

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Scrutiny Committee
Date: 22nd September 2020
Report for: Information
Report of: Executive Member Environment, Clean Air and Climate Change

Report Title

Active Travel across Trafford

Summary

This report identifies and provides an update on the work that is currently being undertaken relating the Active Travel across Trafford

Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the report be noted.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Sharon Walls
Tel: 07970 252571

Background

1. What is Active Travel

- 1.1 **Active travel means** a mode of transport which involves physical activity such as walking and cycling to get from one destination to another - including **travel** to and from the places we live, work, learn, visit and play.
- 1.2 Active Travel is a term also referred to by the Department of Transport (DfT) and government departments as a form of travel that supports the health and wellbeing of individuals. It is in effect alternative sustainable travel such as walking and cycling and is seen as alternative forms of travel other than using the car.
- 1.3 **Active travel** gives people an opportunity to be physically **active** as part of their daily routine, which can contribute to improved health and help to prevent or manage a range of chronic diseases and helps tackle health issues such as obesity.
- 1.4 During recent months as a result of Covid-19 Active Travel has gained much publicity in especially as a result of changes in behaviours that have resulted from lockdown. Many households during lockdown looked to gain their daily exercise by walking and cycling more.

There are many benefits from Active Travel including:

2. Congestion & Air Quality

- 2.1 Making shorter journeys using active means of travel can contribute to reducing congestion by reducing the number of cars on the road
- 2.2 In urban areas, journey times are often shorter when walking or cycling as users are able to take advantage of paths not accessible to motor vehicles. 5.3% of early deaths in the UK can be attributed to long-term exposure to small particles polluting the air making air pollution the greatest environmental risk linked to deaths every year.
- 2.3 Reducing the number of cars on the road can also contribute to improved air quality and reduced carbon emissions. In 2012, 21% of UK domestic greenhouse gas emissions were from transport
- 2.4 Road transport is the largest contributor to total transport greenhouse gas emissions, comprising 68% of the total amount produced, including 40% from cars and taxis
- 2.5 Making more journeys using active travel, including part-journeys that use public transport, can make a significant contribution to reducing the levels of emissions from private motor vehicles. The number of cars on the road has increased year-on-year since 1950 and this trend is projected to continue. Making more journeys using active travel will become of greater importance and convenience in the future. By contrast the number of people walking and cycling has declined in the last 20 years

3. The Health Benefits

- 3.1 The UK has the highest levels of obesity in Western Europe. That means that one in four British adults are obese. About one quarter are inactive, failing to achieve a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity per week.
- 3.2 Public Health England estimates that in the UK, physical inactivity directly contributes to one in six deaths every year.
- 3.3 The rise in obesity rates has been blamed on rapidly changing modern lifestyles – driving instead of walking, poor diets, and desk-based jobs, to mention a few. Physical activity is good for your health, but it also has countless other benefits - like making your life more enjoyable.
- 3.4 Physical activity is first and foremost an opportunity to have fun. Use these special moments to relax, forget about work, think about something else and change your mood. Physical activity is good for your body and your mind, as well as adding years to your life and life to your years!
- 3.5 Including walking and cycling to daily routines is the most effective way to increase physical activity. This helps to reduce levels of obesity, as well as prevent cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancer, and improves mental health.

There can be some barriers to Active Travel that need to be overcome

4. Common reasons for not making short journeys using active travel include:

- a lack of joined-up routes that allow people to make functional journeys through active travel;
- a lack of knowledge of opportunities for active travel, including knowing where cycle lanes and paths are; car parking, street furniture and building in cycle lanes or pedestrian routes;
- issues with safety and perceptions of safety on roads, particularly for vulnerable user groups;
- the relative greater comfort of using a car.
- Other issues cited as common barriers to active travel include a lack of motivation in individuals and populations, a lack of time due to modern lifestyles, necessity for families to make multi-drop journeys, disability or injury, carrying heavy loads or transporting young children and pets, poor weather especially in winter, and the social trend that with increasing affluence people are able to buy mobility and convenience

4.1 Another key issue is safety. Pedestrians and cyclists suffer the second and third highest casualty rates of all transport types. The perceived safety of cars is supported by DfT evidence, with less fatalities travelling by car for the same distance travelled.

4.2 Perceptions of safety for pedestrians and cyclists go beyond road traffic accidents and include travelling alone along unlit or poorly-lit alleyways and through areas with high rates of crime, particularly for vulnerable groups including children or lone females

4.3 Whilst walking and cycling offer increased health through physical activity, they also present risks through, for example, atmospheric pollution, road safety concerns and social inequality.

5. Vehicles parking on footways

5.1 Trafford Council has been working closely with TfGM in an effort to secure more robust legislation and would welcome a more streamlined and robust approach to tackling the issue of pavement parking.

5.2 The Council recognises the difficulties that can and often are experienced for blind or partially sighted pedestrians, wheelchair users or people with prams, often having to walk into the road when parking on the pavement forces them to have to walk into the road to navigate vehicles parked on the footway and can be seen as a barrier to active travel options.

5.3 Unfortunately, whilst the issue of pavement parking is not straight forward. A large proportion of our neighbourhoods are terraced streets, with high car ownership and no availability to park off street and clearly feel the need to park on the pavement. If parking was solely limited to the carriageway other vehicles including emergency vehicles would potentially be unable to pass

5.4 Clearly the two above issues are incompatible, but having the powers to control pavement parking where necessary would be welcomed. Thorough engagement with

our communities is considered to be the methodology necessary to deliver stakeholder acceptance of any strategies developed on this initiative.

- 5.5 Below is an extract from the recently published Gear Change - A bold vision for cycling and walking published by the DfT August 2020 which clearly demonstrates central government commitment for bringing forward the legislation and Trafford Council is currently gearing up to embrace these new powers:

New powers for local authorities –

'We will commence the remaining elements of Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004, allowing local authorities, rather than the police, to enforce against moving traffic offences such as disregarding one-way systems or entering mandatory cycle lanes. The change has already largely taken effect in London, where it has significantly reduced police workload on traffic offences, allowing officers to prioritise more important matters, while also improving enforcement. Traffic flow and speeds have improved and casualties have fallen faster than in areas where the powers have not been commenced. We will issue guidance to local authorities about the powers including on the importance of ensuring citizens are properly informed about them and the need for traffic signing to be properly designed and placed, so that it is clear to drivers what restrictions are in force. We propose that motorists be issued with a warning for a first offence, and fines for subsequent offences.'

- 5.6 When this new legislation is available the Council will be ready and a methodology for how this legislation is to be managed/introduced within Trafford will be the subject of a future report to Council for consideration.

Ongoing Work to support Active Travel

6. Making the Change to Active Travel

- 6.1 Trafford Council has fully embraced the Mayor of Greater Manchester Made to Move Strategy Our Goal:

“To double and then double again cycling in Greater Manchester and make walking the natural choice for as many short trips as possible. We must do this by putting people first, creating world class streets for walking; building one of the world’s best cycle networks, and create a genuine culture of cycling and walking.” See attached Made to Move Strategy in Appendix 1 which clearly identifies the approach that we are part of. This message has been and will be part of our communication plan for all

- 6.2 The Mayors Challenge Fund (MCF) schemes and both Tranches 1 & 2 of Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) are bringing in funds to support the changes needed for residents and commuters to become more active.

7. Changes to the Physical Environment to Encourage participation

- 7.3 The Department for Transport has published the 20mph Research Study by Atkins, AECOM and Professor Mike Maher (UCL) 22 November 2018. It assesses the outcomes of introducing 20 mph speed limit schemes (i.e. reducing speed limits from 30mph to 20mph) in residential areas and town centres. These are generally on a

wider scale, but “signs only”, i.e. without the traffic calming measures of earlier 20mph zones. They were introduced for a variety of transport, community and health reasons.

7.4 The study found:

- a. Public support for 20mph (signed only) limits but concern about non-compliance
- b. Minor changes in driven speeds: median speed fell 0.7mph in residential areas and 0.9mph in city centre areas
- c. Faster drivers reduced speed more: 1.1mph and 1.6mph respectively (85th %ile - is the speed at or below which **85** percent of all vehicles are observed to travel under free-flowing conditions past a monitored point)
- d. Road characteristics have a much larger impact on driven speeds than whether the road has a 30mph or 20mph limit
- e. No significant change in short term in collisions and casualties in the majority of case studies
- f. The majority of people have not noticed a reduction in the speed of vehicles, and do not perceive there to be fewer vehicles driving at excessive speeds
- g. Small increase in use of active travel modes; mode shift cannot be determined from data.

7.5 Accepting that the DfT have produced a report that does not totally support the introduction of 20mph speed limits, other authorities are still moving forward with introducing schemes, see attached link:

<http://roadsafetygb.org.uk/news/evaluation-shows-positive-impact-of-20mph-in-edinburgh/>

7.6 Trafford Council considers that the local physical environmental conditions should make the introduction of 20 mph speed limits more self-regulating. Where the environment does not support the 20mph limit physical measures and changes in the road environment would have to be considered. Where the environment does not support the 20mph limit physical measures and changes in the road environment would have to be considered however, this would require considerable investment.

7.7 20mph speed limits were not considered as part of the EATF funding that became available due to timescales associated with the funding that needed to be spent by September 2020 for Tranche 1 and March 2021 for Tranche 2. Traffic calming measures that is often associated with changing the environment to reduce speeds requires longer consultation with wider stakeholder engagement for the Traffic Regulation Orders and changes to environment needed to reduce speeds. Based on past experience the engineering requirements associated with the design and implementation would not be able to be delivered within the tight timescales.

8. **Bike Hire and Bike Storage**

8.1 Tranche 2 of the EATF will see a large number of bike hangars being introduced across Trafford, the locations where the hangars are to be located are currently being worked upon with introduction towards the end of the year.

8.2 As part of the Mayors Challenge fund there is also a strand on bike hire that will allow ready access to more active forms of travel.

- 8.3 Trafford also has an ongoing bikeability scheme that reaches out to primary schools and looks to train school children to ride a bike with confidence and in a safe way to encourage the use of active travel modes of transport from a young age.

9. Joined up working with Public Health

- 9.1 The need for improved Public Health has been at the fore in developing schemes all bids for the Mayors Challenger Fund and both Tranches 1 & 2 of EATF. All Tranches of the MCF are heavily biased towards making people active and this thought process has been adopted throughout all our project bids, which is clearly demonstrated within the Urmston Active Neighbourhood, which has becoming active as the core theme of the bid.
- 9.2 The main thrust of the Urmston Active Neighbourhood scheme is that it is a community led initiative and so far the community has played a significant part in the development of the project, and will continue to be at the heart of the proposals as we move forward. Engagement in the design should ensure the changes introduced will be utilised and embraced as a positive change to active travel.
- 9.3 This Active Neighbourhood will be the largest in Greater Manchester and looks at how the physical environment can be adapted to support and encourage active travel, especially for short journeys. Please see the document Urmston Becoming Active in Appendix 1. This project will be seen as the base model for further rollout of Active Neighbourhoods should further Mayors Challenge Funding or other funding becomes available in the future.
- 9.4 Additionally a Cycling Strategy Document is currently under preparation which will be developed with assistance from colleagues in Public Health.
- 9.5 During the consultation on any scheme that may have public health benefits that conflict with residents, businesses and stakeholders there always has to be a balanced view on the decision taken. This would be assessed on a site by site basis and often changes can be made to schemes that mean that a solution can be found and progress can be made with overall support.

10.0 Conclusion

- 10.1 As contained within the report and within the Appendix it can be demonstrated that there are a range of activities that are ongoing and being developed to encourage Active Travel.