

## TRAFFORD COUNCIL

**Report to:** Executive  
**Date:** 13<sup>th</sup> March 2023  
**Report for:** Decision  
**Report of:** Executive Member for Climate Change & Transport Strategy

### Report Title

Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy

### Summary

The Council has an ambition to increase the numbers of people walking, wheeling and cycling across Trafford. Along with partners we will work to support more people to take up walking, wheeling and cycling so that everyone can feel the benefits of active travel. The strategy has been developed in line with Greater Manchester's refresh of the Active Travel Mission and the Department for Transport's Gear Change vision for cycling and walking. It also supports the council's priorities to reduce health inequalities by encourage residents to be more active, supporting people out of poverty by enabling affordable transport and address our climate crisis by reducing emissions from road traffic.

### Recommendation(s)

It is recommended that the Executive:

Adopt the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy and enable the boroughs and Greater Manchester's vision for Active Travel.

### Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy Document

### *Implications:*

Relationship to Policy Framework/Corporate Priorities	This work supports the Council's Corporate priorities of Reducing Health Inequalities, Supporting People out of Poverty and Addressing our Climate Crisis. The Strategy also supports the delivery of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, Leisure Strategy and Trafford Moving.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	Strategy links to Greater Manchester's refresh of the Active Travel Mission and delivery of the Mayor's Challenge Fund.
Financial	The strategy was prepared using existing Council resources. Investments to support the implementation of the strategy will be subject to available internal and external funding.
Legal Implications:	Not applicable
Equality/Diversity Implications	The strategy seeks to address inequalities by providing inclusive access to Active Travel
Sustainability Implications	Not applicable
Carbon Reduction	Addresses our climate crisis by encouraging residents to take journeys by foot and non-carbon emitting vehicles
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Not applicable

Risk Management Implications	Not applicable
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The strategy will positively effect residents' health and wellbeing by increasing physical activity levels and contributing to clean air
Health and Safety Implications	Not applicable

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The strategy is a 10 year approach which will build on the vision where Trafford is a green and connected borough where more people choose walking, wheeling or cycling every day. This will enable the strategy to support the councils' corporate priorities to reduce inequalities, support people out of poverty and address our climate crisis. It will also support Trafford Moving and Health and Wellbeing strategies, by increasing the opportunities for residents to be more active and to help people sustain this activity as part of their everyday lives
- 1.2 The Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy is a living document which will evolve over time. An example of this is the recent development and inclusion of wheeling, how we include other modes of transport and residents with a disability is and important part of ensuring that active travel is for all. Through the development of the walking, wheeling and cycling delivery plan we will be able to adapt our approaches to emerging themes such as wheeling.
- 1.3 Regionally the strategy will support Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner and Greater Manchester's recent refresh of the Active Travel Mission. The Mission will build on its three foundations of accessibility, behavior change and communications and engagement.
- 1.4 Transport for Greater Manchester annual Travel Diary Survey asks 2000 households details of all journeys made over a 24-hour period. The last survey in 2019 found that 52% of short journeys (under 2km) are walked in GM. Walking accounted for 29% of all trips, whilst cycling was only 2.2%.

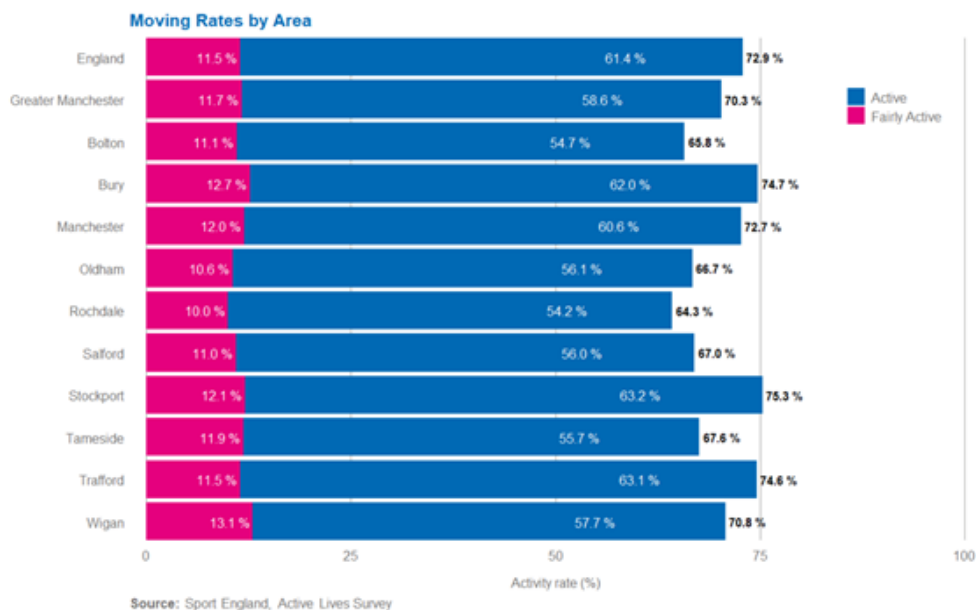
Our overall goal is that over the next 10 years

- 90% of journeys under 1 mile will be taken by foot or wheeled equipment (e.g. cycles, scooter, wheelchair, mobility scooter). .
  - 80% of journeys under 5 miles will be taken by foot or wheeled equipment (e.g. cycles, scooter, wheelchair, mobility scooter).
- 1.5 We want to enable Trafford residents to live healthier lives, improve health outcomes and reduce congestion. To do this we want to highlight the benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling and encourage more people start using active travel as their preferred method of transport, for both leisure and commuting.
- 1.6 Active travel is great way to build activity into people's daily lives. Trafford is already one of the most active boroughs in Greater Manchester but there's more to be done to support the people who need to do more. We will work with local communities to understand the barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling and look to help remove as many of these as possible.

## 2. Walking, Wheeling and Cycling for Public Health and Wellbeing:

- 2.1 Trafford residents are some of the most active in Greater Manchester and above the national average, but there is still work to be done to enable the most inactive to move more. According to the latest Active Lives data from Sport England, 63.1% of Trafford

Residents are achieving 150+ minutes of moderate activity per week in line with the Chief Medical Officers guidelines.



- 2.2 The health benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling are many. Research has shown that keeping physically active can reduce the risk of heart and circulatory disease by 35% and risk of early death by as much as 30%. By swapping short journeys like the one set out in our goals, Trafford residents will be able to build activity into their days and feel the health benefits.
- 2.3 Health and wellbeing can also be improved by walking, wheeling and cycling more. Studies have shown that by being physically active you can overcome and even prevent depression and anxiety. According to the Mental Health Foundation, physical activity can be as effective as medication and counselling.
- 2.4 The Office for Health Improvement and Disparities, stated that 'physical activity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including 0.9 billion to the NHS alone).
- 2.5 Inactivity in Trafford costs our health system £4.8 million. By enabling more people to walk, wheel or cycle we can have an impact on conditions such as asthma, diabetes, obesity, heart disease and cancer. By reducing the number of people with health and wellbeing conditions, we can help to reduce the strain on local health services.
- 2.6 As well as the impact on our climate, air pollution from motorised vehicles has a detrimental impact on our health. Air pollutants from transport include nitrogen oxides, particles, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons. All have a damaging impact on the health of people and contribute to the conditions mentioned above. By reducing road traffic, we can help to address our climate crisis and have a big impact of resident's health.

### 3. Leadership & Inspiration:

- 3.1 As a council we will lead by example in the policy decisions we make and our support to enable more of our colleagues and residents to make the choice to walk, wheel or cycle more often in their daily lives.
- 3.2 With the appointment of our Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Lead we will be able to bring partners together to inspire and encourage others to take up walking, wheeling and

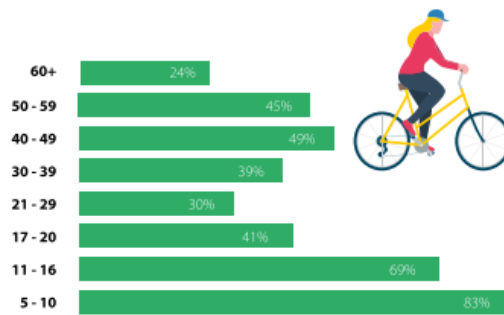
cycling. This will include conversations with partners, businesses and employers to influence their approach to active travel and public transport.

- 3.3 We will develop a joined-up approach to walking, wheeling and cycling in Trafford ensuring that national and local policy is connected and coordinated to promote the allocation of resources to Trafford.
- 3.4 An important part of the strategy is how we demonstrate the impact it has on increasing the number of people walking, wheeling and cycling. Working with partners such as Transport for Greater Manchester, Sport England and GM Moving we will be able collate information and data that will be able to inform policy and show health and traffic statistics.

#### **4. Enabling Change:**

- 4.1 The council will play a leading role in removing barriers and challenges that some people may face when it comes to walking wheeling and cycling. We will do this by supporting behaviour change, raising awareness and promoting the many benefits of adopting a more active lifestyle.
- 4.2 There is a perception that walking, wheeling and cycling are not safe. The Council will work with TfGM and partners to challenge some of the perceptions and challenge key myths that have established.
- 4.3 This strategy links directly with Trafford Moving which aims to increase the number of people moving more each day. Alongside Trafford Moving we will support community events and organisations, as well as produce publicity and promotional materials which demonstrate the many benefits of active travel.
- 4.4 The Council recognises that for residents to start walking, wheeling and cycling a large amount of behavior change will need to take place. We will draw on the strengths of the boroughs voluntary and community groups and enable them to build capacity and encourage all sectors of the community to take up active travel.
- 4.5 We will work with residents who may face barriers to walking, wheeling and cycling. People with disabilities, long term health conditions, children and young people and older adults all face barriers to moving each day. Working with these groups we will identify these issues and help to overcome them.
- 4.6 The council has an ambition to include active travel in town centre regeneration. How walking, wheeling and cycling is included in new developments such as the Stretford Town Centre Masterplan and refurbishment of Leisure Centres will help residents through new infrastructure to make the change to active travel.
- 4.7 The Right to the Streets partnership in Trafford is working to make streets and public spaces safe and welcoming for women and girls to enable active lives. Concerns of safety on the streets has been identified as a key barrier to women and girls accessing or engaging with physical activity, active travel, and sports or cultural events in their area. The partnership will help develop an approach which can enable more women and girls to actively travel daily in a welcoming environment.
- 4.8 Access to cycles and equipment to support active travel can also be a barrier to participation. Provision will also be made for greater accessibility of bicycles, including bike hire, cycle loan schemes, cycle skills training, cycle repair support, and storage to overcome this barrier.

### People with access to a bicycle, by age (2017-2019)



4.9 Cycle training is particularly important for children as a way of teaching young people how to cycle safely on the roads. The council currently offers Bike-ability training courses and is developing School Streets to grow the number of young people walking, wheeling and cycling.

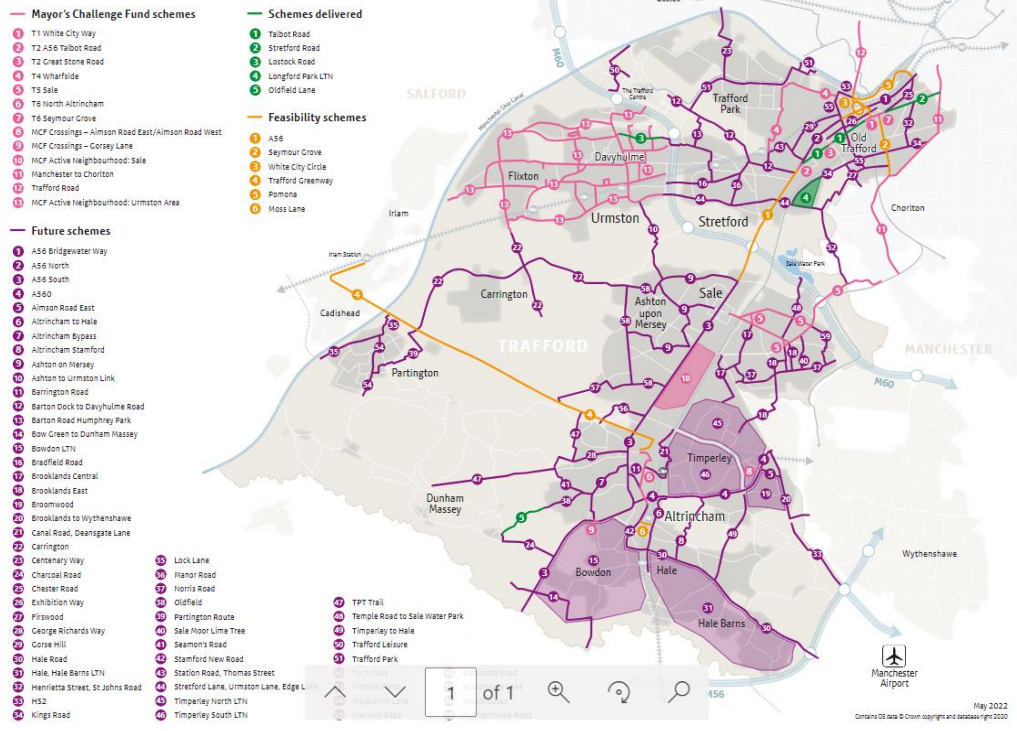
## 5. Improving Access – The Physical Infrastructure:

5.1 Some existing walking, wheeling and cycling routes are already in place and others are being developed following Trafford's successful bid for funding from the GM Mayor's Challenge Fund. Further schemes will be developed and contribute to the Greater Manchester Bee Network - making vital connections across the region by improving access to walking, wheeling and cycling for all.

5.2 Working with partners we will ensure there is a clear understanding of how the physical infrastructure needs to be improved to support people to make the choice to walk, wheel or cycle.

5.3 We will develop our network so it better links communities, particularly those not currently served well by public transport. We will work with local communities to identify local schemes which will provide the maximum benefit to local residents.

## Trafford Walking and Cycling Strategy Map



5.4 Building on the Councils investment into its leisure centres, we will develop active travel hubs across the sites. This will include secure parking facilities to encourage users of the centres to use active travel when visiting their local facility and cut down on short journeys.

5.4 We will ensure that all road plans and improvements and maintenance in Trafford include measure to incorporate walking, wheeling and cycling safety. We will also work with the Trafford Design Guide team to ensure that active travel is a consideration for new and existing developments in the borough.

## 6. Summary

6.1 Trafford's Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy will evolve over the length of its 10 year duration. Ensuring that it keeps pace with local and national policy ensuring that the council can continue to lead and support residents to live healthier and more active lives.

6.2 This strategy sets out our approach to building a more sustainable and environmentally friendly approach to travel across the borough. It aims to cut down the number of short car journeys which can be taken by foot or by wheel.

6.3 Working with local communities, partners and residents we aim to increase the ease at which they can access the boroughs town centres, amenities, leisure facilities, parks and open spaces

6.4 The Council will improve the health and wellbeing and physical activity levels of its residents. This will have positive impact on health services and help to address the strain on the NHS locally.

## Other Options

If no other option is considered the impact of air quality and inactivity will go unchecked and this will affect resident's health and wellbeing being. The number of pollutant producing vehicles on Trafford roads is reaching an unsustainable level and a major contributor to poor air quality and

our climate crisis. If this trend continues, then journey times will continue to increase as will congestion and the amount of air pollution produced.

By not encouraging Trafford residents to make the change to walking, wheeling and cycling we will also see an impact on health, wellbeing and inactivity and the ability to achieve the ambitions of Trafford Moving, the boroughs strategy for tackling inactivity through sport and physical activity. This will also have a financial impact on local services as demand for health services increase through poor health.

## **Consultation**

The walking, wheeling and cycling strategy public consultation engaged in a resident's survey, six locality face to face drop-in sessions and an online session. The survey received 357 responses, the responses from this survey will be used to inform the approach of the strategy and the development of the delivery plan to enable it. Alongside this there has been continual engagement with key stakeholders in the sector.

The delivery plan will sit alongside the strategy and will set out the key priorities to enable the strategy. Using the results of the public consultation survey and what we already know, the plan will highlight the areas we will focus on to overcome barriers, enable behaviour change and support residents to make the change to walking, wheeling and cycling.

Its important to say that active travel and other road users form polarising opinions and this has to a certain degree been seen in the in person public consultation. This strategy will look at address those fears and show that there is a way forward that will work for all. The results of the survey show that respondents are overwhelmingly in favour of the strategy.

Respondents were asked whether they believed that the strategies key actions can lead and inspire behavior change towards more walking, wheeling and cycling. 72% agreed that it could with 75% saying that funding to secure opportunities to provide high quality infrastructure would be their priority key action.

Key messages were that:

- The infrastructure is a key element to get right prior to trying to lead and inspire behaviour change. Comments focused on more / better infrastructure as well as maintenance and lighting.
- Walking needs more focus and paths need to be in better condition and have an equal or higher priority than roads. For example, grit pavement as well as roads and don't allow pavement parking.
- Safety came through as a theme with related comments focusing on cycling infrastructure being away from road infrastructure.
- There were also comments relating to making driving harder, especially in relation to driving into towns and villages such as parking being on the edge of towns and villages and cycling parking being far more plentiful.
- Health benefits were also mentioned in relation to highlighting the positive impact of cycling and walking.
- There were also comments against the principle of changing behaviour with focus on cycling infrastructure taking up road space.

When asked if the strategy would enable change towards more people walking, wheeling and cycling, 65% said yes it would. Over half of respondents said that there should be a review of practices that incentivise car use over active travel or public transport. 60% of respondents also welcomed the introduction of more 20mph speed limits in appropriate locations.

Key messages were that:

- Increasing awareness of the positive impacts of more people walking, wheeling and cycling in terms of reducing Co2 and other greenhouse gases is important.
- The actions need to focus on positives and being negative to the car will bring resistance and result in the topic being divisive.
- Weather was consistently mentioned as an issue and a barrier to active travel.

In answering the question about whether the strategy supports the Council to improve the physical walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure and the access to it, 83% of residents said that it would. When asked which measure in particular would support the development of the infrastructure 68% said that it was key to ensure that all road plans, improvements and maintenance in the borough incorporated measures to improve walking, wheeling and cycling.

Finally, 82% of people who completed the survey said that the strategy sets out the key priority opportunities and challenges in relation to increasing walking, wheeling and cycling. This saw road safety and the walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure as the key priorities of respondents.

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

- Enable the council and in conjunction with Trafford Moving to improve the health and wellbeing of residents through increased activity rates by walking, wheeling and cycling
- Reduce the number of short journeys taken by cars, by providing leadership and enabling behaviour change that gives residents confidence to make these journeys via active travel.
- Address our climate crisis by reducing the number of motorised vehicles on the roads and reducing congestion by enable residents to make the change to active travel.
- Connecting with the GM Active Travel Commissioners Refresh the Mission Strategy and ensure a joined up approach to active travel that benefits all residents in Trafford.

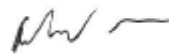
**Key Decision** (as defined in the Constitution): Yes

**If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given?** Yes

Finance Officer Clearance (PC)

Legal Officer Clearance (TR)

**[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE** (electronic)



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Executive Member has cleared the report.

### **Appendix**

- **Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy**
- **Public Consultation Survey Results**