TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Date: Report of: Scrutiny Committee 10th July 2024 Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group: Reducing Car Dependency

Report Title

Reducing Car Dependency

Summary

In 2023 the Scrutiny Committee agreed to form a Task and Finish Group to look at how car dependency within Trafford could be reduced. This report provides a summary of investigations carried out by the Task and Finish group on how the Council could tackle the issue of car dependency in Trafford and provides recommendations to support.

Recommendation(s)

That the recommendations set out below be endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee for referral to the Executive:

The Executive are asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1. That an overarching strategy is implemented to link up the active travel and public health initiatives already happening, and to provide a cohesive, integrated and visionary approach of what Trafford could look like with streets free from cars.
- 2. That the strategy is shown to be effective by strong leadership with a clear positive vision of what life could be like in Trafford with less traffic and congestion, and increased safe road and pavement space for pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists. We recommend working closely with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), and other Greater Manchester (GM) Councils, and learning from other Councils who are demonstrating good practice, while maintaining autonomy in our decision making.
- 3. That the following recommendations are included in the strategy:

Make our streets and pavements safer:

- 1. Develop a Trafford wide strategic approach to introducing 20 mph speed limits, which, unlike 20 mph zones, do not require traffic calming measures (using models such as Wirral Council's which set up a working group on road safety and recommended focusing on all residential, retail and education areas, divided up appropriate 20 mph roads into areas and time phases, based on ability to complete and costings, and prepared for when money becomes available).
- 2. Look at options for bringing the speed limit down to 40mph on rural roads and enforcing speed limits on the A56.
- 3. Liaise with GM Police to increase the use of enforcement measures to ensure that drivers obey the speed limit this will form part of the GM Zero Vision Strategy.
- 4. Prepare for future grants and funding bids to retrofit our roads, transforming our streetscape, making pavements wider, changing the infrastructure to reduce speed at junctions, narrowing road lanes to ensure drivers drive more carefully, creating blended crossings where the pedestrian and wheeler are prioritised, and improving access for those restricted by disability or mobility.
- 5. Consider proceeding the identified Trafford Council transport strategy officer post, to provide a more joined up, strategic approach and improve communication between Council Officers and Councillors.
- 6. Be proactive in working with TfGM to request more pedestrian and wheeler prioritisation at pedestrian crossings, suggesting gradually reducing all timings to 10 seconds where safe.
- 7. Ensure EV points and infrastructure do not clutter the pavement, acknowledging that electric cars are only one part of the solution.
- 8. Campaign and raise awareness for drivers who have no alternative but to park on pavements to allow enough space for pedestrians and wheelers.

Make our streets greener and more pleasant to walk along:

That the Executive look to:

- Increase shade and prevent flooding by aiming to plant a tree every 25metres on the kerbside as Lambeth Council have done in their plan for trees to provide 25% canopy cover (the UK average is currently 16%) – this will make Trafford's pavements safer and more pleasant to walk, wheel and cycle along, and also reduce traffic noise (see Appendix B).
- 2. Increase the planting of wildflowers along road verges and roundabout borders, exploring the options for creating raingardens, looking at good practice such as in Salford Council.
- 3. Engage with businesses to provide funding to enhance our streets, for example sponsoring benches as resting places for those walking.

Enable residents to make the modal shift from car use to public transport and active travel:

- 1. Support the establishment of a Trafford Car Club, aiming for electric car hire within walking distance of all residents, with access in allocated car parks and bays on the kerbside.
- 2. Continue to work with community groups, engaging with those who may be less likely to cycle.
- 3. Increase access to bicycle libraries and look to offer mobile bicycle repair services.
- 4. Identify locations to install cycle hangars which offer secure bicycle storage so that bicycle and cargo bike owners can park their vehicles safely on the street, as well as offering a registration form on our website to allow for residents to register their interest in cycle hangar storage.
- 5. Ensure there are cycle stands outside all major public services, green areas, and along residential streets.
- 6. Explore the feasibility of introducing car free days and pedestrian high streets on Sundays.

Communications:

That the Executive:

- 1. Develop a coordinated Communications Strategy highlighting the positive benefits of reducing car reliance, and the reasons for these, ensuring consistent, clear and positive messaging on readdressing the balance towards alternative forms of travel and walking.
- 2. Aim to gain a consensus on the policies before introducing them by reaching out and engaging with a broad and diverse cross section of our community including those with disabilities, to gain a balanced range of views from a wide range of demographics.
- 3. Use the Trafford Council website and social media to display more positive images of residents cycling and walking and cargo bikes to present this as a norm.
- 4. Promote bus journeys as an attractive, appealing mode of transport and fully prepare for an increased uptake of bus journeys when franchising takes place in Trafford in January 2025, in liaison with TfGM.
- 5. Promote the economic benefits to local businesses of people using active travel to get to town centres.
- 6. Ensure the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling forum provides a safe forum to express views and make suggestions and is representative of Trafford's demographics, with representatives from all communities.

Review parking policy:

That the Executive:

1. Ensures the current parking policy review looks at the feasibility of introducing variable parking charges in car parks, pay and display and resident parking

schemes, including increasing charges according to engine and car size, and reviewing the number of streets under resident parking schemes.

- 2. Explore the possibility to free up appropriate car parking space, exploring adopting a social justice approach around the use of kerb space that works for all residents, setting a target of repurposing street parking spaces for alternative uses as modal shift takes place, such as trees, green spaces, pocket parks, car club spaces, rental bikes, and EV chargers.
- 3. Explore the feasibility of more effective parking enforcement, including the use of ANPR.

Enable more children/young people to walk, wheel or cycle to school:

That the Executive:

- 1. Fully engage with GMCA and TfGM in their plans to encourage and facilitate more children to walk to school and to expand School Streets across Trafford and GM.
- 2. Make the School Streets Officer post permanent.
- 3. Fully cost the installation of ANPR on all School Streets so that they can become permanent, taking into account the revenue.
- 4. Encourage and enable schools to set up walking and bicycle buses as cost effective, community-based ways of enabling children to walk or cycle to school safely.
- 5. Promote Park and Stride and inform parents of where they can park safely when driving their children to school.
- 6. Initiate communication with businesses to explore ways to incentivise employers to travel to work by active transport, including flexibility in working hours to facilitate parents walking their children to school.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

Name: Harry Callaghan Report Author: Councillor Jill Axford

1. Membership, Scope and Direction of the Task & Finish Group

Councillors Acton, Axford, Boyes, Coggins, Hornby, Leicester, Welton and Zhi initially volunteered to take part in the Task and Finish Group and a meeting was arranged to discuss the scope of the group on 11 January 2023. It was agreed that Councillor Axford would chair the group.

Councillor Boyes left the group in May 2023, Councillor Hornby in August 2023 and Councillor Coggins in February 2024.

At the initial scoping meeting in January 2023 many ideas and suggestions were raised to form the baseline of a formal strategy which would be differentiated from the Trafford Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy. Questions to ask Council Officers were suggested.

It was decided to hold information gathering meetings with Councils who have progressive policies in this area, and to find out what was already happening in Trafford by speaking to Council Officers and TfGM. It was decided to hold a meeting with Trafford Data Lab to find out their role in providing data. Some public consultation was also suggested but was not followed up due to lack of resource.

Terms of Reference were agreed in February 2023.

2. Background

The task and finish group arose from a request by Cllr Axford to set up a group to explore reviewing our parking policy to include measures to disincentivise car use. Cllr Acton suggested a wider exploration of ways to reduce car dependency, which was agreed on by the Scrutiny Committee.

According to Sustrans 75% of GM residents think that their streets are dominated by moving or parked motor vehicles. Every year walking and cycling in GM prevents 2,612 serious long term health conditions: <u>Walking and Cycling Index 2021: Greater Manchester (sustrans.org.uk).</u>

The reliance on cars as the main means of transport can result in reduced well-being for our residents, due to poor air quality, inactivity, car collisions, and lowered community cohesion as roads are primarily used for car transport rather than walking, and places to meet up. The needs of pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists are often deprioritised, with pavements cluttered with parked cars.

According to the January 2024 Vision Zero Strategy Greater Manchester draft report: "People not vehicles use roads, roads are not just about travel...Roads are about connecting people and places, and are places where we live, work and spend time. Safe roads can bring people and communities closer together": <u>5A. DRAFT Vision</u> <u>Zero Strategy Greater Manchester Jan 24.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)</u>

Reliance on cars also leads to economic costs, with, according to the report, congestion in GM costing £1.6 billion a year in lost productivity, and causing delays to our newly franchised bus services which could contribute so much to reducing car dependency : <u>Made to move.pdf (ctfassets.net)</u>

Unlocking road space leaves space for essential travel.

The issues of safety on the roads seems fundamental to enabling people to choose forms of active travel, and without a reduction in car use, this appears to be difficult to

achieve. The amount of people injured or killed on our roads by cars and other motor vehicles would not be accepted in any other form of transport, and the term "road accident" is still being used for collisions. In the last five years on average 1000 people were killed or seriously injured each year on GM roads. In 2022 there were 64 deaths and 787 serious injuries on GM roads. Furthermore, mental health problems such as depression or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder are common following collisions. The greatest proportion of those who suffer death or serious injury are pedestrians (31%), followed by car drivers (22%), cyclists (16%), motorcyclists (15%) and car passengers (13%). Vulnerable road users, including mostly children and older people, account for two thirds of those killed or seriously injured: <u>5A. DRAFT Vision</u> <u>Zero Strategy Greater Manchester Jan 24.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)</u>

In 2021 there were 286 road casualties in Trafford of which 52 were pedestrians and 55 were cyclists. According to the Vision Zero Strategy report, Trafford had the highest proportion of cyclists killed in GM, at 24%, in 2018-22: <u>5A. DRAFT Vision Zero</u> <u>Strategy Greater Manchester Jan 24.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)</u>

The case for 20mph speed limits is strong. A pedestrian hit by a car travelling at between 30mph and 40mph is 3.5 to 5.5 times more likely to be killed than one struck by a car travelling at less than 30mph: <u>Introducing 20 mph Limits (rospa.com)</u>. Journeys are more efficient when vehicles are travelling at similar speeds and traffic can flow through the network without needing to stop and start constantly.

The prioritisation currently given to cars is also an issue of social justice and inequality. People from our most deprived communities without access to a car are more likely to be killed or seriously injured on our roads but have no choice but to cycle, walk or motorcycle. According to the Trafford Data Lab, in 2021 the average proportion of households in Trafford without access to a car was around 19%, with the highest amount at 35.3% in Gorse Hill and Cornbrook, followed closely at 34.5% in Old Trafford, with the lowest proportion at 8.7% in Hale Barns and Timperley South. Further disparity is shown by 15.5% of households in Davyhulme have access to three or more cars, compared with only 3.4% in Gorse Hill and Cornbrook. Interestingly, 11.3% of households in Davyhulme have access to three or more cars, which may reflect poor public transport links in this ward. Moreover, those living in deprived areas are more likely to live closer to noisy, busy roads and so to suffer more from diseases related to poor air quality and those with disabilities are unfairly discriminated against on pavements with the many obstacles blocking their path.

https://www.trafforddatalab.io/ward_profiler/?theme=Transport&name=Households%2 0with%20no%20car

https://www.trafforddatalab.io/ward_profiler/?theme=Transport&name=Households%2 0with%20three%20or%20more%20cars

Transport emissions are the third largest source of CO2 emissions in Greater Manchester after industry and household emissions. According to 2022 government statistics, transport accounts for over a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, with 90% of this coming from road transport vehicles, the largest share from cars and taxis: <u>Transport and environment statistics 2022 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u>

A recent BBC report indicated global temperatures in 2023 were about 1.48C warmer than pre-industrial levels and it is likely that 2024 will be even warmer. This has already led to catastrophic weather conditions, forest fires, floods and displacement.

The Climate Agreement threshold is 1.5 degrees and we only have a small window to make changes: <u>2023 confirmed as world's hottest year on record - BBC News</u>

At a recent briefing for the GM Joint Clean Air Scrutiny Committee, GMCA's Megan Black reported that "Nitrogen oxides cause 1200 deaths a year in the UK, with road transport being responsible for 80%, with diesel being the main source". Despite improvements in vehicles, levels of particulate matter in the atmosphere remain high, with increases in PM from brake and tyre wear in 2020 12% above the 1990 total, and from road abrasion 8% higher than in 1990: <u>Transport and environment statistics 2022</u> - <u>GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)</u> Commenting on Greater Manchester's non charging plan Andy Burnham says "cleaning up the air that people breathe is a priority for Greater Manchester".

The GM Transport Strategy 2040 has a target of reducing car use to no more than 50% of all journeys in GM, with the remaining 50% made by public transport, walking and cycling, with no increase in motor vehicle traffic by 2040: <u>Greater Manchester</u> <u>Transport Strategy 2040 | Bee Network | Powered by TfGM</u>

The Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Strategy has a target of 90% of journeys under 1 mile being taken by foot, bicycle or wheeled equipment and 80% of journeys under 5 miles being taken by foot or wheeled equipment over the next 10 years: <u>Trafford</u> Walking Wheeling and Cycling Strategy 2023 V4.pdf

GM has a goal of creating a future where nobody is killed or receives life changing injuries on the road network by 2040, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all, with a target of a 50% reduction by 2030: <u>5A. DRAFT Vision Zero Strategy</u> Greater Manchester Jan 24.pdf (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)

To reach these ambitious targets, urgent, bold policy and infrastructure changes are required. Alongside our active travel initiatives, we therefore feel that there must also be a focus on reducing Trafford residents' dependency on cars as their main source of transport.

3. Task and Finish Group meetings

Group meetings were held regularly to review and discuss the group's next steps, suggest who to invite to meetings and what questions to ask, and to discuss our recommendations, alongside regular email communication. The importance of giving people options was discussed and suggesting quick wins, thereby influencing the direction of travel. A request for car dependency to be on the agenda for the next Trafford Climate Change Network meeting was made, which was not granted.

4. Meetings with Amey and Council Officer (Appendix A)

- **4.1** Seven meetings were held with Amey and Council officers including the Director of Public Health, Head of Planning and Development, Head of Climate Change and Sustainability, Head of Leisure, Head of Highways, Transportation and Greenspaces, and several Amey officers. The first of these took place on the 1st February 2023 and the final one on the 6th March 2024.
- **4.2** From our meetings, it appeared that Council Officers are extremely aware of the issues, and are keen to implement change, but there appears to be a lack of connection between the actions of each department and a lack of an

overarching strategy as well as a clear vision. A lot of work has been achieved on active travel, but there appears to be less focus on behaviour change and reducing car dependency per se and less focus on encouraging walking, with safe pavements and roads. The lack of funding is clearly a barrier, but a strategic approach would enable better preparation for possible funding bids.

5. Meetings with Councillors from good practice Local Authorities (Appendix B)

The Group met with representatives of several Councils who had been identified as exhibiting good practice when it came to Reducing Car Dependency. These Members were;

- Councillor James McAsh, Southwark Council (24th April 2023)
- Councillor Mike McCusker, Salford Council (15th August 2023)
- Councillor Rezina Chowdhury, Lambeth Council (4th October 2023)
- Councillor Tracey Rawlings, Manchester Council (14th November 2023)
- Councillor Clyde Loakes, Waltham Forest Council (9th January 2024)
- Councillor Liz Grey, Wirral Council (24th April 2024)

Overall, we were really impressed with the level of ambition and vision that these Councils displayed, with the courage to move forward on contentious issues for the wellbeing of their residents despite the voice of the car lobbyists. Clearly, more funding is available to some of these Councils, but also having enough Council Officers to secure bidding seemed fundamental to their success.

6. Meeting with Transport for Greater Manchester (Appendix C)

The group met with representatives from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) on the 4th December 2023. It appears that TfGM shares the group's aspirations, and are slowly beginning to implement action, but with caution. They seemed to be heavily reliant on the impact of buses on their ambitions. They stressed that Trafford Council have the option to set things up autonomously rather than waiting for the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to deliver, but it appeared unclear whether the GMCA prefers a consistent Greater Manchester wide approach.

7. Meeting with Dame Sarah Storey, Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner (Appendix D)

The group met with the Greater Manchester (GM) Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey on the 15th April 2024. Dame Sarah was passionate about the subject and provided helpful insights to the group. She supported the groups' view that the balance needs to be shifted away from the motorist to give all equal rights to safe streets and pavements. Dame Sarah also emphasised that electric cars are not the panacea.

8. Task and Finish Group Summary

The group concluded that Trafford would benefit from a strategy that distinguishes itself from the Cycling, Wheeling and Walking strategy in that it would focus on reducing the over reliance on cars which leads to traffic congestion, road collisions, poor air quality, reduced physical activity and an increase in carbon emissions. This is an issue of social justice, as the poorer members of our community often do not have access to vehicles.

The aim is to offer positive choices to residents, by shifting the balance away from the priority that has been given to car drivers towards the needs of the pedestrian, wheeler and cyclist, so that our street space is shared safely and fairly by everyone.

Inspired by what other Councils have achieved, especially Waltham Forest, the group acknowledged that with strong leadership and a clear vision, and an improved bus service rolled out in January 2025 in Trafford, a modal shift could be achieved. It is hoped that bus use will be fully promoted as an affordable, accessible, reliable option, considering how important access to active travel is as a prerequisite for using public transport.

Effective communication is essential, with the ability to ride out the pro car lobby. It is important to have conversations with the people involved before formal consultations, and to talk about the topic of travel more broadly and to those who sit in the middle ground. It is also important to include items such as the introduction of 20 mph speed limits into the Council manifesto as a demonstration of our wish to improve the quality of life for all our residents, so that consultations can be more about providing detail, rather than allowing a voice to the car lobby. All the effective Councils we spoke to highlight the importance of being bold and visionary where necessary to deliver change and to have the courage to carry positive measures through.

Reducing speed limits would appear to be an important step in enabling our residents to feel safe on the roads and to encourage more people to walk and cycle. The group were especially interested to learn from other LAs that introducing 20 mph speed limits across a wide area could be seven times more cost effective in terms of speed reduction achieved than spending money only on isolated zones and that implementing 20 mph speed limits, rather than zones, requires very little signage and no traffic calming measures. According to Living Streets, the cost of road signs is low and Portsmouth, for example, converted 1200 streets to 20 mph for just over £500,000. This is extremely cost effective when related to the impacts from road collisions. The 20mph zones in London are estimated to be saving more than £20m in crash prevention annually. https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/policy-reports-and-research/20mph/.

The group concluded from learning about other Councils' School Streets projects and from Dame Sarah Storey that the only sustainable and permanent option is to instal ANPR and that this pays for itself by creating revenue. The Trafford team are also recommending this.

Creating a parking policy that considers the disproportionate amount of road space cars take up appears to be an effective way to reinforce the message that a more balanced use of road space is required. It is hoped that this would disincentivise car use and further encourage a modal shift to active travel. There seemed to be some affordable quick win solutions, such as setting up an EV car club, which allows residents the opportunity to have use of a car only when they really need one, which has been proven to create modal shift; working in partnership with a cargo bike delivery company, as Waltham Forest do, which again raises people's awareness of cycling as an option; installing cycle parking hangars on streets which also give a visual message that parking space is being given to bikes as well as cars and so raises awareness of cycling being a feasible option; and creating opportunities for people to experience the impact of car free streets, such as car free days, and town centre car free roads on Sunday.

It is recognised that our lives and the places where we live and work are currently designed around the car and that for residents to make the modal shift towards active travel, and for Trafford to redress the balance from streets for cars to streets for people, we will need to offer our residents more attractive options to driving, so they have genuine choices. Interventions need to be multi-faceted, with a balance of behavioural and infrastructure interventions, with protection offered to those who are vulnerable. Above all, the vision of a cleaner, quieter, safer, healthier Trafford must be held by strong leadership so that this can become a reality for our residents.

9. Recommendations

That the recommendations set out below be endorsed by the Scrutiny Committee for referral to the Executive:

The Executive are asked to consider the following recommendations:

- 1. That an overarching strategy is implemented to link up the active travel and public health initiatives already happening, and to provide a cohesive, integrated and visionary approach of what Trafford could look like with streets free from cars.
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