

TRAFFORD COUNCIL

Report to: Executive
Date: 18th December 2024
Report for: Decision
Report of: Executive Members for Highways, Environmental & Traded Services and Climate Change

Report Title

Response to Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group – Reducing Car Dependency

Summary

This report has been prepared following consideration of, and in response to, the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group findings as detailed in the report dated 10 July 2024 in respect of making Trafford a place that is less dependent on private car transport. Investigation by the Scrutiny Committee produced a series of recommendations relating to safety, a greener environment, modal shift, communications, car parking and young people.

Recommendation(s)

1. That the Executive welcomes the Scrutiny Task & Finish Report on Reducing Car Dependency dated 10 July 2024 and supports the principle of widening transport choices and reducing reliance on the private car for journeys in Trafford.
2. That the Executive endorses the response to the Scrutiny Committee Task & Finish Group report set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Contact person for access to background papers and further information:

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Background Papers: None

Appendices: None

Relationship to Policy Framework /Corporate Priorities	The desire to rely less on individual cars aligns with the corporate objective to address our climate crisis.
Relationship to GM Policy or Strategy Framework	The TFGM 2040 Transport Strategy supports modal shift away from reliance on private cars. There are a number of supporting strategies that also align with the

	Scrutiny Committee's ambition to reduce car dependency and support other transport modes.
Financial Implications	The specific financial implications of recommendations, where applicable, are addressed within the detailed responses in section 3 and Appendix 2 of the report. Many of the recommendations have significant financial implications – either in terms of capital cost or ongoing maintenance – which present a a serious barrier to implementation. In such cases, the Executive can only be recommended to agree to the Scrutiny Committee conclusions should resources become available at some point in the future.
Legal Implications	The regulation and management of Highways is governed by the Highways Act 1980 and Traffic Management act 2004. Related Traffic Regulation Orders then govern how individual sections of road space are utilised.
Equality/Diversity Implications	Improving transport choice and reducing car dependency has social benefits in promoting opportunity for those unable to run a car. However, it must also be acknowledged that for many people with mobility difficulties, access to a car is essential in order to travel in safety in comfort. It should also be noted that an important part of the rise of car use during the second half of the 20 th century can be attributed to increasing numbers of women driving – and that the safety and independence afforded by car travel has had a role in promoting gender opportunity and equality.
Sustainability Implications	The Report considers how sustainable travel could be better promoted throughout the Borough.
Carbon Reduction Implications	Better use of public transport and less reliance on the private car will also assist in meeting Carbon reduction ambitions. Whilst in time, virtually all cars will become fully powered by electricity – which can be generated by renewable means, it will be the middle of the century before that position is likely to be reached.
Resource Implications e.g. Staffing / ICT / Assets	Staffing implications, where they arise, are addressed within the individual responses.
Risk Management Implications	None directly arising.
Health & Wellbeing Implications	The issues highlighted by the scrutiny committee link to the health and well-being of the local community– these are addressed within the report.
Health and Safety Implications	Improving safety for non-motorised road users is addressed within the report.

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In July 2024 the Scrutiny Committee published the findings of its Task & Finish Group on Reducing Car Dependency. As described in the supporting documentation, the Group met with a wide variety of Council officers in considering this issue. They also met with a number of 'good practice' Councils, alongside TFGM and Dame Sarah Storey the GM Active Travel Commissioner
- 1.2 These issues were set out in a report by the Task and Finish group which was presented at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 10 July 2024. This Report provides a detailed response to the matters raised.

2.0 COMMENTARY & ANALYSIS

The rise of the motor car & National transport policy

- 2.1** The modern motor car was invented in the late 19th Century but remained a rare luxury until after the First World War with the introduction of the first mass-produced vehicles. As a consequence, car ownership grew rapidly through the 1930s, with an estimated 2 million vehicles on the road by the end of the decade. As a consequence, the car began to influence the forms of development from this point forward.
- 2.2** The second world war, with the rationing of petrol and other severe restrictions interrupted this trend for growth – such that it is in the second half of the 20th Century that car ownership and travel began to grow very significantly. Graph A at Appendix 1 shows that whilst other transport modes remained relatively static, passenger journeys by car grew by both percentage and volume. The flexibility of the motor car and the availability of road space meant that people were able to undertake more frequent, complex and longer journeys than was previously the case.
- 2.3** The implications for the form and character of towns and cities rapidly became apparent in this post-war era – culminating in the highly influential report “Traffic in Towns” by Sir Colin Buchanan, published in 1963. This Report recognised the potential adverse consequences of the use of the private motor vehicle –and the need for changes to be made to towns and cities to better segregate road users. The redevelopment of Stretford, with the pedestrianisation of King Street, the building of the Arndale Shopping Centre and the urban ‘bypass’ of Kingsway are a classic example of this approach to traffic management and urbanism that remained prevalent for much of the remainder of the 20th Century.
- 2.4** Despite the Oil Crisis of 1973 and the recognition by the 1980s that motor vehicles had an impact on the local and global environment, National policy remained resolutely in favour of a ‘predict and provide’ approach to traffic management. As late as 1989 the White Paper “Roads for Prosperity” proposed a very significant expansion of road building. In and around Trafford this would have included the M56/M62 link west of Sale (which was never built) and the Airport – Bredbury A6(M) which was later modified and finally constructed as the A555 east of Hale Barns.
- 2.5** As a result, passenger journeys using cars or vans continued to increase until mid 2000s – and as Graph B at Appendix 1 shows, many households taking on a second family vehicle. Consequently, the context the starting point for reducing car dependency is a century of expansion of the motor vehicles – and a policy framework favourable towards their expanded use and accommodation within the urban form.

Transport Policy in Greater Manchester

- 2.6** Integrated transport planning in Greater Manchester has a fairly long genesis – commencing with the 1968 Transport Act and the establishment of a Passenger Transport Executive for the region to coordinate public transport. With the creation of Greater Manchester in 1974 this became GMPTE – and since 2011 Transport for Greater Manchester, answerable to the GM Mayor and Combined Authority since 2017.
- 2.7** This history means that local efforts have been made over successive decades to reduce dependency on the private car. There have however been set backs – notably the abolition of the Greater Manchester County Council in 1986 and the de-regulation of buses in the same year. Whilst the latter generated innovation and competition on some routes, it reduced frequency and capacity on others. As a consequence the patronage of buses (which has some of the best potential to drive down car use in a city region) remained on the decline across Greater Manchester

- 2.8** However, the continued operation of the GMPTE has enabled other city-wide projects to flourish – most notably the Metrolink network – first opened in 1992 and now extending over 63 miles with 99 tram stops. The network now enables some 36 million passenger transport journeys per year and is the largest of its kind in the UK.
- 2.9** With the creation of the GMCA and TFGM in 2011 and a GM mayor from 2015, there have been further significant developments in Transport Policy over the past decade. The 2017 bus services act enabled bus services to once again be subject to local regulation – leading to the development of the Bee Network – an integration of Metrolink, active travel, bus services and hire bikes into a single coordinated transport system. This will be joined by suburban rail after 2028.
- 2.10** The strategic Transport body has long been responsible for preparing a Statutory Local Transport Plan – and its current embodiment, The Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 was first published in February 2017. An updated version was published in January 2021, along with a new Five-Year Transport Delivery Plan (2021-2026). A third iteration of the strategy is now being prepared and will be the subject of public consultation next year.
- 2.11** The 2040 strategy seeks to establish the ‘right mix’ of travel between different transport modes. At the Strategy’s inception, car travel represented 61% of daily trips in the conurbation – and the ambition of Strategy is to sift this to 50% by 2040 an estimated 3.4M trips. With an overall increase in journeys across the City region, the intention is that daily car trips decrease by 0.3M but that active travel & public transport increase by 1M trips each day.
- 2.12** The Strategy sets out a series of interventions to stimulate and accomplish this change – including a comprehensive active travel network, improved public transport and changes to ticketing. Many of these have become evident within Trafford since 2021 – notably a significant increase in Active Travel projects and the rolling out of bus franchising.
- 2.13** Alongside this lies a suite of other policy documents. Of particular relevance is the Streets for All Strategy and its related design guide, launched earlier this year. The Strategy aims to create streets are welcoming, green, and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel by walking, cycling and using public transport.
- 2.14** Consequently with the establishment of the Bee Network the prospect of a truly integrated transport network is now within sight. This will not remove cars from the Transport mix within Trafford, but it establishes favourable conditions for fewer car journeys to be made. This provides the context for the recommendations made by the Scrutiny committee to the Councils Executive.

3.0 Response to Recommendations

- 3.1** Following their investigations, the Task & Finish group identified 34 principal recommendations. A recommended response to each of these is set out in Appendix 2.
- 3.2** The Scrutiny recommendations cut across a number of policy and operational areas of the Council – but highlight that a comprehensive approach is needed on matters of Transportation. Whilst the Council has a key role to play, it must be recognised that Transport for Greater Manchester has specific responsibilities around transport policy and the operation of the wider transport network in the City Region.
- 3.3** In many cases the responses to recommendations reference strategies or other initiatives which are led by TFGM. The emerging Local Transport Plan and continued role out of the integrated Bee Network provide an opportunity for further engagement. Accordingly it is vital that the Council works positively and collaboratively with TFGM to achieve the best outcomes for Trafford and the conurbation as a whole. The Responses cite several examples of where this has taken place or is ongoing.

- 3.4 The work of the Scrutiny Committee also highlights that transportation cuts widely across different Council functions. There is a clear role for local Strategies to support different transport modes – especially the forthcoming Local Plan. The Adopted Places for Everyone and Trafford Design Code will also foster changes to design, the use of road space and accessibility. In addition to this there is continued work that needs to be done at the operational and community level to support modal shift. The recent expansion of active travel projects and fresh initiatives around parking enforcement exemplify this. Meanwhile the work of the Walking, Wheeling and Cycling team demonstrates how working with people and communities can promote behavioural change and healthier lifestyles. The use of the car has been popular because it has enabled travel that is generally safe, flexible and affordable. Reducing car dependency therefore needs a comprehensive approach to ensure other modes are similarly convenient and cost effective.
- 3.5 As the introduction to the report highlights our urban fabric has been extensively shaped by the widespread use and ownership of the private car. This has been the bedrock of national policy and transport trends over many decades – and the Trafford that we see today is reflective of that history and culture. It will similarly take many years to achieve a different balance of transport opportunity and choice. However with the combination of the right policies supported by practical initiatives, there is now a genuine opportunity to broaden transport options and reduce car dependency in the Borough.

4 Reasons for Recommendation

In order to address the matters highlighted by the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group.

Key Decision No

If Key Decision, has 28-day notice been given? n/a

Finance Officer Clearance ...PC.....

Legal Officer Clearance ...EM.....

[CORPORATE] DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE



To confirm that the Financial and Legal Implications have been considered and the Corporate Director has cleared the report prior to issuing to the Executive Member for decision.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - Graphs illustrating national transport trends

Appendix 2 – Responses to Scrutiny Recommendations

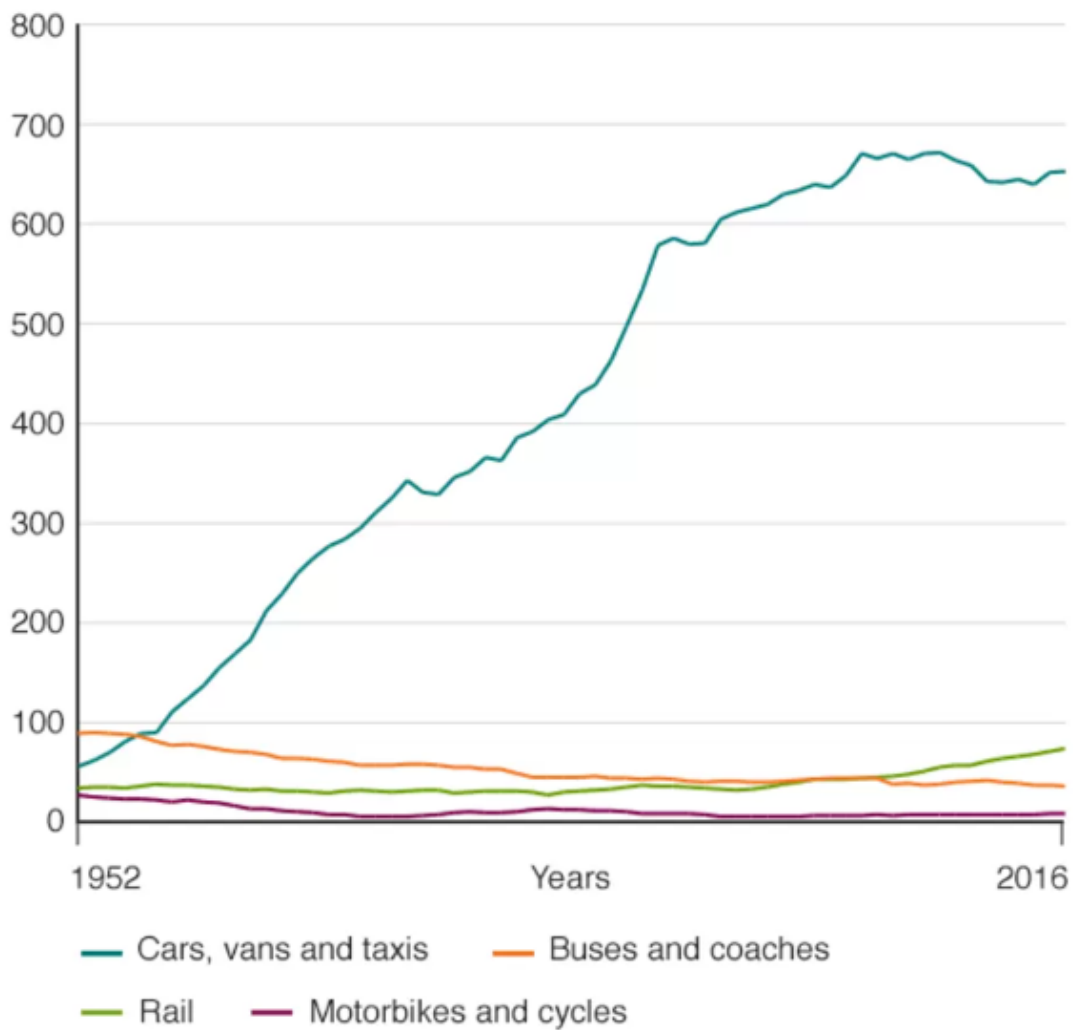
APPENDIX 1

GRAPHS ILLUSTRATING NATIONAL TRANSPORT TRENDS

GRAPH A

Road and rail travel since 1952

billion passenger km per year



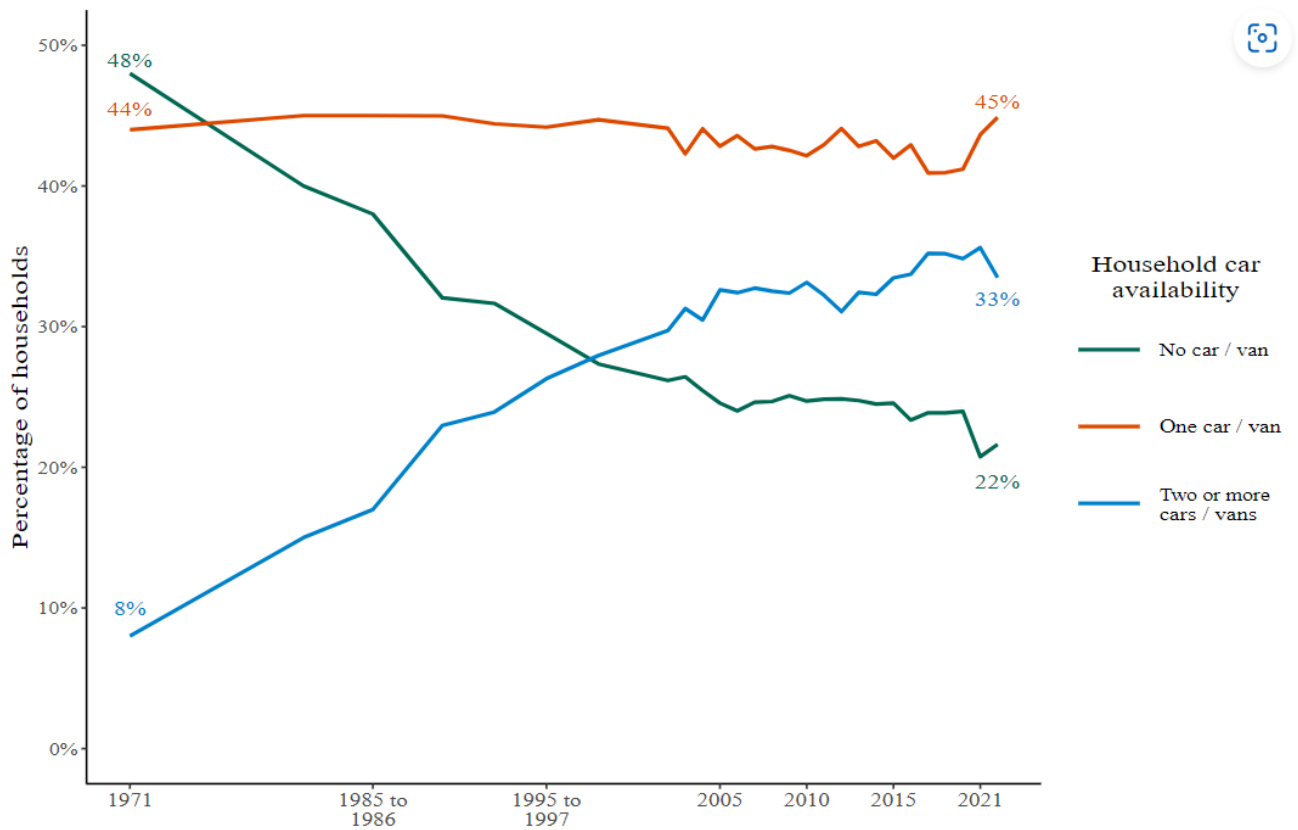
Source: Department for Transport



[10 charts that tell the story of Britain's roads - BBC News](#)

GRAPH B

Percentage of households by car access: Great Britain (1971 to 1988) and England (1989 to 2021)



Source HM Government

[National Travel Survey 2021: Household car availability and trends in car trips - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/national-travel-survey-2021-household-car-availability-and-trends-in-car-trips)