

Draft Transport Strategy Consultation

**Report by Consultation & Engagement Team
April 2024**

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1. Background and methodology

Between 26th February and 22nd March, Bolton Council ran a public consultation, seeking to engage residents, visitors and stakeholders that commute and use public transport in Bolton, in sharing their reflections on Bolton's draft Transport Strategy. During that period a comprehensive communication plan was implemented to raise awareness of the proposal across the borough, with a strong emphasis on engaging residents. An email was also distributed to stakeholders, including the community & voluntary sector; equality groups; licensed taxi and private hire companies; as well as Elected Ward Members. Supporting documentation was made accessible on the Council's consultation webpages and social media was heavily utilised throughout the period to share key messages about the consultation.

Participants were surveyed using a questionnaire tool made up of open and closed questions, over a period of 4 weeks, providing respondents the opportunity to reflect and share their thoughts on the draft strategy and its subsequent objectives. The questionnaire was made available both digitally and offline, with the questionnaire being accessible on the council's consultation web page, as well as in hard copy format, on request.

*A copy of the questionnaire is included at the end of this document, located in Appendix A.

Analysis notes

- Results are presented in the questionnaire format with 'Don't know' type responses removed unless stated.
- Comments have been categorised where feasible. Unless otherwise stated, categories with 5 or more responses are shown. Categories may overlap and a comment from one respondent included in multiple categories. A sample of comments [verbatim] are included in the report. Comments may be abbreviated so that only the relevant extract is included. One comment may be coded into multiple categories, and each category may only cover a certain aspect of the comment, for example a respondent may have made both positive and negative comments about the same aspect.
- Base: unless otherwise stated the base is the number of respondents to a particular question.
- Data has been cleansed where appropriate, e.g., comments moved into existing responses.

2. Consultation responses

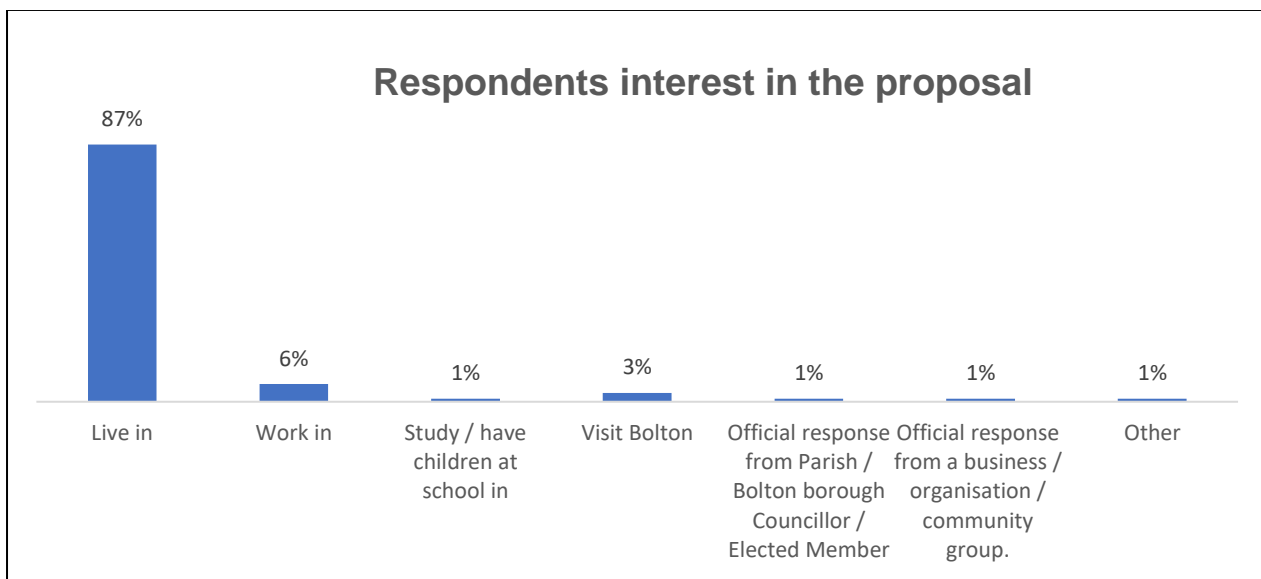
A number of open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire to give respondents the opportunity to comment on the strategy and suggest alternative approaches to priorities.

Throughout the consultation period the following responses were received:

- 200 completed electronic questionnaires from residents and stakeholders
- 2 official responses from a residents (refer to Appendix B)
- An official response from Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group (refer to Appendix C)

- Offer of partnership support from Bolton Deaf Society to improve the strategy’s accessibility and engagement (refer to Appendix D)
- An official response from Walk / Ride Greater Manchester (refer to Appendix E)
- An official response from Bolton Public Health (Appendix F)

Of the 200 residents and stakeholders that engaged in the public consultation, 87% are resident in the borough; 6% work in the borough; 1% study or have children at school in Bolton; and 3% visit the borough. The individual that answered ‘other’ is a disabled cyclist in Bolton. Official responses were also received from 2 representatives from the business / CVS community, as well as 2 Ward Councillors.



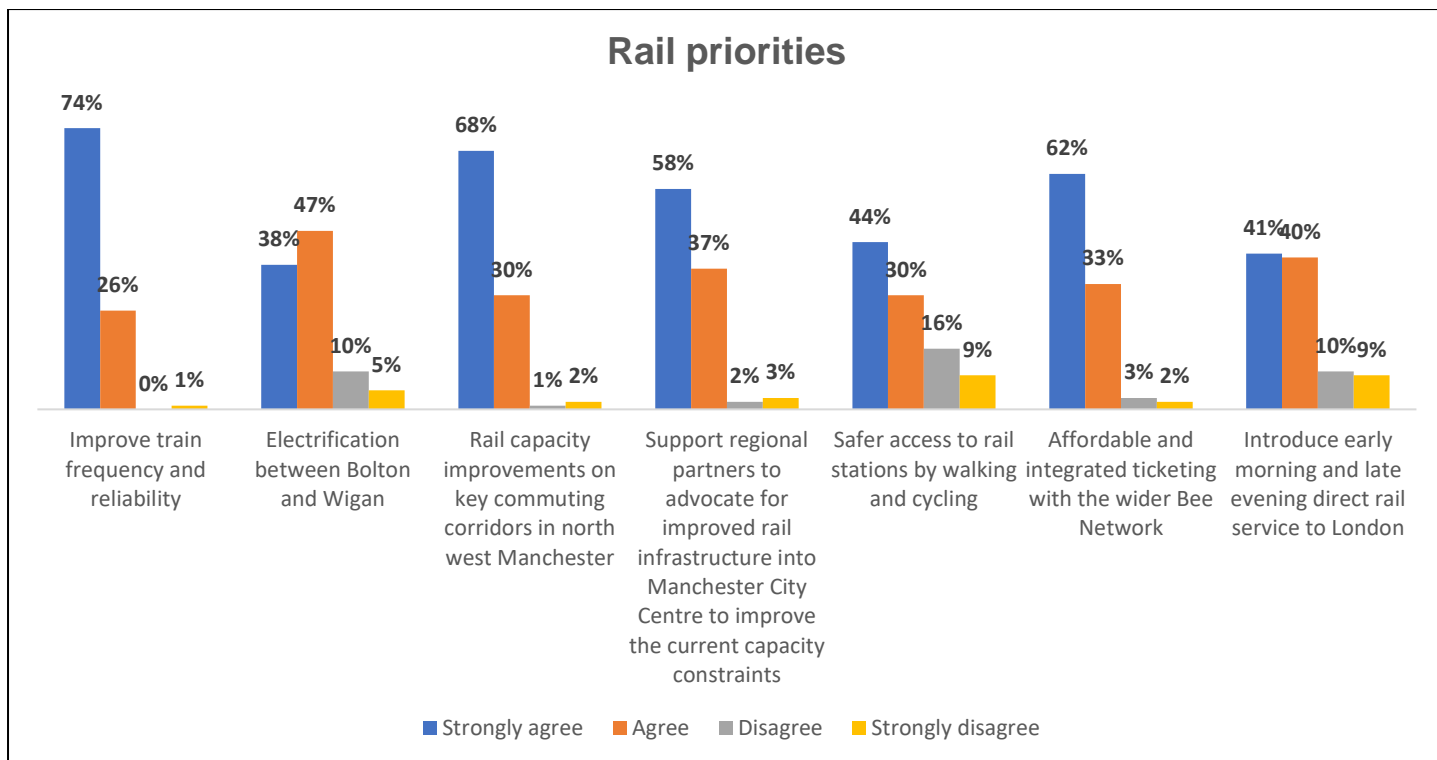
Public Transport

3a. Rail Priorities

Bolton borough is served by eleven railway stations, which have reliability and accessibility challenges. If the draft strategy proposals are taken forward, Bolton Council would work collaboratively with Transport for Greater Manchester to improve user experience. To understand whether the strategy priorities around rail are sufficient, all stakeholders were asked to consider whether they agree with the 7 priorities.

168 residents and stakeholders agree, in principle with all the priorities outlined. Highest agreement is for ‘improve train frequency and reliability’ (100%); and ‘support regional partners to advocate for improved rail infrastructure into Manchester City Centre to improve the current capacity constraints’ (98%). Least agreement is around the principle to ‘introduce early morning and late evening direct rail service to London’ (81%).

Whilst overall agreement of the principles is outlined, stakeholders went on to provide additional comment around challenges with the rail network. These are outlined in the comments section below.



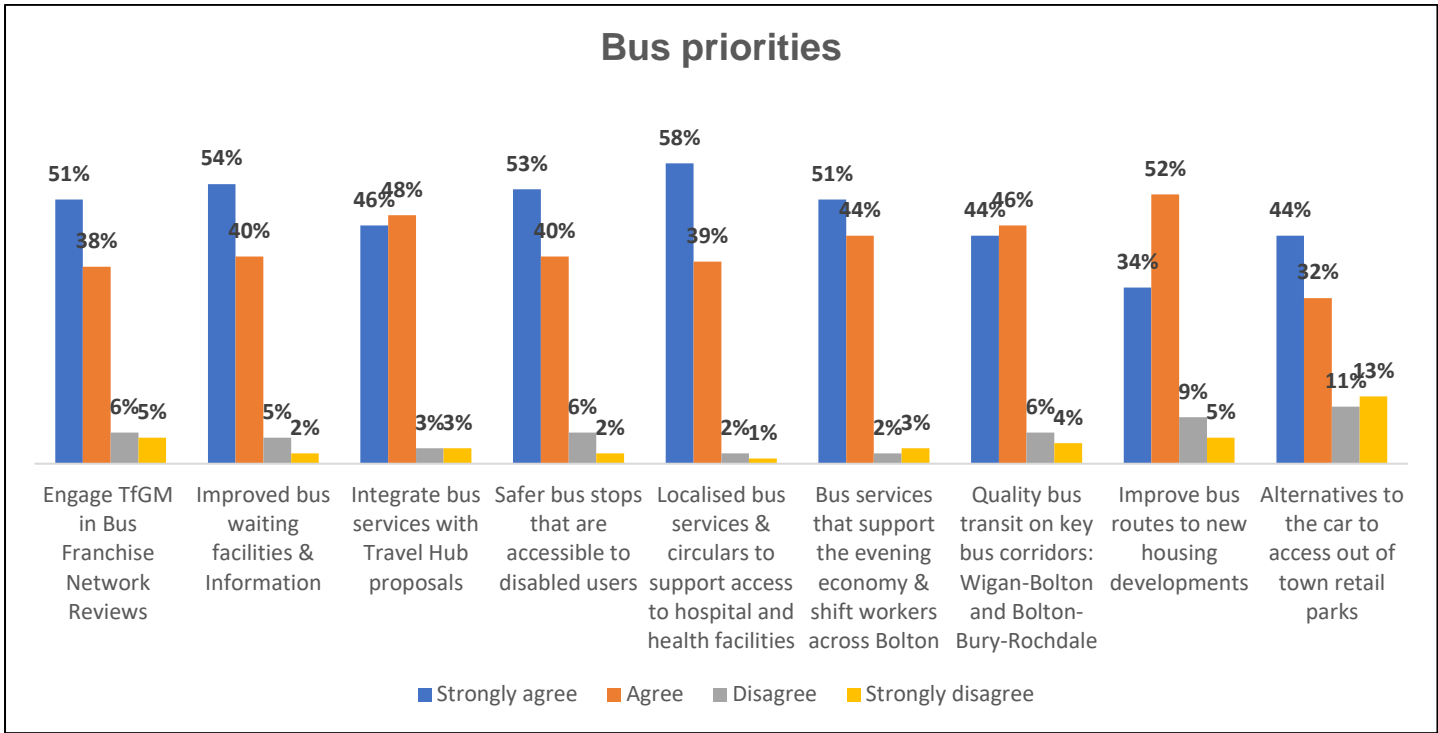
Base average: 168

3b. Bus priorities

The Bee Network provides opportunities to improve services within our borough. If the draft strategy proposals are accepted, Bolton Council will work with partners and neighbouring councils to offer a good quality and accessible service and experience to its customers. To understand whether the strategy priorities around the bus network are sufficient, all stakeholders were asked to consider whether they agree with the 9 priorities.

171 residents and stakeholders agree, in principle with all the priorities outlined. Highest agreement is for *'localised bus services & circulars to support access to hospital and health facilities'* (97%); and *'bus services that support the evening economy & shift workers across Bolton'* (95%). Least agreement is around the principle to have *'alternatives to the car to access out of town retail parks'* (76%) and *'improve bus routes to new housing developments'* (86%).

Whilst overall agreement of the principles is outlined, stakeholders went on to provide additional comment around challenges with the bus network. These are outlined in the comments section below.



Base average: 171

3c. Active Travel priorities

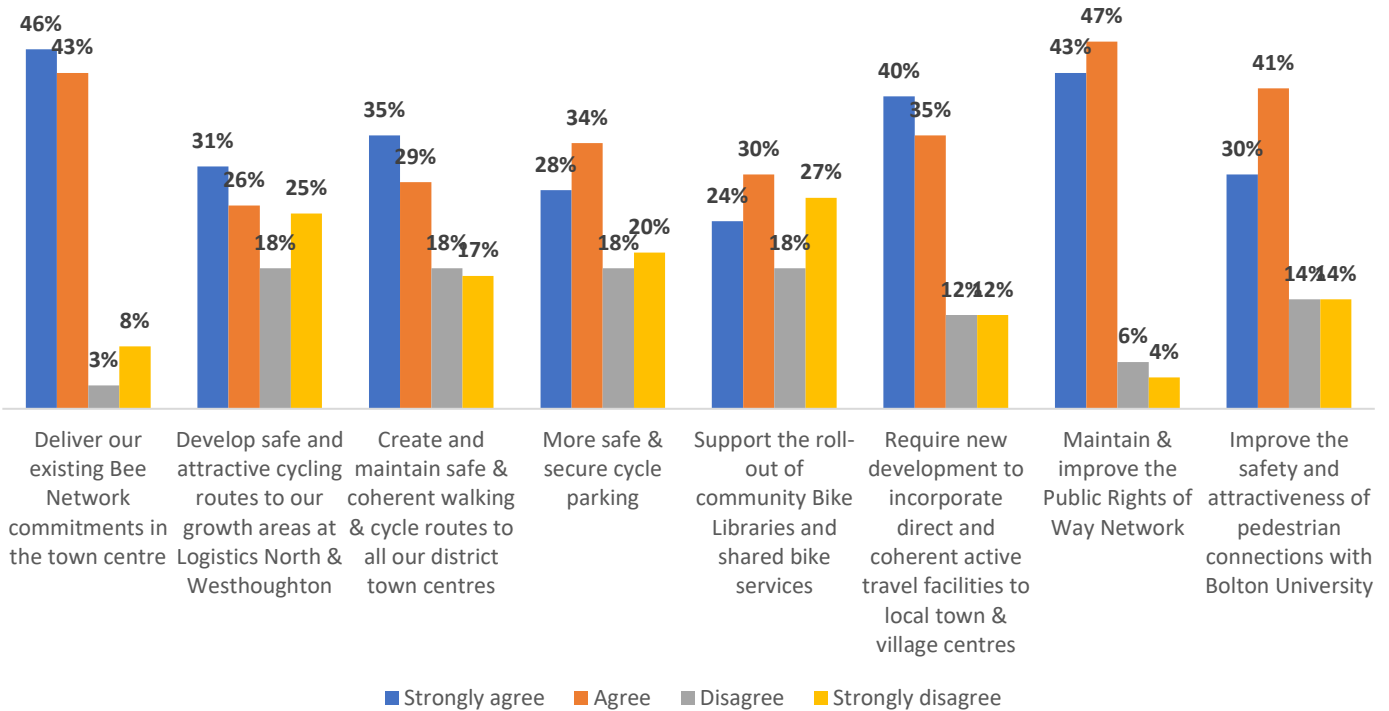
To support the infrastructure around Active Travel, Bolton Council propose to upgrade pavements and bridleways and improve lighting. Furthermore, investment into secure cycle parking in key public areas would be implemented to support and grow the number of people commuting by bike. The Council would also produce a new Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Finally, the Council would work with a range of partners, including the University of Bolton to improve user experience for students and visitors.

To understand whether the strategy priorities around active travel is sufficient, all stakeholders were asked to consider whether they agree with the 8 priorities.

171 residents and stakeholders agree, in principle with some of the priorities outlined. However, there are areas where there is a split consensus. Highest agreement is for ‘*maintaining & improving the Public Rights of Way Network*’ (90%); and ‘*delivering our existing Bee Network commitments in the town centre*’ (89%). Least agreement is around the principle to ‘*support the roll-out of community Bike Libraries and shared bike services*’ (54%) and ‘*develop safe and attractive cycling routes to our growth areas at Logistics North & Westhoughton*’ (57%).

Stakeholders went on to provide additional comments around the challenges of Active Travel. These are outlined in the comments section below.

Active travel priorities - Walking, cycling and wheeling



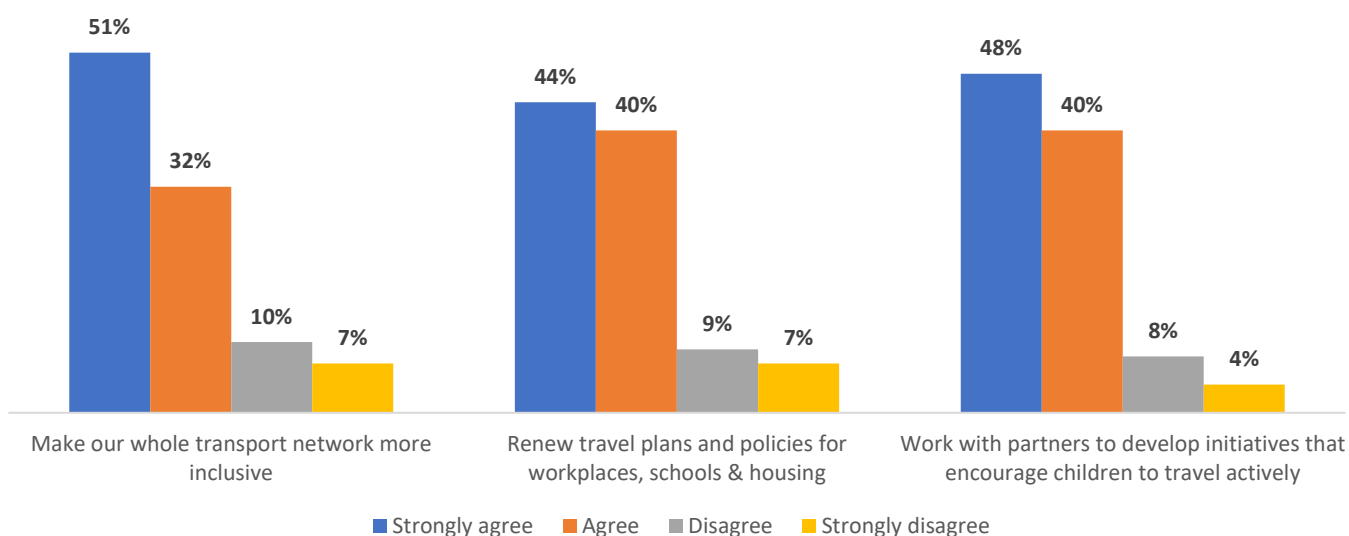
Base average: 171

4. An inclusive travel network

Bolton Council want to make it easier for everyone to use the transport network, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion. If the draft strategy proposals are accepted, the Council would strive to build on the support currently offered to people who may struggle to afford or access transport.

Residents and stakeholders were asked to consider the priorities for an inclusive travel network. Of the 175 stakeholders responding to the 3 priorities outlined, all agree in principle. 88% agree with the principle to *'work with partners to develop initiatives that encourage children to travel actively'*; 84% agree to *'renew travel plans and policies for workplaces, schools & housing'*; and 83% agree to *'making our whole transport network more inclusive'*.

Inclusive transport network priorities



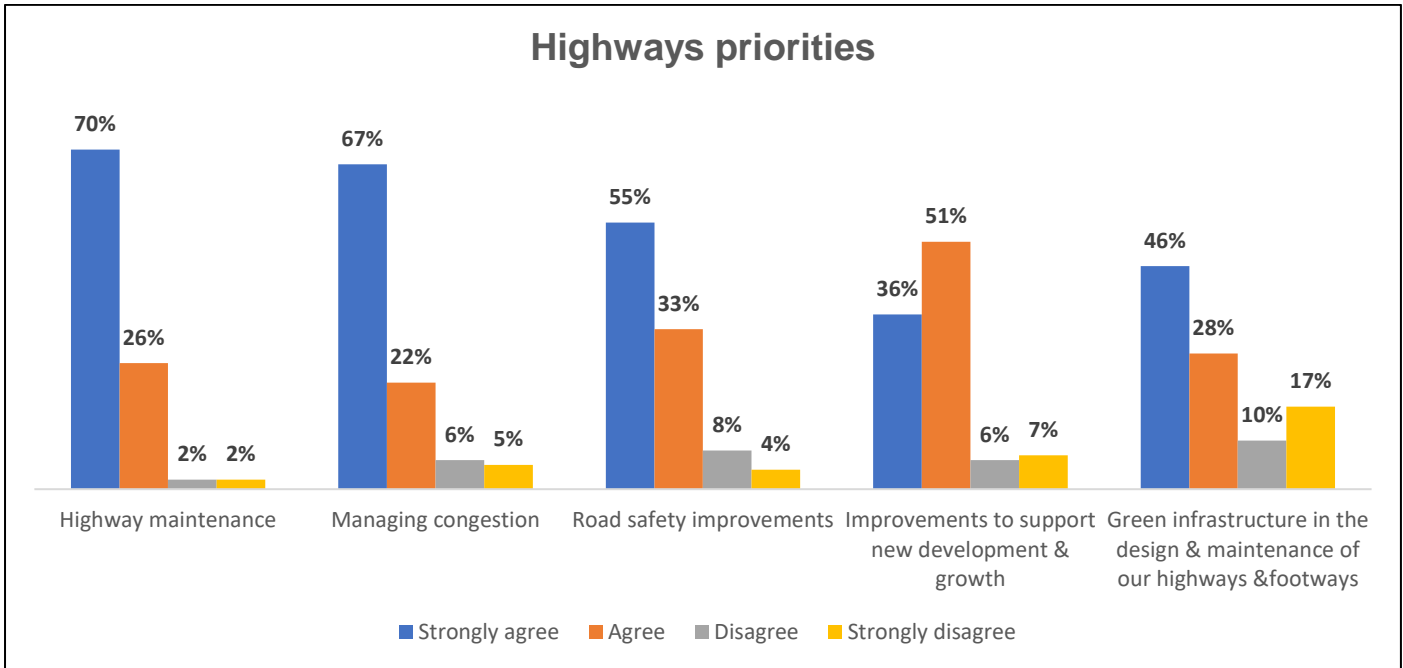
Base average: 175

5. Highways

The Transport Strategy makes a commitment to improving highways infrastructure, specifically around maintenance of highways and freight networks. In addition, the Council would lobby for improvements to the motorway junctions in our borough, as well as look to improve and maintain the borough's green infrastructure.

Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect on the 5 highways priorities outlined within the strategy. Of the 184 responses received, all stakeholders agree in principle with the priorities. Highest agreement is for greater '*highway maintenance*' (96%) and '*managing congestion*' (89%). Least agreement is for the principle to prioritise '*green infrastructure in the design & maintenance of our highways & footways*' (74%).

Stakeholders went on to provide additional comments around the challenges of highways maintenance and congestion of key link roads. These are outlined in the comments section below.

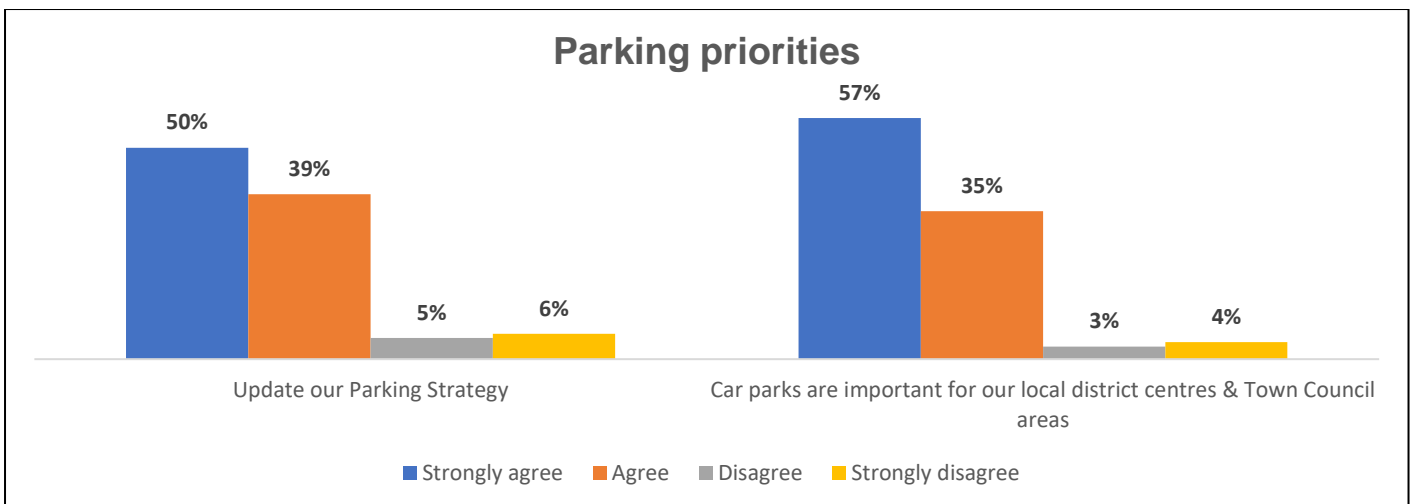


Base average: 184

6. Parking

Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect on their carparking experiences in Bolton and whether they agree with Bolton Council's priorities to update their Parking Strategy, supporting those that need access to parking across the borough, as well as taking account of greater engagement in Active Travel. Stakeholders were also asked to consider whether carparks are important for district centres and town centre areas.

Overwhelmingly 175 residents and stakeholders agree with the principles, with 89% agreeing that a carparking strategy should be implemented and updated; and 92% agreeing that carparks are important across all district and town centres. Residents went on to outline further considerations in the comments section below.

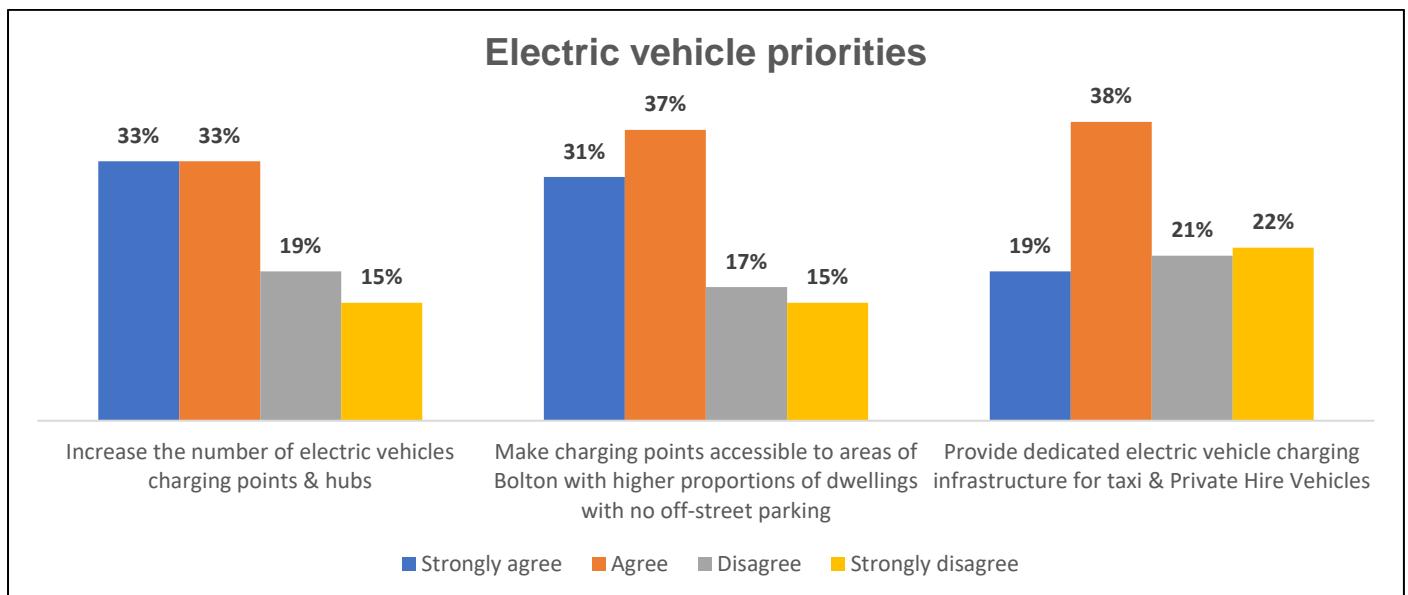


Base average: 175

7. Electric Vehicles

Within the Transport Strategy, Bolton Council make a commitment to work with Transport for Greater Manchester to improve accessibility and infrastructure to support the growth of engagement in electric vehicle usership. Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect upon 3 priorities around this thematic. Of the 163 stakeholders engaging in this question, it is evident that respondents are split over their agreement of whether electric vehicles should be a priority within the strategy. This was also echoed by the comments received (see below).

57% agree in principle with the priority to *'provide dedicated electric vehicle charging infrastructure for taxi & Private Hire Vehicles'*; 66% agree in principle to *'increase the number of electric vehicles charging points & hubs'*; and 68% agree with the priority to *'make charging points accessible to areas of Bolton with higher proportions of dwellings with no off-street parking'*.



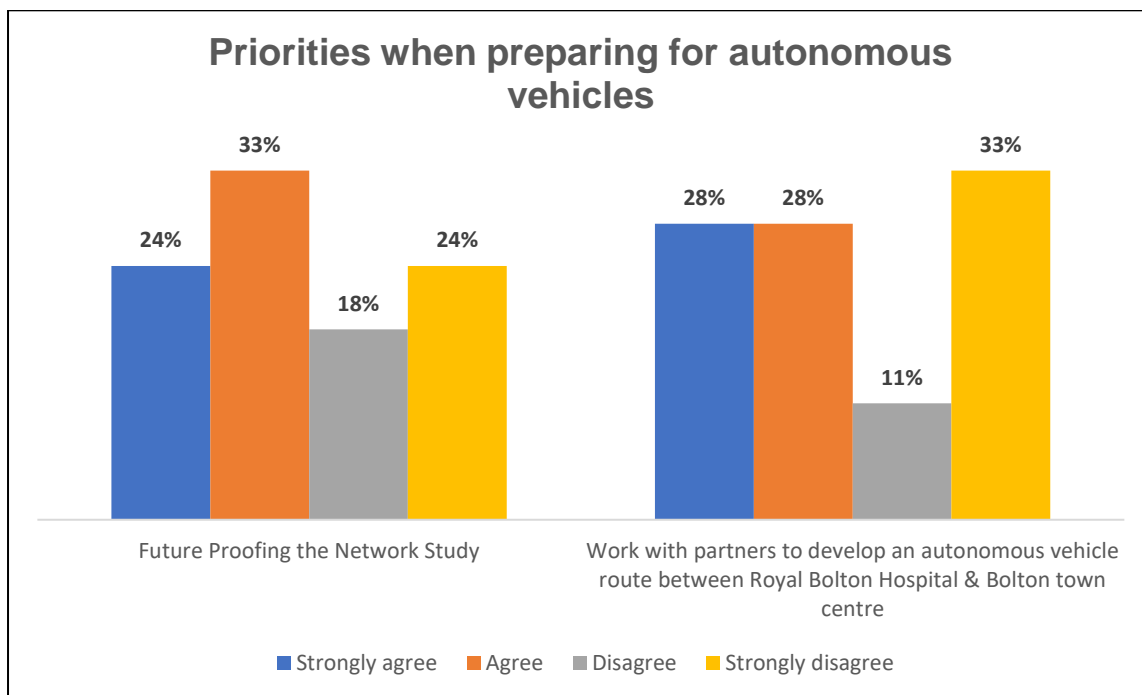
Base average: 165

8. Autonomous Vehicles

Bolton Council are currently carrying out a feasibility study to look at using decommissioned railway lines to set up a Connected Autonomous Mobility [CAM] network, to connect Bolton Transport Interchange [Bolton town centre] with Royal Bolton Hospital. Within the strategy, the Council would look to expand this network to connect new housing, business growth areas, health and education services across the borough.

Of the 159 stakeholders engaging in this question, respondents are split over their agreement of whether autonomous vehicles should be a priority within the strategy. This was also echoed by the comments received (see below).

56% agree in principle with the priority to 'work with partners to develop an autonomous vehicle route between Royal Bolton Hospital & Bolton town centre'; and 57% agree in principle to 'future proofing the network study'.

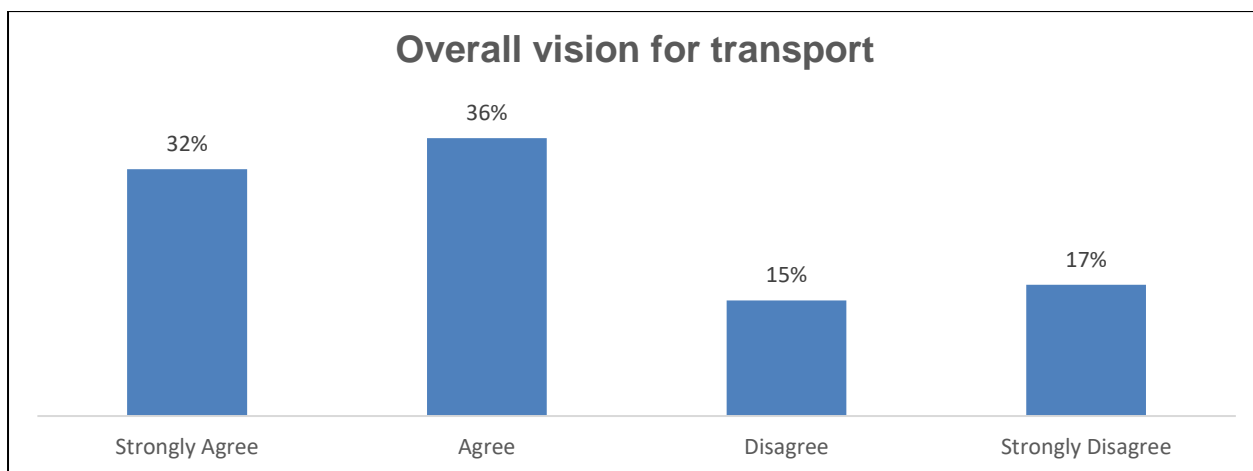


Base average: 159

9a. Overall vision for transport

Bolton Council's overall vision for the transport is to 'work towards a zero-carbon transport network that is inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable; taking a balanced approach, ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected, and responsive to technological change and innovation'.

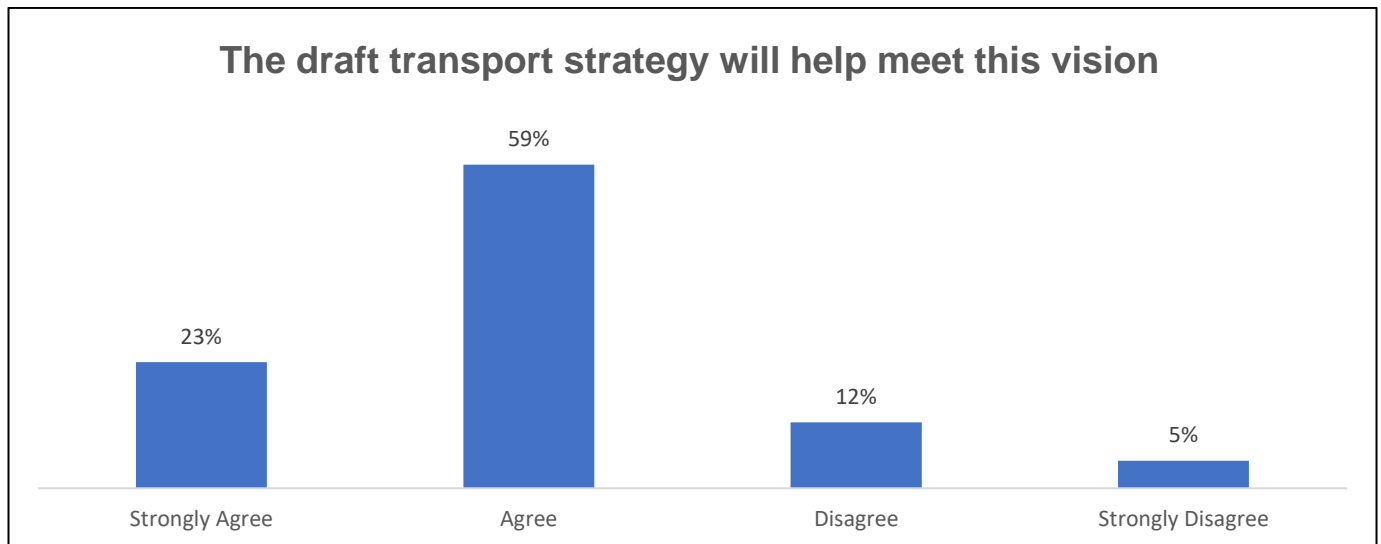
All residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect on this vision and whether they agree with its principle. Of the 187 responses received, 68% agree with the vision and just under one-third (32%) disagree.



Base: 187

9b. Meeting the vision

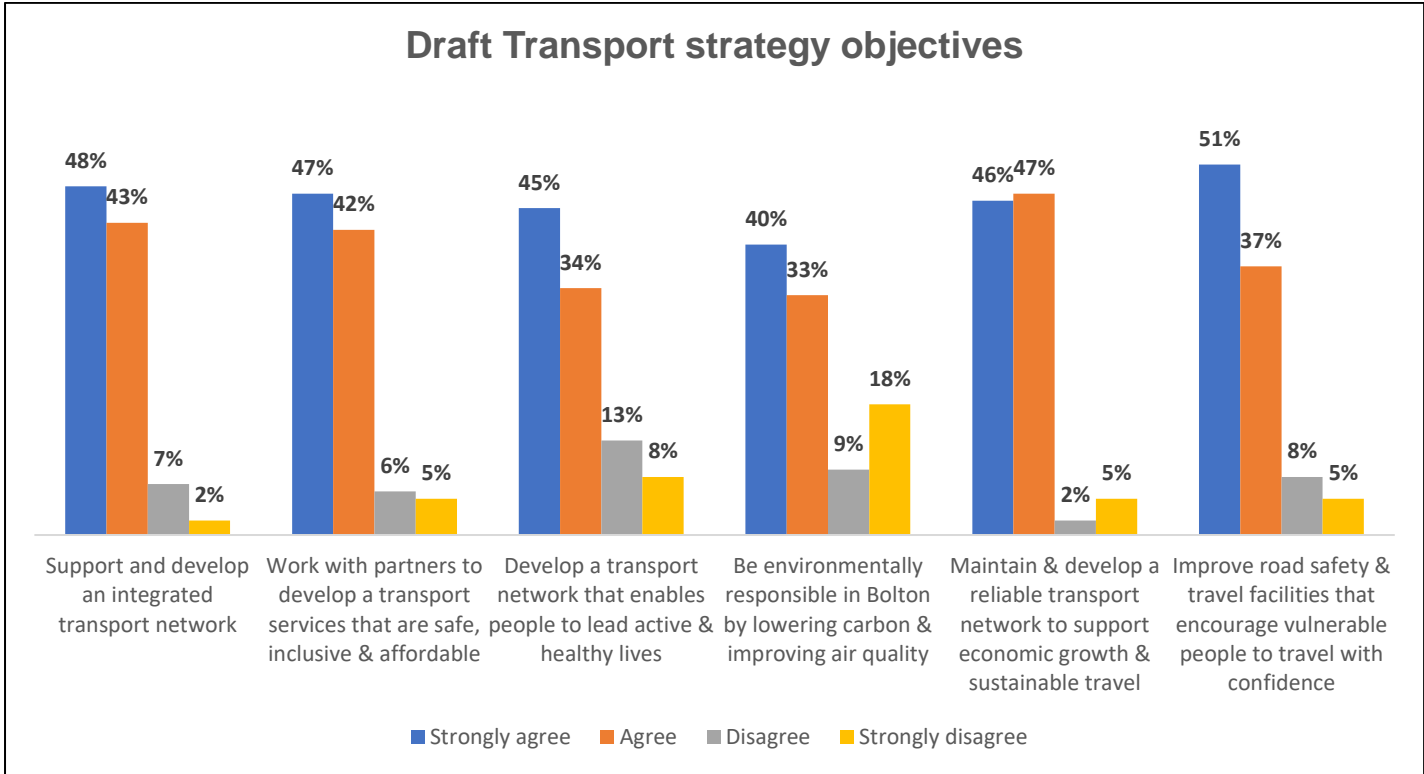
Residents and stakeholders were asked to consider whether the priorities outlined in the Transport Strategy will meet the vision for transport in Bolton. Of the 113 responses received, 82% of respondents agree that the strategy has the potential to meet the transport vision for Bolton. Just under one-fifth (18%) disagree.



Base: 113

10a. Strategy objectives

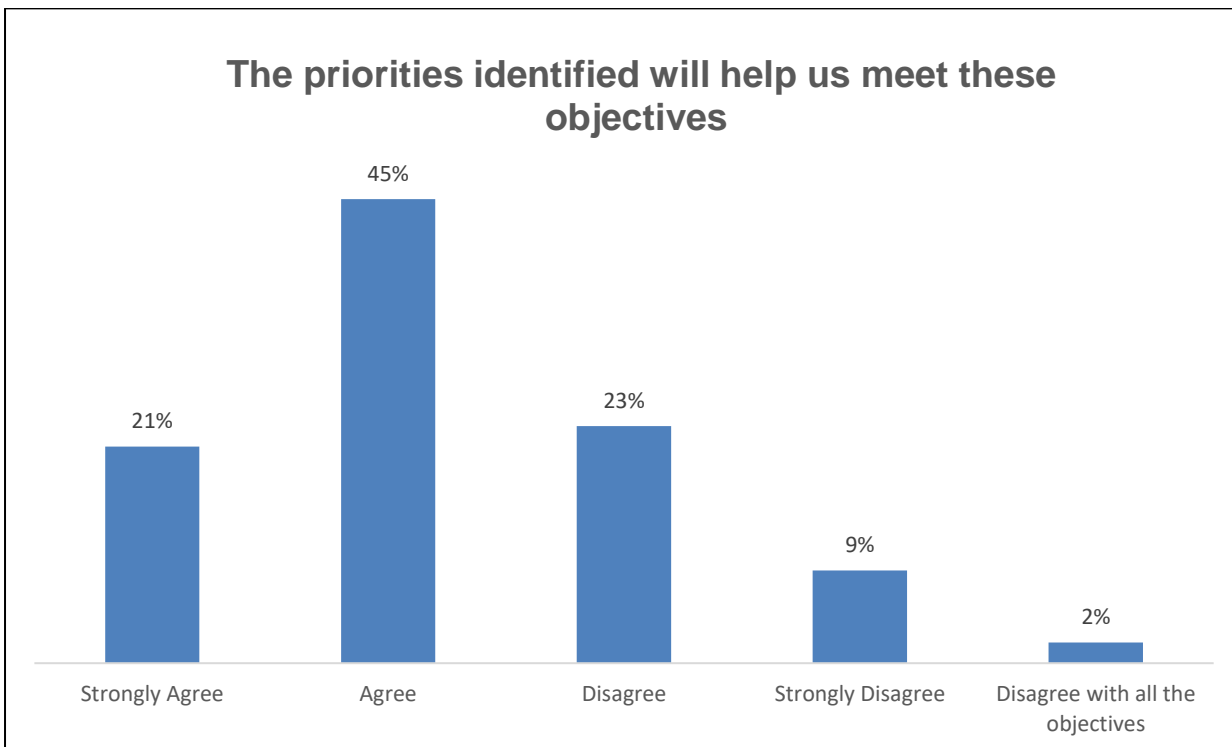
Residents and stakeholders were asked to consider 6 objectives within the strategy, which are designed to improve transport within and beyond the Bolton borough, as well as give people a real choice about how they travel. Of the 188 responses received, stakeholders tended to agree with all the objectives outlined. Greatest agreement is with the objectives to *'maintain and develop a reliable transport network to support economic growth & sustainable travel'* (93%); and *'support and develop an integrated transport network'* (93%). Least agreement is with the objective to *'be environmentally responsible in Bolton by lowering carbon & improving air quality'* (73%); and *'develop a transport network that enables people to lead active & healthy lives'* (79%).



Base average: 188

10b. Meeting the objectives

Residents and stakeholders were asked to consider whether the priorities outlined in the Transport Strategy will meet the objectives for transport in Bolton. Of the 180 responses received, two-thirds (66%) of respondents agree that the strategy has the potential to meet the transport objectives for Bolton. Just under one-third (32%) disagree and 2% disagree with all the objectives outlined.



Base: 180

11. Comments and suggestions on the draft strategy

Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect upon the overall Transport Strategy proposals and asked to make further comments, recommendations or suggestions. A total of 122 individuals used this opportunity to make further comments. These have been categorised into 13 distinct themes, some of which are cross cutting.

Rank	Category	No. of respondents
a.	Public transport	50
b.	Cycling infrastructure	34
c.	Highways infrastructure	33
d.	Challenge with the strategy document	17
e.	Carparking	14
f.	Climate targets	13
g.	Impacts on groups with protected characteristics	= 12
h.	Council / political challenges	= 12
i.	Walking infrastructure	10
j.	Autonomous Vehicles / Electric Vehicles	9
k.	Vehicle use	8
l.	Safety	6
m.	Employment / Visitor Economy	5

a. Public Transport

50 comments were received which outline challenges to the public transport infrastructure within the borough. Stakeholders generally reflected on specific public transport modes, either train, bus, or lack of Metrolink provision within the borough. Residents were particularly frustrated by the lack of connectivity across the borough and to other localities within Greater Manchester. Infrequency of current services to key areas of the town, including the Town Centre and hospital, is also acknowledged. Affordability of service provision is also noted as a barrier to access.

Rail:

- *“There needs to be a train service between Horwich Parkway (and associated stops) and Manchester Victoria/Salford Central like there used to be. This was a busy commuter train link which was cut during covid and Northern say they have no plans to reinstate this, leaving people with no choice but to drive instead!”*
- *“Better transport integration to Horwich Parkway train station at all times.”*
- *“How many of Bolton rail stations are identified as community owned stations? What plans and targets are there for growing that community based owned rail stations by 2030 and 2040?”*
- *“What capacity is there at each heavy rail station for park and ride provision to encourage moderation of car use and NOT in effect follow a strategy indicating is primarily focussed on a anti car use policy. What targets could be set in 2030 and 2040 to address current capacity.”*
- *“We can’t force people off the roads but must give them viable options eg park and ride at rain stations”.*
- *“Trains on Sundays from Farnworth and better bus links (ie there is no direct bus from Stoneclough to Bolton Town centre). None of this has been actioned.*
- *“It’s vital that Bolton has a direct train to London”.*

Bus:

- *“The outer towns/villages of the Borough such Horwich need to have better bus options.”*
- *“Getting a bus is not an option as a quick shopping trip becomes an all day chore with stress, bus no shows.”*
- *“Buses to town centre are too infrequent and unreliable.”*
- *“Need better bus service to the hospital that fit in with staff finish times most of the time they don’t turn up after a 12.5 hour shift to I’ve had the walk home”.*
- *“More bus option should be provided so that public can use bus instead of car flexibility of time pick up & drop of points. Condition of bus should be nice a clean and modern”.*
- *“It would be good to have a bus coming up and down moss bank way to connect Horwich as far as Radcliffe metro station.”*
- *“The buses to bury are packed on a Saturday so obviously people want to go there too do there shopping so put more buses on the bury route and make them reliable.”*
- *“My daughter works in horwich, one bus to town and one from town to horwich, vice versa to come home, on minimum wage and often late because the bus doesn’t come, even at 6:45 in the morning and she allows over an hour for that journey. To still be late For nearly £70 a month, how frustrating is that!”*
- *“Little evidence of consideration of optimum location of logistic hubs such as garage/recharge facilities to minimise dead mileage when buses are carrying no passengers particularly numerous town centre routes. Little detail outlined on bus specification and average age of fleet expectations to minimise pollution. Little recognition on the influence of leisure travel in the future bus network vision for example links to bury market, Altringham community market, Harwood night time economy offer. How successful has the bee network been in increasing previous commercial bus service network into connecting to schools thereby quantifiably saving on supported bus subsidies which and using those further saving to further invest in public transport.”*

Tram:

- *“There needs to be a future plan to get the tram services to Bolton.”*
- *“In no part of this consultation is there a section about Metrolink.”*
- *“Bolton not joining the Metrolink means the town will never be fully integrated to the wider GM travel Network”,*
- *“Bring Metrolink to Bolton with the savings from HS2.”*
- *“We need to get the Metrolink service into Bolton and surrounding towns. That will relieve the congested rail network and the frequency is such that people are not rushing for one single train at one single time.”*
- *“The proposals are good, but there is not full transport integration as Bolton and Wigan are the only two towns that are not connected by the Metrolink Tram System.”*
- *“There is a clear lack of ambition in this document, with only a small paragraph mentioning Metrolink. Bolton council should be pressing hard for this connection and then some.”*

b. Cycling infrastructure

34 comments were received that refer to challenges around the borough’s cycling infrastructure. Some comments reflect concerns from cyclists around the lack of connectivity, maintenance and safety of the infrastructure; while other concerns were raised from motorists about their lack of use and therefore rationale and affordability of the provision.

- *“A joined up approach through planning to ensure developments incorporate separate maintainable walking / cycle infrastructure is a must, simply retrofitting historic highways is simply punishing those who use cars.”*
- *“Active travel is not improved by more cyclist routes and the crazy junctions such as that at Trinity Street. It is not a case of build them and they will come. They won't. Improve traffic flow and reduce pollution by scrapping cycle lanes.”*
- *“No cycle lanes, that are a waste of public finances. By ways and public rights of way are much more important than any on road cycleway.”*
- *“Stop wasting tax payers money on VANITY projects IE expensive looking cycling lanes!!! That are hardly used, Bolton is in a valley it's not Amsterdam”.*
- *“Too many cycle lanes introduced traffic lights not as efficient as possible. Causing congestion also more lanes for cars and less cycling lanes too late now too much money spent on a scheme that hardly anyone uses.”*
- *“We need less of the cycle junctions that only a very small minority of people use.”*
- *“They needs to be much more detailed consolidation prior to bike lanes being created - for example the A579 which attaches to Manchester Road and Bradshawgate has heavy congestions ever since the bike lanes have been created.”*
- *“Stop blocking roads with pointless & unused cycle lanes. It increases congestion & pollution.”*

- *"I support the creation of active travel routes - in particular good segregated cycle lanes. The new cycle lanes that have been built on trinity Street are good."*
- *"The overwhelming majority of cyclists want to ride on the road with a separation, look at the Dutch, Spain, France"*
- *"Cycling is hard on the roads because the condition of the surface next to the pavement is poor. Especially Sharples and Bromley Cross."*
- *"I would like more cycle paths"*
- *"I feel usage would be higher if there were more places to park a bike. The bike hub is a good idea, but it costs a subscription and often the door is broken requiring a member of staff to open it. Rows of free to use bike racks by the bike hub, the town hall/library and market place would be helpful. Also bike racks placed at the town centre "gate ways. Additionally more cycle racks outside shops in the suburban parts of town or at supermarkets and retail parks. It would help if these are clearly signposted or marked and in busy areas with CCTV to deter theft."*

c. Highways infrastructure

33 comments were received which reflect the challenges around the highways infrastructure. Comments focus on congestion hotspots, particularly the Town Centre, as well as maintenance concerns.

- *"Remove all towncentre one way systems and open up Highways in all directions to improve congestion."*
- *"I personally don't like driving into the town center anymore because congestion is at an all time high. Caused by the reduced road capacity in and out of town."*
- *"Remove the one way system in the town centre! This is the cause of congestion forcing vehicles to take one route in and out."*
- *"The centre of Bolton traffic management is a disaster! Getting in and out of Bolton takes forever unless you know some rat runs, this isn't good enough"*
- *"For years road maintenance has been a neglect, then all of a sudden, things seem to be Springing up, too many that are causing congestion deliberately to try to make out a problem exists when it doesn't. How many years have you not fixed potholes there's an issue."*
- *"Please just sort out potholes and ensure that transport systems and infrastructure are reliable and well-maintained."*
- *"Please do not further restrict the flow of traffic in order to achieve these goals. The roads feed the town and a lot of these ideas just cause further restriction and delays."*
- *"Stop narrowing roads to ease congestion and repair the roads"*
- *"Improve road congestion around Beehive roundabout, Mansel Way, Chorley New Road, Middlebrook retail park"*
- *"Road calming measures such as 20mph or road narrowing in Westhoughton do not work."*
- *"A link is needed at Kearsley, so that people can join the motorway network there to travel north."*

d. Challenge with the strategy document

17 comments were received by residents and stakeholders that believe the strategy, in the current format, is not accessible, due to its length and use of jargon. Some thought the vision was bland, with a lack of meaningful detail. Some comments also focus on the need to recognise affordability of services by those that use them. Additional comments also reflect frustration with the consultation process, noting the questionnaire framework was limiting in enable constructive feedback.

- *“The "vision" comes across as the typical generic corporate jargon that is expected from public sector or large organisations with the usual buzzwords that are the current flavour of the week.”*
- *“I would like more detail on how transport users and those currently not accessing transport in all its forms will be engaged and consulted on the specifics. There is very little mention of cost in the strategy - affordability is a major issue for many people”*
- *“Strategy is really low on actual strategies, especially ones that will make any real change. Loads of 'work with x' which is meaningless rather than actual strategies with measurable outcomes. How are we to know that this has succeeded?”*
- *“We need to think of next 25yrs - Needs to be affordable - cost of living crisis is crippling”*
- *“I take issue with how vague this draft strategy is. The majority of it could be cut & paste to any area of the country. It does not clearly identify Bolton specific issues in the depth and as such fails to offer any clear cut rectifications.”*
- *“Too long. Poorly written. Difficult to understand. Very text heavy (even the exec summary). Whole document needs a rewrite needs to be punchier. Felt like an early draft”.*
- *“Delivery plan has no detail in it. Is just a list of statements of things are any of these achievable in timescales proposed.”*
- *“The strategy is far too long, disjointed, & very difficult to read. It has too many priorities, with that many you're unlikely to achieve them. After spending literally hours reading this document I am still none the wiser. The best thing about it is the attempt to address the very many things transport impacts on with the overarching aims. However they're then basically disregarded for the rest of the strategy, which considers each transport mode entirely separately.”*
- *“Great objectives, vague wishy- washy 'information'. It's just text and words with no indication with how any of these things will be accomplished.”*
- *“The overall proposals are great, but I think that needs to be more clear definitions of how you propose to implement some of these things”.*
- *“I don't think that this survey has been well thought out. It's hard to disagree with anything but there are some issues that need additional input”.*
- *“A lot of the statements in this survey are hard to disagree with. Should of been more do you prefer this or this.”*

e. Carparking

14 comments were received which outline challenges around carparking. Reflections tend to focus on Town Centre parking and affordability, with the cumulative impact of steering visitors to alternative venues, including retail parks. Other comments focus on the challenges of on-street parking and the wider impacts this has on commuter traffic and safety.

- *“People wont pay for parking as its free at the trafford centre and there are more shops”.*
- *“I've lived in Bolton for 2 years and still don't know where to park for the best in town. So I drive to a retail park”.*
- *“Reduced cost parking stand a chance of rejuvenating the commerce in the town centre”.*
- *“People use out of town shopping(Retail parks) because its increasingly bad for drivers of cars to use the town centre and also costly for people to park in the town centre.”*
- *“A car park is needed at Bolton railway station to get people to go to Manchester by train.”*
- *“Police the abhorrent illegal parking taking place everywhere with more cameras and fixed penalty notices to enforce it.”*
- *“Farnworth needs some improve such as Harrowby Street congested at the bottom due to parking”.*
- *“Complete ban on cars parking on pavements, if streets aren't wide enough double yellow lines on one side”.*

f. Climate targets

13 comments reflect residents and stakeholder perceptions and frustrations around having climate emergency targets. Whilst the majority of comments within this theme found that reference to climate targets should be removed, some called for the strategy to go further and offered suggestions.

- *“Unclear how proposals will lead to carbon reduction & net zero target.”*
- *“Air quality across GM is OK (just look at TFGM's website to see that most of the readings are 1s and 2s which are fine)”*.
- *“All the lies about CO2 needs to stop , too much brainwashed people ,it is no more than a scam to take money.”*
- *“The carbon zero goal is false just another for to tax individuals”*.
- *“Zero carbon will never be achieved - pie in the sky to think it will”*.
- *“Little detail outlined on bus specification and average age of fleet expectations to minimise pollution and hence increase air quality, separate target for school buses often older and more polluted.”*
- *“The council declared a climate emergency in 2019, transport is the largest contributor to carbon dioxide equivalent emissions in the borough, & the council has a great deal of direct control over local roads so can change things. The number 1 change in DfT's decarbonising transport document (2021) is increasing cycling & walking. Throughout the strategy the need to shift journeys from private car to walking, cycling & public transport is hinted at but treated like the elephant in the room.*
- *“For a truly green and biodiverse future we need to look closely at the verges'and traffic islands' maintenance.”*

g. Impact on groups with protected characteristics

12 stakeholders were concerned that individuals from protected groups could be adversely impacted by the ambitions outlined in the strategy. There was a clear call from respondents for planners and decision makers to fully consult with and consider the impact to those with protected characteristics. Some respondents call for the strategy to focus on how its implementation could positively impact those with protected characteristics, like disabilities.

- *“Please make all transport etc more accessible for wheelchairs. Ring & Ride is great, when you can actually get a booking.”*
- *“Make all train stations wheelchair accessible. My nearest stations are Westhoughton & Daisy Hill, neither have lifts, just steps, so I have to travel to Wiigan or Bolton to get a train.”*
- *“Reduce the age of concessionary fares to 60 years old as they have on Merseyside which will encourage more elderly people out of cars.”*
- *“Safer streets for pedestrians, especially after dark. Make the area feel safer for those who have to walk, especially women”*.
- *“I am a pensioner who sometimes walks in the road because the flags are so uneven and I'm less afraid of being run over than of tripping.”*
- *“Please improve pavement crossings by considering people who are visually impaired all side roads and crossings should have a raised surface to indicate the end of the curb. This does happen at the top of steps and for pedestrian crossings, but it needs to be for every road crossing to maintain a safe route for the visually impaired in our community who use White canes and not Guide Dogs.”*
- *“Need to include more support for people with hearing loss and BSL users such as captioned videos, providing access to BSL interpreters such as SignVideo or SignLive which provide remote BSL interpreters.”*

h. Council / Political challenges

12 comments highlight frustration with the Council and the wider Greater Manchester ambitions.

Stakeholders outline their lack of confidence in the local authority delivering on the ambitions within the strategy and its subsequent action plans and objectives.

- *“It's not the Councils job to sort out transport. You cannot deal with the services you are supposed to deliver.”*
- *“I simply don't believe the Council has the resolve, finances and determination to put this into action. Unfortunately I feel it is a pipe dream.”*
- *“Listen to road users, not useless degree holders in so called planning teams who don't know how or what the real world is!”*
- *“So much of this is way beyond what a local council can do”.*
- *“The Bee Network run by Politicians will not work. It needs professional transport people”.*
- *“The BEE network has yet to be proved to be operationally and financially sustainable - it only exists because the Government has provided the funding for it. Once that funding dries up then who will foot the bill?”*

i. Walking infrastructure

A number of respondents (10) highlight challenges with the walking infrastructure and a desire for the strategy to go further to improve the network for current and future users.

- *“Walking should be prioritised. It is supposed to be the top of the user hierarchy but not mentioned a lot.”*
- *“Make high schools children bike or walk as mandatory = reduce traffic, improve physical health and mental wellbeing”.*
- *“Maintaining pavements is also important - I am frequently tempted into walking in the road (away from main routes) because the flags are so uneven”.*
- *“More safe spaces for cyclists and walkers.”*
- *“Pavements should be widened so pedestrians and cyclists can use them rather than roads.”*
- *“Need to focus on public transport and active travel, pedestrianising areas.”*

j. Autonomous Vehicles / Electric Vehicles

9 comments focus on the rationale for including autonomous vehicles and electric vehicles, when they are not affordable to most residents.

- *“The technology behind electric vehicles is damaging to the environment and is not sustainable. You should be ashamed that you are promoting autonomous vehicles and depriving people of driving jobs and their livelihoods.”*
- *“I am perplexed why electrification is in the strategy when this project is in its final stages”.*
- *“Why is there a section on autonomous vehicles? Is this at all realistic over timescales covered by the report.”*
- *“You're pushing the electric vehicle agenda - ordinary people can't afford electric vehicles”.*

k. Vehicle Use

8 comments focus on the general use of vehicles.

- *“The car is a necessity, simply put the safety and comfort of ones own car is preferable to many than public transport.”*
- *“People need cars and cannot afford electric vehicles, so no amount of encouraging us to use a 'better' public transport or making and maintaining more cycle lanes will help the people of Bolton.”*
- *“Acknowledge residents of Bolton aren't suddenly going to leave their cars at home to hop on buses or trains to get to where they need to be.”*

l. Safety

6 comments focus on the need to address road user safety concerns. Some comments reference particular sites that were challenging for road users.

- *“Safety needs to be a higher priority”.*
- *“Certain junctions also need to be looked at for example 'blind spots' situated between 155 Harrowby street and 157 Harrowby Street, as you leave to entre the main road drivers are unable to see ahead due to obstructions from parked vehicles.*
- *“Since Moses Gate was "improved" there has never been so many crashes and what is that nonsense chicane doing on Radcliffe road apart from causing chaos and risking lives.”*
- *“Does not address the fact that there are short comings with recent implantations e.g. Trinity Street cyclops is more dangerous to turn right with no green arrow, Blackburn Road / Moss Bank way, lack of capacity at J5 and J6 caused by local network issues”*

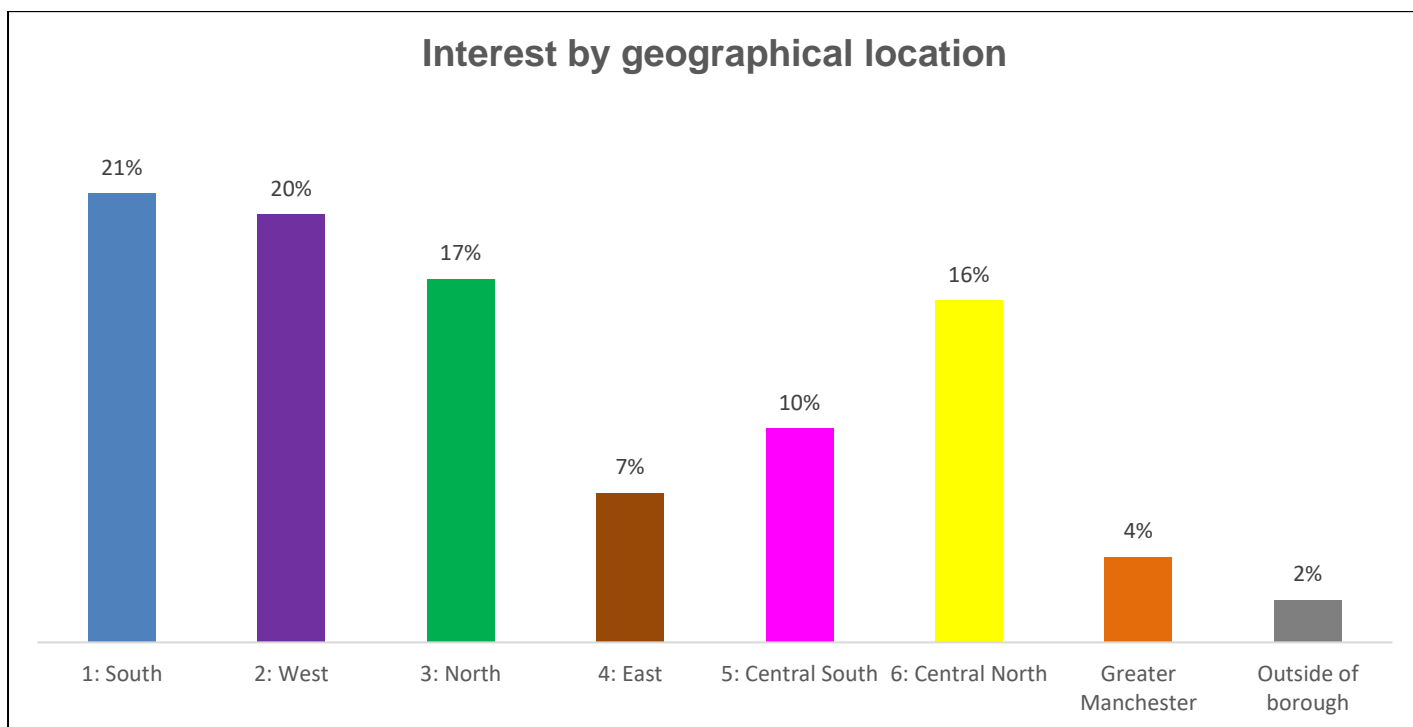
m. Employment / Visitor Economy

Some residents and stakeholders (5) reference the correlation between accessible highways infrastructure and healthy economies and job creation.

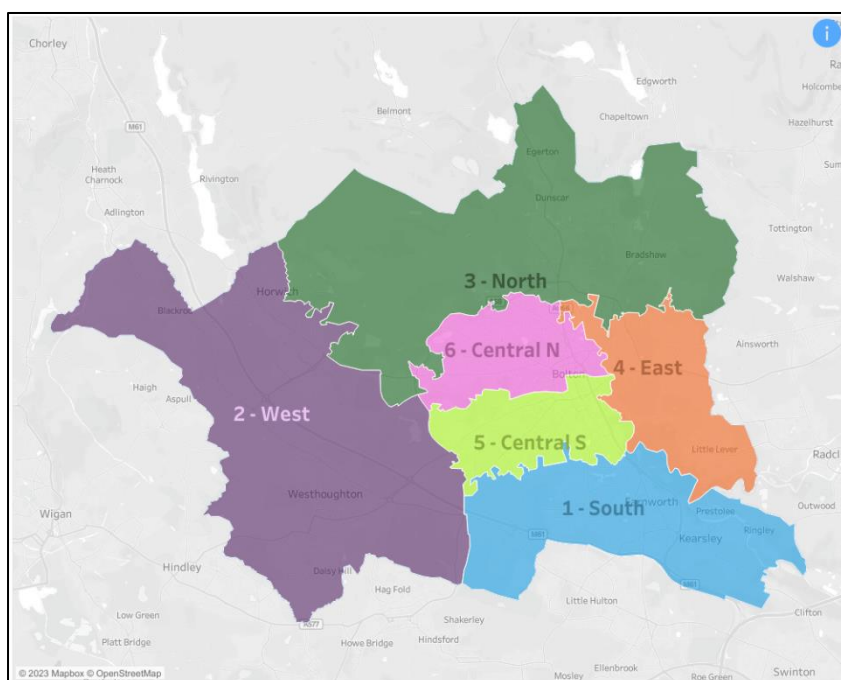
- *“If retail is dead you need to improve social spaces. This proposal needs to be worked on as a whole system approach”.*
- *“BEFORE sorting out 'Transportation', there NEEDS to be REASONS TO COME TO BOLTON. IDEALLY, having a vibrant, meaningfully active, multi-faceted, RETAIL outlets. Incessant 'opportunities' for cafes/fast-food/mobile phone/gambling have not, WILL NOT, 'cut the mustard, in wealth creation.”*
- *“There isnt any decent employment in bolton so i drive 20 miles out and need to leave asap and dont want to be out of pocket with childcare.”*
- *“Bolton centre is already dying and needs help to bring people in, not turn them away due to inaccessibility.”*
- *“The economy relies upon transport for all kinds of workers and while encouraging public transport for commuting and general leisure is great, cars and vans should not be losing out as a result of these schemes.”*

12. Demographics

12a. Demographics: Geographical The table below outlines the demographics of respondents by geographical neighbourhood. A total of 184 respondents provided their full postcode. Greatest engagement in the consultation is from residents and stakeholders located in the South (21%) and West (20%) of the borough. Lowest engagement is from residents located in the East of the borough (7%). The consultation also engaged residents in Greater Manchester (4%) and other parts of the country (2%).



Base: 184



*Neighbourhoods are a local geography for integrated health and social care; all have a population of around 50,000 residents.

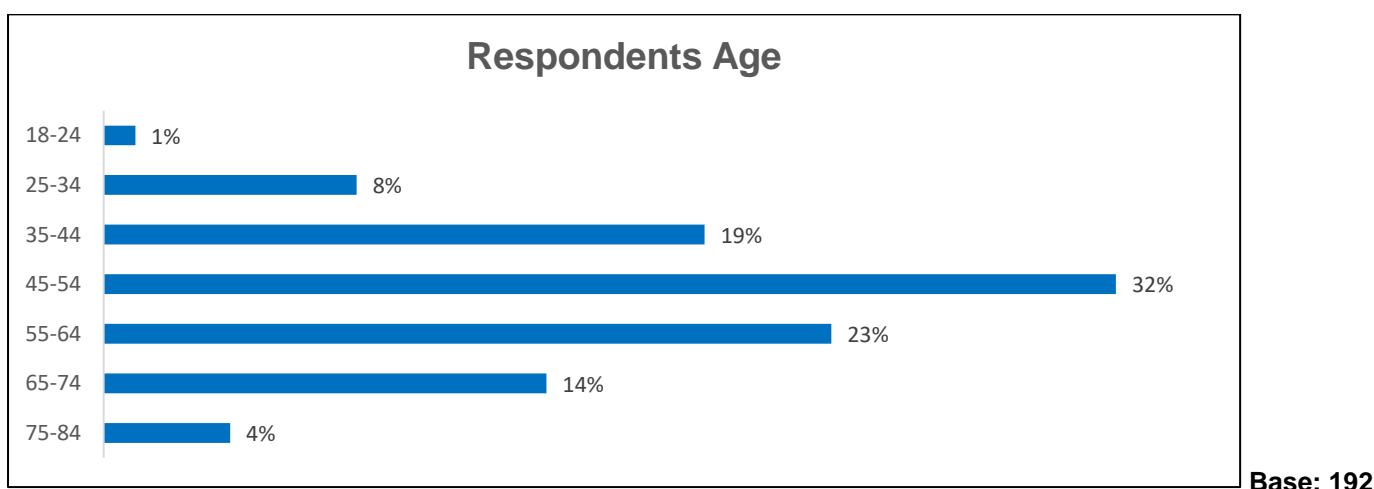
12b. Sex

168 responses were received providing the respondent's sex. 43% of respondents' identity as being female, 54% as male and 4% of respondents identify as 'other'.



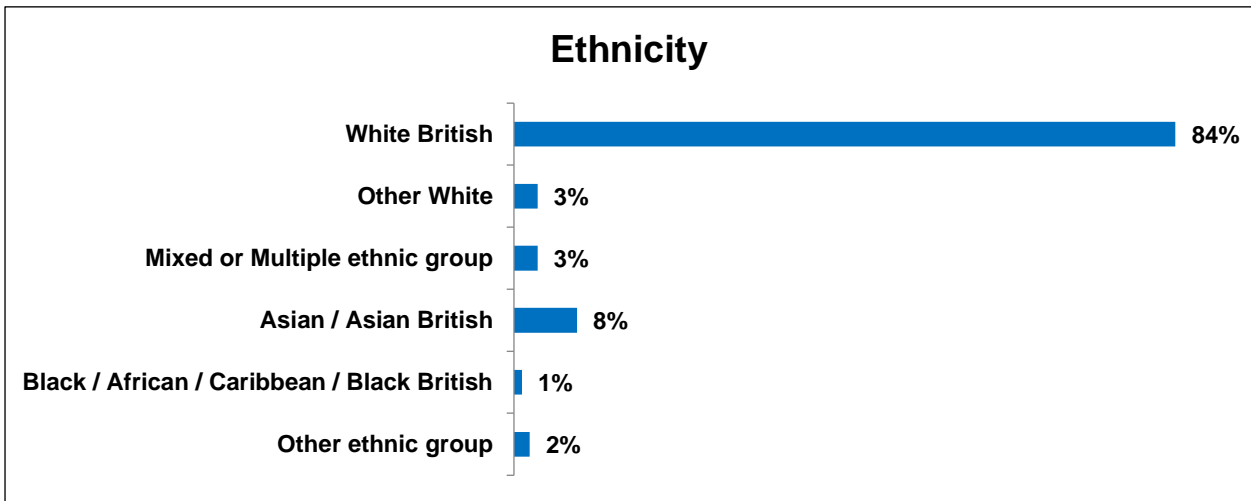
12c Age

Responses were received from individuals in all age categories, above the age of 18 years. No responses were received from young people. 9% respondents are under the age of 34 years. Nearly three-quarters (74%) of respondents are aged between 35 – 64 years. 18% of responses were received from individuals above the age of 65 years.



12d. Ethnicity

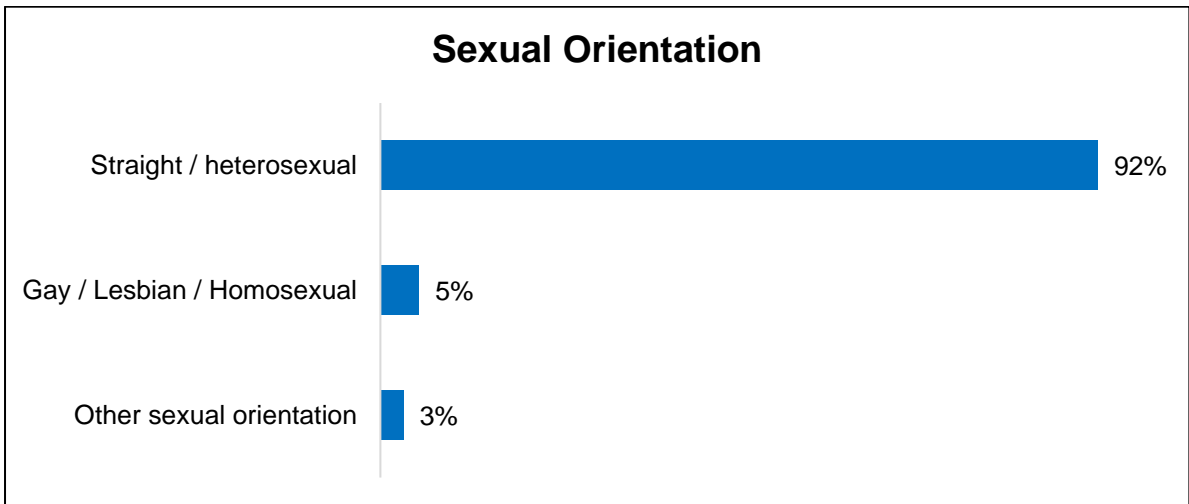
185 respondents provided their ethnicity when undertaking the consultation. 84% report as being white – British. 17% report as being from other ethnically diverse communities, this includes 8% from the Asian / Asian British community.



Base: 185

12e. Sexual orientation

170 respondents provided their sexual orientation. 92% of respondents identify as being heterosexual and 8% identify with being gay / lesbian / homosexual, or another sexual orientation.



Base: 170

13. Summary

Between 26th February and 22nd March 2024, Bolton Council ran a public consultation seeking to engage residents, visitors and stakeholders that commute and use public transport in Bolton, in sharing their reflections on Bolton's draft Transport Strategy. During that period 200 digital responses were received, as well as 4 emailed responses. An offer of support was also received from Bolton Deaf Society, outlining a proposal of support to ensure the strategy was inclusive and accessible to the residents and visitors of Bolton.

Public Transport: Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect on the strategy's proposal around public transport. In principle, all respondents agree with the priorities outlined for rail and bus networks. However, a mixed response was received for Active Travel. When asked about building support for an inclusive travel network, over 80% of residents and stakeholders agree. Comments received reflect current challenges with the public transport network, particularly the lack of connectivity across the borough and to other areas of Greater Manchester. Infrequency and affordability is also noted. It was also strongly noted that the lack of reference and commitment to a Metrolink in Bolton was hindering progress in the borough.


Highways: When asked to reflect on highways priorities, all residents agree with the principles. However, challenges were raised around current maintenance and congestion of key link roads, particularly in the Town Centre.

Parking: Residents and stakeholders were asked to reflect upon the strategy's carparking priorities. Over 89% agree with the principles outlined. Again, comments were received which outline challenges with Town Centre parking, affordability, and the cumulative impact on increasing visitor numbers to out of town retail parks. On-street parking was also noted as a challenge.

Electric and Autonomous Vehicles: Residents and stakeholders were somewhat split in their agreement of whether the priorities outlined in the strategy were relevant and should be included. Whilst over 50% lent their agreement to the priorities, with comments reflecting a lack of appetite for its inclusion within the strategy.

68% of stakeholders agree with the strategy's vision and 82% agree that the Transport Strategy would meet the transport vision for Bolton.

Over 70% of stakeholders agree, in principle, with the 6 strategy objectives and 66% agree that the Transport Strategy will meet the transport objectives for the borough. However, it should be noted that a number of comments were received that suggest the strategy, in its current format, is not accessible due to



its length and use of jargon. Some stakeholders thought the strategy was too bland, with a lack of meaningful detail.

Other areas of reflection were around engagement from residents with protected characteristics; active travel infrastructure; and comments around the climate agenda.

End.

Transport strategy consultation

Please complete this form online if possible by going to the 'Active consultations' section of Bolton Council's website at www.bolton.gov.uk, where all background documents can also be found.

If you would like paper copies of any of the documents however, please contact the Consultation & Engagement Team on 01204 334875.

Consultation closes on 22nd March 2024

Bolton Council have worked with AECOM to produce a draft transport strategy. AECOM are a consultancy firm who help to develop solutions to transport infrastructure, such as roads and railways.

The draft transport strategy sets out how we will develop our transport network to make it easier for people and goods to move within our borough and beyond. We aim to give people a real choice about how they travel by improving public transport, vehicle travel and parking, alongside active travel such as walking and wheeling [cycling, mobility scooters etc].

The transport strategy won't be a quick fix - its a long-term plan that suggest key improvements for the next twenty years.

The draft strategy has been developed in consultation with local leaders and stakeholders from across the borough, Greater Manchester and beyond.

It links in to the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 [which sets out the regions vision of having " *world class connections that support long-term, sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all*"] and plans for the Bee Network, which aims to improve public transport and active travel.

We would now like your views, which will be considered alongside other information to help Bolton Council put together a transport strategy for our borough. Please read the draft strategy and background documents before completing this questionnaire.

The background documents can be found online on the 'Active consultations' section of Bolton Council's website.

Your response - keeping your data safe

Most questions are optional; just miss out any that you don't want to answer.

The results of this consultation may be made public. If you're responding as an individual you won't be identified in any report as your responses will be anonymised and grouped with those from other people. If you're responding in an official capacity your response may be published but no personal details will be included.

Any personal data you provide will be held securely, in line with our retention schedule and privacy policy which can be found online:

www.bolton.gov.uk/data-protection-freedom-information/privacy-notice

We use Snap Surveys professional software to collect and process your data. Snap Surveys Ltd. follow the UK General Data Protection Regulation, and their privacy policy can be found by online:

www.snapsurveys.com/survey-software/privacy-policy-uk/

Public transport - rail

Bolton borough is served by eleven railway stations, however the service can be unreliable and stations difficult to access.

If the draft strategy proposals are accepted, we would work with TfGM to improve access, adding additional car and cycle parking facilities, with electric vehicle charging points. We could also make sure train and bus timetables are better aligned to make it easier to complete a whole journey using public transport, particularly if the frequency and reliability of the train service was improved. This will be helped by the electrification of the Bolton - Wigan line [due by 2025], which should also allow for an upgraded fleet and platform improvements.

We want to make it easier for people to access to railway stations, which may have steps which are difficult for people with mobility difficulties or those with a bike, wheelchair or pram.

Bolton Council will lobby for an early morning and late evening direct rail service to London, which should help attract business investment.

Q1. Rail - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Improve train frequency and reliability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Electrification between Bolton and Wigan.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Rail capacity improvements on key commuting corridors in north west Manchester	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Support regional partners to advocate for improved rail infrastructure into Manchester City Centre to improve the current capacity constraints	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Safer access to rail stations by walking and cycling	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Affordable and integrated ticketing with the wider Bee Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Introduce early morning and late evening direct rail service to London	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Public transport - bus

Buses are essential methods of transport for many people, particularly people with disabilities, the young, elderly and those on a low-income who rely on buses to travel to shops, education, work and health appointments.

The franchising of bus services under the Bee Network provides opportunities to improve services within our borough, and if the draft strategy proposals are accepted, Bolton Council will work with partners and neighbouring councils to offer a good quality service that's reliable, frequent and provides the public with easily accessible and up-to-date information on timetables and fares.

Whilst routes have recently concentrated on accessing Bolton town centre, additional routes may be needed to directly connect outlying towns and provide services to retail parks, health facilities and employment areas, especially for shift workers - in addition to bus routes that connect us with neighbouring council areas.

We could also improve bus stops by adding more shelters, better lighting, dropped kerbs and crossing points, along with providing real-time information on timetables etc.

Q2. Bus - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Engage TfGM in Bus Franchise Network Reviews to ensure local priorities and aspirations are considered and accommodated in developing an accessible and sustainable transport network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Improved bus waiting facilities and Information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Integrate bus services with Travel Hub proposals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Safer bus stops that are accessible to disabled users	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Localised bus services and circulars to support access to hospital and health facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Bus services that support the evening economy and shift workers across Bolton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Quality bus transit on key bus corridors: Wigan-Bolton and Bolton-Bury-Rochdale	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Improve bus routes to new housing developments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Alternatives to the car to access out of town retail parks.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Active travel - Walking, cycling and wheeling

Active travel includes those who walk, cycle, use a wheelchair or mobility scooter along with people with a pram or buggy. Active travel can be a healthy alternative to vehicle travel, particularly for shorter journey. However suitable routes are not always connected and can be inaccessible because of poor maintenance, or barriers such as traffic congestion and lack of pedestrian crossings.

If the proposals in the draft transport strategy are accepted, existing pavements, footpaths and bridleways could be upgraded and lighting improved. We would produce a new Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan that includes improved access for people with disabilities. We'll make sure that land owners maintain safe access for Public Rights of Way that cross their land, and ensure that business, housing and town centre developments incorporate facilities to encourage active travellers, such as safe and accessible routes which are well lit.

We'll work with the University of Bolton to maintain and improve pedestrian routes to improve access for students and staff.

Secure cycle parking could be provided for our town centres, schools and other public places, and more bike libraries could be set up so that people can borrow a bike for their journey.

Q3. Active travel - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Deliver our existing Bee Network commitments in the town centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Develop safe and attractive cycling routes to our growth areas at Logistics North and Westhoughton	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Create and maintain safe and coherent walking and cycle routes to all our district town centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. More safe and secure cycle parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Support the roll-out of community Bike Libraries and shared bike services	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Require new development to incorporate direct and coherent active travel facilities to local town and village centres	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Maintain and improve the Public Rights of Way Network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Improve the safety and attractiveness of pedestrian connections with Bolton University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

An inclusive transport network

An inclusive transport network makes it easier for everyone to use the transport network, regardless of age, disability, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religion.

If the draft strategy proposals are accepted, we could build on the support currently offered to people who may struggle to afford or access transport. By upgrading path surfaces and lighting and improving physical access to buses and trains, we can reduce actual and perceived travel barriers to using active travel and public transport. To reduce car dependency, travel plans could be developed with new schools, business and housing developments.

Q4. An inclusive transport network - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Make our whole transport network more inclusive	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Renew travel plans and policies for workplaces, schools and housing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Work with partners to develop initiatives that encourage children to travel actively	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Highways

Maintenance of our highways - the roads, pavements, footpaths, bridleways, Public Rights of Way and cycleways - is a concern that's frequently raised by our residents. Pothole repair, safe crossing points and lighting is important for the safety of pedestrians and vehicle users alike.

Vehicle congestion impacts on bus services, commuting and contributes to poor air quality. Whilst improving public transport and making active travel more accessible may help to relieve congestion, improving hot spots could provide a reliable road network which doesn't deter business development and commuters.

If the draft strategy proposals are accepted, we would increase highway maintenance for all users, particularly around safety measures such as speed warnings, pothole repairs, and pedestrian crossings. Congestion could be managed by measures such as including bus and cyclist priority traffic signals. Improvements to support housing and commercial development would include freight routes and a requirement that all developers plan in travel needs of residents, visitors and business users by mitigating impacts on the road network and promoting active and sustainable travel. In addition we would lobby for improvements to the motorway junctions in our borough.

We would look at additional ways to improve and maintain the green infrastructure, including trees and soakaway areas to help prevent standing water.

Q5. Highways - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Highway maintenance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Managing congestion	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Road safety improvements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Improvements to support new development and growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Green infrastructure in the design and maintenance of our highways and footways	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Parking

We propose to produce a new car parking strategy so that car parking is available for everyone who depends on it. The strategy would strike a balance between the needs of drivers and passengers, and encouraging more walking, cycling and the use of public transport.

Car parks are important for many people who use them to access shops and other businesses, and health and social care services, particularly in towns and district centres such as Horwich, Westhoughton, Little Lever, Blackrod and Astley Bridge.

We want to make better use of our car parks by maintaining them to a higher standard, looking particularly at drainage and measures to keep vehicles and their users safe. We'll make sure there are enough disabled parking bays and electric vehicle charging points. We'll also support car clubs to encourage people to share vehicles.

Regarding on-street parking in Bolton town centre, we will prioritise loading bays and spaces reserved for use by taxis, Private Hire Vehicles and Blue Badge holders.

Q6. Parking - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Update our Parking Strategy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Car parks are important for our local district centres and Town Council areas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Electric vehicles

The sale of new petrol and diesel cars are due to be banned from 2035. Electric vehicles are becoming increasing popular, and additional charging points will be needed to keep up with the demand.

If the proposals are accepted, we will work with Transport for Greater Manchester [TfGM] to improve charging points, particularly for areas of our borough which have a high proportion of terraced housing and flats, where innovative solutions will be needed to avoid obstructing pavements. Dedicated charging bays will be included in our multi-storey car parks, and included in our surface level car parks. We'll also develop dedicated charging points for taxis and private hire vehicles as these vehicles provide an important service for people without cars.

Q7. Electric vehicles - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Increase the number of electric vehicles charging points and charging hubs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Make charging points accessible to areas of Bolton with higher proportions of dwellings with no off-street parking	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Provide dedicated electric vehicle charging infrastructure for taxi and Private Hire Vehicles	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Preparing for autonomous vehicles

'Autonomous vehicles' covers a wide category which ranges from current vehicles which have safety sensors to reduce accidents, to fully autonomous vehicles which can operate without any input from a driver. By preparing for autonomous vehicles, we can attract businesses that want to use this technology in our borough.

We are currently undertaking a feasibility study to look at using decommissioned railway lines to set up a Connected Autonomous Mobility [CAM] network to connect Bolton Transport Interchange [Bolton town centre] with Royal Bolton Hospital.

If the draft strategy proposals are accepted we will look at expanding this network to connect new housing, business growth areas, health and education services across the borough. We will look at the adaptations that would be needed to our highways so that autonomous vehicles can successfully function in our borough, such as electronic systems that read the carriageway and other users.

Q8. Preparing for autonomous vehicles - How far do you agree / disagree that the following should be priorities for our transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Future Proofing the Network Study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Work with partners to develop an autonomous vehicle route between Royal Bolton Hospital and Bolton town centre	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Overall vision for transport

Our transport vision is the "To work towards a zero-carbon transport network that is inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable; taking a balanced approach, ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected, and responsive to technological change and innovation."

Q9. How strongly do you agree / disagree this overall vision?

- Strongly agree - please go to Q10
- Agree - please go to Q10
- Disagree - please go to Q11
- Strongly disagree - please go to Q11
- No opinion - please go to Q11

Q10. How strongly do you agree / disagree that the draft transport strategy will help meet this vision?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- No opinion

Draft Transport strategy objectives

There are six objectives in the draft strategy, which are designed to improve transport within and beyond our borough and give people a real choice about how they travel.

Q11. How far do you agree / disagree with six objectives that are set out in the draft transport strategy?

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	No opinion
1. Support and develop an integrated transport network	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Work with partners to develop a transport services that are safe, inclusive and affordable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Develop a transport network that enables people to lead active and healthy lives	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Be environmentally responsible in Bolton by lowering carbon and improving air quality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Maintain and develop a reliable transport network to support economic growth and sustainable travel	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Improve road safety and travel facilities that encourage vulnerable people to travel with confidence	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q12. How strongly do you agree / disagree that the priorities we have identified in the draft transport strategy will help us meet these objectives?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Disagree with all the objectives
- No opinion

Q13. Please use this space if you'd like to comment on the proposals in the draft transport strategy, or to suggest anything else that should be included

No comments

Your interest

Q14. Which ONE of the following best describes you / your family's interest in this consultation?

- Live in Bolton borough [Bolton Council area] - please go to Q15
- Work in Bolton borough - please go to Q15
- Study / have children at school in Bolton borough - please go to Q15
- Visitor to Bolton - please go to Q15
- Official response from Parish / Bolton borough Councillor / Elected Member - please answer Q14b and c, then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- Official response from a business / organisation / community group. You must have their permission to submit an official response on their behalf - please answer Q14b and c, then end the survey without completing the 'About you' section
- None of the above - please go to Q14a, then to Q15

Q14a. Please say what your interest is

Q14b. Please say which ward, business organisation or community group you represent?

Q14c. Please say what your role is - in what official capacity do you represent the ward, business, organisation or community group?

About you

Your answers in this section help us to make sure we are getting views from different types of people. They won't be used to contact or identify you.

Q15. Please give your full postcode

Q16. Are you...?

Female

Male

Identify in another way

Q17. Which age group are you in?

Under18

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 - 64

65 - 74

75 - 84

85 or over

Q18. What is your ethnic group?

White British

White other

Mixed or Multiple ethnic group

Asian or Asian British

Black, Black British, Caribbean or African

Other ethnic group

Q19. Which of the following most closely describes your sexual orientation?

Straight / heterosexual

Gay / Lesbian / Homosexual

Bisexual

Other sexual orientation

Thanks! Please post to: FREEPOST RTTT-YTEL-YSXS, Consultation & Engagement Team, 2nd Floor, Town Hall, Victoria Square, Bolton, BL1 1RU

Appendix B: Resident responses

Response 1:

Thank you for your response. My additional comments are as follows:

Rail:

The longer term aspiration should be for 4tph on Atherton line. Services via Bolton need to be balanced against regional / national services so may be more difficult to achieve those frequencies.

The priorities should also include making railway stations accessible for all.

In terms of safer access by walking and cycling; this should consider lighting around stations – it is particularly poor on bridges outside Lostock and Daisy Hill. Safe cycle storage, of which there is zero at Daisy Hill needs to be considered.

In terms of direct services to London; reliable services to Wigan North Western and to Manchester Piccadilly can help increase connections for services to London. East-West links (to Liverpool and Yorkshire) should be given more thought.

Bus:

A town the size of Westhoughton should have a high frequency route to the hospital in Bolton. A well-advertised and easy to use demand responsive bus service may be useful to support access to health and community facilities in Westhoughton.

Any bus routes to new housing developments would need to be frequent, so that they are a real alternative to car-use.

A specific example of improving alternatives to car to access out of town facilities would be to increase frequency on 516 – connecting Westhoughton to retail and leisure in Middlebrook and Leigh.

Active Travel:

More focus needs to be placed on crossings – which give priority to walking / wheeling and space for cyclists.

The highway network in Westhoughton, namely Cricketers Way is designed for high speed motor travel when this is not appropriate. Some of this space can be given back to active travel.

If low traffic neighbourhoods are not rolled out in Westhoughton; better consideration should be given to ensuring the 20mph limit is adhered to.

Roads like Park Road and Leigh Road in Westhoughton need to have much more opportunities for safe crossings, which relate to the local walking network (e.g. routes in and out of housing estates).

Inclusive Transport Networks:

Travel Plans need to ensure that they are funded sufficiently in the local authority, so they can be both monitored but also ensure there are plenty of incentives to encourage sustainable transport.

Highways:

New development and growth should not be predicated on having enough highway capacity rather use new development to support investment in alternative modes.

Electric vehicles:

Whilst the principle of supporting charging points in areas with low levels of off-street parking is laudable – who would pay for this? Should the local authority be subsidizing people who are able to afford private electric cars? Investing in a car-club network may be an alternative.

Autonomous vehicles:

A high frequency route between the hospital and Bolton town centre sounds exciting – hopefully it would not be to the detriment of the off-road walking and cycling route.

Response 2

Some specific points to feed into this.

- P24 – the ‘Bolton at a glance’ infographic is seriously out of date, it has been taken from a Bolton FT document which was obviously produced before the 2021 census data was available. It is not acceptable to be referencing 2011 census data in a document dated 2024. This either needs to be updated or removed. The statement that ‘demographic & equality information’ will be updated annually on Bolton JSNA is incorrect, only age & overall population has an annual update, as the other information is obtained from the census.
- P24 – Reword “The 2021 census revealed that 45% of Bolton’s population live in an area that is among the 20% most deprived nationally” to “45% of Bolton’s population live in an area that is among the 20% most deprived nationally”. The census includes a measure of household deprivation, however this figure refers to deprivation as calculated by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 applied to the 2021 population.
- P29 – ‘Collision’ should be used rather than ‘accident’ in line with best practice on language

- P31 – remove reference to 50% most deprived areas, this is not a meaningful grouping. Figure key – change “Bolton IMD 2019 deciles” to “England 2019 deciles”. Sometimes local deciles are used so the current wording is confusing.
- P37 – reads as if these are objectives from the GM transport strategy, but they are the objectives from this strategy. Reword heading to make this clear.
- P41 – Where is the table at the bottom of the page from? I can’t find it or its contents in ‘GM Bus service improvement plan’ or ‘bus back better’, the two documents referenced on this page.
- P45 – reword “Around 18% of the adult population have a registered disability and 9% have a long term health condition” to “19% of the Bolton population are disabled”.
- The current wording is incorrect. ‘registered disabled’ doesn’t exist. The figure comes from the 2021 census & relates to the total population. 9% is far too low for the proportion of the population who have a long term health condition, it is likely this relates to the census 2021 figure for proportion of the population who have a long term health condition or disability that limits their day to day activities a lot, which comes in at 9%, however that is not needed here.
- P49 – reword “... such as the disabled and elderly” – this is not inclusive language, reword to ‘disabled people’ and ‘older people’.
- Is there a reason for picking up these groups in particular? National travel survey 2022 found those age 17-20 made the greatest proportion of their journeys by public transport, so there are likely to be other protected or ‘vulnerable’ groups which also rely on busses.
- P50 – ‘Improve bus routes to new housing and employment developments’ – ‘new’ is added here (& p145) but not present elsewhere in the text. This has implications as if it’s only new developments there’s potential for S106 funding, not available if it refers to existing developments.
- P144 – ‘travel training’, ‘transport assessments to improve public transport accessibility to new housing & employment sites’ are included as priorities in the timescale but are not in the main text
- Where ‘Members’ is used throughout, this is not meaningful to members of the public or external partners, replace with ‘councillors’.

- 'Vulnerable people is used throughout, but no clarification or definition given.

This will make it difficult to complete an equality impact assessment, as it is clearly identifying an inequality or potential adverse impact that needs mitigating but not giving enough detail to assure that the potential adverse impact is mitigated.

Bolton Council's protected characteristics are in line with the public sector equality duty: Age; sexual orientation; disability; religion or belief; sex/ gender; pregnancy & maternity; gender reassignment; marriage & civil partnership; race (including ethnic or national origins, colour, nationality) PLUS caring status (unpaid care for disabled, chronically ill or older relatives or friends who need support); socioeconomic (inequalities that result from differences in occupation, education, place or residence or social class); armed forces/ veterans; care leavers (young people in care & care experienced people). Not all groups will experience inequalities or potential differential impacts from all interventions.

- P75 in particular would benefit from this greater clarity on the groups with the greatest transport related inequalities and challenges that are mitigated within the rest of the strategy.
- P75 reword "Physical and mental disabilities... are just some of the barriers..." – the disability is not the barrier, but the result of the barrier. The social model of disability as adopted in the Equality Act separates out the impairment from the environmental, behavioural or attitudinal barriers that impact on individuals; this is why we need to ask both about the health condition or impairment as well as the impact. For example a person may have a long term health condition that is well controlled with medication so they do not feel it has a significant impact on how they live their life, or equipment or adjustments may mean a person with an impairment considers they are able to do all the things they would want to do so the impact on their day to day activities is minimal.

GM transport strategy defines vulnerable road users as: pedestrians; cyclists young drivers & their passengers, motorcyclists.

- Bus nor engagement sections make reference to 'local link'. This is no longer in operation in Bolton but is elsewhere in Greater Manchester. There is potentially learning to be had from this particularly relating to the district centres to the west of the borough.
- Icon of man & woman with walking stick – is this representing older people? It is not an inclusive image of aging well. See centre for aging better [Range of free-to-use 'age-positive' icons launched to replace stereotypical symbols of ageing | Centre for Ageing Better \(ageing-better.org.uk\)](https://www.ageing-better.org.uk/)
- Icon of person cycling – replace with a more upright design cycle to emphasise it's not about sport cycling



Response to the Draft Bolton Transport Strategy (2024)

By the Blackrod Neighbourhood Plan Delivery Group

March 2024

We very much support the Draft Plan and were a consultee to the Plan. However, one of our major objectives included in our Neighbourhood Plan (Adopted 2021) is achieving an improvement to the rail services to Blackrod Station. (Ref Community Project – Transport 1)

Despite being a consultee, disappointingly Bolton's draft Plan makes no specific mention of improvements to rail services to Blackrod.

Prior to the impact of Covid, Blackrod Station had the third highest footfall in the Borough after Bolton Interchange and Horwich Parkway.

Blackrod is principally a commuter town with Blackrod Rail Station within around 15 minutes walking distance of the town centre. It also demographically has a greater proportion of the active older generation than both locally and nationally, who therefore travel to local centres.

Currently, apart from peak times, Blackrod only has an hourly service (recently restored from a two hourly service during the day)

In addition, Rivington Chase (a development of 1700 houses) is coming onstream and with the emphasis on the modal shift of personal travel to public transport will considerably further increase the footfall at Blackrod Station.

Therefore we believe that it is essential that, within the Bolton Transport Strategy, priority is given to providing a minimum half hourly service at Blackrod, together with an improvement to the rail traveller infrastructure.

Appendix D: Response from Bolton Deaf Society

Bolton Deaf Society would like to advise on and assist with Deaf-inclusive consultation, facilitating equitable access to opportunities of informing and influencing strategy development going forward (written communications and digital surveys with a cohort whose first language - BSL - is visual not written or spoken, and among which there are disproportionate degrees of un/underemployment, financial hardship and digital exclusion do not work).

We would like to further assist in creating captioned BSL content for travel/journey/public information boards/screens in the Bolton Transport Interchange. AND we would like to train frontline staff at the Bus Station and in the Train Station in Deaf Awareness, Interpreter Awareness and Basic BSL to grow accessibility/inclusion, improve Deaf experiences and get more Deaf citizens (of which there are 46,500 in Bolton) choosing active travel (they are consistently under-represented in physical activity participation analyses) and public transport. Much service/lifestyle/behaviour change information is completely inaccessible to Deaf people.

1 Background and purpose

This is a response to the consultation on the draft Transport Strategy. Whilst it looks at all aspects of the draft strategy, this response focusses particularly on active travel, which should be at the centre of the strategy given the enormous benefits that it can bring across all strategic areas of the Borough.

I draw attention to a strategy proposal for Active Travel in Bolton that I wrote a year ago and have already provided to the Council and Aecom, which I have included here as Appendix 1. Please consider that a part of this consultation response.

2 Executive Summary (“TLDR”)

Whilst the draft transport strategy contains some good points in relation to active travel, it is severely lacking in ambition and comes across as largely a “business as usual” proposal rather than putting forward any real change. It is also very poorly structured making it far too long and muddled. (See section 4.)

It appears to place “managing expectations” over ambition. This may be a problem in attempting to gain resources for travel developments, which is particularly true now that Active Travel England will have oversight in relation to active over all government funded transport projects, not just ring-fenced active travel funding. (See section 5.)

There is very little analysis of the borough in terms of such things as trip attractors, populations, travel patterns, etc. that would be required to inform real strategic thinking. Despite stating that the Greater Manchester Streets for All strategy will be applied across all highways related projects, there is no attempt to make use of its principles, especially the typology of roads and streets, in developing this strategic plan. (See section 6.)

The current “GM Right Mix” targets for travel modes are used without question, despite it being well known that these are under review. This is likely to bring them more closely into line with national targets - a significant change that would require a complete re-think of this strategy to make it far more ambitious in relation to mode shift towards sustainable transport. (See section 7.)

The strategy appears to address each travel mode (active travel, public transport, private motoring) in isolation so that it fails to address by far the most important issue of how to enable people to make the right choices between different modes for particular journey types and purposes. A

structure based around trip purposes could be a far more effective basis for exploring the issues. (See section 8.)

Sections of the draft strategy on walking, wheeling and cycling do acknowledge the need to provide for active travel, but are treated in isolation from motor vehicle provision, resulting in a failure to tackle the key issue of road space reallocation. The emphasis is on interventions that don't interfere with motoring, such as upgrading public rights of way, which will have little impact on enabling active travel, and again come across as unambitious and half-hearted. Active Travel has the potential to address many of the problems identified in the strategy, as well as contributing significantly to every other area of Council strategy (see Appendix 1). As such, it needs to be placed right at the core of any Transport Strategy. (See the Birmingham Transport Plan vision and principles quoted in section 4.1.)

Section 9 discusses the relationship of active travel with: diversity, deprivation and health outcomes; micro-mobility; active neighbourhoods; travel to school; existing active travel projects; new developments; removing footway clutter and barriers; as well as a number of specific comments regarding statements made in the text of the draft. In addition, Appendix 1 contains a proposal for an Active Travel Strategy for the Borough, which discusses the issues in far more depth, along with a great many references to back it up.

References to "Road Safety" should all be replaced with "Road Danger Reduction" in line with currently practice. Similarly "Accidents" should be replaced with "Collisions" wherever it appears. This is important and is discussed in more detail in section 10.

There seems to be a belief underlying much of the strategy that technology will solve the problem of fitting larger and larger numbers of bigger and bigger cars into our finite road space, and make all of the problems of motor dependency go away.. This is irrational; the only way to address the problems is to enable people to choose alternatives. (See section 11.)

Similarly with Parking (which means **car** parking in the strategy), there is not a lack of space to park the cars, there are too many cars for the available space, and it is important to take steps to address this underlying problem. Car sharing (car clubs) could help with this, but in fact much of the existing car parking pr4ovision should be reduced to discourage inappropriate car use. (See section 12.)

The section on timescales is extremely weak, irrational and inconsistent. A great deal more thought needs to go into revising that section to show an ambitious path to change. (Se section 13.)

Finally, a section on how the council will improve its engagement and consultation on active travel and transport generally, which has been very poor quality, both in terms of general messaging and consultation on specific schemes. Having an ambitious and inspiring Transport Strategy would be the first step in enabling the Comms team to address this. (See section 14.)

3 The strategy document overall

The transport strategy contains some good points, and does say some of the right things regarding active travel and sustainable transport generally, but it fails to make the commitments that are needed to redress the balance between motoring and active travel, which is currently grotesquely skewed towards motoring at the expense of suppressing any significant mode shift to active travel. Consequently, it is unlikely to achieve the huge benefits¹ that could be gained from investment in active travel and public transport if we had a truly ambitious strategy, and is unlikely to make a significant impact on achieving the targets that need to be met in relation to Climate Change.

The document is very poorly structured, resulting in its being unnecessary large and unwieldy. There is a lot of repetition, some parts are quite vague whilst others go into fine detail on seemingly random points; issues that are closely related are scattered widely across different sections; and issues that are not closely related are brought together for seemingly spurious reasons (such as what source happened to raise those particular issues during the preparation of the document – page 8).

As a result of all this, the strategy comes across as very uninspiring, and largely a “business as usual” proposal rather than putting forward any real change.

The key issues, and the solutions needed to address those issues, are largely the same across the whole borough and should be stated once. Then any sections that relate to particular locations or areas should be limited to points of divergence from the wider strategy, which will be few, and should primarily relate to prioritisation of when those areas will be addressed. Currently the same points are repeated over and over again, such as “not enough car parking” (which is itself an issue needing a far more nuanced approach – see Section 12), or too much congestion – issues that affect the whole borough to varying degrees.

This all makes the strategy look muddled and weak, and it should be completely rewritten so that it presents a coherent strategy for change.

Given that the Council has used consultants to create this document, it would not be unreasonable to question whether the Council has got value for money from this expenditure.

4 A Lack of Vision

The “vision” put forward in the document is:

“To work towards a zero-carbon transport network that is inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable; taking a balanced approach, ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected, and responsive to technological change and innovation.”

That is not a strategic vision for change:

“To work towards...” immediately tells the reader from the start that there no real commitment to bringing about change.

1 *Best practice in active travel and its associated benefits - Literature review.* Transport Scotland, 2023. <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/53143/literature-review-best-practice-in-active-travel-and-its-associated-benefits-april-2023.pdf>

“...taking a balanced approach...” seems like a meaningless platitude: of course there needs to be a balanced approach - so what? The strategic issue is about deciding what constitutes a balanced approach: answering the questions: “what is the right balance?”, “how far are we away from that now?”, and “what are going to do to close that gap?”; that is where the “vision” lies.

“ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected...” Well, of course, but it’s not exactly inspirational; it just states what you should be doing anyway. What will this look like, feel like? How will it affect and improve my daily life and the futures of my children and grandchildren?

A strategic vision should be a clear, unambiguous, inspiring statement of what our world will look like if the strategy is successful. It should “nail the colours to the mast”, not just say that there are different colours that need to be considered. Here is a starting point based on Appendix 1:

“The transport vision for Bolton is to revolutionise the urban environment across the whole borough to create:

- *A local environment in which people of all ages are able to spend time, play, shop, exercise, travel actively, and enjoy the spaces around their homes in safety, free of obstacles.*
- *A physical environment in which streets are pleasant places to be, the air is clean, and noise is at a minimum.*
- *A borough in which people of all ages can travel safely and comfortably from anywhere to anywhere by sustainable means if they so choose, so that active travel is considered first for short journeys, followed by public transport, and in which those people who really have to use motor vehicles encounter much less traffic congestion.”*

4.1 An Example – Birmingham Transport Plan

As an example, Birmingham’s vision for transport² is expressed thus:

“The vision for Birmingham’s transport is for a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere network.

Safe and healthy environments will make active travel – walking and cycling – the first choice for people making short journeys.

A fully integrated, high quality public transport system will be the go-to choice for longer trips.

A smart, innovative, carbon neutral and low emission network will support sustainable and inclusive economic growth, tackle climate change and promote the health and well-being of Birmingham’s citizens.”

² Birmingham Transport Plan. https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20013/roads_travel_and_parking/2032/birmingham_transport_plan

The plan goes on to state the key principles that will apply in implementing this vision:

“The future vision will be secured through the delivery of four principles:

Reallocating road space

The allocation of road space will change away from single occupancy private cars to support the delivery of a public transport system fit for a global city, fundamentally changing the way that people and goods move around the city.

Transforming the city centre

The city centre of Birmingham will be transformed through the creation of a network of pedestrian streets and public spaces integrated with public transport services and cycling infrastructure. Access to the city centre for private cars will be limited with no through trips. This includes looking at different options for the central section of the A38 including re-routing it to an upgraded ring road.

Prioritising active travel in local neighbourhoods

Active travel – walking and cycling – will become how most people get around their locality most of the time. Cars will no longer dominate street life around homes and schools. A limit of 20mph will be standard on all local roads. Residential neighbourhoods and local centres will be places where people are put first.

Managing demand through parking measures

Parking will be used as a means to manage demand for travel by car through availability, pricing and restrictions. Where development potential exists, land currently occupied by car parking will be put to more productive use.”

This presents a clear vision for change. It puts a marker down that can form the basis for widespread engagement so that, when funding opportunities do arise, there will be a clear indication of the ambition that the Borough has, and when project consultations come along, they do not happen in a vacuum as tends to be the case in Bolton (see section 14).

5 Ambition vs Managing Expectations

Setting ambitious goals and managing expectations are clearly two ends of a spectrum that need to be balanced. Unfortunately, the balance in this document clearly prioritises managing expectations over ambition, which is why the proposed strategy is so uninspiring.

It is easy to see why that emphasis is present given the severe lack of funding currently available, but it is a serious mistake to rein back on ambition because of a fear that the funding may not be there. These strategic plans will be used to back up bids for funding, so a lack of strategic ambition will almost guarantee that funding will not be forthcoming. Bolton already has a poor track record in this regard – the Council was previously told not to bother putting in proposals to Active Travel Fund tranche three because of a lack of confidence in the commitment of the leadership. We need to show that we can be ambitious.

Active Travel England now has oversight of all highways projects from the point of view of provision (or lack of it) for active travel. The clear trend now is to see active travel as an integral part of mainstream highways funding, which will be primarily funded through CRSTS (City-Regional Sustainable Transport Settlements) granted to regions - Greater Manchester in our case. All of this means that every project, from capital projects through to maintenance will need to address all modes, and will need to show how it applies the user hierarchy that is contained in the Manual for Streets since 2007 and reiterated in the recently published Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide (page 20). That hierarchy may be expressed as:

Consider first Walking (and wheeling), then Cycling, then Public Transport, then Specialist Service Vehicles, then Other Motor Traffic, then Parking for Private Vehicles last.

Again, if we do not show the ambition to transform our urban environment and particularly the highways network, we will be far less successful in attracting funding for **any** forms of travel.

6 Lack of Analysis

6.1 Statistics

There is very little evidence of any attempt to pull together and analyse data (as opposed to opinions) to build a picture of the current position within the Borough or to support proposals made in the document. For example:

- The *TfGM Travel Diary Surveys*³ provide detailed information about travel habits, trip distances by mode (see also section 7.1), purposes of trips,
- TfGM also hold extensive data about traffic levels cross the Borough's highway network,
- The *Sustrans Walking and Cycling Index*⁴ provides more general information about numbers walking and cycling and the potential for increasing that if the right infrastructure were provided.

In addition to transport-specific data, there is a great deal of background data available to support strategic proposals. For example, the Fingertips database, provided by Public Health England provides a rich source of information, down to the local level, to help identify health priorities for the Borough. This shows, for example, that 27.5% of adults in the Borough are considered inactive (less than 30 minutes of moderate activity per week), which is far worse than the average for England or the North-West. The strategy does provide some information on the overall, borough-wide background in relation to population, health, deprivation, etc. on page 24 and 31, but there appears to be no attempt to make use of that information in formulating a strategy for change.

Note, I have also provided a large number of relevant and authoritative references in the document in Appendix 1.

3 *GM Travel Diary Surveys*. TfGM, <https://tfgm.com/trads>

4 *GM Walking and Cycling Index 2024*, Sustrans. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index/greater-manchester-walking-and-cycling-index/>

6.2 No real analysis of the Borough

Apart from reference to two locations (Bolton University and Logistics North), there is no systematic analysis of the borough in terms of major trip attractors, trip start and finish locations, through-traffic versus traffic within the borough, levels of congestion in different parts of the borough (especially on the Key Route Network), propensity to cycle (for which an excellent tool is available free of charge⁵), populations in different areas of the borough, etc. This would seem to be the most basic prerequisite of a Transport Strategy for the Borough.

The document mentions (page 17) the Streets for All strategy and design guidance, and even shows a graphic of the roads and streets typology contained in that strategy. But beyond this, it is as if “Streets for All” is just something that is happening in a short length of one street in Farnworth (see pages 63, 67, and 70), and there is otherwise no real commitment to use it in strategic planning. In particular, no attempt is made to apply the typology to the roads and streets of Bolton Borough to help with the setting of priorities. This surely must be fundamental to the formulation of a Borough Transport Strategy that is purported to place the GM Streets for All strategy at its core (page 17).

Deprivation is mentioned as an issue (on page 31), as is levels of car free living, but there is no attempt to make use of this information (which can be mapped down to Census LSOA level) in the strategy. Stating that there is an issue and then making no attempt to address that issue is the opposite of strategic thinking.

The Key Route Network is mentioned only in relation to other issues such as maintenance, but there is no consideration of whether it needs to be reviewed based on traffic levels, trip attractors, populations, etc. Again, this is surely a fundamental part of any transport strategy.

6.3 Out of date references

Where references are used in the strategy, they are often out of date. Examples include:

- References to the GM Interim Active Travel Design Guide should be replaced with references to the GM Streets for All Design Guide, including the image on page 90.
- Road Collisions data for 2016 to 2020 are quoted (page 29). The latest confirmed data goes up to 2022 and provisional data is now available for 2023. Why not use those?

These are just a couple of examples, and it is to be hoped that all sources will be replaced with up-to-date references when the final strategy document is produced.

7 The Right Mix Targets

The strategy undertakes to achieve the “Right Mix” targets defined in the Greater Manchester transport strategy. It makes no attempt to question this target nor to justify it, rather just blindly accepting it. The strategy summarises the target in the section on Walking, Wheeling and Cycling as an: *“ambition to have a ‘Right Mix’ of sustainable transport trips of around 50% of all journeys in the region by 2040”*. This could equally be expressed as an ambition *“to have half of all journeys made by unsustainable modes by 2040”*.

5 Propensity to Cycle Tool – Greater Manchester. <https://www.pct.bike/m/?r=greater-manchester>

The target falls far short of the national target expressed in the “Gear Change” active travel strategy, the Net Zero strategy, and many other national strategies, which is for “half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030”. Thus the Right Mix target fall far short both in magnitude (the 50% in Right Mix includes public transport as well as active travel), and timescale (2040 compared to 2030 in the national targets).

It has been well known for some time that the GMCA (through TfGM) recognises these anomalies and is in the process of revising the Right Mix target, which is likely to be announced during the summer of 2024, so the one thing we do know about the target being used in this draft strategy is that it will be wrong, possibly before it is even published.

It has been stated before that the strategy proposed can be adjusted to account for changes to the Right mix targets; however the likelihood is that, should the revised targets reflect the national targets, it would require a fundamental re-think of the strategy to make it far more ambitious.

7.1 Right Mix and GM Travel Diary Survey data

The most recent TfGM Travel Diary Survey (TRADS), published in 2023, shows that over three quarters (77%) of car and van trips in Bolton Borough are less than 10km, which can be cycled by most people, especially with electrically assisted cycles; nearly two thirds (65%) are less than 5km, which can easily be cycled by most people and walked by many; and nearly a third (31%) are less than 2km, which is easy walking distance for most. Figure 1 shows an analysis, based on those figures, of what a commitment to the national target for active travel might look like in terms of conversion of existing short car and van journeys to active travel.

Trip distance	Up to 2km	2km - 5km	5km - 10km	10km+	Total
Conversion rate	80%	50%	20%	0%	
Potential extra AT trips	82,400	57,500	8,000	0	147,900
Potential Total AT trips	196,400	66,500	8,000	0	270,900
Potential AT % of trips	78%	46%	15%	0%	50%
Current AT % of trips	55%	8%	4%	0%	29%
Potential Cumulative	78%	66%	60%	50%	

Figure 1: A potential scenario for a target of 50% of trips by active travel in Bolton.

Surely it would be better to consider what a suitable target would be for Bolton (such as the example shown above) and use that instead, which could even result in Bolton providing some leadership on the matter and influencing the regional target.

8 Breaking it down

8.1 Artificial separations

Travel modes are choices that people make, not different species of humans. The reason we have terrible traffic congestion (by which we really mean **motor** traffic congestion), poor air quality, unsustainable emissions and use of resources, high levels of inactivity leading to poor health outcomes, etc. is because of the choices people make, or are forced to make by the environment in which they find themselves.

By dividing the strategy into modes, with separate sections on what we are going to do for motorISTS, for cyclISTS, for pedestrians (walkISTS), etc., the document fails to address what is absolutely the most important strategic issue: is how can we enable people to make the most sensible travel choices given the immutable constraints of space, etc., and the possibly mutable constraint of resources available. It is also worth noting that every bus or train trip starts and ends with either an active travel trip or a car trip, so a consideration of combined, multi-mode trips in an integrated manner is essential.

To set the right tone, every reference to “motorists” (or “drivers” or equivalent) should be replaced with “motoring” (or “driving” or equivalent); every reference to “cyclists” (or equivalent) should be replaced with “cycling” (or equivalent); every reference to “pedestrians” (or equivalent) should be replaced with “walking and/or wheeling” (or equivalent). The wording should then be changed so that the meaning is properly captured. So, for example: “... so more motorists may be attracted to use alternatives” on page 87 should read “... so people may be able to switch more journeys from motoring to sustainable alternatives”.

Whilst there should be sections addressing what the needs are for people adopting different modes, this can mostly be handled by reference to external guidelines and standards (e.g. LTN1/20 for cycling, Streets for All design guide, etc.) Just state that by the end, ALL of the network will conform to those standards.

8.2 Trip purposes

A far more sensible way to break the strategy down would be by trip purpose, which is well supported for individual travel by the Travel Diary Survey. Travel to work, travel to school, and travel for shopping are all good examples of trip types that could be made by any mode. As well as the general issues faced by all travel, these different trip purposes have very specific needs and problems, and the needs of people making such choices should be addressed in the strategy as a priority.

For example, travel to school presents a serious problem across the Borough yet is mentioned only briefly in terms of travel choices and has no real strategic commitments made to address the problem. It really should have a section dedicated solely to that (see section 9.5).

9 “Walking, Wheeling and Cycling Priorities”

Please read the proposals and evidence provided in Appendix 1 for a full account of what I think is needed in a strategy for walking, wheeling and cycling (i.e. Active Travel).

In the Draft Transport Strategy, the statement in the section on Vision (page 2) referring to the Active Lives strategy is very promising: *“In Bolton we want people to move more, more often. The ambition is to create an environment where people are more active in their daily lives, which in turn will improve health and resilience across communities. This will increase both physical and emotional well-being; improve life chances, employability, decrease dependence on health and social care services and support prosperity.”* However, it does not seem to translate into real concrete proposals in the strategy.

9.1 Active Travel needs to be at the core of the strategy

Active travel interventions can have a significant impact on achieving every single one of the “Made in Bolton” ambitions that are listed on page 2 of the draft strategy (See section 5 in Appendix 1), yet it is hardly prioritised at all in this document. When it is mentioned it is often in a rather apologetic manner; for example: *A Greater Manchester ‘Streets for All’ approach, aligned with the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy, will include measures to ensure streets are safe for pedestrians whilst also recognising the role of cars, vans and taxis.* (page 96). The commitment to enabling active travel to be the first choice needs to be emphatic and unambiguous.

The number 1 priority for active travel should be the creation of the active travel network; currently shown as priority number 2. The term “robust” in this priority is far too vague; what is needed is a *comprehensive network of coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, attractive routes enabling people to choose sustainable means, including walking, wheeling, and cycling, to travel from anywhere to anywhere*, and this should be made explicit in the strategy. It needs to be made crystal clear that active travel provision will be made everywhere it is needed, not just where it is easy.

Cycle parking is important and needs to be provided, but it is hardly the number 1 priority. The strategy should simply commit to providing cycle parking in accordance with LTN1/20. References (see page 65) to out-of-date guidance documents such as the GM Cycle Design Guide and the GM Active Travel Design Guide (which does not even exist other than in an interim form) is not helpful when there is clear national guidance on the subject. In particular, attention is drawn to LTN1/20 Summary Principle 9, along with the extremely detailed information given in Chapter 11 of that guide.

The emphasis in the document on public rights of way appears to be simply a way to avoid solving the real problems. Routes need to go from anywhere to anywhere, and the places people need to get to are rarely located on a public right of way. From a strategic point of view, it is irrelevant whether a route is a public right of way or a highway. If a route that is up to Bee Network standard includes some parts that are designated “public rights of way”, that’s fine, but the vast majority of routes required in the network will not be. In any case, the cost of bringing our off-road footpaths, old railway lines and limited number of canal towpaths up to Bee Network standard will be huge, and for most Public Rights Of Way will not be possible. (For example the Middlebrook Way.) Certainly the PROW network should be maintained, but it will not form a major component of a successful transport strategy.

Priority 5 should not be required in the form shown if priority 2 is made more explicit as indicated above. What is needed in “all our district town centres” is the removal of through motor traffic, along with designs that make crystal clear the hierarchy of road users indicated in the Highway Code, to make the spaces more attractive to people who want to spend time there and accessible to people walking, wheeling and cycling. (See also section 9.4 on Active Neighbourhoods.)

The emphasis on “encouraging behaviour change” is similarly absurd; such “encouragement” has already been going on for decades with little or no effect. People’s behaviours are shaped by the environment in which they are placed, and the need is to enable behaviour change by changing that environment.

9.2 Active travel, diversity, deprivation and health outcomes

Pages 24 and 31 of the draft strategy contains information showing the poor performance of the Borough on a range of indicators including deprivation, car ownership and health outcomes, and their relationship to diverse groups, suggesting that Transport Poverty is a significant problem in the Borough. This leads to disadvantage in the jobs market and many other areas of potential opportunity. Active travel can be a game changer in addressing these problems⁶ Despite the recognition of these issues, the draft strategy fails to put forward any plan for harnessing the benefits of active travel provision to solve these, and commits to doing little about it until at least 2028.

9.3 Micro-mobility

It is good to see the importance of all forms of micro-mobility recognised (page 63), but there is nothing in the strategy to require active travel and micro-mobility routes to be designed to accommodate such traffic as cargo cycles (including larger electrically assisted ones used as an alternative to cars and vans and for logistics). Most of the facilities recently constructed, currently under construction, or planned do not meet LTN1/20 in this respect and are unlikely to enable the necessary shift to more efficient modes. There is a picture on page 63 that shows a Royal Mail cargo cycle of the type typically used for sustainable logistics, but there are few places in the borough where that could be used other than on roads, sharing with motor traffic. If the strategy is truly to support these vehicles, then it will need commitments to be made to enable that; in particular, cycle facilities will need to be designed to accommodate the Cycle Design Vehicle discussed in LTN1/20.

9.4 Active Neighbourhoods

Active neighbourhoods (sometimes known as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods) involve the filtering of streets in residential areas and high streets to remove through motor traffic – so called “rat-running” – from streets that are not designed to carry such traffic, whilst still providing for access. They have been shown in recent research to give a benefit to cost ratio of between 50:1 and 200:1⁷, and are by far the most cost-effective and rapidly deployable measure in enabling active travel.

Their effectiveness has been further confirmed very recently by a study from the DfT ordered by Prime Minister Sunak⁸. The same government research, based on studies of a large number of existing LTN projects, has shown that, despite a loud minority backlash, they are very popular with residents as shown in Figure 2.

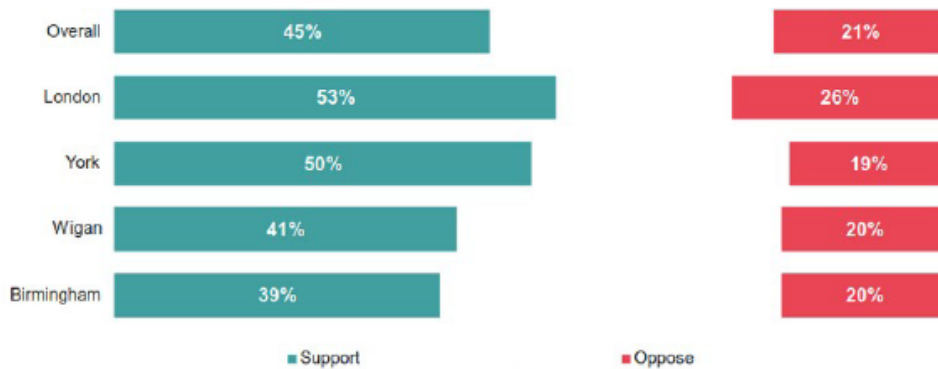
Despite this, the only mention of such measures in the whole strategy document is one reference to “*The prevention of ‘rat runs’ by vehicles through residential and quiet street, which important to*

6 Making the Connection. Sustrans, 2022. https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/10456/transportpovertypaper-sustrans_eng.pdf

7 *Impacts of active travel interventions on travel behaviour and health: Results from a five-year longitudinal travel survey in Outer London*. R Aldred, A Goodman and J Woodcock. *Journal of Transport & Health* 35, March 2024 <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140524000173>

8 *Low Traffic Neighbourhoods*, DfT, 2024. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f40adfa18510011011787/low-traffic-neighbourhoods-research-report.pdf>

develop an amenable and pleasant shop front improvement scheme” in Little Lever Town Centre specifically.



Q10: To what extent do you support or oppose the existing Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme in your local area?
 Base: All answering (1,835); Birmingham (316); London (388); Wigan (459); York (672);
 Fieldwork dates: October-December 2023

Figure 2: Popularity of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods according to DfT research

This is an issue that affects the whole borough, and attention to it could create lasting, beneficial change in a relatively short time and for a relatively low cost. It is shocking to see a proposed Transport Strategy in 2024 that does not even refer to this. This needs to be addressed urgently.

9.5 Travel to School

It is good to see school streets mentioned (page 79), and it is true that it is important to inspiring children to adopt an active lifestyle at an early age, but again the strategy is very weak on this. The emphasis is on encouraging, and hoping that school travel plans will solve the problem without serious interventions on the part of the Council to enable people to choose alternatives. This is key issue for the Borough, as scenes like those shown in Error: Reference source not found can be seen daily at school start and finish times around most schools in the Borough – both primary and secondary. Apart from being dangerous to children and parents travelling to the schools, this causes huge amounts of congestion on the roads and streets of the Borough.



Figure 3: Ashworth Lane outside Sharples Primary School

The strategy states the council will “work with partners to develop initiatives that encourage children to travel actively.” In fact, children don’t need to be encouraged to travel actively; huge amounts of experience and research have shown that they love to travel actively once enabled, by infrastructure, to do so! We need to see far less emphasis on “encouraging” and far more on

“enabling”. There needs to be a pro-active campaign by the council, along with interventions such as modal filters, parking restrictions and active neighbourhoods to address this problem.

Note that Paris is putting in place 300 school streets by 2026, starting with temporary measures on a trial basis, then completing them with permanent kerb protection and modal filters, and has already implemented 180 in little more than the time that it has taken Bolton to plan and implement a single trial, on one day a week, with a convenient car park nearby so that people don't really have to change behaviours.

9.6 Existing active travel projects

The strategy mentions some existing projects as evidence that progress is being made, and it is good to see some projects going ahead, particularly the completed gateway project centred on Trinity Street and the forthcoming Farnworth Streets for All project, which are far ahead of anything that has been done before in the Borough. Similarly, the Bolton Town Centre East project promises to make a good impact eventually, though progress is extremely slow on that.

However, some of these projects are themselves severely lacking in ambition. For example, a big deal is made of the Manchester Road Corridor project (page 62), but that project involves the creation of extremely poor and inadequate cycle infrastructure^{9,10} and absolutely no improvements for walking, or spending time there. This is on a road that could have made a flagship Healthy Streets intervention, given that there is a four lane, 50mph bypass running parallel to it for the full length.

We need the transport strategy to put down a marker that Bolton has really ambitious plans to transform the urban environment in favour of people over motor vehicles.

9.7 New developments

Page 70 (Priority 6) states that the council will: “*require new development to incorporate direct and coherent active travel facilities to local town and village centres*”. This is also mentioned on Page 89. In fact, this commitment has been in the Core Strategy since 2 March 2011, including references to the hierarchy of users. Policy P5 in that core strategy states, among other things, that:

“The council and its partners will ensure that developments take the following into account:

1. Accessibility by different types of transport, prioritising pedestrians, cyclists, public transport users over other motorised vehicle users.

... and ...

5. Parking, including parking for cycles and powered two-wheelers, in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix 3.”

9 Review of the Manchester Road Corridor (Phase One) Scheme
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oV9Q7JiPmQM_CD06aL51-agGhA-dMub9/view

10 Cycling Level of Service - Manchester Road ATF2 Scheme
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1z8JzrevTZt6Xf2aytNXiamLTdZ5jOAMG/view>

13 years later, it is clear that this policy has been pretty much ignored in all developments to date. It would be useful if the new strategy were to explain what will be done to make sure the policy is actually taken seriously in future.

9.8 Removing footway clutter and barriers

A significant obstacle to active travel is the amount of clutter and obstructions on the footways (mentioned on page 83) and cycleways, which makes walking unpleasant at best and impossible at worst, especially for people using wheelchairs, mobility scooters and pushchairs. The majority of this is caused by footway parking (mentioned on page 95), which also causes severe damage to the footways, but an increasing amount is caused by deliberate installations, including equipment boxes and such things as advertising boards, including electronic displays installed across a portion of the footway. (There are two examples of this on Knowsley Street in Bolton town centre, for example.) There is a concern that attempts to provide for the charging of electric cars may exacerbate this problem even further (mentioned on pages 20 and 103) which must be strenuously resisted.

It is good to see that the strategy raises many of these issues, but all of this requires firm, unequivocal commitments to be made in the Transport Strategy.

There also needs to be a clear commitment to removing all physical barriers on cycling routes and shared walking/cycling routes. This includes the removal of barriers that are present (or placed) for reasons related to “anti-social behaviour”, which are a policing problem, not a highway engineering problem. Such barriers are probably a breach of the Equality Act 2010, especially if there has not been an Equality Impact Assessment carried out. There needs to be a timetable established for the removal of such barriers.

9.9 Specific comments on statements relating to active travel

In addition to the points raised in this section, the following issues were identified with specific wordings in the draft strategy.

Page 8. “*Upgrading walking and cycling routes across Bolton, establishing a safer active travel environment.*” Weak. Should say: “Create a coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, attractive network of routes enabling people to choose sustainable means, including walking, wheeling, and cycling, to travel from anywhere to anywhere”.

Page 26. “*Local journeys should be safe and accessible for pedestrians, wheelchair users, parents and buggies and cyclists where appropriate.*” This implies that there are local journeys on which it is not appropriate for people to be safe or even be able to travel by bicycle.

Page 27. “*by preventing congestion from impacting perceptions of safety around walking, wheeling and cycling.*” Should read: “by preventing congestion from increasing the real and perceived danger for people walking, wheeling and cycling”.

Page 57. “*varies across the borough in regard to direct and attractive pedestrian routes*” should read: “varies across the borough in regard to direct and attractive walking, wheeling and cycling routes”.

Page 57. *“inadequate lighting during the months with shorter daylight hours; speeding vehicles; and a lack of safe crossings.”* should also include: *“Lack of safe, protected cycle infrastructure on busy roads”* and *“Heavy traffic on smaller streets that are not designed to carry such traffic, including residential streets.”*

Page 57. *“including our footways and Public Rights of Way”* should read: *“including our roads and streets, footways and Public Rights of Way”*.

Page 61. *“‘Wheeling’ is a consideration of wheelchair users...”* would be better as: *“‘Wheeling’ refers to wheelchair users”*.

Page 66. *“Bolton Council want to prioritise pedestrians equally with cyclists, which is important for inclusive design and support for the changes being made.”* In talking about priority between modes, Bolton Council should be following the priorities contained in the Manual for Streets. In decreasing order of precedence: Pedestrians, Cyclists, Public transport users, Specialist service vehicles, Other motor traffic. This guidance has been in place since 2007. This should be stated explicitly.

Page 66. *“Funded by ‘Mayors Challenge Fund’”* should read: *“Funded by the ‘Mayor’s Cycling and Walking Challenge Fund’”*

Page 70. The statement *“pedestrian routes should be illuminated, designed and maintained in a way that can reduce the risk of anti-social behaviour using passive and active surveillance techniques”* should apply to all forms of active travel and micro-mobility. People on cycles, wheelchairs and mobility scooters also need to be safe from anti-social behaviour?

Page 87. *“behaviour change initiatives to give people the confidence to use alternative modes for short trips.”* This is nonsense - change the environment and people will change their behaviours. People don't travel actively because it feels too dangerous, and until every bit of someone's route feels safe they will not change.

10 Road Safety vs Road Danger Reduction

The document contains too much use of the term *“Road Safety”*; all references to this should be changed to *“Road Danger Reduction”*.

“Road safety” implies that roads are intrinsically unsafe and the issue is how people can avoid being hit.

“Road Danger Reduction” puts the emphasis on removing the danger at its source, which is almost exclusively motor vehicles.

The draft Vision Zero strategy¹¹ also contains too many references to *“Road Safety”*, but it does also emphasise the importance of shifting to a Road Danger Reduction approach. For example in this statement:

11 Greater Manchester Draft Vision Zero Strategy. TfGM, 2024. <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/greater-manchester-strategy/vision-zero-strategy/>

“The RDR approach recognises that to make the region’s streets safe for all, the levels of danger faced by all road users must be reduced through creating an environment which encourages walking, cycling and the use of public transport. It involves proactive management of the city region’s roads to reduce the levels of danger experienced by road users who are the least protected from collision forces where motorised and non-motorised modes share road space.”

In a similar vein, references to “road accidents” should all be replaced with “road collisions”. Most collisions are the result of choices made by drivers, highway engineers, or decision-makers, not “accidents”, and it has long been recognized that changing the language on this is an important element of the changes needed.

Page 88 in the draft states: “Bolton Council have a statutory duty to identify common collisions and areas with a high proportion of road accidents. This helps us to understand causes and possible preventative measures that could be introduced.” This describes the statutory minimum that a council must do. It is important to look at near misses as well; this is well-known, standard Health & Safety practice. As part of the Vision Zero Strategy, it would be useful to work with GM Police on near miss data that could be made available from dash-camera and cycle-camera reports submitted through Operation Snap.

Also on page 88 is the priority: “Improve the pedestrian environment at Market Street / Church Street in Little Lever Town Centre as part of the Farnworth Town Centre Masterplan.” It is presumed this means the Little Lever Masterplan. Why specifically Little Lever? This is a strategic plan for the whole borough up to 2040. Is it to be inferred that nothing will be done about road danger reduction anywhere but Little Lever for the next 16 years?

11 Blind faith in technology

There seems to be a blind faith, in the draft strategy, that technology will solve all the problems, without any real justification for it. In particular, this is true of “electric vehicles”, “traffic management technology” and “autonomous vehicles”. Again, this comes across as an attempt to avoid doing the things that are really needed.

11.1 Regarding electric vehicles,

they can go some way towards reducing emissions, but current EVs take in the region of four or five years to break even on carbon emissions given the embodied carbon in manufacture. They can reduce tailpipe emissions, but they do not reduce significantly the very harmful PM2.5 particulates that come from brakes and tyres (and may even make that worse due to the increased vehicle weight). What they do not address at all is: congestion, the knock-on effect on sustainable modes, physical inactivity and the poor health outcomes that are associated with that, the problem of too many cars and not enough space to store them, etc.

Note that charging hubs (mentioned on page 103 as a solution for areas without off-street parking) implies that off-street parking is to be created, thus making areas without off street parking into areas with off-street parking. However, the volume of private vehicles needing to be stored or charged would be huge, making such an approach totally impractical. It will be far better to use car

share schemes for those occasions in which car use is really necessary (referred to elsewhere in the strategy as car clubs, though primarily in relation to Bolton Town Centre and large employee areas – pages 92 & 140), thus reducing the need to store so many vehicles that stand idle for around 96% of the time¹².

The graphs shown on page 99 are all meaningless. Showing percentage change without baseline figures tells us nothing, and the ratio of charging points to vehicles means nothing without an indication of the actual numbers of vehicles. Could it be that the change in Bolton is just from an extremely low base and the ratio of charge points to cars is because there are very few electric cars? This appears to be just an attempt to make Bolton's figures look good in comparison to GM and UK figures, which would be a very dishonest misuse of statistics. If that is not the case, then why not show meaningful figures?

11.2 Autonomous vehicles

fail for the same reasons and, for the foreseeable future would require massive investment in the highways infrastructure anyway. It is an interesting experiment to try out an autonomous vehicle route (though how that would be a better investment than a frequent, reliable bus service is a mystery), but it does not belong in a Transport Strategy such as this.

11.3 Traffic management technology & congestion

cannot solve the problem of fitting a quart into a pint pot. There are simply too many vehicles on the roads of the borough for the space available, and new space is not being manufactured at the moment nor in the foreseeable future. The only way to expand capacity is to knock down buildings, spread things out more and thus exacerbate the urban sprawl that is a major cause of the problem in the first place. Putting in place expensive technology to make tiny gains in the number of cars getting through a bunch of junctions is not going to make a dent in the problem of severe congestion. It is technology, not magic!

This issue is also mentioned on page 87: *“We are working with our partners to identify improvements to junctions and traffic signals where efficiencies can be gained with signal technology.”* This is unrealistic, as stated above. The council tried this with Astley Bridge junction and it appears to have made little or no change whatsoever, other than an apparent huge increase in collisions. There are simply too many vehicles on the roads and the only option is to provide alternatives. Public Transport and Active Travel provide those alternatives as they are far more efficient in their use of space.

12 (Car) Parking

All references to car parking seem to make the assumption that the number of cars needing to be parked is fixed and the amount of parking required has to be adjusted to meet that perceived demand. This is a classic “predict and provide” strategy, which is well known to have failed across

¹² *Standing Still*, Emily Nagler, RAC Foundation, 2021. <https://www.racfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/standing-still-Nagler-June-2021.pdf>.

all areas of transport planning¹³. Instead of saying there is not enough parking for the cars, why not say there are too many cars for the available space? The space is immutable, the volume of cars isn't. This applies both to the towns/centres, and to neighbourhoods, where the cars currently owned far exceed the capacity of the residential streets to accommodate their storage.

The references to car sharing and car clubs on pages 93 and 140 are encouraging, and it is good that this is recognised as being especially important for town centre living, which is growing rapidly in the Borough. However, this should be made a centrepiece of the strategy given the serious problems with footway parking and general clutter in streets that just do not have the space to store them. It is not sufficient to mention them just in reference to Bolton town centre plus an aside in a section on how to provide for ever greater numbers of huge, heavy private motor vehicles.

The statement “*Car parks are important for our local district centres and Town Council areas*” (page 6) has been made without justification. This sets absolutely the wrong tone; we need to reduce car parking, and making it far more expensive, so that people are encouraged to use more sustainable means of getting into busy centres. Where people really do need to use cars, they should be enabled to park away from the centres and use active travel or public transport to access those centres. Car parking within centres just encourages people to drive there, to the detriment of those centres as places for people.

There should be no such thing as free car parking in the towns and centres, at least until there is free public transport, and even then it should be severely limited. Free car parking without free public transport introduces perverse incentives to use private cars in preference to public transport and active travel.

Note that “*Enhancing car parking facilities in local town centres whilst encouraging modal shift to sustainable modes and enabling people to lead active and healthy lives*” (page 8) are mutually exclusive aims.

In addition, Paris, for example, is putting in place measures to limit the size and weight of motor vehicles by pricing parking according to the weight of the vehicle; Bolton needs to do something similar to combat the ever-increasing size of vehicles that people are expecting the borough to accommodate. This could also have a positive effect on road danger reduction as large SUVs are known to bring more danger to the roads than smaller, lighter, vehicles.

13 Timescales

The “Draft delivery timescales” are both inadequate and ill-thought out.

The idea that focussing active travel investment from now until 2027 only on the Public Rights of Way network will have any significant impact on active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling for everyday journeys as opposed to leisure) is absurd.

Cycle parking and shared bike libraries (2024-2027) will have little or no impact until a reasonably comprehensive network is already in place of coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, attractive routes

13 *Better planning, better transport, better places*. CIHT, 2019. https://www.ciht.org.uk/media/10218/ciht-better-planning-a4_updated_linked_.pdf

enabling people to choose sustainable means, including walking, wheeling, and cycling, to travel from anywhere to anywhere. Yet the creation of that network is stated to be starting only in 2028.

Similarly Developing initiatives to **encourage** children to travel actively (2024-2027) are unlikely to bear fruit if there is no safe network of routes to **enable** them to do that (which only starts in 2028).

By all means indicate that timescales are dependent on funding being available, but we need to see an ambitious plan that will lead to a true realization of the hierarchy of users discussed in section 5.

14 Engagement and Consultation

Little is said on engagement apart from some accounts of engagements that happened during the creation of the draft strategy. There really needs to be a statement on engagement going forward, in terms of both the general engagement to publicise and engage on an ambitious strategy for transport as part of setting the scene for change (see section 4), and the conduct of consultations.

In the past, consultation on highways schemes has been patchy, often with only a small number of stakeholders being consulted based on proximity to an intervention, and has been generally of very poor quality¹⁴. This has been characterised by significant levels of ambiguity in questions asked, questions being asked that the target audience will not have the expertise to answer (e.g, “do you think this will reduce congestion”), and questions that give the impression that a consultation is a referendum, which it absolutely isn’t. There has been a tendency to accept the opinions of people responding to consultations without checking their veracity through the gathering of hard evidence.

There has also been a failure to engage with some sections of the community (though participation has been poor across the board), such as ethnic minorities who may not be used to looking at the communication channels that have typically been used for consultations.

In this context, it would be helpful to include in the Transport Strategy a statement on how engagement and consultation will be improved in the future, which could also help to bring people on board with change, perhaps linking to a separate strategy on engagement and consultation.



Active Travel in Bolton

Dr Grahame Cooper
Version 1.1 – 28th April 2023

About the cover photograph

The cover photograph was taken in Copenhagen in 2019. It captures many of the elements that characterize a culture of active travel. The hierarchy of road users is clear in that walking is in the foreground, with priority emphasized by a zebra crossing over the side road, people are cycling in normal clothes, making everyday trips in a wide space that is clearly separated from people walking and protected from motor vehicles, which are still present but very much in the background and much smaller in number.

1 Vision



The vision for active travel is to revolutionise the urban environment to create:

- A local environment in which people of all ages are able to spend time, play, shop, exercise, travel actively, and enjoy the spaces around their homes in safety, free of obstacles.
- A physical environment in which streets are pleasant places to be, the air is clean, and noise is at a minimum.
- A borough in which people of all ages can travel safely and comfortably from anywhere to anywhere by active means if they so choose, so that active travel is considered first for short journeys, and where those people who really have to use motor vehicles encounter less traffic congestion.

2 Scope

2.1 Active Travel

‘Active Travel’ (or active transportation or mobility) means using physically active means, like walking, wheeling¹ or cycling, as an alternative to motorised transport (notably cars, motorbikes/mopeds etc.) for the purpose of making everyday journeys.^{2,3,4,5,6}

Our primary purpose is to enable people to make the switch from motor vehicles to active travel (known as “mode shift”) for as many journeys as possible, by changing the urban environment and by making people aware of the benefits both to themselves and to the communities they are part of.

2.2 Related Strategic Areas

Active Travel has the potential to bring benefits in a wide range of strategic areas, and depends on those areas for its success. The main areas identified here are:

Public Transport, Active Lives, Planning and Urban Design, Climate Emergency, Air Quality and Noise, Transport Poverty and Social Exclusion, Health Care, The Local Economy, Highways and Transport.

The relationships of active travel to these areas, in terms of **benefits** and requirements, are discussed in more detail in Section 5.

3 Aims

In order to realise this vision, we need to achieve:

1. A council culture in which the needs of active travel are considered before motor traffic in all highways developments, and serious steps are taken to secure resources for improving roads and streets to enable active travel. (This is in line with the Manual for Streets⁷ and Policy P5(1) in Bolton’s core strategy⁸.)

1 “Wheeling” refers to making use of a wheelchair to get around.

2 *Working together to promote active travel: a briefing for local authorities*. Public Health England, 2016
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-a-briefing-for-local-authorities>

3 *Active travel: Trends, policy and funding*. D Hirst & N Dempsey. House of Commons Research Briefing. 2020.
<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8615/>

4 *Future of mobility: urban strategy*. UK government policy paper, 2019
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-of-mobility-urban-strategy>

5 *Active travel*. Sport England web site.
<https://www.sportengland.org/research-and-data/research/active-travel>

6 *Active Travel & Physical Activity Evidence Review*. Sustrans for Sport England. 2019
<https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/active-travel-summary-evidence-review.pdf>

7 *Manual for Streets*. Department for Transport. HMSO. 2007 (In particular, see Table 3.2.)
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1072722/Essex_Manual_for_Streets_Redacted.pdf

8 *Shaping the future of Bolton*. Bolton Council Core Strategy, 2011
<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/downloads/file/666/core-strategy>

2. Roads and streets that are safe and attractive to people of all ages and abilities wishing to travel by active means for all or part of their journey from anywhere to anywhere.
3. Broad grass-roots and business support for the vision and for the steps that need to be taken to realise it.
4. A serious commitment and leadership from the elected council towards the reallocation of road space in favour of active travel.
5. A clear picture of the current state of the Borough's roads and streets in terms of enabling active travel, and of the potential for active travel in the Borough.
6. A significant reduction in the number of motor vehicles being driven or parked on roads and streets (including footways).
7. A significant improvement in the standard of driving across the borough.

4 Objectives

The goal is that these should be SMART objectives: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant (addressing the aims) and Time specified.

1. 50% of trips in Bolton Borough undertaken by active travel by 2030 in line with national targets^{9,10,11}. (Addressing aims 1, 2, 6) [Note, it has been suggested by Dame Sarah Storey that the Greater Manchester "Right Mix" targets¹² are not sufficiently ambitious¹³.]
2. The majority of residential streets filtered to remove through traffic by 2030, and any remaining through-routes on minor roads are clearly and explicitly justified. (Addressing aims 1, 6)
3. Adoption, by the end of 2023, of an alternative measure for the optimization of road and junction designs, ensuring that people movement by active means (including walking, wheeling and cycling) is properly taken into account, in line with the commitment previously agreed in the *Made to Move* strategy¹⁴.

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- 9 *Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking*. HM Government, 2020. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf
 - 10 *Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener*. HM Government, 2021. (Section 3v.) https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1033990/net-zero-strategy-beis.pdf
 - 11 *About Us*. Active Travel England web page. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england/about>
 - 12 *Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040*. GM Combined Authority. <https://tfgm.com/2040-transport-strategy>
 - 13 *Opinion: first nine months as active travel commissioner*. Dame Sarah Storey, Cycling UK, 2023 <https://www.cyclinguk.org/article/opinion-sarah-storey-her-first-nine-months-active-travel-commissioner>
 - 14 *Made to Move*. C Boardman, TfGM. 2017. https://assets.ctfassets.net/xfhv954w443t/3jT3fDcFNiDC2Pkh9be8g8/9d00b504c11607a2a832eae8cf51dbe/Made_to_move.pdf

4. All main through routes have walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure to a standard complying with the Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide¹⁵ and the LTN1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design guidance¹⁶, by 2030. (Addressing aims 1, 2, 6)
5. All active travel routes in the Borough to be free of barriers to accessibility, in line with the Greater Manchester Active Travel Mission¹⁷, by the end of 2024. (Addressing aim 2)
6. Adoption, by the end of 2024, of a strategy for achieving Vision Zero¹⁸ (could be as part of the Transport Strategy). (Addressing aims 1, 2, 7)
7. Consult, by the end of 2024, on the acquisition of powers under Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004¹⁹ to enforce a range of moving traffic and parking offences, with a view to applying in 2025. (Addressing aims 6, 7)
8. A sustained programme of activities to achieve a widespread understanding among Bolton's communities and businesses of the benefits of active travel to themselves, to their neighbourhoods and to the planet, starting during 2023. (Addressing aims 3, 4)
9. An audit of the whole borough to establish the current state of active travel facilities, building on the TfGM Bee Network audit, along with an estimate of what is needed to unlock the potential for active travel and a gap analysis to identify what needs to be done, to be completed within 2023. (Addressing aims 2, 5)
10. The needs of active travel are properly addressed in all of the Council's policies as they are renewed and, in particular, in the Transport Strategy before it is approved, expected within 2023. (Addressing aims 1, 2, 3, 4)

5 Relationships to other strategic areas

5.1 Public Transport

Public transport is essential for journeys that are too long for most people to undertake by active means or for people who are unable to travel actively. However, it rarely provides a door-to-door service, so often needs to be combined with other means; for example, walking to bus stops or cycling to a railway station – so called multi-modal journeys. This combination has been described

15 *Greater Manchester Streets for All Design Guide*. GMCA, 2023. To be published in 2023. Link to be added.

16 *Cycle infrastructure design (LTN 1/20)*. UK Government Department for Transport, 2020. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

17 *Refreshing Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission*. Dame Sarah Storey. 2023 https://democracy.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/documents/s24503/Greater_Manchester-s_Active_Travel_Mission.pdf

18 *What is Vision Zero?* Vision Zero Network, web site. <https://visionzeronetwerk.org/about/what-is-vision-zero/>

19 *Traffic Management Act 2004, Part 6*. UK Government, 2004. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/18/part/6>

as “an absolute essential”²⁰. Consequently, whilst Public Transport is not active travel, it is closely linked to it, and each places requirements on the the other.

5.2 Active Lives

Bolton has a particularly serious problem of inactivity, with approximately a third of adults in the Borough getting less than half an hour per week of moderately intense activity²¹.

Active travel has the potential to provide a particularly effective means of addressing this as it allows people to become active whilst going about their daily lives rather than having to carve out time and possibly expense as a separate activity. A review of evidence carried out by Sustrans for Sport England⁶ concluded that:

“There is strong and substantial evidence that active travel interventions are effective at increasing walking, cycling and physical activity” and “There is an overwhelming case for investing in active travel to support physical activity”.

UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines²² also state:

“It is recommended that people are active every day. Spreading activity across the day or week can help make the guidelines achievable within daily living; for example, walking, wheeling or cycling for daily travel is often the easiest way to get physically active,”

As well as the impact on physical health, this has been shown to bring significant benefits for mental health^{2,23}; both of these have a knock on effect on the Health Service and the latter on the Police Service.

5.3 Planning and Urban Design

The planning process has an impact on the need for travel as well as the accessibility of travel. For example, urban sprawl has resulted in long journeys to work, centralization of services such as health care has resulted in significant journeys to access those services, concentration of shops and other commercial services into trading parks has had a similar effect. As well as having walkable and cyclable streets, it is important to have services located within a walkable and/or cyclable distance. This is encapsulated in the concept of the 15 (or 20) minute neighbourhood which, despite recent negative publicity and conspiracy theories, is a popular aim²⁴.

20 *The integration of active travel and public transport in Norwegian policy packages: A study on ‘access, egress and transfer’ and their positioning in two multilevel contractual agreements.* Research in Transportation Business & Management, **40**, 2021

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2210539520300948>

21 *Percentage of physically inactive adults 2020/21.* Public Health England.

<https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/profile/physical-activity/data#page/3/gid/1938132899/pat/15/par/E92000001/ati/401/are/E06000047/iid/93015/age/298/sex/4/cat/-1/ctp/-1/yr/1/cid/4/tbm/1/page-options/tre-ao-1>

22 *UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines.* 2019

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/832868/uk-chief-medical-officers-physical-activity-guidelines.pdf

23 *Guidance - Physical activity: applying All Our Health.* UK Government Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2022

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health/physical-activity-applying-all-our-health>

5.4 Climate Emergency

Domestic transport has the largest share of UK greenhouse gas emissions of any sector across the economy, at 23% in 2019, and the majority (55%) of these emissions are from passenger cars¹⁰.

Along with public transport, mode shift towards active travel has the potential to make a significant contribution to addressing this.

5.5 Air Quality and Noise

Air pollution²⁵ and noise pollution²⁶ have a negative effect on physical and mental health. Excessive use of motor vehicles is a major cause of both of these problems and mode shift towards active travel has the potential to improve them^{27,28,29}.

5.6 Transport Poverty and Social Inclusion

The current transport system is having a detrimental effect on efforts to level up opportunities and reduce inequality³⁰. This problem is exacerbated by the current crisis in fuel and energy costs, and has a disproportionate effect of people with disabilities³¹. Active travel can play a large part in addressing this problem; for example, *“Improving provision for cycling can also have a positive impact on employment opportunities”* and *“Overall, access to services improves with access to public transport. However, poor access to public transport does not necessarily mean poor access to services, particularly if services are accessible by walking”*³⁰.

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- 24 *Most Britons would like their area to become a ‘15-minute neighbourhood’*. Finton Smith, YouGov, 2023
<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2023/03/06/most-britons-would-their-area-become-15-minute-nei>
- 25 *Health consequences of air pollution on populations*. World Health Organization, 2019.
<https://www.who.int/news/item/15-11-2019-what-are-health-consequences-of-air-pollution-on-populations>
- 26 *Noise pollution is a major problem, both for human health and the environment*. European Environment Agency, 2020.
<https://www.eea.europa.eu/articles/noise-pollution-is-a-major>
- 27 *Improving air quality by walking and cycling*. Sustrans, 2017.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4467/improving-air-quality-walking-cycling.pdf>
- 28 Our position on improving air quality. Sustrans web site.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/policy-positions/all/all/our-position-on-improving-air-quality/>
- 29 *Active travel: local authority toolkit*. UK Government Department for Transport, 2022.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/active-travel-local-authority-toolkit/active-travel-local-authority-toolkit>
- 30 *Transport and inequality: An evidence review for the Department for Transport*. S Gates, F Gogescu, C Grollman, E Cooper, P Khambhaita, NatCen Social Research, 2019.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953951/Transport_and_inequality_report_document.pdf
- 31 *The cycle of transport poverty: how the cost-of-living crisis is locking disabled people indoors*. E Johnson, Transport for All, 2023.
<https://www.transportforall.org.uk/news/the-cycle-of-transport-poverty-how-the-cost-of-living-crisis-is-locking-disabled-people-indoors/>

Motor-centric urban design, with its emphasis on maximizing the throughput of motor vehicles, results in community severance, which has a detrimental effect on communities³². Active travel has the potential to address this directly, as people tend to meet more when travelling actively, and through reduced motor traffic. The measures taken to enable active travel involve the removal of severances by a diverse range of means such as improving junctions, reducing speed limits and introducing crossing points.³³

5.7 Health Care

Improvements to public health resulting from increased use of active travel can result in significant savings to the National Health Service². It has been estimated that switching to active travel for short motor vehicle trips could save £17bn in NHS costs over a 20-year period, with benefits being accrued within 2 years for some conditions².

The health benefits and resulting healthcare cost savings from active travel are now being recognised through £12.7 million worth of social prescribing trials, including walking, wheeling and cycling³⁴. An urban environment that is conducive to adopting these modes for everyday travel would give healthcare providers such as GPs more opportunity to engage in such social prescribing as well as having a positive effect on physical and mental health generally. This has been recognised in a series of policy proposals put forward by the Greater Manchester Directors of Public Health and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership³⁵.

As more services have been centralised, access to healthcare can be difficult for people without access to affordable mobility. Attention is often focussed on the cost of car parking at hospitals and the inability of hospital car parks to meet demand, but little attention is given to the costs of using public transport and active travel to access services. The Royal Bolton Hospital has serious problems with car parking and motor vehicle access, and experiences serious congestion, especially at shift change times. However, the site is inaccessible for active travel as it can be reached only via particularly hostile routes, especially for people on cycles. Enabling alternatives to motor vehicle access could help to alleviate those problems.

5.8 The Local Economy

The benefits to the local economy of investment in enabling active travel are well-documented^{29,36}. For example, Bolton Town Centre could be revitalized by the introduction of safe, comfortable and

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- 32 *Community severance and health – A novel approach to measuring community severance and examining its impact on the health of adults in Great Britain*. M Higginson, J Stockton, P Ancaes, S Scholes, JS Mindell, *Journal of Transport & Health*, 2022.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140522000408>
- 33 *The Role of Active Travel in Improving Health*. Sustrans Active Travel Toolkit, 2017.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4464/4464.pdf>
- 34 *Walking, wheeling and cycling to be offered on prescription in nationwide trial*. UK Government, 2022.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/walking-wheeling-and-cycling-to-be-offered-on-prescription-in-nationwide-trial>
- 35 *Greater Manchester Active Travel Public Health Manifesto*. Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, 2020.
<https://www.gmhsc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GM-Active-Travel-Public-Health-Manifesto.pdf>
- 36 *Active Travel and Economic Performance*. Sustrans Active Travel Toolbox, 2017.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4472/4472.pdf>

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- 32 *Community severance and health – A novel approach to measuring community severance and examining its impact on the health of adults in Great Britain*. M Higginson, J Stockton, P Ancaes, S Scholes, JS Mindell, *Journal of Transport & Health*, 2022.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2214140522000408>
- 33 *The Role of Active Travel in Improving Health*. Sustrans Active Travel Toolkit, 2017.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4464/4464.pdf>
- 34 *Walking, wheeling and cycling to be offered on prescription in nationwide trial*. UK Government, 2022.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/walking-wheeling-and-cycling-to-be-offered-on-prescription-in-nationwide-trial>
- 35 *Greater Manchester Active Travel Public Health Manifesto*. Greater Manchester Health & Social Care Partnership, 2020.
<https://www.gmhsc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/GM-Active-Travel-Public-Health-Manifesto.pdf>
- 36 *Active Travel and Economic Performance*. Sustrans Active Travel Toolbox, 2017.
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/4472/4472.pdf>

convenient active travel routes from the surrounding areas. This is particularly important as the amount of residential property in the centre increases and the need to make short journeys outstrips the availability of space on the roads.

One of the key barriers to the creation of infrastructure is a perception that reduced volumes motor traffic will be bad for business. It is important to listen to the concerns of businesses and handle them in a sensitive way, providing evidence where fears are unfounded, accommodating them where they are real, and ensuring that they are aware of support that is available³⁷. Support from local businesses can be very helpful in dealing with the political resistance to change.

5.9 Highways and Transport

The provision of infrastructure for Active Travel is part of Highways and Transport, so it will be essential for the Transport Strategy serve the needs of active travel and, indeed, for active travel to be placed at the centre of transport strategy and policy.

However, Highways and Transport itself can benefit significantly from a move towards active travel. The increasing population and demand for travel is placing an ever increasing load on our highways and there is not room to increase capacity to match this, and the increased damage to roads is stretching the Council's already very tight roads maintenance budget as the cost of materials and energy rises³⁸. The only solution is to provide for alternatives to the private car. Public transport, walking, wheeling and cycling have the greatest potential to address this need.

The 2021 GM Travel Diary Survey³⁹ shows that nearly 80% of all car and van trips in the borough are less than 10km, which is within cycling distance for most people, and a third are less than 2km, which is within walking distance. (The figures for 2019 were similar.) Thus walking and cycling are able to cover a significant volume of these journeys. In fact, these can be thought of as particularly pessimistic figures and the availability of shops and services within walking and cycling distance will probably increase as neighbourhoods become more amenable to these modes.

In considering investments in infrastructure, it is important to consider which modes of transport have the most potential to bring about mode shift away from motor vehicles, especially private cars. The Sustrans Greater Manchester Walking and Cycling Index⁴⁰ for 2021 shows that the demand for this exists; for example, 60% of respondents supported the creation of more cycle tracks along roads, physically separated from motor traffic and pedestrians, and 68% supported the creation of more low (motor) traffic neighbourhoods.

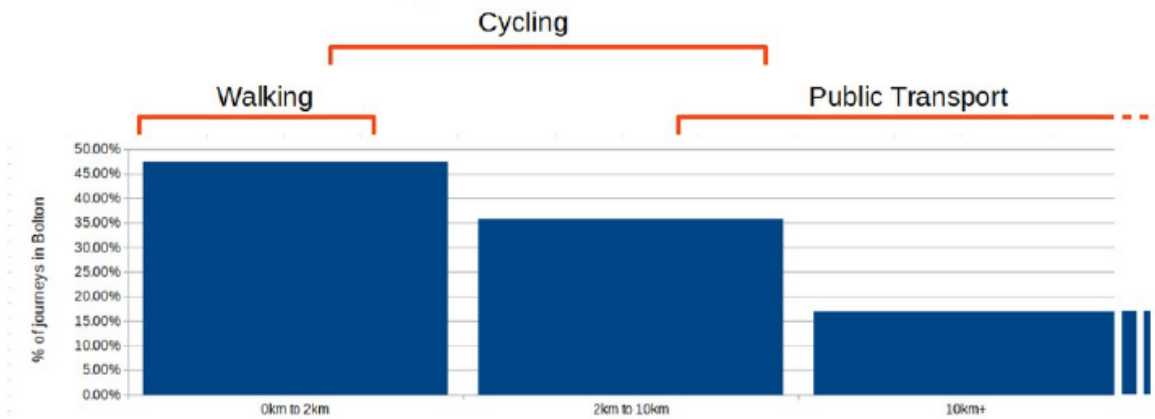
37 TFGM launches portal to help businesses encourage employees to use public transport and active travel. <https://greenergreatermanchester.com/posts/tfgm-launches-portal-to-help-businesses-encourage-employees-to-use-public-transport-and-active-travel/>

38 Bolton Council struggling to cover costs of road repairs due to Russian invasion. Bolton News, 2022. <https://www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/20877935.bolton-council-struggling-cover-costs-road-repairs-due-russian-invasion/>

39 Greater Manchester Travel Diary Survey. Transport for Greater Manchester, 2022. <https://tfgm.com/trads>

40 Greater Manchester Walking and Cycling Index for 2021. Sustrans, 2022. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/10485/greater-manchester-walking-and-cycling-index-2021.pdf>

Why these modes?



The introduction of electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) also has the effect of extending viable distances for cycling considerably beyond the figure shown above⁴¹. The growth in electrically assisted cargo cycles means that it is no longer necessary to use HGVs and vans for many “last mile” deliveries, giving the potential to reduce significantly the amount of motor traffic on urban streets^{42,43}. The switch to sustainable “last mile” deliveries is already being seen in cities that are building the infrastructure to support it, for example Amazon e-cargo cycles can already be seen in Manchester and London⁴⁴, and new businesses are emerging around cycle logistics⁴⁵.

41 Do people who buy e-bikes cycle more? A Fyhri & HB Sundfør. Transportation Research Part D: Transport and Environment. **86**, 2020.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S136192092030609X>

42 *The future of last-mile deliveries: Understanding the local perspective*. Local Government Association, 2022.

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/future-last-mile-deliveries-understanding-local-perspective>

43 *Delivering The Last Mile: Scoping the Potential for E cargo Bikes*. L Blazejewski, G Sherriff, N Davies

<https://usir.salford.ac.uk/id/eprint/59007/8/Delivering%20the%20Last%20Mile%20-%20Blazejewski%20et%20al%202020.pdf>

44 *Amazon expands electric cargo bike deliveries in Manchester and London*. Amazon, 2022.

<https://www.aboutamazon.co.uk/news/sustainability/amazon-expands-electric-cargo-bike-deliveries-in-manchester-and-london>

45 *Cargo bikes and cycle logistics gaining traction*. R Armitage, 2020.

<https://greenfleet.net/features/09122020/cargo-bikes-and-cycle-logistics-gaining-traction>

Appendix F

Public health directorate response to Bolton draft transport strategy consultation

General points

- The very great length of the document (150 pages), and the large number of priorities (38) is likely to negatively impact engagement and the influence the strategy can have.
- The acknowledgement of the broad range of priorities of importance to Bolton Council and the Vision partnership that transport can impact on is welcomed.
- As highway authority, the council has a great deal of direct control over the local road network; this is an excellent and rare opportunity to leverage this to achieve a range of outcomes important to the council. In terms of deliverability of this strategy, it would be beneficial if areas where the council does have this greater degree of control were highlighted. This contrasts with sections, such as rail, where the council does not have direct control but instead must exert influence as one among a number of local, regional and national stakeholders.
- The document is structured by transport mode, however public health priorities are overarching and actions that can be taken to improve population health are spread across all modes. Links between modes are not clearly made (e.g. no mention of rail priority 5 'safer access to rail stations by walking and cycling' in the 'Walking, cycling and wheeling' section. It is not easy to pick out priorities and key actions linked to each of the 6 overarching objectives. The great length of the document risks that the sections are read and used separately, meaning that the links between sections are missed and so the overarching objectives may not be achieved.
- The potential mechanism of action linking the priority to the objective it is stated to influence is in many cases unclear.
- Health inequalities often fall repeatedly on the same groups of people, creating a spiral of multiple disadvantage. The strategy frequently identifies transport inequalities among 'vulnerable groups' however the characteristics identifying these groups are not specified; nor is it clear whether the same groups are referred to in all the sections. This will make it difficult to demonstrate that the strategy has attempted to mitigate inequalities to create a more equitable transport network. Transport has already been identified as a topic for the upcoming Age Well strategy, this lack of clarity will make it difficult to coordinate these strategies.
- Transport affects health directly, but also indirectly – through its relationship with the wider determinants of health. This influence occurs through four main channels¹: These areas are considered separately below.
 - active travel
 - air and noise pollution
 - road safety
 - social exclusion.

Climate emergency

¹ The Health Foundation (2021) *How transport offers a route to better health*. <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/how-transport-offers-a-route-to-better-health> Accessed

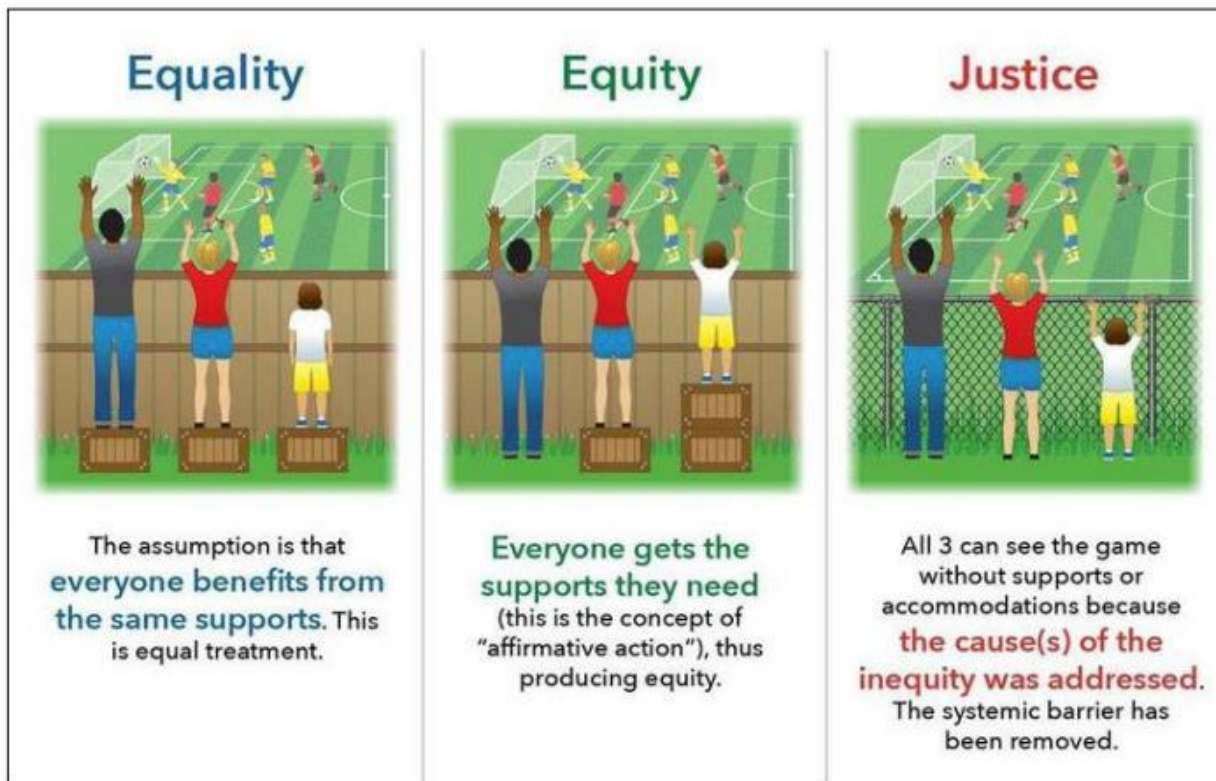
- Bolton Council declared a climate emergency in 2019. In 2021, the borough of Bolton produced 1.2 million tonnes of CO₂e (Carbon dioxide equivalent). The largest source of emissions was transport at 35%. Emissions on minor roads and A roads were responsible for 65% of overall transport emissions². Bolton Council's climate strategy has a section on 'buildings, transport and operations' which includes the aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. The climate strategy also aims to 'increase the proportion of journeys of less than 5km made by walking or cycling'. It also contains a section on 'climate change and health', setting out the impacts of the climate emergency on health, and the importance of health equity.³
- The reference to the climate strategy in the draft transport strategy is welcomed, as is the vision 'to work towards a zero-carbon transport network' (p2).
- The aim of a transport network is not merely moving vehicles, but moving people and goods; connecting communities, providing opportunity. We can (and must if we are to meet the challenge of the climate emergency declared in 2019) shift to doing these things in a way with fewer harms and more benefits.
- The strategy hints repeatedly at the need for modal shift (e.g. p8, p14, p18, p31, p61, p87, p121, p133, p136, p137), however it makes no clear unambiguous statement in support of shifting journeys out of private cars into walking/ cycling/ wheeling and public transport. Private cars will remain a part of the transport mix in the coming years, but they can play a smaller part. Without such a statement, the strategy does not provide a secure basis for making prioritisation decisions to support such modal shift, and risks not achieving health and climate aims.
- The draft transport strategy aims to take 'a balanced approach, ensuring that all modes of travel are considered and connected' (p2). Equality and equity are important concepts within public health and a core part of the climate strategy, as illustrated by Figure 1. Essentially it is the difference in focus between equality of inputs and equality of outputs. Offering everyone the same opportunity is not truly fair if other factors mean that some people are less able to take it up or benefit from it. Our aspiration for our transport network should be that it is equitable, this may involve unequal distribution of resources if this is necessary to overcome existing inequalities, including those the strategy acknowledges currently exist within our transport system. In a transport context, this may include greater promotion or availability of a form of transport specifically at a group who currently less able or willing to use it, or reallocation of road space to or from certain modes of transport to promote them. For example, converting a general traffic lane or junction turn to a bus gate or bus lane is not equal inputs, but it may be equitable in terms of outputs if it improves bus journey time and reliability allowing many more people to make a journey.

Figure 1: Health equity⁴

² Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. (2024). UK greenhouse gas emissions: local authority and regional <https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/723c243d-2f1a-4d27-8b61-cdb93e5b10ff/uk-greenhouse-gas-emissions-local-authority-and-regional>

³ Bolton Council (2021). Bolton Climate Change Strategy: A Joint Framework for Bolton to Act on the Climate Emergency (2021-2030) <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/climatechangestrategy>

⁴ P10 Bolton Council (2021). Bolton Climate Change Strategy: A Joint Framework for Bolton to Act on the Climate Emergency (2021-2030) <https://www.bolton.gov.uk/climatechangestrategy>



Public Health England. (2020). PHE Screening inequalities strategy.

Active travel

- The inclusion of active travel (primarily walking, cycling and wheeling but inclusive of other modes such as skating, running, kick scooting) as a priority is welcomed.
- There are strong links with Bolton Council's adopted Active lives strategy, it is good to see this referenced.
- There is great health benefit to be had from more journeys being made by active modes (walking, cycling, and wheeling for a whole journey or as a part such as to or from a public transport stop or station).
- The 1st priority under 'Walking, cycling and wheeling' is 'More safe and secure cycle parking'. While important, we would question whether this is the number one priority action – The GM walking and cycling index 2023 identifies 'Safety, including road safety and personal safety, is the single largest barrier to cycling.'⁵
- The proposed action under the cycle parking priority is to 'develop a cycle parking strategy'. We question whether the further development of a strategy is necessary given the relatively low cost of installation of Sheffield style stands, and existing guidance on placement. We recommend that instead the action is to install cycle parking in line with GM and national guidance on position and style, prioritising locations along Bolton's active bee network routes, Bolton town centre, district centres and high streets, and other places identified by residents and partners as key attractors.
- We welcome the focus given to supporting the public rights of way network (footpaths, bridleways and byways) which is an asset for active leisure, contact with nature which has wellbeing benefits, and tourism potential which can boost the economic prosperity of the borough.
- We question however the extent to which the public rights of way network can currently and in the future function as a transport network. 82% of women and 40% of men would feel unsafe walking alone after dark

⁵ P8 Sustrans (2024). Greater Manchester Walking and Cycling Index 2023. <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/the-walking-and-cycling-index/greater-manchester-walking-and-cycling-index>

in a park or other open space⁶. A transport network needs to enable journeys during daylight hours and after dark and be resilient to adverse weather. According to the Active Bee Network standards this will include providing sealed surfaces (for wet weather use) and lighting (for use after dark), adequate path widths, together with proximity to places people want to travel to. It may be that some public rights of way will be able to be upgraded to meet this standard, but this will certainly not be the case for all. The impact on nature and wildlife of the upgrades necessary may be unacceptable, the work may be very expensive compared to using existing lit paved roads, or they simply will not serve key housing, employment, education or other services.

- We are pleased to see in the parking section (p95) reference to the impacts of pavement parking, which can block and damage pavements, and cause particular issues for wheelchair users, people with visual impairments and those with prams or buggies⁷.
- This issue is most strongly represented in the ‘cycling, walking and wheeling’ section of the strategy, but there are also strong links with the ‘highways’, ‘parking’ and ‘inclusive transport network’ sections.

Air and noise pollution

- Air pollution is the single biggest environmental threat to health in the UK, shortening tens of thousands of lives each year. After air pollution, noise causes the second highest pollution-related burden of disease in Europe, and is responsible for more life years lost than lead, ozone or dioxins. Inequalities in environmental quality and accessibility all contribute to health inequalities in England. The poorest people often live and work in the most polluted environments. They also have higher rates of underlying health conditions that may make them more vulnerable to the effects of pollution. areas of highest deprivation and those with high proportions of ethnic minorities are disproportionately affected by high levels of air pollution⁸
- No mention is made of noise pollution, although draft GM Vision Zero strategy notes ‘Speed also causes noise stress and worsening air quality’ (p31). We are pleased to note that the Bolton transport strategy endorses adoption of Vision Zero.
- We are pleased to see support for roll out of electric vehicles, since they have the potential to greatly reduce emissions of air pollutants, particularly NOx, at the roadside through eliminating exhaust emissions. However electric vehicles will still produce roadside non-exhaust emissions, from processes such as tyre and brake wear and road surface abrasion, together with any emissions resulting from electricity generation⁹. Many of our residents are struggling with cost of living¹⁰, and buying an electric car may not be affordable. Across Greater Manchester, 9 in 10 respondents are taking action to save money as a result of cost of living increases; 1 in 3 are cutting back on non-essential journeys in their vehicle, significantly higher than the GB equivalent. 3 in 10 are walking more to save money but only 6% are cycling more to save money¹⁰. Electric vehicles should therefore be promoted and enabled alongside wider modal shift (greener cars alongside fewer cars) to obtain the full health benefits necessary.

⁶ ONS (2022). Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/perceptionsofpersonalsafetyandexperiencesofharassmentgreatbritain/16februaryto13march2022>

⁷ Department for Transport (2023). Pavement parking: options for change.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/managing-pavement-parking/pavement-parking-options-for-change>

⁸ Environment Agency (2023). *State of the environment*. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/state-of-the-environment-health-people-and-the-environment>

⁹ UK Air (nd). *AQEG Advice - on the concept of 'zero emission vehicles'*. <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/research/aqeg/zero-emission-vehicles>

¹⁰ GMCA (2024). Greater Manchester Resident survey wave 11. [Resident Surveys - Greater Manchester Combined Authority \(greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk\)](https://greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/resident-surveys)

- This issue is not strongly represented in any section of the strategy, though there are elements in the ‘highways’ and ‘electric vehicles’ section.

Road safety

- Road traffic collisions are a major cause of deaths in children, and comprise higher proportions of accidental deaths as children get older. Parents cite vehicle speed and volume as reasons why they do not allow their children to walk or cycle, thereby reducing opportunities for physical activity. Bolton has a significantly higher rate than England of children aged 0-15 years who were killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions per 100,000 population.¹¹
- the greatest proportion of those who suffer death or serious injury are pedestrians; people from our most deprived communities are most likely to be killed or seriously injured on our roads.¹²
- We are pleased that the strategy supports implementing GM’s draft Vision Zero strategy in Bolton. The GM strategy takes an approach of safe streets; safe road users; safe speeds; safe vehicles; post crash response. It is not entirely clear how the priorities given on p88 map across to the GM strategy to provide a local response.
- The strategy makes few references to freight or logistics, is it intended primarily as a passenger transport strategy? GM’s draft Vision Zero strategy notes ‘After cars, goods vehicles are the largest contributor to vulnerable road users being killed or seriously injured on our roads. Due to their size, weight and poor visibility HGVs are more likely to cause serious injury or death if involved in a collision’.¹³
- Although primarily located within the ‘highways’ section of the strategy, this issue also has strong links with the ‘cycling, walking and wheeling’ and ‘inclusive transport network’ sections.

Social exclusion

- The contribution that healthcare makes to our overall health is far less than 50 per cent. It is other factors that make up the majority of the contribution¹⁴. These other factors are predominantly the wider determinants of health or the social determinants of health. Transport provides residents access to a range of facilities and services including work, education, social activities, all activities which promote health, together with access to health services.
- As the Health Foundation¹⁵ notes, Private motorised vehicles offer great convenience and mobility to some users, but they also contribute to reducing the mobility of others. These unintended consequences include:
 - Marginalised road users. Without bus and bicycle lanes, congestion marginalises other road users, making bus services less reliable and contributing to a perception of danger. Every 10% drop in bus speed caused by congestion leads to a like-for-like drop in bus passenger numbers.

¹¹ OHID (2024). Public Health Profiles. [Public health profiles - OHID \(phe.org.uk\)](https://publichealthprofiles.org.uk/)

¹² GMCA (2024). Vision Zero Strategy: Reducing Road Danger in Greater Manchester, Draft - January 2024. <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/greater-manchester-strategy/vision-zero-strategy/>

¹³ GMCA (2024). Vision Zero Strategy: Reducing Road Danger in Greater Manchester, Draft - January 2024. <https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/greater-manchester-strategy/vision-zero-strategy/>

¹⁴ Local Government Association. (nd). *Social determinants of health and the role of local government*. https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.52%20Social%20Determinants%20of%20Health_05_0.pdf

¹⁵ The Health Foundation (2021) How transport offers a route to better health <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/how-transport-offers-a-route-to-better-health>

- Reduced services. As people abandon public transport in favour of car ownership, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain unprofitable services. This could lead to higher fares and poorer availability for those who still depend on public transport as their only way of staying connected.
- Reshaped built environment. Car dependence encourages the development of built environments that are predominantly adapted to the needs of drivers, leaving others behind.
- As the strategy notes, in Bolton as a whole according to 2021 census data, 25% of households have no access to a car or van. This varies with deprivation: 8% of households in the areas of Bolton that are among 10% least deprived in England have no cars or vans, rising to 41% of households in areas that are among the 10% most deprived in England.
- We welcome the priority to provide green infrastructure in the design and maintenance of our highways and footways. The strategy could potentially go further on this point, for example maintaining highway areas such as verge space as wildflower meadows, and further enhancing the borough's street trees. Access to nature has mental health benefits, but unequal access¹⁶.
- Inclusive icons should be used throughout i.e. replace the people with walking sticks, a range of positive age icons are provided by Centre for Ageing Better¹⁷



- Transport has a strong role in placemaking, with streets comprising a large part of our public realm. It is surprising that the strategy makes no reference to 'active neighbourhoods' an approach taken in Greater Manchester where areas of residential streets are closed to through motor traffic. In an active neighbourhood, access by motor vehicles remains but through routes can only be used by people walking, cycling and wheeling. Alongside main road routes, this provides quiet alternative routes for active travel but also includes strong placemaking elements as items such as benches and planters to provide a space for people. Several active neighbourhood schemes have been proposed for Bolton.
- The proposed action in relation to electric vehicles priority 2 'make charging points accessible to areas of Bolton with higher proportions of dwellings with no off street parking' is to install on highway charging units. We suggest this be preceded by the development of a kerbside strategy to ensure that electric vehicle charging is balanced with other kerbside needs. A range of kerbside needs to be considered might include active travel facilities (maintaining pavement width and space for cycle lanes where traffic volume and speed is too great for cycling in mixed traffic, cycle parking including for larger non standard cycles and residential parking using cycle hangers), benches, green infrastructure including street trees, parklets and rain gardens, space for people to chat and children to play.
- Car parking availability and cost can be used to manage private vehicle use alongside the use of other modes e.g. bus fares that compare favourably in price with parking prices, resident parking schemes to manage overspill around areas of demand. We are pleased to see mention of the need to balance parking 'alongside the principle of encouraging sustainable transport modes' in the plan to update the parking strategy although it is unclear whether this refers to Bolton town centre only or across the borough.
- This issue is not strongly represented within any section of the strategy although it does have links with 'an inclusive transport network'.

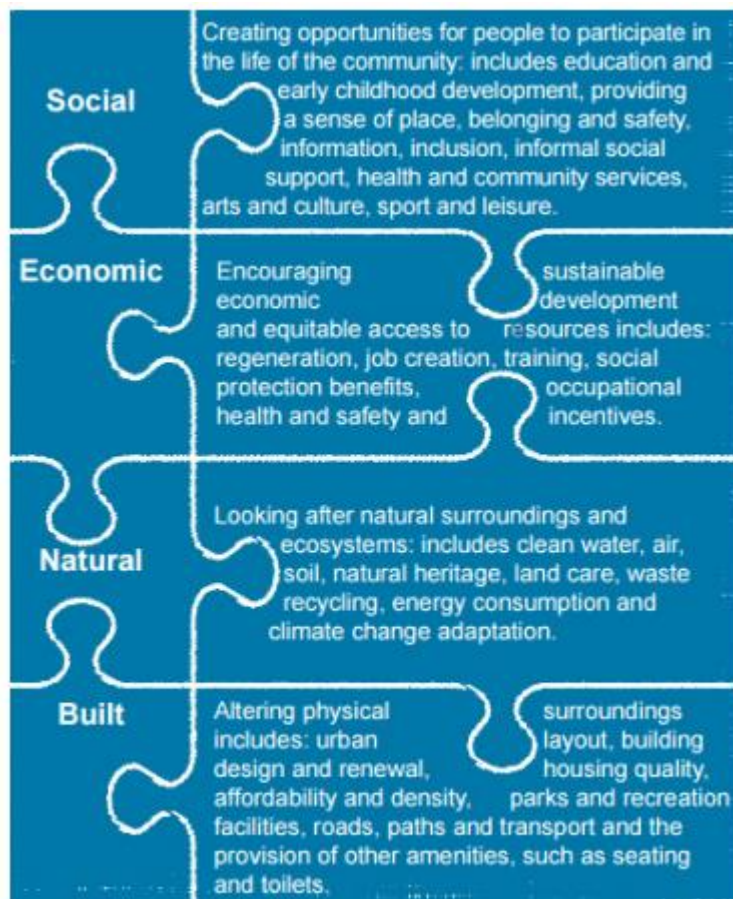
¹⁶ Mental Health Foundation (2021). Nature: How connecting with nature benefits our mental health.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/research/nature-how-connecting-nature-benefits-our-mental-health>

¹⁷ Centre for Aging better (2021). Range of free-to-use 'age-positive' icons launched to replace stereotypical symbols of ageing.

<https://ageing-better.org.uk/news/range-free-use-age-positive-icons-launched-replace-stereotypical-symbols-ageing>

Figure 2: How can we improve health?¹⁸




Source: www.local.gov.uk/health-all-policies-manual-local-government

¹⁸ Local Government Association. (nd). *Social determinants of health and the role of local government*. https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/22.52%20Social%20Determinants%20of%20Health_05_0.pdf

Further resources

The Health Foundation (2021) How transport offers a route to better health

- <https://www.health.org.uk/publications/long-reads/how-transport-offers-a-route-to-better-health>
 - Transport affects health directly, but also indirectly – through its relationship with the wider determinants of health. This influence occurs through four main channels:
 - active travel
 - air and noise pollution
 - road safety
 - social exclusion.
- Road transport accounts for 35% of nitrogen oxide and 12% of particulate matter (also called particle air pollution) emitted into the air in the UK. These include PM10 particles (particles with a diameter of 10 micrometres or less) and PM2.5 particles (diameter 2.5 micrometres or less), both of which are small enough to penetrate the respiratory system. Outdoor air pollution is associated with premature mortality and increased risk of hospital admissions from respiratory disease, lung cancer and cardiovascular illness.
- In the UK, long-term exposure to air pollution is attributed to between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths each year. Air pollution from road traffic tends to be worse in the most deprived areas, despite lower vehicle ownership rates in those areas, because more deprived areas tend to be more urban.
- The health impacts of noise are well-documented too, with unwanted sound associated with higher levels of stress, anxiety, sleep deprivation, high blood pressure and cardiovascular disease, as well as cognitive impairment in children. The World Health Organisation has previously identified noise from transport as the second most significant environmental cause of ill health in Western Europe.
- Road safety standards have improved significantly in the past few decades, but vulnerable road users, such as pedestrians and cyclists, remain at a higher risk of serious injury or death than drivers. Collisions are also distributed unequally across society, with children and young adults in the most deprived areas experiencing a higher risk of injury and death than those in the least deprived areas.
- The quality of a transport system captures a broad range of factors, including journey times and the availability of public transport, as well as the reliability and affordability of services.
- Barriers to people using public transport vary geographically, and across demographic groups, but they all have the power to make it hard – or completely impossible – for people to access essential aspects of day-to-day life. This can contribute to stress, fatigue, low mood and social exclusion.
- Marginalised road users. Without bus and bicycle lanes, congestion marginalises other road users, making bus services less reliable and contributing to a perception of danger. Every 10% drop in bus speed caused by congestion leads to a like-for-like drop in bus passenger numbers.
- Reduced services. As people abandon public transport in favour of car ownership, it becomes increasingly difficult to sustain unprofitable services. This could lead to higher fares and poorer availability for those who still depend on public transport as their only way of staying connected. While local authorities can subsidise ‘socially necessary’ routes, declining profitability and financial pressures due to austerity can put services at risk. For example, in 2019, local authority funding for buses was £163m lower (in real terms) than in the previous decade, contributing to 3,000 fewer supported bus services in England.
- Reshaped built environment. Car dependence encourages the development of built environments that are predominantly adapted to the needs of drivers, leaving others behind. One study of planned housing communities in England found that most were designed around car use, with little-to-no funding for walking or



cycling. It concluded that just 20 new communities would lead to 200,000 car-dependent households, as developments were built in locations far from town centres and local services.

Department for Transport (2019) Transport, health, and wellbeing: An evidence review

- https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5dd6b167e5274a794517b633/Transport_health_and_wellbeing.pdf