

We Asked,  
You Said,  
We Listened



# INTRODUCTION

## Consultation Process

The Bolton Transport Strategy consultation was prepared by the Bolton Council Engagement Team with support from the supplier, AECOM. The consultation ran for four weeks from 26th February 2024 and the draft Transport Strategy document was available on the Bolton Council website.

Bolton Council sought views of residents, businesses and wider stakeholders in relation to the proposed priorities included in the Bolton Transport Strategy. Respondents were asked if they could complete their response by using one of the following methods:

- Completing the online survey provided.
- Contacting the communications team.

In addition to the consultation being available online, paper copies were available upon request, and it was made accessible with an in-depth summary of the document uploaded with voice over for the blind and visually impaired.

## Consultation Findings and Response

The online survey received 200 responses, with 122 individuals using the opportunity to provide further comments.

Such comments have been reviewed and have helped inform further changes to the final document.

To gain an understanding of how the feedback has helped shape the Bolton Transport Strategy, the following slides show the process of receiving and understanding the feedback, and the actions taken to acknowledge and respond.

# WALKING, WHEELING AND CYCLING: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards Bolton's walking, wheeling and cycling network, we asked for feedback on our eight dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

There was a high level of support for the priorities dedicated to walking, wheeling and cycling, including agreement with efforts to make bus waiting facilities safer to access, support for improving Bolton's Public Rights of Way, and, more widely, balancing the need for car use across the strategy as a whole. Concerns were raised about the need for safer crossings across the borough to integrate with local walking and cycling networks. The consultation process also received comments expressing a desire for the strategy's priorities to emphasise the current lack of active travel funding.

## We listened

As a result, we have further emphasised our wish to maintain and improve Bolton's Public Rights of Way, better connecting Bolton's active travel network. This will also include prioritising improvements to current pedestrian and cyclist crossings as well as providing new crossings at suitable locations. Future funding opportunities and their allocation are topics subject to change, making it unsuitable to include this information in the document. However, the strategy details existing schemes underway across the borough dedicated to providing a robust network of walking, wheeling and cycling routes, showcasing funding already allocated to Bolton's network.

# BUS: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards Bolton's bus services and facilities, we asked for feedback on our eight dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

The responses received from the consultation process often called for enhanced bus connectivity and frequency across the borough, with specific suggestions on which routes require more buses. The responses suggest that Bolton's bus services also need to be more reliable for those depending on them most. Current buses are infrequent, unreliable and overall make commuting and bus trips stressful and time-consuming. Concerns were also raised repeatedly regarding the limited bus access to key health facilities across the borough.

## We listened

The Transport Strategy identifies Bolton's dependency on buses and highlights that those most dependent may not be adequately served. Given the feedback received, further emphasis has been placed on making bus services accessible for all, with an awareness that bus services must connect the borough to key services, including health facilities. Improved bus waiting facilities and information will make their use less stressful, and introducing bus services that support the evening economy and shift workers will make commuting by bus more accessible. Both are further developed priorities within the Strategy. Bolton Council will also seek to bring forward improvements through the bus network review process as part of Bus Franchising across Greater Manchester.

# RAIL: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards Bolton's rail services and facilities, we asked for feedback on our four dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

A main theme of the responses was a strong demand for restoring and improving Bolton's current rail services, including specific services and certain station stops. There was also a significant push for integrating Bolton into Greater Manchester's Metrolink tram system, with a particular emphasis on the need for Bolton to be better connected to Greater Manchester.

## We listened

Bolton's Transport Strategy emphasises that improving Bolton's rail service frequency and reliability should be a high priority. The strategy now more strenuously emphasises that we are committed to working with our partners at TfGM to progress Metrolink services to Bolton as a long-term aspiration, as detailed in the Strategy. In addition, the document now emphasises more clearly that rail reliability is crucial for realising inclusive growth across Bolton and our communities require reliable services.

# HIGHWAY: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards Bolton's highways, we asked for feedback on our five dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

The comments regarding Bolton's highways were predominantly negative. Bolton's congestion issues were frequently addressed, with specific areas identified for improvement. There was also calls for enhanced road maintenance and infrastructure across Bolton, emphasising the importance of well-maintained roads for overall traffic efficiency.

## We listened

The Strategy's highway priorities reflect these concerns. The importance of highway maintenance will be identified in an updated Highway Asset Management Policy and Strategy. Paying closer attention to the maintenance of Bolton's highway will benefit all road users and multiple modes of transport, underscoring its necessity. The strategy will prioritise the smarter use of the borough's highway assets and technology to help manage traffic congestion. The strategy now makes clearer our intention to prioritise asset maintenance with our partners, which facilitates the allocation of funding to Bolton.

# PARKING: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards Bolton's parking facilities, we asked for feedback on our two dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

Your responses reflected a mix of concerns and suggestions regarding parking management and infrastructure improvements. A frequent issue raised was the inadequate signage within Bolton Town Centre to help residents and visitors find the most suitable parking. This led to comments about Bolton not having sufficient parking provisions overall, with calls for certain areas of the borough to increase their number of car parks.

## We listened

As a result, our priority to update Bolton's Parking Strategy will seek to maximise the use of existing council-owned car parking facilities through expanded advertisement. Ensuring that those wishing to park in the town centre understand the most suitable car park to use will help address the lack of understanding about the parking facilities Bolton has to offer. Furthermore, this approach will also contribute to improving issues related to illegal parking and obstructive pavement parking by providing alternative options.

# ELECTRIC AND AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards electric vehicles (EVs) and autonomous vehicles, we asked for feedback on our five dedicated priorities through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

The inclusion of priorities dedicated to EVs was met with scepticism regarding the environmental benefits of EVs and their sustainability. There were also themes of confusion surrounding their inclusion within the strategy, with questions about their relevance to Bolton's transport network, especially considering frequent views that electric vehicles are not affordable for a large proportion of Bolton's population. The necessity for autonomous vehicle priorities was also questioned, with the reasoning that they did not fit the strategy's timescales and that such vehicles are not sustainable.

## We listened

Affordability is a key factor regarding EVs as they come at a premium, which Bolton Council appreciates. The inclusion of priorities for electric and autonomous vehicles aims to focus more on their future use in Bolton by both businesses and individuals. We need to consider current Government policy and funding to facilitate their adoption. Bolton Council is addressing broader technological changes to prevent the borough from falling behind its neighbours. Therefore, EV priorities remain integral to the Strategy, with a focus on current advancements such as the Be.EV Taxi Membership.



# DOCUMENT STRUCTURE: We Asked, You Said, We Listened

## We asked

To gain an understanding of the stakeholder perspective towards the Transport Strategy document, we asked for general feedback on such through our consultation process. Over the course of four weeks, residents, businesses, and wider stakeholders were encouraged to provide their opinions and queries about the priorities and, more broadly, the Transport Strategy.

## You said

Around 14% of responses detailed the Strategy document as being inaccessible due to its length and use of jargon. It was also reported that, at times, the points made within the Strategy lacked meaningful detail. The objectives were met with a positive response, but there was questioning around how many of them would be accomplished.

## We listened

Bolton Council appreciates the responses regarding the document's accessibility, and since the consultation, the Transport Strategy document has undergone a major restructuring while maintaining its core findings and priorities. Text-heavy sections have been converted into accessible graphics. Sections of text aimed at supporting the priorities have been moved to appendices to prevent them from overshadowing the main document. More defined actions for the priorities have been marked within the document to indicate how the priorities can and will be achieved, helping to support the delivery plan also included in the Strategy.