

Strategy and Policy Overview Report

Report of the Director of Place Management

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Cycling and cycling-related activity is a key element of the Greater Manchester (GM) and Stockport Active Travel agenda to support and encourage more people to consider their travel choices. The development of cycle schemes is informed by policies and strategies at national, regional and local level and includes input from multiple directorates within the Council, including Highways, Health and Education.
- 1.2 Policies and guidance have been subject to regular change over recent years at all levels. The Council has endeavoured to follow and adhere to all requirements in scheme development which align with the requirements contained in the documents described below. Further, the Council is legally required to produce supplementary documentation such as action plans etc. to complement national and regional policy and strategy changes.
- 1.3 In addition to the strategy and policy input, there are a range of guidance documents which direct the delivery of the schemes the Council put in place.

2. The National Context

- 2.1 There are several key pieces of legislation, key strategies and guidance documents issued at national level by the Department for Transport and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (previously DLUHC) that the Council is required to follow in relation to cycling and transport generally.
- 2.2 The most relevant of these pieces of legislation and policies are:
[Transport Act 2000](#)
- 2.3 Under the Transport Act 2000, local transport authorities are required to produce Local Transport Plan's (LTP's) every 5 years to set out the aims and objectives for improving accessibility, air quality and transport across the local area as well as outlining the measures being undertaken to achieve these improvements.

- 2.4 Stockport Council is part of the GM LTP (GM2040) process, and this is currently in the process of developing the next iteration of the Local Transport Plan.
- 2.5 Stockport Council is also developing a borough Local Transport Strategy. This will update on the One Stockport Transport Plan 2022 Draft developed to support the developing Local Plan at that time

[Traffic Management Act 2004](#)

- 2.6 The Traffic Management Act places a duty of network management on local authorities to manage their own road network, meaning all transport schemes need to achieve improved traffic flows and management. In addition, the legislation grants significant powers to local authorities such as: powers to develop their own roadworks permits and utility works permits – which need to be obtained by contractors for all infrastructure schemes, and flexibility over parking enforcement (e.g. blue badge inspection and civil parking enforcement).
- 2.7 The Council can include in these permits requirements to facilitate the safe movement of cyclists as part of necessary diversions while roadworks are taking place. This can include signing alternative routes.
- 2.8
- 2.9 All infrastructure schemes will require the necessary road works permits to make any changes to the highway and officers carry out the necessary preparatory work (e.g. assessing risks etc.) before granting a permit. Road works may also result in temporary road closures which again requires risk assessment before approval and traffic management measures.

[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)

- 2.10 The NPPF sets out in detail the Government's planning policy for England. It contains 17 chapters related to planning and how planning policy should be applied by local authorities. There is particular emphasis in this framework that planning applications by developers and decisions made by planning authorities should align with and follow the principles of promoting of sustainable transport (e.g. active travel and sustainable modes) and the promotion of healthy and safe communities.
- 2.11 This guidance states that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals so that opportunities to promote walking, cycling and public transport use are identified and pursued. Officers from the Highways and Transportation Service work closely with colleagues from Planning to identify these opportunities.

- 2.12 Since its introduction in 2012, it has been revised 6 times with the latest revision open to consultation until 24th September 2024. The changes made to this framework are considerable and the Council is currently reviewing these to assess any impacts to the Council's work and how best to align planning with housing and employment targets.

Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

- 2.13 This Strategy was launched in 2017 to set out the Government's priorities and policy for improving the cycling network and increasing the attractiveness of cycling for making shorter, medium and longer distance journeys by 2040.
- 2.14 Alongside this Strategy, the Gear Change policy paper was published which details all the actions that needs to be taken to achieve the aims set out in the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy which included the release of new cycling design guidance (LTN 1/20) and the creation of Active Travel England, a new executive body with the responsibility of promoting active travel in England and enforcing these design standards with the power to enforce these design standards.
- 2.15 The full Strategy was then relaunched in 2021 as CWIS2.

3. The Regional Context

- 3.1 Since the Greater Manchester Devolution Deal in 2014, the Mayor of Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority have been developing and delivering the Bee Network across the region to promote and encourage the use of sustainable modes for travel.

Bee Network

- 3.2 The Bee Network aims to make it easier to get around the region by bus, tram, train, walking, wheeling, or cycling. It is Greater Manchester's vision for a joined-up travel network that works for everyone and includes the further ambition of making it easier to get around Greater Manchester via safe, affordable, reliable services.

[Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040](#)

- 3.3 The Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy (GMTS) includes the region's target of being carbon neutral by 2038 through the introduction of the 'Right Mix' policy. This policy aims for 50% of all transport trips to be made by sustainable modes. Cycling schemes contribute to several of the Transport Strategy's Network Principles for developing a customer focused transport system which is Reliable, Integrated, Environmentally Responsible and Inclusive.

3.4 The 2040 Strategy is structured around 5 'Spatial Themes' to help develop an integrated set of interventions where specific issues in different parts of Greater Manchester can be addressed, and which are appropriate to the type of location and journey made.

3.5 In Stockport, cycling to contributes to 3 of these aims these themes:

- Connected Neighbourhoods: Where the Council aspires for local neighbourhoods to be safer and more pleasant to walk or cycle around and help achieve the 'Right Mix' vision.
- Travel Across the Wider City Centre: Where the Council's ambition is that our regenerated town centre is easy to get to, particularly by sustainable modes with improved walking and cycling links which will lead to less congested roads.
- Getting into and Around the City Centre: The Council aims to improve the sustainable transport links between Stockport and Manchester City Centre with several cycling schemes demonstrating this ambition such as the Fallowfield Loop scheme which includes many improvements to cycling infrastructure to ease cycling journeys from Stockport into Manchester and beyond.

3.6 The 2 remaining spatial themes in this document are City to City Links and A Globally Connected City.

3.7 The Greater Manchester 2040 Transport Strategy is currently under review with a consultation on an updated strategy expected to take place next year.

[Vision Zero Strategy](#)

3.8 In January 2024, the GMCA approved a draft Vision Zero strategy for consultation to reduce the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSIs) on GM roads.

3.9 The key aspiration is to reduce traffic-related injuries and deaths on our roads to zero by 2040. The final strategy is expected to be published in November 2024.

3.10 The Vision Zero Strategy identifies 8 Safe System Change Mechanisms that when pursued together can be used to deliver Vision Zero across Greater Manchester. The Safe System Change Mechanisms are:

- Leadership and Coordination

- Standards and Training
- Design and Engineering
- Compliance and Enforcement
- Legislation and Regulation
- Investment
- Education and Communication
- Research, Monitoring and Evaluation

3.11 A GM-wide Action Plan (including for the initial 3 years of the Strategy up to November 2027) is being developed by the Safer Roads Greater Manchester Partnership (of which Stockport Council is a member) and is expected to reflect identified issues within each borough, as well as feedback from the stakeholder and public consultation. This is expected to be published and adopted at the same time as the Vision Zero Strategy in November 2024.

3.12 One of the main expectations of this strategy and plan is that people will be safer and more confident using active travel, and so cycling.

GM Streets for All guidance

3.13 Streets for All is Transport for Greater Manchester's approach to everything that is on street in Greater Manchester. Streets for All places a strong emphasis on reducing traffic and road danger, and on improving the street environment for everyone travelling along, spending time in, or living on them. This people-centred approach to street planning, design and network management is needed to deliver the Bee Network, support growth and productivity and enable us to meet our decarbonisation targets.

3.14 This guidance is used by Stockport Council and its principles incorporated in scheme design development.

Made to Move

3.15 In 2017 Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner Chris Boardman published the Made to Move Action Plan which outlined the 15 steps Greater Manchester will take to transform the way we travel around the region. A key target in this plan is to double and then double again the number of cyclists in the region through building one of the world's best cycling networks and creating a genuine culture of cycling.

3.16 The Made to Move Strategy outlined 15 steps to achieve this transformation, some of which are:

- Develop a new highway design guide

This was achieved through the development of the Streets for All Design Guide

- Ensure all upcoming public realm and infrastructure investments, alongside all related policy programmes, have walking and cycling integrated at the development stage
- Establish a ring-fenced, 10-year, £1.5 billion infrastructure fund, starting with a short-term GM Mayor's Active Streets Fund to kick-start delivery for walking and cycling.

This was achieved through the creation of the Mayoral Challenge Fund where Stockport has received funding for several MCF Schemes such as Stockport Interchange, A6 to Bramhall Cycle Link and Broadstone Hall.

- Call for devolved powers to enforce moving traffic offences, and develop strategies for reducing anti-social driving, through public spaces protection orders.

Stockport Council submitted a request to the Secretary of State for Transport to receive these new powers with this request under review

- Deliver year on year reductions to the risk per kilometre travelled, by establishing a task force to improve safety on roads and junctions.

The adoption of the Vision Zero Strategy in Greater Manchester and Draft Action Plan will contribute to the reduction of killed and seriously injured (KSI) on our roads

3.17 The Made to Move Strategy was refreshed and updated to the Greater Manchester Active Travel Mission when Dame Sarah Storey became Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner in 2022 to reflect her vision and priorities.

3.18 Dame Sarah Storey's vision for walking and cycling includes:

- New infrastructure to be delivered under 4 principles for building a connected network: Universally Accessible, Longer Routes, Active Neighbourhoods
- Home to School Travel where children and families are encouraged to walk/cycle to school
- Cycle Hire and access to cycles where the number of and access to bike libraries is increased across the region
- Integration with Public Transport where active travel to be the preferred choice for the first and last mile of a journey

- Road Danger Reduction where the Vision Zero Strategy and Draft Action Plan are adopted across Greater Manchester

Dame Sarah Storey has also proposed the below actions to achieve this vision:

- Renew the commitment for every part of the Bee Active Network to be universally accessible
- Publish a plan for the expansion of GM's cycle hire scheme to additional areas of Greater Manchester
- Adopt Vision Zero, clearly stating a timeframe and plan for all people in GM to commit to
- Deliver a new plan for travel between home and school that reduces the number of children being driven less than 2km to their school and helps support Greater Manchester's ambitions for improved air quality.
- Work with GM's local authorities and the Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector to create an expanding, accessible and diverse range of training offers to suit local needs that reaches all residents of GM by 2025. Collaborate with Bikeability to assist them in achieving the ambition to ensure that every child is able to achieve level 2 Bikeability by 2025

3.19 The Council is working with Transport for Greater Manchester and partners to collectively deliver these ambitions in Stockport.

4. The Local Context

4.1 It is Stockport Council's ambition to deliver a high quality and fully connected cycling network by 2029 through the Bee Network and through various schemes such the Bramhall to A6 Cycle Link, Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 scheme and others.

[One Stockport Borough Plan: Our Vision for 2030](#)

4.2 The three-part vision of the Borough plan:

- One Heart: Because at the heart of Stockport are its people and the communities in which they live.
- One Home: Because we believe that Stockport is a great place to live, where no one should be left behind.
- One Future: Because we can grow, create and deliver a thriving future for Stockport.
- Supports the delivery of an improved sustainable transport in the borough.

- 4.3 This has been further iterated in the One Future Plan where one of the 5 big things Stockport aims to deliver is Clean Green Transport with aims to provide more sustainable transport options for our residents so we can create well-connected green, inclusive and safe neighbourhoods. A key part of this will be delivered by making walking and cycling more accessible for residents.
- 4.4 The Borough Plan is supported by the aims of the Council Plan 2024 - 2027
- 4.5 The Plan has the overarching theme of Climate Action Now which will in part be delivered by delivering new walking, cycling and wheeling routes to support the move to low-carbon and active transport options. This is acknowledged to support Our 4 Big Ambitions particularly investment, regeneration and creating jobs where it increases accessibility to affordable, reliable travel for people and wellbeing in neighbourhoods where it supports delivering our Active Communities' Strategy, 'Stockport Moving Together', to encourage healthy, physically active lives

Stockport's Local Plan

- 4.6 The Council is required to produce a Local Plan which, includes our aims for improving transport, accessibility etc. in the borough over its lifetime. The Local Plan is informed by a comprehensive, proportionate, and up-to-date evidence base and responds to the key challenges facing the Borough over the next 15 years, including the need to address the impacts of the climate emergency. The Local Plan needs to be consistent with the most recent national planning policy set out in the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), accompanying Planning Practice Guidance and strategic plans at Greater Manchester level.
- 4.7 We are currently reviewing our local plan proposal in terms of the NPPF changes being brought forward by the current government. Until the new plan is in place we will continue to use our current planning policies which include transport objectives and related policies to support the delivery of active travel.

[One Stockport Economic Plan](#)

- 4.8 The One Stockport Economic Plan acknowledges the need to reduce congestion in our Town Centre, on key arterial routes and high streets that will help improve air quality and the health of Stockport's residents through more active travel.
- 4.9 There have been several schemes delivered by the Council to encourage more cycling and sustainable travel by residents such as Stockport Interchange and the Helix Ramp which connects the Trans Pennine Trail with

the new bus station as part of an integrated transport network. Through these schemes, the Council aims to encourage more cycling and reduction congestion.

[Stockport Walking and Cycling Plan 2019 - 2029](#)

- 4.10 The Council's aims and objectives for cycling are detailed in Stockport's Walking and Cycling Plan 2019 – 2029 which outlines how we will:
- Create and maintain a high quality and fully connected walking and cycling network within Stockport.
 - Enable 'last mile' walking and cycling to enable connections with public transport.
 - Use targeted promotion and training to help all groups to consider walking and cycling, and to improve safety.
 - Ensure that neighbourhoods and district centres are walking and cycling friendly to promote trips by bike and on foot.
 - Ensure that employment, residential and retail and leisure activities in the Town Centre easy to get to on foot and by bike.
 - Improve and maintain high quality walking and cycling connections with local networks, to better connect surrounding areas to the Town Centre
- 4.11 The principles included here extends to other Council policies and project areas such as:
- [Active Neighbourhoods](#)
An Active Neighbourhood aims to help residents to make short trips on foot, by cycle or by public transport, instead of jumping in their car. Active Neighbourhoods also seek to make our roads a safer place for all users. Active Neighbourhoods in Stockport are part of a Greater Manchester-wide programme to improve the areas where people live.
 - [Stockport Active Communities Strategy 2022 - 2030](#)
This strategy was adopted in 2022 and sets out Stockport's vision to create a culture of active communities in the borough. Tackling physical inactivity is both pivotal and catalytic to addressing many of the local health, social, regeneration, transport, environmental and educational inequalities, and priorities.
 - [Rights of Way Improvement Plan \(ROWIP\)](#) – This improvement plan sets out how the Council will improve and maintain Stockport's Rights of Way network which includes: footpaths, cycleways, bridleways etc.

[Five Year Transport Delivery Plan \(2021–2026\)](#)

- 4.12 The Greater Manchester Delivery Plan includes the Stockport District Local Implementation Plan (DLIP) This Implementation Plan sets out how Stockport Council will work towards the priorities set out in the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 over a 5-year period. The Delivery Plan includes actions supporting economic growth, improving the environment and increasing social inclusion by building on Stockport's planned and current transport projects. While the 5-year Delivery Plan considers large, medium, and long-term schemes, the Implementation Plan focuses on local and neighbourhood level priorities and interventions to 2025.
- 4.13 There are several outcomes in Stockport's 5 Year DLIP which relate to cycling which are:
- Outcome 2 - Enhanced connections to and within Stockport town centre by foot, bike, and public transport
 - Outcome 4 - Transport Network in Stockport will be clean and green and well maintained
 - Outcome 5 - Stockport residents, workers and visitors have good access to Rapid transit connections and local public transport connectivity

Design Guidance used for Cycling Schemes

- 4.14 There are a wider range of guidance and other advisory documents in the public domain regarding transport. These are the guidance documents Stockport Council are required to consider and use in various elements of street/cycle scheme design at the current time. It should be noted that that when unavoidable factors are involved like road space etc., the Council designs are based on the best possible fit which might not be mentioned in these guidance notes. This will be undertaken in consultation with the funding provider for the scheme as relevant.

[Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design](#)

- 4.15 LTN 1/20 provides guidance to local authorities on delivering high quality, cycle infrastructure including:
- planning for cycling
 - space for cycling within highways
 - transitions between carriageways, cycle lanes and cycle tracks
 - junctions and crossings
 - cycle parking and other equipment
 - planning and designing for commercial cycling
 - traffic signs and road markings
 - construction and maintenance
- 4.16 When the Council applies for funding from Government for scheme, we are required to demonstrate that the proposals are compliant with LTN 1/20.

GM Streets for All Design Guide

- 4.17 TfGM have recently developed design guidance, based on a range of advisory documents, that they view necessary for delivering the essential aims of the Streets for All strategy which are:
- An attractive and inclusive environment
 - A safe and connected cycling experience
 - A future proofed street network
 - Streets that enable people to drive less
 - A reliable, integrated, and accessible public transport network
 - Goods are delivered on time with minimal impact on local communities
 - Green, vibrant streets that are welcoming and safe places to spend time in
- 4.18 The document provided detailed guidance on these essentials and the requirements/features for different types of streets. In addition to this, TfGM have produced an Interim Streets for All User Hierarchy and summary of data/potential actions that can be used to measure the success of an intervention/scheme.
- 4.19 There is also a Streets for All Design Check tool available to local authorities to assist in assessing how well existing streets meets the Streets for All essentials.
- 4.20 This Design Guidance has only been active in Greater Manchester on a trial-basis with TfGM collecting information and data from local authorities to be reviewed after a set period.

Design Review Panel

- 4.21 TfGM has implemented a Design Review Panel (DRP) to ensure consistent design standards across all Active Travel Infrastructure developments. The DRP meets on a weekly basis and is an established element of Active Travel scheme development within Greater Manchester. In instances where, for specific local reasons, advisory documents such as the streets for all design guide cannot be met, an exception must be agreed to be acceptable through Design Review Panel.
- 4.22 Through the DRP process, it is anticipated that scheme designs will meet Active Travel England's delivery aspirations.

Design Manual for Roads and Bridges

- 4.23 Volume 6 - Section 3 – Part 5 (The Geometric Design of Pedestrian, Cycle and Equestrian Routes)

4.24 The national guidance provides technical information to the Council on the technical design details for developing cycle routes and other road features with the mathematical underpinning for these rules explained in detail

4.25 This guidance is used by Stockport Council for the below elements in street/road design:

- Design Speed
- Visibility
- Alignment
- Gradient
- Crossfall
- Cross-section
- Headroom
- Crossings

Local Transport Note 2/95 – The Design of Pedestrian Crossings

4.26 This note recommends the practices to be followed when planning, designing and installing at-grade pedestrian crossings. It describes all types of crossings, including shared facilities with cyclists, other than those at signalled junctions. Advice is given on the design of pedestrian crossings in general and the operation of signal-controlled (Pelican, Puffin or Toucan) crossings.

4.27 The Council uses this guidance for the below elements in design:

- Signal timings and activation
- Proximity of Junctions
- School Crossing Patrols
- Visibility
- Crossing Width Guard Railing
- Crossing Approach Surfaces for Footways and Carriageways
- Facilities for Disabled Pedestrians Lighting
- Signing
- Provision for Bus Stops and Street Furniture

Local Transport Note 1/07 - Traffic Calming

4.28 This guidance note provides advice and information to local authorities on the various traffic calming measures and considerations to be undertaken for the benefit of cyclists such as reducing the speed, dominance and at times the volume of motor vehicles. It also gives information about legislation and looks at the design, effectiveness and installation of measures.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 This report provides an overview of the main policy and design guidance in place regarding cycling. Cycle design best practice is continuing to evolve as more schemes are delivered and their success monitored, issues identified, and conflicts recognised.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are none

Anyone wishing to inspect the above background papers or requiring further information should contact Jamie Birtles on telephone number 07356 120 423 or alternatively email jamie.birtles@stockport.gov.uk / Sue Stevenson on telephone number Tel: 0161-474-4351 or alternatively email sue.stevenson@stockport.gov.uk