

## Network Policy 7: Tackling transport related social exclusion

We will work to alleviate and prevent transport related social exclusion, including the impacts of deprivation wherever possible.

This will include:

- a) Considering the specific transport needs of communities experiencing social exclusion and deprivation when planning transport interventions and services to enable access to key services, opportunities and amenities (see **NP2: Network Planning**).
- b) Investing in our active travel and bus networks as the most affordable transport options for those experiencing social exclusion or deprivation (see **DP3: Walking and wheeling, DP4: Cycling, DP6: Bus infrastructure, DP5: Bus services**).
- c) Supporting alternative means of travel in situations where walking, wheeling, cycling and traditional public transport options are unsuitable (see **DP7: Neighbourhood transport services**).
- d) Working towards an affordable and fully integrated public transport network (see **NP8: Affordability**).
- e) Working towards a safe and secure transport network (see **NP16: Personal safety and security; NP15: Vision Zero**).
- f) Working to improve air quality by tackling pollution caused by the transport network, focusing on locations which are worst affected where people and communities are exposed to levels above legal limits (see **NP11: Pollution**).

### Policy explanation

1. Deprivation is about much more than income levels. There are 39 separate indicators such as education, health, barriers to housing and living environment, organised across seven domains which were combined and weighted to calculate the Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2019. The LTP provides opportunities to alleviate some of these, for example environmental issues such as noise and air pollution and, to connect people and

neighbourhoods to jobs, training and education, childcare, healthy food shops, leisure facilities and green spaces.

2. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) data show that just over a fifth of the neighbourhoods in Greater Manchester fall into the bottom 10% of most deprived neighbourhoods nationally with respect to employment and income.
3. Some 1.3 million residents of Greater Manchester, approximately 45% are classified as either 'Stretched Society' or 'Low Income Living'. This is a far higher share than the UK as whole (33%). Typically, around three in 10 of these residents describe their financial situation as 'just managing to make ends meet', and one in 10 are 'drawing on savings or running into debt'.
4. Living with deprivation often leads to poor health and wellbeing through lack of access to nutritious food, health care, and safe housing. This can also work in reverse, with those experiencing poor health being at greater risk of living in poverty due to not being able to work, exercise, or access health care. This downward path of health insecurity can also cause stress and impact mental health negatively.
5. Across Greater Manchester, the most deprived households were four times more likely to have no access to a car than the least deprived households. Overall, 27% of households had no access to a car, rising to 40% in our most deprived households. This means that if there are limited or unreliable public transport options, then residents' life opportunities are severely limited. (TRADS, 2022, TfGM, English Indices of Deprivation, 2019).

**Figure 1 – TRSE related stats in Greater Manchester**

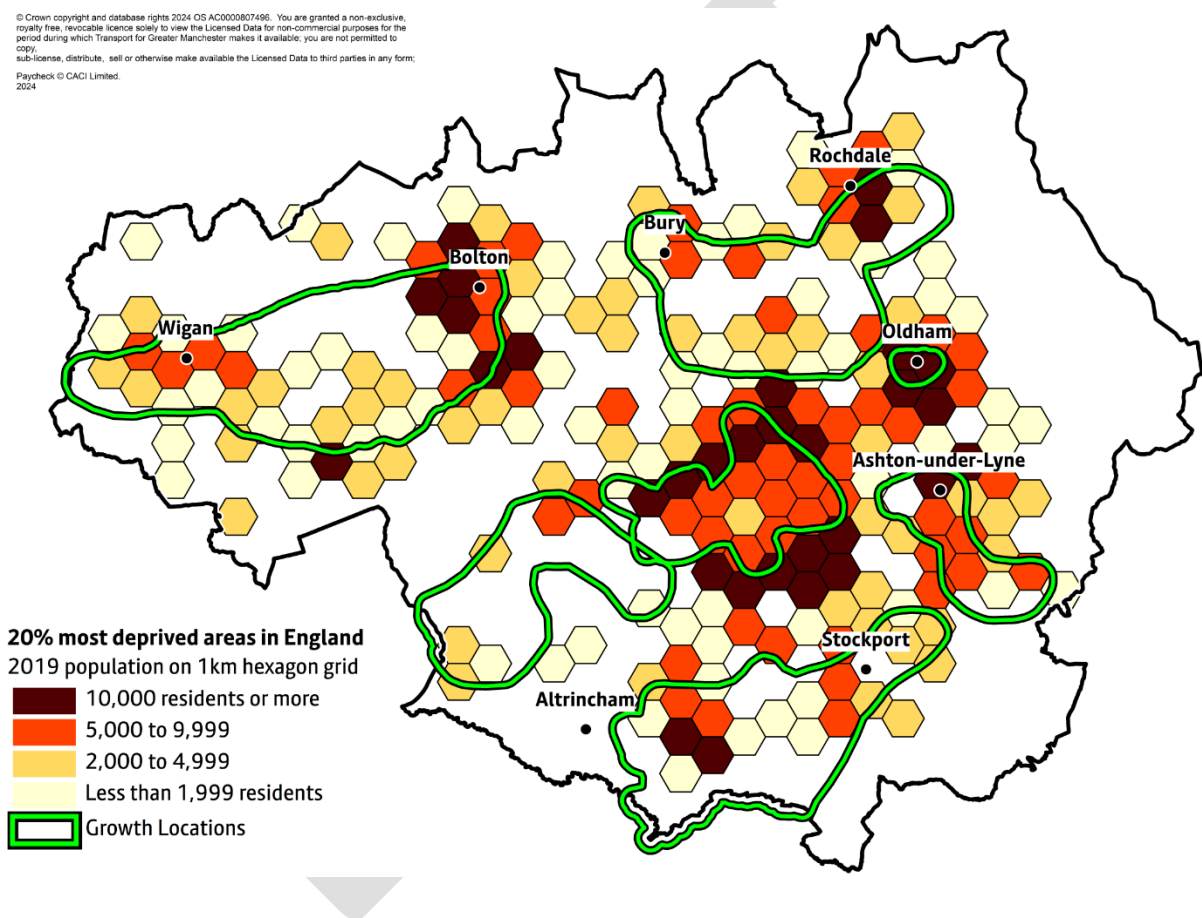


6. Where there are no other transport options people may be forced into car ownership, pushing them into further financial hardship. Data suggests that this could be the case in GM. Areas of GM that have seen greater than 20% growth in privately owned cars between 2009 and 2024 have more than 60% of residents classified as either 'Stretched Society' or 'Low Income Living' (TfGM 2024). People from deprived communities in rural or semi-urban areas are more likely to face this dilemma, as public transport options are likely to be more limited than in more dense urban areas where there is higher demand to support public transport services (TfGM, 2025).
7. Deprivation is a series of hardships, which exacerbate existing challenges. For example, unemployment leads to low income, which leads to poorer quality housing and potentially a decline in health and wellbeing. Conversely, minor changes in the environment can lead to an upward cycle, enabling people to move out of deprivation. An example would be improved local transport enabling residents to access improved employment opportunities, and potentially better life chances. This one catalyst – improved local transport – can create a significant positive impact on an individual and their whole family.
8. In Greater Manchester tackling deprivation and inequalities is vital for achieving the GM vision that Greater Manchester is a great place to grow up, get on and grow old for all. Through our efforts to create a safer, more

affordable, reliable, accessible, and sustainable transport system we will carefully consider the implications of our interventions, recognising that their effects vary and that some communities may require additional support.

9. In addition, our Growth Locations (see map below) show a significant overlap with areas of deprivation and will support the delivery of transport interventions that help enable inclusive and sustainable economic growth across Greater Manchester.

**Figure 2: GM Areas of deprivation 2019 and locations of planned growth**



### Connectivity needs of communities experiencing deprivation

10. Transport connections are a key enabler for improving wellbeing and reducing deprivation. In areas of socio-economic disadvantage where people are less likely to own a private vehicle, the availability of affordable transport can make the difference between being able to apply for work and training opportunities or missing out. This can lead to a downward spiral, where lack

of access to work and training can lead to further deterioration of prospects and wellbeing.

11. In addition, lack of available and appropriate public transport to connect people with vital services, like health and social care, can lead to diminishing health and wellbeing due to missed appointments and worsening physical and mental health.
12. Alongside this, many may face social isolation, anxiety and poor mental health through having to cope with uncertainty and the lack of choice over how they travel for day-to-day journeys. These effects particularly fall on disabled people, those in low-income households, and carers, who generally face greater constraints on their transport choices, and greater consequences from transport issues.
13. Given the importance of the health, wellbeing and skills for individuals and families, as well as for communities and the GM economy, connectivity to key services, employment and to amenities, is essential to alleviating the daily challenges that people living in deprived neighbourhoods face.
14. To do this we need a clearer understanding of Transport Related Social Exclusion (TRSE) across GM and to understand how best to utilise the policies in the LTP to alleviate it. To this end, we are currently developing ideas for new ways to understand and measure this phenomenon.
15. TRSE is defined as being unable to access opportunities, key services, and community life as much as needed, and facing major obstacles in everyday life through the wider impacts of having to travel to access key destinations (Transport for the North 2024). It is estimated that about 420,000 people are at risk of TRSE across GM, approximately a third of all those living in deprived communities. (TfGM, 2025).
16. Therefore, we will need to proactively consider areas of deprivation in planning and delivering transport infrastructure, services and interventions in order to deliver on our mission of a fairer City Region (see **NP10: Health** and **NP2: Network planning**). This is in addition to considering the specific needs

of disabled residents and other population groups who may experience barriers to travel (see **DP7: Neighbourhood transport services**, **NP16: Personal safety and security**, **NP6: An inclusive and accessible network**).

### **Investing in the most affordable transport options**

17. At very low or at no cost, much of our population can access their daily needs by walking, wheeling and cycling. This means that we must plan and deliver safer, more welcoming streets, where walking and cycling routes are accessible are considered, not only a first option, but a positive choice. For those who do not have a choice due to income poverty, it is vital that walking and cycling routes are well maintained, well-connected and appropriately signposted.
18. In addition, buses are particularly important for residents in Greater Manchester's most deprived areas. Access to bus services is especially important for isolated communities living in poorly designed estates where levels of car ownership are low (often a result of lower incomes).
19. Therefore, to support efforts to alleviate deprivation, we need to consider the specific needs of more deprived locations across the City Region when planning and delivering the bus network.



20. This is now feasible due to the newly implemented franchising model of bus service delivery, we can now plan routes, set affordable fares and integrate buses into Greater Manchester’s transport system, the Bee Network (see **NP8: Affordability; NP10: Health; NP2: Network planning; DP2: Streets for All; DP5: Bus services**).

### **Supporting alternative transport options**

21. For some residents, public transport or active travel is not the right choice, possibly due to disability or ill health, or it is simply not available. In wealthier areas, residents may have family or friends with cars and capacity to support their travel needs or may be able to pay for taxis. However, for more deprived communities, being unable to travel to important appointments, or for work and can lead to deteriorating health and other negative impacts. Neighbourhood services, also known as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) are currently very important for service-users to access employment. Trips for this purpose account for 25% of all trips on the Local Link service (TfGM, 2024). However, this can vary locally and particularly in peripheral

employment areas, for example in Heywood this rises to 67% (Wang, 2014), making it a vital service.

22. In addition, speed is an important factor allowing first/last mile services (FLM) to increase accessibility to jobs by public transport for low-income residents. This is because speed increases residents' willingness to travel greater distances. The use of faster FLM modes achieved a greater increase in job accessibility by public transport than increasing the frequency of the 'main leg' service. On-demand ride-sharing services are particularly suited to reducing FLM connection times (Boarnet et al., 2017).
23. There is also an opportunity to integrate different neighbourhood transport services, such as Local Link and Ring & Ride. This will enable services to accept multiple trips and to deliver greater reliability for users of accessible transport, particularly for those passengers who have been refused due to capacity issues.
24. In addition to existing neighbourhood transport services, there is also an opportunity to conduct network reviews to consider how transport needs can be met in certain geographic areas. This could provide greater integration with the wider Bee Network including through digital integration and multi-modal journey planning. This can help address the financial challenges associated with running a low-cost and accessible service. Where capacity challenges remain, some neighbourhood transport services could be moved to taxis through a mixed vehicle approach where customer needs can be met (see **DP16: Taxis**). To deliver improved flexible demand services that meet customers' needs, engagement with customers will form an important part of any proposed service changes in-line with the Accessible Transport Charter.

### **Working towards an affordable and fully integrated public transport network**

25. Greater Manchester's transport services need to be affordable and integrated, both for consumers and for the public bodies that provide and enable them. These two elements are intrinsically linked. Affordable, integrated transport supports social mobility as well as economic growth. Public transport is a key enabler for those who can't afford a private vehicle, so the choice can be

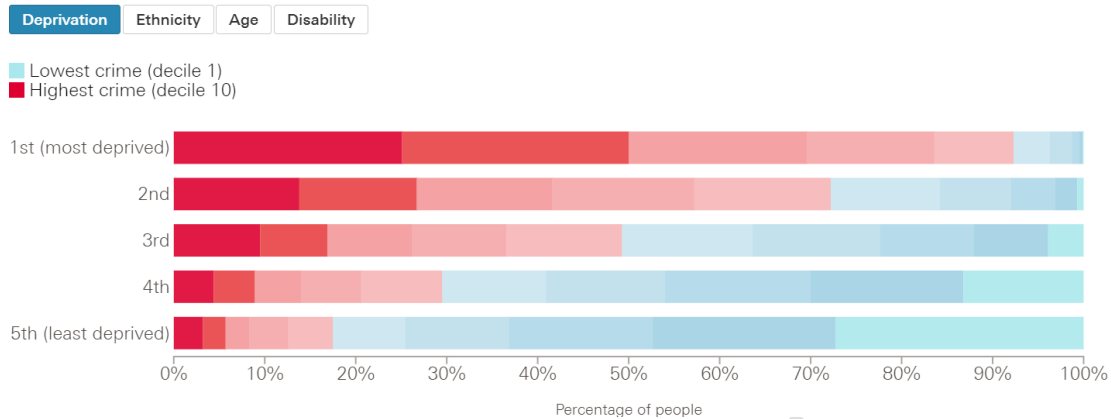
between travelling and not travelling, working or not working, rather than making the choice to go by car.

26. Now that Greater Manchester has taken much greater local control of its transport system through the creation of the Bee Network and bus franchising, we have opportunities to plan and deliver our transport network in a way that helps to alleviate deprivation and support residents' opportunities and wellbeing. This includes integrating fares across the network to offer joined up tickets across modes. (see **NP3: integrated fares and payments**).
27. To date, GM's experience of reducing fares through the £2 single and £5 daily bus fare cap, has shown encouraging results, including:
- a reduction in the average cost of travel for bus users by almost 20%.
  - a contribution to increased bus patronage of 12%
  - 76% of residents continue to feel the new fares save them money and 72% feel that they have been helpful to combat the cost-of-living crisis (GMCA, 2023).
28. Some passengers that are eligible for concessionary fares, such as disabled people, care leavers, pensioners and 16-18-year-olds. These need to be subsidised by revenue and public subsidy (see **NP3: integrated fares and payments**).

### **Working towards a safe and secure transport network**

29. Levels of crime are one of the indicators of deprivation, meaning that in deprived communities residents tend to be and to feel less safe than those living in wealthier neighbourhoods. Experiencing the impacts of crime, and feeling unsafe, can lead to social isolation, a reduction in the likelihood of residents walking, wheeling and cycling, as well as increased levels of anxiety.

**Figure 3: The percentage of different population groups living in neighbourhoods with different levels of crime**

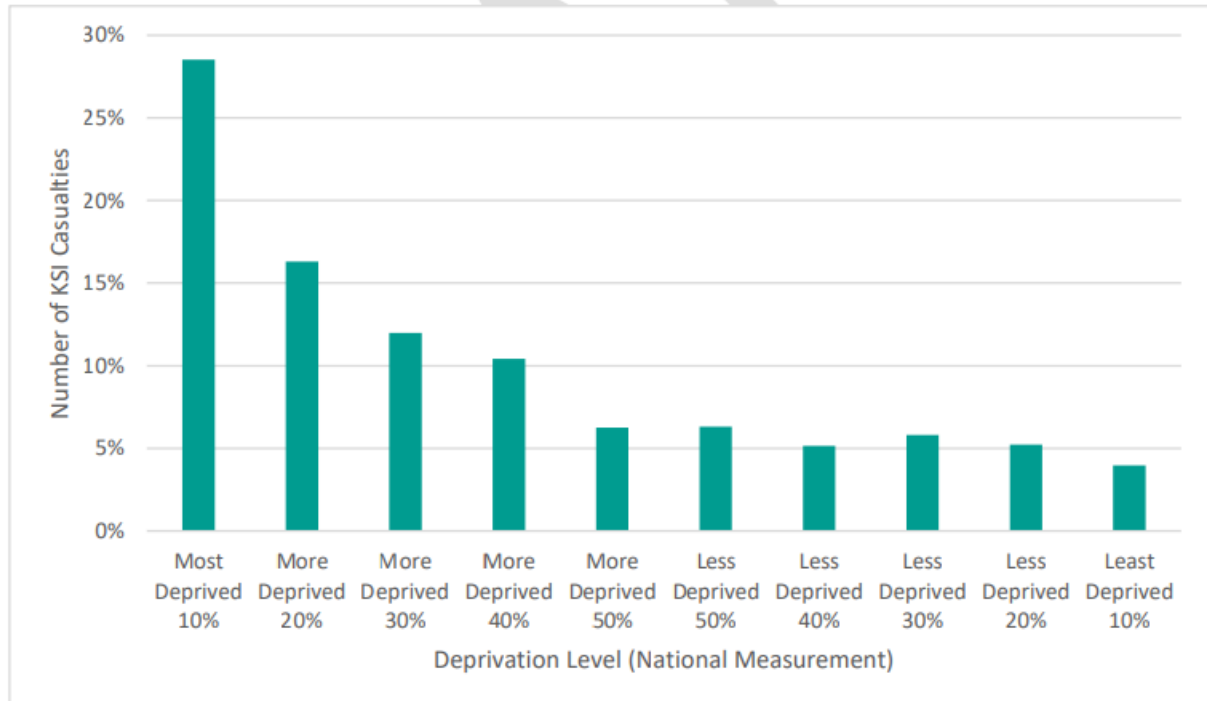


**Source: The Health Foundation 2024**

30. Residents who feel that they cannot travel safely, either within their neighbourhood or further afield, are far more likely to experience daily anxiety and may restrict their life opportunities.
31. Figure 3 shows the percentage of different population groups living in neighbourhoods with different levels of crime. People who live in more deprived areas are more likely to live in neighbourhoods with higher crime rates. Some 25% of people living in the most deprived neighbourhoods live in the 10% of neighbourhoods with the highest crime rates. This compares with only 3% of people in the least deprived neighbourhoods.
32. The Bee Network presents an opportunity for Greater Manchester to improve safety and the perceptions of safety across the network. GM's approach to improving personal security across the whole transport network, should be consistent with the goals of the GM Police and Crime plan, increasing the security and police presence on public transport, tackling anti-social behaviour on public transport, and increasing safe reporting mechanisms.
33. In addition, people in areas with higher levels of deprivation are more likely to be killed or seriously injured on our roads. Deprivation can influence the way in which we travel. It may be that residents in these communities have no choice but to walk, cycle or use a motorcycle, making them more vulnerable road users. The environment and access to services can influence mode choice. We know residents from our most deprived communities are much less likely to have access to a vehicle. Road design may also be an issue, with these communities potentially having higher levels of traffic, leading to

increased chances of conflict (see **NP16: Personal safety and security**; **NP15: Vision Zero**).

**Figure 4: KSI casualties in GM by home deprivation level (2018-2022)**



**Source: Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government 2019**

### **Improving air quality in locations which are worst affected**

34. Poor air quality is an important public health issue facing the UK. Whilst air quality has been generally improving over time, pollutants that are not visible to the naked eye, remain a serious concern in many urban areas. These are oxides of nitrogen (NO<sub>x</sub>), principally nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), and particulate matter (PM). Road transport is responsible for some 80% of NO<sub>2</sub> concentrations at the roadside (which is where they are measured), of which diesel vehicles' tailpipe emissions are the largest source.

35. Evidence suggests that poor air quality harms everyone in the long-term and, in the short-term, it impacts the most vulnerable. This includes children, older people, those with existing respiratory or cardiovascular disease and those living in areas of deprivation (Orellano and Reynoso 2020; WHO - Lee and Spath 2020). Because of their harm to human health, the government sets national standards which local authorities must work to achieve.

36. Our Pollution policy will tackle pollution caused by the transport network, focusing on locations which are worst affected, where people and communities are exposed to levels above legal limits (see **NP11: Pollution**).

DRAFT

## References

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