

Delivery Policy 4: Cycling

We will enable and encourage more people to cycle, as an integral part of the Bee Network.

This will include:

- a) Delivering a safe, well-maintained, comprehensive and accessible cycle network, following our Streets for All guidance
- b) Ensuring cycling is an attractive option, both as a main mode and for incidental journeys to public transport stops and stations, and also enabling people to travel with their cycle on trams (**DP1 – Delivering the Bee Network**).
- c) Provide a range of cycle parking and cycle storage options across the network.
- d) Increasing access to cycles (including electrically assisted pedal cycles, cargo-bikes and other adapted cycles) by continuing to expand and develop public cycle hire sharing schemes and cycle libraries (**DP14: Cycle and e-scooter hire**).
- e) Ensuring that new developments are designed to enable cycling and are fully integrated into the wider network through the planning process (**NP5: Land use and new development**).
- f) Enabling more people to cycle through a diverse range of cycle training and initiatives to suit local and individual needs – including school streets (**DP24: Travel choices**).

Policy explanation

1. Cycling can make a significant contribution to improving health by increasing active travel and reducing pollution. It also helps reduce carbon emissions. Much needs to be done to make cycling a realistic option for more people. Most importantly, cycling infrastructure needs to be safe and attractive for those who don't currently ride a bike, for example those who feel reliant on private cars for their everyday shorter trips.
2. For the purpose of this policy, cycling is the activity of riding a bicycle or other type of cycle, including recumbent or adaptive cycles, e-bikes and also cargo-bikes. This incorporates the action of moving on a wide range of pedal-

powered wheeled transport and may have from 2 to 4 wheels (Wheels for Wellbeing, 2024).

3. The huge potential for cycling to reduce car mileage, improve access to key facilities, and improve public health and fitness, is now widely understood. In view of the serious health consequences of inactive lifestyles, and the significant numbers of very short trips which are currently being made by car (15% of car trips were 1km or less, this equated to about 150 million annual car journeys by GM residents, that could have been cycled in around 4 minutes), it is crucial that we further increase levels of cycling across the city-region (GMCA, 2024) (see **NP10: Health**). Reducing reliance on the car, especially for shorter journeys, will have environmental, social and public health benefits.
4. The emergence of e-bikes is also increasing the possible range for cyclists and can reduce the barrier of topography in hillier parts of Greater Manchester, meaning the scope for more people to replace longer car trips with a cycle trip is steadily increasing. A long term study found e-bikes encourage longer trips by bike (with average daily trips increasing from 1.3 miles to 5.7 miles) and eventually a higher percentage of all trips taken (share of trips by bike went from 17 to 49%) (Fyhri et al 2020).
5. While recognising the role of personal choice in travel, we will encourage people who are able to do so, to cycle for day-to-day journeys or to cycle simply for leisure and enjoyment. Much more needs to be done to achieve the desired scale of change and more investment is essential to provide safe and convenient routes that connect people to jobs, education, services and recreation.

Delivering a safe, well-maintained, comprehensive cycle network

6. One of the biggest barriers to cycling in Greater Manchester is that our streets have traditionally not been designed to make cycling feel safe and easy. Only 34% of GM residents think the level of safety for cycling in their local area is good, with only 26% agreeing it's a good level of safety for children (Sustrans 2021). Designing our streets to enable cycling will make cycling feel safer,

encourage modal shift, improve air quality and public health and can support successful high streets.

7. Network planning is important when considering the most appropriate place for cycle infrastructure because it helps us identify which routes are needed to incrementally grow the network, remove barriers, fill network gaps and provide wider opportunities to use public transport. Crucially, it also help us balance the different needs of different road users, and this includes dedicated and protected space for cycling as part of a strategic network, for more information see **NP2: Network planning**.
8. A main source of danger on our roads comes from motorised traffic, and excessive speed is considered one of the biggest problems in road safety, deterring cycling. The speed and volume of traffic on any given road is a key determinant of the appropriate type of infrastructure for cycling. Enabling slower motor vehicle speeds and more considerate driver behaviour will significantly contribute to making our streets feel safer. This may include the use of cycle-friendly traffic calming and modal filters, as well as speed limit reductions to improve the overall safety of our streets for those who want to cycle (see **NP15: Vision zero**).



9. By providing a dedicated space for cycling, bike lanes reduce the risk of collisions between cyclists and motor vehicles, but it is also important that bike lanes are free from obstruction (such as cars parking along them) so they are safe to use and uncluttered (see **DP2: Streets for All**, and **DP12: Parking and kerbside management**).
10. We recognise that personal security – and the perception of personal security – is important in supporting people to choose to travel by bike. Personal security is therefore a key consideration in the design of cycling routes and cycle parking and storage locations, including lighting and CCTV or natural surveillance (see **NP16: Personal safety and security**).
11. A high-quality natural environment can encourage neighbourhoods and communities to cycle more. Routes alongside canals and rivers have an important part to play to support active travel, and it is crucial we build upon the National Cycle Network and ensure leisure routes are integrated and easily accessible across the region (see also **NP13: Green and blue infrastructure**).
12. Wayfinding is also an important aspect of the network because it can help provide a consistent and high-quality, easy-to-use customer experience across Greater Manchester. Good wayfinding systems will ensure routes are direct, easily navigable and integrated with public transport, highways and the wider leisure network (see **NP4: Journey planning and information**). In addition to general wayfinding approaches in our towns and city centres, active travel wayfinding for the cycling network will be a guarantee of the quality of facilities.
13. All new cycle infrastructure across Greater Manchester needs to meet the requirements outlined in the Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide where funded, or part funded, by GMCA. The Design Guide ensures that we are building for our target audience: those who do not yet use cycling for their everyday local journeys. A safe, well-maintained, and comprehensive network, including strategic routes, is required to appeal to this target audience.

14. In order to encourage more people to cycle we will build, maintain and upgrade infrastructure, to meet the Streets for All design requirements, including:

- Longer distance continuous strategic routes linking key destinations.
- Providing physical protection for cycle lanes on major roads using additional kerbs and other features and ensuring clear delineation from the cycle lane and the pavement.
- New high-quality crossing points on busy roads and across other points of severance, such as motorways, watercourses and railways. Wherever possible, these crossing points should not require those cycling to share space with those walking / wheeling.
- Connecting existing quiet streets.
- Facilitating use of traffic-free routes, such as through parks or on former rail lines, and removing access control barriers that restrict legitimate path users.
- Upgrading junctions to make cycling safer, in particular by providing protected infrastructure which separates bikes from motor traffic and pedestrians.
- Providing comprehensive wayfinding, signage and information, including through the Bee Network App.
- Creating accessible neighbourhoods that reduce the dominance of vehicles and make walking, wheeling, and cycling the first choice for short journeys, including journeys to school, for example by improving cycling routes and creating school streets.

Cycling and public transport integration

15. We will create an integrated cycle network to make it easy for people to cycle to / from public transport and easily access public transport services. To make cycling a real option for travelling to public transport nodes, we need to deliver infrastructure, such as high-quality crossings, cycle routes and storage facilities for cycles at bus stations, trams stops and rail stations (see **DP1: Delivering the Bee Network** and **DP23: Transport hubs (including park and ride)**).



16. In turn, this should help with increasing the catchment of each public transport stop and station, encouraging more people to consider using public transport.

17. Integrating public transport with cycling, enables cyclists to move between modes to make longer journeys possible – thereby potentially offering an attractive alternative to car use. Enabling bikes on trams (as they are already on trains) therefore helps people to continue their journey seamlessly, without leaving their cycle in storage or parked at a station or stop. This will require designing new trams to be able to accommodate bicycles and potentially retrofitting existing vehicles.

Cycle parking

18. In addition to providing cycle parking at travel hubs, it will be important to offer secure, high-quality cycle parking at safe and convenient locations close to local and key destinations (such as town centres, local high streets, schools, and community facilities) and near peoples' homes. Information about the location of cycle parking needs to be easily available, and the Bee Network

App offers the opportunity to provide detailed information alongside other modes.

19. We understand that existing GM housing stock does not always offer provision for cycle parking, and this can be a deterrent for cycle ownership (Household Bike access remains low at around 25% (TfGM 2025a)), therefore it is important we also provide basic, but frequent cycle parking across the entire network. Options are also being looked at to address cycle parking, for example, on-street shared cycle storage or residential cycle parking using cycle hangars. Updated guidance on cycle parking is provided in the Greater Manchester's Streets for All Design Guide. Also, as part of the Cycle Hire scheme, cycle hire bays should be located in accessible and convenient locations (near residential housing).

Increasing access to cycles

20. Lack of access to cycles including electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) are barriers for increased use, and increasing access will help connect people to work, education, services, and leisure.
21. The GM Cycle Hire Service (currently branded as Starling Bank Bikes) consists of around 1200 cycles, 300 EAPCs, over 200 stations and more than 2500 stands, with the service area spanning parts of Manchester, Salford and Trafford. Starling Bank agreed to a sponsorship package in January 2024 and the service has been rebranded as Starling Bank Bikes, including a new app and sponsorship logos on bikes and stands. Expanding the coverage of Starling Bank Bikes will increase the number of people able to benefit from the scheme.
22. Cycle libraries can be important local hubs that allow people to borrow a cycle to try them out. Cycle libraries aim to boost access to cycles and are often based in the heart of a community, in an easy to reach location. Some cycle libraries also offer access to non-standard cycles such as adapted cycles, cargo-bikes or EAPC cargo-bikes. Promoting the expansion of cycle libraries across Greater Manchester will also help to increase accessibility to cycles including non-standard cycles.

23. Refurbished cycles can provide a cheaper and more environmentally friendly alternative to buying a new cycle. We will therefore continue to work with charities and cycle shops to promote places that sell refurbished cycles (TfGM, 2025b).



24. We will support safe and legal use of electrically assisted pedal cycles (EAPCs) including any national government regulation and will consider any national government proposals on the introduction of an EAPC licensing scheme. We would support any licensing scheme if it could be demonstrated that it could

be effectively enforced within existing enforcement frameworks and that it would not dissuade potential legitimate and safe EAPC use.

Cycling and new developments

25. The design of new development needs to make it easy for people to cycle. This means developers and local authorities need to work together to provide safe and convenient cycle routes and on-site cycle parking. Developments need to be fully integrated into the wider cycling network through the planning process.
26. The Places for Everyone Plan has a clear policy approach to ensuring new development is accessible by cycling for nine of the ten local authorities. The expectation is that all GM local authorities will adopt policies to support the provision of cycle facilities for new development, for more information see **NP5: Land use and new development**.

Cycle training and initiatives

27. TfGM offers cycle skills and confidence training for those who live or work within the region, as well as cycle repair workshops. We will continue to build on this good work to expand and enhance the cycle training offer to all residents, by improving the accessibility and diversity of this offer to reach all residents in GM. For more information see **DP24: Travel choices**.
28. Understanding how people in Greater Manchester feel about cycling as a mode of transport is key to understanding how to influence travel behaviour towards more sustainable modes.
29. A wide range of activation measures will be delivered to increase awareness of the opportunity to cycle (as well as the benefits). Measures will include tailored interventions to individual audiences and to particular locations, including areas where new infrastructure is delivered.



School Travel

30. We want to support people to choose cycling for short journeys, including journeys to school. The school journey is one that can often be made by cycling, and encouraging more cycling in this area is important in improving children's health, as described in **NP10: Health**.
31. A comprehensive set of measures to make it safer to walk, wheel, scoot and cycle to school are captured in the School Travel Strategy (TfGM, 2025c). For more information on School Streets see **DP3: Walking and wheeling**.
32. We will provide greater access to cycles, adapted bikes and scooters by supporting schools to either set up their own cycle library or partner with their nearest cycle library. A cycle library allows people to borrow a cycle and try it out for a short loan period, either for free or for a small fee. Cycle libraries are generally based in places such as community centres, schools, village halls or local business premises.

References

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