

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

Introduction

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. We want a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday local journeys. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

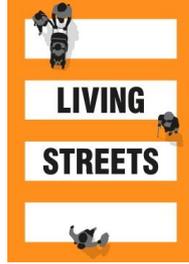
Living Streets welcomes the work the Mayor has already undertaken to promote cycling and walking within the city and the work Chris Boardman has championed as the region's first Cycling and Walking Commissioner. We support the vision, backed up by infrastructure investment, to make walking the natural choice for short trips in the city. We urge the Mayor to continue working in partnership with Living Streets and other active travel charities to achieve the change the city needs to see

We support the overall tenet of the plan – and the emphasis on focusing development where possible in existing centres. The role of walking and cycling should continue to be encouraged within this, and active travel should run through the whole strategy. Higher housing densities should encourage walking and cycling but effort needs to be made to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way as to maximise the benefits. Careful thought should also be given to the location and size of parking facilities to encourage walking as part of everyday journeys.

The overall strategic vision set out in paragraph 3.1 is positive – and the role walking and cycling can play in delivering on this vision should not be underestimated. Active travel can make a positive contribution to ensuring individuals can live healthy lives, can boost both a sense of place and competitiveness, can address climate change and dirty air and can ensure that groups across our community – including children and the elderly – are included. It is important that these principles are taken into account throughout the policies for inner and outer areas.

As Manchester continues to grow and new developments come on stream, it will be critical to ensure that cycling and walking continues to be embedded into the city. We call on the Mayor to introduce specific targets rather than aspirations for walking and cycling (including walking to school) across the area.

Looking to the future, people will be attracted to live and work in cities by attracting built environments and public realms, and clean air. The Mayor's plans in this regard are to be welcomed but could go further in the future. Measures to improve the air quality, safety and health of our children, including through school street closures, should be prioritised. And we look forward to seeing further detail of outline business case for tackling NO2 concentrations and bringing them within Limit Values – more clarity on this needed



Living Streets' response to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework

A Sustainable and Resilient Greater Manchester

Living Streets supports the proposed policy on sustainable development. A planning policy designed to deliver simultaneously on economic, social and environmental benefits can improve prosperity whilst reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality. This would serve to make Greater Manchester an attractive place for this and future generations.

The principle of policy GM-S6 is to be welcomed. Dirty air is currently contributing to up to 36,000 premature deaths a year¹ and is having a particularly negative effect on our children. And recent research commissioned by Public Health England² has estimated that the health and social care costs of PM_{2.5} and NO₂ emissions in England could reach £5.3 billion by 2035. Emissions from transport are a particular part of the problem and will not be completely alleviated by the move to electric cars given the impact of matter from tyres.

Implementation of policy GM-S6 should be guided by the recommendations in NICE's recent quality standard on outdoor air quality and health³ that authorities identify how they will address air pollution and assess proposals to minimise and mitigate road traffic related air pollution in planning applications for major developments. Ensuring that developments prioritise cycling and walking will reduce reliance on transport that generates air pollution.

More detail is needed on the principles behind street design and Greater Manchester's approach to controlling traffic and parking within and around schools and early year sites. Living Streets' school run report⁴ outlines a number of ways to overcome barriers to walking to and from school and we urge policy-makers to study it closely.

We would particularly emphasise the importance of:

- A "children first" approach to planning and street design, prioritising safe and enjoyable streets for children in all existing and new developments.
- Greater use of school street closures outside schools across the Greater Manchester area to improve local air quality around schools, boost the safety of the walk to school and remove unsafe parking and speeding traffic. These should be accompanied by appropriate enforcement through, for example, police powers, traffic cameras or removable bollards.
- Ensuring that schools and other key services are located within walkable distances of new communities, and are accessible by safe and high quality walking, cycling and public transport facilities, thereby reducing the need for parents or guardians to drive.

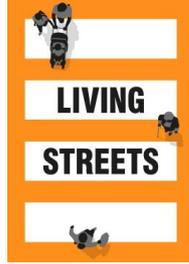
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https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/734799/COMEAP_NO2_Report.pdf

² <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/news/186406/air-pollution-england-could-cost-much/>

³ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/qs181>

⁴ https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3618/livingstreets_school_run_report_web.pdf



- Anti-idling measures to reduce air pollution outside of schools.

A Prosperous Greater Manchester

Prosperity needs to go hand in hand with sustainable development if we are to create desirable communities in which people want to live and work in the future. Building high quality walking, cycling and public transport networks is critical to this. This is particularly important given the focus on maximising the potential of the key growth locations highlighted in the strategy.

The city should also not discount the growth potential of walking and cycling projects, as highlighted in our recently refreshed Pedestrian Pound research⁵. Investing in better streets and spaces for walking can provide a competitive return compared to other transport projects; walking and cycling projects can increase retail sales by 30% or more. In the city of New York pedestrian improvements at one junction increased local retail sales by 48%. Traffic management and public realm improvements in Kelso, Scotland increased town centre footfall by 28%.

Our research also highlights the need for more dedicated research on the impact of public realm improvements to boost walking and the economy. The field would benefit from better evaluations of public realm interventions. These should include baseline assessments of economic indicators as well as methods for calculating additional value. Assessments should include the potential equalities impacts on communities from processes such as gentrification. Evaluation of regeneration spending is particularly in need of more rigour. More research is required into the elements of public realm improvements that are likely to yield positive impacts to a wide range of stakeholders. We know that good design matters and pays for itself in the long-run, but we know less about how investments can be harnessed to create employment for local people. The value of the high street to communities is often mentioned but has never been fully explored. The social value of the high street is an underdeveloped area of research, which would strengthen the case for better funding and more targeted policy measures to support its survival.

Homes for Greater Manchester

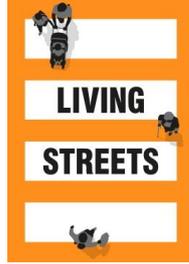
We support policy GM-H 4 on appropriate densities for locations, and the importance of ensuring accessibility by walking, cycling and public transport. We would draw attention to the conclusions of Transport for New Homes' report⁶ on development and transport on the importance of ensuring that new housing developments are integrated with the communities that surround them, and the careful thought needed for pedestrian routes and cycling for everyday journeys.

A Greener Greater Manchester

Living Streets supports the protection of existing urban green spaces and policy GM-G 2 on a green infrastructure network. Measures to enhance air quality and enable more trips to be made by walking and cycling are particularly welcome. We would emphasise the importance of ensuring that the network is appropriately connected with other walking and cycling networks.

⁵ <https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/media/3890/pedestrian-pound-2018.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/transport-for-new-homes-summary-web.pdf>



A Greater Manchester for Everyone

We support policy GM-E 1 on sustainable places, and the emphasis on the benefits of walking for health, wellbeing and sustainability. We agree with the importance of high quality, inclusive design of places and developments. This has social benefits, but the research in our Pedestrian Pound report outlined above also highlights the economic benefits that such design can have and is particularly pertinent to policy GM-E 3. As indicated in this report, design assessments should evaluate the potential equalities impacts on communities from processes such as gentrification.

We support Policy GM-E 5 on health and the desire to ensure new developments are designed with active travel in mind – both in terms of social infrastructure and retail facilities on the site (schools, convenience stores etc) and in terms of connections with neighbouring developments. The region has an opportunity with development of this spatial framework to promote the further development of networks that encourage walking and cycling as the natural choice for short journeys, but more detail is needed on how behavioural change to encourage more active travel is encouraged across the whole population, particularly older people at risk of becoming physically inactive and socially isolated. Greater Manchester should consider further how it can address both the behavioural and the physical barriers to walking, including poor pavement conditions, street clutter, pavement parking, and inadequate crossing facilities (including insufficient crossing times).

A Connected Greater Manchester

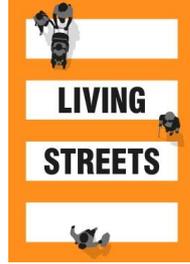
We support Policy GM-C 3 and Policy GM-C1, and the role of active travel within them. We support the objective of encouraging less people to drive for shorter journeys but would argue for a stronger objective around “enabling fewer car journeys” by encouraging walking and cycling, and by strengthening walking and cycling links with public transport. People should be encouraged to walk and cycle short journeys wherever possible.

Whilst we welcome the aspiration that half of all daily trips should be made by public transport, cycling and walking, we would argue that these should be turned into hard and fast targets. We would call for a separate target for walking and cycling within this – and an aligned aspiration for active travel as part of the journey to school and for employers.

As indicated above, there is a positive recognition that increased active travel uptake “will be achieved by creating local neighbourhoods where people can live, work and access services and shops, alongside behavioural change, such as flexible and home working.” Whilst we agree with this sentiment, the strategy should also reference the role behaviour change can play in encouraging greater uptake of walking and cycling as well, and addressing the challenges of congestion and air quality.

Living Streets is separately arguing for improvements in pedestrian and cyclist priority at junctions and it is welcome to see the recognition of the importance of this in the strategy.

Investment in the electric vehicle charging network should not be to the detriment of walking and cycling investment and public transport. GMCA should also provide clear guidance on the location of electric vehicle charging points to avoid unnecessary pavement clutter. If EV charging points are to be installed they should be located off-street, for example in car parks at leisure centres, community



facilities, shopping centres, train stations, or housing estates. If this is not possible, charging points should be located on the road in well-designed build-outs.

With reference to policy GM-C 5, more detail is needed on the promotion of alternatives to car parking, and any limitations that may be placed on parking provision within new developments. There is an argument for stricter controls on parking within new developments, and the promotion of appropriate infrastructure to enhance cycling and walking.

Turning to Policy GM-C 6, we agree that targeted improvements to the highway network should be sought where they complement the aim of securing a significant increase in the proportion of trips made by walking, cycling and public transport. (Policy GM-C 6)

We support Policy GM-C8; the Streets for All approach is welcome and mirrors the efforts in London to create healthy, active streets (Policy GM-C 8). The Streets for All approach should be echoed across the whole strategy – particularly sections on the economy. Indeed, the whole strategy should reflect the importance of the movement and place function of streets and the need for pedestrians and cyclists to be able to navigate easily, safely and without delay, and minimising barriers and obstacles to their movement.

Transport Delivery Plan

We support the Transport Delivery Plan, although would call for greater emphasis on behaviour change throughout the document. Stronger targets for connected neighbourhoods should also be included.

It is important to ensure that active travel options are taken into account in design of transport infrastructure projects – to ensure wayfinding from stations and other locations is straightforward and walking becomes the natural choice.

Living Streets
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