

### Introduction

Through increasing the mobility of people and goods, transport has had a fundamental role in achieving the standard of living we enjoy today. It is instrumental to a healthy economy and people's ability to access jobs, shopping and other services.

However, this has not been achieved without a cost to the environment, society and economy. The road network is increasingly busy and congested. This blights local communities with heavy traffic, noise, air pollution and concerns of road safety and adds substantially to journey times. In addition, those without access to a car have suffered as land uses have become more dispersed and less accessible without a car.

The Greater Manchester Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP2) is the primary means of delivering transport improvements in the Borough. Its strategy seeks to secure a transport system that is better integrated, more accessible and less damaging, thereby meeting people's needs and helping to regenerate the Borough.

The UDP and LTP are consistent. The transport policies seek to promote greater travel choice, reducing our dependence on the car and promoting public transport, walking and cycling in particular. This is reinforced by land use policies that seek to ensure that development is accessible by a choice of means of transport by virtue of its location, layout and design.

The Council's powers with regard to bus and rail services are limited. However through working closely with the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE), public transport operators and other relevant bodies, the Council will seek to ensure that the bus and rail network and service provision fully meets the needs of people and businesses in the Borough.

The Council has adopted Walking and Cycling Strategies and is implementing measures in accordance with them.

Freight is heavily dependent on road traffic. While opportunities for rail use will be actively pursued and facilitated wherever possible, the primary aim is to reduce the environmental, amenity and safety impacts of freight.

Changes from the first UDP have been extensive in response to fundamental changes in national transport policy. Major new proposals include the integration of the two railway stations in Wigan, a new railway station at Golborne and the safeguarded route of the guided busway between Leigh and Manchester.

## **A1 ACCESSIBILITY**

**THE COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH OTHER AGENCIES, WILL SEEK TO ACHIEVE A MORE SUSTAINABLE AND INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM WHICH MEETS THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, ASSISTS IN THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL REGENERATION OF THE BOROUGH AND REDUCES ITS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT.**

**DEVELOPMENT WILL BE LOCATED SO THAT IT MINIMISES THE NEED TO TRAVEL, PARTICULARLY BY CAR, AND CAN BE READILY ACCESSIBLE BY ALTERNATIVE, MORE SUSTAINABLE FORMS OF TRANSPORT SUCH AS PUBLIC TRANSPORT, WALKING AND CYCLING.**

**IN THE DESIGN AND LAYOUT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS AND HIGHWAY WORKS, THE FOLLOWING HIERARCHY OF ACCESSIBILITY WILL BE APPLIED:-**

- (1) PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES**
- (2) PEDESTRIANS**
- (3) CYCLISTS AND HORSE RIDERS**
- (4) PUBLIC TRANSPORT**
- (5) TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**
- (6) COMMERCIAL TRAFFIC FOR LOCAL ACCESS**
- (7) GENERAL ROAD TRAFFIC**

**THE SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY AND AMENITY INTERESTS OF PEOPLE WHO LIVE, WORK OR OTHERWISE USE THE AREA WILL BE GIVEN DUE REGARD WHEN CONSIDERING THE ACCESS NEEDS OF AN AREA.**

The Borough's transport system is poorly integrated and suffers from regular congestion on its road network. This prevents it fully meeting people's needs and is a constraint on regeneration.

In line with Government policy there is a need to reduce the extent of car usage and allow people more choice in how they travel and in how far they need to travel to access work, shopping and other services.

As well as the location of development, careful consideration needs to be given to the siting, layout and design of new development and how it relates to other land uses. For example, new housing should be within a short walking distance of local services and a public transport connection and developments likely to attract large numbers of people should not be located where they are only readily accessible by car.

In determining proposals careful consideration will be given to the accessibility of a development. The 'hierarchy of accessibility' set out in the policy seeks to ensure that the interests of the more vulnerable users are not overridden by the accessibility requirements of motor vehicles. It will help support social inclusion and promote less environmentally damaging forms of transport.

Taxis and private hire vehicles are given priority over the car because they do not require parking spaces to be provided in individual developments and they are available to all including those who do not have access to a car.

Local access for commercial traffic has to be accommodated where necessary but this should not be at the expense of a safe and convenient walking and cycling environment.

Horse riders are included in the 'hierarchy of accessibility' alongside cyclists not because of their potential to contribute to the achievement of a more sustainable transport system, but in recognition that they are vulnerable road users.

## **A1A Transport Assessments**

**A Transport Assessment will be required for all proposed developments or changes of use that would, either individually or together with other recently completed developments or outstanding planning permissions in the locality, give rise to a material increase in the volume or other impact of road traffic. It should establish whether the proposal is acceptable in transport terms and, if not, whether highway works or other measures are required in order to make it acceptable.**

New development generates new demands on the transport network and it is essential that the consequences for all forms of travel are properly assessed. Applicants should seek discussions at the pre-application stage to determine whether a Transport Assessment is required and what its scope and detail should be.

The coverage and detail of a Transport Assessment should reflect the scale and likely transport impacts of the development proposed including any implications for the trunk road network. For smaller schemes it will be sufficient to outline the transport aspects of the application. For major proposals that would generate significant numbers of trips, it should set out clearly the accessibility of the site by all forms of transport and the anticipated use of each. It should also set out measures to improve access by public transport, walking and cycling, reduce the need for car parking and mitigate adverse transport impacts. In many cases a Travel Plan will be needed to address these issues as set out below in Policy **A1B**. In all cases the requirements on a developer will be commensurate with the scale and transport impacts of the development proposed.

## **A1B Travel Plans**

**A Travel Plan will be required alongside planning applications for new development or change of use that would:-**

- (a) generate significant volumes of traffic; or**
- (b) generate traffic that would create or exacerbate an existing local traffic problem; or**
- (c) generate traffic in an area where there are existing or proposed initiatives to reduce road traffic and/or promote walking, cycling or public transport; or**

- (d) **significantly increase traffic in an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) or other area of poor air quality such that an AQMA might need to be declared.**

Travel Plans are an important component of our overall transport objectives and Government policy is that businesses, schools, hospitals and Councils should produce their own Plans. Wigan Council is producing a Travel Plan for its employees and is progressing a programme of Travel Plans for schools.

A Travel Plan should address:-

- (a) a reduction in car use, particularly single occupancy car use, and an increase in walking, cycling and public transport for access to the development;
- (b) a reduction in the impact of traffic arising from the development; and
- (c) safe pedestrian and cyclist access.

The Government has defined a range of size thresholds (gross floorspace) for new developments above which a Travel Plan will automatically be required:-

- (i) retail, cinemas and conference facilities and other indoor leisure developments over 1,000 square metres;
- (ii) offices, other Class B1 employment uses and further education developments over 2,500 square metres;
- (iii) stadia with more than 1,500 seats.

As noted above under Policy **A1A**, the need for a Travel Plan will often arise from a Transport Assessment. Pollution, including Air Quality Management Areas, is covered by Policy **EV1B**.

### **A1C Access for All**

**New development and transport proposals will be required to make provision for safe, clearly defined and convenient access for all potential users, regardless of disability, age and gender to ensure the highest standards of accessibility and inclusion in all development proposals.**

**Where off-site provision for people with disabilities is inadequate, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the works needed to improve accessibility. This will be relative to the scale and type of the development and the relevant characteristics of the local environment.**

Safe and convenient access for people with disabilities is an important element in addressing issues of equality and inclusion. It also ensures that other people with restricted mobility are not unduly disadvantaged. This can include the elderly, people with prams or otherwise with small children, people carrying shopping or luggage, and people temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accordingly, access for people with disabilities has the highest priority in new developments and transport proposals.

When considering proposals the Council will give careful consideration to the requirements of disabled people as pedestrians (including wheelchair users), public transport users and drivers in particular. Routes will need to be safe, well defined, easy to negotiate and appropriately signed. Car parking standards for disabled people are set out under Policy **A1S**.

Inclusive design creates an environment where everyone can access and benefit from the full range of opportunities available to members of society. It should be easily used, safe, predictable, of high quality and welcoming regardless of age, gender or disability.

The Council will, where appropriate and relative to the scale of development and its access needs, seek contributions towards off-site improvements necessary to maximise the accessibility of a site for disabled people (see Policy **G1B**). Any such works will need to be agreed with the Council as Highway Authority and completed in accordance with Council's standards for such work.

## **A1D Walking**

**The Council will implement measures to make the walking environment more accessible, attractive, convenient and safe.**

**Development will be required to make provision for an accessible, attractive, convenient and safe walking environment, both within the development and between it and nearby important facilities and public transport connections.**

**Where off-site access for pedestrians is inadequate, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the works needed to improve accessibility. This will be relative to the scale and type of the development and the relevant characteristics of the local highway network.**

Walking is an important mode of travel, particularly for local journeys and the Council adopted a Walking Strategy for the Borough in August 2001. This includes a commitment to identify a network of routes both on and off the highway which link key places. Particular emphasis will be given to routes that provide safe and convenient access from residential areas to schools, town and local centres, public transport connections and other facilities.

The Council will implement a range of measures to improve the attractiveness, safety and security of the walking environment, with priority given to the safety and security of off-road links and areas where road safety is a major issue. To improve security, attention will be given to providing adequate lighting and ensuring footways are visible from surrounding areas.

In accordance with the hierarchy of accessibility, walking has high priority when considering development proposals. Developments should be designed to encourage walking with advantageous routes and good urban design ensuring natural surveillance.

The Council will, where appropriate and relative to the scale of development and its access needs, seek contributions towards off-site improvements necessary to maximise the accessibility of a site for walking (see **Policy G1B**). Appropriate measures could include:-

- new routes;
- widened and improved footways;
- improved street crossing facilities;
- improved street lighting;
- improved landscaping

## **A1E Cycling**

**The Council will implement measures to improve accessibility for cyclists, including the development of a more attractive, convenient and safe cycling network.**

**Development will be required to make provision for safe and convenient access for cyclists.**

**Where off-site access for cycling is inadequate, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the works needed to improve accessibility. This will be relative to the scale and type of the development and the relevant characteristics of the local highway network.**

Cycling is a healthy and economical form of transport which can help reduce the adverse impact of the car, particularly for shorter journeys.

An important part of the Council's Cycling Strategy is the identification and subsequent provision of a network of key routes, both on and off the highway. Priorities are the provision of safer routes to schools and links from residential areas to town and local centres, employment areas, leisure facilities and bus and rail stations. Whilst the network will primarily make use of existing roads, it will also utilise canal towpaths, disused railway lines and the defined Greenway Network, as appropriate. Opportunities for linking with, and/or developing sections of, the proposed key network through new development proposals will be sought.

The needs of cyclists will be considered in all new developments. Cycle audits will be carried out by the authority to determine the required infrastructure improvements and to ensure that development does not adversely affect the existing and proposed cycle network. Cycle parking standards are set out under Policy **A1S**.

The Council will, where appropriate and relative to the scale of development and its access needs, seek contributions towards off-site improvements needed to maximise the accessibility of the site for cyclists (see Policy **G1B**). These could include:-

- dedicated road space for cyclists;
- advanced stop lines at signal controlled junctions;
- dedicated signals and crossing facilities;
- new and improved routes.

## **A1F Bus Provision - New Development**

**In all appropriate new developments provision for access by buses will be required.**

**Where off-site access for bus services is inadequate to allow for an appropriate level of service provision, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the works needed to improve accessibility. This will be relative to the scale and type of the development and the relevant characteristics of the local highway network.**

In line with Government advice it is important that new developments are made readily accessible to bus services. The need to meet the requirements of this policy will depend on the size, location and type of development though it is likely to be particularly appropriate in larger housing, retail and leisure developments. A Transport Assessment will help determine the need for improved access and the type of measures required (see Policy **A1A**).

Wherever possible the Council will require a development to be designed to provide for bus movements within the on-site road network, with land set aside for a bus lay-by(s) and turning area.

As detailed under Policy **G1B** the Council will, where appropriate and relative to the scale of development and its access needs, seek contributions towards off-site measures necessary to maximise accessibility to the site for buses. This could include:-

- bus priority measures;
- bus lanes;
- bus stops and shelters;
- real time information;
- new or improved pedestrian routes to bus stops.

In addition to improvements to bus infrastructure, the Council will consider the use of obligations in appropriate circumstances to bring about specific improvements to, or provision of, bus services, particularly in locations away from town centres and public transport interchanges. This could include ensuring services operate at certain hours of the day and at a specific frequency.

### **\* A1G Physical Improvements to Bus Network**

**The following routes are being developed as Quality Bus Corridors:-**

- |  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
| <b>(1) Wigan to Leigh/Atherton (A577/A578)</b> | <b>*(10, 11, 16, 17, 18, 23)</b> |
| <b>(2) Wigan to Chorley (A49)</b>              | <b>*(2,4,7,10)</b>               |
| <b>(3) Wigan to Skelmersdale (A49/A577)</b>    | <b>*(9,10)</b>                   |
| <b>(4) Leigh to Bolton (B5215/A579)</b>        | <b>*(17,18, 23)</b>              |
| <b>(5) Wigan to St Helens (A573/A58/A49)</b>   | <b>*(10, 15, 21, 26)</b>         |

**Developments close to a proposed Quality Bus Corridor that require a Transport Assessment should contribute towards the implementation of Quality Bus Corridor measures as far as they are material to the proposed development.**

Bus services form the heart of the public transport network in the Borough. It is the Council's vision to have a high quality frequent service network between main settlements.

Key routes have been identified as Quality Bus Corridors along which comprehensive improvements have and will be undertaken in order to improve the overall environment for bus users. The main objectives are to reduce journey times, increase the reliability of services and provide high quality accessible vehicles, waiting environments and passenger information.

A range of measures can be used to achieve these objectives including bus gates at junctions, bus priority at traffic lights, more convenient and safely located bus stops and shelters and measures to ensure that parking and delivery needs can be provided for without disrupting bus services.

**\* A1H Leigh, Ellenbrook, Manchester Public Transport Corridor**

**Development that would prejudice the construction and operation of a guided busway between Leigh and the Borough boundary at Ellenbrook (together with a link to Higher Folds), as part of a Quality Bus Corridor eastwards to Manchester, will not be permitted. The route will also be safeguarded from development that would prejudice its future upgrading to light or heavy rail.**

\*(23, 24, 18, 19)

The Council has been working with GMPTE and Salford Council to progress proposals for a Quality Bus Corridor from Leigh to Manchester. The scheme has undergone a comprehensive programme of public consultation and an application for an Order under the Transport and Works Act was made in January 2002, with a public inquiry held in the Autumn of that year.

Within the Borough it will comprise a new guided busway along 8 km of the former railway line from Leigh through Tyldesley to Ellenbrook, together with a spur to Higher Folds. High quality bus priority measures will link Ellenbrook to Manchester City Centre, primarily along the A580, giving comprehensive bus priority along the entire route. Integral to the proposal is the creation of a safe access and waiting environment for users.

The implementation of the scheme will significantly reduce journey times between Leigh and Manchester and improve travel opportunities for those without access to a car. It should also result in fewer car journeys, thereby reducing congestion for the benefit of other road users and residents. Swifter public transport links will also improve the attraction of Leigh and Tyldesley as locations for business.

At the present time the Council sees the development of a Quality Bus Corridor as the most feasible means of providing a high quality integrated transport route between Leigh and Manchester. However provision is made to allow for the route to be upgraded to light or heavy rail if feasible in the future.

## **\* A1J Rail Infrastructure**

**The development of new or improved services and facilities at existing rail stations will be sought.**

**The construction of a new rail station at Golborne will be pursued within land shown on the Proposals Map.**

\*(27)

As stressed by the Government, Local Authorities in conjunction with the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) need to fully consider the potential for improving rail travel in their areas.

There are a number of infrastructure improvements required at many of the stations in the Borough, including the need to enhance security and accessibility, upgrade facilities and improve the provision of information and interchange with other modes. In determining priorities the Council will work closely with GMPTE and the local community.

A new station is proposed at Golborne. It is dependent upon a number of factors including the introduction of a local service on the West Coast Main Line, south of Wigan.

## **\* A1K Integration of Wigan Rail Stations**

**Within the land shown on the Proposals Map, the integration of Wigan North Western and Wigan Wallgate Stations will be pursued.**

\*(10)

Wigan North Western is a key station on the West Coast Main Line and Wigan Wallgate and North Western are the focus for local rail services. The two stations are poorly integrated, being separated by a busy road and with inadequate and unattractive pedestrian links between them. The Council wants to see the combination of the two stations into a single entity providing significantly improved facilities.

Wallgate Station and most of the other buildings along the north-west side of Wallgate to the railway bridge are Listed Buildings and, together with buildings on the south-east side of Wallgate as far as the vehicular access to North Western Station, they are all within the Town Centre Conservation Area. The design for this scheme will need to be sensitive to this context.

This scheme forms one of a closely associated package of wider proposals called the Wigan Hub. Integral to it is the construction of the A5225 and Town Centre Link Road (see Policy **A1P**) which will provide access to Wigan town centre and the railway stations. Through the implementation of the Wigan Inner Relief Road (see Policy **A1P**) significant improvements in access arrangements for pedestrians, cyclists and buses can be achieved, with the potential for high quality interchange facilities between car, bus, taxi, cycle, walking and rail. The Council is committed to working with relevant landowners to produce a development brief for the area that is also consistent with Policy **S1B**.

## **A1L Taxis - New Development**

**Adequate provision for taxis and private hire vehicles will be required in proposals for large retail and leisure developments and at rail and bus stations. Facilities should:-**

- (a) have adequate capacity for taxis according to existing and/or anticipated demand;**
- (b) be within easy walking distance of the development;**
- (c) have seating and shelter;**
- (d) be in a secure location and well lit at night; and**
- (e) be accessible for disabled people.**

**Where existing off-site provision can satisfy the above criteria, on-site provision will not be required.**

**Where off-site access for taxis and private hire vehicles is inadequate, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the works needed to improve accessibility. This will be relative to the scale and type of the development and the relevant characteristics of the local highway network.**

Taxis have an important role in meeting the transport needs of the Borough's residents, enabling people who do not have access to a car to reach services and facilities where they do not live near a convenient and regular bus service, and at times when other modes such as bus and rail are not available. They also have a key role for people who have difficulty utilising regular bus and train services. A Transport Assessment will help determine the need for improved access by taxis and the type of measures required (see Policy **A1A**).

## **A1M Freight – New Development**

**Proposals that will generate freight movements will be required to have appropriate access to the Strategic Route Network.**

**Proposals for rail connections for freight will be permitted provided that there will be no undue impacts on amenity, safety or congestion and any additional road traffic generated will have appropriate access to the Strategic Route Network.**

The efficient movement of freight is essential to a competitive local and national economy. Given its flexibility, road transport will remain the primary mode for the movement of freight. However the road network in the Borough is increasingly affected by congestion.

Proposals should be located where access between the site and the Strategic Route Network is suitable for the traffic likely to be generated, without undue adverse impact on congestion, road safety and amenity (see Policy **G1A**).

Rail can play an important role in the sustainable distribution of goods. It has particular strengths in the movement of goods over longer distances. Subject to the safeguards outlined its use for freight will be facilitated.

A Transport Assessment will be required for new developments likely to generate significant freight movements, in order to assess the full implications of traffic movements and how they can be carried out in the most sustainable way.

**\* A1N Strategic Route Network**

**The Council will safeguard, maintain and improve the Strategic Route Network to accommodate main flows of general traffic in the Borough.**

\*(1-11, 13-29)

An effective road network is integral to meeting the future transport needs of the Borough. The Strategic Route Network (SRN) comprises the main arterial roads carrying the highest volumes of traffic and linking the main settlements.

It is important that this network is able to accommodate the efficient movement of people and goods between urban areas and the motorway system, thereby helping to reduce the impact of traffic elsewhere.

In certain circumstances, new roads are required to overcome problems of traffic congestion and to improve accessibility to locations that are constrained by poor access (see Policy **A1P**).

The use of the Strategic Route Network for main flows of general traffic should not prejudice walking, cycling and public transport accessibility. Parts of the SRN are also being developed as Quality Bus Corridors (see Policy **A1G**). Walking and cycling, both along and across the SRN, should also be facilitated.

**\* A1P Major Highway Schemes**

**The Council will safeguard the land required for the following road schemes and will not permit any development which might prejudice their construction:-**

- (1) Westwood Park/Town Centre Link Road** \*(10)
- (2) Wigan Inner Relief Road West** \*(10)

The highlighted schemes are important new road links required to resolve traffic conflicts and support the Borough's economy.

- (1) Westwood Park/Town Centre Link Road

This road will link the town centre with Westwood Park. It involves a major upgrading of Chapel Lane and Poolstock Lane with improved access to Westwood Park to enable the development to proceed. It is anticipated that the road will be completed in 2006.

## (2) Wigan Inner Relief Road West

This road proposal will link the A49 at the Saddle Junction with the Inner Relief Road at New Market Street, thereby completing the inner ring road around the town centre. It is part of the Wigan Integrated Transport Scheme (WITS) and will allow for improved access to the rail and bus stations by public transport, cycling and walking and remove general road traffic from Wallgate. It will also provide access to new employment sites close to areas of high deprivation.

In addition, the Council will advocate to the Highways Agency, that Junction 25 be made an 'all ways' junction.

### **A1R Highway Access - New Development**

**New development will be required to facilitate safe and convenient access for all road vehicles in a way which is compatible with the hierarchy of accessibility and good urban design. Proposals should ensure that:-**

- (a) roads, junctions and access points are safe, convenient and suitable for the traffic that will be required to use them;**
- (b) access for emergency service vehicles is provided;**
- (c) roads, pavements, footpaths and cycleways are designed and integrated into the development so as to give priority to pedestrians, wheelchair users and cyclists and to promote community safety.**

It is essential that in all developments access arrangements are appropriate to the type and level of traffic to be generated. They must also provide for the needs of other road users in accordance with the hierarchy of accessibility (Policy **A1**) and enhance the overall quality of development.

Direct access on to the trunk road network will be restricted. Developers will need to contact the Highways Agency at an early stage about any development that may directly or indirectly affect a trunk road.

Attention will be given to ensuring the impact of traffic in residential areas is minimised making them safer environments for children in particular. Where appropriate developers will be expected to provide traffic calming. To this end, the Government is encouraging the development of 'home zones' so that the streets of residential areas meet the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, children and the wider community, rather than primarily the motorist. In larger residential developments, the developer will be required to provide for the principles of a 'home zone'

### **A1S Parking in New Development**

**In new development, convenient, safe and secure provision will be required for:-**

- (a) cycle and motorcycle parking and car parking for disabled people in accordance with the minimum standards adopted by the Council;**

**(b) car parking in line with the maximum standards adopted by the Council.**

**The scope for providing cycle or motorcycle parking or car parking for disabled people below the minimum standards, or car parking below the maximum standard, will be considered against the following factors:-**

- (i) the accessibility of the site by public transport;**
- (ii) the availability of convenient and safe off-street parking;**
- (iii) the availability of on-street car parking without detriment to residential amenity and highway safety;**
- (iv) the feasibility of providing on-site parking relative to other planning issues such as the reuse of a constrained site or building and urban design.**

**Where necessary, a legal agreement will be sought to secure the developer's contribution to the provision and/or management of off-site parking.**

Government guidance (PPG13) states that maximum car parking standards should be applied to new development as part of wider measures to reduce car use. This does not apply to car parking for disabled people in order to maximise accessibility for disabled people, nor to cycling in order to encourage cycle use, nor to motorcycling. The Council has developed maximum car parking standards and minimum standards for cycle and motorcycle parking and car parking for disabled people in conjunction with other Greater Manchester authorities. The standards are based on the 'urban conurbation' standards in Regional Planning Guidance and national standards in PPG13 and are set out in Appendix 9.

When development is proposed with car parking in excess of the maximum standards, it should be demonstrated by way of a Transport Assessment why it is needed. The criteria in the policy set out the circumstances when parking provision below any of the standards is appropriate, either because there is satisfactory alternative provision; good accessibility by public transport or proposals in place to improve its use (for example, by way of a Travel Plan); or it is outweighed by other planning considerations such as the desirable reuse of a constrained site or for reasons of good urban design.

On many occasions the car is the only means of access for disabled people. The minimum standards for car parking for disabled people seek to ensure that there are adequate spaces to ensure equal opportunity of access. Such provision should always be made as close as possible to, and usually within 50 metres of, the main entrance(s) to the building(s) and accord with nationally recognised design guidance.

## **A1T Park and Ride**

**Applications for park and ride facilities will be permitted subject to the following criteria:-**

- (a) they are compatible with the Local Transport Plan and in accordance with the Regional Transport Strategy;**

- (b) a detailed assessment of alternative sites has been undertaken and the travel impacts of the proposal have been fully evaluated;**
- (c) it does not give rise to unacceptable impact on congestion;**
- (d) the proposal does not have a significant adverse impact on residential amenity; and**
- (e) the proposal is easily accessible by all relevant modes of transport.**

**Additionally, where the proposal falls within Green Belt, it will need to be demonstrated that the site is the most sustainable option and that the proposal will not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in the Green Belt, and can be designed without unacceptable impact on the openness or visual amenity of the Green Belt.**

Park and ride can play an important role in the integration of transport modes, help to promote sustainable travel patterns and improve the accessibility of town centres. Schemes can be based around bus or rail and can vary significantly in size and purpose.

Proposals should accord with the Greater Manchester Park and Ride Strategy. As well as needing a comprehensive evaluation of potential alternative sites and the impacts on traffic flows and local amenity, it is vital that its overall implications for transport provision are beneficial. Proposals should not result in a significant increase in the levels of a town centre's public parking provision. In determining schemes careful consideration will be given to ensuring the proposal will not bring about additional journeys onto the road network, particularly by commuters.

Development in the Green Belt will only be acceptable when it can be demonstrated that the scheme will not seriously compromise the purposes of including land in Green Belt (see Policy **GB1**), and it is the best available option in terms of travel and other impacts.

To maximise its potential, schemes should be designed in conjunction with other measures such as public transport improvements, parking controls and good access to the facility for pedestrians and cyclists.

In consideration of parking proposals at rail stations, particular attention will be given to ensuring they will not result in unacceptable road congestion on the surrounding road network.

## **A1U Improving Access to Support a Sustainable Pattern of Settlement**

**The Council will continue to work with partners to identify solutions to the severe constraints on access in the Borough in order to support a sustainable pattern of settlement. Proposals will be brought forward that will:**

- (a) improve accessibility within, and between, urban areas in the Borough and between urban areas and the principal route network;**
- (b) promote the development of previously developed land within the urban area;**

- (c) assist in the removal of inappropriate vehicle movements from sensitive locations on the road network;**
- (d) incorporate detailed measures to contain traffic levels and promote sustainable transport;**
- (e) be demonstrably the best option or range of options to meet the above policy objectives following the conclusion of a rigorous assessment of alternative options; and**
- (f) where appropriate, be supported by an environmental statement or environmental impact assessment that demonstrates that the proposals will not have an unacceptable impact on the environment.**

Since the inception of the modern town planning system in 1947, the Borough has not benefited from a fundamental restructuring of its public transport infrastructure and strategic route network. The main east-west highway across the centre of the Borough is the A577. This is typical of the strategic route network in Wigan in that it passes through the built-up areas and the retail centres of settlements, fragmenting these and introducing noise, air pollution and traffic hazard. It carries both local and through traffic. Heavy goods vehicles share the same road surface with buses and cyclists. Due to the cramped layout of much of the older housing stock this traffic flow is, at many places, separated from the front elevations of dwellings by only the width of a narrow footway.

The central east-west corridor through the Borough is characterised by areas of high deprivation and areas of previously developed or degraded land within the urban area. By bringing forward this land in a manner compatible with proper environmental care, development can be promoted that will benefit the quality of life of residents and support efforts to achieve sustainable communities. It will also reduce pressure for development on safeguarded land, most of which is greenfield land.

In order to achieve this it will be essential to improve accessibility within and between urban areas in the Borough and between urban areas and the principal route network. Such improvements would enable through traffic movements to be removed from sensitive locations on the road network. This would also enhance the scope of the road network to accommodate the sustainable transport modes of buses, cycling and walking, and ensure that overall traffic levels are contained.

In order to identify the best option or range of options to achieve the policy objectives, a rigorous examination of alternative options will need to be carried out.

Such an examination will include the consideration of broad environmental impacts. However, the provisional best option from the examination of options will need to be assessed in detail to determine its impact on the environment. If it will have an unacceptable impact and this cannot be adequately mitigated, then an alternative option will need to be progressed. Where appropriate an environmental statement or environmental impact assessment will be required in accordance with the relevant regulations, to inform the decision-making process.