

A New Direction

Based on all the information and evidence collected, and the views submitted during the extensive consultation exercise, a number of important underlying transport values and concepts have emerged to ensure that future transport provision will be consistent, efficient, and fair. The transport vision outlined in this section aligns with the Council's own values; confidence in the borough, putting people first, efficient and business-like, always keen to do better, and one team one council.

It is perhaps no surprise that one of the biggest issues raised by the consultation in 2011 was congestion. It is one of the key priorities for Wigan Council. The evidence collected confirms the hotspot locations and extent of congestion that exists in the borough, but it also demonstrates that we are the least congested district in Greater Manchester. Indeed, there are many places across the country that experience significantly worse congestion than we do. However, that does not mean we should be complacent about tackling congestion as it is clearly a key issue for our communities and businesses.

For a long time, expanding road capacity for motor traffic has been a popular solution for reducing congestion. Despite huge investment across the country, this has had little effect. This is because traffic congestion tends to remain at a constant level: if congestion increases, people choose to travel to different locations, by different routes or modes, or at different times of the day. These different trips release some capacity on the network and therefore it appears that congestion is declining.

If congestion declines to a point where people think it's no longer an issue, or engineering improvements are made to increase capacity of a particular route or junction, then trips divert back onto the route and people change their travel choices, so bringing congestion back up to its previous level. It is now proven and generally accepted that congestion won't disappear, however by improving our transport choices, so that they are attractive, affordable, convenient and connected, we can get the borough moving and the impact of congestion can be reduced.

Traffic-based strategies tend to make vehicle movement more efficient by assuming that increased vehicle mileage and speed benefit society, and they also tend to favour road capacity expansion, resulting in more sprawl and generating more total traffic mileage. The evidence and consultation results have told us that we need to improve accessibility (people's ability to reach desired services and destinations), rather than mobility (physical movement and vehicle trips), and this new approach will help to get people where they need and want to go.

Accessibility refers to the ability to reach desired goods, services and activities. We can evaluate this based on time, money, discomfort and risk to people. This approach considers all options as being potentially important, including reducing the need to travel, improving transport choices and enhancing our transport connections. Accessibility-based strategies will help us to prioritise a wide range of solutions, making transport much more resilient and the results will provide a more efficient network with less adverse impacts on our economy, environment and society.



Our transport vision

By 2026, we want... people to have good access to an attractive transport system, which provides choice for jobs, goods and services, and balances the needs of sustainable residential communities with strategic business networks

Objectives

The borough's transport evidence and your consultation responses have led us to develop the four key objectives set out below, which will help to ensure that we can deliver the vision by 2026.

Therefore, we are aiming for our transport network to provide:

1. **Sustainable transport** to deliver economic, environmental and social outcomes
2. **Equitable access** between communities, businesses, services and goods
3. **Diverse and adaptable networks** for choice and resilience
4. **Attractive transport experience** to encourage modal shift

It is important that improvements in congestion and accessibility are secured for the long term. However, it is critical that we change our transport thinking and shift the focus away from vehicle movements, to put people at the centre of decision making and enable them to have access to the goods and services they need. The evidence has proved to us that...

If you plan for **cars** and **traffic**,
you get **cars** and **traffic**.

Linked with the vision and objectives, the evidence has also led us to developing a new hierarchical approach to delivering the actions and projects outlined later in this transport strategy.

1. **Reducing the need to travel** in the first place, because it physically removes a trip off the network.
2. **Transferring trips onto and encouraging sustainable travel choices** to improve congestion by moving trips to more efficient modes of transport that use less road space. Improving other modes has a very important effect on the resilience of the transport system: in the short term, this can be helpful for providing alternatives in exceptional conditions, such as snow and ice, or other temporary incidents, such as breakdowns or accidents; and, in the longer term, it will help people to adapt to changing circumstances, such as age, health, climate change, and the cost and availability of fuel.
3. **Improving the efficiency** of the remaining trips will include more efficient driving styles, more economical engines, and technology solutions for vehicles and network management.

If you plan for **people** and **places**,
you get **people** and **places**.

Section 8

A Transport Strategy

From the evidence collected and discussed within this document, and the views submitted during our consultation, we have been able to develop a transport strategy and action plan looking at key activities and projects for improving our transport networks over the next fifteen years. Resources are limited and we are not going to be able to achieve everything that we would like, nor as quickly as we would like, BUT... we've already made a start and we're moving in the right direction.

More information on the priority schemes has been included in this section, however the evidence and detailed information will be provided in the suite of sub-strategies that will accompany this high-level strategy document.

The executive summary to this report provides a holistic overview of the transport strategy and associated action plan, which has been condensed to highlight the key priorities and projects that will help us deliver the vision and achieve our objectives.





The Strategic Importance of Rail

We want to improve quality, image and choice for rail passengers, through better stations, better quality rolling-stock and improved services. We want to:

- Influence decisions on investment and operation;
- Improve integration and connectivity with other modes of transport, including flexible and through ticketing;
- See the range of rail services and destinations expanded;
- Improve on the current passenger experience, both on the train itself and at the stations within the borough; and
- Reduce the impacts of car travel at stations, by encouraging more sustainable choices of travel.

We recognise that the Council has no direct control over rail operation and investment, but we have formed productive partnerships with franchisees and decision makers, which need to be expanded and strengthened to influence the outcomes to improve our strategic rail connectivity.

Our key rail priorities and projects include:

- Supporting the delivery of Northern Hub
- Supporting rail electrification
- Investigating opportunities from High Speed Rail
- Investigating opportunities for Tram Train
- Developing Wigan Hub
- Influencing franchise renewals
- Developing rail station travel plans
- Investigating potential for new stations
- Developing P&R at stations
- Supporting smart-ticketing rollout





Better Buses

We want to encourage more people to travel by bus and therefore we need to change the way people think about buses. Making them more attractive, reliable and competitive is the key. We want to improve:

- Punctuality and reliability of services;
- Value for money;
- Service frequencies, operating hours, and choice of routes to provide door-to-door connectivity; and,
- The whole journey experience (including vehicles, interchange and the attractiveness of using bus services).

We recognise that the Council has no direct control over bus service operations, but we need to strengthen our partnerships working with Transport for Greater Manchester and bus operators to help secure improvements for our bus networks and improve perceptions of bus travel. We want to influence investment decisions to target initiatives that enable people to make informed choices about bus services and help make bus travel more competitive with other modes.

Therefore, we want:

- Passengers to have a better interchange experience, through improved infrastructure and access;
- A prioritised list of network improvements that give genuine priority to buses;
- Flexible and through ticketing for hassle-free trips;
- On-going dialogue with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and bus operators for productive partnerships;
- A broader and more comprehensive programme of travel initiatives, marketing and passenger information to promote a more positive image of bus travel and encourage people to travel on buses;
- To deliver the bus infrastructure and enhanced public transport information as part of the Better Bus Area Fund for Wigan Town Centre and the CANGo area (in partnership with St Helen's and Warrington); and,
- To support the delivery of TfGM's Busway Project, so that it is operational by 2015.





More Cycling, More Safely, More Often

We want to increase and sustain cycle use by expanding the use of cycles for leisure activities and generating a new culture of cycling for commuting. To do this, we will need to create an environment where cycling is regarded as safe and convenient, to develop healthier and happier lifestyles. We want to:

- Maintain and develop an inclusive 'fit for purpose' cycling network;
- Improve road safety and personal security; and,
- Promote cycling and equip users with skills and information

We want to develop a cycling commuter network, supported by education, training initiatives and incentives to encourage more cycling, through:

- Cycling infrastructure improvements to create a 'fit for purpose' cycling commuter network, including the Pier to Pier, NCN 55, and CANGO cycling corridors;
- Environmental, traffic management, and road safety improvements to create safer, well lit and more attractive conditions for cycling;
- Education, training and promotion, to give people the skills and confidence they need; and,
- A programme of travel planning initiatives to give people the information and incentives they need to make realistic travel choices and encourage behavioural change to promote more cycling.

We need to ensure that we get value for money for capital investment schemes, and with numerous benefits to offer, cycling projects tend to outperform all other transport sectors in terms of benefits / cost ratios.

We believe cycling can make significant and positive contributions to our whole way of life by being a preferred commuter mode of travel, as well as a healthy leisure activity for individuals and families.

Cycling is a comparatively cheap, sustainable and low carbon form of transport, and we need to ensure that we make best use of our historical assets (disused railway lines and canal towpaths), vast open spaces, and relatively flat terrain, to provide the routes and information to connect communities to education and employment opportunities.

TfGM have identified cycle commuting as one of their key priorities and have recently been successful in receiving almost £50million from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which includes capital and revenue cycling activities and projects.



Walking: A Step in the right direction

We want transport to play a stronger role in improving peoples' health, through more people choosing to walk for local journeys (those less than two miles). This will also help to relieve the amount of localised congestion.

We want everyone to be aware of making 'smarter travel choices'. We need to need to understand more about some of the barriers discouraging people from walking.

We need to improve linkages to existing residential areas and ensure that when planning new developments, pedestrian (and cycle) connections are well integrated.

We also need to prioritise improvements to ensure that both personal security and road safety issues are accommodated.

We need to continue to provide 'active travel' information and support, and work in partnership with other organisations to explore more ways to encourage more walking trips.

Therefore, some of the key projects that will need to be delivered include:

- Revision / development of a new walking strategy;
- Ensuring good design in and to new developments;
- Walking routes from residential areas to key local centres, services and facilities, and education centre;
- Enhance walking links to public transport, parking areas and key destinations;
- Market and incentivise walking trips; and,
- Prioritised resources for walking routes that best connect communities to employment / training / education opportunities.



Parking: Right place, Right time, Right Price

We want to provide the right balance of parking across the borough to:

- Ensure parking policy promotes a shift to sustainable transport modes;
- Support and strengthen the local economy;
- Provide facilities in a fair way to those most in need;
- Ensure that car parking locations perform efficiently in terms of meeting the required demands, place, price and operating times for all types of users;
- Investigate wider aspirations for 'Park and Ride' and 'Cycle and Ride' facilities to help relieve congestion hotspots on key corridors across the borough; and
- Identify cycle and motorcycle parking locations where significant numbers of car users could be encouraged to consider sustainable forms of transport to support wider economic objectives.

We want to ensure that parking facilities are provided in the right locations, at the right price, and provide for the right duration to accommodate various transport needs. This includes reviewing current car, cycle, motorcycle and lorry parking provision, both on street and in designated parking areas, to ensure the right balance of provision is made to support our borough from economic, environmental and social perspectives.

By managing the supply, location and user type better we can ensure parking supports the needs and economic long term objectives of the borough by:

- Supporting and influencing better parking (cycle, motorcycle, and car parking) provision in our town centres through the emerging Area Action Plans for Wigan and Leigh;
- Introducing traffic management and pricing measures to ensure parking supply at important locations is fair and sustainable;
- Identifying opportunities to develop a network of electric vehicle charging points;
- Investigate & promote potential new sites for secure overnight lorry parking; and,
- Reviewing and identifying parking locations to deliver wider economic, environmental and social objectives.



Freight: Effective & Efficient for a Strong Economy

We want to improve the efficiency of freight to help grow the economy. We also want to reduce the impact it has on local communities, on other road users, and the wider environment. We could do this with:

- A more efficient and appropriate freight network – on road/by rail;
- Better loading facilities for quicker and more flexible deliveries; and,
- Understanding and supporting local businesses' with their transport issues and aspirations

We are commissioning some research into how the borough might be able to maximise opportunities for rail freight. We need to understand the implications of reducing the distance and time that lorries spend on our roads, and then we can develop a more efficient and appropriate network. This will include the possibility of reducing road freight trips and transferring to other modes, such as rail and water.

We want to review parking and loading regimes, to reduce operating costs, maximise flexibility for shippers and receivers, minimise congestion for other road users, and improve security for operators.

We want to work more closely with our business partners across the borough, especially with freight operators. We also want to continue to support various technologies and behaviour programmes that improve fuel efficiency, reduce vehicle and road wear, and improve road safety.

We want to:

- Support businesses in transferring their road freight onto more sustainable freight routes and modes (rail and water);
- Encourage businesses to run training programmes to improve driver skills;
- Explore and support opportunities for secure overnight lorry parking and investigate the possibility of a designated distribution centre within the borough;
- Understand how centres outside the borough (such as the Atlantic Gateway, Liverpool Super Ports and Port Salford), can bring about advantages for freight movements; and,
- Review existing freight movements, to ensure future routes, mapping and signage, to key destinations, are efficient and complement our congestion reduction ambitions.



Smarter Travel – Tackling Congestion

Everyone in the borough has an opinion about congestion and discussions about traffic problems are as common as discussing the weather. We need to keep people and services moving to ensure that the economic prosperity of the borough is achieved, and provide ways in which we can connect people to opportunities for employment, education, health, retail or leisure. Therefore we need to:

- Review the evidence to ensure we understand where and when congestion problems occur across the borough;
- Develop a prioritised programme of action to tackle the borough's congestion hotspots, whilst ensuring we achieve value for money.
- Promote a shift in personal transport choices away from road vehicles to public transport, cycling and walking.

We want to reverse the detrimental effects of congestion on communities, the local environment, economy and wellbeing of residents. We also need to ensure that when success has been achieved in reducing the impact of congestion, that the available road space does not automatically generate further congestion levels through other people reverting back to car use. Building new roads isn't the answer to long-term congestion relief.

By engaging with developers during the planning process, we will ensure the delivery of new transport links, in addition to the safeguarding the existing transport network, to deliver sustainable travel provision (walking, cycling and public transport).

We also need to make the most of any available funding opportunities in the future by demonstrating, without question, the value of any proposed projects in terms of cost, health and the environment.



Strategic Transport – Connecting People to Opportunities

The future development of the borough is critical for securing an environment where:

- Public transport, walking and cycling infrastructure is embedded within the physical landscape of the borough;
- Transport connections are prioritised to ensure people can access the places they want to go to; and,
- Future opportunities and services for residents are located as conveniently as possible to that infrastructure.

We want to ensure any development in the future plays an important role in shaping a borough whose residents are a lot less reliant on the private car for their everyday journeys:

- We will have to be sure what transport measures are required across the borough in the short, medium and long term;
- Identify and prioritise the major infrastructure required (road, rail electrification, bus priority, cycling and walking corridors) and seek funding opportunities to deliver the wider aspirations; and
- Developers will need to have a good understanding of what we want their development to contribute to and help achieve sustainable transport objectives.

All new and major development in particular will need to:

- Align with the transport strategy objectives and hierarchy;
- Include measures to help mitigate the impact of development on the transport network through
 - good design;
 - provision of accessible walking, cycling and public transport links to local community facilities; and
 - appropriate Section 106 contributions or the use of Community Infrastructure Levy.



Action Plan

We want to make sure that our plans meet the needs of our residents, businesses and visitors and therefore the action plan set out in this section highlights our transport projects and priorities.

By delivering the actions and activities set out in the tables ahead, we will be working hard to deliver the environmentally sustainable, reliable and safe transport system that our communities need. We will also be working with key partners and stakeholders to: challenge and influence decisions to develop a better transport system; connect people to opportunities; and, promote economic regeneration.

The map opposite shows: the locations of our major transport infrastructure projects; how they contribute towards improving out transport networks; and, their potential timelines. This map, together with the action plan set out in this section will be reviewed annually to monitor progress and to reflect any new opportunities that may have developed.

Future Transport Priority Projects

Future Transport Priorities

Key

-  Existing key site
-  Proposed key site
-  Broad location

Future transport network

Short to medium term schemes

1. Pier to pier cycle route (NCN 562) (Wigan pier to Southport Pier)
2. Foundry Lane junction improvement
3. Pemberton Park link road phase 1
4. Saddle link road
5. A49 diversion
6. Wigan transport hub
7. Amberwood link road
8. Northleigh link road
- 8a. Northleigh hub/interchange
9. Parsonage link road phase 1
10. Leigh - Salford - Manchester busway
11. Busway (highway connections) to Atherton town centre

-  12. Leigh Sustainable Travel Project (LSTP)

Longer term schemes

13. Pemberton link road phase 2
14. Landgate - Stubshaw Cross link road
15. Wigan inner relief road
16. Amberwood link road phase 2
17. South of Hindley link road
18. Parsonage link road phase 2
19. South of Atherton link road
20. East of Atherton link road

Aspirational schemes

21. M58 link road
22. M6 junction 25 all ways
23. Ince link road
24. Gaborne rail station
25. Keyon Lane rail station
26. Busway extension - Lowton loop
27. Busway extension - Hindley Green
28. Electrification of the Atherton line
29. Tram train connection from Atherton rail line to Wigan town centre (also aspirational)

