

Greater Manchester – a proposed Centre of Excellence in transport

Foreword

The Greater Manchester Authorities are proud of their innovative work in taking forward the transport policy framework set out in the Government's 1998 Transport White Paper.

Greater Manchester has already been recognised as a Centre of Excellence for our work in the integration of public transport. We are anxious to build on our achievements in this area and are making a submission to be declared an overall Centre of Excellence in this, our first full Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Our submission

Greater Manchester is a complex and diverse conurbation administratively, geographically, economically and socially. We have, however, successfully developed a common transport planning framework since the submission of our first unified Package Bid in 1995.

We have always recognised that a successful transport system should not be viewed as an end in itself but rather as a means of achieving wider economic, social and environmental objectives. Our approach has therefore always stressed the importance of integration, not just between transport modes, but also with other policy areas such as land use planning, health, education and community safety.

In justification for our claim to be designated a Centre of Excellence in Transport Planning we would like to draw Government's attention to the following key areas of our work.

Ensuring a consistent planning framework

The Greater Manchester Strategic Planning Framework has been developed to inform the review of our Unitary Development Plans, our LTP and as a Greater Manchester input to draft Regional Planning Guidance. It provides an agreed basis for the future development of the County in a way which is entirely consistent with Government objectives of providing greater travel choice, improving the quality of public transport and promoting sustainable communities.





Developing an integrated transport network

At the core of our future planning is the Greater Manchester Integration Project. The project is a partnership between the ten district councils, GMPTA and GMPTe, public transport operators, infrastructure providers, Manchester Airport and the Highways Agency. All parties are committed to working together to develop a more effective transport system in the County which not only makes interchange within and between modes more convenient but also seeks to ensure that the transport system as a whole is planned to make best use of existing infrastructure and provide maximum travel choice.

Ensuring widespread community support for our plans

We are always keen to engage the community in debates about future transport planning. In producing our LTP we have undertaken a range of initiatives aimed at ensuring that our transport strategy commands widespread support amongst the community at large. Examples include:

- ***our 'Transport Matters' consultation newspaper with 110,000 copies widely distributed around Greater Manchester***
- ***discussions at specially-convened Local Transport Groups in each of the ten Greater Manchester Districts***
- ***the Women and Transport Conference***
- ***the Greater Manchester Youth Parliament to discuss transport issues***
- ***development of a web-site on which the Provisional LTP and the 'Transport Matters' newspaper have been made available***
- ***district based consultations with existing transport forums, business organisations and regeneration agencies***

Changing attitudes to travel

Working to change people's attitudes to travel is an important part of our overall transport strategy. We recognise that changing attitudes is a long term process and one which requires a mix of different measures aimed at making alternatives to private car use progressively more attractive for certain journeys.

Our travel co-ordinators have been actively establishing links with major employers and have been successful in jointly developing a number of travel plans in a range of different contexts. Our aim is to make contact with many more major employers over the coming years to take this approach further.

Our work also involves undertaking a number of local initiatives aimed at increasing the attractiveness of public transport, walking and cycling. These include:

- ***a pilot 'Home Zone' and a number of 20mph zones***
- ***safer routes to schools initiatives***
- ***promotion of cycling and walking as more healthy travel alternatives***
- ***safer stations and a safer rail route initiative***

Centre of excellence

A concentration on creating 'seamless journeys'

We recognise that people's decisions on what form of transport to use are affected by each part of their journey. Our approach is therefore to give attention to making information more available, improving conditions for pedestrians and cyclists in local neighbourhoods, improving street lighting and taking other measures to improve community safety and security. We therefore aim to make it easier and safer to access public transport as well as improving the public transport services themselves.

We are also working hard to make it easier for people with disabilities to travel around our County. This again means that we must improve the condition of pavements, provide more dropped kerbs and protected crossings and ensure that easy links are provided between public transport and shops, employment and leisure facilities. The conventional public transport fleet has become increasingly accessible and we are also committed to maintaining and improving the dedicated services we provide for people who find it hard to use conventional public transport. We are also working to improve the links which the nine 'shopmobility' schemes in Greater Manchester have with public transport facilities, ensuring that the whole journey from front door to shop door is made as easy as possible.

Building strong partnerships

The partnership which has developed in building our Integration Project is just one of a number of important joint initiatives which have developed between AGMA, GMPTA and the private and voluntary sectors. We would also draw attention to:

- ***the partnerships being developed to ensure that the Commonwealth Games in 2002 are a success for Greater Manchester and the nation***
- ***the Airport Transport Forum whose aim is to support the continued development of Manchester Airport in a way which maximises the contribution of non-car access, including the development of a multi-modal ground transport interchange***
- ***the partnership we are developing with our neighbouring authorities and the rest of the region to ensure coherent transport planning across boundaries***
- ***innovative funding partnerships which have brought great benefit to the County and have been essential to the delivery of schemes such as the Airport Rail Link and Metrolink***
- ***local partnerships with Health Authorities***

In summary, we believe that Greater Manchester's record in working to improve the transport system for all its people is a strong one. We are committed to building on our achievements to date and look forward to continued Government support.