

A woman with dark hair, wearing a bright pink blazer over a patterned blouse, stands at a clear acrylic podium. She is speaking into a microphone. The background is a blue wall with white text and graphics. In the top right corner, the Greater Manchester logo is visible. On the left, there is a graphic of three interconnected hexagons and the text 'REFRESHING GREATER MANCHESTER'S ACTIVE TRAVEL'.

**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**  
DOING TRANSPORT DIFFERENTLY

REFRESHING  
GREATER MANCHESTER'S

**ACTIVE  
TRAVEL**

# GREATER MANCHESTER'S BIG ACTIVE CONVERSATION

1 November 2022

“

*Sharing the Refreshed Mission for Greater Manchester's Active Travel programme was a key part of the work my team and I have been doing since I took on the role in May 2022. Everyone now has an in-depth view of the work that needs to continue and be built on in order to achieve the ambitions laid out previously for a fully integrated transport system in GM where active travel is an integral part. I am looking forward to seeing the subsequent implementation plan come to the fore and for us all to pull together in building the bee network'.*

**Dame Sarah Storey**

Active Travel Commissioner  
for Greater Manchester

”



*The Big Active Conversation held at the Edge Arena Wigan brought together partners and people from across the Greater Manchester conurbation who were addressed by the Active Travel Commissioner for Greater Manchester who shared her vision.*

*The event shared inspiring and ambitious initiatives to achieve a refreshed Active Travel mission for Greater Manchester, and those who were invited could help make Greater Manchester a place to walk, cycle and wheel in safety.*

*We here in Wigan support Dame Sarah's mission for improved safe Active Travel infrastructure across the region, which has the potential to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality for all here in Wigan and across Greater Manchester.*

**Councillor Paul Prescott**

Wigan Council, Portfolio Holder for Planning,  
Environmental Services and Transport



# OVERVIEW

**Taking place on 1 November at The Edge Arena in Wigan, this was the first Big Active Conversation event to be delivered in person. Attendees included members of the public and key partners in active travel from the Greater Manchester region. In total, 135 people participated in the event.**

The focus of this session was the launch of Greater Manchester's Active Travel Commissioner Dame Sarah Storey's refreshed priorities to support walking, wheeling and cycling in GM, which were explored further through a series of breakout sessions.

Dame Sarah Storey unveiled a refreshed active travel mission for Greater Manchester, built upon three foundations – our ABC: **Accessibility, Behaviour change** and **Communications**.

## A

**Accessibility:** Active travel in Greater Manchester must be inclusive, universally accessible and built to consistent standards that meet and exceed local and national standards. That means providing appropriate infrastructure, adaptations and indeed space on our streets.

## B

**Behaviour change:** We're building on Greater Manchester's Right Mix target to help people walk, wheel and cycle more, and crucially, reduce the number of trips made by car and other non-sustainable modes.

## C

**Communications:** To deliver on A and B, we will promote transparent and simplified communication lines for schemes at all stages of development and delivery.

Under the mission, there are **five key priorities** that will drive the work and focus of active travel over the coming years:

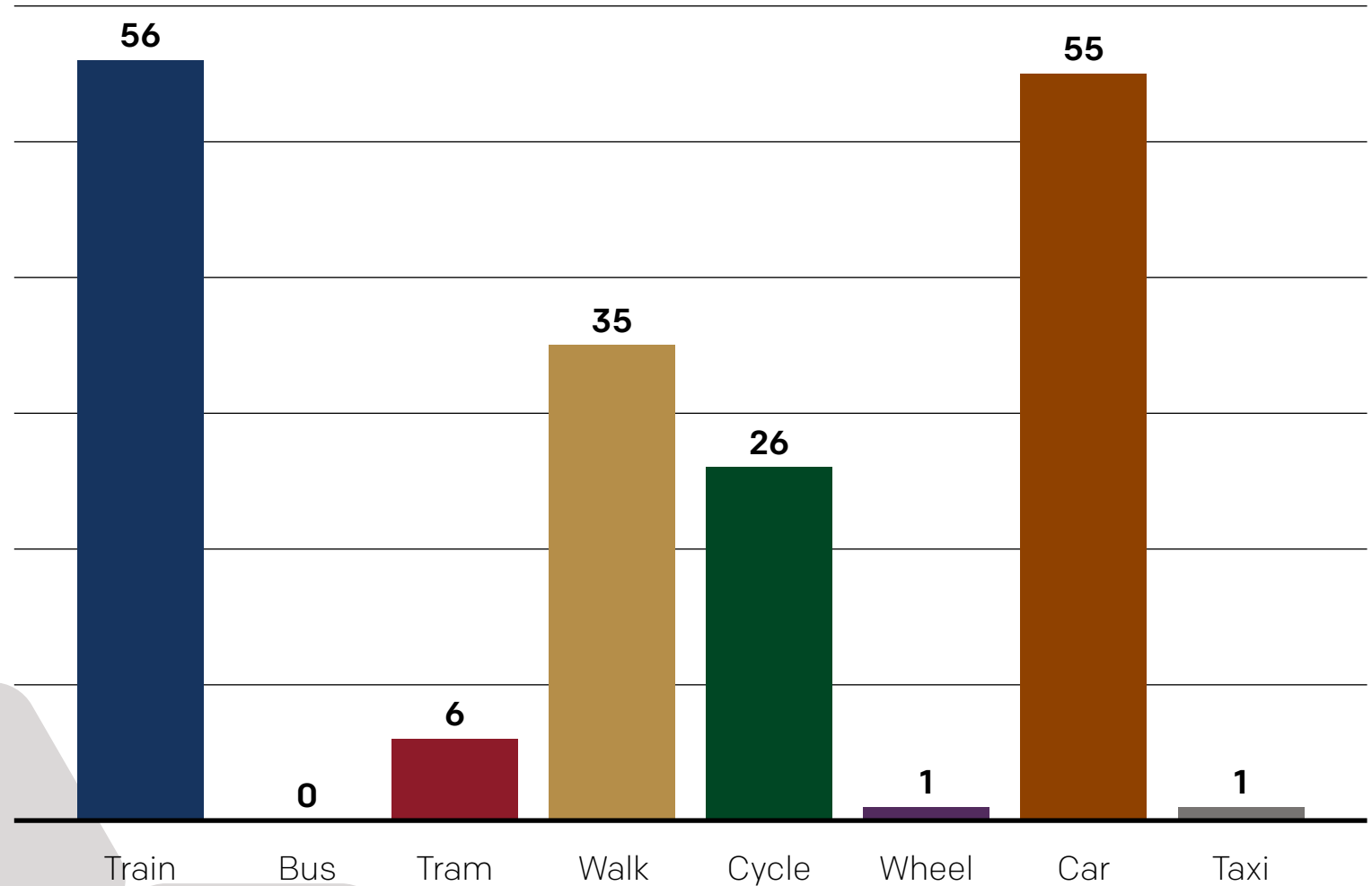
- 1. Infrastructure delivery** - At the heart of the strategy is the building of a universally accessible, coherent and connected network for Greater Manchester.
- 2. Home to school travel** - Ensure education establishments across the region are provided with the tools to engage with every option available to support our youngest members of society.
- 3. Cycle hire and access to cycles** - Support the development of the cycle hire and bike libraries schemes that have launched across the city region, to give communities and individuals access to cycles and adapted bikes.
- 4. Integration with public transport** - Ensure that stops and interchanges are easy and safe to walk, wheel and cycle to. Passenger experience is the highest priority so we want to make it easy to Get On Board from start to finish.
- 5. Road danger reduction** - Greater Manchester to adopt Vision Zero where the target is no deaths and severe injuries on Greater Manchester's roads.

Further details about Greater Manchester's refreshed Active Travel Mission can be accessed here: [Greater Manchester's Active Travel Mission.pdf](#)



## How did you travel here today?

Attendees were invited to take part in an 'ice-breaker' at the start of the event, where the following questions were shared via interactive slides during the introductory talk.









# Engagement Workshops

Following the introductory presentations, event participants were invited to break out into workshop sessions. Eight workshops were delivered during the event, with each session being delivered twice. The workshops were delivered by representatives from TfGM and partner organisations and covered topics relevant to walking, wheeling and cycling in Greater Manchester.

The following workshops were delivered:

- A walking/wheeling perspective on a local route (GM Moving & Wigan Council)
- Active travel - more than a transport solution (TfGM)
- Commitment to inclusion (TfGM, Cycling UK & Wheels for All)
- Creating welcoming, safe, joyful streets (Greater Sport & Partners)
- Enabling active travel to school (TfGM, Living Streets & WalkRideGM)
- Engaging our communities (TfGM)
- Insights from GM Cycling and Walking Index (Sustrans)
- Reducing road danger (TfGM)



# A walking/wheeling perspective on a local route

Greater Manchester  
Moving > ^ < v

Wigan  
Council

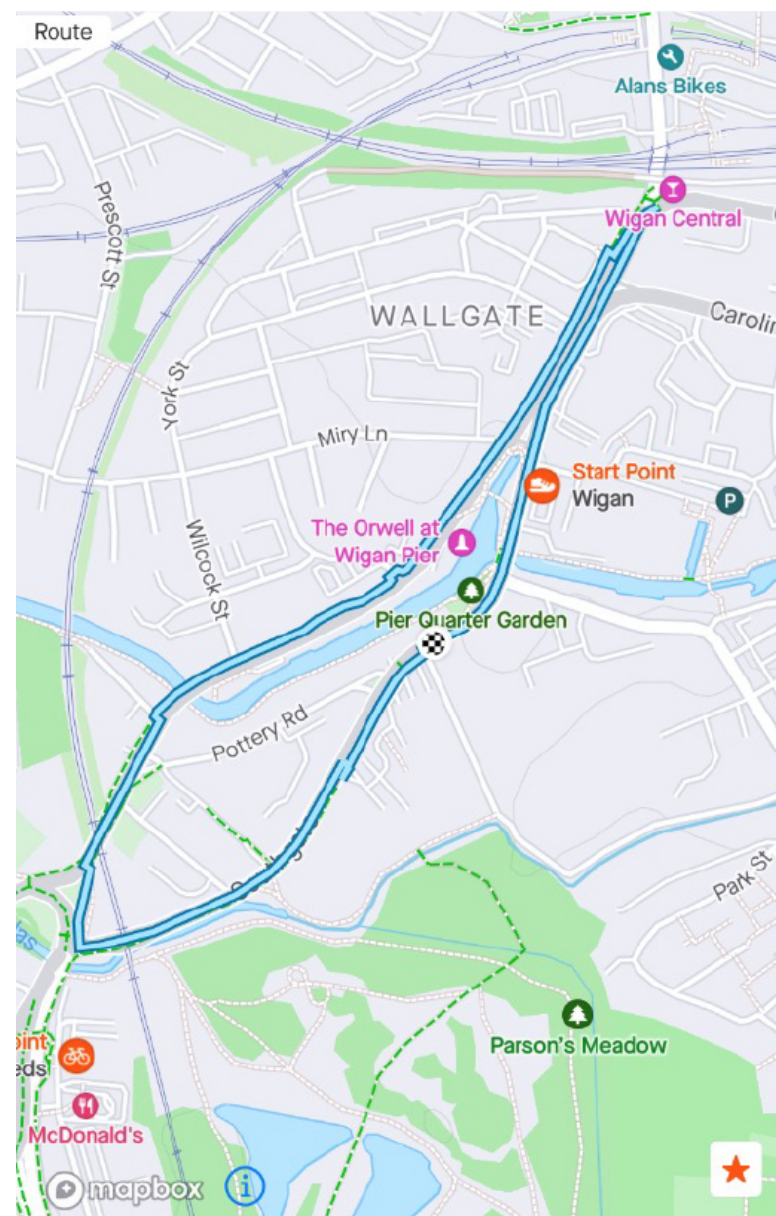
**Workshop leads:** Richard Smith (Activation Manager - Walking & Cycling at Wigan Council) and Louise Robbins (Strategic Lead - Walking and Active Environments at GreaterSport).

Hosted by GM Moving and Wigan Council, this session enabled participants to experience the challenges and opportunities for creating safe, attractive and inclusive walkable environments by walking, wheeling, or cycling a 1.5-mile circular route from the venue. This route included examples of old infrastructure, improvements for people walking and wheeling or cycling, and discussions on the challenges we face in our motor vehicle dominated environment.

A map of the route taken during the workshop is shown to the right.

## Summary:

- The route included a range of active travel schemes that are located in the vicinity of the venue, including older active travel schemes, the new Road to Wigan Pier scheme as well as canal towpath and access areas.



- It was clear that lessons had been learnt from the previous scheme, which have old specifications, when looking at the new schemes. Improvements had been made in terms of the ways these schemes had been developed. An example raised was the difference between shared use walking and cycling routes and the new segregated walking and cycling routes.
- There were discussions along the route about the challenges of prioritising people walking along desire lines<sup>1</sup>, with the complexities of the risk of and safety from busy traffic and meeting the standards for Bee Network segregated cycle routes.
- The importance of considering the needs of people moving on foot or using mobility aids at the initial stages of project concept was raised by participants, and engineers acknowledged that challenge and input from a walking/wheeling perspective at an early stage could be useful to support the best possible outcomes.
- It was noted that, overall, the schemes in Wigan were successful in what is a busy area of one-way systems.

1. A 'desire line' is an unplanned route or path (such as one worn into a grassy surface by repeated foot traffic) that is used by pedestrians in preference to or in the absence of a designated alternative (such as a paved pathway)



# Active travel - more than a transport solution



**Workshop leads:** Sophie Bullock and Mark Thomas (Business and Employer Engagement).

Hosted by TfGM, this workshop explored how business and TfGM can play a role in encouraging active travel amongst employees. This included discussion on what barriers and opportunities existed currently, and how these could be addressed.

## Summary of key points:

- Opportunities for active travel in the workplace were identified as encouraging a supportive and social culture; a sense of achievement; benefits to physical and mental wellbeing, financial savings and having more control over their time. Reference to commercial benefits to retailers from a high street well served by active travel was made.
- Challenges were a lack of connected infrastructure; access to storage space at home and at work; the

up-front costs of purchasing equipment; safety and encouraging behaviour change across an organisation.

- Safe and connected infrastructure was noted as key to enabling active travel for all or part of the journey, and needed to be accessible across all of Greater Manchester, not just the city-centre. TfGM was widely seen for driving this infrastructure, and the Bee Network was a positive ambition of which benefits were already being felt. There was some feedback that TfGM grants were not developed or communicated in a way that allowed local authorities sufficient time to engage businesses around active travel improvements.
- Further to the physical development of the Bee Network, TfGM's role as an educator and communicator for how businesses can incorporate active travel into the workplace, and what the benefits of such schemes and incentives could be, was a recurring theme.

- Businesses also identified their own responsibility in communicating schemes, incentives, and benefits in their workplace as well as acting as mentors for other businesses located locally. There was a broad consensus that within a business this should be visible, led by example through senior employees, supportive, and clear of the benefits not only to the commute but other parts of people's lives.
- Engaging with employees to understand their physical, cultural, behavioural, financial and social considerations is an important factor to enabling a people-centred approach that is mindful of people's barriers and concerns at the individual level.



# Commitment to inclusion



**Workshop leads:** Pete Zanzottera (Consultant and Active Travel Advisor (working on behalf of TfGM), Tom Webster, Ellen Holmes and Andrew Cremin.

Hosted by TfGM, Cycling UK and Wheels for All, this workshop focused on what a truly inclusive active travel programme looks like. The workshop concentrated on the needs of people who are often excluded, including those people with protected characteristics, and how we can meet people in their space to best understand how we can develop activities and design places that match the vision for inclusive active travel.

## Summary of key points:

- The focus of the session was based on participants sharing experience and talking about groups that they find difficult to include and taking away their own individual action. Key feedback from this session is listed under two headings: 'Resource Need' and 'Resources Available'.

## Resource need:

- There is a general need to reach out to more ethnically and culturally diverse groups of people: we need better insight into these groups, and we need better tools to engage with people.
- One participant quoted: "I don't know who to go to or how to do this".
- Need for better tools and practice for engagement on different schemes as we tend to use maps and locations that only include a narrow band of the local population.
- Better engagement with Disability Sport – understanding the opportunities that exist for people with disabilities, including people who experience more barriers to participating in sport as well as people who experience fewer barriers, and ensure opportunities are available for all.
- Language interpretation – ensure terminology used in both leaflets and in person meetings is clear.

- Create regular inclusion workshops and opportunities – reach out to the network and forum groups to listen to the barriers that people regularly face. Monthly meetings with volunteers to collect feedback and experiences.

### **Resources available:**

- Examples of best practice consultations conducted by other local authorities, which included people who have visual impairments.
- TfGM is producing a Streets for All Guide, which will have updated technical specifications.
- Cycling UK have some Behaviour Change Cards and other resources / experience [ellen.holmes@cyclinguk.org](mailto:ellen.holmes@cyclinguk.org)
- Wheels for All have regular groups and resources in GM – [hello@wheelsforall.org.uk](mailto:hello@wheelsforall.org.uk)



# Creating welcoming, safe, joyful streets

**GREATERSPORT**

Greater Manchester  
Moving > ^ < v

**Workshop lead:** Eve Holt (Director at GreaterSport and Strategic Leadership for GM Moving).

Hosted by GreaterSport and Wigan Council, this workshop used two current local initiatives, the Right to the Streets project in Trafford (led by Trafford Council), and the Wigan Safer Streets project (led by GreaterSport), to facilitate discussion and explore different approaches and tools for creating streets and public spaces that are welcoming, safe and joyful, where people are invited to be active.

## Summary of key points:

- Understand patterns of violent and anti-social behaviour by gathering insights and experiences of residents in addition to data.
- Develop an intersectional approach to understanding how people experience their streets.
- Involve groups who have often been excluded from conversations, such as women, girls and gender-diverse people, young people, and people who have lived experience of being excluded or experience of the criminal justice system.
- Develop sense of community ownership by engaging in co-design processes and working with local people and networks to encourage local ownership of streets.
- Pay closer attention to what does and doesn't work and avoid decisions that are proven to not work.
- Security measures can have unintended design consequences. Barriers, like gating of spaces, reduces access, pro-social activity, and usage for residents and the local community, rather than mitigating against anti-social behaviour.
- Get basics right e.g lighting, cutting back bushes, clearing fly tipping.
- Encourage and facilitate pro-social activities to enable more people to use streets and public spaces, in their diversity, resulting in them becoming safer and more welcoming places to be.



- Opportunities for other uses, including street art, active urbanism, pop-up activities, shops and services.
- Enable regeneration by working with housing associations to design key principles for safe, welcoming, active streets into longer term vision, planning and development.
- Some examples and opportunities to explore further: other Greater Manchester Safe Streets projects; Ipswich Business Improvement District, 10 min city principles, mixed use; Sustrans removal of barriers on National Cycle Network (12,000 barriers); play zones; holiday activities (holiday activity fund); learning from GM Local Pilot around ways to involve local people and grow local assets; Wigan active travel activation approach.



# Enabling active travel to school



**Workshop leads:** Elizabeth Saul (Senior Active Travel Officer at TfGM).

Hosted in partnership by TfGM, Living Streets, and WalkRide GM. The Enabling Active Travel to School workshop presented the picture across Greater Manchester, approaches being taken to enable more children to walk, wheel, and cycle to school, and a discussion on how we can all work together to make it easier for schools and their local communities to access the support available and help more young people to make the switch to active travel.

## Summary of key points:

- We need to involve young people in the conversation, this is their journey to school, and we should empower and involve them in decisions about how they make that journey. However, we also need to recognise the role of parents as decision-makers, especially with younger children and ensure we have communicated

to them the benefits of independent and active travel to school on mental and physical health as well as educational attainment.

- Taking a place-based approach to align all initiatives in one neighbourhood is needed to implement further changes. Working with the school and their community as part of wider transformations in infrastructure, equipment and activation schemes is needed to make change to travel to school rates as per the refreshed mission priorities. We know that to impact walking & cycling to school rates we need a suite of solutions to be played in together including the following:
  - Infrastructure - safe crossings, safe protected routes to and from school
  - Enforcement - pavement parking, speeds, school streets
  - Behaviour change schemes - cycle training, rewards, school streets

- Equipment - bike storage etc
- Marketing and comms - signage, messaging to parents etc
- We need to make it easy for schools as well as parents and carers to be able to seek and engage in initiatives. This could be resolved by creating a resource that acts as a hub or single signpost. Improved partnership working can help but that needs resourcing as is currently thinly stretched too so would also benefit from this approach.
- We need to celebrate more. There are lots of fantastic initiatives being delivered across GM to enable more children to walk, wheel, and cycle to school. Celebrating inspires others but shares best practice, so we can learn from each other.

### **Recommendations:**

- Discussion around how active travel to school rates can only be improved through a holistic place-based approach supporting future improvements and embedding this through work with stakeholders and partners.
- Participants suggested ideas around how to create conditions where schemes can succeed including working with pre-existing advocates – particularly any school leaders or elected members that are supportive. Could take an approach of seeking to

develop 'pioneer' neighbourhoods where enough pre-existing conditions for change exist and that these receive concentrated funding to introduce change centred on safe travel to school, and the full suite of interventions, that can then act as demonstrators for other areas and catalyse momentum for change.



# Engaging our communities



Transport for  
Greater Manchester

**Workshop leads:** Michael Clegg (Partnerships and Engagement Officer at TfGM), Aaron Scorse (Consultation and Inclusion Officer at TfGM), and Charlotte Patterson (Consultation and Inclusion Officer at TfGM).

Hosted by Transport for Greater Manchester, the 'Engaging with Communities' workshop explored the role of community engagement as a component of active travel infrastructure and service design. Participants discussed the purposes of community engagement in active travel design, how GM partners can improve community engagement, and the nature of co-design in the context of active travel.

## Summary of key points:

- Engagement should be a continuous journey of listening and dialogue, rather than a single occurrence.
- Engagement should seek to involve stakeholders at every stage and be accessible to all.
- One of the purposes of engagement is to hear from people who may be under-represented, seldom heard, or a "silent majority", including those who may not already be walking or cycling, and provide them with agency and ownership over projects.
- Engagement should seek to balance the bigger, strategic significance of schemes with a local and hyper-local community context.
- Engagement should not be top-down, or else it misses out on the opportunity to learn lessons from people in the local community who are the experts about where they live and the needs of the community.
- Engagement should incorporate lived experience as well as quantitative data.
- Engagement should be based on an understanding of what the community needs, develop solutions to those problems with the community, and should often take place before design.

- There needs to be more transparency on what engagement is about, what can be impacted, what aspects can be co-designed, how feedback is used, and regular updates on progress for the community.
- Partners should be conscious that the words “co-design” and “consultation” may mean different things to different people, and improve the consistency of language that we use.
- Partners should work with existing networks and trusted groups within communities and consider devolving budgets to local communities.



# Insights from GM Cycling and Walking Index



**Workshop leads:** Nick Brelsford (Head of Partnerships for England (North) at Sustrans) and Anne Clarke (Cycling & Walking Evaluation Officer at TfGM).

Hosted by Sustrans and TfGM, this session focused on findings from the Walking and Cycling Index report (W&CI) as well as other sources of data provided by TfGM, with a particular emphasis on inequalities identified by the data. The session also featured an open discussion, where attendees were prompted to answer the following four questions: Your reaction? What else is needed? Are there gaps? How would you use the data?

## **Summary of key points:**

- Importance of walking as a mode of transport, and needing it to be prioritised.
- Using examples where something has been done well to drive change elsewhere.
- Safety and people's perception of safety are key factors.
- We need to understand what journeys are not currently being undertaken but could be, usually because of safety fears.
- Monitoring of infrastructure projects so that they can be properly evaluated and the evidence used to enable further infrastructure.
- Using data to understand where infrastructure could have the most benefit in terms of equal access.
- Using data to build trust with communities and businesses.
- Social media can skew perceptions, good to have evidence to counter this.

# Reducing road danger



Transport for  
Greater Manchester

**SAFER ROADS**  
**GREATER MANCHESTER**

**Workshop leads:** Julie Reide (Road Danger Reduction Manager at TfGM) and Paul Anderton (Collision Investigation Office at TfGM) .

Hosted by Safer Roads, the Reducing Road Danger workshop looked at what made people feel unsafe with Active Travel. It also covered the possible solutions to the barriers that stop people from using active travel as a form of travelling from one place to another. The workshop looked at all types of active travel to see how the network can be further improved for all users.

## Summary of key points:

- By making people feel safer to use active travel methods, this will encourage more people to use active travel and will therefore reduce road danger. If people feel safer, then they are more likely to make active choices to public transport or for all of their journey, which will reduce journeys by car and, in turn, road danger.
- More discussions held at events such as the Big Active Conversation and wider public audiences.
- There needs to be a shared understanding of what it means to be considerate in a shared space.
- Travel by car shouldn't be the most attractive option, it should be walking/cycling/public transport.
- Active Travel is the most cost-effective form of travel but barriers/hazards on their journey prevent users from taking advantage.
- Deaths on the roads are avoidable and an unacceptable consequence of using our roads.
- Where does the harm on our roads originate and which type of road are they most likely to occur on.
- The number of deaths on the roads in GM as a whole and by road user.
- Barriers to active travel and solutions that could be put in place.

# Participant feedback

Attendees were invited to complete a survey following the event, which aimed to understand what respondents thought worked well at the event as well as aspects that could be enhanced when delivering future Big Active Conversation events.

## What did you enjoy?

Hearing from Dame Sarah Storey.

Networking opportunities.

Face-to-face discussion and exchange of ideas.

## What would you like to discuss at a future BAC event?

Implementation of policies and ideas by sharing case studies, lessons learned, and progress.

How partners and organisations can work together to achieve goals.

Opportunity to discuss funding.

## What could we do differently?

Broader range of representatives attending.

Logistics – ensure the venue has adequate cycle parking facilities.

Streamline the agenda and workshop offering.

## General comments:

Expression of desire to focus on priorities identified during the event and putting tools to measure success in place.

Choice of venue was well received.





# Social Media Engagement

Following the event, posts on social media achieved the following impressions and interactions:



**Impressions** - The number of impressions is the number of times a post has been seen on screen. For example, if a post has achieved 18k impressions, that means it has been seen on screen 18k times.

**Engagements** - The number of engagements a post has received is how many times it has been liked, commented on, or shared on a social media platform.



Transport for Greater Manchester...  
@OfficialTfGM

Active Travel Commissioner,  
[@DameSarahStorey](#) has today  
unveiled a refreshed active travel  
mission for Greater Manchester.

Walk, wheel or cycle and let's get GM  
moving! 🚶

Find out more at [tfgm.com/refresh-  
the-mi...](https://tfgm.com/refresh-the-mi...)



Transport for Greater Manchester...  
@OfficialTfGM

Get active when you travel – walk,  
wheel and cycle your way to better  
health. ❤️

Let's refresh the mission.

Find out more at [tfgm.com/refresh-  
the-mi...](https://tfgm.com/refresh-the-mi...)

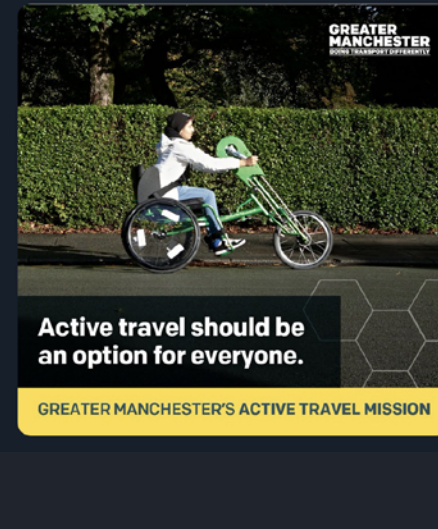


Transport for Greater Manchester...  
@OfficialTfGM

We're committed to making Active  
Travel an accessible option for  
everyone.

Refresh the mission. 📌

[tfgm.com/refresh-the-mi...](https://tfgm.com/refresh-the-mi...)





**GREATER  
MANCHESTER**  
DOING TRANSPORT DIFFERENTLY