



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Stockport Local Plan

Transport Topic Paper

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1. Introduction

- 1) This is the ‘Transport Topic Paper’ and is one of a number of topic papers that have been written to support Stockport’s Local Plan.
- 2) All topic papers can be found online at Stockport Council’s website.
- 3) The main purpose of this document is to set out the current legislation, policies, strategies and evidence that have informed the Local Plan in relation to transport.
- 4) The key strategies for addressing transport need in Stockport are to be found in the draft Stockport Transport Strategy 2026-2042, the published Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 and draft Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050, all of which are referred to in the information below.

2. Background

- 5) This paper sets out what the NPPF requires with regards to assessment of transport provision and other relevant transport strategies relevant to Stockport. It also looks at the transport evidence work undertaken to support the local plan: traffic modelling work and locality assessments. It should be read alongside the draft Local Plan itself as well as the key evidence that is referenced within it.

2.1 National Planning Policy Framework

- 6) **This topic paper has been prepared with regard to the 2024 version of the NPPF, in accordance with the transitional arrangements set out Annex A of the August 2026 NPPF.**
- 7) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024¹ provides the key policies, requirements, and examples that guide how transport is considered in planning and development in England.
- 8) Transport issues must be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, using a vision-led approach to identify solutions that deliver well-designed, sustainable, and popular places. In addition, patterns of movement, streets, parking, and other transport considerations should be integral to scheme design, contributing to high-quality places.
- 9) In support of the overall approach significant development should be focused on locations that are or can be made sustainable, limiting the need to travel and offering a genuine choice of transport modes (walking, cycling, public transport). This approach aims to reduce congestion, emissions, and improve air quality and public health. Opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary between urban and rural areas, and this should be reflected in both plan-making and decision-making.
- 10) Strategic policies must make provision for transport infrastructure and coordinate with infrastructure providers. In so doing the overall approach should recognise the importance of transport infrastructure for supporting economic growth, logistics, and supply chains.
- 11) Plans and decisions should support an appropriate mix of uses to minimise the number and length of journeys needed for employment, shopping, leisure, education, etc. In doing so, policies should be prepared with the active

¹ See <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20250225172715/https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

involvement of local highways authorities, transport infrastructure providers, operators, and neighbouring councils.

- 12) Plans should also identify and protect sites and routes critical for developing infrastructure to widen transport choice and enable large-scale development. Transport planning should support the transition to net zero, including promoting sustainable travel and reducing emissions.
- 13) Provision should be made for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks, with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking.
- 14) It is also important that local authorities recognise the importance of maintaining the operation of airports, which is of particular relevance to Stockport given the proximity of Manchester Airport and the potential impacts resulting from and to new development.
- 15) Where sites are allocated for development, these should prioritise sustainable transport modes, ensure safe and suitable access for all users, and reflect relevant guidance on street and parking design. Where any significant impacts on the transport network or highway safety are identified, these must be cost-effectively mitigated.

2.2 Planning Practice Guidance

Transport evidence bases in plan making and decision taking

- 16) The government has produced Planning Practice Guidance² (PPG) to help local planning authorities assess and reflect strategic transport needs in Local Plan making. This makes it clear that local planning authorities must undertake an assessment of the transport implications in developing our Local Plan.
- 17) In summary, the PPG guides local planning authorities to:
 - Do an assessment of existing situation and identification of opportunities to facilitate the use of alternative, sustainable transport or to reduce the need to travel, where appropriate;
 - Consider the cumulative impact of existing and proposed development on transport networks;
 - Assess of the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands; and
 - Identify the short, medium and long-term transport proposals across all modes.

² See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/transport-evidence-bases-in-plan-making-and-decision-taking>

- 18) Paragraph 3 of the PPG sets out that the key issues should include the following:
- *assess the existing situation and likely generation of trips over time by all modes and the impact on the locality in economic, social and environmental terms*
 - *assess the opportunities to support a pattern of development that, where reasonable to do so, facilitates the use of sustainable modes of transport*
 - *highlight and promote opportunities to reduce the need for travel where appropriate*
 - *identify opportunities to prioritise the use of alternative modes in both existing and new development locations if appropriate*
 - *consider the cumulative impacts of existing and proposed development on transport networks*
 - *assess the quality and capacity of transport infrastructure and its ability to meet forecast demands*
 - *identify the short, medium and long-term transport proposals across all modes*
- 19) Paragraph 7 sets out the scenarios to be considered, with transport data that reflects the typical flow conditions on the network, for example, non-school holiday periods, typical weather conditions etc.
- 20) Paragraph 8 provides more detail on how to assess the impact of proposed land allocations of the Local Plan on the transport system, to estimate the person trips that are likely to be generated.
- 21) Paragraph 11 details that the assessment should “ideally cover the period of the Local Plan, taking into account all the changes and improvements in, for example, technology and behaviour that is likely to happen in that time.”

Travel Plans, Transport Assessments and Statements

- 22) The government has produced Planning Practice Guidance³ which provides advice on when Transport Assessments and Transport Statements are required, and what they should contain. The guidance principally relates to decision-taking, but is noted as being potentially useful in plan making, if local authorities take the view that Transport Assessments can inform the Local Plan.

³ See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/travel-plans-transport-assessments-and-statements>

2.3 Greater Manchester Transport Strategy

Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040

- 23) The current adopted Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040⁴ sets out Greater Manchester’s long-term ambition for transport.
- 24) It sets a vision for Greater Manchester to have world-class connections that support long-term sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all. By 2040, the goal is for 50% of all journeys to be made by public transport or active travel (walking/cycling), with no net increase in motor vehicle traffic.
- 25) The strategy also commits to helping provide a transport system which:
- supports sustainable economic growth and the efficient and effective movement of people and goods,
 - improves the quality of life for all by being integrated, affordable and reliable; protects our environment and,
 - supports the GM target to be net zero carbon by 2038 as well as improving air quality; and capitalises on new technology and innovation.
- 26) The document identifies challenges likely to result from rapid population growth and an ageing demographic. There is a need to tackle congestion, improve air quality, and reduce carbon emissions, to which transport has a significant contribution. Improvements to the transport system can help to address social inequality and improving access to jobs, education, and services.
- 27) To achieve this and to deliver a transport system that serves the needs of its users the strategy identifies a need for an integrated, high-capacity public transport (bus, rail, Metrolink) and comprehensive walking/cycling networks (e.g., the Bee Network).

Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050

- 28) Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) consulted on a draft Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050⁵ from December 2025 to March 2026. This updated draft strategy sets to deliver an integrated, sustainable, and inclusive transport network as a vital part of support for the global city region Greater Manchester is seeking to create. It identifies transport as central to economic growth, social inclusion, health, and environmental sustainability, with the Bee Network central to this. It is intended that the Bee Network will be a fully integrated, zero-emission transport system (bus, tram, walking, wheeling, cycling, and local rail) providing seamless, affordable, and accessible travel.

⁴ See <https://tfgm.com/strategy>

⁵ See <https://www.gmconsult.org/transport/transport2050/>

- 29) The strategy sets a number of targets, including an ambitious modal shift such that by 2040, 50% of all journeys in Greater Manchester should be made by public transport or active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling), with individual targets set for each of those elements and consequently reducing car and van trips, improving air quality, and supporting carbon neutrality by 2038.
- 30) The strategy looks to find responses to the unique needs of different neighbourhoods, town centres, and growth locations but with the aims of delivering safer, more attractive neighbourhoods for walking and cycling vibrant town centres with improved public transport and active travel links and enhanced regional and national connectivity, such as Northern Powerhouse Rail, airport access.
- 31) For local authorities, Transport 2050 requires that sustainable transport is prioritised in new developments, including investing in active travel, and collaboration on cross-boundary issues. In addition, it is important to integrate transport with housing, health, and economic strategies.

2.4 Streets for all

- 32) Transport for Greater Manchester published the ‘Streets for All’ Strategy⁶ in 2023, which has become part of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy. Streets for All places a strong emphasis on reducing traffic and road danger, and on improving the street environment for everyone travelling along, spending time in, or living on them. This people-centred approach to street planning, design and network management is needed to deliver the Bee Network, support growth and productivity and meet decarbonisation targets.
- 33) The strategy is accompanied by the associated ‘Streets for All Design Guide’⁷, which sets out:
 - The Streets for All approach to designing streets and places.
 - Design requirements, our overarching standards for street design which we will seek to achieve wherever possible.
 - Design and infrastructure options for designers to consider.
- 34) The Guide is for use by everyone involved, or with an interest in, the design of streets and places in Greater Manchester. Its use is a requirement for schemes funded through the GMCA.

⁶ See <https://tfgm.com/strategy/streets-for-all>

⁷ See [Greater Manchester’s Streets for All design guide](#)

- 35) This is further supported by Greater Manchester’s ‘Sustainable Drainage Design Guide’⁸, which is supplementary technical guidance. The purpose of the guide is to:
- Support the delivery of SuDS at scale across the city region.
 - Answer common questions around SuDS which may be preventing more widespread delivery and adoption.
 - Promote well-considered holistic SuDS design through:–
 - providing standard details for common SuDS features.
 - design and infrastructure options for designers to consider across a range of Greater Manchester street contexts.
- 36) The guide primarily focuses on delivering retrofit SuDS into the complex built environment through the delivery of street improvement projects.
- 37) Those involved in the development of new streets and places should also have regard to the principles of this guide, in conjunction with the CIRIA SuDS Manual to inform drainage design of new streets and places.

2.5 Stockport Transport Strategy

- 38) The draft Stockport Transport Strategy 2026-42 was approved for public consultation by Cabinet in June 2026 (see item 12 on the agenda⁹) and sets out the Council’s proposed long-term strategic framework for transport investment and prioritisation across the borough. It provides direction for future investment, partnership working and funding opportunities, while supporting the delivery of the Council’s wider ambitions for economic growth, inclusion, health and climate action. Following consultation, the strategy will be finalised and presented for formal adoption.
- 39) The Stockport Transport Strategy 2026-42 complements the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2050 but contains further local detail on the investment priorities that are considered most important for the borough.
- 40) The Stockport Transport Strategy also supports the delivery of the Stockport Local Plan and establishes a vision and seven strategic objectives for the future transport network. These objectives provide the framework through which future investment priorities and interventions will be identified and brought forward.

⁸ See [Greater Manchester Sustainable Drainage Design Guide V.1.1.pdf](#)

⁹ See <https://democracy.stockport.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1015&MId=30473&Ver=4>

41) The vision for the strategy is:

“Providing a transport system which is cleaner and greener, positively supports the social and economic vitality of Stockport, and enables more journeys to be made safely, comfortably, efficiently and in ways which reduces the impact travel has on the climate and our environment.”

42) The objectives for the strategy are:

- Strengthen Stockport town centre’s role as the Southern Gateway into Greater Manchester and the North, supported by the redevelopment of Stockport rail station to create a modern and fully integrated multi-modal national, regional and local transport hub.
- Develop and strengthen sustainable transport connections to and within the Airport and Southern Growth Corridor, to promote significant economic growth and regeneration for Stockport and Greater Manchester, and to secure active travel and public transport benefits.
- Identify and develop sustainable infrastructure and transport services that support and facilitate delivery of existing land supply and new development across the borough.
- Develop and deliver multi-modal transport solutions and interventions to improve the network performance of the borough's key transport corridors including West Coast Mainline, A6, A34 and A560.
- Develop and promote sustainable transport solutions that are targeted at addressing transport-related social exclusion in areas of the borough facing vulnerability and accessibility challenges.
- Support sustainable local journeys within, and between, neighbourhoods, to local centres and schools, and to Stockport town centre and our borough district centres.
- Develop a well-maintained, decarbonised, resilient, safe and reliable local transport system in such a way as to:
 - Reduce the impact our travel has on the climate and our environment; and
 - Improve the quality of our neighbourhoods and streets, supporting our communities to become more appealing places to live, work, visit and invest.

43) The strategy is supported by a delivery plan which identifies transport investment priorities across a range of themes including public transport, active travel, highways, maintenance, connectivity and decarbonisation. The delivery plan will be reviewed periodically to reflect emerging opportunities, funding availability and changing priorities.

44) The Stockport Transport Strategy provides an important link between the spatial vision established through the Local Plan and the transport investment required to support future growth. It identifies the interventions, partnerships and funding opportunities that will be required to improve connectivity, support sustainable

development, increase travel choice and help ensure that future housing and employment growth can be accommodated in a sustainable manner.

2.6 Traffic Modelling

Overview

- 45) Traffic modelling has been undertaken looking at a range of scenarios. Following the regulation 18 draft Local Plan consultation, the traffic modelling work was updated to take account of changes to the proposed housing and employment allocations, as set out in the regulation 19 Local Plan draft pre-submission proposals. Modelling work was also carried out at the regulation 18 stage and both documents are available on the council's website¹⁰.
- 46) Consultants (WSP) were commissioned to assess the strategic highway impact of the regulation 19 Local Plan. The assessment forms part of the evidence for the Local Plan and has been carried out using the Stockport Strategic SATURN Highway Model. The modelling considered the cumulative impact of the Regulation 19 Housing and Employment sites.
- 47) The latest report assesses the potential traffic impact of the regulation 19 Local Plan using a strategic highway model. It considers network travel times, speeds, routes, and link flows, modelling urban and Green Belt sites, with additional network adjustments for key sites, and aligns with wider growth targets and traffic distribution assumptions.
- 48) In order to assess the impact of the allocations on the local and strategic highway network modelling has been undertaken for 2042 against a 2022 base year. Whilst further details can be found in the associated report¹¹, a summary of the findings is provided below.
- 49) It should be noted that subsequent to the modelling work taking place, a small number of changes in the housing supply have resulted in a slightly different overall housing total figure, however this is not considered material to the outcome of the work at this stage.
- 50) The Regulation 19 modelling reflects the proposed development strategy now included within the Local Plan. For context, earlier modelling undertaken during the Regulation 18 stage tested a higher level of development and a different pattern of site allocations. The comparison between the two exercises helps demonstrate how changes to the scale and distribution of development have influenced forecast transport impacts. Whilst some impacts have reduced under

¹⁰ See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/transport-and-infrastructure>

¹¹ See '**Stockport Local Plan - Regulation 19 Strategic Traffic Modelling Report May 2026**', which will be made available on our website

the Regulation 19 strategy, the modelling shows that significant pressures on parts of the transport network remain.

Key model outputs: traffic conditions

- 51) For traffic conditions, compared to base year conditions, there is predicted to be an increase of 23% in the total distance travelled on all roads across the borough in the evening peak with a corresponding increase of 41% in travel time, while average speeds are predicted to reduce by circa 3mph (from 21mph to 18mph). Average speeds in the inter-peak are predicted to be 23mph.
- 52) It should be noted that the regulation 18 modelling for the scenario of meeting 100% of the housing need predicted an increase of 27% in the total distance travelled on all roads across the borough in the evening peak with a corresponding increase of 56% in travel time, while average speeds are predicted to reduce by circa 4mph (from 21mph to 17mph). Average speeds in the inter-peak are predicted to be 22mph.

Key model outputs: journey routes

- 53) In terms of journey routes, compared to base year conditions:
- Journeys on the A6 between Hazel Grove and the Town Centre are predicted to take 50 secs longer northbound in the morning peak, and 2 mins 7 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak.
 - Journeys on the A34 between Wilmslow and East Didsbury are predicted to take 3 mins 36 secs longer northbound in the morning peak and 4 mins 12 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak.
 - Journeys on the A555 between Manchester Airport and A6 Hazel Grove are predicted to take 6 mins 19 secs longer westbound in the morning peak and 6 mins 29 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak.
- 54) It should be noted that the regulation 18 modelling for the scenario of meeting 100% of the housing need predicted journeys on the A6 between Hazel Grove and the Town Centre are predicted to take 8 mins 15 secs longer northbound in the morning peak, and 6 mins 10 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak. Journeys on the A34 between Wilmslow and East Didsbury are predicted to take 4 mins 25 secs longer northbound in the morning peak and 4 mins 55 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak. Journeys on the A555 between Manchester Airport and A6 Hazel Grove are predicted to take 3 mins 15 secs longer westbound in the morning peak and 4 mins 25 secs longer for the return journey in the evening peak.

Key model outputs: traffic flows

- 55) Compared to base year conditions, predicted traffic flow increases across the borough vary, due to the spatial distribution of future housing allocation, and the

ability of the network to accommodate more traffic. Daily traffic levels on the A6 (Stepping Hill) are predicted to increase by 0.2%, which compares to increases of 34% on A34 Kingsway, 38% on A5102 Bramhall South, 29% on A626 Hall Street, 17% on A5135 Didsbury Road, and 24% on A560 (Cheadle).

- 56) It should be noted that the Reg 18 Modelling for the scenario for 100% of the housing need predicted (taking the special distribution of allocations and network amendments) daily traffic levels on the A6 (Stepping Hill) to increase by 14%, which compares to increases of 32% on A34 Kingsway, 65% on A5102 Bramhall South, 27% on A626 Hall Street, 22% on A5135 Didsbury Road, and 32% on A560 (Cheadle).

Findings

- 57) The traffic modelling work has identified that the highway network is already struggling with the traffic flows, particularly at peak times, and a number of junctions are close to or at capacity.
- 58) It is clear that in the southern area of the borough, there are already existing major roads and junctions that suffer from issues over flows and journey times. The addition of further housing above that proposed would put unsupportable strain on the network. In seeking to deliver sustainable development there are also extremely limited opportunities in those southern parts of the borough to deliver new rail and or tram networks or to deliver jobs and services in the locality to ease the need for travel.
- 59) In the eastern part of the borough, there are fewer roads which would be capable of taking significantly more traffic than is currently planned for in the Regulation 19 local plan. In addition, there are also very few opportunities to improve public transport links from those areas in to the town centre and to elsewhere within the borough.
- 60) The modelling results demonstrate the importance of aligning future development with locations that can be served by sustainable transport and where existing or planned transport infrastructure is capable of accommodating growth. The findings have therefore informed both the overall development strategy and the selection of individual site allocations within the Local Plan.

2.7 Locality Assessments

- 61) The council has undertaken a series of site-specific assessments for each of the proposed housing allocations and for the proposed employment allocations in the Green Belt. This outputs of this work are contained in a separate locality

assessment document¹². That considers the proposed allocations in relation to the existing transport network, accessibility by sustainable modes, potential traffic impacts, and the capacity of local highway infrastructure to accommodate future development. It also examines the feasibility of accessing each site safely and efficiently, together with any mitigation measures that may be required to support development.

- 62) In addition, the locality assessments have considered cumulative effects of development, reviewing multiple sites within the same area, to identify how proposals might interact with each other and with existing infrastructure. This helps to ensure that site selection is transparent, robust, and informed by a thorough understanding of local conditions. It also highlights where mitigation measures or infrastructure improvements may be required.
- 63) The work undertaken in this regard has helped to inform policies which have been applied to the proposed allocations under policies HOM 2a and BUS 3b. However, the modelled cumulative impact of the allocations means that it will be necessary for planning applications associated with most sites to undertake detailed junction modelling to determine the impact of individual sites on the local and strategic highway network. The nature and extent of this modelling is to be agreed with Stockport Council officers on a site-by-site basis.

¹² See <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/evidence-planning-policy/transport-and-infrastructure>

3. Conclusion

- 64) This topic paper has pulled together and summarised evidence and legislation from a variety of national, regional and local sources. The policies are underpinned by proportionate and locally relevant evidence, including the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy, Streets for All, the Stockport Transport Strategy, and traffic modelling work.
- 65) The chapter of the Local Plan entitled ‘Infrastructure’, particularly policies INF 7-17 provides a comprehensive policy approach to addressing transport matters arising from future development and the planned level of growth.
- 66) The following policies within the local plan have been updated and strengthened between regulation 18 and regulation 19, to take into account updated evidence and feedback from stakeholders:
- INF 7: Integrated transport network
 - INF 8: Sustainable streets
 - INF 9: Walking, wheeling and cycling
 - INF 10: Public transport
 - INF 11: Freight and logistics
 - INF 12: Public rights of way and strategic recreation routes
 - INF 13: The highway network
 - INF 14: Access and servicing
 - INF 15: Vehicle parking and infrastructure
 - INF 16: Safeguarding future transport infrastructure and routes
 - INF 17: Metrolink
- 67) In addition, policies relating to housing and employment allocations identified in HOM 2a and BUS 3b seek to deal with site specific matters, though the relevant INF policies will also be applied as appropriate.
- 68) Given the modelled cumulative impact of development, it will be necessary for planning applications for allocated sites to undertake detailed junction modelling to determine the impact of individual sites on the local and strategic highway network. The nature and extent of this modelling is to be agreed with Stockport Council officers on a site-by-site basis.
- 69) In developing these policies and the overall strategic approach, significant regard has been had to the need to deliver sustainable and safe development balanced with the requirement to meet need. The Local Plan seeks to provide a framework for transport provision which is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.
- 70) Policies have been developed to encourage the provision and use of public transport and active travel wherever possible. The location of development,

particularly seeking to increase the amount of housing in the town and district centres, is also part of the approach to reduce the need to use the car and to improve quality of life, at a variety of geographic scales. It is, however, inevitable, that some new development will be less well located and less likely to be able to benefit from, or provide, those more sustainable modes of transport at a significant level. As demonstrated by the modelling work outlined in this paper, that will result in major impacts on the road network.

- 71) In seeking to deliver sustainable development in Stockport in line with the requirements of NPPF, the provision of existing transport infrastructure and the ability to deliver new and or improved transport infrastructure means, that this will have a limiting effect on the ability to meet local housing need in full.