

Bee Network – Public Transport

- 11.30 This policy sets out how the borough’s Bee Network will develop to improve local travel and access to amenities, existing and future development by public transport, providing a local perspective to Places for Everyone Strategic Plan Policy JP-C3.

Policy T7 - Bee Network – Public Transport

The Council will support improvements to the borough’s public transport network and facilities that promote more sustainable transport choices and measures that reduce reliance on private motor vehicles.

In supporting existing and new development these will lead to:

- a. Increased public transport network capacity and improved reliability, frequency, speed, directness and coverage of routes and services;
- b. Improved services linking key destinations such as town and local centres, employment areas and growth zones, education, health and leisure amenities;
- c. More effective integration, including through better service co-ordination, improved interchanges / hubs and integrated ticketing promoting connected multi-modal trips;
- d. Enhanced passenger on-service experience, including safety, security, comfort and the waiting environment;
- e. Improved access to public transport to/from the wider network particularly for people with impaired mobility and provide additional park and ride facilities if required;
- f. Provision of travel hubs which could include car share, e-bikes, e-scooters and facilities for secure non-motorised modes e.g. Cycles, scooters etc;
- g. Reduced harmful emissions including through the ongoing “roll out” of low and zero emission vehicles.

The following proposals will be identified on the Local Plan Policies Map as Public Transport interventions that will contribute to improving accessibility and connectivity in the Borough:

- i. Rochdale Rail Corridor Transit Orientated communities on development sites within walking distance of the borough’s railway stations;
- ii. Tram-Train Pathfinder – Rochdale – Castleton – Heywood – Bury potentially including an additional stop at Broadfield
- iii. Rochdale – Oldham – Ashton Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor
- iv. Rochdale – Heywood – Bury Quality Bus Transit (QBT) Corridor
- v. Rapid Transit links to serve Atom Valley Growth Location (including Northern Gateway) from Middleton, Heywood, Norden, Bury, Oldham and Manchester
- vi. Rapid Transit links to / from through Middleton.

Places for Everyone Links

Policy JP-C3 – Public Transport

Reasoned Justification

- 11.31 Convenient, efficient and affordable public transport integrated with other travel modes provides a genuine alternative to the motor vehicle for many journeys. It is also key to

influence delivery of modal shift and decisions on how people choose to travel. Better public transport also supports the Borough's long term economic growth.

- 11.32 Improving the connectivity, reliability, comfort, safety and security of services enables them to more strongly compete with motor vehicle journey times and contribute to a thriving local economy, town centres and local communities. It also contributes to achieving the "Right Mix" target of 50% of journeys in Greater Manchester being made by active or sustainable transport modes by 2040.
- 11.33 The Borough's public transport network links key local destinations and public amenities, but on some bus routes there are avoidable delays. Metrolink runs from Rochdale Town Centre south to Oldham and on to Manchester City Centre. Patronage since the line was completed in 2014 has grown significantly and is a key Bee Network asset for the local communities it serves, as well as inter-urban travel between Rochdale and Oldham Town Centres.
- 11.34 A quicker alternative for trips to and from the regional centre is the train using the Calder Valley Railway Line (Leeds to Manchester and beyond) with stations in the Borough at Mills Hill, Castleton, Rochdale, Smithybridge and Littleborough. Park and Ride is currently provided at Rochdale serving both Metrolink and rail passengers with some parking provision for rail passengers at the other stations. There are ambitions to increase this at other stations in the borough.
- 11.35 Bus services in the borough are a mix of local routes from town centres to suburban residential areas and rural communities with inter urban services providing links of varying frequency to Bury and Bolton, Oldham and Ashton, Rawtenstall and Bacup, Halifax and Manchester City Centre. These serve many locations and communities that do not have convenient access to Metrolink or the rail network but there are gaps in services to access commercial and employment areas particularly outside daytime working hours.
- 11.36 Some bus services interchange with the Metrolink and rail network and offer convenient transfer opportunities for passengers, but these need better promotion. Improvements through bus franchising and integrated ticketing is starting to address these, promoting public transport as a competitive alternative to car travel as it becomes more affordable and reliable.
- 11.37 Public Transport links between Heywood / Castleton and Manchester will be enhanced through the development of Bus Rapid Transit corridor proposals along A58 and connecting Heywood to the Calder Valley Railway Line by the Tram-Train Pathfinder proposals to public rail passenger services as well as extending the East Lancashire Heritage Railway Line to Castleton. These proposals will help to drive economic growth in the borough.
- 11.38 Capacity Improvements to line speeds and journey times on the Calder Valley Railway Line between Manchester, Leeds and the town and city centres along the route to / from the Borough's Railway Stations will be supported including: -
- Continued delivery of measures to unblock delay and pinch points on the rail network;

- Phased or full electrification of the Calder Valley Line;
- Support for TfGM and rail Industry bodies in bringing the GM sections of the line to become part of the GM Bee Network;
- Local initiatives and events to encourage off peak use of the Calder Valley Line.
- Improving access, facilities and park and ride at the railway stations, Metrolink stops, and transport interchanges / hubs which contribute to economic growth, enhance community value and integrate with the Bee Active Network; and
- Congestion Relief measures on A58 Littleborough to Rochdale, Heywood and Middleton and Milnrow Town Centres include Bus Priority and improved active travel links and provide shared mobility and travel choice options.

- 11.39 The Bee Network and the Greater Manchester Rapid Transit Strategy provide proposals to connect the main town centres and major developments by public transport. This includes the Tram-Train Pathfinder linking Oldham, Rochdale Heywood, the Northern Gateway Growth Allocation and Bury. This will be supported by Rapid Transit links from the existing Metrolink network to Middleton and onward connections to the Atom Valley Growth Corridor (Northern Gateway and Stakehill). These proposals will provide a network linking existing and future employers to local customer markets and a source from workforces can be recruited.
- 11.40 Improving Bus Network Infrastructure will be key, with Bee Network proposals already progressing to link Rochdale, Oldham and Ashton under Lyne and Rochdale and Bury via Heywood. These projects along with Bus Service Improvement Programme (BSIP) measures will enhance bus journey times. Service and infrastructure improvements between Bury, Atom Valley, Heywood, Middleton and Oldham and potentially other inter urban routes will follow, alongside the phased delivery of development proposals in Atom Valley
- 11.41 Addressing pinch point delays and implementing local route improvements aim to improve the reliability of bus services. Recognised through bus franchising, a pipeline of local proposals will be identified and implemented to address delays and tackle this.
- 11.42 Eight GM routes in Greater Manchester have been identified by the GM Mayor to be run locally and become part of the Bee Network by 2030, including the Manchester – Rochdale line. There are rail journey reliability shortcomings caused by a range of issues such as services being cancelled, running short or omitting stops as well as a historic lack of rail infrastructure investment. The recently formed Calder Valley Community Rail Partnership (CVCPR) is promoting the line to local community groups and potentially new rail users, in seeking to increase travel outside peak hours and strengthen local community affinity and “ownership” of the line.
- 11.43 Railway Stations are key gateways to town centres and local communities and although the Council has ambitions to improve park and ride provision, demand to access our stations by car will not be met. Railway stations in the borough are in sustainable locations therefore where appropriate could provide hubs offering convenient interchange with the wider Bee Network and incorporating shared transport first / last mile travel options alongside with cycling, walking and wheeling opportunities. These should also be available at Metrolink Stops and Transport Interchanges along with connecting infrastructure to provide convenient access for active travel modes.

- 11.44 Public Transport journeys in Heywood are significantly lower than other parts of the borough with journeys made by active travel or car. This is indicative of bus services not going where or when people want to go so do not meet the needs and expectations of local people. Bus priority proposals are included in the Heywood Town Centre element of the programmed Streets for All scheme, with the Tram Train Pathfinder Project proposals including the potential provision of a new stop at Broadfield. This would serve the Northern Gateway PfE allocation and be supported by first and last mile travel options to the new development for businesses / employers and residents.
- 11.45 The bus priority measures in Heywood Town Centre will include focus points for bus interchange so that passengers have identified locations to catch the bus or change services. This will be supported by clear signing and wayfinding. The proposals include measures giving greater priority to active travel modes and enhance public realm, reducing car dominance and giving people safer access to local shops and businesses. Streets for All proposals are also identified in the Middleton Town Centre masterplan.
- 11.46 There are several pinch points, congestion issues and delays that occur along A58 between Littleborough and Rochdale; to help tackle these the Smithy Bridge Residential Relief Road proposal will balance road space both on the new and bypassed route with active / sustainable modes in line with Streets for All design principles. Part of the route will form the main access to the Roch Valley PfE allocation provided by a third party.