



## 7. Active Travel

### 7.1. Introduction

Active Travel plays a central role within our overall Local Transport Plan strategy. Increasing physical activity, by including walking and cycling as part of the daily routine provides health benefits and associated cost savings in terms of improved health, particularly in relation to obesity and coronary heart disease. Urban environments which are pleasant to walk and cycle in tend to improve community cohesion and safety through lower traffic speeds and more opportunity for interaction, thus contributing to overall wellbeing.

An increase in travel by active modes also contributes to the economy of Greater Manchester in a number of ways, through: a healthier more productive workforce, increased public transport patronage as the catchment area of stations and stops is widened, reduced congestion and increased access to employment and key services (providing people with a low-cost option for getting to work). In addition, since there are no local emissions from active travel modes, they support carbon reduction and improve local air quality (where walk and cycle trips replace the car), contribute to reducing congestion, noise and improving local safety.

In seeking to encourage and facilitate more active travel, our aim is to develop an integrated package of infrastructure improvements and promotion aimed at securing a step change in the levels of walking and cycling. This will focus on short trips, either as the whole journey to key centres of activity, or as the first leg of a journey by public transport. As a guide, trips of less than 2km (1.2 miles) could be made on foot by many people, whilst distances of less than 5km (just over 3 miles) could be suitable for cycling. A key requirement will be to present active travel as a consistent 'product' across Greater Manchester, giving greater certainty to the traveller about the type and standard of infrastructure available and the integration with other modes.

Our approach is to target improvements so as to:

- increase the number of people walking or cycling to work and education, especially for short trips made in the peak hours, and to reduce the number of single-occupancy vehicles travelling in Greater Manchester's most congested areas and corridors;
- make the best use of existing networks and add value to investment in public transport networks by integrating walking and cycling with other modes of transport;
- improve safety and personal security for pedestrians and cyclists, with an initial focus on routes to key transport hubs and areas of employment;
- contribute to the improved neighbourhoods and environments within Greater Manchester by facilitating low-carbon modes of travel (ie walking and cycling); and
- contribute to improved public health in Greater Manchester by increasing physical activity, especially in areas with the most pronounced health inequalities.

### Case Study: Bridgewater Way

The Bridgewater Way is a regeneration project that will ultimately create a 65km leisure/commuter route for walkers and cyclists alongside the Bridgewater Canal between Runcorn and Manchester. Approximately half of the route falls within Greater Manchester, the majority of this within Trafford, provides a direct traffic-free alternative to some of the busiest sections of the A56, and is an important route between some of the major residential areas of Trafford and Manchester City Centre. Approximately 5km of the route has already been completed within Trafford, and a number of other sections are being prioritised for any available funding through the LTP.

Within Trafford, the project aimed to overcome the following problems:

- Cyclists not previously permitted to use the route
- Tow-path surface narrow and often muddy, not even providing an attractive route for pedestrians
- Lack of good links to surrounding on-highway walking and cycling routes
- Lack of a traffic-free alternative cycle route to the A56 – one of the busiest radial routes into central Manchester

The scheme includes improved highway access to the canal towpath, new access points, a wide surface for new uses including cycling, focal points, public arts and heritage interpretation programmes and a safer and more appealing route. A number of sections of the route link with additional Links to School cycle routes, and one school has been provided with a dedicated, direct, traffic free access onto the Bridgewater Way from within its grounds.

Three phases of the scheme have been completed at a total cost of just over £2,000,000, with funding from the Sustrans Connect2 programme, Sustrans Links to Schools Programme, Trafford's Integrated Transport and Highways Capital Programmes, and the Bridgewater Canal Trust.

The scheme provides an important leisure and utility walking and cycling resource and has been very successful in increasing cycle use in the area, particularly associated with local schools. At Springfield Primary School, which has its own direct access onto the tow path, around 50 families are using the new facility on a daily basis.

Extensive 'before' surveys were taken to establish the level of use of the towpath prior to the works taking place. 'After' surveys will be undertaken in the financial year 2011/12 and are expected to confirm that levels of use, for both pedestrians and cyclists, have significantly increased.

In the short term, the limited amount of conventional funding means that there is a need to focus on a twin-track approach based on:

- implementing low cost, value-for-money measures that will make better use of existing infrastructure, for delivery in the early years of the strategy; and
- exploring additional funding opportunities.

Initiatives to encourage active travel are set out in Implementation Plans for each of the ten Districts. However, the framework within which the local authorities will work with key partners (eg Transport for Greater Manchester, voluntary, community, health and education sectors and transport operators) in delivering Active Travel initiatives is set out below.

In addition to providing safe environments for walking and cycling (through network management and through the planning process) and improving infrastructure, promoting active travel through co-ordinated 'smarter choices' campaigns and as part of Travel Plans will be an important part of encouraging more people to walk and cycle. Our proposals are set out in chapter 5. In promoting walking and cycling we will target hubs of activity (eg employment sites, community centres, places of education) and those groups of people who are most likely to walk or cycle more. To this end, we will continue to deliver sustainable transport initiatives in schools and further education establishments, including: training, initiatives and promotion, assistance to improve facilities, improved infrastructure (routes to schools) and promote and encourage local or community ownership.

## 7.2 Walking for everyday journeys

Most journeys start and end with a walk, whether to a bus stop or from a car park. However there is potential for most people to make at least some short journeys entirely on foot.

Most of the infrastructure needed for walking already exists, through a comprehensive network of footways. However the maintenance of that network and the provision of safe crossing facilities are key issues in encouraging people to walk more. To encourage people to walk more, we need to create an urban environment where walking is seen as a pleasure and to actively promote the benefits of walking to key groups. Pedestrian-friendly design needs to be incorporated at the earliest stages of the planning process, to ensure that these are fully integrated. Joint working with the health sector, to promote the health benefits, will be important in achieving the cultural change needed to make walking a part of everyday life. Through LTP2, we have:

- produced Rights of Way Improvement Plans for each District;
- upgraded pedestrian crossings;
- delivered improvements to pedestrian links eg routes through residential areas, traffic free routes and Safer Routes to Schools, and improvements as part of major transport schemes, such as Quality Bus Corridors; and
- launched the walkit.com website in 8 Districts.

In order to maximise the benefit from limited funding in the short term our priorities are now to:

- deliver activities to encourage walking as part of a co-ordinated Smarter Choices programme;
- identify and deliver key walking routes; and
- raise awareness, both of walking routes and the benefits of walking, through information provision and partnership working (particularly with the health sector).

We will identify safe, convenient and attractive walking routes to and from the Regional Centre, key local centres, key services (including employment, education health, retail and leisure) and public transport nodes, and prioritise them for investment in improvements. For example, routes to key stations will be prioritised, adding value to the investment in public transport schemes such as Metrolink. This will include a signage strategy to ensure that key routes are clearly marked and the promotion of any improvements to routes to raise awareness and usage. We will also explore ways to provide such information to sensory disabled people. Canal towpaths offer great potential in providing traffic-free walking routes, and we will support schemes to improve them.

### **Case Study: Pedestrian Links in new development, The Rock Triangle, Bury**

The Rock Triangle is a major new retail, leisure, food and drink, office and residential development on the eastern gateway of Bury Town Centre. Access problems that the development needed to overcome were as follows:

- Although The Rock Development would be within easy walking distance of the heart of the town centre the most direct link was compromised by the barrier effect of the highway layout on The Rock / Rochdale Road.
- Pedestrian access through the site was not particularly encouraged with a lack of routes and legibility to those routes.
- Movement patterns were dominated by the car and car access to the parking areas.
- The footpaths that existed were narrow and unattractive.
- The most easterly part of the site (where Marks and Spencer's and Debenhams are located) was a significant distance from Bury Interchange.

Integration of the new development with the existing Town Centre retail area by improved pedestrian links was seen as key to the success of the scheme. The following features were funded by the developer and Bury Council:

- A new central street for pedestrians through the site.
- New public squares
- Improvements, including enhanced links, to St Johns Gardens
- Upgrades to the existing pedestrianised part of The Rock
- Removal of the Angouleme Way/ Rochdale Road roundabout (on the main Town Centre Inner Relief Route) to improve accessibility, particularly for pedestrians.
- Safety and accessibility integrated into the scheme design.
- Provision of a bus stopping facility on Derby Way (the new link road replacing The Rock) at the back of Marks and Spencer/Debenhams

The Rock development opened in July 2010. In the first 3 months visitor footfall surpassed two million. At the same time visitor numbers to Bury Market and the existing Millgate Shopping Centre have been maintained proving the pedestrian links are working well.

We will seek to ensure that new development is designed to be pedestrian friendly, with safe, direct walking routes along desire lines, linking into the existing network and vehicular traffic given lower priority within residential areas.

Footway maintenance including repairing pot holes, clearing overgrown vegetation, gritting in the winter and ensuring lighting is operational are all essential for ensuring a safe and attractive walking environment. We will ensure that key routes are prioritised for maintenance (including winter maintenance such as gritting) within Transport Asset Management Plans. We will also work with the relevant authorities over the enforcement of obstructions on footways and cycleways.

In the longer term, we aim to develop a comprehensive approach to providing information about walking routes including:

- providing walking maps in urban centres and paper-based walking maps (such as Stockport's Green A to Z maps which promote green walking routes);
- conducting Community Street Audits to identify problems on key walking routes and possible solutions, working with local residents; and
- delivering comprehensive Greater Manchester wide pedestrian signage strategy which ensures consistency and promotes routes (possibly using time rather than distance based signs).

### **Rights of Way**

Greater Manchester has an extensive Rights of Way (RoW) network, with approximately 3,000km (1,864 miles) of route. The network covers both urban and rural areas, with 56% of the network in the urban area. The vast majority of the network is in the form of footpaths, for pedestrians only, with only 13% also open to cyclists and equestrians. RoW are an important part of the integrated transport network, providing links to local facilities and public transport services, as well as providing opportunities for recreation and leisure pursuits, whilst contributing to the health and wellbeing of the local population, as well as the protection and enhancement of the local environment. They are important in providing access to greenspace for all socio-economic groups.

In 2007, the Government required authorities to produce a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP), demonstrating how they would improve both their local public rights of way network, and also access in general. The plans were to take in to account both public rights of way and concessionary and other off road routes. These plans, available from the relevant local authorities, set out specific actions for the short term. In line with subsequent guidance in 2009, we now aim to integrate the delivery of the RoWIPs with that of the wider LTP strategy. We will therefore prioritise improvements and maintenance according to how the ROW can contribute to our LTP strategy objectives.

The objectives for RoW are based on the objectives in each individual borough's improvement plan. They are to:

- prioritise the improvement of the existing RoW network in line with RoWIPs to meet locally identified travel needs for all users; for example school or workplace travel plans, or accessibility studies on public transport interchanges;
- create, with reference to the RoWIPs, an integrated and continuous network which incorporates both local, circular and long distance routes (such as national trails and cross boundary routes) providing access to green space and recreational opportunities as well as educational sites, employment sites and other facilities such a health care and retail opportunities;
- set up an annual maintenance programme and safety inspection to improve the network in a way that provides best value while ensuring that the RoW network is open and available for all users: disabled, walkers, cyclists, and equestrians;
- keep under continuous review, and easily accessible, the definitive map and statement for each authority area;

- identify and secure funding for the delivery of the RoWIPs and improve partnership working with internal and external groups to ensure maximum financial benefit and value for money;
- improve safety and connectivity on the network for all users, as well as improving accessibility (in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act) of the network to all.
- provide an effective information and marketing strategy to encourage use of the network by a wider range and greater number of users, increasing the number of trips made by non-car modes; and
- promote and encourage respect and understanding between users, landowners and other groups to avoid and minimise conflict and increase equal opportunity for all.

Within this we will:

- utilise the planning process (both through Local Development Frameworks and development control) and work with organisations, landowners, and planners to maximise opportunities to enhance the network, to protect the existing network and achieve objectives within RoWIPs;
- develop and implement a Greater Manchester-wide safety assessment regime to enhance the effective management of the network, combined with a maintenance process and programme that supports the Transport Asset Management Plans for each local authority;
- remove, where feasible, barriers and obstructions to give the least restricted route possible and ensure maximum accessibility for all users;
- improve marketing and communication including signs, maps and other media; and
- work with relevant departments and agencies to ensure reports from the public can be dealt with effectively and to enable advantage to be taken of any synergies in work programmes.

In the long term, as well as continuing to maintain and improve the network in relation to locally identified transport needs we will maximise the networks usefulness for both utility and leisure journeys by creating, as funding allows, an integrated and continuous network. This will be done by:

- improving and maintaining the RoW in a way that is linked with the Transport Asset Management Plans;
- the development and maintenance of routes for cyclists and equestrians (where this is possible based on individual circumstances of routes);
- the improvement of route accessibility both for people with disabilities and other users with accessibility needs;
- the improvement and maintenance of crossing points; and
- the reduction, where possible, in the need to use main roads as part of the network.

We will also work with relevant partners to promote the network by signage maps and other media and promote the use of circular and long distance and national routes; this will help to encourage greater use of RoW.

Realising the potential of RoW in this way will support economic growth through encouraging a modal shift and thus a reduction in car usage. This will help to reduce congestion, and carbon emissions, whilst also bringing physical and mental health benefits through increased physical activity and increased access to greenspace, especially for lower socio-economic groups.

### 7.3 Making cycling a natural choice

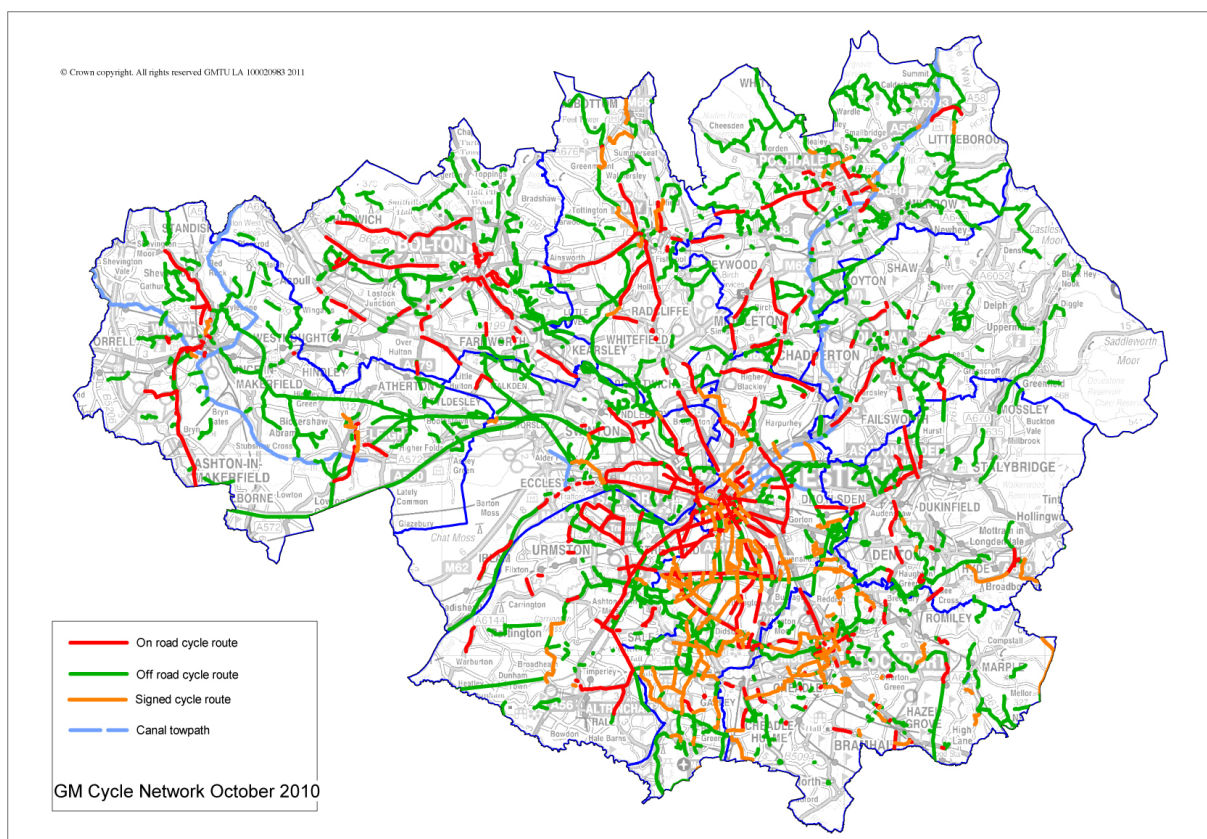
Our long-term aim is to make cycling a genuine, attractive choice for journeys to work and education, for leisure and for fitness. In the short term, however, we will need to focus on delivering easy low-cost measures that will encourage people to use bikes to make short journeys. Whilst cycling casualties have been in decline in recent years in Greater Manchester, fear of using the roads is often cited as a reason not to cycle. Providing safer infrastructure and training for cyclists, and minimising conflict between cyclists and other road users is therefore essential. As more people cycle, safety fears are likely to be reduced, creating a virtuous circle that will lead more people to cycle.

Through LTP2 we made progress in:

- developing a network of cycle routes;
- providing cycle parking, toucan crossings and advanced stop lines;
- working towards completing the National Cycle Network and on 4 large infrastructure schemes in partnership with Sustrans (the Connect 2 project), including bridges and canal towpath improvements (see Bridgewater Way case study above); and
- providing cycle training for primary school children and piloting adult training.

However, while progress has been made in improving cycle infrastructure, the Greater Manchester cycle network is not complete and the schemes which are delivered are often piecemeal (due to funding constraints or physical obstacles). Figure 7.1 shows the current cycle network.

**Figure 7.1: Existing Cycle Network**



The key priorities for action have been identified as follows:

- continue to deliver 'Bikeability' cycle training and awareness raising;
- maintain a cycle network for day-to-day journeys and work towards its completion by plugging gaps incrementally; and
- co-ordinate, align and add value to existing activities which encourage cycling (part of the Smarter Choices strategy) and continue to support and deliver successful programmes of engagement.

### **Case Study: Old Trafford Cycle Link**

A scheme through Old Trafford to provide a new link on the National Cycle Network, linking two existing and well used NCN routes in Manchester and Salford (NCN60 and NCN55), and provide improved walking and cycling routes and facilities to five schools. The route also improves access to a number of important employment locations including Salford Quays and Trafford Wharfside, and to Manchester United and Lancashire County Cricket Club. The route includes some particularly challenging interventions to provide safer routes in a densely populated area. It combines both on road and shared use facilities and a link will be formed with a new bridge across Manchester Ship Canal to Media City which is due to open in 2011.

The route will offer further links via the Stretford Grammar Links to School scheme at Longford Park to the Trans Pennine Trail NCN62 and Bridgewater Way RCN82.

The scheme sought to address the following:

- Schools in the area were keen to encourage cycling to school but felt the surrounding highway infrastructure didn't support cycling
- Pedestrians and cyclists unhappy with previous subway provision to cross the Metrolink line at Old Trafford
- A gap in the National Cycle Network linking key employment and residential areas for commuters

Using funding of £410k from Sustrans Links to School grant and £600k from Trafford Council Section 106 contributions, a combination of improvements was made to the route, including: Toucan crossings, track level Metrolink crossing, shared use footways, signage, dropped kerbs and crossing points, advance stop signs for cyclists and resurfacing. Marketing of the new route includes new leaflets and maps produced and school assemblies to raise awareness of improvements with pupils.

A key element of the route is the new at-grade crossing of the Metrolink line at Old Trafford, where the previous subway, which was unpopular with users, has been filled in and replaced by a high quality track level crossing for pedestrians and cyclists as part of a wider station upgrade.

The scheme was completed in Autumn 2010.

## **Cycle Network**

A key priority is to ensure that the existing cycle network is maintained to a high standard. Ensuring road surfaces are maintained (including repairing pot holes and removing debris from cycle lanes) and maintaining lighting and signage are important for cyclists to ensure routes are safe and pleasant. As with pedestrian routes, we will ensure that key routes are prioritised for maintenance, including winter maintenance such as gritting.

Our overall aim is to enable people to cycle safely on the whole on and off-road network. However, as a priority the local highway authorities will each continue to work towards completing a core cycle network (of local, regional and national routes) providing direct, continuous, safe, attractive, comfortable and coherent cycle routes. This will include links with cycle routes outside Greater Manchester, such as the National Cycle Network. The network will link residential areas to key services (primarily employment and education but also health, leisure and retail) and into district/local centres. Whilst a whole route approach will be adopted to identify and plan routes, they will be delivered incrementally. The focus for investment will be on cycling routes that enable short trips or facilitate longer-distance trips through interchange with public transport. The routes will cater for all levels of ability (new and existing cyclists), eg both on-road, signed routes and quieter off-road routes. The Rights of Way network has potential in this respect and we will, over time, increase the number of routes that are designated as bridleways (and therefore open to cyclists). Canal towpaths have the potential to provide safe cycling route, and we will support schemes to upgrade them.

Within town and city centres, we will work to achieve high cycle permeability and accessibility of the cycle network by providing measures such as contra flow cycle lanes, cycle paths, shared space in former pedestrian areas, advanced stop lines, signs on busy roads, signs to locate parking (including at key transport hubs), sheltered parking and shared crossings. It is recognised that shared spaces may require additional or enhanced signage in order to address the needs of disabled people.

In the longer term we aim to designate key routes (where a high demand for cycling is demonstrated and where routes link key educational and employment areas to residential areas) as continuous and high quality cycle 'expressways'. To do this, we will need to investigate funding options, including sponsorship from large employers or private organisations, such as bike shops

## **Integration with public transport**

Combining cycling with public transport provides a viable alternative to the private car for many medium and long-distance journeys. It can both increase public transport patronage by increasing the catchment area of stations, and reduce the demand for car parking around stations.

Cycle carriage is permitted on Northern trains (the major operator in Greater Manchester) but overcrowding means that there are serious problems in accommodating more than two bikes on some trains, and conductors have the right to refuse access if the train is crowded. There is, however, no restriction on the number of folding bikes carried. The carriage of bicycles on Metrolink is prohibited under the by-laws due to constraints on space on the existing trams, unless they are folded and fully encased. This policy was recently re-affirmed following a review. Bus operators in Greater Manchester do not permit cycle carriage.

The provision of secure cycle parking across the network and promotion of the facilities that are available is essential. We will therefore work with partners to provide:

- convenient, visible, secure cycle parking, at Metrolink stops, bus stations, rail stations, park and ride sites and all key public transport interchanges. Cycle parking will be provided at stops on the new Metrolink extensions, the new public transport interchanges at Altrincham, Bolton, Rochdale and Wythenshawe and as part of stop upgrades on the Bury and Eccles lines, subject to the advice of the local authority;
- clearly signed routes to stations and information about bike and public transport options; and
- walking and cycling routes to, from and between key public transport interchanges.

### **Case Study: Metrolink Cycle Parking**

In 1995, GMPTTE made a successful bid to the DfT's Cycle Challenge competition for funding to provide cycle parking at Metrolink stops on the Phase 1 Bury and Altrincham lines. This had not been provided as part of the original Metrolink scheme, due to funding constraints. However, the provision of cycle parking was important, given that the carriage of cycles on Metrolink trams is not permitted.

Sheffield stands and cycle lockers were installed on the platforms at a number of the stops, in locations covered by the CCTV. Vertical cycle lockers were chosen as it was felt that these were better suited to the restricted space on the platforms. Use of the lockers is free, but users have to pay a small key deposit for membership of the Bike Locker Users Club (BLUC). This gives access to any locker on the network.

However, monitoring revealed that the cycle lockers were not well used, and a survey of BLUC members showed that their size was a problem (some people find it difficult to lift the cycle into position, while others have a large cycle that will not fit). Consultation was therefore carried out in 2010 with local cycling groups, who confirmed the view that the vertical lockers are too small and that if lockers are to be provided, they should be of the horizontal type.

Following a procurement exercise, GMPTTE identified a suitable model of horizontal locker, and these will be installed at stops on the new Metrolink extensions (Phase 3) and as part of the refurbishment of the Bury line. Lockers will not be installed as part of the Eccles line refurbishment, however, as the local authority advised that this would not be appropriate (additional Sheffield stands will be installed instead). A total of 208 lockers will be provided on the Phase 3 lines, and 62 on the Bury line, in addition to Sheffield stands.

### **Supporting measures**

In addition to providing cycle parking at public transport nodes, it is essential to provide it in centres, places of work and other key destinations such as health, education and leisure facilities. We will continue to provide this as funding allows and as part of new developments.

We will also:

- investigate the viability of cycle centres at key locations within Greater Manchester and options for funding ie privately funded cycling facilities (employer) or public and private partnerships;

- explore options for the delivery of a managed cycle locker scheme which provides Greater Manchester wide coverage of an easy to use, high quality, safe and secure cycle locker system; and
- investigate the feasibility of a public bike hire scheme, which provides docking stations located around town or city centres, with bikes for hire by the hour (this will need to be preceded by substantial improvements in the cycling environment in the regional centre including much greater cycle permeability, and cycling facilities).

We aim to deliver agreed minimum levels of child cycle training throughout all districts, and will look to co-ordinate activity to deliver more efficiently. We will also work with key partners to identify funding and resources to deliver adult cycle training. In the longer term we aim to deliver cycle training to all (children and adults) with a focus on plugging gaps eg training for secondary school children and hard to reach groups.

Finally, we will work with Greater Manchester Police to investigate scale of cycle theft and possible options to reduce it.

### **Powered Two-Wheelers (PTW)**

Although not an active travel mode, PTW users face many of the same issues as cyclists. PTWs can have a positive impact on congestion, as they are economical in their use of road space compared to cars, but accident rates are high. We will continue to improve safety by assessing all road markings for skid hazards (particularly on bends) and installing anti-skid markings where necessary. We will also provide adequate and secure stands for parking in key locations, such as town centres.

User groups have requested that powered two-wheelers should be allowed to use bus lanes. A number of trials have been carried out, most recently in London. After an initial ten-month trial, the conclusion was that collisions involving motorcyclists had increased, particularly where cars were turning left into, or out of, a side road. There was also an increase in the percentage of motorcycles exceeding the speed limit. A further trial is now aimed at producing more robust evidence and conclusions on which to base recommendations. Pending the outcome of these trials, we will therefore maintain our position of prohibiting motorcycles from bus lanes in Greater Manchester.