Frequently Asked Questions

The Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood

How is the design of the Active Neighbourhood established?

The Active Neighbourhood plan includes 'Through Routes' where through-traffic can travel through during the trial. It also features clusters of residential streets where rat-running of vehicle through-traffic won't be possible by placing Bollards/Planters in the road, while still allowing access for other road users. The process for identifying the roads is explained in a bit more detail here:

Community Identification of Through-Routes and Residential Streets

As part of an engagement workshop, members of the community identified Through Routes which would stay open to through-traffic and residential streets which would become resident access only. Local people sketched these onto plans. This activity was repeated multiple times as part of a co-design event with local people. These plans were then overlayed and combined to gather an understanding of Through Routes and areas to be closed to through-traffic.

On the online platform, local people also highlighted traffic, speed and volume as issues on certain local residential streets. Traffic analysis also showed that a large proportion of traffic (often >50%) on some residential streets is made up of non-local 'rat-running' traffic. Removing through-traffic from these residential streets could reduce local traffic volumes and create areas to walk, cycle and play with less vehicular traffic and improved air quality.

Roads such as Kingsway, Stockport Road and Albert Road featured as Through Routes in all instances, with most community-led plans also showing roads such as Broom Lane and Matthews Lane. Some plans showed Slade Lane/Burnage Lane and Errwood Road as residential areas to be closed to through-traffic, while others showed them as Through Routes.

Narrow residential streets across Levenshulme and Burnage such as Clare Road, Scarisbrick Road and Marshall Road were found to feature more than 50% non-local through traffic.

Eliminating Rat-Running with the Fewest Number of Bollard/Planter Locations

If only a small number of residential streets were closed, remaining traffic avoiding closure points would have been concentrated on fewer residential streets. To resolve this, engineers identified and plugged 'leakage points' so that rat-running traffic would not be able to travel through residential areas. Trial bollard/planter locations were reduced to the smallest number needed to relieve all non-Through-Routes of rat-running/through traffic.

Taking Onboard Community Feedback

The suggested trial layout was shared with the public online and lots of comments were received via local councillors. Feedback was also gathered through online webinars and Councillors have shared views of local residents. These views, including bollard/planter locations have all fed into the updated layout for the trial.

A key issue raised were Bus Gates/Bus Friendly Filters. These restrict through-traffic, but allow buses through.

Without Bus Gates, narrow residential streets such as Matthews Lane would have still had high volumes of through-traffic and air quality and traffic safety would have remained an issue near primary schools on Errwood Road and Burnage Lane.

Further Feedback and Changes

Further community feedback on the locations of these is welcomed, so that a final Trial Plan can be developed. The trial plan has a degree of flexibility once live, but we need to allow the trial to bed in to understand how habits change and the trial is being used.

Impacts of creating a network of quiet streets/low-traffic streets

The safest means of mitigating risk is to prevent it at source, but obviously we can't close all roads to all traffic in order to make it safer for walking and cycling.

The next best solution is to reduce traffic volume and / or speed to create a safer environment. The installation of planters for a trial allows this for a relatively low investment. This creates a large number of streets which are improved for walking and cycling, rapidly delivering an Active Neighbourhood route network.

Why can't cycle lanes be installed instead?

Cycle lanes are suitable for busier roads, as traffic flows and speeds dictate where they should be considered and what they look like. High traffic volumes and speeds dictate the cycle lanes need to by fully segregated (divided from traffic lanes with upstanding kerbs) and of a minimum width of 1.5m in each direction.

Cycle lanes should form part of a wider network, being continuous and connected, if not they can lull cyclists into a false sense of security where these routes end and they must re-join vehicular traffic lanes. In addition, a cycle lane on one particular road doesn't provide benefit to other road users on the adjacent roads.

Trying to establish cycle lanes of this nature on existing roads is expensive and time consuming due to the need to remove roadside parking bays, providing suitable lane widths for vehicles and factor in diversions, drainage, civils works and resurfacing. The temporary nature of planters means that most of these costs and time-implications can be avoided.

The Mayors Challenge Fund Bid provides a limited amount of funding which if spent on cycle lanes would impact a reduced area. The Active Neighbourhood approach with planters means that walking and cycling can be improved across a much wider area, can be more cost effective, within a quicker delivery period.

Reference: cycle-infrastructure-design (Local Transport Note 1/20 – July 2020)

What is an experimental Traffic Order?

An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order is a type of Traffic Regulation Order used to make changes to the highway.

An experimental traffic order (ETRO) is similar to a permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in that it changes traffic restrictions. An experimental order can only stay in force for a maximum of 18 months while the effects of the traffic and parking restrictions are monitored and assessed (and changes made if necessary), before the traffic authority decides whether or not to continue the ETRO on a permanent basis.

Changes can be made during the first six months of the experimental period to any of the restrictions (except charges) if necessary, before the Council decides whether or not to continue with the changes brought in by the experimental order on a permanent basis.

Will the restrictions be 24hrs a day 7 days a week?

Once implemented the majority of restrictions will be 24hrs a day 7 days a week.

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Why do the traffic restrictions have to be 24hrs a day?

A key aim of the Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood scheme is to remove rat running traffic from an area to enable residents and businesses to enjoy low traffic environments. While areas may be most affected by through traffic during rush hour there is still a need to reduce traffic at other parts of the day.

There are also issues around the effectiveness of modal filters that only operate during certain times of the day. Firstly these filters would need to be designed in an ‘open state’ and would require drivers to obey signs in not passing through them. Evidence shows that compliance with these types of modal filters is low and having camera enforcement on each filter is not financially viable.

How will emergency services be affected by modal filters?

The emergency services are integral to the development of the proposed road changes. The ambulance service, police and fire service have the opportunity to feed into the design to ensure essential access can be maintained.

How will key workers like carers, delivery drivers and people with access needs get around by car?

The Active neighbourhood trial design allows access by motor vehicle to every property in the area, though the routing to some properties will inevitably change. This is why it’s important to trial the design first before any permanent designs are agreed, and allow people to get used to the new way the neighbourhoods work.

How will Manchester City Council and Transport for Greater Manchester decide how the scheme will proceed?

As part of the trial, we will be looking at all feedback that is sent in, as well as monitoring traffic, pedestrian, cycling and air quality. Reviews of the trial will be undertaken at 1 month, 3 months and 6 months - in that time all of the information will be reviewed with recommendations made to the Head of Network Management and Executive Member for Environment, Planning and Transport.

All projects funded by the Mayors Challenge Fund are required to submit a business case requesting the release of funding to pay for a scheme. All of the feedback and monitoring information will be collated and included in the business case that is submitted before any final designs are funded or construction of the permanent works commences.

The trial is mainly focused on restricting through traffic, what about the extra crossings and street improvements that have been suggested during the engagement?

The trial is a relatively low cost ‘test’ of the traffic reduction measures as without these there is no Active Neighbourhood. Once we understand the impact of these measures, necessary changes are made and these are agreed, the permanent design for the area will be confirmed.
Alongside the development of the design for the Active neighbourhood a plan of new and improved crossings has been developed.
The recommendations for new and improved crossings that have come out of the engagement and design process so far are now being reviewed by Manchester City Council Highways team. They are looking at the feasibility of installing or improving existing crossings at each location. Findings from the Active neighbourhood trial will provide more information about where crossings should best be located and which ones should be prioritised to help people move safely and comfortably about the area.

I have a business based in Levenshulme. How will the changes affect my business?

This depends a little bit on where your business is and what your business does. If you are located near to some of the new features being introduced as part of the project, access to your business by motor vehicle may change. All addresses are still fully accessible by motor vehicle but access some areas of Levenshulme by motor vehicle from the main road network may slightly change. Whilst we are trying our best to advise people who make deliveries via official channels you may want to advise your suppliers of the best route to your premises.

As with access to business premises all residential properties are still accessible by motor vehicle but some routes into residential areas will change. This will only really impact routes that are really residential streets so again shouldn’t impact business deliveries that use the main road network for the majority of trips. Some short cuts between parts of Levenshulme won’t be available any more but the reason is because they are used too much by traffic that should really be on the main road network in the first place.

There aren’t any major changes planned to parking or loading restrictions in the area as part of the Active Neighbourhood project. However some local minor changes like yellow lines might be needed near new temporary features. This is to ensure access for people walking and cycling, the emergency services and to allow vehicles to safely manoeuvre.

Please see the trial maps on : https://levenshulmeandburnageactiveneighbourhood.commonplace.is/ and if you want some advice or want to raise an issue specific to your business or location please contact us.

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What happens to all the traffic? Have you done any traffic modelling? Will it not just make the main roads worse?

Streets within the Active neighbourhood cells should experience reductions in volume of 50-70% compared to pre-covid levels. As they will only be used for vehicle trips starting and ending in the area (residents, deliveries and school traffic) speeds should also significantly reduce.

In the short term, the boundary roads might experience a slight increase in traffic compared to current levels. It's difficult to compare to pre-covid but we will monitor. Evidence shows a short-term increase (3-6 months) before it drops back to pre-Active Neighbourhood levels.

Covid-19 has transformed our mobility patterns, with many fewer trips, schools closed etc. The impact will continue for the rest of the year and potentially beyond, with many people working from home more often, school start times staggered and reduced public transport capacity. As such, any traffic modelling exercise would be unable to accurately predict how people will travel, when and by what mode. We collected traffic before the pandemic and will be monitoring traffic volumes after the trial has gone in, checking whether it meets its stated objectives of reducing traffic volumes and speeds on residential streets.

What happens if Crossley Road floods?

Manchester City Council are working with neighbouring council Stockport to find a permanent solution to the flooding issues on Crossley road. Further work during the engagement on Phase 2 will be undertaken to find solutions to maintaining access during unexpected flood events.

How can I get involved with project areas?

Feedback through your ward members and the Project team if you would like to be involved moving forwards. There will be time to fine tune the scheme during the trial, but in the meantime, we would really value your feedback on the trial aspirations.

How have you engaged people from different backgrounds?

One of the project areas is to 'get more people in the community involved' with the 'our active neighbourhood' programme. As part of the wider activation of the project, Open Streets events trialled between June and September 2019 has been part of inclusive grass roots approach to engage more widely and positively with people living multi cultural ,diverse nature of Levenshulme.

The restrictions mean that I have to drive a lot further and down busy roads, won't this cause more pollution?

The Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood scheme primarily looks to deliver a low traffic neighbourhood, but more than that it looks to change the way residents view transport and their travel choices. There will always be those essential car journeys that people need to make, and for mobility impaired residents this may be every journey. However, for the rest of us the transport choices we make have a direct impact on not only our local community, but that of our neighbours and the environment.

So while initially some journeys may feel longer and counter intuitive but we hope that some of those journeys in the future you will make by more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling or public transport.

What about the A6?

There are two distinct funding avenues to access the £160 million allocated to the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund. These are:

Active Centres + Corridors
Strategic walking and cycling route connections between and across town and city centres; This applies to the A6 (and other commuting corridors)
and

Active Neighbourhoods
Improving neighbourhood walking and cycling access from residential areas to local jobs, schools, colleges, health facilities and public transport.
It was agreed at the initial community meetings to focus on 'active neighbourhoods' and the benefits of multiple projects in creating healthier residential streets and continue to support the development of plans to create cycle lanes along the A6 as part of joining the dots in the future.

TfGM are looking at the A6 corridor and neighbourhoods along it and working with Manchester and Stockport Council to develop ideas.

Who is on the project team? Who is doing what? Who makes the decisions?

Manchester City Council Project Manages the Programme and funding application, technical design, procurement and delivery of the scheme. The scheme is funded through the Mayors Challenge Scheme, administered by Transport for Greater Manchester.

Project Delivery Team
The project team is made up of representatives from MCC Highways and Neighbourhoods teams, TFGM, Sustrans Collaborative Design Team and Bespoke Transport Consulting.

Approvals Board
These are a group of people who will sign off the business case and final plans for the scheme. The approvals board consists of representatives from the Highways Department, locally elected members at Manchester City Council including executive members and our councillors. Representatives from the project delivery team report to the Approvals Board.

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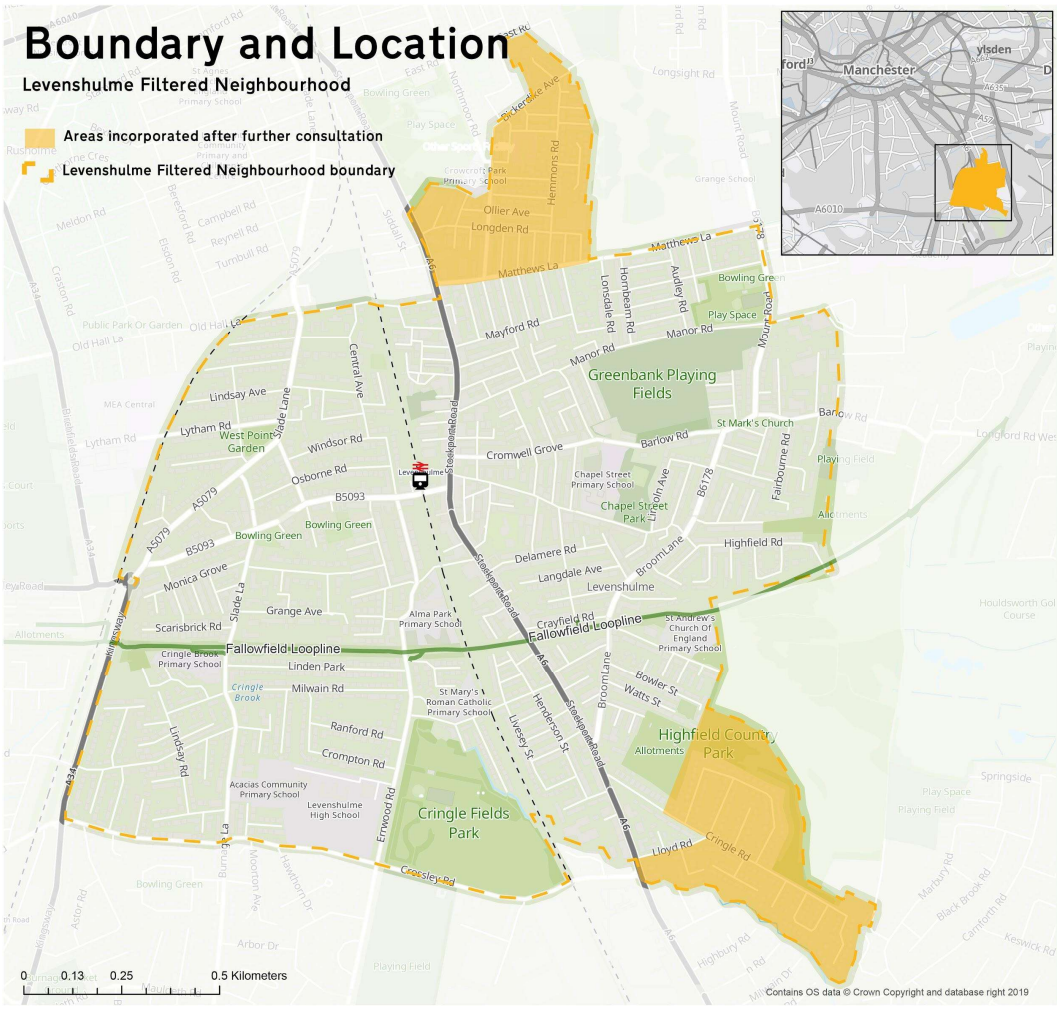
How was the programme boundary chosen?

The area identified falls within two ward boundaries – Levenshulme and Burnage. A prominent local landmark was chosen to establish a central point for the neighbourhood area and 'The Bee With No Name' was chosen on the area known as the Village Green on the corner of Stockport Road (A6) and Chapel Street.

The original area boundary (defined during the community meetings) was based on a 10 minute walk from the heart of the area. There are more than 9,000 homes in the area as well as 6 primary schools, one secondary school and over 200 businesses.

The programme area was bounded by Kingsway and the railway line to the West, Crossley Road to the South, Highfield Country Park to the East and Matthews Lane to the North of the area.

Following feedback after the launch of Commonplace map the area was extended to include the additional area to the North of Matthews Lane . The area includes two additional primary schools. The new boundary also includes additional streets to the South East and stretches to the Stockport MBC boundary.



How much will it cost? Where's the money coming from?

£2.5 million has been requested for the 'Our Active Neighbourhood' from the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund, with a £100,000 contribution coming from Manchester City Council directly. This funding is specifically focussed on sustainable transport initiatives.
A robust business case is required to release the funding for the scheme beyond the development phase, and the principle objectives of the MCF Active Neighbourhood fund MUST be met in order for the funding to be awarded.

How will you measure the success of the Levenshulme and Burnage Active Neighbourhood scheme?

The success of the trial and project will be measured through perceptions of people who live work and learn in the area and monitoring of key indicators including levels of motor traffic and numbers of people travelling actively gathered through the following methods:

-Baseline perceptions data gathered via postal questionnaire, commonplace map survey and door to door interviews with people that live and work in the area. Further questionnaires following delivery of the active neighbourhood scheme will enable the evaluation of changes in perceptions of the area.
- The Commonplace online tool will be gauged to see how the residents, businesses and users find the trial and we can form a picture
- Air quality monitoring is underway at key locations
- traffic counts at key locations
- pedestrian and cycle counts at key locations
- Pedestrian and cyclist journey time calculations

What are the timescales?

There are a number of projects within the overall scheme that are currently being developed but will vary in the timescales for delivery:

The Active neighbourhood trial
We hope to commence the trial in the Festive season break in December and will last a minimum of 6 months. The final designs for the Active neighbourhood will be drawn up based on the results of the consultation and implemented within 18 months should the funding application be successful.

New and improved crossings
The recommendations for new and improved crossings that have come out of the engagement and design process so far are now being reviewed by Manchester City Council Highways team. They are looking at the feasibility of installing or improving existing crossings at each location. Findings from the

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Active neighbourhood trial will provide more information about where crossings should best be located and which ones should be prioritised to help people move safely and comfortably about the area.

School street improvements
The project team is working with the schools in the area to look at whether one day school street timed closures can be trialled.

Supporting initiatives

Parklet In October 2019, we held a community co-design event to stimulate ideas about what a community parklet on the A6 would look like and function as. We presented the design parameters and ideas to a specialist design company who provided two design options. In January 2020 we asked people on Commonplace to 'Have Your Say' on the A6 Parklet and received 103 responses. Option 1 received the most positive responses, with additional comments

Carport Bicycle Parking, Bike hangers and Cycle hub, these initiatives will be reviewed and developed once we have support for the trial and the Active neighbourhood. The aim is to provide suitable infrastructure so that more people will consider utilising cycles for journeys and to provide safe places to store and lock up cycles, buggy's, trailers and trikes.

How have schools been involved?

Some previous engagement and development work has been undertaken by Sustrans, and has resulted in design proposals for each of the six schools and recommendations for trials. These include 'school streets', traffic calming measures, signage and artwork and improved crossing points, however we understand further work is required as we move forwards. We want to build on this engagement and firstly agree the specifics of the active neighbourhood with traffic calming and crossing points, before moving on to understand how school streets could further reinforce the active neighbourhood and alleviate some of the known congestion and safety issues around the areas.

Can I still drive my car, how will I get home or visit friends

Everyone still has access to their houses and businesses. The idea is that we make the streets less attractive to people using it for rat runs and keep the streets for residential access only. Deliveries and visitors are still all easy, it's just the route to and from your property may change a little.

Can we not just spend the money on speed bumps and traffic calming?

Speed bumps can make some impact on speeding but they don't reduce traffic volume or discourage using the route, therefore a modal filter is far more effective at reducing traffic levels and speeds. The Active neighbourhood acts as a traffic calming measure for the entire neighbourhood. We have proposed a number of sites for traffic calming measures on the boundary roads following feedback from residents, and it's something we are keen to receive feedback on to make sure we maximise the benefits these additional measures can provide.

This pot of money is ring fenced for 'gold standard' walking and cycling projects set by the Mayor's Challenge Fund and must be spent on projects that are likely to see significant improvements in conditions for people to travel actively and reductions in car use. We hope the additional traffic calming on the boundary routes helps address concerns over traffic speeds on these routes.

Has an Equality impact assessment been undertaken?

As part of the design process, an EIA has been completed and is currently being reviewed by the Manchester City Council Equalities team. The document is a live document which gets reviewed and updated throughout the engagement, trial and consultation process. Additionally, MCF schemes are reviewed by TfGM's Disability Design Reference Group, so the Active neighbourhood proposal will be reviewed by the group at their next meeting and any recommendations they provide will be included as part of the trial

How can this project support more people to use bikes for daily journeys?

As part of the wider ambition of the project, we are working with programme partners Transport For Greater Manchester (TfGM) to make access to bikes hire schemes, bikeability training and bike maintenance courses possible locally.

We are developing a programme of events to support activation of more everyday cycling journeys and will make these available on our website and local noticeboard publicity materials.

For more information on current bike maintenance courses and bike to work schemes available via TfGM please see here