

Over 50s and Active Travel

Insight and Evidence Review

Enabling Active Travel for over 50s
in Greater Manchester in support of GM Moving and our shared
ambitions to enable Active Travel and Active Lives for all.



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Group

September 2021

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1. Background to this report

In early June 2020 GreaterSport's Active Ageing lead, working with GM Moving leads, the Centre for Ageing Better and Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) brought a range of Greater Manchester colleagues together to explore and collate evidence on active travel and people aged over 50 years old. The partners decided to form an Active Travel and Over 50s Steering Group in order to progress this work.

1.1 Over 50s and Active Travel Steering Group

Group members

- **Beth Mitchell**, Active Ageing Lead, GreaterSport
- **Nicola Waterworth**, GM Partnership Manager, Centre for Ageing Better
- **Eve Holt**, Strategic Director at Greater Sport and for GM Moving
- **Anne Clarke**, Cycling & Walking Evaluation Officer, Transport for Greater Manchester
- **Dr Aideen Young**, Evidence Manager, Centre for Ageing Better
- **Dr Karen Lucas**, Professor of Human Geography, University of Manchester
- **James Baldwin**, Senior Policy Officer, Transport for Greater Manchester

The purpose of the group was to consider opportunities to increase levels of participation in active travel among people in mid and later life in order to increase physical activity levels, and boost health and wellbeing. This work forms part of the **Active Ageing programme** led by GreaterSport and part of the **Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy** coordinated by the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub led by Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). The Greater Manchester Ageing Hub is a partnership responding to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing population in the city region. GMCA has a strategic partnership with the Centre for Ageing Better, in place since 2016.

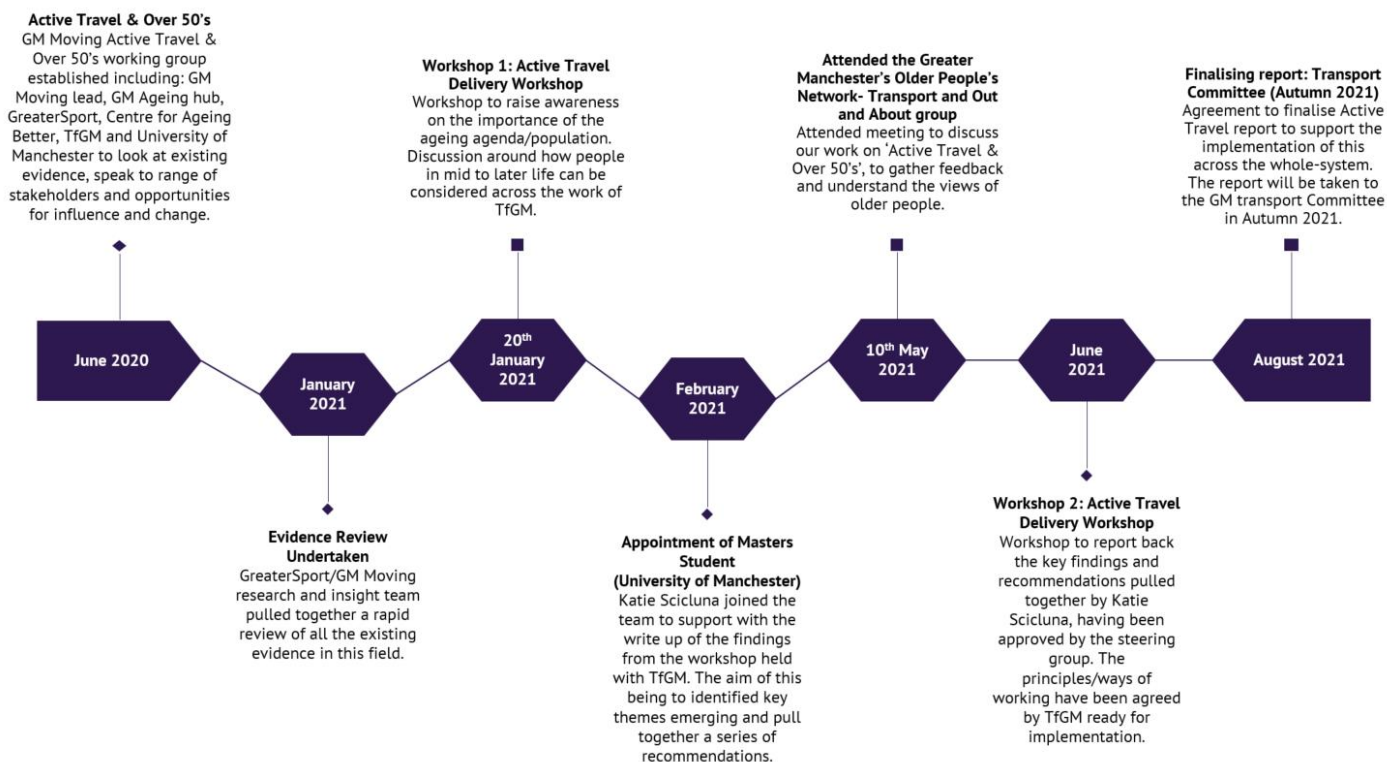
For this work the group has **defined active travel** as:

“Travel [that] includes walking and cycling in all its forms for purposeful journeys, parts of journeys and smaller modes of active transport, e.g. e-bikes, scooters”

This report will refer to **“over 50s”** or **“adults in mid and later life”**.

The aim was to support GM ambitions for a transformational growth in active travel, building on the current momentum resulting from initiatives introduced to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing work to develop GM's Bee Network. This also forms part of the work going on to develop a more inclusive integrated transport network for Greater Manchester and to collectively address the inequalities exposed and exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic, recognising the role active travel and sustainable travel can contribute to making GM a great place to grow up, get on,

grow old and to invest, do business, visit and study. And the need to reduce carbon-emissions and air pollution across the city region.



1.2 Timeline for the Active Travel and Over 50s Steering Group

1.3 Summary report and recommendations

The insight and evidence review set out in this report has informed the Steering Group recommendations as set out in this [Summary Report](#) produced by the group and [published on International Older Person's Day, 1 October 2021](#).

Partners recognise there is a range of existing information, strategy, policy and delivery opportunities that encourage active travel in Greater Manchester and that seek to ensure that active travel strategy and delivery across Greater Manchester is inclusive of the needs, wants and aspirations of residents over 50 years of age. The contents of this report are intended to complement existing evidence and research and to help identify gaps in the current knowledge base.

Since the contents of this report were drafted, the Centre for Ageing have published [national research into Active Travel and Over 50s](#), '[Best foot forward: Exploring the barriers and enablers to active travel among 50-70 year olds](#)'. This national research, conducted by Sustrans, has been considered alongside the insights set out in this report to collectively shape the future work programme and next steps of the Greater Manchester Steering Group.

Case studies: [Wigan resident Deb West explains the role active travel plays in her life](#). [Carl explains why he prefers a bike ride over a car](#). [Atuku tells us why she loves having her own bike](#)

Greater Manchester partners are now exploring how best to implement these recommendations and further reports will follow once next steps have been agreed.

2. Supporting information and analysis

2.1 Introduction

This report summarises the insight and evidence collated by Katie Scicluna, placement student at the University of Manchester based on the outputs and discussion at the Active Travel Delivery workshop with TfGM in January 2021 and focused on the needs of over 50s. This highlights the discussion at the workshop, identifies key themes and presents supporting data, evidence and analysis. The report also identifies key knowledge gaps that were identified at the workshop.

2.2 Health and wellbeing

2.2.1 Benefits of physical activity and active travel for people in mid and later life

Exploring the underlying theme of health and wellbeing provides the general rationale for investigating ways to encourage active travel in over 50's. In 2013-2015, life expectancy for men at age 65 was the lowest in England in Manchester at 15.8 years (Centre for Ageing Better, 2017). Therefore initiatives to help boost health and wellbeing such as through active travel are crucial in GM.

GreaterSport Active Ageing lead emphasised that through awareness campaigns, it is widely known that people understand the cardiovascular benefits of physical activity and so understand the importance of moving for 150 minutes per week. Indeed 66% of people aged 65+ are more likely to consider exercise as a motivation for active travel, compared to 63% overall (TfGM SeGmentation survey, in GreaterSport, 2021). This means that this cohort are aware of some of the health and fitness benefits of physical activity.

However, going forward there needs to be more targeted messaging emphasising the importance of strength and balance from physical activity, as this reduces the risk of injury from slips, trips and falls that people are more vulnerable to as they age. An example of this in a Greater Manchester context is that strength and balance training in care homes has helped free up care staff as there are fewer falls, showing that physical activity and thus active travel can have the added benefit of reducing the impact of falls.

Similarly, the benefits of mental wellbeing could potentially be promoted further, for example by presenting the positive effects of physical activity on mental health in active travel initiatives for people in mid and later life. A GHIA report emphasises the importance of urban green and blue spaces on health and wellbeing, marking the maintenance of these spaces as integral to creating 'age-friendly' urban areas (Lindley *et al.*, 2020). These green and blue spaces are often the site of active travel in local areas. Promoting health and wellbeing could also involve promoting the aspects of community that initiatives such as Cycle and Stride may present.

2.2.2 Physical needs for active travel

People in mid to later life may have different needs regarding active travel, therefore active travel initiatives need to accommodate these and account for differences across the population. We know that an individual's ability to adapt to a changing environment changes with age, for example mobility issues and visual impairments may mean that an individual moves through the environment slower than or differently to a typically able-bodied or younger person.

A key issue identified was the need for a more nuanced dataset outlining the needs of different age cohorts within the broader over 50s category, in order to adapt current transport and travel strategies and infrastructure to the needs of older people. While there is also understanding from the data that the residents in Greater Manchester are not ageing equally across the city region. This will uncover how older people may be marginalised by the built environment as it is, and help shape recommendations for shaping age-friendly spaces going forward.

***Knowledge gap:** there needs to be a more nuanced understanding of the different needs of different age cohorts and within the over 50s population*

2.3 Inequalities

“If implemented without an understanding of marginalisation, asset-based approaches risk contributing to existing inequalities, excluding those who are the most socially isolated” (Ambition for Ageing, 2018).

Issues of health and wellbeing are intrinsically linked to issues of access and equality, and health issues of people in mid to later life are of course diverse and differentiated across different identities, including gender and income. As experiences of ageing in Greater Manchester are extremely economically uneven, active ageing needs to take an inequalities approach that considers vulnerable groups and those most 'at risk', processes of marginalisation and widening inequalities. This inequalities approach links to the key issue of finding appropriate engagement mechanisms for people in mid and later life which will ensure that these issues of social and economic inequalities are not perpetuated by a top-down approach. Overall, uneven experiences of ageing in Greater Manchester need to be understood at a more granular level. Exploring the underlying theme of health and wellbeing provides the general rationale for investigating ways to encourage active travel in over 50's. In 2013-2015, life expectancy for men at age 65 was the lowest in England in Manchester at 15.8 years (Centre for Ageing Better, 2017). Therefore initiatives to help boost health and wellbeing such as through active travel are crucial in GM. The Centre for Ageing Better have identified a research gap that these intersecting characteristics that shape someone's ability to access active travel should be understood so that future policy can be informed by, and sensitive to, the needs of different groups and communities.

***Knowledge gap:** what are the intersecting characteristics of those in mid-life who do/ do not participate in active travel?*

Travel initiatives and infrastructure, should not facilitate an environment which marginalises people in mid and later life further, for example by prioritising cars at crossings with short crossing times that can exclude those in later life. Projects such as the Green Infrastructure and the Health and wellbeing Influences on an Ageing population (GHIA) project recognise that there are uneven experiences of access to urban green and blue spaces, perpetuating health inequalities (Lindley *et al.*, 2020). In this way, the built environment needs to adapt to the needs of people as they

approach and are in later life, rather than further marginalising them by creating an environment or community space where they cannot participate in active travel to the same degree as other age cohorts.

2.3.1 Economically uneven access to active travel

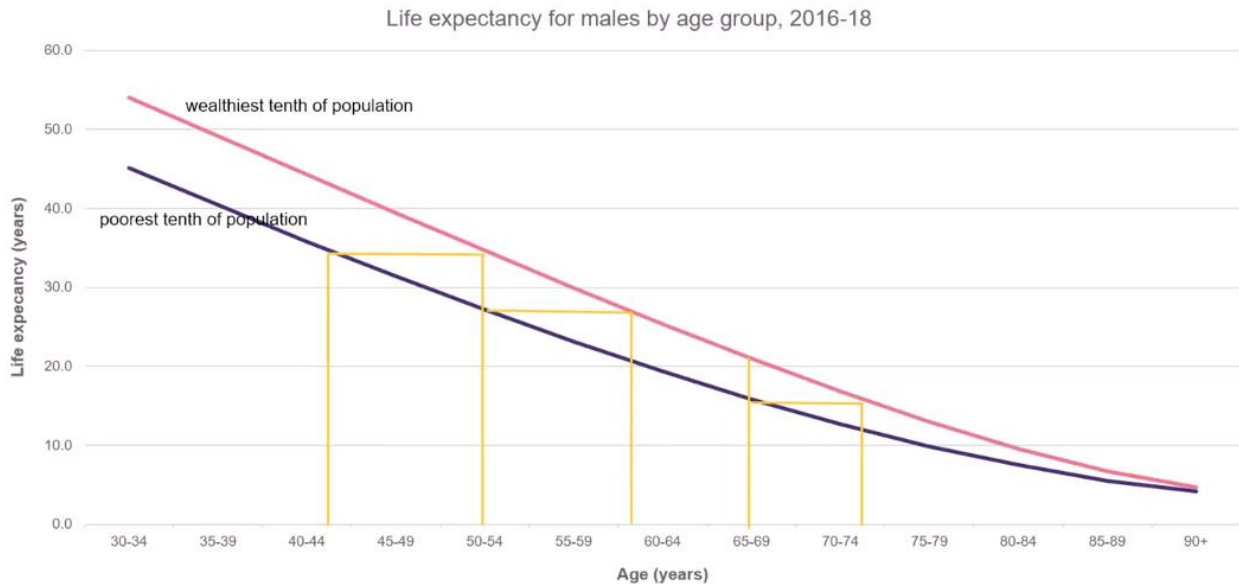


Figure 1: Life expectancy for males by age group, 2016-2018. (Source: Centre for Ageing Better, 2021).

There is a connection between health and wellbeing and socio-economic inequalities that needs to be addressed in strategy. For example, in Greater Manchester, 34% of white English people aged 62-70 report bad health, compared to 63-69% of Indian, Pakistani and Caribbean and 86% of Bangladeshi people (GMCA, 2018: 11). Similarly, the poorest third of the population have the same levels of frailty as people ten years older in the richest third (GMCA, 2018: 18). Centre for Ageing Better echo this research by comparing life expectancy for males with income; Figure 1 shows that the wealthiest tenth of the population consistently have longer to live than the poorest tenth, indicating worse health for the poorest tenth of the population (Centre for Ageing Better, 2021). Consequently, active travel initiatives for people in mid to later life need to take an inequalities approach, accounting for differences across groups and communities, so that all people in GM can benefit from accessing the health benefits of physical activity.

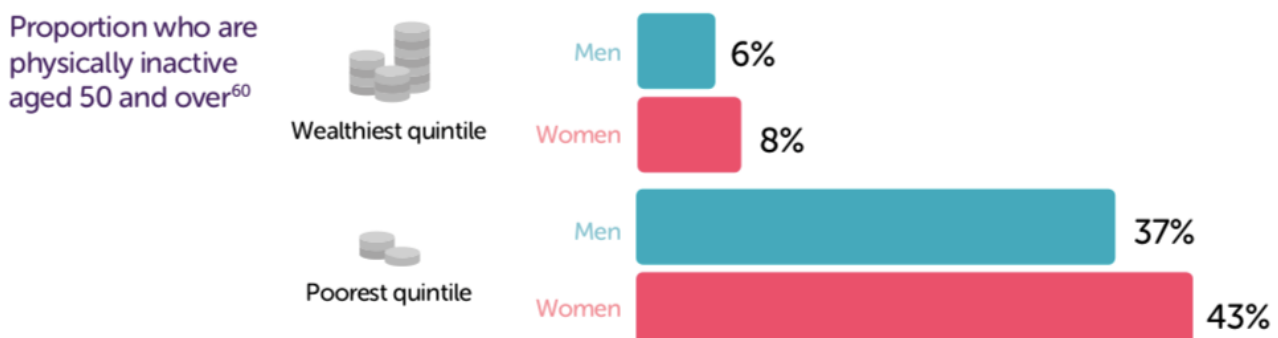


Figure 2: Graph showing the proportion of people who are physically inactive and aged 50 and over. (Source: Centre for Ageing Better, 2019).

Furthermore, Figure 2 compares the proportion of over 50s who are physically inactive by gender and income (data taken from Abell & Amin-Smith, 2018; Centre for Ageing Better, 2019). The graph indicates that the poorest people in society are more likely to be physically inactive, and that women are more likely to be physically inactive than men. Figure 3 provides more depth to this, showing how people in the poorest neighbourhoods in England are more than twice as likely to be physically inactive as people in the wealthiest (Centre for Ageing Better, 2020).

Percentage of people aged 55–74 who are inactive, fairly active and active by deprivation decile, England, 2018

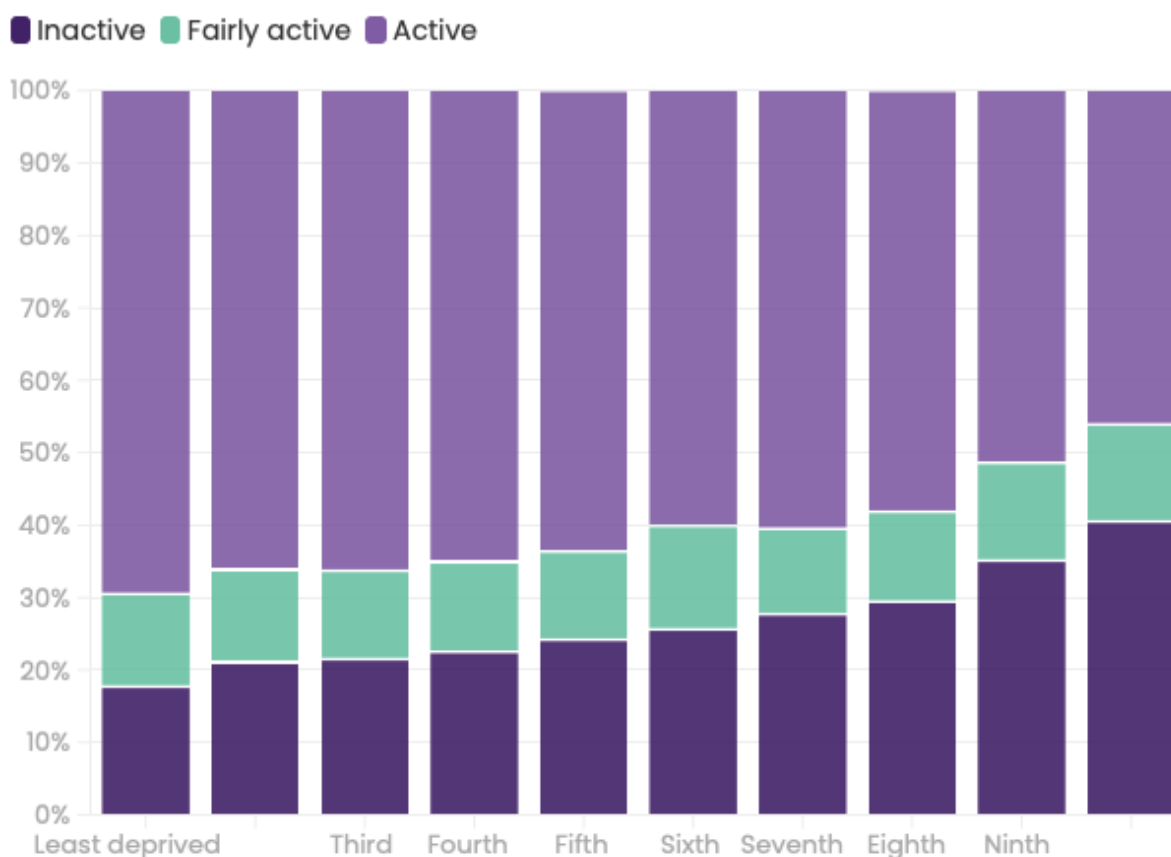


Figure 3: Graph showing the proportion of people aged 55-74 who are inactive, fairly active and active by deprivation decile, England, 2018 (Source: Centre for Ageing Better, 2020; data analysis from the Active Lives survey, 2018).

2.3.2 The influence of gender and care on access to active travel

A key theme emerging from the work was that the needs of people in different age cohorts are substantially shaped by their 'life journey stage'. This issue of defining 'age' is also reflected in the life expectancy and income inequality research (Centre for Ageing Better, 2021), that shows that experiences of age are affected by socio-environmental factors.

'Life journey stage' therefore separates the extremely broad age category of 'over 50s' into groups of people who are defined by whether they have children or grandchildren, are married or single, or are approaching retirement or in retirement. This granulation of age cohorts reflects care responsibilities for an individual or household and therefore affects access to active travel. For example, a person with responsibility to care for young children will have a different ability to engage in active travel such as cycling than someone who potentially has more free time due to a relative lack of care responsibility, as the person with caring responsibility may be more likely to travel by car. Separating the age groups in this way therefore reveals the issues surrounding the age, health and care nexus that shapes people's ability to access active travel because of their mobility needs.

As women tend to take on more caring responsibility in the home, it can be inferred that these 'life stages' may be experienced differently by gender and so ability to participate in active travel may be influenced by these caring roles. This may also provide some further evidence for why a higher proportion of women aged 50 and over are physically inactive, as shown in Figure 2.

2.3.3 Opportunities for policy: Equalities Impact Assessment

The Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) has potential to address age inequalities in infrastructure if it is used more systematically for the over 50's age group, despite older people not typically being included as part of an EIA. The importance of including older people in EIAs is emphasised in the GM Moving Strategy for the next decade (GM Moving, 2021) where an inequalities approach to creating healthy communities and places is being applied.

2.3.4 Messaging and an inequalities approach

Information needs to be provided for older people in an inclusive way. This means that messaging for active travel in over 50's needs to account for experiences in digital exclusion or uneven access to technology in order to fully consider an inequalities approach to active travel.

Furthermore, messaging around walking and cycling community group's needs to be inclusive. There is a possibility that certain groups, for example people with mobility issues or disabilities, may perceive themselves to be unable to participate in these active travel groups and initiatives as they may go too fast for them. This means that messaging needs to be targeted and focus on how these initiatives can be adapted for more people, and be accessible to the needs of people in mid and later life despite potential pre-conceptions.

2.4 Infrastructure and funding

The key issue with infrastructure and its connection to active travel is that there is a huge disconnect between planning and infrastructure that is built and implemented with the ageing population and their needs in mind. A key example of this, as identified in the *Evidence Review for Active Travel and Older Adults* (GreaterSport, 2021), is that road crossings assume that pedestrians walk at a pace of 1.2 metres per second, however 76% of men and 85% of women over 65 walk slower than this (Holley-Moore & Creighton, 2015). Contrastingly, a well-maintained physical environment actively encourages active travel in older adults, as higher levels of active travel have been noted in residential areas with features including well-maintained footpaths and available benches and street lighting (Zandieh *et al.*, 2017). Centre for Ageing Better have

suggested it is important to have an in-depth understanding of the role of the built environment in encouraging or discouraging active travel for people in mid and later life .

Knowledge gap: what role does the built environment play in encouraging/discouraging active travel in the over 50s?

TfGM has been attempting to consider adults in mid and later life more and more in their work around active travel. For example, to understand barriers to cycling, Cycle and Stride have been in contact with Age UK. However, it was indicated repeatedly that in order to accommodate these cohorts in transport planning and policy to a greater degree, TfGM needs to better understand their views, needs and requirements for what would make active travel infrastructure more accessible.

Knowledge gap: what are the views, needs and requirements of adults in mid and later life?

2.4.1 Opportunities for infrastructure and funding

The Mayor's Challenge Fund and Made to Move report were identified as a mechanism for prioritising age in infrastructure planning. For example, age is already being considered as an area of importance in the Bee Network.

Tricycles were suggested as part of the Greater Manchester bike hire schemes as they may be seen as 'easier', more stable or more attractive for some people in mid and later life to use to participate in active travel as they take up more space in the road. Similarly, e-bikes offer an age-accessible alternative to bikes in the bike hire schemes as they aid mobility for people who might struggle with cycling for long distances or over uneven terrain, for example.

The mapping of the Greater Manchester bike libraries was mentioned as a way that infrastructure can be made more age-friendly, thereby encouraging active travel among older people through identifying target areas by mapping demographics. Similarly, mapping in this way will highlight target areas for making walking safer for older people, for example by identifying key roads to grit which will reduce the risk of slips, trips and falls.

The Streets for All approach, working as a part of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040, is a way that people in mid and later life can be thought about, as its key principles include safety and inclusivity (GM Transport Committee, 2020).

The vision for Streets for All outlines that *"our streets will be welcoming and safe spaces for all people, enabling more travel on foot, bike and public transport"* (GM Transport Committee, 2020: 5). Streets for All prioritises people and their needs, therefore covering issues such as pavement width, benches and street lighting which all encourage active travel in people in mid and later life by making it safer to walk. In GM and other urban areas, streets in the city centre tend to be better maintained than in the outskirts. Therefore, a priority for active travel initiatives moving forward could be to focus on regional centres across GM, or in more suburban or rural areas. Streets for All provides parameters for designers and planners to check that infrastructure is inclusive and accessible, so in initiatives going forward it is important that Streets for All parameters are enforced systematically. This ties in with the TfGM knowledge gap identified in the workshop breakout rooms that they need to understand how to adapt and create spaces to the needs of people in mid and later life. Also, an issue that was flagged up in the breakout rooms is that due to financial

cutbacks, many public toilets in parks have been closed; this could be a barrier to people taking local walks despite other accessible features.

Further ideas to encourage active travel could be to identify local neighbourhood walking routes that are safe and cater to their specific needs. Characteristics of suitable walking and cycling routes would be to have consistently flat, even surfaces (i.e. well-maintained roads), appropriate street furniture (including benches to rest), accessible toilets and street lighting. Currently, there are examples in GM of 'safe' routes for older people, for example via the Ageing in Place programme in Tameside where walking routes have had benches strategically placed for resting. Similarly, in Whalley Range, age-friendly benches have been installed following consultations (Black, 2019). Furthermore, there are heritage and canal walks, for instance in Wigan, that are accessible and provide a purpose to walking and makes walking for leisure more attractive. However, there are spatial differences across GM surrounding the cultural value of canal walks, for instance in the Sale and Chorlton areas, walking along the canals is practiced more than in areas including Middleton and Rochdale. A solution to this could be to encourage the development of more local community walking and cycling groups. Simply Cycling currently provide accessible local cycling sessions for older people, and the Bury Tandem Club for Blind and Partially Sighted People is an example of a specific community-based local group. Also, the GM Walking Voice network connects a diverse range of organisations and groups, including Wigan and Leigh Carers (who have a GM Walking grant to encourage carers to walk) and the Federation of Jewish Services (providing community walks to support health and wellbeing among the Jewish community in GM).

2.4.2 Case study: Age-friendly Tyburn

Greater Manchester can learn from the case study of Tyburn, an 'age-friendly' area in the West Midlands. A Sustrans report on Tyburn provides three key recommendations for maintaining an age-friendly city: road safety, placemaking, and connectivity (Sustrans, 2021). By following the framework outlined in Figure 5, Manchester and GM have the opportunity to encourage active travel in over 50's by adapting to their needs. Tyburn as an age-friendly city is also made more accessible to people with disabilities, as aspects of the project such as maintaining step-free access to the canal allow people with mobility issues to access active travel routes.

ROAD SAFETY

1. Installation of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods.
2. Reduce wait times at crossings and increase green person crossing time.
3. Ban pavement parking combined with regular enforcement.
4. Reduce speed limits to 20mph in residential areas, 30mph for arterial roads and increase the number of pedestrian crossing points.

PLACEMAKING

5. Develop indoor and outdoor spaces and support and maintain community venues.
6. Install public seating to support people to make more independent journeys by foot, cycle, wheelchair and mobility scooter.
7. Develop a community toilet scheme.

CONNECTIVITY

8. Put in wayfinding signage to enable people to connect to their local spaces to travel further distances.
9. Improve local and regional public transport links.
10. Increase truly protected, safe cycle infrastructure.

MAINTENANCE

- Maintain step free, low gradient access to the canal.
- Review maintenance procedures and time lines.

Figure 5: Age-friendly city recommendations (Source: Sustrans, 2021: 6).

2.5 Engagement

Engagement links to the policy circle on the socio-ecological model of health, emphasising the importance of involving people in mid and later life in co-design of policy and infrastructure, spaces and initiatives (see Figure 6). This includes being involved in research that covers the intersection of age, health and transport, building a collaborative approach to policy that is not just top-down. Policy changes in this model need to integrate public transport, housing and planning, health and social care using Equalities Impact Assessments in order to change the Greater Manchester physical environment to encourage active travel. The socio-ecological model presents a whole-system approach in line with the GM Moving Strategy for the next decade (GM Moving, 2021), which will be adopted using an inequalities lens to mitigate entrenched inequalities.

The Greater Manchester Age-Friendly Strategy and the Greater Manchester Ageing Hub prioritise inclusive communication and engagement, particularly valuing the voices of marginalised groups (GMCA, 2018: 7), showing that policy design surrounding active travel is already focused on inclusive engagement.

In the breakout rooms, groups discussed the importance of engaging with people in mid-life as well as later life so that initiatives can be built to prepare for these age cohorts as they get older. This will provide a platform for those in mid-life to engage with co-design in policy, complementing Centre for Ageing Better's priority of 'extending mid-life'. Placing an emphasis on engaging with people in mid-life could therefore be a priority for Active Travel and Over 50s work.

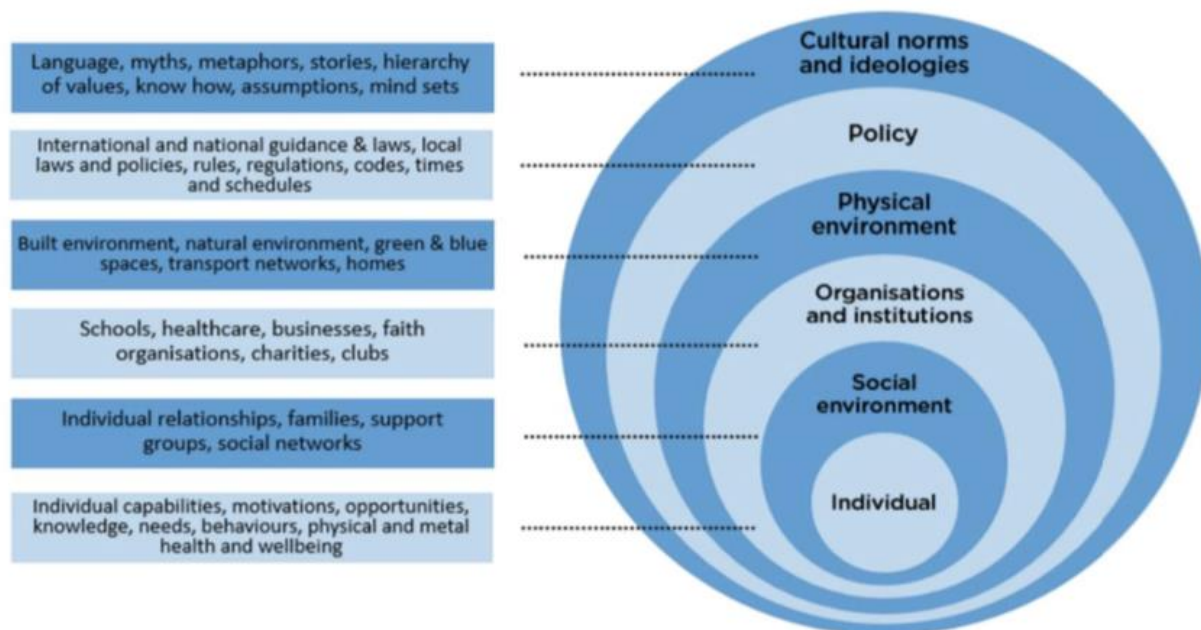


Figure 6: The socio-ecological model of health, adapted from Bronfenbrenner’s ecology of human development. (Source: GreaterSport, 2021).

2.5.1 Engagement mechanisms

Current engagement mechanisms include the Greater Manchester Older People’s Network and district-level boards across Greater Manchester. TfGM work with people in later life through their connections with the voluntary sector, for example the Cycle and Stride Programme have worked with Age UK. In a similar way to the Streets for All approach, Cycle and Stride was mentioned as a way to facilitate co-production and engage older people to assess whether the project design was fit for purpose. This network connecting people with policy design could be extended to the Active Travel and Over 50s work. This will help partner organisations to understand their needs regarding the physical environment and how it can be changed to enable active travel.

There is potential to create a ‘stakeholder map’, creating a database of local and community groups that will build a network of Greater Manchester engagement mechanisms by tapping into these groups catering for those in mid and later life, or people with disabilities.

2.5.2 Digital engagement

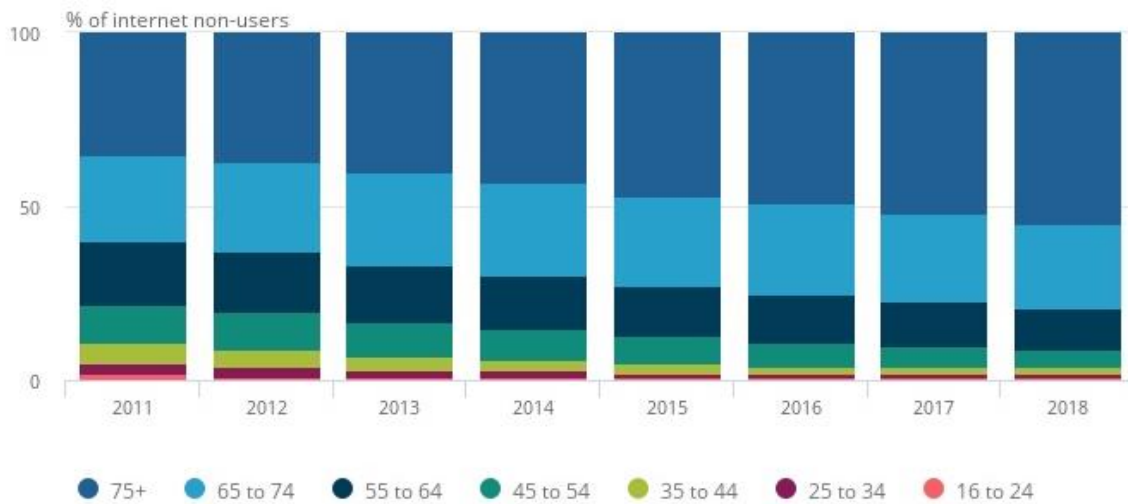
Especially post-pandemic where the majority of interactions are conducted online, the issue of online and digital engagement needs to be addressed. There is a lack of in-depth knowledge about the digital spaces people in later life in particular have access to, or choose to engage in.

Despite widespread digital access in Greater Manchester generally, there are higher rates of digital poverty among older age cohorts. Figure 7 shows that over 65’s have consistently made up the largest proportion of internet non-users since 2011, and that in 2018, over half of adult users were over the age of 75 (Office for National Statistics, 2019). This means that engagement regarding

active travel needs to be sensitive to this, and that online engagement may exclude already marginalised people by limiting their access to co-production of planning.

This issue was discussed in different breakout rooms in the workshop, and solutions that came to light included using engagement networks already in place via the voluntary sector and using non-digital engagement mechanisms, for example working with local magazines to promote initiatives.

Age composition of internet non-users, UK, 2011 to 2018



Source: Office for National Statistics - Internet Users, Labour Force Survey (LFS)

Figure 7: An increasing proportion of internet non-users are over the age of 65 years (Source: Office for National Statistics, 2019).

2.6 Messaging

A key issue that was debated in the breakout rooms was how the messaging of initiatives surrounding active travel should be adapted to appeal to the cohorts within the Over 50s requiring both inclusive and targeted messaging.

Solutions may be in changing the imaging of different initiatives by presenting adults in mid and later life as examples of cyclists or walkers in Greater Manchester alongside the focus on children or young people. There was a recurring theme in the breakout room discussions that active travel discourse and initiatives are centred around younger people, meaning that people in mid and later life may not feel as though they belong in that space. Therefore, both greater diversity in messaging and targeted messaging may encourage engagement. Similarly, there needs to be a conscious effort to include images of all ethnicities.

Another issue that was discussed was that people may not relate to being an 'older person' if they are over 50 as they may have different needs to others within the age cohort. This emphasises that 'over 50s' is too large an age bracket to present to the public as it may unintentionally alienate people. A solution to this would be to focus language on different 'life stages', such as pre-retirement, retirement, older carers, people in later life etc. People at different life stages may also be more willing to join community groups, as life stages such as retirement may increase an individual's feelings of social isolation. In this way, being specific about people's needs based on their economic, employment or familial status may attract groups of people who may otherwise not consider engaging.

3. Conclusions

Overall, the health and wellbeing benefits associated with increased physical activity in adults in mid and later life provide a central rationale for encouraging active travel among over 50s in Greater Manchester.

It is widely understood that people may have different needs regarding active travel compared to other age groups, for instance due to mobility issues affecting walking speed. This means that the physical environment needs to be adapted to these needs in order to facilitate inclusive and age-friendly walking and cycling infrastructure. The Greater Manchester bike hire schemes or bike libraries, through the use of e-bikes and tricycles, are a potential way to encourage cycling among older people quickly as they are suitable to use alongside current transport infrastructure. Mapping target locations for these schemes so they are accessible for older people will help facilitate their take-up. Similarly, local cycling and walking groups may build community

It is important that approaches to encouraging active travel among older people involve older people, for example through consultations. This will aid co-production and limit the risk of further marginalising older people through top-down driven initiatives. Similarly, the Active Travel and Over 50's project needs to take an inequalities approach, and uneven experiences of ageing should be assessed at a more nuanced and granulated level in order to understand the intersecting characteristics of people in mid to later life who do not participate in active travel. GM is ageing unevenly, with socio-economic influences on older people driving their ability to access spaces where they can participate in active travel. Furthermore, 'life journey stages' may be a more appropriate way to distinguish groups within the over 50's age category as it connects groups of older people based on their socio-economic or employment status and so may therefore group people by their needs rather than specific age.

Information needs to be provided for older people in an inclusive way. This means that messaging for active travel in over 50's needs to account for experiences in digital exclusion or uneven access to technology in order to fully consider an inequalities approach to active travel.

The GM Age-Friendly Strategy and TfGM's Age-Friendly Cycling and Walking are examples of older people's needs being incorporated into initiatives in GM already. Similarly, the Streets for All approach as part of the GM Transport Strategy provides parameters to ensure infrastructure projects are inclusive to all ages. Also, the Mayor's Challenge Fund is a way to fund age-friendly infrastructure for active travel in GM. Incorporating age within Equalities Impact Assessments was identified as a mechanism for considering the needs of older people in future projects, and it was recommended that this is used systematically going forward. These mechanisms will facilitate

active travel in older people by ensuring that the physical environment in GM is suited and adapted to their specific needs.

In conclusion, the Active Travel and Over 50's project is already operating within a complex network of age-friendly initiatives and strategies across GM. However, moving forward there needs to be a focus on the effect of inequalities and engagement mechanisms in order to promote active travel in an inclusive and accessible way.

4. Recommendations

Recommendations that have arisen from the workshop breakout rooms include:

- The strength and balance and mental **wellbeing** benefits of physical activity should be promoted more to encourage active travel.
- A need for more **targeted messaging** surrounding active travel initiatives to the over 50's age group generally, e.g. through imaging, and also for different specific age cohorts or 'life stages' within that in order to appeal to different groups of older people who have a diverse range of needs. Messaging also needs to consider the unequal experiences of digital exclusion in GM.
- TfGM need a full list of **requirements** to making the physical environment age-friendly, for instance how long crossing timings should be and where benches can be placed along walking paths, in order to encourage active travel in older people in GM.
- It is crucial that older people are involved in **co-production** of initiatives, for instance through consultations, so that processes of marginalisation of older people are not further perpetuated. A '**stakeholder map**' should be created to show connections between engagement networks and channels to increase engagement with older people. Furthermore, it is important to engage with people in **mid-life** as well as later life to plan for the future in GM's ageing population.
- The Active Travel and Over 50's project needs to take an **inequalities approach** to understand the intersecting characteristics of people who do not participate in active travel, in order to conduct targeted initiatives to these marginalised groups. This approach should also consider the effects of **digital poverty** on accessing information about active travel.
- The Streets for All approach and considering age within Equalities Impact Assessments are mechanisms for ensuring that infrastructure projects in GM are age-friendly and **inclusive**, facilitating active travel in older people.
- Encouraging **cycling** via the GM bike hire schemes and bike libraries, including e-bikes and tricycles, have potential to involve older people in active travel as they are seen as 'safer' or more accessible.
- The city centre tends to have better maintained streets than the regional centres or outskirts of the city, so a priority should be to account for the **spatial differences** in infrastructure across GM.
- **Tyburn** in the West Midlands should be used as a model for adapting GM to become more age-friendly; Sustrans have a list of recommendations that can be followed (Figure 5).

5. Next steps

- Report shared with all partners and published.
 - Steering Group recommendations and next steps to be informed by the report findings.
 - Conversations to take place with identified partners and system actors to explore the findings, gather any further information (to include further opportunities and gaps), and find out which recommendations partners will be adopting and delivering on.
 - Agree corresponding timelines and measures of progress.
 - Annual update published across all recommendations and progress measures
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6. Further Information

- [Summary Report and Recommendations of the Greater Manchester Steering Group on Over 50s and Active Travel](#), published 1 October 2021
- [‘Best foot forward: Exploring the barriers and enablers to active travel among 50-70 year olds’](#) by Sustrans, Commissioned by the Centre for Ageing Better, published on 4 October 2021
- Case studies: [Wigan resident Deb West explains the role active travel plays in her life](#). [Carl explains why he prefers a bike ride over a car](#). [Atuku tells us why she loves having her own bike](#)

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