



Transport Resource Unit Briefing

“The Greater Manchester Congestion Charge” A very brief overview for voluntary and community sector staff

This short briefing aims to give an overview of the Transport Innovation Fund proposals (TIF) – more commonly referred to as the “Greater Manchester Congestion Charge”. The briefing is aimed at voluntary and community sector staff who may be asked questions on the proposals by their service users. Full details on the proposals and the consultation can be found on the GM Future Transport website here: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk>.

Summary

Investment in transport

The Transport Innovation Fund will unlock nearly £3 billion to be spent on changing the way that we travel in Greater Manchester. This funding will be used to extend the bus and tram network, improve train stations, bring improvements for cyclists and support people to use public transport. Most of these improvements will be brought in by 2013. The proposals for each district can be seen here: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/mydistrict>

The congestion charge

Part of the available funding is in the form of a loan from the Government which will need to be repaid through the introduction of a limited congestion charging scheme. This charge will not be introduced until 2013 at the earliest, when the vast majority of the public transport improvements should be in place, and will only affect people who travel during peak times.

Who will pay and when?

Unlike the London congestion charging scheme, charges will apply Monday to Friday at peak hours only (7am to 9.30am, and 4pm to 6.30pm). People will only be charged if they are traveling into Manchester in the morning and away from Manchester in the afternoon. The charging rings are the M60 and an inner ring about 2 miles outside of the city centre. The exact boundary of the inner ring is subject to further consultation. The proposals for the inner ring can be viewed here: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/pdf/inner-ring-update.pdf>

No one will be charged for traveling around the M60 or between the rings. Some road users will be exempt: buses, motorcycles, blue badge holders, emergency vehicles, licensed Hackney carriages, private hire taxis, community transport operators and patients attending regular hospital appointments. A 50% discount has been proposed for car trips into Trafford Park until the completion of the Trafford Park public transport package and a 20% discount has been proposed for low paid workers. Full details on the charges can be found here: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/CongestionCharges/OurPlans>

Why is this investment needed?

Greater Manchester's economy has grown rapidly over recent years and this growth is predicted to continue. This will mean new jobs and new houses across Greater Manchester. There is concern that the transport system (public transport and the road network itself) will not have the capacity to support new jobs and an increasing population as the economy grows.

Consultation – how can people get involved?

A 14 week formal consultation period is now underway and will end on Friday 10th October 2008. All Greater Manchester householders will be sent information on the proposals during this period and there will be specific stakeholder engagement work with the business community, minority groups, young people and the voluntary sector. A series of public exhibitions will be held in each district – details of the exhibitions can be found here: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/consultation/exhibition>

There are two official consultation response forms – a [public response form form](#) and a [business response form](#) which can be accessed via the GM Future Transport website: <http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/consultation>. All of the response forms will go directly to Ipsos MORI (an independent research agency) for analysis. There is also a free phone number for questions about the scheme: 0800 234 6100.

The final decision

A Greater Manchester-wide referendum will be held in December. Voting is likely to take place by post and results will be broken down on a borough-by-borough basis. People in seven or more of the ten districts of Greater Manchester need to vote in favour of the proposals for them to be approved, otherwise the scheme will not go ahead.

The Transport Resource Unit

The Transport Resource Unit (TRU) will consult with representatives from the VCS during the consultation period to ensure that organisations are fully briefed on the proposals and to gauge the likely impact of the proposals on the sector as a whole. TRU will be holding a number of information events across Greater Manchester and will be researching the possible effect of the proposals on VCS organisations, their staff, volunteers and service users.

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