Topic paper:
Traffic and transport

Public Transport in Saddleworth

Public transport and being able to move around Saddleworth and connect to other areas is extremely important. The road system in Saddleworth was laid out mostly in the 19th and 20th centuries. Many roads do not have footpaths and footpaths in the villages are often narrow. This is dangerous because of the significant increase in the volume of traffic through some of the villages eg Delph and Uppermill. In the Neighbourhood Survey carried out in 2019/2020 Transport was the current third priority of concern. When it came to future priority it became more important to people the further they were from the urban end of Saddleworth. Connection to the urban areas of Manchester and Leeds, Huddersfield is important for many residents who work outside the Saddleworth area. Once out of the immediate village vicinity there is connection to A roads and the M62 motorway.

Springhead 4th priority	(32%)
Uppermill 3rd priority	(67%)
Slackcote 2nd priority	(80%)

1. Public Transport Provision and Connectivity

1. Support will be given to the provision of enhanced public transport throughout the area, particularly with regards to the provision of new or restored infrastructure which can boost overall capacity.

Rail Transport

Greenfield in Saddleworth has the only rail station in the Oldham Borough. It sits on the Trans Pennine line between Manchester and Leeds. The number of trains is restricted by the age of the track and lack of investment in the infrastructure. Being up to 3 miles from the nearest metro link station means that commuters rely on this service.

2. Support would be given to policies and development which enhances accessibility of public transport across the area, particularly with regards to access for people with disabilities.

Locally, there is restricted access to the train station at Greenfield, with the only access to one side of the station (for trains to Manchester). The opportunity to provide access to the other station has often been tied to the proposals for electrification of the rail line, which has been delayed for several years

Policy 1A There needs to be significant Government and Network Rail investment in this rail link. Urgent provision needs to deliver disabled access on Leeds bound side at Greenfield station. (This has been discussed and campaigned for, for at least 12 years.)

Policy 1B There needs to be provision of another station at Diggle to increase the capacity of the local network

Bus Services

Bus services in the area are run by several companies who wish to make a profit. This means that the less profitable rural routes are not well served. Eg There is no bus service to Denshaw after 6.00pm. Routes are frequently altered with little or no consultation with the residents. Until 2018 there was no service linking the villages to the rail station. This has now been altered to its detriment. The villages on the fringe of the urban area (Springhead and Grotton) are quite well served but the areas further out have reduced services, hourly or 2 hourly towards Manchester or Huddersfield. The majority of Saddleworth residents are in favour of the control of public bus services being put back under the control of TfGM. The majority of journeys in Saddleworth are by private car but there is a proportion of the population which does not have access to a car and needs reliable public transport. Being on the fringe of Greater Manchester does not mean that the residents of Saddleworth do not deserve the appropriate services.

Policy 1C There are specific issues around provision of rural public transport, which currently requires financial support to make it deliverable. Specific consideration and support will be given to services which enhance village to village connectivity, particularly where it coordinates with wider connectivity.

Policy 1D Public transport to contribute to the reduction of private cars travelling to beauty spots such as Dovestone.

Recommendation: There needs to be greater consultation with the residents.

The nearest Metro link station is three miles from many of the remoter areas. There has not been a real drive to link all the modes of transport together other than providing park and ride facilities for motorists. There is no suggestion of extending metro link eastwards into Saddleworth in the TfGM Transport Plan 2040 plan which takes up to 2040.

Policy 1C ? Do we want a metro link extension into Saddleworth

2. Cycling and Pedestrian Infrastructure

The terrain, the weather and roads of Saddleworth do not encourage the majority of residents to cycle or walk on shorter journeys. The roads are narrow and do not always have footpaths for pedestrians and the roads (including the A roads) do not have the width to allow for cycle lanes. However, there is the potential for cycle tracks and a network of Rights of Way and Bridleways away from the main traffic areas. Saddleworth has a great potential to provide an area for activities and fitness to improve the health of the population both of Saddleworth and the surrounding area.

Policy 2A Bridge Street, Springhead. This linear path follows the old railway line and the junction needs changing so that cyclists and pedestrians do not have to leave the safety of the linear path and cross the busy A669 main road. This would form a pedestrian or cycle link from Uppermill / Greenfield to Oldham and beyond.

Policy 2B Safe cycle parking points to be provided in all villages and at key sites across Saddleworth

Policy 2C A budget dedicated to the upkeep of Rights of Way and bridleways and other leisure sites is a must.

Policy 2D Work with neighbouring authorities and the Peak Park Authority to provide off road cycling and walking in a responsible way.

Policy 2E An in depth survey of road safety in the whole area of Saddleworth

Leisure Travel – Canals and Waterways

The Huddersfield Canal runs from the Ashton u Lyne Basin, through Saddleworth to Huddersfield. It was abandoned in 1944 and the last small section in 1963. In the 1980's a campaign was started to reopen stretches of the canal and it reopened in 2001. It has the highest, longest and deepest canal tunnel in Standedge Tunnel in the UK. It is now used by leisure craft, mainly narrowboats, and sight seeing trips. This contributes to the tourism economy of the area.

Policy 2E To support those groups which maintain and preserve the canal.

3 Reduction of traffic and journeys *by vehicular transport*

Reducing the number of vehicle journeys and improving the air and environmental quality is one of the important strategies for helping to reduce climate change. This can be achieved in a variety of ways. Reliable and frequent

Policy 3A Make sure that companies provide the best in broadband and other technical infrastructure so that people can work from home or close to home.

Policy 3B Promote walking and cycling to school.

Policy 3C Promote use of local shops and services

Policy 3D Improve public transport so that it is reliable and frequent and so reduce private car journeys.

4 Improvement in Air Quality and Monitoring

Air pollution leads to many illnesses and deaths every year. In rural areas there is still air pollution from cars and other non electric vehicles. One of the main areas for pollution is outside schools if parents use the car for the drop off and yet this is one of the areas where air quality should be improved.

4A. Roadside monitoring devices on all main roads and especially near schools

4B. Provision of electric charging points in public places to encourage the change to electric vehicles.

4C. All new builds to have electric charging points as standard.

4D. Campaign to reduce the number of non- electric vehicles used on the school run.

4E Pledge to be carbon neutral by 2030

SADDLEWORTH TRAFFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Saddleworth faces issues arising from the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF) that include:

- ☐ Increased population.
- ☐ Increased number of cars.
- ☐ Increased traffic.
- ☐ Impact of traffic on emissions.
- ☐ Impact of traffic on noise.
- ☐ Impact of traffic on parking.

This document starts to examine the issues.

Full details of my analysis will follow in due course, together with details of sources of information.

Estimated Number of Cars in Saddleworth

ISSUE	CURRENT ESTIMATE	2037 FORECAST
Population	25,535	28,895
Number of households	12,110	13,710
Number of cars	18,064	20,565
Uppermill car park spaces	220	?

Current analysis shows that the average number of cars per household in Saddleworth = 1.5

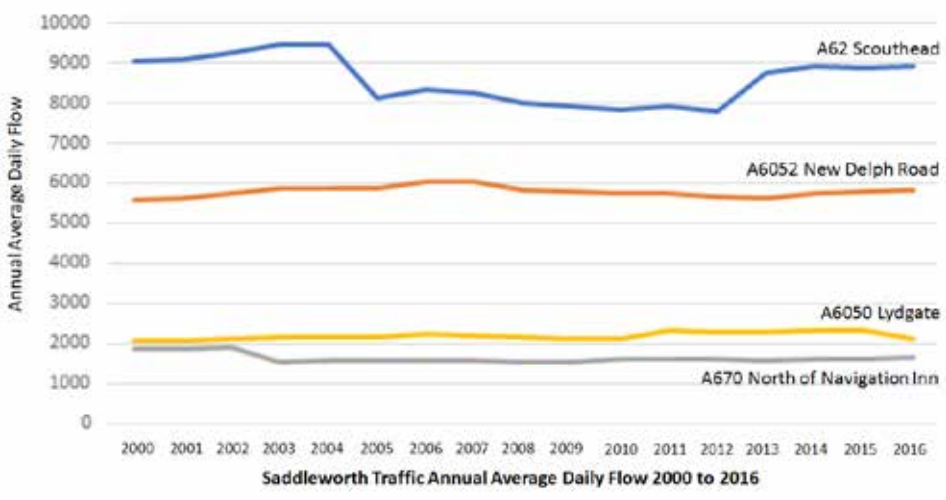
Data and information used in developing the analysis comes from statistics produced by the Government and OMBC.

Traffic on Britain's roads has increased considerably over the past 20 years as shown in the following table published in April 2017 by the Department of Transport.

⇔ is used for changes of 0.5% or less	Vehicle Miles 2016	Percentage change from: Last Year 2015	5 Years Ago 2011	10 Years Ago 2006	20 Years Ago 1996
All Motor Vehicle Traffic	323.7 billion	↑ 2.2%	↑ 6.5%	↑ 4.0%	↑ 18.1%
Cars and Taxis	252.6 billion	↑ 2.0%	↑ 5.0%	↑ 2.3%	↑ 13.0%
Light Commercial Vehicles (LCV)	49.1 billion	↑ 4.7%	↑ 18.7%	↑ 22.9%	↑ 71.1%
Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGV)	16.6 billion	⇔ -0.2%	↑ 4.5%	↓ -7.8%	↑ 2.1%
Buses	2.5 billion	↓ -7.7%	↓ -14.7%	↓ -24.8%	↓ -20.7%
Motorcycles	2.8 billion	↑ 1.9%	↓ -2.0%	↓ -11.0%	↑ 21.0%
Pedal cycles	3.5 billion	↑ 6.3%	↑ 12.4%	↑ 23.4%	↑ 36.4%
Motorways	67.8 billion	↑ 2.0%	↑ 9.7%	↑ 9.7%	↑ 39.5%
Rural 'A' Roads	93.8 billion	↑ 2.8%	↑ 7.0%	↑ 5.2%	↑ 22.3%
Urban 'A' Roads	50.0 billion	↑ 0.7%	↑ 1.6%	↓ -2.4%	⇔ -0.5%
Rural Minor Roads	45.5 billion	↑ 2.4%	↑ 10.6%	↑ 7.9%	↑ 24.5%
Urban Minor Roads	66.4 billion	↑ 2.6%	↑ 4.1%	↓ -0.7%	↑ 7.3%

Saddleworth road traffic mileage statistics will be sought.

Saddleworth traffic census are located on some roads in Saddleworth. The following shows the Estimated Annual Average Daily Flows (AADFs) on four of the roads.



The roads in Saddleworth were not built with the current levels of traffic in mind.

Source of Information: *Saddleworth Traffic Census Points*
http://www.uktrafficdata.info/grid/SD984070 and
https://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php?la=Oldham

Cars and Air Pollution

According to transport analysts, creating more road space will inevitably lead to more traffic, which will result in more greenhouse gas emissions. Road transport already accounts for a fifth of Britain's CO_2 emissions, and the government's own forecasts are for a 40% increase in road traffic over the next 20 years

The principal air-quality pollutant emissions from petrol, diesel, and alternative-fuel engines are

- ☐ **Carbon monoxide** - reduces the blood's oxygen-carrying capacity which can reduce the availability of oxygen to key organs. Low concentrations CO may pose a health risk, particularly to those suffering from heart disease.

- ☐ **Carbon Dioxide** - is not a direct risk to human health in the same way as other exhaust gases including nitrogen oxides and tiny pieces of soot called particulates. But it is a greenhouse gas and its contribution to global warming is the reason why governments across the world are forcing car manufacturers to lower CO_2 emissions.

- ☐ **Oxides of nitrogen** - include nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) and nitrogen oxide (NO): NO reacts in the atmosphere to form nitrogen dioxide (NO_2) which can have adverse effects on health, particularly among people with respiratory illness.

- **Un-burnt hydrocarbons** –contribute to ground-level ozone formation leading to risk of damage to the human respiratory system. Some kinds of hydrocarbons are carcinogenic.

- **Particulate matter** - fine particles have an adverse effect on human health, particularly among those with existing respiratory disorders. Particulate matter is associated with respiratory and cardiovascular problem. 29,000 deaths a year in the UK are attributable to fine particulate pollution.

Modern cars, if kept in good condition, produce only quite small quantities of the air quality pollutants, but the emissions from large numbers of cars add to a significant air quality problem.

Source of Information: *"Cars and Air Pollution", Vehicle Certification Agency, http://www.dft.gov.uk/vca/fcb/cars-and-air-pollution.asp*

In 2014, 23 per cent of UK domestic greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (117.9 $MtCO_2$) were from transport. (An increase of 15 per cent from 1990).

Source of Information: *Transport Statistics Great Britain 2016, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/576095/tsgb-2016-report-summaries.pdf and Department for Transport table TSGB0306, https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/tsgb03*

Despite total traffic being forecast to rise by between 19 - 55 per cent between 2010 and 2040, road traffic emissions are forecast to fall.

CO_2 is forecast to fall by between 3 per cent and 26 per cent from 2010 to 2040.

Source of Information: Road Traffic Forecasts, Department of Transport, 2015, https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/411471/road-traffic-forecasts-2015.pdf

The earliest Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT) estimate of the average car CO_2 for all cars in circulation was 169.3g/km in 2010. In 2015 the average car in use emitted 153.0g/km, compared with 121.4g/km for a new car. A new car is therefore more than 20 per cent more efficient than the average car in use.

Source of Information*: "NEW CAR CO2 REPORT", THE SOCIETY OF MOTOR MANUFACTURERS AND TRADERS LIMITED, 2017, https://www.smmt.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/DEF571-SMMT-Co2-report-2017.pdf*

Road vehicles are responsible respectively for 33%, 15% and 18% of the total NOx, PM10 and PM2.5 emissions nationally. Whilst between 1998 and 2011, overall NOx emissions from road transport reduced by 60%, PM10 by 39% and PM2.5 by 46%, the change in emissions does vary between the vehicle types. NOx emissions from petrol cars have reduced by some 90% over this period, whereas emissions from diesel cars have risen by 250%. This dramatic difference is a result of a rapid growth

in the number of diesel cars, and relatively higher NOx emissions of diesel vehicles compared to petrol vehicles.

***Source of Information**: "Air Quality and Road Transport Impacts and solutions", RAC Foundation, June 2014,*
http://www.racfoundation.org/assets/rac_foundation/content/downloadables/racf_ricardo_aea_air_quality_report_hitchcock_et_al_june_2014.pdf

Extracts of statistics of air pollutants in the UK are given below.

EMISSIONS OF AIR POLLUTANTS IN THE UK 2000 TO 2015

Year	Sulphur dioxide (Million tonnes)	Nitrogen oxides (Million tonnes)	Non-methane volatile organic compounds (Million tonnes)	Ammonia (excluding natural sources) (Thousand tonnes)	PM_{10} (Thousand tonnes)	$PM_{2.5}$ (Thousand tonnes)
2000	1.22	1.82	1.63	326	195	134
2001	1.14	1.79	1.55	320	191	132
2002	1.01	1.69	1.46	316	169	117
2003	0.99	1.66	1.34	309	172	117
2004	0.83	1.62	1.26	313	167	116
2005	0.71	1.61	1.17	307	166	113
2006	0.67	1.56	1.13	303	163	112
2007	0.59	1.49	1.09	294	159	109
2008	0.49	1.34	1.01	281	155	110
2009	0.40	1.16	0.92	281	145	105
2010	0.42	1.14	0.90	282	154	113
2011	0.39	1.06	0.88	284	142	102
2012	0.44	1.09	0.87	280	149	108
2013	0.38	1.03	0.84	277	150	109
2014	0.31	0.96	0.84	288	146	104
2015	0.24	0.92	0.84	293	145	105

Source: National Atmospheric Emissions Inventory

***Source of Information:** Emissions of Air Pollutants In The UK, 1970 To 2015; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, National Statistics,*
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/579200/Emissions_airpollutants_statisticalrelease_2016_final.pdf

SADDLEWORTH CAR POLLUTION EXAMPLE CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS

In 2015:

Average Annual Daily Flow of all vehicles = 8,891
Average Annual Daily Flow of Cars = 7,635
Source of Information: *https://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php?la=Oldham#77880*

In 2015:

Average car in use emitted 153.0 g/km of CO_2
New car emitted with 121.4 g/km of CO_2
Source of Information: *https://www.dft.gov.uk/traffic-counts/cp.php?la=Oldham#77880*

On the 2.05 miles (3.3 km) of the A62 associated with Count Point ID 77880 the estimated daily contribution of CO_2 to the atmosphere by the average car = Average car emission X distance = 153 X 3.3 = 504.9 g

Estimated annual contribution = 504.9 X 365 = 184,288 g = **184 Kg (rounded) = 406 lbs.**

Noise

Noise arising from a stream of traffic has two main components:

- ☐ Noise generated by the engine, exhaust and transmission systems of vehicles. It is the dominant source of noise when traffic is travelling at low speeds, or in a low gear. Engine noise from heavy vehicles is commonly the dominant source of low frequency noise. Engine and exhaust noise levels are closely related to engine speed, and transmission noise depends more on the relationship between road speed and engine speed than on vehicle speed.

- ☐ Noise generated by the interaction of tyres with the road surface and this is the dominant noise source when traffic is flowing freely at moderate to high speeds. Tyre noise contributes a considerable proportion of high frequency noise, especially in wet weather. Tyre noise levels depend on the tyre characteristics and the road surface roughness, but always increase with vehicle speed in this speed range.

Traffic vibration is a low frequency disturbance producing physical movement in buildings and their occupants.

***Source of Information**: "Noise and Vibration", Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, Noise and Vibration, The Highways Agency, November 2011.*

Cost of Building Roads

Even if land was readily available for building additional roads the cost in doubtless prohibitive. Figures based on estimates produced in 2006 are given below. They do not include cost of land purchase of subsequent maintenance.

Bypass – single carriageway £1.57 million per km (£2.53 million per mile)

***Source of Information**: Christopher Archer & Stephen Glaister "Investing in Roads: Pricing, Costs and New Capacity", Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Imperial College London November 2006*

Two lane 7.3 m (7.7 feet) wide road in rural location, cost range £1,050 to £1,300 per metre which equated to between £1.05 million and £1.3 million per km (£1.7 million to £2.1 million per mile)

***Source of Information**: "Indicative rates for civils and services infrastructure",* http://www.building.co.uk/Journals/Builder_Group/Building/2006_issue_17/attachments/Indicative%20rates%20for%20civils%20and%20services%20infrastructure.pdf

WALKING AND CYCLING IN SADDLEWORTH

By

Saddleworth Parish Councillor Rob Knotts BA MBA M Phil (Engineering)

Abstract

During the coronavirus pandemic commuters throughout the UK turned to travelling by bicycle to avoid crowded public transport. As lockdown eases local authorities are keen to exploit the opportunity of a mode of transport that is free of carbon emissions. Increased bicycle use would also benefit physical fitness and health and help reduce obesity. However, safety concerns exist with dangerous motor vehicle drivers, potholes, and at times unthinking cyclists.

Greater Manchester's Beelines initiative, issued in June 2018, offered cycling, and walking infrastructure proposals. These included 80 new or upgraded crossings in Oldham with proposals that would enable 84% of the population to use Beelines. Sadly, the proposals offer nothing to benefit Saddleworth.

Oldham Council's planning policy 5, entitled "Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices highlights the importance of ensuring that new development locations are accessible by a choice of travel modes, including public transport, walking, and cycling. The policy relates to all types of development.

Saddleworth's narrow, hilly, and winding roads were designed for horses and carts and clogs, certainly not for modern levels of traffic, nor for bicycles in the early days of cycling. Moreover, widening roads in Saddleworth and developing cycle paths are inhibited by the hilly geography and the constraints of existing building boundaries.

However, that does not mean that their provision should not be thoroughly examined; the need is evident.

Evidence offered shows a representative picture of considerable cycling activity in Saddleworth, albeit suggesting Saddleworth cyclists avoid routes through Oldham.

Comments made on social media and by email include many requests to improve opportunities for children to use bicycles to travel to school. In addition, the comments air concerns and needs about cycling safety and the need for 20 mph speed limits in certain villages. Emphasised is a vital requirement for the bridge over Church road to be replaced before schools reopen in September 2020, to allow St Chads and Saddleworth school children to use that route to walk to and from school. In addition, focus is needed on ensuring that cycling infrastructures are effectively included in all future new developments in Saddleworth.

A recent article in the Guardian states that ultimately, the biggest reason people do not cycle, walk or e-scoot is because most of the time, city infrastructure does not prioritise these modes of transport. The message is that all modes of transport of transport need to be considered in urban and rural areas in Greater Manchester, currently the Beeline network proposals ignore Saddleworth.

Unity Partnership's Transport Assessment for the new secondary school in Saddleworth, produced for Oldham Council in 2009 stated there are currently no proposed facilities specifically for cyclists at or near the site. However, in its summary of findings Unity

Partnership considered that bicycle facilities in the vicinity of the existing school could be better to encourage a greater number of pupils to consider cycling to school.

An obvious question is why was this consideration not included in Greater Manchester's Beeline proposals?

Oldham Council's planning committee's report for the proposed new Saddleworth School, published in February 2019, recommends adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage users to travel by sustainable modes which include bicycles, together with suitable cycle parking facilities. Details of the cycling infrastructure would be welcome.

One idea presented is to have banks of e-bikes positioned in each village, that could be hired using an App and left at the train station ready to be ridden back to the villages in the evening. Rush hour traffic would be significantly reduced.

Introduction

During the coronavirus pandemic commuters throughout the UK turned to cycling to avoid crowded public transport.

As lockdown eases and with efforts to get the economy back on its feet, local authorities are rushing to ensure that it is not just the wheels of industry that need to start turning again. New cycle paths are being created to encourage people to use their bicycles rather than cars. Cycling offers a unique opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and advance green policy goals. In addition, increased bicycle use would benefit physical fitness and mental health and help reduce obesity.

However, cycling is a potentially hazardous activity. Dangerous motor vehicle drivers, pot-holed congested roads, and in certain cases unthinking cyclists result in accidents and injuries in road traffic accidents. Simple mistakes such as changing direction without checking their blind spot while defects in road surfaces can easily cause riders to be thrown off their bikes, onto the road, or worse, under traffic.

Some of the most common locations for cycling accidents are:

- T- junctions.
- Filtering and overtaking.
- Roundabouts.
- Parked vehicles.
- Potholes.

In June 2018 Greater Manchester issued cycling and walking infrastructure proposals in a document entitled "Beelines". In Oldham, 80 new or upgraded crossings are proposed enabling 84% of the population to use Beelines. However, the proposals offer nothing to benefit Saddleworth.

Oldham Council's planning requirements includes Policy 5, entitled "Promoting Accessibility and Sustainable Transport Choices highlights the importance of ensuring that new development locations are accessible by a choice of travel modes, including public transport, walking, and cycling.

The policy relates to all types of development.

Saddleworth's narrow, hilly, and winding roads were designed for horses and carts and clogs, certainly not for modern levels of traffic or for bicycles of the time which were powered

by direct-drive from pedals to the wheel, gears were not a feature of the early days of cycling. Moreover, widening roads in Saddleworth and developing cycle paths are inhibited by the hilly geography and the constraints of existing building boundaries.

However, that does not mean that their provision should not be thoroughly examined. So, what is the scale of cycling in Saddleworth?

Scale of Saddleworth Cycling

During the period between 2000 and 2014/2017 Oldham Council monitored traffic flows on several roads in Saddleworth. The annual daily flow of all types of vehicles were measured, including bicycles; figures for bicycles and all vehicles different roads are summarised in figure 1.

		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
A62, Scouthead	Pedal Cycles	47	41	43	36	35	26	25	25	25	28	28	25	23	30	24	24	24	24
	All motor vehicles	9,051	9,101	9,270	9,464	9,475	8,110	8,337	8,263	8,006	7,926	7,829	7,919	7,788	8,739	8,913	8,891	9,071	9,125
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
A672, Saddleworth	Pedal Cycles	10	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	All motor vehicles	5,133	3,978	4,064	4,160	4,166	4,183	4,303	4,318	4,189	4,135	4,105	4,197	4,125	4,103	4,196	4,207	4,312	4,359
A6052, Saddleworth	Pedal Cycles	8	22	24	20	20	20	20	20	20	22	27	23	21	21	17			
	All motor vehicles	4500	4197	4280	4394	4402	4418	4533	4514	4381	4349	4617	4673	4596	4580	4669			

Figure 1 – Saddleworth cycling statistics

The figures only offer a snapshot of cycling activities in three areas and are not representative of Saddleworth as a whole. However, one important observation is the recorded decline in cycling counts accompanied by general increases in all motor vehicle figures. Could the decline in cycling figures arise from the increased all motor vehicle activity, prompted by associated road safety concerns?

Figure 2 gives screen prints of heatmaps taken from a piece of software called Strava which is a social media platform of cyclists and it gives an idea of how much cycling happens. The darker the blue colour, the more cycling journeys have taken place. Please note though that Strava is also a training tool and all journeys have been logged using either a phone app or an on-bike GPS device. Thus, the heatmaps do not necessarily account for 'ordinary' journeys by commuters, parents, and children. However, they offer a more representative picture of considerable cycling activity in Saddleworth.

Figure 2 - Strava Outputs indicating scale of Saddleworth cycling

Note the absence of dark blue trails leading into Oldham which suggests the cyclists concerned avoid routes through the town.

Saddleworth Cyclists Views and Comments

Views and comments about cycling in Saddleworth were recently sought on social media. All responses commented on the value of cycling in the community. Many children cycle to school, while within Saddleworth there is a very strong cycling community. Many expressed views about the future of cycling in the area. Views and comments received include the following:

- There is more potential for cycling in Saddleworth, by improving the bridgeway (old railway), Delph Donkey and canal towpaths and by making a couple of short, strategic extra bits to link them together (with lights-controlled crossing of the main road. I'd love to see the new school connected by cycle routes to each village (which could be done as outlined above), with strong incentives for pupils (and adults) to use it. Furthermore, this would of course connect Greenfield, Uppermill, Diggle, Delph and Dobcross; enabling bike travel within Saddleworth for all. It would be easy to take this further, to connect to Mossley. Oldham would be a much bigger ask.

- No new housing developments should go ahead unless they have off-road cycle routes connecting them to this core network. This should be included in the Neighbourhood Plan together with a determination to connect all other substantial areas of housing to that core route. A modest budget to make these routes less muddy and easier to use is needed.

- I commute from Saddleworth to Manchester. Near accident nearly every day due to close passing vehicles and vehicles cutting in front too close. The Saddleworth part is fine, but the Oldham section is appalling - there is no cycle friendly route through at all, so many resort to the long way through Ashton.

- Traffic in Saddleworth is very unfriendly for children cycling to school with a parent. If we want to reduce congestion, then working to improve access to schools across villages would help massively. When the High school moves, transport by bike needs

to be a real option. For children in Greenfield it will make the walk quite long, so the option to cycle safely would be very welcome.

- I regularly cycle locally and would love to cycle with my child to school (St Marys, Manchester Road). Unfortunately, the paths are too narrow with the morning footfall and I would not entertain taking a child on the roads. A local network of cycle lanes connecting bridleways etc would be a dream!

- More cycle friendly routes where kids (and adults) can cycle safely for transport would make the area more attractive to residents and visitors. It would also reduce the number of angry rants on social media about congestion caused by school drop off traffic. Many councillors in Salford and Trafford are cycling their own roads to see what it is like.

- There are some decent bridle paths between Uppermill and Greenfield and Delph, however they are not all weather and can get quite muddy. With a new surface, lighting, and a bit of extending they could serve as a half decent safe cycle route.

- Another option is widening the canal paths. Seems a bit daft that it is safer to get a boat through Saddleworth than a bike

- A lot of the side roads around Saddleworth are just too steep for most people to even contemplate cycling along. The only real options are main roads, bridle paths (the old railway lines) and canal tow paths.

- I regularly commute to Manchester by bike. I avoid cycling through Oldham when possible, the standard of driving is appalling there and prefer to go via Stalybridge and Ashton.

- Many cyclists and walkers use the A62 running by Delph on a daily basis.it However on the road near the Old Bell pub cars are travelling at high speeds making it dangerous for cyclists. The pavement is overgrown and impassable in places for walkers forcing them to use the road. There is definitely a need for some sort of provision here and it would be useful for residents of Delph, Dobcross and Diggle.

- I cycle every day to Manchester. I go via Ashton where I join the canal then the Fallowfield loop. Generally, cyclists need space. Either designated or by motorists giving it to them. Investment is the absolute key. More cycle ways, better junctions.

- I have holidays in the Netherlands. The roads there have been designed to encourage cyclists. The new school in Saddleworth needs to be accessed by bikes, for all children. That is where I would start a village to school spider extending across Saddleworth.

- I live in Uppermill and cycle regularly to work and back in Manchester. There are a quite a few of us who do this regularly, also using bicycle provision on the train. I also cycle to St Chad's school with my kids. We use the Pennine Bridleway, which is of course part of one of the longest horse/bike routes in the UK. (**as an aside, it is absolutely vital that the bridge over Church road is replaced** before schools reopen in September 2020 as so many St Chads and Saddleworth school kids use that route to walk to and from school).

- There is quite a lot of flat land in Saddleworth/Mosley area which makes cycling for shopping, leisure, and exercise entirely feasible, including the off-road routes. What

we need on the roads are marked cycle lanes to increase the confidence of new cyclists and increase awareness of cycling among vehicle drivers.

- The Government has recently given councils in London powers to ban driving near schools? The impact of air pollution on children's health may well see a time in the not too distant future when bicycles should be the only vehicles allowed near schools.

- Schools need to encourage promoting cycling to school n=but in a safe traffic environment.

- One prominent cyclist states that while the roads might seem incompatible with an increase in cycling, I think several things could be suggested.

  - Integrate the current cycling infrastructure with on-road lanes. For example, connect the Delph Donkey Line with the Diggle Jiggle, Bridleway, Saddleworth Cycling and Horse-Riding Trail.

  - Create a Saddleworth Cycling Zone. Like the congestion charge in London but without the charge. As you enter Saddleworth, clear and regular signage and road markings indicate that drivers are entering a cycling friendly area and caution must be observed.

  - Segregated bicycle lanes - these can be painted and have bollards - very much like we see in city pop up lanes. My thoughts are that roads that could accommodate this would be the likes of the A62, the A670, Delph Road, Uppermill High Street, Mossley Road - and more.

- A report carried out on behalf of Transport for London visited 14 cities where cycling as an integrated mode of transport is present and found that three principal types of cycle facility made up well-planned and designed cycle networks. These are summarised as:

  - Paths/tracks/lanes on busier streets which provide a degree of separation from motor vehicles that is appropriate to motor traffic flows/speeds and the demand for cycling.

  - Quiet streets/'bicycle streets' with 30kph/20mph or lower speed limits and often restrictions on motor vehicle access, particularly through movements.

  - Cycleways/'greenways' away from main highway (e.g. bicycle-only streets, paths in parks and along old railway lines and canals), but still well connected to the rest of the network at frequent intervals.

- Many comments have been received concerning cars travelling too fast through villages in Saddleworth. Request are made for speed limits to be reduced to 20 mph in certain areas.

Comments made above include many requests to improve opportunities for children to use bicycles to travel to school. In addition, the comments air concerns and needs about cycling safety. Emphasised is a vital requirement for the bridge over Church road to be replaced before schools reopen in September 2020, to allow St Chads and Saddleworth school children to use that route to walk to and from school. In addition, focus is needed on

ensuring that cycling infrastructures are effectively included in all future new developments in Saddleworth.

A final submission in this section comes from a press article which states *"Ultimately, the biggest reason people don't cycle, walk or e-scoot is because most of the time, city infrastructure doesn't prioritise these modes of transport. As governments are now being forced to rethink how they approach urban travel, and organisations like Transport for London deliver bold and transformative improvements, we do anticipate an influx of new riders over the next few months, as people search out alternative travel options."*

Source of Information: *Jillian Ambrose, "From dusted-off bikes to electric dreams: UK green economy booms on back of Covid-19", The Guardian, 6 July 2020.*

Surely the same message must apply to urban and rural areas in Greater Manchester? The message is that all modes of transport of transport need to be considered in Greater Manchester, currently the Beeline network proposals ignore Saddleworth.

Cycling to School

In March 2009 Unity Partnership produced a Transport Assessment for Oldham Council for the new secondary school in Saddleworth.

Paragraph 5.3.1, entitled "Existing conditions" of the assessment stated:

> "There are currently no proposed facilities specifically for cyclists at or near the site. Oldham Council's Cycle Network Map states that some surrounding streets are quiet / traffic calmed and therefore suitable for cycling. The cycle network map also identifies a potential traffic free route following the path of Huddersfield Narrow Canal."

Para 5.5 of the assessment contained the following summary:

> "The walking/ cycling accessibility and inclusive mobility for the existing Saddleworth School have been reviewed in this chapter. Current pedestrian facilities provided in the vicinity of the site are considered to be of a sufficient standard, but it is considered that cycle facilities in the vicinity of the existing school could be better to encourage a greater number of pupils to consider cycling to school. Facilities to aid inclusive facilities are considered good, with a number of crossing points along High Street having dropped kerbs and tactile paving."

The assessment also stated that Appendix E shows the area accessible within 2.4km and 5km cycling distances from the proposed site. This figure shows that the whole Uppermill area is within the average cycling trip distance of 2.4km for educational purposes. However, Annex E in the document is blank, it does not list the accessible areas.

While Unity Partnership considered that cycle facilities in the vicinity of the existing school could be improved an obvious question is why was this consideration not included in Greater Manchester's Beeline proposals?

In February 2019 page 105 of Oldham Council's planning committee's report for the proposed new Saddleworth School contained the following statement:

> "In order to maximise the benefits of the site's location in relation to active travel, it should be ensured that the pedestrian and cycling environment is designed to be as safe, convenient and attractive as possible, so as not to discourage people from

accessing the site on foot / by bicycle. This should be applied both throughout the site layout, also between the site and existing active travel networks and can be achieved through measures, such as the appropriate use of surfacing materials, landscaping and signage. It is also important to ensure that the development includes adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage users to travel by sustainable modes. The TA states that secure cycle parking and facilities will be provided. TfGM note that the TA does not state how many cycle spaces will be provided at the site. Condition: Should the Council be minded to approve this application it is suggested that suitable cycle parking designed in accordance with parking standards."

E-bike Hire

One keen cyclists suggested e-bike hire.

He lives in Diggle and his wife sometimes travels to Manchester by driving to Greenfield, parking her car, and hour. I have taking the train. The car journey is less than 3 miles with one person in one car, on the road at rush hour. It is suggested that many people make similar journeys car parking needs.

His wife is a keen recreational cyclist but the thought of riding her expensive bike to Greenfield and then locking it up or even worse trying to get it on a train puts her off.

E-bikes allow people to travel shorter distances rather than take the car.

Consider having banks of e-bikes in each village, that could be hired using an App and left at the train station ready to be ridden back to the villages in the evening. Rush hour traffic would be significantly reduced.

Conclusions

Cycling during the coronavirus pandemic enables commuters to avoid crowded public transport. As lockdown eases local authorities are keen to exploit the opportunity of a mode of transport that is free of carbon emissions.

Increased bicycle use would benefit physical fitness and mental health and help reduce obesity. However, safety concerns exist with dangerous motor vehicle drivers, potholes and at times unthinking cyclists.

Greater Manchester's Beelines initiative, issued in June 2018, offered cycling, and walking infrastructure proposals. Sadly, the proposals offer nothing to benefit Saddleworth.

Oldham Council's planning policy 5, highlights the importance of ensuring that new development locations are accessible by a choice of travel modes, including public transport, walking, and cycling.

Saddleworth's narrow, hilly, and winding roads are not suited to modern levels of traffic, nor for bicycles in the early days of cycling. Moreover, widening roads in Saddleworth and developing cycle paths are inhibited by the hilly geography and the constraints of existing building boundaries.

Cycle path provision in Saddleworth needs to be thoroughly examined.

There is considerable cycling activity in Saddleworth, albeit Saddleworth cyclists avoid routes through Oldham.

There are many requests to improve opportunities for children to use bicycles to travel to school. In addition, comments are aired concerning needs about cycling safety.

Many comments have been received concerning cars travelling too fast through villages in Saddleworth. Requests are made for speed limits to be reduced to 20 mph in certain areas.

Emphasised is a vital requirement for the bridge over Church road to be replaced before schools reopen in September 2020, to allow St Chads and Saddleworth school children to use that route to walk to and from school.

In addition, focus is needed on ensuring that cycling infrastructures are effectively included in all future new developments in Saddleworth.

The biggest reason people do not cycle, walk or e-scoot is because most of the time, city infrastructure does not prioritise these modes of transport. The message is that all modes of transport of transport need to be considered in urban and rural areas in Greater Manchester, currently the Beeline network proposals ignore Saddleworth.

In its findings Unity Partnership's Transport Assessment for the new secondary school in Saddleworth, produced for Oldham Council in 2009, considered that cycle facilities in the vicinity of the existing school could be better to encourage a greater number of pupils to consider cycling to school.

An obvious question is why was this consideration not included in Greater Manchester's Beeline proposals?

Council's planning committee's report for the proposed new Saddleworth School, published in February 2019, recommends adequate infrastructure and facilities to encourage users to travel by sustainable modes which include cycling, together with suitable cycle parking facilities. Details of the cycling infrastructure would be welcome.

Banks of e-bikes could be positioned in each village, that could be hired using an App and left at the train station ready to be ridden back to the villages in the evening. Rush hour traffic would be significantly reduced

Recommendations

- Greater Manchester's assertively readdresses Beeline proposals to include Saddleworth from the point of view of walking and cycling.

- Greater Manchester Transport and Oldham Council representatives meet with Saddleworth Parish Council and members of the Saddleworth cycling community in the very near future to discuss, address ways of providing a safe cycling infrastructure in and around Saddleworth and for all other modes of transport, including walking. Reducing traffic speed limits in some villages needs to be addressed in the meeting.

- Arrangements are urgently made to replace the bridge over Church road in Uppermill before schools reopen in September 2020 to allow St Chads and Saddleworth school children to use that route to walk to and from school.

- Oldham Council makes the Saddleworth community aware of the planned cycling infrastructure at the new school in Diggle.