

Cllr Grace Baynham,  
Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council,  
Town Hall,  
Edward Street,  
Stockport,  
SK1 3XE

31<sup>st</sup> March 2026

Dear Cllr Baynham,

The Get About Better sub-group of Marple Civic Society submitted a response to the consultation (see <https://www.marplecivicsociety.org.uk/get-about-better>) on the GMCA Transport Strategy 2050 (TS 2050). In general, we were supportive of the overall direction indicated in the document. Our only concern was that little in the detailed proposals in the delivery plan would improve life in Marple or its surrounding settlements. We therefore have decided to write to you as SMBC Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways and Transport Services, and also our representative on GMCA's Bee Network Committee, with some suggestions as to how the strategic direction set by the Consultation Draft could be realised for the benefit of Marple citizens.

With housing development expected within the area over the coming years, one of the key questions that members of the society often raise is in connection with increases in traffic. With the laudable aim within TS 2050 of seeing no overall increase in car journeys, and a focus on minimising car use for sub-2km journeys, the answer, in our view, has to be significant improvements in both public transport and the routes that can be used for walking, wheeling and cycling.

### **Buses**

TS 2050 aims to ensure 90% of GM residents are within a 5 minute walk of a regular 30 min service by 2030. We acknowledge that this will be much easier to achieve in town centres and the regional centre but working towards this in district centres such as Marple will be important. We have two specific proposals that would put more residents close to a bus stop with a 30 minute service:

1. The 394 service should be brought into the Bee Network and have a 30 minute service frequency. This has many potential benefits, including: encouraging residents to use the bus to access Stepping Hill Hospital (thereby reducing parking problems at Stepping Hill); enabling residents of High Lane to get to the new Marple Community Hub without having to use a car; and, allow more students at Marple Sixth Form

- College to use public transport.
2. Institute a “district bus service”, serving areas within a 2-3 mile radius of Marple district centre on a regular schedule, once again minimising the need for short car journeys to Marple centre for shopping or recreation

## **Trains**

Network Policy 2 of TS 2050 promises to review and adapt the transport network to respond to changing travel patterns. The situation in Marple that most urgently needs review is the service to Rose Hill station. A “clock-face” timed Monday-Saturday half-hourly service, at a 15 minute offset to a similar service through Marple station, would mean the large population area to the west of the district centre would have a truly usable rail service. It is important that such a service is maintained into the late evening enabling residents to attend events in the city centre and return without having to leave before the curtain call. Leisure travel is generating huge volumes of traffic on a Sunday, so an hourly Sunday service to Rose Hill (again, offset by 30 minutes from a similar service through Marple station) could help to persuade some of these travellers to use rail.

Network Policy 3 concerns integrated fares and ticketing. There seems no logic in excluding New Mills from the Bee Network pricing arrangements when Hadfield and Glossop are included. The two-way traffic between Marple and its near neighbour would be strengthened, potentially to both towns’ benefit. Including New Mills in this way may also help to reduce pressure on parking in Marple as anecdotal evidence suggests people may already be tempted to drive to Marple to then continue a journey by train at Bee Network prices.

## **Walking, wheeling and cycling**

Reducing the carbon impact of travel (Network Policy 12) and enhancing green and blue infrastructure (Network Policy 13) couple with Delivery Policy 3 and 4 about enabling walking, wheeling and cycling. The challenge here is to provide year-round usable connected routes. A few examples of what could be achieved in Marple are:

1. Rollins Lane – a proper year-round surface would connect Compstall, including proposed new development in this area, to Marple Station and the district centre via a traffic free route.
2. The Middlewood Way – again, a proper surface would connect High Lane, including proposed new developments in the area, to Rose Hill Station, the district centre and the Community Hub.
3. Marple has a multiplicity of footpaths and is a popular area for leisure walking. Yet, there is only a very limited budget for maintenance and progress on restoring key paths (e.g. FP62 Marple and also the route up Mortin Clough) is absolutely glacial.
4. Pavement parking is a significant blight within Marple, causing safety concerns for all but especially children and those wheeling. We would encourage the Council to take all powers available to it to achieve the aim outlined in delivery policy 11, para 11.33 to “tackle obstructive parking on footways”.

## Cars

Streets should be for all, as per Delivery Policy 2, and we acknowledge that a huge amount of work will need to be done to persuade the population at large that building a less car-reliant future is achievable. We all use private car transport to varying degrees and acknowledge its place and importance in the transport mix. We are doubtful however that continuing the A555 through to Bredbury is a wise choice. The ecological damage that building such a road through the Torkington area and along the Goyt Valley would be very significant. Far better to commit the same effort to gain a similar level of funding (millions- or billions?!) both to complete improvements to existing roads and to deliver a fully functioning Bee Network across the whole of the Borough.

We would welcome the chance as a group to discuss our thinking on the above topics with you and relevant officers. In the meantime, we look forward to seeing how progress is made across Stockport to deliver what seems to us a very promising strategy.

Yours sincerely,

Geoff Green on behalf of Get About Better  
A sub-group of Marple Civic Society.