# Topic Paper 3: Transport Summary

## Introduction

Planning policies should support and enable a range of quality transport options for residents.

## Context

Knowsley has a mix of transport networks that service a range of local needs. Located between Liverpool, Warrington and Manchester, the borough benefits from excellent east to west rail links as well as a key strategic highway corridor with the M62 and A580 that run east to west and the M57 and A5300 which run north to south and connect Knowsley to other areas of the Liverpool City Region.

In 2023 the Liverpool City Region brought the bus network back under public control, with an aim to implement the first phase of franchising in Autumn 2026 for St Helens and Wirral. The introduction of bus franchising by Merseytravel across the Liverpool City Region has seen improvements to accessibility, reliability and affordability within Knowsley by enabling greater local control over routes, frequencies and standards.

Bus franchising will also have a beneficial carbon impact, through the addition of 100 electric double decker buses into the bus fleet. Knowsley will benefit from the second phase of bus franchising, which is set to be delivered across the region by 2027, with key routes in the borough including the 217-route between Kirkby and Halewood, the 3-route extended to Whiston Hospital, improved provision to the 239-route to Broadgreen and the improved general provision to Knowsley Village and Knowsley Industrial Park.

Despite these transport links there are areas of the borough that are more isolated, with the north to south public transport infrastructure less extensive for example it can be difficult to travel between Kirkby and Halewood. This can limit access to employment, education, healthcare and other essential services, particularly for residents without access to a private vehicle, whilst embedding car dependency for those who do.

In the period 2011-2022 Knowsley experienced the highest growth in car ownership across the Liverpool City Region. Reliance on cars does not benefit modal change and Knowsley's net-zero carbon emissions by 2024. Almost half of resident commuting journeys are less than 10km in length, highlighting a considerable opportunity to increase active travel in the borough.

## Key policies, plans and strategies

The National Planning Policy Framework seeks to promote sustainable transport by establishing a vision-led approach to development. By acknowledging the importance of transport from the earliest stage of plan-making, there is more scope for ensuring development complements more sustainable forms of travel; whilst also

considering how transport infrastructure can be shaped to benefit all and promote inclusive, well-designed places. Whilst the NPPF supports making places more sustainably connected, there is also a push to drive development towards areas where there is pre-existing transport infrastructure, with development within reasonable walking distance (800 metres) given heavy preferential weighting.

National Planning Practice Guidance highlights the importance for local planning authorities of an assessment of the transport implications when preparing Local Plans. A robust evidence base should identify the opportunities for encouraging a shift to more sustainable transport usage, where reasonable to do so and highlight the infrastructure requirements for inclusion in infrastructure spending plans linked to the Community Infrastructure Levy, S106 planning obligations and other funding sources.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Spatial Development Strategy is being prepared, and it is likely to have an overarching vision for a fairer, stronger, cleaner Liverpool City Region where no-one is left behind. Transport is likely to be key to this vision, as the promotion of modal shift and sustainable development are paramount in the pursuit of the carbon net zero by 2040 target.

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Local Transport Plan sets out guidelines for transport up to 2040 across the city region and beyond the boundaries of the city region. This plan will allow the city region to speak with one voice, with an integrated plan that encompasses all forms of transport, with a goal of pro-transport choice that facilitates residents across the region to pick the transport mode that works best for them.

The Knowsley Council Plan 2025-2030 aims to support Knowsley residents to thrive by delivering effective, high-quality services and support that positively impact the lives of Knowsley residents; encouraging growth that benefits everyone – ensuring communities and town centres can flourish; delivering targeted support to encourage fairness and opportunity for those residents facing the biggest challenges. Two guiding principles for the Plan are understanding Knowsley's people and communities better and helping them find their own solutions; and inclusive growth to ensure everyone benefits, and no one is 'left behind'.

The Knowsley Transport Plan is a strategic document that explores opportunities to enhance transport and movement across the borough of Knowsley. It aims to shape the future of transport by promoting more active travel and sustainable modes of transport, while retaining and building upon some of the borough's strongest connections. This transport plan takes a holistic view of Knowsley, showing how transport can support development, regeneration, and community wellbeing.

The Knowsley Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was created to enable growth in active transport by providing long term plans throughout the Borough that aim to create better connected, greener, safer and healthier

communities. By promoting active transport in this fashion, the LCWIP is thought to be a crucial part in Knowsley's response to the climate emergency, by making active travel more attractive and accessible.

## Key issues to be addressed by the Local Plan

- Sustainable Accessibility – Parts of the borough experience relatively poor access to employment, services and public transport, particularly within northern and southern Knowsley. The spatial strategy should seek to direct development to locations that are accessible by a range of transport modes and support improved connectivity.
- Public Transport Connectivity – There is a need to improve connectivity between Knowsley's main settlements and key destinations within the wider Liverpool City Region. New development should be located and designed to support and strengthen the viability of public transport networks. ctive Travel Networks – Gaps in the borough's walking and cycling network can limit opportunities for sustainable travel. Development should contribute to the creation of safe, direct and attractive active travel routes and improve connections to existing networks.
- Reducing Reliance on Private Cars – The location and design of development should minimise the need to travel by private car and maximise opportunities to travel by walking, cycling and public transport.
- Low-Emission Transport Infrastructure – The Local Plan should support the provision of infrastructure required to facilitate the transition to lower-emission forms of transport, including electric vehicle charging and associated infrastructure where appropriate.
- Freight and Logistics Infrastructure – Knowsley plays an important role within the Liverpool City Region's freight and logistics network. The Local Plan should ensure that sufficient land and infrastructure are available to support sustainable freight movement and meet future logistics requirements.
- Transport and Development Integration – Future growth should be aligned with existing and planned transport infrastructure to ensure development is accessible, supports sustainable travel choices and does not place unacceptable pressure on the transport network.