



Levenshulme Bee Network Q & A's V1 March 2019 - June 2020

What is the Bee Network?

The Bee Network is a vision for Greater Manchester to become the very first city region in the UK to have a fully joined up cycling and walking network; the most comprehensive in Britain covering 1,800 miles. [Read all about it here.](#)

What is the Levenshulme Bee Network? How did it start?

The Levenshulme Bee Network is the overarching name of the community-led scheme.

Our local councillors from Levenshulme and Burnage (spearheaded by Councillor Dzirra Noor) held a public meeting with Martin Key from Transport For Greater Manchester (TfGM) at Arcadia Library in October 2018 looking at opportunities to engage with the Bee Network (then called Beelines) and develop the first iteration of a mapped network of routes using local knowledge. This was the original map prior to local people's feedback.

From that start it was agreed that a volunteer working group would meet regularly and that we would also work towards developing an active neighbourhood scheme to present to TfGM.

We held a number of well attended public meetings in November 2018, December 2018 and January 2019 (with over 100 people at those sessions) at Arcadia. These people helped develop initial ideas and revise the original mapping supplied by TfGM.

Using the skills we had around the table, we put together a bid to the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund which subsequently gained successful programme entry and kick started the movement of community-led proposals across the region.

The enthusiasm for change led to Levenshulme forming the first community group centred on how we could lead from the ground up on the Bee Network proposals and develop the first community-led approach to make improvements to walking and cycling and livability in our neighbourhood.

There are now lots of advocacy groups across Greater Manchester seeking to improve walking and cycling and we are proud to have provided the catalyst for inspiring a grass roots approach to developing bee network schemes around the region and sharing our learning with others.

We produced a handy A3 guide that highlights the type of things that we are looking to do. It breaks down into roughly four project areas with the fifth area of work being the need to talk to as many people in the neighbourhood as we can. You can see it here

We will also share our resources, strategies for engagement and data as and when they become available here

What are project aims of the Levenshulme Bee Network?

The process is completely community-led. A good example is the work done in the lead up to the bid proposal where the volunteer group developed a 'community street audit' which not only served to widen interest in the community and create new 'street advocates' but it also helped gather important data about the conditions and perceptions of our streets by local people.

As with everything, with more community involvement our projects and their principles can and will evolve and we hope to see a lot more people embrace the chance to have their say in creative ways.

At the November 2018 meeting we agreed as a group that we supported the following big vision:

“To create a distinctive, best practice approach that is recognisably Levenshulme, that embraces walking and cycling to encourage a healthy environment (more trees), a healthy high street (buy local), active travel, less pollution and safe places for us all to use and enjoy. Streets returned to people. Our home.”

In December 2018 and January 2019 we agreed the overall project aims:

- The creation of an active neighbourhood based around a ten minute walk at its heart
- Reduction of car use for shorter trips and a modal shift to more sustainable and active travel
- Safer journeys to and from schools
- An increase in active modes of transport like walking and cycling
- a reduction in the impacts of significant severance of the A6 and railway

Our project aims will continue to support the recommendations of the Made To Move report and will align with those robust recommendations, particularly that the design standard should provide the following:

Walking: A double buggy should be able to pass – walking routes must:

- Link across difficult junctions
- Connect to local schools, shops and amenities

- Be well signposted with walking times (not distance)
- Improve links to transport interchanges
- Improve public spaces – pavements, side road crossings and places to rest

Cycling: Should be safe for a competent 12 year old (Bikeability Level 2)

Cycling routes should be a mixture of the following:

- Wide segregated cycle lanes on main roads
- Local cycling routes through communities
- Green routes that encourage slow cycling through residential streets

Who is on the team? Who is doing what?

The Levenshulme Bee Network is a collaboration between local advocates, a specialist project delivery team and an approvals board to develop, design and deliver 'Our Active Neighbourhood'. We are working on a pioneering model where the community will guide the process and meaningfully input into the decision making process at all levels to create a community-led, flagship fully filtered neighbourhood in Manchester that reflects the people who live here.

Manchester City Council and Transport For Greater Manchester

Manchester City Council will project manage the technical design, procurement and delivery of the scheme and we are working with Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) and our project delivery partners (like Sustrans and Bespoke Transport Consulting) to ensure the process, engagement and the outcomes of the scheme support the 'Our Active Neighbourhood' vision and project aims.

Project Delivery Team

As part of our proposal, we have secured funding to have a local project coordinator who is based in the community embedded into the project and leading from the front to communicate what Levenshulme wants and making sure the project keeps up speed so change can happen in real time.

This local consultancy role, carried out by Pauline Johnston firstly in a voluntary capacity, was deemed integral to the delivery of the project, widely supported by the initial inception group as a 'good idea' and will ensure a community link can expand on hyper-local knowledge and expertise and provide feedback and accountability to the project development and implementation at large.

The project coordinator and active Levenshulme Bee Network advocates, together with Manchester City Council have commissioned a group of professional engagement, design and transport consultants who are now part of the project delivery team and have direct experience of delivering this type of scheme.

This really is a revolutionary way of working and we are extremely excited to document the learnings of this pioneering approach.

Find out more about the people on the project delivery team and what they'll be doing here.

Who makes the decisions?

As part of our collaborative approach, we are developing the governance model. The following groups of people are involved and each group are integral to the overall decision making process:

Approvals Board – These are a group of people who will sign off the business case and final plans for the scheme. It consists of representatives from the Highways Department, locally elected members at Manchester City Council including executive members and our councillors. Representatives from the project delivery team acting for and on behalf of the Levenshulme Bee Network will feed into this process.

Project Delivery Team – This is a professional support team who will assist the wider community to develop 'our active neighbourhood' projects in detail. This will be made up of the Levenshulme Bee Network project coordinator Pauline Johnston , Highway officers and specialist transport and engagement consultants. Read more about the people and roles here

Levenshulme Bee Network Advocates

Street Advocates – These are local participants (chiefly residents and businesses) who sign up to the vision and project aims within the Levenshulme Bee Network scheme and are happy to help spread the word, lend a hand to build awareness and support wider engagement in the neighbourhood. This group will be vital to ensure scrutiny at a community level and to guide and influence our projects.

Advocates will be invited to attend regular meetings for updates with the project delivery team where they will feed into projects, deliver feedback and provide critical observations on development, designs and delivery of the projects.

School Advocates – These are local participants who sign up to the vision and project aims of the Levenshulme Bee Network, as above with a specific emphasis on supporting activation in and around the school gates and providing vital feedback to and developing complementary measures (things like walking buses and park and stride initiatives) with the project delivery team.

Stakeholders – These are the people who live, work, play and travel in Levenshulme with an interest in ‘what’s going on?’ in the neighbourhood. The job of the Levenshulme Bee Network project delivery team is to hear as many voices as possible and ensure information and feedback is easy for stakeholders to access.

What is a filtered neighbourhood?

Filtered neighbourhoods describes an approach that creates low traffic, low speed neighbourhoods. On roads that aren’t the main roads, it creates barriers to cars whilst still allowing pedestrians and cyclists to benefit from direct access.

The aim is to remove traffic that is ‘rat-running’ through communities and to make short journeys attractive by other means rather than the car.

People will still be able to get to their front doors in the car but they will now have to go the long way around.

These filters can often be attractive too, with tree planting and space to sit or play or they might just be a series of bollards. Junctions have better crossings to get people across busy roads with ease.

Here’s a handy guide to filtered, low traffic neighbourhoods for more detailed reading

Why do we need a filtered neighbourhood?

In Greater Manchester 30% of trips under 1km are done by car. This is because we make travel by car the easiest method, with the most direct routes and parking a priority. We accept that people will take shortcuts in cars at speed through our streets. We want to change that.

The filtered neighbourhood approach in Waltham Forest has been found to have removed 44% of traffic from these residential streets. The number of journeys as a total reduced as people choose alternate routes and switched from car use to walking and cycling. The evidence found that people were walking 30 mins more a week on average and 10 mins more a week cycling.

Filtered neighbourhoods aren't the whole story but they are an important step to making the streets where we live better, safer and more enjoyable to use on foot, bike, buggy or other wheels for everyday journeys.

What about the A6?

We want to join the dots and we want it all. This is the start of our journey to create a fully filtered neighbourhood with great connectivity.

When we shaped our proposals with the group we identified that there were in fact two distinct funding avenues to access the £160 million allocated to the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund. These were:

Active Centres + Corridors

Strategic walking and cycling route connections between and across town and city centres; This applies to the A6 (and other commuting corridors)

and

Active Neighbourhoods

Improving neighbourhood walking and cycling access from residential areas to local jobs, schools, colleges, health facilities and public transport.

We agreed with the inception group that we would focus our attention on 'active neighbourhoods' and the benefits of multiple projects which applied to making healthier residential streets.

We recognise that work along the A6 will require solutions that are integrated along the whole corridor. For instance, there is no point getting everyone to the roundabout next to the Apollo unless there is a safe way to cross. TfGM are looking at the A6 corridor and neighbourhoods along it and working with Manchester and Stockport City Council to develop ideas. So in the interim our focus is on 'Our Active Neighbourhood'.

Even if a project along the A6 was implemented – many of our residential streets would still make walking and cycling difficult. No drop kerbs, crossings or lots of cars rat- running can create hostile streets even though they are 'quiet' in theory.

Think about most of your journeys; quite a lot of those to our bus stops, or Levenshulme train station, to school or wherever might involve crossing the A6 or arriving on the A6 but not necessarily walking or cycling along its whole length. (for the time being at least!)

For a lot of local journeys the A6 might not be involved at all, none of our schools are on the A6 but we do need to make it possible to get across it to connect those walking and cycling routes better.

As a neighbourhood we therefore can focus on easy/regular crossings and creating neighbourhoods that are low speed, and low traffic where people don't park on pavements. Low traffic, filtered neighbourhoods, when connected to segregated cycle lanes and leisure routes (in our case the excellent Fallowfield Loop) are the ultimate goal. We hope that by putting in the groundwork and delivering a flagship scheme, we will have the information to develop a strong case with our partners for the A6.

We have looked very closely at Waltham Forest where they have delivered a combination of segregated and filtered neighbourhoods and the evidence shows that it is the best way to achieve the ambitious goals. It isn't an either/or situation.

Through our project areas and delivering an area-wide filtered neighbourhood we can connect our journeys to carry out everyday activities but also connect to our neighbouring areas and mirror How much will it cost? Where's the money coming from?

The headline figure is that the 'Our Active Neighbourhood' project has £2.5 million earmarked from the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund, with a £100,000 contribution coming from Manchester City Council directly.

As a bit of background to our application process, when we wrote the proposal, we put indicative figures for the type of scheme and the project areas we wanted to cover.

When the application form was designed by TfGM, it was perceived that local authorities would submit schemes conceived and designed by local authorities, with the community consulted along the way.

Levenshulme Bee Network turned the norm on its head. The bid was fully prepared by residents of Levenshulme. (totally unprecedented) and proposed to Manchester City Council through a series of meetings with support from our local councillors and neighbourhood officers.

Manchester City Council's Highways department agreed to submit the bid and committed to our aspirations, supplying internal resources.

It was agreed with both TfGM and MCC that we would submit outline costs for budget purposes but we would have the space to develop our schemes and the final detail with members of our community through an extensive programme of consultations after the project was accepted at entry level.

This means that some of the details that formed part of the bid described the type of work that could happen as an agreed aspiration.

Because we have no pre-existing plans and have built in scope and resources for development of a 'gold standard' active neighbourhood design, this meant that a number of assumptions were made to ensure that we had an available budget.

We now need to make a robust business case to release appropriate funding for the scheme and we envision a bit of flex to ensure we have the best value, flagship scheme to showcase. routes that people walk and cycle to avoid heavy traffic and are naturally quieter and often a lot more pleasant journeys.

This is the start of our journey and by focussing on 'our active neighbourhood' project areas we hope it will stand Levenshulme in good stead for future walking and cycling projects to help join the dots.

When will it be built?

The short answer is as soon as we can with the caveat that 'we need to get it right' and we need to produce the 'gold standard' in development, design and delivery along with the best value scheme we can achieve. We want to be able to share what we learn so other neighbourhoods in Manchester can benefit from our learning.

We are very excited about the team that has been coordinated, with some of the best skills and experience in the country.

We will then need to speak to our neighbours all over the community to hear your views and ideas. The time to carry this out has been included within the original programme. We see this as being a three year programme up to 2022 from Programme entry, which was approved in early 2019, to the diggers finally finishing on site.

Some of our projects have already commenced, such as Open Streets/Play Streets and there will be efforts to move those along for second phase pilots by Spring 2020.

Engagement on project areas like secure bike parking for everyone, filtered neighbourhoods and school streets begins in Autumn 2019 with area-wide filtered neighbourhood trials and quick wins anticipated as early as Spring 2020.

Expect to see permanent changes on the ground in 2020/2021.

How did you choose the boundary?

At the start of the project the volunteer working group got the big maps out, looked at the first iteration of the beelines map and developed ideas in and around the area identified as Levenshulme.

The area identified falls within two ward boundaries – Levenshulme and Burnage – so we choose a prominent local landmark to establish a central point for our neighbourhood area and chose ‘The Bee With No Name’ on the area known as the Village Green on the corner of Stockport Road (A6) and Chapel Street.

From this landmark we looked at a 1 mile radius (or a ten minute walk) in all directions as a general catchment for the filtered neighbourhood.

This is a good starting point, but it is by no means set in stone. If there are issues or ideas around the suggested boundary they can be identified in the commonplace heat map.

How can I get involved?

We have a growing list of people in the community who are already active within our project areas. ‘Community street audits’ and ‘open street’ activators are two great examples of this.

We still need and want more people involved to support different elements of the scheme and be ‘critical friends’.

We are developing our ‘street advocate’ and ‘school advocate’ roles and we will be inviting a wide range of community stakeholders to provide insight and scrutiny on behalf of the wider community as part of the extended project group at future events and meetings.

Now is the time to get more of the community involved in all aspects of shaping the design and development of each of the project areas and build a better neighbourhood for all.

If you'd like to participate please email: hello@levenshulmebeenetwork.co.uk with the subject: **I'd Like To Bee Involved!**

How do I keep updated on events and news?

Our website will provide regular project updates via our blog, so keep an eye out. It is a living document and we will update and refresh as the scheme progresses.

We also have our consultation tool site commonplace which we will be using to deliver our project's active engagement. We will post on this website too.

We'll make sure to poster/flyer the high street when important engagement events are planned.

We have a mailing list that you can join here. We'll update you on projects and local events and opportunities to consult and engage regularly through this method.

We have an events and workshops page here which will be populated with all up and coming events relating to the Levenshulme Bee Network.

We keep relevant on social media too so feel free to follow the progress and conversation on Facebook or Twitter pages

Informal chats and idea sharing are encouraged at our Levenshulme Bee Network Facebook group as well.

How will you measure the success of the Levenshulme Bee Network?

Our bid proposal included development costs for meaningful engagement, robust data collection and an extensive monitoring and evaluation process.

Some of the measures you will see on the ground and be involved with are things like area-wide traffic counts, pedestrian and cycle counts, residential and high street air quality monitoring. All of this will help to give us a strong baseline data before we implement the proposed changes.

We are excited to be the first project in Greater Manchester to be using an innovative engagement tool called commonplace. This tool allows us to collate data about stakeholder issues and ideas, perceptions of the areas in which they live and work and issues relating to the neighbourhood.

We will carefully evaluate and monitor this data to support project development and design and measure things like people's opinion of the area.

We will undertake a collection of interviews with people that live and work in Levenshulme which will provide initial data on current conditions in the area. Further data collection, monitoring (of things like trials) and evaluation will take place throughout and afterwards to measure and assess the impact and hopeful success of the projects.

Can we see your community-led bid??

Sure thing. Head over to our useful documents section here. The bid document is called a **Programme entry pro-forma**.

Here you'll find our supplementary documents too.

A caveat on the pro-forma document is that this bid was written at a point in time (Jan 2019) when there was no precedent set for a community led approach and no one else had explored the 'active neighbourhoods' avenue so by its nature the document is quite experimental.

We needed enough information to determine the type of costs and type of interventions we would make but we wanted to be clear that our design methodology and community engagement approach was extensive and 'grass roots'.

This was enough for our scheme proposal to gain a really good scoring on the programme entry front and gain subsequent approval to the Mayor's Challenge Fund. Things have moved on

somewhat with the scheme and when we come to deliver our business case to TfGM, that will reflect the natural evolution of this pioneering approach, showcase development costs and detail the real time costs of our quick wins as well as the extensive filtered neighbourhood design and implementation.

You'll also see we're a season behind schedule but again, we're working with unknowns and people are being trained up left right and centre in various ways to service this new approach to creating more liveable, walking and cycling friendly neighbourhoods, so in the grand scheme...it's looking good!

This form shows ballpark figures basically because as you'll see on the bid document our tick boxes say "initial idea" and "no design accompanying". We wanted to ensure we utilised the knowledge of local people and get in the right expert support of people who have delivered similar projects elsewhere!

Our most fundamental principle was and still is 'NO PEN TO PAPER' on design until we get the right team onboard and as many voices involved as possible. Job done.