GREATER MANCHESTER
LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

SUBJECT: Business Engagement and the GM Congestion Deal

DATE: 12 November 2018

FROM: Customer Director, TfGM

1. Introduction and Background

1.1 As reported to the LEP Board in May, the Mayor’s Congestion Deal includes a range of initiatives to be brought forward for public bodies, business and individuals to tackle congestion together, recognising that demand on the highways network exceeds capacity and will continue to do so. Evidence suggests that there is a high level of car dependency across Greater Manchester. Almost two thirds (64%) travel to work by car or van (TfGM Travel Diary Survey, 2017).

1.2 This reflects a complex set of congestion issues facing the city region and that a combination of improved sustainable forms of transport, modal shift and behaviour change are essential if we are to address what is a very challenging situation.

1.3 Since the Congestion Deal was published, transport has continued to be high on the public and media agenda given the significant rail related issues that followed introduction of the May timetable which has led to people switching to using their cars. This has been further compounded by the Manchester & Salford Inner Relief Road (MSIRR) works undertaken by both City Councils which impact particularly on the west of the conurbation and also on a number of arterial routes. The regional centre has also continued to experience significant disruption during mid-week Champions League fixtures.

1.4 The Mayor announced a further five measures as part of the Congestion Deal in late October, including an ‘early bird’ tram ticket and additional Metrolink and bus services. During the next phase of the Deal, TfGM have been asked by the Mayor to work with businesses (and representative organisations such as the GM LEP and Chamber of Commerce) and individuals to develop a joint campaign with business to launch early in the new year to encourage those who can work flexibly to do so.
1.5 There is clear and often cited evidence that a temporary 10% reduction in traffic (the so-called 'half term effect') makes travel significantly easier and reduces congestion. Working towards a permanent reduction to half term levels by retiming or spreading the busy morning or evening peaks, and encouraging people to use public transport or walk and cycle where feasible, is therefore a priority. TfGM is keen to work closely with businesses, providing support on how to do so.

1.6 The benefits to business and individuals of flexible working are often cited – productivity, reducing stress, convenience, employee retention. It is these benefits and examples of best practice and support available that we are seeking to highlight and expand. This will form a key part of the work undertaken by the newly formed Sustainable Journeys Team at TfGM, which is now headed up by Anna Collins. The work will move quickly for a January launch, however initial views from the LEP are sought regarding tone, content, reach, messaging and engagement in order to develop the strategy, products and approach to be used in a joint campaign. We are also interested in understanding how ongoing input and support can be provided by the business community.

1.7 In addition to this work, there continues to be specific problems relating to the congestion that arises from mid-week Champions League fixtures. The next fixture is Tuesday 27 November when Manchester United host Young Boys. A working group has been convened with the club, GMP, TfGM and Highways Authorities to review travel arrangements and management. However, there is a need to consider messages to employers to encourage those in the regional centre and around Trafford Park to leave early or to work from home with specific reference to commuters exiting the city, whilst being cognisant of the need to avoid sending messages around the city being in some way ‘off limits’ or discouraging footfall at a particularly busy time of year. Views are sought on the appropriate engagement with businesses to ensure these messages are disseminated effectively.

2. **Proposals for Consideration**

2.1 Given the current situation there is an opportunity to develop a high profile, co-ordinated campaign to encourage flexible working across businesses in GM, to be launched in January 2019. This could explore the benefits of spreading the morning and evening peak.

2.2 This idea could be tested by trialling a working from home message. This would be targeted at local businesses in the regional centre and near to Trafford Park to help ease congestion ahead of the upcoming Manchester United Football Club Champions League fixture on Tuesday 27 November 2018.
2.3 This activity would be reviewed to understand its impact and inform future longer term behaviour change interventions.

3. **Next Steps**

3.1 TfGM is interested in the LEP Board’s views on how we can work together on this issue.

4. **Recommendations**

4.1 Members of the LEP Board are recommended to:

   - note the contents of this briefing; and

   - offer feedback on support for a high profile campaign to tackle congestion and instigate longer term joint working.

**Stephen Rhodes, Customer Director, TfGM**