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questions

pro·manchester
BRINGING BUSINESS TO PROFESSIONALS



Financial and Professional practitioners' questions

1. Availability of skilled labour will remain a pre-requisite for investment in Manchester - and public transport arteries critical. What modal shift is expected post congestion charge introduction - how and what value to our economy will this make?

One of the many problems caused by congestion is that it shrinks labour markets and makes cities less attractive to business and investment. Conversely, we believe a comprehensive, reliable and high quality public transport network makes a city more attractive to business because it enlarges the potential pool of qualified employees within a reasonable commute of their premises.

The TIF package is therefore designed to secure net increases in the labour market which means more potential employees willing to commute within and to Greater Manchester. We believe this will enhance and protect the competitiveness of our city region.

Our transport models forecast a 10% to 15% reduction in peak traffic (vehicle kilometres) to the Regional Centre as a result of the TIF package – this translates into 20%-30% fewer vehicles crossing the charging rings after the introduction of charging. TIF significantly increases public transport capacity. Our studies calculate the number of passengers per hour carried by all methods of public transport (during the peak) would rise by approximately 29,000 by 2012/13 crossing the inner ring and approximately 19,000 at the outer ring. This will increase by 2016/17 to around 31,000 crossing the inner ring and 22,000 crossing the outer ring.

The TIF package is central to the delivery of 210,000 new jobs across the city region. Please see the 'Why' document which comments on the economic benefits of TIF (http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/pdf/Why_200808.pdf).

2. The importance of an integrated public transport provision is critical to our existence and growth in our city centre location - but when can we look forward to a cleaner, safer, reliable and cheaper public transport provision - and will the TIF actually deliver this?

TIF comprises a new, ground-breaking partnership with bus operators that will create improved services, modernised vehicles and ensure that the great majority of local people are within easy reach of a guaranteed level of service. Investment in new Metrolink extensions and extra trams is proposed along with improvements to rail and bus stations and interchanges, and provision of longer trains. At least 80% of the new public transport solutions will be operational by summer 2013. Full details of the TIF package are in the 'What' document (at www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk).



3. Flexible working hours are not a new concept - is it expected that many more businesses will adopt such concepts to facilitate greater productivity - perhaps with workers driving in earlier and staying later to avoid congestion charging?

A core objective of the TIF package is to reduce congestion at peak times. Expanding flexible working would be welcome since it would spread travel-to-work over a longer time period. Large and small companies alike will benefit from our travel planning service. Companies will be helped to survey their staff to understand more about their journeys to work, and help them to provide information about travel options and, where appropriate, change travel behaviour for the mutual benefit of employers and staff.

4. Do you agree that the merits of congestion charging is not widely understood and that is why many contest its very premise - are all the facts regarding its introduction in the public domain - otherwise consultation becomes meaningless?

The overall TIF programme, including congestion charging, has been communicated through media and advertising campaigns. The public were provided details through a newsletter, consultation brochure and an information pack. The consultation brochure was posted to all 1.2 million households in Greater Manchester in July, and most homes also received the newsletter in June.

The public's views are being sought through deliberative events in each borough, a MORI survey and exhibitions across Greater Manchester which have been attended by over 5,000 people so far. To date, we have received over 70,000 responses email, telephone, and letter.

All the 130,000 businesses in Greater Manchester received a newsletter and the consultation brochure. Briefing meetings have been held with each Chamber of Commerce in the ten AGMA boroughs and specific events have been held with sectoral groups. Briefings and follow up meetings have been held with public bodies and non-business organisations covering local government, health, education, emergency services, regeneration groups and trade unions. Individual meetings have been held with politicians on request and they have received written responses to correspondence received. Question and answer sessions have been held with Members at most of the AGMA councils. We have identified and briefed groups representing the voluntary sector, disabled people, ethnic minorities, faith groups and other special interest groups.

5. The impact and cost of a congestion charge to some will be negligible - but to other of significant impact - particularly low paid employees - what suggestions are there to support those most exposed financially?

We recognise that this is a legitimate concern and we want to ensure that all people in Greater Manchester have better access to good jobs through the TIF package, thus expanding the labour market and in turn benefitting the wider economy.

It is proposed that the lowest paid workers who choose to drive and who would incur a charge because their workplace is located within the charging rings would be eligible for a charging discount of 20%. There is also a parallel proposal that we are consulting on for low income workers to choose to receive a 20% discount on public transport fares instead.

It also important to remember that a third of households in Greater Manchester currently do not have access to a car and are dependent on public transport, and they stand to benefit significantly from the TIF investment.

6. My main concern relates to the underlying concern regarding the perceived market impact (attractiveness) and the corporate costs burden - as it is widely accepted that congestion charging costs will filter through to salaries and therefore to operational bottom lines. Is this a misconception?

We believe the TIF package is essential to maintaining Greater Manchester's attractiveness as a place to do business. Protecting the continued economic growth of our city region is the central reason why we explored TIF and submitted a bid to Government.

We believe that congestion is a serious hidden cost to the economy and if the growing congestion problem is not tackled then investment, job creation and economic growth in Greater Manchester will all be threatened. In order to ensure that this congestion 'tipping point' does not occur in the early part of the next decade we need to take action now, and this is what the TIF package is intended to address.

Of course, how companies choose to remunerate their staff is up to them; but there is no evidence of this being the case elsewhere. The improved options for their workforces to use public transport means that people would have a wider range of options for the method they choose to travel to work, including reliable and comfortable public transport options. We will offer support to employers who want to help their staff plan their travel and encourage those who currently drive to work to use alternative methods of transport where possible.



7. The potential loss of 1 in 7 jobs is on the basis of doing nothing to our public transport infrastructure? What's the potential between a do nothing option and the TIF investment?

The TIF package is central to a long term strategy to deliver 210,000 new jobs across the city region, because as congestion increases then labour markets contract. We believe that if the growing congestion problem is not tackled then investment, job creation and economic growth in Greater Manchester will all be threatened. In order to ensure that this congestion 'tipping point' does not occur in the early part of the next decade we need to take action now, and this is what the TIF package is intended to address.

In the absence of TIF, we believe that 1 in 7 of the new jobs that Greater Manchester could create would be lost, because growing congestion and an inadequate public transport system will make the city region less competitive and less attractive to business.

8. How much are AGMA/Local Authorities paying towards the public transport infrastructure?

Under the TIF package, up to £3 billion of funding will be available for transport improvements in Greater Manchester. This comprises Government grants of £1.5 billion, £1.2 billion of local funding supported by future revenue from a weekday peak-time only congestion charge and £0.1 billion of local third party contributions. The DfT has also confirmed that it will fund extra railway rolling stock for the city region, supporting more than 7,000 extra passengers at peak times.

This is all in addition to £575 million already allocated for phase 3a of Metrolink.

9. Should Manchester not have a Transport Tsar - someone who actually takes responsibility and is not on secondment?

The role of the interim Chief Executive of the GMPTE is to lead the organisation through the TIF bid approval process, which David Leather has been doing for two years now. In the event that the bid progresses, it is the intention to recruit a permanent Chief Executive to lead a reformed and strengthened organisation to deliver TIF. And of course transport across Greater Manchester is overseen by the Clerk to GMPTA, plus a new Deputy Clerk has recently been appointed to replace Penny Boothman.



10. Is there an expectancy that any businesses would decant from Manchester if the congestion charge is introduced?

The reduction in congestion and the increased pool of labour available to businesses that TIF will deliver, both inside and outside the charging rings, means in our view that there is no reason to expect an exodus of businesses. Businesses move for different reasons all the time. Just being located inside the charging rings is unlikely of itself to constitute the reason to move a business.

Overall, we firmly believe that the TIF package will enhance the competitiveness of Greater Manchester as we will then have both a world class public transport network and a mechanism for ensuring that congestion is managed and business transport costs are reduced. We believe this will make the city region more attractive to business, not less so.

Obviously there are companies which support the overall TIF package and see the case for limited congestion charging to help pay for the investment; and there are others which oppose congestion charging.

At least 80% of the new public transport solutions would be operational before charging starts in summer 2013: these transport improvements should mean improved journeys for their workforces, and a wider pool of potential employees living within a 1 hour journey time.

11. Define 'bulk' - as in the 'congestion charge will not be introduced until the bulk of the transport investment has been completed'?

At least 80% of the new public transport solutions would be operational before charging starts in summer 2013. Only the Second City Centre Crossing and Trafford Park Metrolink extensions, some of the Outer Area Bus Package schemes, and the Chorlton Street and Parker Street interchanges will not be complete before the charge is introduced. All the proposed transport improvements in the package are scheduled to be completed by 2016.

12. I'm pleased there is going to be a referendum - but how is it going to work and what's the question?

The Leaders of the 10 local councils (the AGMA Executive) have agreed that a public poll (referendum) will take place on the TIF proposal on December 11th this year – this will be a postal ballot and this is the last date on which ballot papers will be received from voters.

AGMA Leaders will approve the referendum plans, including the question to be asked, over the next two months. However, the development of these plans and the question itself will be overseen independently by the Electoral Reform Society and Sir Neil McIntosh CBE, a former Electoral Commissioner and local authority Chief Executive who acted as Chief Returning Officer for the Scottish Parliamentary Referendum in 1997. Sir Neil will be the 'Returning Officer' for this Greater Manchester referendum.

The TIF referendum report can be found at:
www.agma.gov.uk/ccm/agma/AGMA_Agendas_and_Minutes/Executive/AGMAExecutivePapers20082009/July2008.en

13. How is our carbon footprint going to be reduced if we don't secure the TIF money?

The PTE is already committed to a strong environmental performance (for instance, hydropower provides electricity for Metrolink) and more details of our environmental policies and commitments can be found here:
http://www.gmppte.com/content.cfm?category_id=320780

However, the TIF package will allow us to build on this significantly.

The TIF package recognises that in order to be truly sustainable, economic growth must be delivered alongside improved environmental outcomes such as a lower transport carbon footprint. Independent environmental experts were asked to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of all the potential environmental impacts of TIF Package. Their conclusions were that the biggest benefits would come from reductions in greenhouse gas emissions (carbon dioxide, or CO₂), and reductions in local air pollutant emissions. Our research shows that the TIF package would reduce emissions of local air pollutants (oxides of nitrogen (NO_x) and particulate matter, generally known as PM₁₀) emitted by road traffic by up to 10% in areas where air quality is currently at its worst across Greater Manchester. Please see the 'Why' document at www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk for more details.



14. How many extra park and ride spaces will be created to help motorists transfer onto trains and metros - if this provision was free or if you promoted a special park + ride fare that would be enticing.

The TIF strategy aims to deliver 3,500 additional park and ride spaces – a doubling of park and ride provision on the rail/Metrolink networks. Passengers using the new car parks and most existing car parks and making onward journeys by train, tram or bus will not be charged for parking at the facilities.

15. The sale of 49% of Newcastle airport generated a sum close to £1 billion - can you accept that a precedence has been set for AGMA to follow with regards to MAG?

Manchester Airport is one of the most successful airports in the UK and a vital public asset for the city region and wider North West, although it is of course run by a private sector led Board. Indeed, the success of the Airport is one reason why the local economy is currently thriving.

Given the importance of the Airport and its critical future contribution to the growth strategy of the City Region, it is the case that future decisions about the Airport should be made solely on the basis of the Airport's contribution to the City Region and not on the disposal simply to secure other investment needs. Manchester Airport also makes a significant return for local authority stakeholders, which supports economic and social programmes in their individual areas.

16. What's original, modern or innovative regarding the future public transport infrastructure plans - are we ambitious enough?

The TIF investment package has been carefully designed to ensure that its different elements work together to provide maximum benefit and value for money. The planned investments have been selected to deliver effective integration between bus, train and tram networks, and to provide attractive public transport alternatives for car users. These investments will be complemented by integrating ticketing arrangements, making it easier and simpler to pay for travel on different types of public transport. TIF comprises a new, ground-breaking partnership with bus operators that will create improved services, modernised vehicles and ensure that the great majority of local people are within easy reach of a guaranteed level of service.



17. What guarantees are there that the public transport fares aren't going to spiral? (they are already very expensive and the service is diabolical).

Public transport in Greater Manchester is improving all the time and we believe TIF is essential to achieve a step change in the scope and quality of the network across the county. Public transport is delivered through a combination of public and private sector operators. Metrolink is publicly owned and operated by the private sector, bus and rail operators are privately owned.

Through the TIF proposals we expect to see an increase in the numbers of people using public transport, which we hope will increase revenues. Also, new Government legislation (the Local Transport Bill currently before Parliament) gives us more influence over the bus service.

18. I believe that the local authorities should sell a non-controlling minority stake in the Manchester Airport Group to inject the necessary investment into public transport - has that been considered?

As part of developing our proposals we looked carefully at a number of possible alternative funding methods, including the sale of Manchester Airport. None of these methods would provide the investment possible under TIF. Please see the answer to question 15 above for a more detailed explanation.

19. Does the TIF ensure that everyone has a genuine choice to travel by public transport?

The TIF investment package has been carefully designed to ensure that its different public transport solutions work together to provide maximum benefit and value for money. Specific promises are being made, for instance, on the accessibility of the new bus service we plan to offer under TIF.

The planned investments have also been selected to deliver effective integration between bus, train and tram networks, and to provide attractive public transport alternatives for car users. We believe the new integrated ticketing system and Oyster-style travel 'smartcard' will also be popular with the travelling public.



20. Bearing in mind that most people travel by bus - what is being done to regulate the disparate show of decrepit dirty multi-coloured buses that ply our thoroughfare? Will they be properly regulated, be cleaned up, reduce their PM10 emissions and start looking like a unified and integrated GM fleet?

Some 80% of public transport journeys are indeed taken by bus, and new Government legislation (the Local Transport Bill currently before Parliament) gives us more influence over the bus service.

TIF therefore includes a new partnership with bus operators that will create improved services and modern vehicles across a far more comprehensive network, plus the advent of an Oyster-style travel smartcard that will make changing between different bus services and between bus and other travel modes more easy across Greater Manchester. We also plan a number of new transport interchanges that will benefit bus passengers.

Full details of the bus proposals that TIF would deliver can be found here:
<http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/TransportTypes/bus/>

21. The railway service is deplorable as it currently stands and very infrequent. Will the Chester line gain a shorter frequency service or is the service to be reduced?

The benefits of providing increased rail capacity will not be confined to Greater Manchester. Through investment from the Department for Transport's High Level Output Specification (HLOS) and TIF there are proposals to add capacity to trains operating from Lancashire, West and South Yorkshire, Derbyshire, Cheshire and Merseyside. GMPTE has made representation to DfT for trains from North Wales via Chester to stop at Eccles so that passengers can interchange to Metrolink.



22. With a regular train service to Manchester Airport, why is there a proposal to build a dedicated Metrolink service to it - and if it's so vital how much is the Airport contributing to the development?

The Airport extension will serve a number of communities along the line. It will support the sustainable expansion of Manchester Airport by extending its catchment area for labour. The line will significantly reduce journey times between the areas south of the Mersey and the City Centre. It will improve access to jobs and services in Wythenshawe to the Airport, Regional Centre, Salford Quays and Trafford Park as well as improved access to Wythenshawe Hospital and local health centres. The line will promote sustainable development of large employment sites; and ensure the vitality of Wythenshawe Town Centre and Local Centres.

23. It's a great idea - but will all schools be serviced by dedicated yellow school buses?

By 2018, it is intended that over 300 Yellow School Buses (YSBs) will be deployed across Greater Manchester, building on the success of the current 36 vehicles. At the current rate of usage this will result in over 5 million home-to-school trips per annum. TIF will deliver 120 new YSB vehicles on routes that have been provisionally identified across Greater Manchester. This includes 70 completely new services and 50 services which replace existing home-to-school routes. It is intended that these services will be further enhanced by another 170 vehicles funded by a combination of the Government's Regional Funding Allocation (RFA) and local funds, bringing the total to 326.

24. What happens if the transport infrastructure proposed overruns or goes over budget - who carries the financial responsibility?

The financial responsibility lies with the AGMA councils. However, the business case includes significant contingencies against such risks (such as a £600 million capital contingency), including the risk of actual revenues not matching projections. Projected revenues have been calculated using a high degree of caution.

We are confident that the financial models are robust, and they have of course been closely scrutinised by the Department for Transport and HM Treasury over the past year, prior to provisional approval for the TIF bid being granted.



25. The congestion charging scheme states the level of charge proposed - what period of guarantee will there be that these charges will not start increasing as in the case of London when the c-charges went up from £5 to £8 in one jump?

There will be an independent regulator appointed to ensure future decisions on the detail of the congestion charging scheme (such as how charges rise in line with inflation) will be evidentially-based and subject to independent scrutiny. This is an important part of the governance arrangements for the TIF package.

26. Why can't Manchester attract a permanent full-time Chief Executive to head up transport operations?

The role of the interim Chief Executive of the GMPTE is to lead the organisation through the TIF bid approval process, which David Leather has been doing for two years now. In the event that the bid progresses, it is the intention to recruit a permanent Chief Executive to lead a reformed and strengthened organisation to deliver TIF. And of course transport across Greater Manchester is overseen by the Clerk to GMPTA, plus a new Deputy Clerk has recently been appointed to replace Penny Boothman.

27. You estimate that fewer than 20% of peak time drivers would pay the charges - would these drivers have the option to use public transport?

The TIF investment package has been carefully designed to ensure that its different public transport solutions work together to provide maximum benefit and value for money. Specific promises are being made, for instance, on the accessibility of the new bus service we plan to offer under TIF.

The planned investments have also been selected to deliver effective integration between bus, train and tram networks, and to provide attractive public transport alternatives for car users. We believe the new integrated ticketing system and Oyster-style travel 'smartcard' will also be popular with the travelling public.



28. What is the cost of implementing and running the congestion charge and what proportion of that income would therefore be the loan repayment?

The capital cost of the charging scheme is £318m. Our estimates for its annual operating costs are around £31m, in the context of revenues of £174m per annum. These figures are projected for 2015/16, the conclusion of the scheme's second full year of operation. Annual charging revenues (after operating costs) are therefore £143m which means that the upfront charging investment is effectively paid off within three years. For further information, please see the Funding and Finance Supporting paper at www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/FAQ/PressReleases/90percent.aspx

29. The consultation document states you could reduce by up to 10% pollutants in the air - why are you not currently using or proposing sustainable fuels - natural gas or electric buses etc?

GMPTe cannot provide bus services and the impending Local Government Act will not change this. However, the PTE does subsidise services that are not provided by operators on a commercial basis - about 15% of the total. Although the PTE has no control over the environmental standards that operators adopt for commercial services, the PTE does specify that buses used on subsidised services should be fitted with particulate traps; by influencing the makeup of operators' vehicle fleets, this stipulation has an indirect positive influence on commercial service emissions.

GMPTe intends to deliver a step change in the volume and quality of buses in advance of congestion charging through partnership arrangements with operators. Emission standards will be a feature of these partnership arrangements and will thus enable GMPTe to exert a more direct influence on the environmental impact of buses.



30. What provision does cycling have in the public transport plans - after all that's the most efficient and sustainable option next to walking.

A package of improvements for cyclists is proposed across Greater Manchester. The details of the cycling package are still being refined. The proposals will need to be evaluated further and local consultation will take place before the plans are finalised. The routes on which it is planned to introduce improved cycling facilities include:

- routes on priority public transport corridors;
- other main routes to the Regional Centre;
- other routes across the proposed charging rings; and
- routes to rail stations.

In addition there will be new secure cycle parking facilities.

31. Why doesn't Manchester have the equivalent of a Transport for London?

If the TIF bid progresses, then a reformed and strengthened PTE will go a long way towards the TfL model. The Greater Manchester authorities have worked actively with the Government as it has led a debate over recent years to consider how the major city regions outside London should be organised in future, culminating in the Sub-National Review of 2007 and legislation, which is anticipated shortly. Our work has highlighted the critical role that the coordination of local transport investment and service planning will play in maximizing the City Region's future economic potential. This is reflected in the 2008 Local Transport Bill, which allows for the review of local transport governance arrangements. AGMA intends to pursue at the earliest opportunity a future strategic decision-making mechanism that will best meet the purposes of the TIF strategy.

The arrangements being considered and developed by AGMA reflect in particular:

- the need to be able to deliver a very extensive local transport investment programme in an accountable and efficient manner;
- the importance of a greater local influence over the procurement and management of bus and rail services, alongside greater integration of strategic motorway management into the local transport system; and
- the effective management of the transport network so that it becomes more responsive to the changing demands being placed upon it, through enhanced strategic capacity and coordination between local authorities and other stakeholders.



32. If London has an oyster smartcard, will Manchester have a cockle smartcard - and will our public transport journeys cost less?

We will introduce an electronic Smartcard, similar to the Oyster card, so that passengers can more easily move from one type of public transport to another, without having to buy multiple tickets. We believe this will be popular with the travelling public. No name has yet been decided and we are open to positive and imaginative suggestions.

33. How much has been spent on preparing the TIF, the consultation and now the referendum - and who's paying the bill?

The TIF budget report can be found at www.agma.gov.uk/ccm/agma/AGMA_Agendas_and_Minutes/Executive/AGMAExecutivePapers20082009/July2008.en

34. Aside from city sponsored agencies and property developers what actual businesses are supportive of the congestion charge?

The exact degree of support or opposition for the TIF from the business community is debatable and one of the matters our public consultation and independent polling will help clarify. There are roughly 130,000 businesses in Greater Manchester. As may be expected, opinions differ within the business community. Some companies have signed up to groups opposed to, or in favour of, the TIF package.

35. Is there a plan B?

If after the referendum, and its decision-making meeting after that, AGMA decides not to proceed with the TIF package, Greater Manchester's situation will be the same as it is now – i.e. gradual change and investment rather than the step change in public transport provision envisaged by the TIF. The funding available will be limited to the annual local transport budget which is sufficient to undertake only a fraction of the changes planned through the TIF. If the TIF process fails, then the approximately 90% of the national TIF fund that has been provisionally allocated to Greater Manchester may instead be allocated elsewhere in Britain.



36. Will businesses be actively supported in developing green travel to work plans and in what form will this assistance come?

Yes, both large and small companies will be helped to survey their staff to understand more about their journeys to work, and help them to provide information about travel options. The priority focus will be on individual workplaces with 500 or more employees. This includes 76 distinct sites; a total of 23 major employment areas e.g. business parks/industrial estates; nine hospital sites; and around 12 small business travel networks, but working with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and the Federation of Small Business we hope to cover all business districts.

37. I like many believe that employers will inevitably pay the price of the congestion charge if introduction – it's either that or lose staff to other firms who will compensate - altogether not very attractive proposition to be located in the central business district.

How companies remunerate their staff is up to them; but there is no evidence of this being the case elsewhere. The improved options for their workforces to use better public transport means that people would have a wider range of options for the method they choose to travel to work, including reliable and comfortable public transport options. We will offer support to employers who want to help their staff plan their travel and encourage those who currently drive to work to use alternative methods of transport where possible.

We believe the TIF package is essential to maintaining Greater Manchester's attractiveness as a place to do business. Protecting the continued economic growth of our city region is the central reason why we explored TIF and submitted a bid to Government.

We believe that congestion is a serious hidden cost to the economy and if the growing congestion problem is not tackled then investment, job creation and economic growth in Greater Manchester will all be threatened. In order to ensure that this congestion 'tipping point' does not occur in the early part of the next decade we need to take action now, and this is what the TIF package is intended to address.

38. Public transport is critical and so are the investment proposals - but what alternative market options have been considered to raise the necessary investment - can you inform us to reassure businesses that all options have been explored?

As part of developing our proposals we naturally looked carefully at a range of possible alternative funding methods, and Government also required this. None of these methods would provide the investment possible under TIF.

The 'alternative funding sources' section of the 'Why' document in the TIF information pack provides extensive detail on the funding and financing options that were explored:

http://www.gmfuturetransport.co.uk/pdf/Why_200808.pdf

39. Who exactly is leading the TIF?

The TIF process has been led by the AGMA Executive on behalf of the ten Greater Manchester authorities – the AGMA Executive is composed of the ten elected Council Leaders from each of the AGMA boroughs. They are supported by GMPTA in its strategic role as deliverer of local public transport improvements. In support of the elected bodies, a substantial team of AGMA, GMPTA/E and external advisory staff has been assembled to ensure that the package contains the most effective strategy to meet Greater Manchester's future needs, is underpinned by a robust system of financial, risk and delivery management processes, and is communicated and consulted on in a thorough and balanced manner. All activities are supervised by the AGMA Transport Chief Executives Group to ensure policy fit with the wider aspirations of the City Region.

In addition, at key stages in the development of the TIF package, a panel of business representatives and academics provided independent scrutiny of the package against the key tests that were laid down by AGMA at the outset of the work.

40. We shouldn't be afraid of increased car ownership but rather its growing use - however, is congestion charging going to make Manchester more competitive?

Whilst there are many things that determine the attractiveness of a location to businesses, there are two critical areas where transport can make the difference:

- the size and depth of the labour markets a location can offer; and
- the costs and reliability of business transport in terms of moving goods, delivering services and employee travel during business hours.

Rising congestion impacts negatively on both of these key indicators. First, it reduces the number of employees a business can attract, as a result of the effect increasing journey times and reduced reliability will have on the number of people across the labour market willing to undertake increasingly lengthy and stressful commutes to Greater Manchester businesses. Secondly, by adding to businesses' costs of operating in, and accessing, markets.