

Researching Attitudes to Public Transport Improvements & Congestion Charging

GfK NOP Social Research carried out authoritative research to determine levels of support for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities' recent Transport Innovation Fund bid. The bid was for £3 billion of public transport improvements, which included proposals for congestion charging.

"GfK NOP provided a robust evidence base that greatly assisted Greater Manchester leaders in taking a view as to the scale of acceptability amongst the public and local employers of the TIF investment package, the outline charging scheme and the principle of a TIF Bid being made."

Sheila Stark (GMPTE)

The research challenge for Manchester

The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA) and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Authority (GMPTA) recently prepared a bid for £3 billion of local transport investment from the Department for Transport's 'Transport Innovation Fund' (TIF). Before they could proceed with the bid, AGMA / GMPTA



wanted reassurance that the transport improvement package they were proposing was acceptable to local people and employers. In order to determine this, GfK NOP was asked to carry out research across Greater Manchester.

We proposed using both quantitative and qualitative research to meet the challenge:

- Quantitative research – to ensure wide representation of the public and employers across the ten local authorities and to provide authoritative findings as to levels of acceptability.
- Deliberative events – to provide deeper insight into the motivations behind people's views as well as to determine how these views were affected after exposure to more detailed information about the bid.

Why GfK NOP?

GMPTA and the Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive (GMPTE) selected GfK NOP to carry out this project on the basis of our:

- reliability in conducting effective research to time and to cost
- joined-up approach to both aspects of the project
- strong transport experience, working for clients such as Transport for London and the Department for Transport
- proven expertise in conducting deliberative events for clients such as Cumbria County Council
- robust and inclusive approach to sampling

What we did

The aim of the quantitative stage was to provide a robust measure of public and employer attitudes to the TIF bid across Greater Manchester. 5,000 telephone interviews were carried out with the general public as well as 1,000 with local businesses, both samples being split equally across each of the ten Greater Manchester local authorities. The questionnaire, designed in close consultation with GMPTE and AGMA, was piloted in advance of the survey to ensure its running time and clarity.

Once the quantitative interviews were complete, we carried out a series of deliberative events at the Bridgewater Hall, involving 70 employers and 100 members of the public. The deliberative events involved breakout groups and made use of electronic voting to ensure participant anonymity during voting, as well as presentations and questions from the floor. This research process provided participants with an opportunity to express their views spontaneously and in their own words and enabled them to question the TIF bid team leaders. The events also enabled GfK NOP to determine how a greater awareness of the full details of the transport package being proposed impacted on people's views.

How our client benefited

On Friday 27 July, the Greater Manchester local authorities decided in favour of submitting the TIF bid to central government. Sir Howard Bernstein, Chief Executive of Manchester City Council, called it, "One of the most radical and innovative bids that has been made for public transport in this country."



Deliberative events at Bridgewater Hall

Crucially, GfK NOP's research:

- Provided robust and authoritative findings – both for Greater Manchester as a whole and for each of the ten local authorities
- Engaged a comprehensive and diverse range of participants from all interested parties
- Investigated attitudes to the proposed transport improvements, as well as congestion charging
- Showed that a majority of employers and the general public were in favour of the bid
- Demonstrated that opinions shifted in favour of the bid, when given greater awareness of the full package being proposed
- Was completed to time and to budget

Overview of organisation

GfK NOP Social Research is a leading primary research partner to public sector organisations in the UK providing both quantitative and qualitative research services to all major government departments as well as non-governmental organisations. We frequently work in partnership with a range of academic institutions and consultancies to supply outputs that incorporate specialist sector knowledge and recommendations. We combine first class research experience and public policy knowledge to deliver robust data that is used to inform policy development, spending decisions and communication strategies.

For further details, please contact:

Michael Thompson
Associate Director
GfK NOP Social Research
+44 (0) 20 7890 9866
michael.thompson@gfk.com