


## REPORT TO CABINET

22 January 2020

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	<b>Cllr Jackie Taylor Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport</b>
<b>Director:</b>	<b>Director of Regeneration and Growth - Amy Harhoff</b>
<b>Contribution towards Vision 2030:</b>	
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### DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

**That :**

Approve the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) subject to consultation and to the approval of detailed proposals by the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport.

#### 1 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 Approval of Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP).

#### 2 **IMPLICATIONS FOR VISION 2030**

2.1 The provision of a safe and convenient network of cycle routes will help address the health impacts of inactivity thus contributing to Vision 2030 Ambition 2.

- 2.2 All three tiers of the cycling network; National, Metropolitan and Local, contribute to the provision of a high-quality transport system linking homes and communities to jobs and facilities (Vision 2030 Ambitions 6, 7 and 8).

### **3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS**

- 3.1 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published in April 2017 with the aim of making cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The strategy seeks to double the 2013 number of journeys, or part journeys, made by cycle by 2025. It recognises that achieving this will require a sustained investment in cycling infrastructure by Central Government, Local Transport Authorities and third parties. The Government anticipates that Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) will be the principal vehicle for targeting this investment.
- 3.2 The West Midlands Combined Authority has developed an LCWIP that identifies and enables a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout the West Midlands up to 2028.
- 3.3 To complement the WMCA LCWIP Sandwell MBC commissioned work to develop a Sandwell LCWIP that will identify and enable a plan to develop local cycling and walking networks throughout the borough till 2030. The Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) will be published in January 2020 subsequently to cabinet approval. The SCWIP will replace the Sandwell Cycling Strategy which was published in 1999 and has been the guiding framework for local cycle infrastructure investment since then. Whilst the overall strategy of 'islands of safe cycling' linked by signed routes, and the network that supports it, remains relevant, the advent of LCWIPs has provided the ideal opportunity to update the strategy.
- 3.4 Consultants Mott MacDonald were appointed by Sandwell MBC to prepare Sandwell's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to support mode shift to active modes across the authority. The process undertaken conformed to the Department for Transport (DfT)'s defined six-stage LCWIP process. The geographical scope was the whole of the area within the authority's boundary. A policy and data led analysis was carried out to establish areas of highest cycle and walking demand. These areas were then reviewed by Sandwell's Transportation team to select those which aligned with Sandwell's policy objectives. These included: air quality improvement areas, regeneration corridors, proximity to secondary schools, proximity to transport hubs, current and planned 20mph zones and areas of high congestion. A map of the selected cycle routes and core walking zones can be found in Appendix A.

- 3.5 A full presentation of the Sandwell Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan went to Scrutiny on 10 October 2019 and was well received. Minutes of the meeting can be found in on CMIS.

## 4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The population of Sandwell is rising with ONS mid 2018 estimates showing that there are 327,328 people living in the district of all ages. SMBC has forecast continued population growth with around 30,300 additional people residing in the district from 2016 to 2030. Sandwell borough has a complex network of places within which people exercise their choice of location for residence, business and their destination for employment, shopping, education, health treatment, leisure and entertainment. Consequently, the borough has to support considerable trips on a daily basis.
- 4.2 The Sandwell local cycle network was originally identified as part of the Cycling in Sandwell strategy at the end of the 1990s. It has subsequently been incorporated into the Council's Local Plan through the Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (2012) and West Bromwich Area Action Plan (2012). The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan – Movement For growth includes a proposed Strategic Cycle Route network. The plan illustrates an indicative network linking locations rather than identifying actual routes. Many of the local links also form part of the intended Strategic Network and as such serve a dual purpose. Wherever possible routes are either segregated or follow quieter streets with low speed limits. However, there are occasions where space precludes segregation and no parallel route is available, when cycle lanes need to be provided on carriageway along principal roads or as shared pedestrian/cycle footways.
- 4.3 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, are a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, ideally over a 10-year period, and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.
- 4.4 The SCWIP will have a prioritised plan for improvements to the local network within Sandwell, which align with existing Black Country and West Midlands strategies for planning and transport. It will be refreshed in a three to five-year period, incorporating new and updated data sources to support cycling and walking interventions in Sandwell.

## **5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)**

- 5.1 The SCWIP was developed in partnership with stakeholders. This included local community groups such as walking and cycling groups.
- 5.2 The projects that deliver the SCWIP programme will be subject of individual consultations in line with exiting highway and transportation procedures and processes.

## **6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS.**

- 6.1 For each scheme within the SCWIP, the options considered and the reasons for the recommended option will be set out in the individual approval reports as they are submitted to the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport

## **7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The majority of funding for 'standalone' cycle infrastructure projects comes from Sandwell's allocation from the Integrated Transport Block (ITB). ITB is allocated annually by Central Government to Local Transport Authorities, such as the West Midlands Combined Authority. In the West Midlands the WMCA then re-allocates this funding to the districts on a 'per-capita' basis.
- 7.2 £125k of ITB is allocated to the 'Measures to Encourage Cycling' category in 2019/20. In addition, some of the projects to be funded from other categories such the 'Measures to Encourage Walking' and the various safety-related categories include a cycling element.
- 7.3 As well as ITB, cycle infrastructure is also funded through regional/sub-regional initiatives such as Managing Short Trips (MST), the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund and similar funding streams. These will be combined with ITB allocation to deliver the project within the SCWIP

## **8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 Under section 65 (1) of the Highways Act 1980, a highway authority may, in or by the side of a highway maintainable at the public expense by them which consists of or comprises a made-up carriageway, construct a cycle track as part of the highway; and they may light any cycle track constructed by them under this section.

- 8.2 To convert all or part of a footway to a shared pedestrian and cycle route, all or the appropriate part of the footway must be removed under section 66 (4) of the Highways Act 1980, and a cycle track 'constructed' under section 65 (1) of the act. No physical construction is necessary but there needs to be clear evidence that the local highway authority has exercised these powers. This can be provided by a resolution of the appropriate committee or cabinet member.
- 8.3 Actions to manage and improve air quality are required by EU legislation via the 2008 ambient air quality directive (2008/50/EC) which sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air pollutants that impact public health. This was transposed into UK legislation by the Air Quality Standards Regulation 2010 and came into force on 11th June 2010. There is the potential for the UK Government to be fined if EU limit values are continually exceeded. There is a risk to the Council as the reserve powers in the Localism Act 2011 have the potential to pass EU fines to local authorities and public bodies (where they have failed to take action when they could) unless air quality standards are met locally.
- 8.4 Measured air pollution levels in the Metropolitan Borough of Sandwell are amongst the highest in the West Midlands, with concentrations exceeding the annual Air Quality Objective for nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) at roadside monitoring sites. The whole borough was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005. Sandwell MBC has had an Air Quality Action Plan (2005) for a number of years which has a range of measures to improve air quality in the borough including “implementing a range of measures to promote alternative and sustainable travel” and “encouraging walking, cycling and take up of public transport”. Despite progress with the council’s Air Quality Action Plan, measured NO<sub>x</sub> concentrations in the borough are not declining as expected.

## **9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 9.1 As stated in the SCWIP Full Outline Business Case walking and cycling are among the cheapest modes of transport and so help build equality within the borough as it offers affordable options of travel to employment and higher education which in turn will encourage economic growth of the borough. The routes and zones identified are spread across the entire borough to benefit as many Sandwell communities as possible.

- 9.2 Where we have identified cycle interventions, the preferred (and costed) options are for segregated provision. Safety and not wanting to mix with traffic is the main barrier given for why people don't cycle. This is especially true for women who make up only 25% of those cycling (Sustrans). Women are also more likely to make 'escort' trips with children (National Travel Survey). Good quality cycle infrastructure is designed to be suitable for a child who has completed their level 2 Bikeability (previously known as Cycling Proficiency). Cycle facilities to schools and colleges provides greater freedom for children, and the ability for families to travel in an active way.
- 9.3 Cycle infrastructure and good walking environments also gives older people, and those with physical disabilities more transport options and greater independence. Cycles are available for almost every type of disability and can act as a mobility aid for those who find walking difficult. Evidence where high quality cycle infrastructure has been built has shown it is often shared with wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other assistive modes of transport.
- 9.4 When considering the recommended interventions for both cycling and walking, the user hierarchy, as set out in Manual for Streets (2007), has been followed. This considers the most vulnerable user's needs, pedestrians, first, followed by cyclists and then users in motorised forms of transport.
- 9.5 As individual schemes from the SCWIP are developed they will be subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their formulation and the results reported to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment to further ensure an inclusive approach, so all groups are considered

## **10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 10.1 The recommendations in this report do not result in the collection or retention of personal data.

## **11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT**

- 11.1 There are no Crime and Disorder issues arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Individual projects require Cabinet Member approval and will be subject of risk assessments as part of the approval process. Any resultant implications for crime and disorder will be included in the report.

## 12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

12.1 All 'on-road' cycle infrastructure and those 'off road' routes that are parts of the public rights of way network form part of the Borough's highway network and the cost of their maintenance is covered by the overall highways maintenance budget. The canal-based routes remain the responsibility of the Canals & Rivers Trust.

## 13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 Nationally Sandwell is the 13th most deprived local authority out of a total of 326, with unemployment rates at 7.3%, which is higher than the national average of 5.4%. In Sandwell 34% of households do not have access to a car. Limited travel choices and high costs of public transport can limit social mobility by restrict residents from accessing employment, education and services. Sandwell residents that have limited travel choices and sparse resources can be disadvantaged in their aspirations. This has implications for council budgets in terms of benefits, housing, health, social care, and council tax revenue.

13.2 In 2012 24.5% of Year 6 children and 25.4% of adults in Sandwell were classified as obese; with levels physical activity and life expectancy being worse than the England average. Obesity and lack of exercise costs the Black Country £37 million a year and data published in 2018 showed Sandwell was the sixth worst area for obese children in the country. The West Midlands on the Move 2017-30 Physical Activity Strategy identifies that nearly two million adults or 29% of the West Midlands population are doing less than 30 minutes of activity a week. Inactivity is holding back economic growth and the better life chances, raised aspirations and better quality of life and leads to:

- Poorer health
- Less productivity at work
- More isolated society
- Reduced educational attainment

13.3 In order to mitigate the health impacts of inactivity in the West Midlands, the Strategy aims to provide a working partnership with local authorities and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) "to create an extensive, safe and coherent network of well-designed off and on-road links connecting key destinations irrespective of administration boundaries to promote walking, cycling and running".

## **14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND**

14.1 There are no direct implications for Council managed property or land arising directly from this report. Cycle routes on the highway network form part of the highways asset and are managed as such.

## **15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS**

15.1 The provision of dedicated infrastructure for cyclists is an important element in making cycling a genuine mode choice, especially for short journeys. The investment in cycle infrastructure within Sandwell is targeted at delivering the routes across all three tiers; the National Cycle Network, the Metropolitan Cycle Network as identified in Movement for Growth, and a local Sandwell Network which will be identified in the Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

15.2 Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan schemes contained at Appendix A.

## **16 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

16.1 Scrutiny Minutes -Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment – 10 October 2019

## **17 APPENDICES:**

Appendix A: Map of SCWIP Improvement Routes and Core Walking Zones

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