

Report to Cabinet

26 July 2017

Subject:	Cycle Infrastructure Programme 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC16160)
Presenting Cabinet Member:	Regeneration and Economic Investment and Highways and Environment

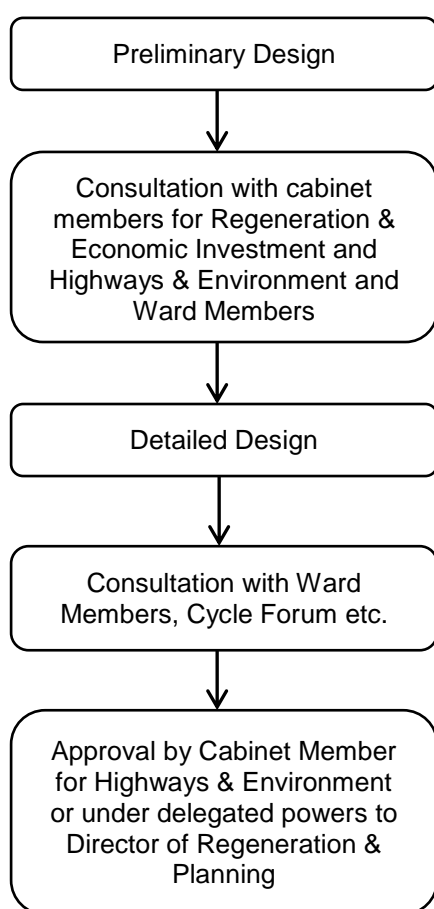
1. Summary Statement

- 1.1 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. This will be subject of a future report.
- 1.2 Within Sandwell, the Black Country and the wider West Midlands, a great deal of work has already taken place that supports and will continue to support the national strategy. The West Midlands Cycling Charter was adopted in September 2015 to outline key principles among partners to deliver a required step change in cycling across the West Midlands. A detailed Action Plan was outlined and is currently being delivered with the target of increasing levels of cycling to 5% of all trips by 2023. The Cycling Charter is based on the following four principles:
- a) Leadership and Profile
 - b) Cycling Network
 - c) Promoting and Encouraging Cycling
 - d) Funding.

From these core principles, three actions have been identified to support a step in change for cycling including development of a West Midlands wide cycle hire scheme, development of a West Midlands cycle brand and building the Strategic Cycle Network.

- 1.3 The Strategic Cycle Network is included in the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan – Movement for Growth. This was adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in July 2016. Work to deliver this, as well as those related to local networks, will be implemented under the 'Cycle Revolution' banner which has been adopted as the common branding for all cycle infrastructure and promotional activity throughout the West Midlands. The WMCA has also adopted a Physical Activity Strategy. Increasing the number of journeys carried out by bicycle is a major aim of this strategy.
- 1.4 Sandwell's own Cycling Strategy was adopted over a decade ago. Whilst the overall strategy of 'islands of safe cycling' linked by signed routes, and the network that supports it, remains relevant, it is intended to refresh the strategy during 2018 to reflect the national and West Midlands strategies adopted in the intervening years.
- 1.5 The cycle route network consists of three tiers; the National Cycle Network (NCN), the Metropolitan Cycle Network as identified in Movement for Growth, and a local Sandwell Network identified in the Sandwell Cycling Strategy. The network within Sandwell is shown on the plan at Appendix A. The network is included in the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS), the Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (SAD) and the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP).
- 1.6 Investment in cycle infrastructure is targeted at delivering this network. During 2016/17 towpath upgrades were carried out on the Birmingham Canal between the borough boundary and Galton Bridge and on the Tame Valley canal between Chatsworth Avenue and Hill Farm Bridge, a further section of the A4123 Cycle Route was completed in the vicinity of Ormiston Academy and the River Tame pathway between Great Bridge town centre and Dudley Port railway station was upgraded as a shared pedestrian/cyclist route. Work also began on linking the Pedestrian/Cycle footbridge on the A41 at West Bromwich with Hateley Heath and three pedestrian crossings on the A41 between West Bromwich and Great Bridge were upgraded to Toucan standard to assist cyclists. The plan at Appendix A shows the locations of these projects and illustrates how they contribute to the delivery of the overall planned network.

- 1.7 The proposed programme of projects for 2017/18 includes the completion of the works on All Saints Way, a link between Blackheath town centre and Rowley Regis railway station via Avenue Road, and link between Bromford Road and Dudley Road in Oldbury which is a continuation of the West Bromwich to Oldbury route. These projects are funded from the Integrated Transport Block allocated to the Council by the WMCA. In addition to these, the WMCA Managing Short Trips programme will fund works on the Birmingham Canal between Galton Bridge, Sandwell & Dudley Railway Station and Albion Road. Projects within this programme, and those in future years, will follow the following approval and development process;



Further detail on the 2017/18 projects, identifying funding sources, wards affected and intended consultees, is provided at Appendix B.

- 1.8 Where cycle facilities are included in wider projects these will be consulted on as part of the approval process for those schemes but will include the same consultees as for the general cycle infrastructure programme. In future years this will include the proposed major scheme at Birchley Island.

1.9 The provisional programme of projects for 2018/19 includes ITB funded projects to link George Salter Academy and Black Lake Metro Stop including new toucan crossings on Dudley Street and the A41, and cycle facilities at Queens Head roundabout in Smethwick. Further canal towpath upgrades between Sandwell & Dudley station, Dudley Port station and the borough boundary at Coseley Tunnel and a link between the Birmingham Canal cycle route and the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital will be funded from the Managing Short trips programme. Preliminary details for these schemes are also provided at Appendix B.

1.10 Cabinet is recommended to approve the 2017/18 programme of infrastructure schemes contained at Appendix B subject to consultation with those groups/individuals identified and to approval of the detailed design by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

Further details are attached for your information

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the progress made on delivering cycle infrastructure to support the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan-Movement for Growth during 2016/17 be noted.
- 2.2 That the programme of cycle infrastructure works for 2017/18 be approved subject to consultation with those individuals and bodies identified in Appendix B and to the approval of detailed proposals by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

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3. Strategic Resource Implications

- 3.1 The majority of funding for 'stand alone' 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.
- 3.2 £100k of ITB is allocated to the 'Measures to Encourage Cycling' category in 2017/18. In 2016/17 £480k of funding for cycling was allocated from the Public Health budget. All of this funding was utilised which as a consequence resulted in the ITB cycling allocation for that year being carried forward to 2017/18 giving a total Measures to Encourage Cycling budget for the current year of £200k.
- 3.3 In addition some of the projects funded from other categories such the 'Measures to Encourage Walking' and the various safety-related categories include a cycling element.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 Major schemes such as that proposed for Birchley Island also include facilities for cyclists. However as these are an integral part of the project and not separately funded, they are not included in this report.
- 3.6 The table contained at Appendix B identifies from which source(s) each project is funded.

4. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 4.1 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.

- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 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 (NO₂) 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_x concentrations in the borough are not declining as expected.

5. **Implications for the Council’s Scorecard Priorities**

- 5.1 The provision of cycle facilities contributes to the Councils “active and well people” priority by creating a network linking residential areas to main retail centres, public facilities and leisure/recreational facilities.
- 5.2 The proposal also contributes to the council Scorecard ‘Great People – Changing NHS, Improving Health’ and ‘Great Prospects – Activities for all’.

5.3 The provision of cycling facilities actively supports the 2030 Vision ambitions of;

2. Sandwell will be a place where our people are healthier for longer and the vulnerable are cared for.
6. Our residents will have excellent public transport that connects them to jobs in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, the airport and the wider West Midlands.
7. Sandwell will have significant numbers of new homes built close to key transport routes.
8. Our towns will be successful centres of the community and places where people choose to bring up their families.

6. Background Details

6.1 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.

6.2 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. 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

6.3 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”.

- 6.4 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. The routes wholly or partially within Sandwell are;
- Walsall to West Bromwich
 - Walsall to Birmingham via Great Barr
 - West Bromwich to Halesowen via Oldbury
 - Wednesbury to Dudley
 - Wolverhampton to Birmingham via West Bromwich
 - Dudley to Birmingham via Smethwick
 - Halesowen to Birmingham via Warley
- 6.5 It is intended that the canal network will play a significant role in providing safe, off-road links as part of the Strategic Cycle Network and this is reflected in the significant investment by the WMCA through its Managing Short Trips programme, particularly on the Birmingham and Tame Valley canals which link large areas of Sandwell with Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres (see Appendix A).
- 6.6 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). 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.
- 6.7 The Measures to Encourage Cycling budget and other cycle-specific budgets are also used to fund the provision of cycle parking at public facilities, shopping centres, public transport nodes etc. The locations of existing facilities are shown on the plan at Appendix A.
- 6.8 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. Recognising that preparing LCWIPs may take time and resources not readily available to all local authorities, the Department for Transport (DfT) are offering the opportunity for Sandwell Council, as part of the West Midlands Combined Authority to apply for a comprehensive programme of up to 80 days of technical cycling and walking support to produce a LCWIP or incorporate it into existing strategies and policies.

Source Documents

Report to Cabinet; Local Transport Settlement 2017/18 – 22:03:17
West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth (June 2016)
Highways Act 1980
Cycling in Sandwell: The Strategy (1999)
Black Country Core Strategy (2011)
Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (2012)
West Bromwich Area Action Plan (2012)
Public Health England – Sandwell Health Profile (2015)
Sandwell Trends
Department for Transport - National Travel Survey: England 2015
European Commission: Science for Environment Policy - Cycling
infrastructure: financial returns can be over 20 times the initial investment