

Agenda Item 5 – Cycle Infrastructure Programme 2017/18 and 2018/19 (Key Decision Ref. No. SMBC16160)

Scrutiny Chair	Question	Cabinet Member	Director	Response
Cllr Hickey	Point 1.5 - Proportionally, how much of the cycle route network in Sandwell belongs to the local Sandwell Network comparative to the National Cycle Network and the Metropolitan Cycle Network?	Regeneration and Economic Investment Highways and Environment	Jan Britton Chief Executive	Sandwell Local Cycle Network: 38km Metropolitan Cycle Network: 57.73km National Cycle Network: 20km Off road routes through parks & open space: 18.2km Canal Towpath: 33km
Cllr P Hughes	I have a number of comments/observations to make about these proposals as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are more ‘proposed’ networks than ‘existing’ in the North of the Borough than there is in the South. • There is distinct lack of proposed projects over the next couple of years benefiting the Wednesbury area. With a relatively under-developed network already, the Projects Programme does not appear to be equitable. 			<p>The report only covers projects that are funded from sources specifically earmarked cycling infrastructure.</p> <p>The development of cycling infrastructure has generally followed a network-wide approach. Much cycle infrastructure has been implemented as part of wider projects such as the New square development in West Bromwich. Therefore to a degree, the development of the network has by necessity followed wider regeneration priorities. IT Block funding is allocated by the WMCA (formerly the ITA) is required to be spent in support of the Local Transport Plan/Strategic Transport Plan objectives.</p> <p>Recent investment within the wider Wednesbury area includes:</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5km of towpath from Sandwell and Birmingham borough boundary along Tame Valley Canal & Rushall Canal to Hill Farm Bridge Yew Tree was resurfaced in 2016/17. Further improvements are in the pipeline to continue the route to Friar Park (1.75km). • Recently implemented traffic calming measures in Corporation Street, Wednesbury aim to improve road safety for both pedestrians and cyclists. <p>Further works , which sit outside the dedicated cycle funding programme include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associated works as part of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension aim to create stops with clear visual walking and cycling connections to nearby businesses, the wider street network and future employment and leisure uses; in particular near Hill Top, Great Bridge, Horseley Rd and Dudley Port as recommended in the ‘Proposed Tramstop Assessment’ by consultants SYSTRA, December 2016. • Proposal to aid regeneration in Wednesbury Town Centre, which will include a cycle link from Wednesbury Parkway to Wednesbury Town Centre via Great Western Street. There are also proposals to improve crossing facilities for both pedestrians and
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				cyclists over High Bullen north of the town centre and Dudley Street to improve links to the leisure centre.
Cllr P Hughes (cont.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seems a distinct lack of development of the 'proposed' Canal Cycle Network in the wider Wednesbury area – this is quite an omission bearing in mind the links that could be made to Yew Tree & onwards to the Sandwell Valley area, using the Moxley/ Wednesbury Canal & Tame Valley Canal connections. • Should there not at least be an ambition to join the Borough's Leisure Centres and Green spaces by cycle routes, in order to encourage access to health-related facilities? • Could Scrutiny add value by carrying out a more thorough investigation into these proposals to ensure equity, connectivity, and value for money 			<p>Further afield;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to Sandwell Valley for cyclists and pedestrians is to be improved as part of a highway improvement scheme by implementing a combined toucan and equestrian crossing on Forge Lane, reducing the level of casualties and overall accident levels on this road. • Sandwell's Cycling Strategy was put together by 'Cycling in Sandwell' in 1999 which was made up of over 190 residents and some 19 local organisations who wanted to play their part with Sandwell's Environment Forum, contributing to the quality of our lives through Local Agenda 21. The strategy was subsequently adopted in the Unitary Development Plan and Black Country Core Strategy. The strategy has a proposed cycle network that connect local communities with local centres, amenities and services, which include local libraries and leisure centres all of which have cycle parking facilities. The strategy is due to be reviewed following the Black Country Core Strategy and Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan reviews. The input of the scrutiny panel to the process is welcomed.