

**Minutes of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment
Scrutiny Board**

**27 September, 2018 at 6.00pm
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: Councillor Rollins (Chair);
Councillors Ashman and Singh (Vice-Chairs);
Councillors Ahmed, Ali, Allcock, E M Giles and
Preece.

In attendance: Andy Miller, Strategic Planning & Transportation
Manager

13/18 Declaration of Interests

Councillor Allcock declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 3, Cycle Infrastructure Programme as a member of the West Midlands Combined Authority WMCA - Transport Delivery Committee.

14/18 Cycle Infrastructure Programme 2018/19 and 2019/20

The Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager provided the annual report to Cabinet relating to cycling infrastructure works 2018-19 and the provisional programme for 2019-20. The report had been referred to Scrutiny from Cabinet 19th September 2018.

The Board was advised that the information in the report gave insight about the Sandwell strategy and where it sat within the Wider West Midlands Cycle Plan.

The Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager outlined the three-tier structure of cycling in the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) area. He advised that the West Midlands Combined Authority WMCA was in the process of developing and delivering a new cycle and walking implementation plan at West Midlands level.

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The Board was advised that much of what was contained in the Sandwell Strategy was done at the behest of the West Midlands Combined Authority WMCA and that the cycle strategy at a local level had been delayed to commission consultants to carry out a piece of work. The work had not yet commenced, but was expected that it would be available for consultation on the draft in Spring 2019. The Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager advised that consultant report would be presented to scrutiny to comment on before Cabinet received the report.

The Board was advised that the Council was responsible for integrated cycle schemes of up to £1,000 but that the larger schemes such as canal tow path upgrades were not Council schemes and were funded by the West Midlands Combined Authority WMCA or Local Enterprise Partnership LEP. He advised that in the future there would be more schemes at a local level but there was a need to identify projects in Sandwell that fell within the WMCA strategy and where funding was available.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and issues highlighted:

- During the financial year 2018-19 the Chair observed that there looked to be little or no forward movement of the cycle infrastructure programme; the Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager advised that this year the programme report was originally due to go to Cabinet in April, however there had been a number of unusual circumstances in the run up to this report being circulated which had caused delays.
- Next financial year the report would be scheduled for a February Cabinet meeting to make sure it was ready to roll.
- The Cycle Infrastructure Strategy would in future be a ten-year plan with annual updates underpinned by the table of schemes and more about the local cycle network. At the moment, there was a mix of both which was being split across the network.
- The Board was advised that most of the canal route from Birmingham Centre to Sandwell Valley was complete with the exception of work to complete the path by Chances Glasswork. The delays to the towpath work was due to an unsafe building and the need to carry out work by hand rather than use heavy

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machinery. It was however expected that the work would be complete by the end of 2018.

- The Board was advised that the surface material used for the canal paths was of an all-weather surface compound. There were some conservation areas where it was recommended that a different material be used to ensure it was in keeping with the conservation guidelines.
- Work on the section of the canal from West Bromwich to Black Patch was reported to be progressing well. The Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager confirmed that the Council did not have responsibility to maintain the canal paths and that they were the responsibility of the Canal and River Trust.
- The Chair highlighted the need for future Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) to come before the Scrutiny Board for pre-decision.

Members thanked the Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager for the report and responses to questions.

Resolved:

- (1) That the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board endorsed the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment Cabinet:
 1. To note the progress made on delivering cycle infrastructure to support the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan-Movement for Growth during 2017/18.
 2. To approve the programme of cycle infrastructure works for 2018/19 subject to consultation and to the approval of detailed proposals by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.
- (2) That an update report and photographs highlighting the progress of the West Bromwich to Black Patch section of the canal path re-surfacing and cycle

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scheme be circulated to Members of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board;

- (3) That a pre-decision scrutiny item relating to the draft Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) be added to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme for 2018-19.

(Meeting ended at 18:17 pm)

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