


REPORT TO

**ECONOMY SKILLS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT
SCRUTINY BOARD**

10 October 2019

Subject:	Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP)
Cabinet Portfolio:	Cllr Jackie Taylor
Director:	Director of Regeneration and Growth - Amy Harhoff
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Contact Officer(s):	Talvinder Sandhu – Transportation Team Leader talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That :

1. The board consider this report and supporting presentation on Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) prior to taking to it to Cabinet for approval and adoption

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a briefing overview of the development of Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP). This will be accompanied by a presentation to the board.

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 November 2019 and will subsequently go to cabinet for approval. It will then come into effect in 2020. 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.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 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.
- 4.3 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 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 as 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 (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.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 Individual projects will be subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their formulation and the results reported to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment.

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 The board is recommended to consider this report and presentation on Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan prior to taking to it to Cabinet for approval and adoption

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 16.1 None. A Power Point presentation will be given to the board supporting this report.

17 APPENDICES:

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

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