

Agenda

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 5.30 pm
In the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

1 Apologies for Absence

To receive any apologies for absence.

2 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

Members to declare any interests and party whips in relation to matters to be discussed at the meeting.

3 Minutes

7 - 18

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February and 20 April 2023 as a correct record.

4 Additional Items of Business

To determine whether there are any additional items of business to be considered as a matter of urgency.

5 Europa Avenue Cycle Route Towns Fund Scheme

19 - 60

To consider and comment upon the Europa Avenue Cycle Route Towns Fund Scheme.



6 **Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment
Scrutiny Action Tracker** 61 - 66

To consider and note progress on the implementation of actions and recommendations.

7 **Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment
Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/ 24** 67 - 74

To approve the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/ 24

8 **Cabinet Forward Plan** 75 - 84

To note and review the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Shokat Lal
Chief Executive
Sandwell Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands

Distribution

Councillor Taylor (Chair)
Councillors Owen (Vice- Chair), Akpoteni, Ashraf, Chapman, Dhatt,
Hemingway, Hussain, Kordala, Rahman and J Singh

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Minutes of Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

28 February 2023 at 5.00pm
in the Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillors Taylor (Vice Chair), Fenton, J Giles, Kaur, Owen and Rahman.

Also Present: Mr D Magher (Wednesbury Action Group)
Angela Poulton (Associate Director of Primary Care – Black Country Integrated Care Board)

Officers: Tammy Stokes (Service Manager – Growth and Spatial Planning), Sue Moore (Group Head for Education Support Services), Alison Blakeway (Economic Development Project Manager), Andy Thorpe (Healthy Urban Development Officer), Kate Harris (Assistant Planner), Alex Goddard (Democratic Services Officer) and John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).

8/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Simms (Chair), Abrahams, Gavan and Z Hussain.

9/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

10/23 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to consider.

Friar Park Urban Village

Further to Minute No. 5/23 (9 February 2023), the Board received an overview of the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan proposals. The site represented one of the largest brownfield development opportunities in the West Midlands region.

Following the completion of the concept stage, the Masterplan was seeking endorsement to set the principles and minimum quality standards for the scheme. The design, tendering and planning application stages would be progressed upon the completion of the Masterplan.

The Service Manager – Growth and Spatial Planning outlined that key principles were:-

- Decontamination of the Friar Park site;
- Provision of 10 hectares of open and green space;
- The building of 630 new homes, 158 of which would be affordable;
- Potential expansion of the Millennium Centre.

The draft Masterplan had been amended subsequent to public consultation taking on board feedback from the consultation. It was noted that response rates had been low, however the majority of feedback was supportive of the scheme.

Various representatives from relevant directorates and external bodies were in attendance to facilitate an in-depth analysis of the Masterplan.

The Board heard from a representative of Wednesbury Action Group who expressed reservations regarding the scheme. In particular the following points were highlighted:-

- Construction works would place additional demand upon the Highways Network;
- A local bus route was due to cease operations which could create additional car usage;
- An increase of residents in the locality would increase pressure upon schools and GP practices;
- The number of responses to the public consultation had been low;
- Environmental studies, including noise, air and light assessments were minimal;

- The locality had high levels of pollution and this development could cause the air quality to deteriorate.

A baseline transport report had been conducted based on an assumption of 830 properties rather than the proposed 630, which identified no highways safety concerns. A modest increase in traffic during morning (396 trips) and afternoon (441 trips) peak times had been identified, however this was manageable within the existing highways network.

The Board heard that representations had been made by the Council to Transport for West Midlands to preserve existing bus routes. In addition, the scheme had incorporated pedestrian and cycle routes to ensure journeys would be able to be made sustainably.

The Group Head for Education Support Services outlined that calculations had estimated that 138 primary school places and 62 secondary school places were needed upon delivery of the scheme. These places would be met via the existing school provision; there was sufficient availability in line with Schools Admissions Code requirements to meet the additional need.

School provision would be continuously monitored as the development progressed, it was not anticipated a new school would be required, however if demand was higher than predicted this could be met via funding from the Schools Capital Programme.

Air quality measuring stations were utilised, and the air pollution levels were found to be consistent with the average for Sandwell. To safeguard air quality the Masterplan had ensured that properties were to be 15 metres away from the rail network and vegetation corridors were planned to absorb pollution from vehicles.

The Associate Director of Primary Care – Black Country Integrated Care Board outlined that GP coverage in the locality was in line with national performance, with six practices close to the site accepting new patients. There were no concerns about capacity of GP practices as a result of the scheme, however the ongoing challenges faced in primary care were noted by the Board.

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

- There was a 3% surplus of school places in Sandwell, allowing the Council to manage capacity.
- Five new secondary schools in the Borough were due to open by September 2023 to meet demand.
- School place demand projections were updated annually to ensure local provision, allowing children to walk to school, therefore reducing vehicle emissions.
- Assessing GP registration demand had been complicated as the age demographic of the future residents was unknown.
- The capacity of GP practices wasn't a concern, however additional places could be mobilised if required.
- GP Practices had invested heavily in telephony, however the ambition of the Black Country Integrated Care Board is for patients to be able to access Primary care via multiple routes.
- There was high demand for housing locally, with 142 non-transfer applicants on the housing waiting list residing in Friar Park.
- The Council had nomination rights for 100% of new builds and 50% of properties being re-let, individuals would be nominated from the housing waiting list.
- The scheme had designated 25% of new homes as affordable units to ensure it was viable, additional affordable homes would increase the cost of the project.
- There were no plans to classify properties as 'first homes' as this would reduce the number of individuals nominated for a property from the housing waiting list.

- A Local Lettings Policy would be explored that could allow deviation from the Council's Allocations Policy to best meet specific local needs.
- Ground inspections had identified heavy metals and other toxins in the soil, these contaminants would be removed and treated to meet Environment Agency standards.
- Proposals for community allotments were to be pursued subsequent to toxicology soil testing.
- Landscaping plans had included proposals for wildlife corridors and sustainable urban drainage to introduce wet areas to increase biodiversity.
- Vegetation barriers were considered beneficial to trap carbon and mitigate the impacts of air pollution.
- The traffic assessment conducted by a consultancy firm had calculated the increased journeys by using a national database based on similar urban communities.

The Board thanked attendees for contributing to the meeting and enabling an in-depth discussion to take place on the Friar Park Urban Village.

Resolved:-

- (1) that Cabinet consider in detail the following as part of the consideration of the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan:-
 - (a) Air Quality
 - (b) The methodology used to determine projected additional demand on the highway network
 - (c) Clarity around the provision of Affordable Housing in the development
 - (d) Further detail around the provision of electric vehicle charging points

- (2) that, if Cabinet approves the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan, it be requested to ensure that:-
 - (a) the use of a Local Lettings Policy on the site be explored;
 - (b) regular air quality monitoring is undertaken as the development progresses and once it is complete;
 - (c) different options to utilise appropriate vegetation to help address air pollution is considered for the site.

12/23 **Work Programme and Cabinet Forward Plan**

The Board noted its Work Programme for 2022/2023 and received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Meeting ended at 6:41pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

Minutes of Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

20 April 2023 at 5.00pm
in Committee Room 2 - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: Councillor Taylor (Vice Chair in the Chair);
Councillors Chapman Fenton, J Giles, Owen and
Rahman.

Officers: Andy Miller (Strategic Planning and Transport
Manager), Alex Goddard (Scrutiny Lead Officer) and
John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).

13/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
Simms, Gavan, Z Hussain and Kaur.

14/23 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

15/23 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 9
February 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

16/23 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no urgent additional items of business to
consider.

West Bromwich E- Scooter Trial Review

Further to Minute No. 25/21 (taken on 30 September 2021), the Board received reports in relation to the E- Scooter trial which had operated between December 2020 and November 2022.

The trial had been in operation for 18 months in Sandwell and Voi had operated 50 E- Scooters within the trial zone in West Bromwich town centre.

Safety precautions in place during the trial had included a maximum speed of 12.5mph, restriction to roads with a speed limit of 30mph or less and the restriction to the trial area via geofencing technologies. All users had held a photographic driving licence (including provisional licences) and were aged eighteen or over.

The Strategic Planning and Transport Manager reported that riders had used them primarily for leisure, as longer journeys such as commutes were not possible due to the size of the trial area (just over one square mile).

Complaints by residents and business owners were largely in relation to users riding on the pavement and the poor parking of the Voi E- Scooters.

Whilst the reporting of anti- social behaviour when riding E- Scooters had been noted in the Borough, it was challenging to determine whether these instances had occurred whilst riding Vois or privately owned E- Scooters. It was acknowledged that privately owned E- Scooter numbers had increased in recent years due to the increasingly cost-effective manufacturing and improved technology.

Reported injury accidents had been rare, with only 14 recorded during the trial period in Sandwell. However, national research had indicated that accidents were three times more likely to occur whilst riding an E- Scooter compared to a bicycle.

Demand had been low which had resulted in only 50 E- Scooters in operation, this represented a third of the E - Scooters allocated to West Bromwich during the trial period. The monthly average was 223 rides from the data collected, however, usage was reduced in Winter months. There were no proposals to reintroduce E- Scooters within Sandwell, either by Voi or another E -Scooter provider.

Sandwell's trial had formed part of the wider West Midlands and E- Scooters had also been deployed across Birmingham and Coventry. Voi was the sole operator across the West Midlands and was managed by a partnership between Transport for West Midlands, Voi and the local highway authorities.

Transport for West Midlands had conducted a full evaluation of the trial scheme, however, it was anticipated that this would be completed following conclusion of the trials in Birmingham and Coventry.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- Whilst the wearing of helmets was recommended, it was not compulsory on E- Scooters.
- Sandwell Council had incurred no expenditure directly linked to the trial, however, £50,000 had been spent on minor highway repairs to ensure E- Scooters were used safely.
- Although driving licences were required to hire Voi E- Scooters, once hired, it was not possible to establish who was operating them.
- The riding of privately owned E- Scooters on public land, although prevalent, was illegal.
- E- Scooters were legally classed as motor vehicles, enforcement powers therefore were the responsibility of West Midlands Police.

(Councillor Rahman joined the meeting during consideration of this item)

Bus Service Improvement Plan

The Board received the Bus Service Improvement Plan and an overview of the challenges which the network faced across the West Midlands.

The West Midlands Bus Network was the largest outside of London and 80% of public transport trips were made via bus. National Express West Midlands accounted for 89% of the scheduled mileage, with 23 other operators offering routes across the West Midlands conurbation.

Bus patronage was at 82% of the pre- pandemic level and the network required significant public subsidy to remain viable. The cost of subsidies was £9.8m in 2020/21 and 219 routes were subsidised via a tender process, these routes had been assessed as socially necessary despite being not commercially viable.

The Strategic Planning and Transport Manager identified the following ambitions:-

- A simplified ticketing system;
- Improved bus shelters, with real time information via a departure screen;
- Integration with the West Midlands Metro, national rail services and other public transport networks;
- Increased confidence via the reduction of anti- social behaviour through the Safer Travel Partnership;
- Network resilience and protection from disruption.

It was acknowledged that efforts to improve the air quality across the Borough had been made by the bus network. Proposals included a commitment to the bus retrofit programme, the roll- out of electric buses and innovation in bus fuel technology. In addition, National Express West Midlands had pledged to not purchase any diesel buses.

Following comments and questions from members of the Board, the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

- Grants were provided by central government to operators to install electric charging points in depots.

- Pantographic charging trials had commenced in Wolverhampton bus station in 2022 and Transport for West Midlands had targets to introduce 36 pantograph charging stations by 2023.
- The range of electric buses was increasing as technology developed, however, electric buses were significantly more expensive to operate compared to conventional diesel buses.
- It was acknowledged that 35% of Sandwell residents did not have access to a car.
- Less frequent services which operated during the evenings or on Sundays presented a barrier to increased passenger usage and contributed to a perception that the bus network was not reliable.
- Enhanced Partnerships were being rolled out between operators across the West Midlands Network, this would specify levels of services for core routes.

Resolved that the Director of Borough Economy and the Director of Regeneration and Growth consider the views of the Board when exploring Bus Service improvement proposals.

(Councillor Rahman left the meeting during consideration of this item)

19/23 **Cabinet Forward Plan and Work Programme**

The Board noted its Work Programme for 2022/23 and received the Cabinet Forward Plan.

Meeting ended at 7.02pm

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk

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Report to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

13 July 2023

Subject:	Europa Avenue Cycle Route Towns Fund Scheme
Director:	Director of Regeneration & Growth Tony McGovern
Contact Officer:	Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager, Andy Miller andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations




- 1.1 That the Board considers and comments upon the Europa Avenue Towns Fund highway improvement scheme and the associated consultation which has been undertaken for a proposed cycle and walking route, including continuing the route through Middleway on Europa Avenue, West Bromwich
- 1.2 That the Board considers whether sufficient and appropriate consultation has been carried out in line with existing council policies, practices, and procedures prior to reaching the previous decision to proceed with the scheme as proposed.





2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 At present, there is Cabinet Member approval in place to complete the Cycle Route Proposal 2 which connects to the West Midlands LCWIP route proposals to Sandwell Valley via Europa Avenue to its full extent as initially proposed so that an end to end cycle and walking route can be delivered in accordance with the route proposals in Sandwell's Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) which was approved by Cabinet in January 2020 and in line with the submission for Accelerated Town Funding that was awarded to Sandwell MBC by government for this scheme.
- 2.2 Following the approval by the Cabinet Member for Environment on 28th June 2022, a petition was received by the Council on 02 November 2022 containing 150 signatures. This petition was against upgrading the cycle route between Europa Avenue and Sandwell Valley via Middleway path whilst generally supportive of the resurfacing the path. On receipt of the petition, Cabinet Petitions Committee referred the matter to this Board for consideration.
- 2.3 The Board is therefore requested to consider and comment on the scheme, and the consultation carried out, to enable Cabinet Petitions Committee to reach a decision on what action, if any, should be taken in respect of the petition.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>People live well and age well: The proposals contribute to providing safe and efficient access to the cycling and walking network and the wider transport network, include improved access to Sandwell Valley Country Park for local people and visitors, and contribute to the health benefits of sustainable active travel.</p>
	<p>Strong resilient communities: Successful communities need access to jobs, services, and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. Improving access to Sandwell Valley Country Park, the local cycling and walking network, and the wider transport network is an important enabler of this.</p>
	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods: Both new and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services, as well as leisure facilities such</p>



	as those provided within Sandwell Valley Country Park for them to be successful. Measures by which access to leisure facilities and the wider transport network, including the cycling and walking network is improved and maintained is key to this.
	A strong and inclusive economy: Transport plays a vital role in connecting people to jobs and learning opportunities. Health-promoting transport systems are pro-business and support economic prosperity. They enable optimal travel to work with less congestion, collisions, pollution, and they support a healthier workforce. The provision of improved high-quality cycling and walking connectivity will therefore play a key role in connecting Sandwell residents and businesses to economic and social opportunities.
	A connected and accessible Sandwell: The provision of high-quality cycling and walking links and improved access to the transport network is vital to enable Sandwell residents to access jobs, education, and services both within and beyond the Borough's boundaries.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 Cycling and Walking are important activities that are proven to improve health and wellbeing, assist in reducing traffic congestion and improve air quality. In 2017 the Government published 'The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy' (CWIS), which outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking a natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of longer journeys by 2040. This has resulted in the development of Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Government's CWIS, which are a new a 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. Recently the Government has made it clear that only those Local Authorities who have an approved Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)



would be prioritised for additional funding to improve their cycling and walking infrastructure.

- 4.2 Sandwell published its own Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (SCWIP) in 2020, following public consultation and cabinet approval. It was also presented and discussed at Sandwell's Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board in October 2019 where it received support. The document focusses on local walking and cycling infrastructure connecting communities to town centres, transport hubs, employment, education, and services. The SCWIP aims to assist Sandwell in securing government funding to improve the cycling and walking network within the borough. It also aligns with the Black Country Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (BCLCWIP) and the West Midlands Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (WMLCWIP).
- 4.3 The West Midlands Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (WMLCWIP) entails primary corridors where there are high flows of cyclists forecast along desire lines that link large residential areas to trip attractors such as a town or city centre. Routes were also prioritised based on links to other schemes and upcoming developments. One of the primary corridors that falls within the borough of Sandwell is the route running from Smethwick Galton Bridge to Wednesbury Town Centre via West Bromwich. Part of this corridor coincides with National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) from Galton Bridge, where it links with Birmingham Canal/NCN5 to Birmingham City Centre at Centenary Square and through Sandwell Valley via Roebuck Lane. Birmingham Canal/NCN5 had towpaths upgraded in 2018 as part of the Managing Short Trips programme. The West Midlands LCWIP route aims to continue NCN5 improvements from Galton Bridge to High Street/Birmingham Road via Telford Way and Roebuck Lane. Subsequently the Roebuck Lane to West Bromwich Town Centre element of this route secured central government funding via the West Bromwich Towns Fund project 'West Bromwich Connected' and is due to be delivered over 2023 and 2024.



- 4.4 National Cycle Route 5 (NCR 5) is a 360 miles route within the National Cycle Network, running from Reading to Holyhead, via Birmingham, Sandwell, Walsall, Stoke on Trent and Chester. The National Cycle Network began with a National Lottery Grant from the Millennium Commission in 1995 and NCN5 through Sandwell was delivered in 1999 and this runs from the Birmingham Canal, across Birmingham Road and to Sandwell Valley via Europa Avenue. The route eventually ends at Holyhead in North Wales. The original goal was to create 5,000 miles of signposted cycle routes by 2005, with 50% of these not being on roads, and all of it being "suitable for an unsupervised twelve-year-old. By mid-2000, 5,000 miles of route was signposted to an "interim" standard. Much has changed in the world of cycle infrastructure since NCN5 was delivered. Most notably the publication of Local Transport Note (LTN) 2/08 Cycling Infrastructure Design, which itself was superseded by LTN 1/20 Cycling Infrastructure Design published in July 2020. This guidance has been developed in partnership with a range of stakeholders and experts to ensure it reflects the latest developments in cycle infrastructure design, including proven design elements pioneered in London under Transport for London.
- 4.4. The Black Country LCWIP entails proposals to upgrade the cycle route from Europa Avenue to Walsall Town Centre. This aims to create a traffic free cycle route from Birmingham City Centre, to Walsall via Galton Bridge, West Bromwich High Street, Europa Avenue, Sandwell Valley and Yew Tree.
- 4.4. Cycle Route Proposal 2 within the Sandwell Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan connects to the West Midlands LCWIP route proposals to Sandwell Valley via Europa Avenue. Currently this section of NCN5 is not to current cycling infrastructure standards, as the route is on highway and not segregated from traffic. It's also part of the route included within the Black Country LCWIP. Therefore, the Europa Avenue highway improvement scheme, which is the subject of this report, is included as an improvement route within all three LCWIPs; the SCWIP, the BCLCWIP and the WMLCWIP. Furthermore, it's part of the existing National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) which passes through Europa Avenue from



Beeches Road and then turns right along Europa Avenue on-road, through St John's Close and then on into Sandwell Valley Country Park.

- 4.5 The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan "Movement for Growth" addresses the transport challenges from the current pressures on the local transport system, the demands of new developments and our growing population. Approximately 41% of journeys made by car are under 2 miles in the West Midlands. There is therefore great scope for the increased role of sustainable travel including cycling and walking as a viable solution to address challenges in congestion and air quality. The Strategic Cycle Network (SCN) in Movement for Growth identifies the main corridors for cycling which includes 274 km of roads in the region. The Metropolitan Cycle Network includes all routes including on-road (including shared use bus lanes, segregated, quiet streets), off-road (including green and canal towpaths), and shared use routes. Routes within the SCWIP, the BCLCWIP, and the WMLCWIP form part of the West Midlands Metropolitan Cycle Network.
- 4.6 There has been significant investment nationally in delivering cycling and walking schemes in what are called Active Travel corridors. This is part of objectives within the Government's Cycling and walking plan for England called 'Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking'. Any funding for active travel infrastructure stipulates that only those schemes which aim to deliver high quality, off road, segregated cycle lanes, new footways, and pedestrian crossings in accordance with the national cycle design standards called LTN 1/20 Cycling Infrastructure Design published in July 2020 would receive funding. Active travel projects would also be overseen and monitored to ensure they comply with national design standards by Active Travel England; the government's executive agency responsible for making walking, wheeling and cycling the preferred choice for everyone to get around in England.

Funding

- 4.7 In September 2019, the government invited 101 places to develop proposals for a Town Deal, as part of the £2.4 billion Towns Fund. The



Towns Fund is part of the government's plan for Levelling Up the UK economy. Towns across England have been working with the Government to address their growth constraints, deliver economic benefits and improve the lives of people within their communities. The overarching aims of the Towns Fund are to drive sustainable economic regeneration and productivity across the UK.

4.8 Sandwell Transport Planning Team, working with the Planning Regeneration and Highway Services teams put forward 5 SCWIP schemes for the West Bromwich Towns Fund Bid. On 22nd July 2020 Cabinet delegated authority to approve the Town Investment Plan (TIP) for West Bromwich to the Sandwell Towns Fund Super Board. Super Board approved the projects to be included in the Accelerated Towns Funding programme on 14th August 2020. The Accelerated Funding was an early draw down of the overall West Bromwich Towns Fund for projects that could be delivered relatively quickly over a short period of time. All projects were subject to consultation and final approval through an assurance process that included sign off by Super Board. On 2nd October 2020 Super Board approved shortlisted projects to be included in the Town Investment Plan (TIP). This included the Cycle Route Proposal 2 within the Sandwell Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan which connects to the West Midlands LCWIP route proposals to Sandwell Valley via Europa Avenue.

Europa Avenue Scheme Proposals

4.9 As part of the proposals, the plan is to introduce a two-way off-road cycle route through the 'Middleway' area of Europa Avenue, by widening and realigning the existing path that is already used by both pedestrians and cyclists. The new proposals will separate cyclists and pedestrians, so they no longer need to share the same path help to avoid pedestrian and cyclist conflicts. This aligns with the national design guidance LTN1/20. As an added benefit, the path will also take cyclists away from the road and vehicles, making a much safer route for experienced and new cyclists



alike, particularly children. The work will also have the benefit of putting a brand-new surface on the existing path as well as providing a second dedicated path for the cyclists. In addition, the Middleway will be litter picked and cleaned and overgrown bushes and trees pruned and trimmed.

Consultations

- 5.0 Improvements to Middleway are included in Sandwell's Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) which was widely advertised prior to gaining Cabinet Approval in 2020. It was also presented and discussed at Sandwell's Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board in October 2019 where it received support. The SCWIP is a programme of projects used to attract funds to make improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure throughout the borough. Secondary consultation was scheduled to take place locally on a scheme by scheme basis. In late 2020, Sandwell was successful in bidding for Accelerated Towns Funds in West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Smethwick and there was a press release on the 15th January 2021.
- 5.1 In December 2020 a change request was submitted to the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) to substitute the Europa Avenue scheme in replacement of the West Bromwich Town Hall project, which could no longer proceed as it was being used as a Covid19 centre at the time. Due to the unexpected substitution, delivery timescales for the Europa Avenue scheme had to be accelerated further. As a result of very short timescales for delivery as stipulated by the funding guidance, site preparation works, and public consultation took place simultaneously in February 2021.
- 5.1 Due to funding being made available unexpectedly to implement the identified improvements along Middleway, with very strict time conditions, letters were distributed to only those households directly adjacent by the scheme to hopefully allow work to start as quickly as possible. Work to upgrade the stretch of cycle route from the Beeches Road junction to the



T Junction with Europa Avenue had already begun in tandem with the letter consultation but not along the Middleway. The initial consultation received some adverse reactions from some of the residents on the Europa Village Estate.

- 5.2 Councillor Jackie Taylor, as the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport at the time, was briefed about the consultation and some of the objections received and it was decided that further wider consultation should take place on the new cycle scheme proposed for the 'Middleway' off-highway section, to gauge interest and receive comments from all residents of the estate before any further work continues. Therefore, further consultation took place in November 2021. All 350 addresses on the Europa Village Estate were consulted by letter, a proposals leaflet and questionnaire. The Transport Planning Team received 44 replies, with 22 in favour and 22 opposed.
- 5.3 At a briefing session on 15th March 2022 with the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Ahmed Bostan considered the responses received and stated that we should proceed with the scheme as originally proposed given the split in responses received from the consultation. However, due to a change in the portfolio holder covering Transportation Planning and Highway Services from Councillor Ahmed Bostan to Councillor Zahoor Ahmed, further briefings were undertaken and on 31st May 2022 a Delegated Report was taken to Councillor Zahoor Ahmed as the Cabinet Member for Environment at a briefing session where the scheme was given approval to proceed as planned. On the 28th June 2022, the Delegated Report was officially signed by Councillor Zahoor Ahmed as the Cabinet Member for Environment and subsequently, on the 16th September 2022, letters were sent to residents informing them that approval had been given to proceed with the scheme as planned.
- 5.4. In response to the letters sent to residents 16th September 2022 informing them of the decision to proceed with a scheme, a petition was received by the Council on 02 November 2022 containing 150 signatures. This petition was against upgrading the cycle route between Europa Avenue and Sandwell Valley via Middleway path whilst generally supportive of the



resurfacing the path. On receipt of the petition, Cabinet Petitions Committee referred the matter to this Board for consideration. The Europa Avenue petition and has been discussed at the following meetings: -

- 7 December 2022;
- 18 January 2023;
- 1 March 2023;
- 21 June 2023.

5.5 Following representations made by the petitioners in relation to their concerns around the consultation process and the cycle route proposals, officers agreed to submit a report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board (ESTE).

6 Implications

Resources:	Loss of Towns Funding which was reallocated for the Europa Avenue highway improvement scheme should the scheme not proceed as planned.
Legal and Governance:	Funding agreements for this project are governed by and construed in accordance with the Law of England and Wales and the Parties irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the English and Welsh courts.
Risk:	Leaving the Middleway path as it is, shared between pedestrians and cyclist could mean there is a risk of pedestrian and cyclist conflict in comparison to providing a segregated path as was proposed.
Equality:	This scheme is part of Cycle Route Proposal 2 within the Sandwell Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, an equality impact assessment was carried out during the development of the Sandwell Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan of which this scheme and the proposed infrastructure adheres to latest Government Guidance.
Health and Wellbeing:	The proposed walking and cycling route aim to have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities as it aims to encourage Active Travel.



	Not delivering the improvement scheme could have the opposite effect.
Social Value:	The proposed cycle route will form part of a network that will link communities to employment, education, transport hubs, town centres and services.
Climate Change:	Sandwell Council has joined other councils in England that have declared a Climate Emergency and as a result developed and adopted a Climate Change Strategy 2021-2041. Within Sandwell's Climate Change Strategy Action Plan 3 for Transport states that Sandwell Council will "Implement highway measures and transport facilities that fully accommodate and promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking, making journeys by such methods easier, faster and safer, alongside measures to discourage car use. The Europa Avenue scheme aims to do this.
Corporate Parenting:	There are no specific corporate parenting implications arising from the contents of the report.

7 Appendices

- APPENDIX A: SCWIP Cycle Route 2 Plan & Route Proposal.
- APPENDIX B: Existing Europa Avenue Middleway Path Photos
- APPENDIX C: Existing Example of Similar Scheme along NCN5
- APPENDIX D: Report to Cabinet Petitions Committee, Petitions Progress Report, 21 June 2023
- Letter and consultation leaflet sent to residents November 2021
- Delegated Report 28th June 2022
- Letter sent to residents 16th September 2022

8. Background Papers

Sandwell's Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/29952/sandwell_cycling_and_walking_infrastructure_plan_2020.pdf

Sandwell's Climate Change Strategy 2021-2041



https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/31151/climate_change_strategy.pdf

Sandwell Towns Fund

https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200193/council/4490/sandwell_towns_fund



3.5 Cycle Route 2 NCN Route 5 Improvements, linking to WMLCWIP route

Cycle Route 2 creates links to an existing network. It forms a part of the National Cycle Network (NCN) Route 5 and has connections to the West Midlands LCWIP routes. The length of the SCWIP route is approximately 1km. The link runs through a residential area consisting of a connecting road, a local road and segregated off road pathway. NCN Route 5 incorporates Sandwell Valley Country Park in the route and as such provides off carriageway cycling for leisure and transport purposes. The route does vary in terms of gradient, however, the distance of the gradient would not necessarily discourage people from using the route as it is not excessive. As such the SCWIP route was realigned from the existing route to provide a more direct connection to Sandwell Valley Country Park and take advantage of off-carriageway infrastructure. Approximately half of the route falls into a regeneration corridor and provides good links with existing and planned cycle infrastructure:

- Route 2 is part of NCN Route 5
- WM LCWIP considers improvements to the southern section of this scheme
- Connects to Sandwell Valley Country Park

The results from the RST show that with the improved infrastructure the route:

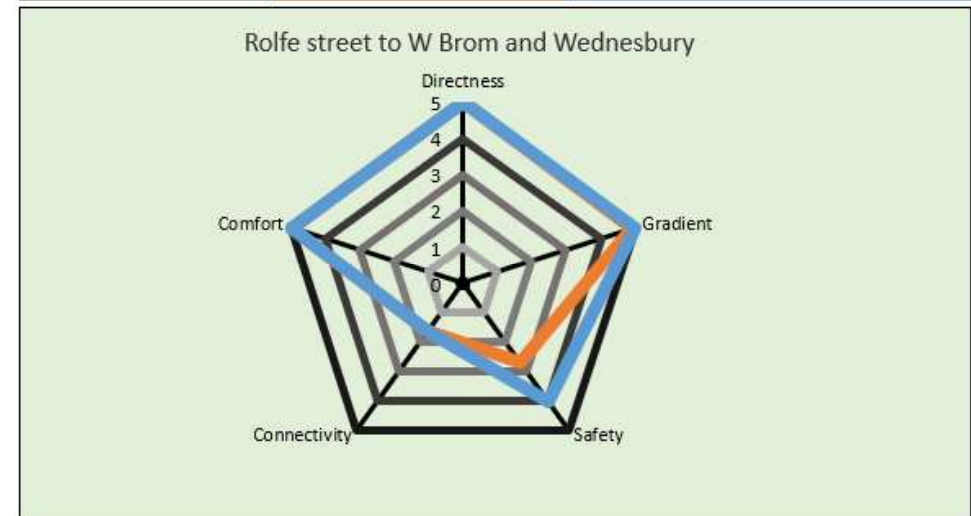
- Scored slightly better in directness, having shorter distance to travel than the original route
- Gradient scoring remained the same as re-routing the alignment made no significant difference to the score
- Scored much higher for safety which would naturally improve on comfort (although, as comfort previously scored high, this is not reflected in the RST scoring), due to segregating cyclists from

motor vehicles for the entire route and improving infrastructure on potential conflict points such as junctions

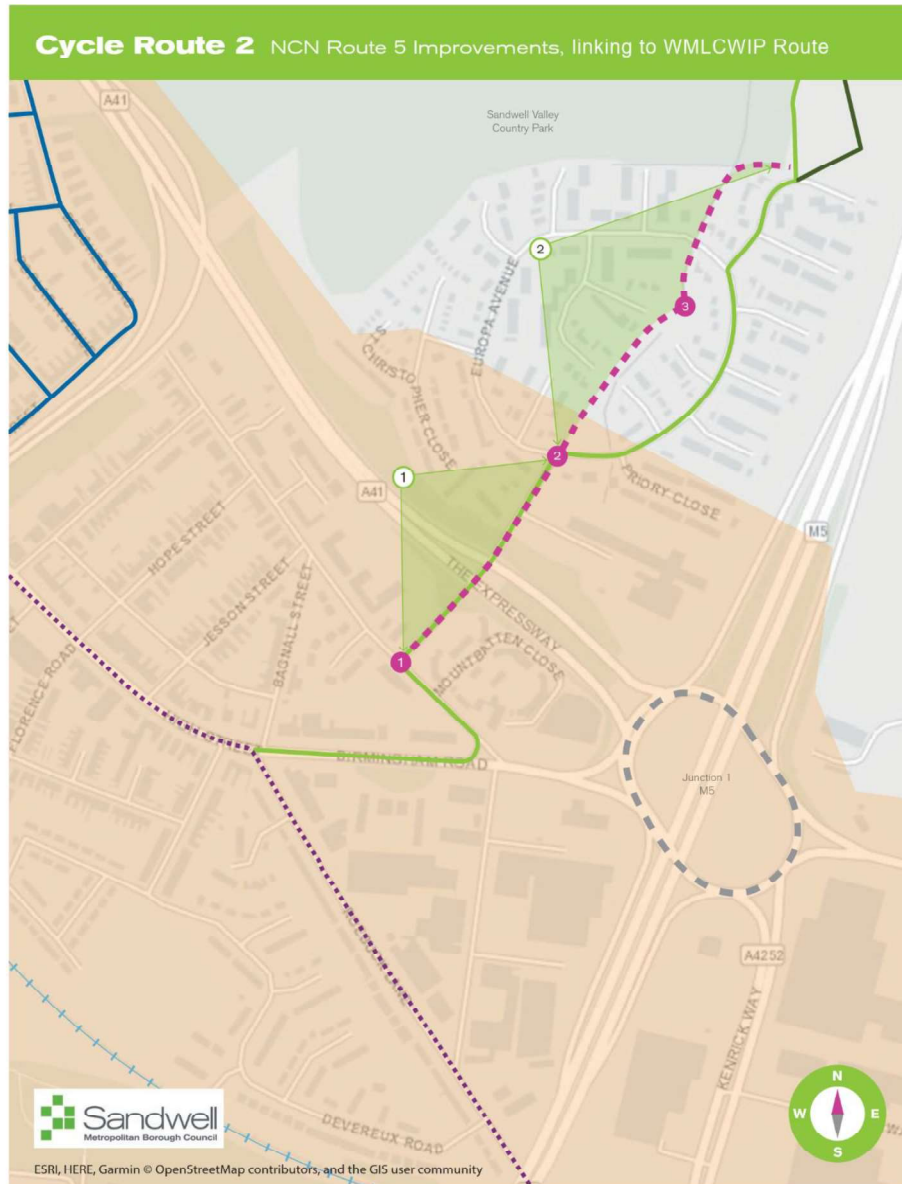
- The score for connectivity remained the same as no new links were identified by realigning the route

Figure 3.10 Route 2 RST scores

Criterion	Performance Scores	
	Existing	Potential
Directness	5.00	5.00
Gradient	4.89	5.00
Safety	2.67	4.01
Connectivity	1.65	1.65
Comfort	5.00	5.00



Number of Existing Critical Junctions/Crossings	8
Number of Potential Critical Junctions/Crossings	0



Europa Avenue Middleway



Europa Avenue Middleway footpath is in poor condition and a potential trip hazard



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Europa Avenue Middleway



National Cycle Network Route 5 in Warwick, which is similar to the Europa Avenue proposal



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Report to Cabinet Petitions Committee

21 June 2023

Subject:	Petitions Progress Report
Contact Officer:	Trisha Newton Trisha_newton@sandwell.gov.uk







1 Recommendations

That the Cabinet Petitions Committee approve the action taken or proposed as details in the third column below.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

To receive petitions and approve action taken/proposed in response.

3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		Petitions are one of the many ways in which people who live and work in the Borough can influence the decision-making process. Many of the issues typically raised by petitions underpin the Council's Vision. Petitions alert members and officers to current local issues and ensure that services are being targeted appropriately in delivering the Council's priorities.
		
		



4 Context and Key Issues

Section 46 of the Localism Act 2011 removes the requirements for principal local authorities in England and Wales to make, publish and comply with a scheme for the handling of petitions made to the authority, with effect from 1 April 2012. At its meeting on 22 May 2012, the Council decided to retain a petitions scheme, although there was no longer a statutory requirement to have such a scheme.

5 Background Details

5.1 Petitions received since last reporting period

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.1.1 16 – residents of Park Lane West, Tipton (Tipton Green)	Request for resident only parking spaces outside of 173-184 Park Lane West.	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 12/03/2023)
5.1.2 211 - against the withdrawal of the No. 45 bus service, Yew Tree and Charlemont Estates, West Bromwich (Charlemont with Grove Vale)	Petition against the withdrawal of the No. 45 bus service, Yew Tree and Charlemont Estates, West Bromwich.	TfWM is now funding the 45 bus service which will continue to be operated by Diamond Bus and remains unchanged. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 28/03/2023)



5.1.3 138 – residents of Thomas Cox Wharf and Alexandra Grange, Tipton (Great Bridge)

Request for the adoption of roads by Sandwell Council.

The responsibility to progress the adoption of any new roads on a development falls solely on the land owner (typically the Developer) who must initially offer any new roads to the Authority for adoption and, importantly, then enter into a legal adoption agreement with the Local Highway Authority (typically an agreement under Section 38 of the Highway Act). The Council has no powers to force a developer to enter into any adoption agreement. In this instance, the Developer gave the Authority every impression that they were going to enter into the necessary Section 38 agreement for adoption on numerous occasions and took discussions well beyond the cut off time allowable to undertake enforcement under Section 220. However, the Developer did not complete the necessary Section 38 agreements for the adoption of the roads, or complete the necessary process. Consequently, the roads on these sites were retained as private roads. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 21/04/2023)



5.1.4	26 – residents in and around Farran Way, Great Barr (Great Barr with Yew Tree)	Request for the pruning of trees and removal of leaves in the area on an annual basis.	The Council recently adopted a new trees strategy which was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. This includes the commitment to complete a full inspection of all council owned trees in red risk areas within the next 18 months. Farran Way is scheduled for inspection in July 2023, and any remedial works identified from this inspection will be scheduled to take place after bird nesting season. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 21/04/2023)
5.1.5	23 – residents in the vicinity of Charlemont Avenue, West Bromwich (Charlemont with Grove Vale)	Request for the maintenance of trees on Charlemont Avenue and Charlemont Crescent.	The Council recently adopted a new trees strategy which was approved by Cabinet in March 2023. This includes the commitment to complete a full inspection of all Council owned trees in red risk areas within the next 18 months. Charlemont Avenue is scheduled for inspection in July 2023, and any remedial works identified from this inspection will be scheduled to take place after bird nesting season. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 21/04/2023)



5.1.6	77 – residents in support of Warley Baptist Church, Oldbury (Old Warley)	Request for double-yellow or red lines on Castle Road East, Oldbury.	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 05/06/2023)
5.1.7	19 – Residents of Field Road, Tipton (Princes End)	Request for speed bumps on Field Road, Princes End, Tipton.	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 12/06/2023)

5.2 Progress on outstanding petitions

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.2.1 141 – Convenience Store Customers, Toll End Road, Smethwick (Smethwick)	Request for a ramp outside a convenience store to enable easy access for customers.	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 4/10/2022)
5.2.2 146 - residents in and around Europa Close, West Bromwich (West Bromwich Central)	Concerns with the proposed cycle route between Europa Avenue and Sandwell Valley	Following representations made by the petitioners in relation to their concerns around the consultation process and the cycle route proposals, officers will submit a report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board. An update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 1/11/2022)
5.2.3 175 – residents in and around Wellington Road, Tipton (Tipton Green)	Request for the easing of traffic problems on Wellington Road, Tipton	Petitioners raised concerns regarding parking problems in the area. A request to utilise a nearby pot of land in the area to ease parking was made. An update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 14/02/2023)



5.2.4	97 – residents in and around Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury (Old Warley)	Concerns regarding road safety on the junction of Wolverhampton Road/Queensway	This matter is being investigated by officers and an update will be submitted to a future meeting. (Received 31/01/2023)
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5.3 Petitions requiring final approval

Signatories	Subject	Action Taken/Proposed
5.3.1 128 – residents of Lightwoods Hill, Smethwick (Abbey)	Request for traffic calming measures	In December 2022 a report was submitted to the Cabinet Member for Environment for a decision on how to progress the proposals for Lightwoods Hill. The report highlighted the findings from the two previous consultations Highways had carried out with affected residents on the two different proposals for Lightwoods Hill. Subsequently, petitioners had created and presented a report to Highways. A response had been submitted to the petitioners in relation to their report. A further updated briefing session was held with the Cabinet Member which contained the additional details of the findings from the petitioner’s report. After considering all the information presented, the Cabinet Member concluded that the correct course of action would be to approve the extension of the Bearwood



			20mph zone and the installation of Digital Vehicle Activated Speed signs on Lightwoods Hill, to help satisfy some of the community concern raised over perceived excessive speed in the area. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 19/7/2021)
5.3.2	692 – users of Carnegie Building, Tipton (Tipton Green)	Request for community use of the Carnegie Building	Tipton Carnegie building currently forms part of a Council plan around locally based council services which are subject to the outcomes of the ongoing customer strategy review. The Carnegie building is being considered for use as a library. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 29/11/2022)
5.3.3	31 – Residents of Hales Crescent, Smethwick (Smethwick)	Request for removal of a large portion of grass area and for further parking bays to be identified, including designated disabled parking spaces.	APCOA have reviewed all of the Penalty Charge Notices issued to ensure they were issued correctly. Officers hand delivered letters in January to all households within the Crescent, inviting them to meet to see if there was interest in pursuing a community-led solution, possibly a local responsible parking charter. Unfortunately, only two responses were received. Officers do not believe that there was enough community buy-in to take things forward. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 21/11/2022)



5.3.4	35 – residents from various addresses across Sandwell	Concern regarding green waste collection charges and surrounding communications involving the matter.	A petition regarding the introduction of charges was received and a response provided to the Committee at its meeting on 18 January 2023 (Minute No. 4.23 refers). The Council has access to suppliers that can translate communication in various languages upon request. The head petitioner has been informed. (Received 20/2/2023)
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6 Source Documents

Copies of petitions from various groups of residents (exempt information).



My Ref:

Your Ref:

Please ask for: Trevor Chatwin

Telephone No. 0121 368 1177

Email : trevor_chatwin@sandwell.gov.uk

Date: 16th February 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

Proposed Cycle Scheme - Europa Avenue

We would like to inform you of proposed improvements to the existing footpath along Europa Avenue which will make provision for both pedestrians and cyclists who would like to gain access into Sandwell Valley. We do not expect there to be any adverse impact on residents, however, we wanted to share this information with you. Enclosed is a plan showing the outline proposals and should you have any feedback or require further information please complete and return the enclosed request for information form in the prepaid envelope and we will contact you as soon as possible.

The footpath along Europa Avenue is currently shared by all users, both pedestrians and cyclists. The proposed scheme aims to widen the existing footpath along Europa Avenue under the A41 Expressway and provide a dedicated cycle lane so that pedestrians are separated from cyclists which will reduce potential conflicts between the two. The new cycling facilities also take the route through the existing wooded area between the rear gardens of St Martins and St Valentines Close, where the existing footway will also be widened.

These proposals are only a small section of a much wider cycling and walking route which will improve access to Sandwell Valley.

Yours faithfully

T.Chatwin

Trevor Chatwin
Principal Engineer – Development

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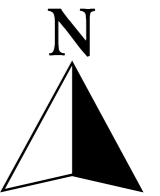
**Project Name: Towns Fund
National Cycle Network Route 5**

Details: Resurface & widen existing footway to create a segregated pedestrians & cycle route & take cyclists off the existing on-road route into Sandwell Valley to improve road safety

Footway 1.8 metres wide

Two way cycleway 2.5 metres wide

Date: 14/11/2021



KEY

- Walking Route —
- Proposed two-way Cycle Route —
- Existing Cycle Route - - -
- Bollards ●
- Uncontrolled Crossing ○

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Sandwell Council
Directorate of Regeneration & Growth
Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 3DB
W: www.sandwell.gov.uk
E: transport@sandwell.gov.uk

Dear Resident,

Pathway Improvements along Middleway

Two public consultations took place on the Europa Village Estate. The first was between 16th February and 2nd March 2021. This resulted in some adverse reaction. As a result, a second round of consultation, between 1st and 29th November was carried out. This involved 350-properties across the whole of the Europa Village Estate receiving a letter, proposals plan and questionnaire. There were 44 (12.5%) responses, 22 in favour and 22 opposed.

Given the even nature of the responses for and against the proposal it is recommended that the scheme proceed as originally proposed as this represents the best layout to achieve the objectives of the Sandwell Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and meets the requirements of the Department for Transport Local Transport Note (LTN)1/20: Cycling Infrastructure, which is the overarching guidance for the development of cycle projects.

Cabinet Member for Environment Services, Councillor Ahmed has granted approval to construct phase 2 of the proposed upgraded cycle route between Europa Avenue and Sandwell Valley via Middleway Path. The proposal is to widen and resurface with tarmac an existing path that currently runs through a wooded area known as the Middleway. This will create a segregated pedestrian and cycle route into Sandwell Valley

Key issues resulting from the consultation and the responses to them are:

Concern: The removal of several trees to widen the path

Response: These will be replaced at a ratio of two to one with new semi mature trees.

Concern: The improvement to the path along the Middleway will attract anti-social behaviour;

Response: There is evidence that when a path is improved and attracts more use it can decrease the incidents of anti-social behaviour by increasing natural surveillance.

Concern: There will be conflicts between pedestrians and cyclists;

Response: The path will be widened, and a demarcation line, tactile paving, logos, signage and bollards will segregate pedestrians and cyclists. This is a common arrangement throughout the Country and fully accords with the provisions of LTN/20.

Yours Sincerely

Transportation Planning Team

Funding was unexpectedly made available to implement the identified improvements along Middleway, but with very strict time conditions. Consequently, letters were only distributed to households directly adjacent by the scheme to hopefully allow work to start as quickly as possible. Work to upgrade the stretch of cycle route from the Beeches Road junction to the T Junction with Europa Avenue had already begun.

Upon reflection and with the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Transport, the decision has been made to undertake further wider consultation on the new cycle scheme proposed for the 'Middleway' off-highway Section, to gauge interest and receive comments from all residents of the estate before any further work continues.

Will trees be removed as part of this scheme resulting in the loss of trees in the area?

Unfortunately, the proposals will result in the loss of 4 trees. However, the Council will plant 8 well established trees in their place, along the route, in as close a position as possible to the original trees. Therefore, overall the scheme will result in having more trees in the area than are there at the moment.

But what's the point of doing this scheme in the grand scheme of things, what difference is it going to make?

The route connects Sandwell Valley to West Bromwich Town Centre, Parkway pedestrian and cycle route to Hawthorns, NCN81 (where the towpath has recently been resurfaced on Birmingham Canal) and Smethwick Galton Bridge Railway Station. This is considered the first phase of a continuous off-road segregated pedestrian and cycle route on NCN5 that will eventually connect Sandwell Valley to places such as Birmingham City Centre, Oldbury Town Centre, Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street Railway Stations, the new Midland Hospital and the new Smethwick Aquatic Centre.

The aim of the overall project is to reduce car trips and provide alternative safe, attractive and sustainable travel options for the residents of Sandwell, whether they be for commuter journeys or for leisure trips. This scheme will also improve health and wellbeing and help to address Sandwell's high levels of obesity, particularly in children. In addition, the wider scheme will help reduce road congestion and improve the borough's air quality whilst contributing to Sandwell's Cabinet approved Climate Change Strategy and Transport Action Plan.

Therefore, the route will:

- Improve overall cycling and walking connectivity
- Improve road safety for both pedestrians and cyclists
- Offer an alternative, cleaner, healthier way of travelling than using the car.

For more information:
??????@sandwell.gov.uk



Europa Avenue Cycling Scheme Public Consultation 2021



Background

Cycling and Walking are important activities that are proven to improve health and wellbeing, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Recently the Government has made it clear that only those Local Authorities who have an approved Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) would be prioritised for additional funding to improve their cycling and walking infrastructure.

Sandwell's Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) was given Cabinet Approval in January 2020. Consequently, the Council successfully gained funding in January 2021 through the Government's Accelerated Towns Fund programme, to provide better cycling and walking provision in line with the approved SCWIP.

Part of that funding was allocated to help improve SCWIP – Route 2 and National Cycle Network Route 5 which links Sandwell Valley through Europa Avenue estate, to the West Midlands Local Cycling & Walking Plan route in Smethwick.

Europa Avenue Scheme Proposals

Currently the existing National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5) runs down Europa Avenue from Beeches Road highway and then turns right along Europa Avenue on the road, through St John's Close and on into Sandwell Valley.

As part of the new proposals, the plan is to introduce a two-way off-road cycle route through the 'Middleway' area of Europa Avenue, by widening and realigning the existing path that is already used by both pedestrians and cyclists. The new proposals will separate cyclists and pedestrians, so they no longer have to share the same path help to avoid pedestrian and cyclist conflicts. As an added benefit, the path will also take cyclist away from the road and vehicles, making a much safer route for experienced and new cyclists alike, particularly children.

The work will also have the benefit of putting a brand-new surface on the existing path as well as providing a second dedicated path for the cyclists. In addition, the Middleway will be litter picked and cleaned and overgrown bushes and trees pruned and trimmed.



FAQ's

Will this scheme affect my property?

Much of the scheme is on the existing highway currently used by all road users and is along the National Cycle Network Route 5 (NCN5), so this will have no or minimal impact on properties.

The 'Middleway' part of the scheme will have minimal impact on properties as the upgraded cycling and pedestrian route will be on the same alignment as the existing path. The current path width is approximately 2.5m wide, which will be widened to approximately 4m, to give the space to separate cyclists and pedestrians already using this path to access Sandwell Valley.

Will this mean more people will be travelling past my property?

The new paths will carry the same amount of pedestrian and cycle traffic as currently travels through Europa Avenue area, but it will improve road safety by taking cyclists off road and also segregating them from pedestrians and vehicles. The aim of the proposal is to improve safety for all road users by separating motorists, cyclists and pedestrians. Those vulnerable, such as wheelchair users, the elderly, children or pushchairs will be separated from cyclists. In turn, those people who currently do not consider it safe to cycle on the road in the same space as motorists, will be provided a safe, separated route from traffic. Please note the proposals are NOT for the purpose of providing for racing cyclists, but for recreational and leisure users. Experienced and racing cyclists generally prefer to use the road system as they have the confidence to do so.

What consultation has taken place, I've not heard about this before?

Improvements to Middleway are included in Sandwell's Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) which was widely advertised prior to gaining Cabinet Approval in 2020. The SCWIP is a programme of projects used to attract funds to make improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure throughout the borough. Secondary consultation was scheduled to take place locally on a scheme by scheme bases. In late 2020 Sandwell was successful in bidding for Accelerated Towns Funds in West Bromwich, Rowley Regis and Smethwick (see press release from 15th January 2021).



If you wish to comment on the proposed pedestrian and cycle route improvements, please fill in this questionnaire and either post it in the return envelope or attach to an email and send to transport@sandwell.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can fill in a questionnaire online at <https://sandwellwalking-and-cycling.commonplace.is/>

1. The segregated pedestrian and cycle through the green space route will improve the safety for cyclists by taking them off the road and minimise accidents with motor vehicles

2.

Agree, mostly agree, do not agree or disagree, mostly disagree, disagree

3. The cycle route will improve the safety of the path through the green space by separating cyclists from pedestrians, providing a wider path and improving the lighting

Agree, mostly agree, do not agree or disagree, mostly disagree, disagree

4. More cycling journeys encourage a more active lifestyle with the associated health benefits

Agree, mostly agree, do not agree or disagree, mostly disagree, disagree

5. More cycling journeys help reduce car use, help with peak time congestion and improve air quality

Agree, mostly agree, do not agree or disagree, mostly disagree, disagree

6. Do you have any additional comments to make?

Sandwell Council
Directorate of Regeneration & Growth
Council House
Freeth Street
Oldbury
West Midlands
B69 3DB
W: www.sandwell.gov.uk
E: transport@sandwell.gov.uk

Dear Resident,

Funding was unexpectedly made available to implement the identified improvements along Middleway, but with very strict time conditions. Consequently, letters were only distributed to households directly adjacent by the scheme to hopefully allow work to start as quickly as possible. Work to upgrade the stretch of cycle route from the Beeches Road junction to the T Junction with Europa Avenue had already begun.

Upon reflection and with the agreement of the Cabinet Member for Environment, the decision has been made to undertake further wider consultation on the new cycle scheme proposed for the 'Middleway' off-highway Section, to gauge interest and receive comments from all residents of the estate before any further work continues.

You will have recently received an information pack and a questionnaire with a return envelope. This consultation will end on **Monday 29th November at 5pm.**

If you wish to comment on the proposed pedestrian and cycle route improvements, please fill in the questionnaire that was previously sent and either post it in the return envelope or attach to an email and send to transport@sandwell.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can fill in a questionnaire online at

<https://sandwellwalking-and-cycling.commonplace.is/>

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Key

● Petition signed by households

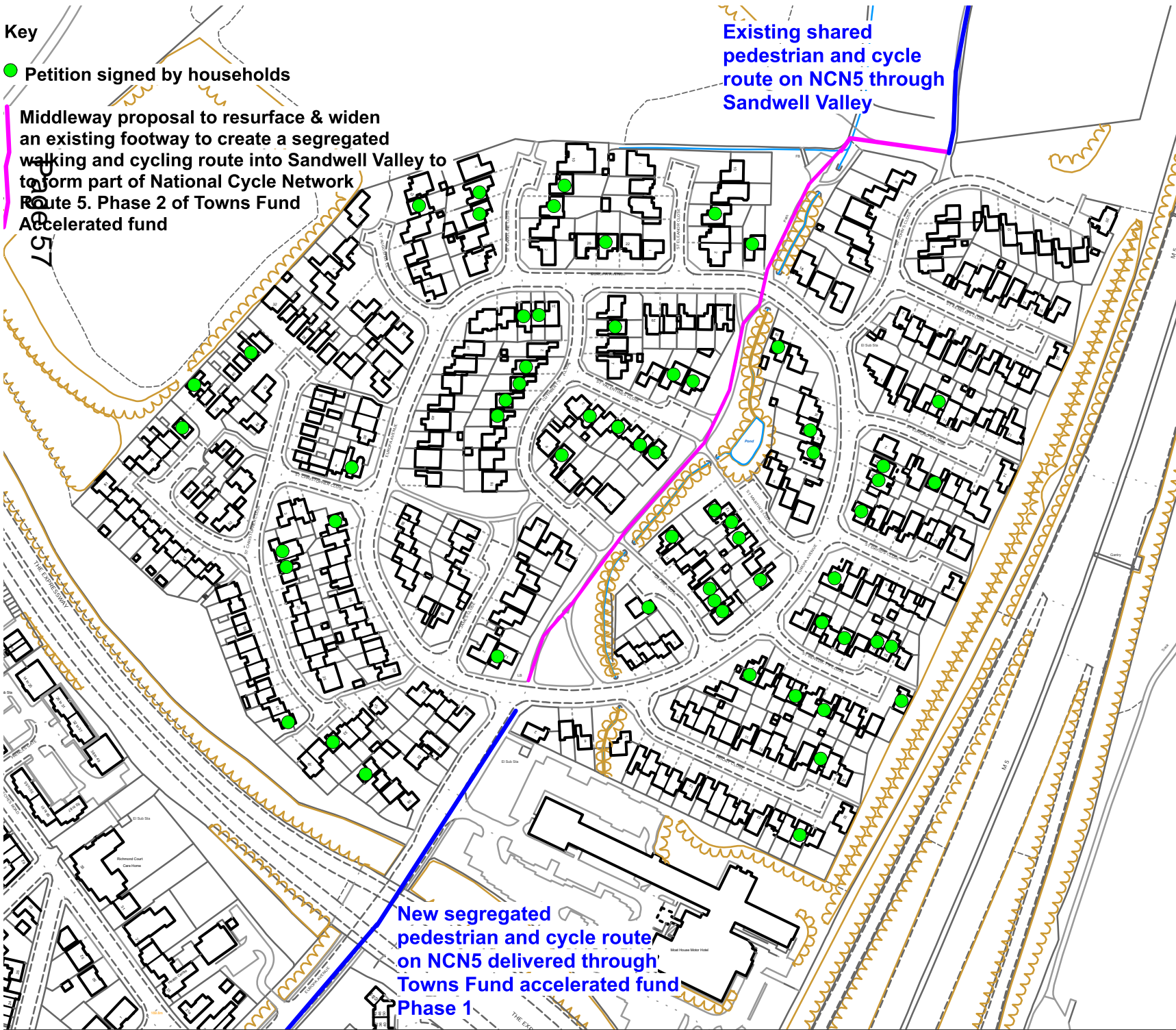
Middleway proposal to resurface & widen an existing footway to create a segregated walking and cycling route into Sandwell Valley to form part of National Cycle Network Route 5. Phase 2 of Towns Fund Accelerated fund

Existing shared pedestrian and cycle route on NCN5 through Sandwell Valley

New segregated pedestrian and cycle route on NCN5 delivered through Towns Fund accelerated fund Phase 1

Petition Plan of Europa Avenue proposed Walking & Cycling Route Improvements

Date: 17/11/2022



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Europa Ave

Mercure Birmingham West

142



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Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

13 July 2023

Subject:	Tracking and Monitoring of Scrutiny Recommendations
Director:	Law and Governance Surjit Tour Surjir_tour@sandwell.gov.uk
Contact Officer:	Alexander Goddard – Scrutiny Lead Officer Alexander_Goddard@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







That the Board considers the items within the recommendations tracker and notes the progress on their implementation.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To facilitate the effective monitoring of progress on responses to and press with implementation of recommendations made by the Board and identify where further action is required.
- 2.2 Effective monitoring of recommendations facilitates the evaluation of the impact of the scrutiny function overall.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	Best start in life for children and young people	The scrutiny function supports all of the objectives of the Corporate Plan by seeking to improve services for the people of Sandwell. It does this by influencing the policies and decisions made by the Council and other organisations involved in delivering public services. Effective monitoring of recommendations made supports this and allows scrutiny to evaluate its impact.
	People live well and age well	
	Strong resilient communities	
	Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods	
	A strong and inclusive economy	
	A connected and accessible Sandwell	

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The attached Appendix details the responses to and progress on the implementation of recommendations made by the scrutiny function.

5 Implications

Resources:	The resource implications will be detailed in the responses to recommendations as detailed in the appendix.
Legal and Governance:	The duty to undertake overview and scrutiny is set out in Part 1A Section 9 of the Local Government Act 2000. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places a duty on the Executive to respond to Scrutiny recommendations within two months of receiving them.



Risk:	Any risk implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Risk Owner at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board. Any specific risks for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.
Equality:	Any equality implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board. Any specific equality implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.
Health and Wellbeing:	Any health and wellbeing implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board. Any specific health and wellbeing implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.
Climate Change:	Any climate change implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board. Any specific climate change implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.
Corporate Parenting:	Any corporate parenting implications have been considered with the relevant Officer/Director/Cabinet Member/Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Team at the time the recommendations were referred to them by the Board. Any specific corporate parenting implications for the Board’s attention are detailed in the Appendix.

6 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Economy, Transport and Skills Recommendations Tracker .

7 Background Papers

None.



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Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Tracker 22/23

Page 55

Date	Item	Recommendation/ Action	Responsible Person	Notes
20 APR 23	Bus Service Improvement Plan	That the Directors of Borough Economy and Regeneration and Growth consider Minute 18/23 (20 April 2023) when exploring Bus Service improvement proposals.	Tony McGovern/ Alice Davey	
28 FEB 23	Friar park Urban Village	<p>That Cabinet consider in detail the following as part of the consideration of the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Air Quality (b) The methodology used to determine projected additional demand on the highway network (c) Clarity around the provision of Affordable Housing in the development (d) Further detail around the provision of electric vehicle charging points <p>That, if Cabinet approves the Friar Park Urban Village Masterplan, it be requested to ensure that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the use of a Local Lettings Policy on the site be explored; (b) regular air quality monitoring is undertaken as the development progresses and once it is complete; (c) different options to utilise appropriate vegetation to help address air pollution is considered for the site. 	Cabinet	
16 NOV 22	Towns Fund Update	<p>That that penalty clauses contained within the contracts between the Council and contractors are circulated to the board</p> <p>That details of the sites identified for regeneration that have not been selected as part of the Towns Fund investment programme are circulated to the board</p>	Tony McGovern	

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Report to Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

13 July 2023

Subject:	Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/24
Director:	Surjit Tour, Director of Law & Governance and Monitoring Officer
Contact Officer:	Alex Goddard, Scrutiny Lead Officer alexander_goddard@sandwell.gov.uk John Swann, Democratic Services Officer john_swann@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations







- 1.1 That the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/24 be approved.
- 1.2 That a working group to consider the Review of the 2017-2022 Strategic Road Safety Plan be established and that the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board determine its membership.
- 1.3 That the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board determine if it wishes to establish any other working group(s) and, if so, the membership thereof.

2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to approve its work programme for 2023/24 taking into account where scrutiny can add value, strengthen decision making to enhance services that the Council delivers and aligns to the Vision 2030 and objectives of the Corporate Plan.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

		Effective governance arrangements support the delivery of all corporate objectives
		
		

4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The relevant Director(s) were invited to attend a training and work programming session on 12 June 2023 for overview and scrutiny members. This included an overview of the services, key issues and priorities relevant to the Board’s terms of reference.
- 4.2 A list of items identified during the year for scrutiny and pre-decision items and any suggestions received from the public were considered during the work programming events by the individual Scrutiny Boards.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 If the Scrutiny Board does not determine a work programme, the opportunity to review policies and services will not be realised meaning that improvements, savings and income generation possibilities may be missed.

6 Implications

Resources:	The Scrutiny function is directly supported by the Council’s Statutory Scrutiny Officer and Democratic Services Officers within the Council’s Law and Governance directorate. Additional technical expertise and evidence on specific matters will be provided by officers within the various directorates of the authority.
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	The strategic resource implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board at future meetings.
Legal and Governance:	Local Government Act 2000 states that Councils operating executive arrangements must also make provision for the appointment of overview and scrutiny committees. Further powers relating to overview and scrutiny are set out in the Police and Justice Act 2006, the Localism Act 2011, the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Any legal and governance implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board at future meetings.
Risk:	Any implications of topics selected for scrutiny will be identified and reported to the Board at future meetings.
Equality:	
Health and Wellbeing:	
Social Value:	
Climate Change:	
Corporate Parenting:	

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/24.

8. Background Papers

None.



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Scrutiny Board Work Programme 2023/ 24

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment



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Standing Items:-

- Tracking and Monitoring of Recommendations to the Executive
- Work Programme (including Cabinet Forward Plan)

Meeting Date	Item	Presented by
13 July 2023	Cycle Route (Europa Avenue – Sandwell Valley) – referral from Cabinet Petitions Committee	Andy Miller/ Wayne Moore/ Tony McGovern/ Robin Weare (delivery of project/ Talvinder Sandu
	Work Programme 2023/24 and establishment of Scrutiny Review Working Group	Alex Goddard
28 September 2023	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim
	Local Transport Plan	TfWM Officers (Via Andy Miller)
8 November 2023	Sandwell Local Plan – Draft Plan Consultation	Andy Miller
8 February 2024	Towns Fund Update	Rina Rahim
7 March 2024	Lion Farm Playing Field Proposals	Tony McGovern

Items to be scheduled:

Working Group:

Road Safety Strategy Review

Task and Finish Group:

Bins Audit (Cllr Hemingway to lead)

Watching Briefs:

Private hire and hackney carriage licensing policy

Corporate Fleet Management

Development of Brownfield Sites

Congestion/ULEZ

Scrutiny Review/s

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Review of the 2017-2022 Strategic Road Safety Plan



To include grass and tree maintenance and any associated impacts.

Once the above review is concluded, the Board has identified the following item to be the subsequent review:

Local Centres – revitalisation and diversification



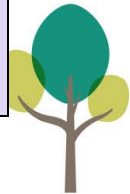
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The following items set out key decisions to be taken by the Executive:-

	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
4	Levelling Up Partnership Contact Officer: Tammy Stokes Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern	Cabinet – Leader of the Council (Cllr Carmichael)	Public	12 July 2023	TBC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandwell Levelling Up Partnership evidence base and proposed interventions.



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
20	<p>City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Projects - Consolidated Approvals</p> <p>Contact Officer: Andy Miller/Robin Weare</p> <p>Director Regeneration & Growth – Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		<p>12 July 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
21	<p>Heat Networks – Outline Business Case and next steps</p> <p>Contact Officer: Mark Taylor</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern - Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Private – Information relating to financial or business affairs</p>	<p>12 July 2023</p>		<p>Report</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
22	<p>Procurement of a Strategic Delivery Partner for the Regeneration Pipeline</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tony McGovern</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet - Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		12 July 2023		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
23	<p>Regeneration Pipeline and Towns Fund Update</p> <p>Contact Officer: Rina Rahim</p> <p>Director: Director Regeneration & Growth – Tony McGovern</p>	<p>Cabinet – Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>12 July 2023</p>		<p>Progress update report</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
24	<p>Planning Validation Checklist</p> <p>Contact Officer: Alison Bishop</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet – Regeneration & WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>	<p>Public</p>	<p>12 July 2023</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Appendix 1 Consultation responses</p> <p>Appendix 2 Planning Validation Checklist</p>



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
32	<p>Highway Infrastructure Funding Plan for 2024/25</p> <p>Contact Officer: Robin Weare</p> <p>Director: Alice Davey – Director of Borough Economy</p>	<p>Cabinet - Environment & Highways (Cllr Millard)</p>		<p>13 September 2023</p>		



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
33	Professional Services Contract PSP4 Contact Officer: Robin Weare Director: Alice Davey - Director of Borough Economy	Cabinet – Environment and Highways (Cllr Millard)	No	13 September 2023	No	Report



	Title/Subject	Decision Maker	Public or exempt report? If exempt – state reason for exemption	Decision Date	Pre or post decision Scrutiny to be carried out? (Board and date)	List of documents to be considered
41	<p>Project Costs for the Re-Location of the Indoor Market in West Bromwich</p> <p>Contact Officer: Tony McGovern</p> <p>Director: Tony McGovern, Director of Regeneration and Growth</p>	<p>Cabinet – Leisure and Tourism (Cllr Padda) Regeneration and WMCA (Cllr Hughes)</p>		13 September 2023		



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