

# Agenda Cabinet

**Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 3.30 pm  
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**1 Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2 Declarations of Interest**

Members to declare any interests in matters to be discussed at the meeting.

**3 Minutes (Pages 5 - 26)**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 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 Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Sandwell (Pages 27 - 44)**

**Regeneration  
& WMCA**

To consider the Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Sandwell.



6	<p><b>Review of Council Tenant Rents and Housing Related Property Charges</b> (Pages 45 - 68)</p> <p>To consider the review of Council tenant rents and housing related property charges.</p>	<p><b>Housing &amp; Built Environment</b></p>
7	<p><b>10 Year Business Rates Retention Agreement</b> (Pages 69 - 172)</p> <p>To consider and recommend to Council the 10 Year Business Rates Retention Agreement.</p>	<p><b>Finance &amp; Resources</b></p>
8	<p><b>A461 Bus, Cycle &amp; Walking Corridor - Initial scheme approval</b> (Pages 173 - 194)</p> <p>To consider the initial scheme approval for the A461 Bus, Cycle &amp; Walking Corridor.</p>	<p><b>Regeneration &amp; WMCA</b></p>
9	<p><b>Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030</b> (Pages 195 - 248)</p> <p>To consider the Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.</p>	<p><b>Environment &amp; Highways</b></p>
10	<p><b>Q2 Budget Monitoring 2023/24</b> (Pages 249 - 286)</p> <p>To consider the Q2 Budget Monitoring 2023/24.</p>	<p><b>Finance &amp; Resources</b></p>
11	<p><b>Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures) - Initial scheme approval</b> (Pages 287 - 358)</p> <p>To consider initial scheme approval for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures)</p>	<p><b>Regeneration &amp; WMCA</b></p>
12	<p><b>Council's Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016</b> (Pages 359 - 390)</p> <p>To consider the Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.</p>	<p><b>Leader</b></p>

- 13     **Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy** (Pages 391 - 422)     **Leader**
- To consider the Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy.
- 14     **Improvement Plan Progress to 1 November 2023 and Letter to Secretary of State December 2023** (Pages 423 - 476)     **Leader**
- To consider the Improvement Plan Progress to 1 November 2023 and Letter to Secretary of State December 2023.
- 15     **Regeneration Programme Performance** (Pages 477 - 550)     **Regeneration & WMCA**
- To consider the Regeneration Programme Performance.

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

**Distribution**  
Councillor Carmichael (Chair)  
Councillors Hackett, Hartwell, Hughes, Khatun, Millard, Padda, Piper and Rollins

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## Minutes of Cabinet

**Wednesday 15 November 2023 at 3.30pm  
in the Council Chamber, Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Piper (Vice Chair in the Chair);  
Councillors Carmichael, Hackett, Hartwell, Hughes, Khatun  
Padda and Rollins.

**In Attendance:** Councillors Fenton, E M Giles, Lewis and Taylor

**Also present:** Shokat Lal (Chief Executive), Brendan Arnold (Interim Section 151 Officer), Surjit Tour (Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer), Michael Jarrett (Director of Children's Services), Rashpal Bishop (Director of Adults Services), Tony McGovern (Director of Regeneration and Growth), James McLaughlin (Assistant Chief Executive), Lina Martino (Consultant in Public Health), Suky Suthi-Nagra (Democratic & Member Services Manager), Connor Robinson (Democratic Services Officer) and John Swann (Democratic Services Officer).

### 130/23 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Millard and Moore.



## 131/23 Declarations of Interest

Minute No.	Subject	Member	Interest
140/23	Sandwell Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) proposal	Councillor Hackett	Work for the SWEDA who are part of the Sandwell Consortium
140/23	Sandwell Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) proposal	Councillor Hartwell	Work for the Bangladeshi Women's Association which was a member of the SCVO and Sandwell Consortium
140/23	Sandwell Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) proposal	Councillor Khatun	Work for the Bangladeshi Women's Association which was a member of the SCVO and Sandwell Consortium
141/23	School Teachers' Model Pay Policies 2023/24	Councillor Taylor	School Governor at George Salter School

## 132/23 Minutes

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2023 be approved as a correct record.



133/23 **Additional Item of Business**

There were no additional items of business to consider.

134/23 **Medium-Term Financial Strategy – Autumn 2023 Update**

Approval was sought to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and Medium-Term Financial Plan.

The Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board inquired as to how the quality of service delivered and how this would be measured, how the consultation would reach all communities across Sandwell, how reduced budgets would impact services, how measures would ensure the consultation received adequate responses, how methods of debt recovery would be financially viable and how the pressures and technical adjustments continued to increase.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources advised that the priority had been and continued to be delivering the best possible outcomes for residents. Sandwell was no different to other local authorities who faced significant financial pressures. Although the Council were in a fortunate position to have options to achieve a balanced budget, difficult decisions would need to be made. The Council was required to meet legal requirements but had the ability to make choices in how services were delivered. The Council's approach to the consultation on the specific savings proposals had been designed to ensure the voices of residents, communities and businesses was captured, the Council would encourage as many people as possible to engage in the consultation through the online survey.

The Council recognised the impact of the cost of living emergency and would only pursue debts through court processes or enforcement agents as a method of last resort. The Council had duty to use reasonable means to recover debt and encouraged individuals and businesses to engage early with the Council if they were struggling to pay any debt that was owed.



The majority of the increase in costs that the Council incurred from one year to the next related to price inflation, pay inflation and demographic growth.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board asked if the options to be considered by Cabinet could be provided to Scrutiny ahead of the proposed meeting to look at the draft Budget in January.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources advised that the session of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board in January would include the detail of all the savings proposals that had been developed and selected by that date which would be included in the papers.

### **Reason for Decision**

The Local Government Finance Act 1992 required the Council to set a balanced, risk assessed budget each year and approve a Council Tax precept by 11 March.

The Council had a duty to consult with those who were liable to pay council tax or non-domestic rates, as well as those who use or are likely to use services provided by the authority. A public engagement exercise on the Council's budget had been conducted in the Summer 2023 seeking residents' views on how the Council should reduce spend in order to deliver a balanced budget. In order to set a balanced budget for 2024/25, the Council had developed a long list of savings options which, if adopted for 2024/25, would impact residents and businesses in the Borough.

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and accompanying Medium Term Finance Plan following a detailed and extensive review indicated that there was an estimated Budget shortfall of £13m in 2024/25. The figure had changed in the course of financial year 2023/24 and reflected the expected refinement and testing of initial planning assumptions.





From analysis presented it was indicated that the Council must select savings which amounted to £13m to balance the 2024/25 Budget and that the overwhelming proportion of these must be recurring in nature to remove the relevant costs in years following and to prevent the avoidable growth of future budget shortfalls.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

The Council was legally required to set a balanced budget during March 2024. There were no alternative options.

#### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that approval be given to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and embedded Medium-Term Financial Plan as an estimate of the Council's current financial position as at October 2023 noting that the figures will change as further updating takes place;
- (2) that the Director of Finance be authorised to commence a period of consultation regarding the savings opportunities referred to in Annex 6;
- (3) that the Guiding Principles be approved as a framework for financial planning for the period of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy;
- (4) that the Capital Planning Principles be approved to guide the preparation of the Capital Programme in the years ahead;
- (5) that the planned development of the Transformation Programme to date and through 2024/25 be noted and approval be given to endorse the extension of the transformational approach to other services of the Council;
- (6) that the Budget Timetable be noted;



(7) that approval be given to submit to the Department for Levelling Up and Homes and Communities a proposal for the flexible use of capital receipts in financial year 2023/24 to support transformation and to delegate the approval of this proposal to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Interim Director of Finance together with the Assistant Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer;

(8) that the Council be recommended to approve the Autumn 2023 update of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy at its next meeting.

## 135/23 Council Tax Base 2024/2025

Approval was sought for Council Tax Base for 2024/2025.

The Council Tax Base was an assessment by each billing authority of the number of chargeable dwellings, converted to Band D equivalents (the average band), allowing for discounts, exemptions, non-collection and new properties. This information was used when setting the Council's budget.

In order to calculate the Council Tax Base, it was necessary to take the actual number of properties in each Council Tax band on the valuation list and then make adjustments to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme. In addition, assumptions needed to be made for changes in the number of properties in each band between now and 31 March 2025 as a result of new builds and demolitions.

### Reason for Decision

The Council Tax Base must be calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012. It was used to determine the annual amount of collectable Council Tax.

The regulations set out the methodology to be used by authorities when calculating their Council Tax Base.



They further dictate that the Council Tax Base should be set between 1 December and 31 January prior to the financial year to which it refers.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

No alternative options were applicable.

#### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Council be recommended to approve setting the Council Tax Base for 2024/2025 at 78,217.27;
- (2) that the Section 151 Officer be authorised to adjust the Council Tax Base as required following approval of the 2024-2025 Council Tax Reduction Scheme by Council on 12 December 2023.

136/23

### **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/2025**

Approval was sought for the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/2025

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board, on behalf of the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, welcomed the report which ensured the most vulnerable and those in poverty were protected and inquired as to the details other local authorities who offered a similar scheme.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources advised it was difficult to provide specific information regarding those local authorities who offer similar schemes to Sandwell as these details were not collected and published nationally. However, the Council had established that there were only around 50 councils nationally that offer 100% Council Tax Reduction Schemes. The Council had also checked the websites for neighbouring authorities and



confirmed that, very few of them still offered 100% Council Tax Reduction support.

### **Reason for Decision**

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme provided crucial support to low income families and the most vulnerable residents.

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was based on income bands and residents on very low incomes can continue to receive 100% support. Sandwell was one of only a few nationally that still provides 100% support.

The local scheme only applied to working age claimants as the Government prescribes how Council Tax Support was calculated for pensioners.

Sandwell made several changes to its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme in 2019/20 to ensure the scheme worked effectively with the Government's Universal Credit system which was rolled out fully in Sandwell in November 2018.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

Nationally a lot of local authorities had introduced a minimum Council Tax payment. This meant that everyone, including those people on a very low income, must pay something towards their Council Tax.

Sandwell does not want to introduce a minimum payment into its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, this was to protect the most vulnerable households and improve child poverty and support residents with the cost of living crisis.

### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that approval be given to make no changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2024/25 as set out in [Appendix 1](#);



- (2) that the Council be recommended to approve the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2025/25 as set out in [Appendix 1](#).

## 137/23 Sandwell Tackling Poverty Plan

Consideration was given to the Sandwell Tackling Poverty Plan and the approval of the resources allocated to the plan.

The Chair of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board inquired as to how the Council could support those hard-to-reach citizens in Sandwell.

The Leader advised that the Council was very aware that people can often find it difficult to ask for help and therefore the Council would do what it could to remove barriers. The Welcoming Space initiative had sought to reduce stigma and it was hoped that people would see these spaces as simply a friendly place to be without any judgement about why they were there.

### Reason for Decision

Sandwell was the twelfth most deprived borough in the country and the cost of living crisis was being felt by and having a tangible impact on the daily lives of our residents and communities. The Sandwell Tackling Poverty Plan set out proposals and actions for the Council and its partners to work together in a co-ordinated way to address poverty in Sandwell.

### Alternative Options Considered

The Tackling Poverty Plan aimed to make the best possible use of all the resources that partners bring to supporting Sandwell residents to address the causes of poverty. An alternative would be to not adopt this plan. However, this would risk not adequately joining up our services across Sandwell or enhancing our coordinated approach.



## Resolved:-

- (1) that Sandwell's Tackling Poverty Plan as at out in [Appendix 1](#) be endorsed;
- (2) that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, be authorised to agree the spending of the £1.5m resources allocated to the plan.

138/23

## Community Based Provision – Reablement Service within Sandwell

Approval was sought for the Community Based Provision – Reablement Service within Sandwell.

For around half of the people being discharged from hospital, it was expected they would need a period of care, rehabilitation or reablement. The proposed service would provide a reablement service free of charge for up to six weeks in order to promote independence and recovery and until assessment for long-term care was undertaken.

The Council commissioned a Promoting Independence: Care at Home Service under the ASC089 and ASC121 contracts, which delivered 1500 hours of care per week. Contracted providers received referrals for people either being discharged from hospital or for people in the community to avoid hospital admissions. The block contracts ensured there was guaranteed provision available that could meet the demands for a more expedited timeframe given the need to ensure that delayed transfers of care were minimised and also with the aim of hospital avoidance for those already in the community. The prevailing domiciliary care hourly rate was paid (80% block purchased, and 20% spot purchased).

There was no further extension option available in the current ASC089 and ASC121 Promoting Independence Contracts as all extensions within these contracts, which would end on 2 February 2024, had been utilised.



However, an extension of four months (from 3 February 2024 to 2 June 2024) in line with Regulation 72 (1) (b) of the Procurement Regulations would allow further review and development of the model whilst also allowing a procurement exercise to be undertaken.

Approval of the extension and proposed new contract would ensure that Adult Social Care could assist people to be discharged home from hospital as soon as they were medically optimised thereby relieving pressure on acute beds. In addition, the contract would also allow admission avoidance by providing care and support to individuals thereby eliminating the need for a hospital admission.

The proposal would create more providers to enable greater availability and increased choice for service users.

The Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board inquired the reasons for tendering the contract late and the effects upon service users.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care advised that service users would continue to receive a Promoting Independence Service, there would not be a detrimental impact in terms of not receiving a service. As it was a new service model and redesign being procured/tendered rather than a like for like service being commissioned, the Council needed the time to develop the new specification and work with the necessary teams to design the new approach.

### **Reason for Decision**

The Council was statutorily required under the Care Act 2014 to carry out an assessment of anyone who appeared to require care and support. Where someone was in hospital, under Discharge to Assess (D2A), funders were required to undertake assessments away from an acute bed setting.



## Alternative Options Considered

Re-procure like for like.

The current Promoting Independence service was a domiciliary care service with a promoting independence ethos. The new model would be ensuring Providers were delivering a reablement service with a clear focus on outcomes and reducing long term care needs, with financial efficiencies anticipated as a result due to the preventative and strength-based focus.

Do not extend current contracts:

This was not considered a viable option. If current Promoting Independence contracts were not extended, this would leave insufficient time to run a compliant procurement exercise, ultimately leaving a gap in provision, which would put the Council in breach of its statutory duty.

Do not re-procure:

This was not considered a viable option. To not re-procure a new service to replace existing provision and allow the current contracts in place to lapse. There would be increased delays in hospital and people not benefiting from admission avoidance leading to system pressure, as a result.

### Resolved:-

- (1) approval be given to extend the current six Promoting Independence: Care at Home Service contracts with 5 existing providers, which are ending on 2 February 2024 to 2 June 2024 (this covers contract refs ASC089 and ASC121);
- (2) that in connection with Resolution (1) above, an exemption to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be approved to enable a short-term extension of four months to allow a new requirement to be scoped out, specified and a tender process to be run, and to allow the Director of Adult Social Care to award contracts to the successful tenderer in the event that the required minimum number of tenders are not received;





- (3) that the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to complete a procurement exercise in order to secure a Reablement Service in Sandwell, which will replace the current Promoting Independence: Care at Home Service contracts from 3 June 2024;
- (4) that the Director of Adult Social Care be authorised to award the contract referred to in Resolution (3) above and enter into a contract with the successful bidders, on terms to be agreed with the Director of Adult Social Care, for the provision of a Reablement Service in Sandwell to commence on 3 June 2024 to 2 June 2026 with an option to extend for 2 x 12 month periods – 3 June 2026 to 2 June 2027 and 3 June 2027 to 2 June 2028;
- (5) that the Director - Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, or their designated representative, execute any documents necessary within a reasonable time;
- (6) that approval be given to make variations to the Contract referred to in Resolutions (1) and (4) up to a maximum of 10% of the contract value, should they be necessitated, and that authority to approve such variations be delegated to the appropriate Chief Officer in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult, Social Care and Health;
- (7) that approval be given to the Reablement Service in Sandwell to mirror the prevailing standard Domiciliary Care rate paid including any uplifts applied for the duration of the contract with variations to the contract being undertaken in consultation with the appropriate Chief Officer;
- (8) that approval be given to the Reablement model as set out in [Appendix One](#).



## Sandwell Health Determinants Research Collaboration proposal

Approval was sought for the Sandwell Health Determinants Research Collaboration proposal.

The Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC) aim was to boost research capacity and capability within local government to embed a culture of always using evidence when making decisions. HDRC used research findings to understand how decisions impact on health and health inequalities.

Sandwell Council was the 12<sup>th</sup> most deprived local authority in England and life expectancy was 2-3 years shorter than the national average. Inequalities had deepened by the pandemic, austerity and climate change, yet Sandwell's superdiverse communities, industrial heritage and green spaces were key assets. A research needs analysis in 2021 found a strong culture of evidence-based decision making in the Public Health directorate, but this was weaker across the wider Council.

### Reason for Decision

The funding would provide the Council with a unique opportunity to progress the service ambitions to use information and intelligence in a more strategic way to improve outcomes for Sandwell residents and reduce health inequalities over the longer term.

The HDRC would align to our Borough-wide Levelling Up Programme (LUP), which would invest in affordable homes, improved skills infrastructure, better leisure facilities, an improved public realm, active travel infrastructure, social value, local spend, and local employment opportunities. The HDRC would give the Council the means to ensure that the LUP and related work across the Council was informed by evidence and robustly evaluated.



Meeting the objectives of the proposed HRDC programme would lead to higher quality of the services the Council deliver and commission and more efficient investment to improve Sandwell as a place, including education, skills, employment, community cohesion, transport, housing, economy and the built environment – which were the wider determinants of health and the objectives of the Corporate Plan. Over the longer term, this would lead to improved health outcomes and reduced inequalities in both physical and mental health across the life course, contributing to the Vision 2030 of a thriving, optimistic and resilient community.

The HDRC would therefore have potential benefits across all Corporate Plan priority areas throughout the programme and beyond.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

Without the funding, the Council would continue to attempt to achieve as much of these objectives as we can within existing resources and partnerships. However, what the Council can achieve in this way was severely limited as the Council do not have the capacity or infrastructure to achieve positive change at the scale and pace anticipated with the funding in place.

#### **Resolved:-**

- (1) that the Health Determinants Research Collaboration proposal and supporting documents be received;
- (2) that funding up to £5 million and implementation of the proposed 5-year programme be approved, subject to the pending bid being successful;
- (3) that implementation of the following action points identified within the Strategic Investment Unit Appraisal Report be approved to reduce any risk to the Council:
  - (a) that NIHR's terms and conditions of funding are passported to delivery partners in agreements with Sandwell MBC and include the following:



- Procurement in accordance with Sandwell MBC's own procurement requirements
  - Maximum funding allocation for each del
  - Evidence required to support grant claims
  - Grant claims paid in arrears
  - Repayment of grant in the event of non-delivery of outputs
  - Monitoring requirements
  - Responsibility for funding overspends on delivery of the project
- (b) that all estimated costs are reviewed with delivery partners to ensure that the outputs of the project can be delivered within available funding;
- (c) that agreed output levels are agreed with partners involved in the delivery of the project and monitored throughout the funding period;
- (d) that overhead costs are reviewed to ensure that defrayment can be evidenced in accordance with the funder's requirements;
- (e) that the Risk Register is reviewed to ensure all risks relating to the project are identified and adequately mitigated;
- (f) that capital equipment purchased for the project is notified to Strategic Finance at the end of the financial year and is included on the council's Asset Register and accounted for accordingly on the authority's Balance Sheet;
- (g) that VAT/tax advice is received from the Council's tax consultants and adhered to accordingly.



## School Teachers' Model Pay Policies 2023/24

Approval was sought for the School Teachers' Model Pay Policies 2023/24 which had been informed by the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2023. There was a statutory duty on organisations employing teachers to have a pay policy in place by 1 September each year which set out the basis on which the employer would determine teachers' pay, the date by which it would determine the teacher's annual pay review and to establish procedures for addressing teachers' grievances in relation to their pay.

### Reason for Decision

The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) required schools and local authorities to have a pay policy which sets out the basis on which they determine teachers' pay, the date by which they would determine teachers' annual pay review and the procedures for determining appeals.

Schools and local authorities must stay within the legal framework set out within the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and in other relevant legislation, such as equality, employment protection and data protection legislation.

The September 2023 pay award had been agreed nationally and the recommendation for Sandwell Council was in keeping with regional comparators for all teachers.

The Department for Education issued the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document to local authorities on an annual basis. It placed a statutory duty on organisations employing teachers to have a pay policy in place by 1 September each year which sets out the basis on which the employer would determine teachers' pay, the date by which it would determine the teacher's annual pay review and to establish procedures for addressing teachers' grievances in relation to their pay.

### Alternative Options Considered

There were not any alternative courses of action available that would otherwise satisfy requirements.



Historical feedback had always suggested that the majority of schools do still want a consistent pay spine produced by the Local Government Association (LGA) for them across all the pay ranges.

**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the September 2023 Pay Award be agreed as follows and is applied to local authority Community Schools:
  - 6.5 per cent uplift to all pay points and allowances for both teachers and leaders, apart from:
  - Higher uplift for M1 of 7.1 per cent (equating to a starting salary of £30,000)
  - All pay uplifts will be back dated to 1 September 2023
- (2) that the Unattached Teachers' Pay Policy 2023/24, now submitted as [Appendix 1](#), be approved and implemented by the Council with effect from 1 September 2023;
- (3) the Model Schools' Pay Policy 2023/24, now submitted as [Appendix 2](#), be approved and recommended to the Governing Bodies of Schools in Sandwell for adoption and implementation with effect from 1 September 2023.

(Councillor Taylor left the room during consideration of this matter)

141/23

**Black Country Framework Contract for Minor Works 2021 – 2024**

Approval was sought for the Black Country Framework Contract for Minor Works 2021 – 2024 which would apply the new percentage inflationary uplift to the schedule of rates on the current Black Country Framework for Minor Works 2021-2024.



## Reason for Decision

The Highways Minor Works framework enabled quick and efficient use of contractors to undertake programmes of work comprising many schemes and eliminates the need for costly and timely tendering processes for each individual scheme. This avoided long delays in delivering safety and infrastructure improvement projects and provides better value for money by tendering in volume for programmes of work in collaboration with Black Country Authorities.

The framework contract provides for an index linked inflationary adjustment at the end of the first 2 years.

## Alternative Options Considered

Highway Services would need to utilise elements of other less suited framework contracts for urgent service provision and tender separately for dozens of individual schemes. This would increase costs, delay delivery and put external grant funding at risk of underspend or claw back.

### Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to apply a provisional BCIS inflationary uplift of 20.64% to the schedule of rates on the current Black Country Framework Contract for the Minor Works 2021 – 2024 in accordance with [Appendix B](#) of the Contract;
- (2) that the provisional BCIS inflationary uplift is implemented as soon as possible and adjusted to align with the firm BCIS index for September 2023 when published in January 2024;
- (3) that decision making as the “Authorised Officer” defined in the Black Country Framework Contract for the Minor Works 2021 – 2024 be delegated to the Director of Borough Economy.



## Sandwell Business Growth Plan

Approval was sought for the Sandwell Business Growth Plan.

The Inclusive Recovery Plan identified 7 priorities for the Sandwell Business Growth Team which had been updated in the Sandwell Business Growth Plan by merging the 'Local Spend' and 'Good Jobs' priorities into the 'Social Value in Sandwell' priority, and the addition of the 'Support in Sandwell' priority capturing the customer journey and the council's commitment to supporting Sandwell Businesses. The Economic Data contained within the Sandwell Business Growth Plan had been provided by the Economic Intelligence Unit to provide an updated evidence base for the plan. The 7 priorities of the Sandwell Business Growth Plan were:

1. Support in Sandwell
2. Start Up in Sandwell
3. Grow in Sandwell
4. Innovate in Sandwell
5. Invest in Sandwell
6. Social Value in Sandwell
7. Net Zero in Sandwell

The Sandwell Business Growth Plan set out the aims of each priority and articulates why this was a priority and how the Sandwell Business Growth Team would deliver against them. Detailed activity, outputs and outcomes for each priority are also included, and identifies outputs which were contracted for delivery through UKSPF and outcomes that the team would measure to determine performance. Contracted outputs were set annually, so on this basis the outputs and outcomes profile would be monitored quarterly and set annually.

The Chair of the Safer Neighbourhoods and Active Communities Scrutiny Board, on behalf of the Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, sought further clarify on the hub model, and how the work of the business growth team complements the work of the WMCA's Business Growth West Midlands team in order to reduce any overlap and duplication.





The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA advised that Business Growth West Midlands was a function of the West Midlands Combined Authority who were the accountable body for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which primarily funds Business Support activity in the region. Business Growth West Midlands did not provide business support directly, they operated as a point of contact for all businesses requiring support within the WMCA geography and then triage business enquiries to the relevant local authorities for action. The WMCA had retained an amount of the UKSPF to fund Business Growth West Midlands and to also commission Business Support programmes that would run at a regional level which all local authorities within the WMCA geography delivered. In addition, an amount of UKSPF funding was devolved directly to local authorities to deliver business support programmes that were tailored to the local level.

### **Reason for Decision**

The WMCA have established 'Business Growth West Midlands' (BGWM) as the centre of a 'hub and spoke' model for Business Support Services in the West Midlands. BGWM are the hub, with each local authority being a spoke. BGWM is responsible for devolving UKSPF to the local authorities, collating Monitoring and Evaluation information for reporting to Government as the Accountable Body for the fund. They also utilise this brand as a contact for all West Midlands Business Support Services and triage business clients to the relevant local authority spoke. Businesses will continue to contact local authorities direct for support.

### **Alternative Options Considered**

Retain the existing Inclusive Recovery Plan, acknowledging that the data, partners, and methods of activity delivery are different.

Rescind the Inclusive Recovery Plan and not replace it with an updated plan, acknowledging that the Business Support offer to Sandwell Businesses was not articulated and the level of endorsement unclear.



## Resolved:-

- (1) that approval be given to the Sandwell Business Growth Plan as set out in [Appendix 1](#) which sets out the Services and Programmes available from the Sandwell Business Growth Team for Sandwell Businesses in the pursuit of Sandwell's Economic Growth;
- (2) that the Inclusive Recovery Plan for Business approved by Cabinet on 23 March 2022 be rescinded;
- (3) that the budget profile and outputs and outcomes of the Business Growth Plan for period 23/24-24/25 financial year be noted.

Meeting ended at 4.14pm

Contact: [democratic\\_services@sandwell.gov.uk](mailto:democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk)



## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Sandwell
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth Councillor Peter Hughes
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Strategic Planning and Transportation Manager – Andy Miller <a href="mailto:andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk">andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Senior Planning Policy Officer – Samantha Holder <a href="mailto:samantha_holder@sandwell.gov.uk">samantha_holder@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

1.1 That approval be given to:

- a) the adoption of the Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy (Appendix 1) for planning purposes, including strategic delivery of biodiversity net gain in Sandwell;
- b) the establishment of six areas of Council-owned land to act as biodiversity net gain habitat banks, as set out in the draft Sandwell Local Plan and in time for the start of the mandatory requirement for biodiversity net gain on development sites (Appendix 2);
- c) Authorise the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Growth, to:





- i. authorise completion of Conservation Covenants between the Council and an appropriate responsible body for the delivery of these sites as detailed in this report; and
  - ii. secure the addition of these sites to the national Biodiversity Gain Site Register;
- d) the submission of Biodiversity Net Gain grant claims and establishment and spend of supplementary budgets in line with the grant funding conditions.

1.2 That future authority for any additional working on the drawing-up and delivery of biodiversity net gain habitat banks and associated projects be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA and the Director responsible for Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism and the Director responsible for Leisure and Tourism.


## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 To explain the implications of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and biodiversity net gain (BNG) elements of the Environment Act 2021 for development, planning and the emerging Sandwell Local Plan.
- 2.2 To approve adoption of the Sandwell element of the Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy for planning purposes.
- 2.3 To approve the addition of six Council-owned sites (habitat banks) to the national BNG register.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>People Live Well and Age Well</b></p> <p>The delivery of an improved environment will support the emerging SLP's emphasis on the creation of a pleasant and healthy environment within which people can take additional exercise and benefit from cleaner air and a greener borough.</p>
	<p><b>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p>The use of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy to identify areas in need of additional ecological and environmental improvement, and the delivery of specific habitat banks to</p>



	support BNG provision in those areas will improve the attractiveness and amenity of neighbourhoods. Provision of BNG habitat banks will aid in the provision of new houses across the Borough and will help prevent delays in their delivery.
	<p><b>A Connected and Accessible Sandwell</b></p> <p>Delivering linked environmental improvements will also help maintain and improve pedestrian, cycle and wildlife routes into and out of the urban areas, as many of the linear routes used by residents will also run through areas of open space and green networks.</p>

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### Local Nature Recovery Network and Strategy

- 4.1 It is a requirement of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 that all public bodies must have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their duties and functions. The Nature Recovery Network (NRN) is a major commitment in the Government's *25-Year Environment Plan (2018)* designed to help wildlife recover by providing more habitat, in better condition and across larger areas that are more closely connected, as set out in *Making Space for Nature (2010)*.
- 4.2 The Environment Act 2021 (the Act) introduces mandatory Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) to support spatial planning for nature and reverse the national decline in biodiversity. LNRS will be prepared for 48 areas that will effectively cover the whole of England and which are intended to help deliver the NRN.
- 4.3 Responsible authorities, chosen by the Government to prepare LNRSs, are required to work with stakeholders across the public, private and voluntary sectors to:
- map the most valuable existing areas for nature;
  - agree nature recovery priorities;
  - agree what actions should be taken to recover nature and where.

### Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) evidence for Sandwell



4.4 During 2021-2022, the Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust was commissioned by the four Black Country authorities to prepare “*Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy: An Emerging Approach*” (BC LNRS) as evidence to support the emerging Black Country Plan (which has now been replaced by the SLP in Sandwell).

4.5 The BC LNRS sets out a comprehensive habitat baseline for the Black Country, developed using satellite imagery and existing survey data. Using this baseline, a Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Map (Sandwell section - Appendix 1) was produced, which reflects how ecological value varies across the area and the strength of connections between habitats. This Map defines:

- Core Landscapes - the most valuable habitats, which are a priority for protection and restoration; and
- Priority Network Restoration Zones – linking Core Landscapes together into a coherent network for nature recovery.

As shown on the map there are three Core Landscapes in Sandwell (Sandwell Valley, Stour Valley and the Rowley Hills) and several Priority Network Restoration Zones across the borough.

4.6 In June 2023, the Government appointed the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) as the public authority responsible for producing an LNRS for the wider West Midlands area, to include the Black Country’s own strategies. The West Midlands LNRS will be an evidence-driven spatial plan for nature recovery and natural environment outcomes, developed through an ongoing process of consultation, including with local authorities, and will be finalised by early 2025. However, in the interim, LNRS evidence is needed to support the introduction of biodiversity net gain in January 2024 and the preparation of the Sandwell Local Plan during 2023-25.

4.7 The BC LNRS followed the methodology being developed for national LNRS at the time. As a result, the West Midlands LNRS to be produced during 2023-25 is likely to reflect most of the methodology, evidence and outputs produced for the Black Country’s own strategy.

Therefore, it is proposed that Sandwell Council adopt the BC LNRS to use for planning purposes, including the strategic delivery of biodiversity net gain in Sandwell, whilst awaiting finalisation of the West Midlands LNRS. This approach is in accordance with current national advice.



4.8 Adoption of the LNRS would not supersede or alter the current system of protections for designated nature conservation sites in Sandwell, including Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation and Local Nature Reserves. The priority areas identified in the LNRS do not currently have any specific protections through local or national policy. However, upon adoption, these designations would become a material consideration when determining planning applications and may acquire greater weight when the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is enacted (due in late 2023).

### **Biodiversity net gain**

4.9 The Act also requires certain types of development to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain, primarily on-site or (if this is not possible) off-site in the vicinity, to be secured for at least 30 years.

4.10 Biodiversity net gain (BNG) is an approach to development and land management, that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Biodiversity net gain delivers measurable improvements for biodiversity by creating or enhancing habitats to replace any lost through the development of a site and then to create additional habitat equivalent to an uplift of 10% of the original value of the development site. Biodiversity net gain can be achieved on-site, off-site or through a combination of on-site and off-site measures.

4.11 The 10% uplift must be calculated using a national biodiversity metric that has been produced by Natural England. This uplift is measured in “units”, identified in the BNG Metric. There are three types of biodiversity units, which are calculated in three separate ‘modules’ of the metric (area units, hedgerow units and watercourse units). Off-site biodiversity units can be sold, i.e. ‘1 unit of modified grassland costs £xx’.

4.12 Certain developments, such as householder applications and proposals affecting an area of less than 25m<sup>2</sup>, are exempt from the need to deliver BNG. For certain other minor developments (e.g. fewer than ten houses or a non-residential site of less than 1ha), a simpler metric can be used, which may not require the developer to employ a qualified ecologist. BNG will apply to all eligible planning applications submitted for major



developments from January 2024 onwards, and minor developments from April 2024 onwards (dates to be confirmed).

### **BNG in Sandwell**

- 4.13 There is an opportunity to maximise the potential for any off-site BNG to be delivered within Sandwell. To achieve this, sites appropriate for BNG delivery within the borough could be identified and BNG delivery secured through a legal agreement, to protect the site from development for a minimum of 30 years. These sites must also be added to a national Biodiversity Gain Site Register (BGSR), which will be managed by Natural England.
- 4.14 The legislation is very clear that BNG should be secured on the development site itself. However, where developers can demonstrate clearly and robustly that the total amount of BNG cannot be delivered on-site, they can deliver it off-site. Again, off-site delivery should firstly take place as close to the development site as possible.
- 4.15 Local authorities like Sandwell will be able to use their own land to offer offsite biodiversity units to developers and will need to calculate appropriate biodiversity unit prices for offsite gains delivered on its land. The prices will need to be sufficient to cover the costs of creating or enhancing the habitat and maintaining it for a minimum of 30 years. Council land used for BNG must be registered on the biodiversity gain sites register, measured using the standardised biodiversity metric and legally secured for at least 30 years.
- 4.16 These sites are often referred to as habitat banks. They are areas of land that have been identified and assessed for their potential ecological value to deliver environmental projects that will generate the equivalent of a certain number of BNG units. Developers who cannot provide all their BNG onsite are then able to effectively purchase the number of units they need, secured through a legal agreement.





Delivering off-site BNG within Sandwell in this way will help retain ecological value and habitat improvements within the borough and maximise related benefits for residents and local wildlife.

- 4.17 It is important to point out that developers are not required to buy units on Sandwell Council-owned sites; they can choose how and where to meet their requirements without needing to use these habitat banks. However, given the relative lack of suitable habitat creation opportunities in urban areas in Sandwell, and the marginal viability of some of the development sites that will come forward, it is considered prudent to establish this option and identify suitable projects as attractive alternatives for developers should they wish to use them.
- 4.18 National guidance also states that there is an option for developers to buy national BNG credits, sold by the government, as a very last resort. This will effectively mean those contributions can be used to support biodiversity projects anywhere in England. However, if local habitat creation opportunities are available, these will generally provide a cheaper option for the developer; the national credits have been deliberately priced at a much higher rate than local BNG units will be, to prompt developers to consider more local options.

### Unit costs

- 4.19 Work will be undertaken on costing the units being made available once suitable projects have been identified. There is no standard cost for a BNG unit, as different types of habitat will require different levels of expenditure. The fee for a BNG unit is intended to pay for the delivery and maintenance of habitat on it over 30 years. As a very broad indication, the Land Trust charity (who manage open space for community benefit) have stated that in their experience biodiversity units are costing between £10 - £25,000 per unit.
- 4.20 Local councils will not be able to levy a tariff system (i.e. a general fee) to pool money for investment in nature elsewhere at some future point. The monies generated by the sale of BNG units are ringfenced to deliver those identified uplifts in ecological value; the covenant is a legal agreement that will set out what outcomes the identified habitat site will be expected to deliver.



However, setting the fees for units at the right level will mean that the Council will not be required to fund these additional improvements itself, and the projects will be in addition to its current programme of improvement works.

This will ensure that biodiversity in Sandwell will increase measurably over time from what was originally envisaged.

### **Proposed BNG habitat bank locations in Sandwell**

4.21 Six Council-owned sites have been identified (shown on the map in Appendix 2) where BNG delivery would support the aims and objectives of the LNRS, and where management of parts of the site for nature conservation purposes for at least 30 years would be compatible with on-going use as public open space. For each site, an ecological survey has been completed, to establish a biodiversity baseline, and a broad menu of biodiversity improvements has been developed. It is proposed to add these sites to the national Biodiversity Gain Site Register (BGSR) as and when this is required to deliver off-site BNG.

4.22 The six sites in question are in the following locations (Appendix 2):

- Hill House Farm
- Hill Farm Bridge Fields
- Menzies Open Space
- Tibbington Open Space
- Tividale Park
- Warrens Hall Park

For clarification, several other sites have also been assessed and identified as suitable sites, but these were chosen as they provide the widest geographical spread of sites across the borough, as well as including the two “highest scoring” sites, able to provide potentially the greatest number of BNG units (Hill House Farm and Hill Farm Bridge Fields). Details of the additional sites that were assessed will be retained and can be considered for BNG purposes in the future if required; the listed sites are the ones that have been included as potential BNG allocations in the draft Sandwell Local Plan.



## Legal agreements

- 4.23 To establish the proposed habitat banks, the Council will need to enter one or more Conservation Covenants with an independent “*responsible body*”. Conservation Covenants are private, legally binding agreements with clauses to be agreed between the land owner and the responsible body. The role of the responsible body is to receive periodic monitoring reports and ensure that BNG is secured and delivered for at least 30 years on the identified sites, providing a significant degree of transparency to the process. Councils cannot be their own responsible bodies, on the grounds of impartiality. Responsible bodies can be public sector bodies or charity involved in conservation, or a private sector organisation with a conservation focus.
- 4.24 Given current uncertainties regarding the nature, content and timing of the Conservation Covenants, it is proposed that Cabinet grant delegated authority to approve the detail of and sign Conservation Covenants, and to add the identified sites (or parts of them) to the BGSR, at appropriate points in the future.

## Future working and delivery

- 4.25 Work will need to begin shortly on identifying suitable schemes / projects to provide viable BNG units for sale to developers once the requirement for BNG comes into force early next year. Consultants for the Council have already undertaken a study that identifies the number of units potentially available at each site and includes suggested interventions for the identified spaces, which could form the evidentiary basis for consideration of projects.
- 4.26 Members may wish to delegate the agreement for the development and delivery of suitable BNG projects to the offices of the Member and Director for Regeneration and Growth, in consultation with the Member and Director for Leisure and Tourism.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 The following alternative options have been considered:
- Option one would be to make no preparations for the introduction of statutory biodiversity net gain. This would result in missed opportunities to direct biodiversity net gain to locations of strategic value for nature recovery and which would benefit residents, and



an inability to progress the Sandwell Local Plan, which is needed to support the regeneration of the Borough.

- Option two would be to implement the recommendations of this report. This would allow statutory biodiversity net gain to be directed towards locations of strategic value for nature recovery and which would benefit residents, and preparation of the Sandwell Local Plan, which is needed to progress the regeneration of the Borough.

5.2 Option two has been selected, to maximise the delivery of statutory biodiversity net gain in strategic locations for nature recovery and for the benefit of residents and to support significant objectives of the emerging Sandwell Local Plan and its approach to delivering sustainable development.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	<p>The Government has provided Section 31 grant to help local planning authorities prepare for mandatory BNG in the planning system. In both 2022- 2023 and 2023 – 2024, DEFRA made available a ring-fenced grant of £26,807 to Sandwell to help implement BNG. Any additional burdens following the commencement of statutory BNG will presumably be subject to further consideration in the future.</p> <p>In line with national guidance and legislation, developer contributions should cover the full cost of delivering and maintaining off-site BNG for at least 30 years, including monitoring and legal costs.</p> <p>The delivery of BNG, including providing support, analysis and monitoring over time will require specialist advice to be available to the Council, given the nature of the input required. This will require either the appointment of a Council ecologist, to advise on this and related environmental and ecological matters, or the contracting-out of the requirement to a private consultancy on a retainer basis. This will be kept under review and reported back to Cabinet if required</p>
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<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The legal context is set out in the body of the report, in line with the appropriate delegation and in line with the constitution. The delivery of BNG is a mandatory requirement once the secondary legislation is agreed, and the Council will be required to manage its agreement and delivery.
<b>Risk:</b>	Having habitat banks in place will enable the Council to ensure that developers have the option to deliver required BNG within Sandwell and the risk of losing such investment to projects outside the borough will be reduced.
<b>Equality:</b>	Having an adopted Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy in advance of preparation of a WMCA LNRS provides supporting evidence for preparation of the emerging Sandwell Local Plan. An equalities impact assessment will be produced for each iteration of the Plan as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. The content of the BC LNRS is a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications to be weighed in the balance alongside the Council's duties under the Equalities Act.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Having a mechanism that allows for biodiversity improvements to be located close to where people live, and where they exercise and relax, will help to improve environmental issues such as air quality. It may also encourage them to visit areas that have been managed for wildlife and habitat and which have been made more attractive as a result. This in turn will help improve people's mental and physical health.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Delivery of improved habitats and environments will support community health and wellbeing by creating opportunities for people to connect with nature and undertake group activities such as walking and exercise together. Opportunities for additional jobs in maintenance and upkeep of such areas may also be created.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	The recommendations set out in this report support the Council's Net Zero ambitions. Delivery of LNRS and BNG will contribute towards climate change mitigation



	and adaptation measures, and meeting net zero targets, through nature-based solutions
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	No implications for Corporate Parenting.

## 7 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Sandwell Local Nature Recovery Network Map

Appendix 2 – Sandwell Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Banks (proposed)



## Appendix 1 – Sandwell Local Nature Recovery Strategy Map

### Black Country Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Map

1. The development of a Nature Recovery Network (NRN) covering the whole of England is a major commitment in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan (2018). The plan states that the development of the NRN will provide 500,000 hectares of additional wildlife habitat, more effectively linking existing protected sites and landscapes, as well as urban green and blue infrastructure; and that as well as helping wildlife thrive, the NRN could be designed to bring a wide range of additional benefits: greater public enjoyment; pollination; carbon capture; water quality improvements and flood management.
2. The Environment Act 2021 made Local Nature Recovery Strategies mandatory in England. Together the strategies are to cover the whole of the country, and the Secretary of State is to determine the areas within England to which individual Local Nature Recovery Strategies are to relate.

### Black Country Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Map (draft April 2021)

3. A requirement of the Environment Act 2021 is a Local Habitat Map that identifies the existing distribution of different habitat types and the location of areas already important for biodiversity, overlaid by locations considered suitable for delivering the outcomes and measures identified in the Statement of Biodiversity Priorities.
4. The emerging Sandwell Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Map forms part of a Birmingham and Black Country-wide map and strategy approach which has been produced by the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country and the Local Environmental Records Centre (EcoRecord). This has been undertaken through analysis of local and national data sets including designated sites, Priority habitats, species distribution, land use and ecological connectivity. The map comprises a number of components that depict the areas of current high ecological value, ecological connectivity between these areas, and prioritises opportunities for investment in nature's recovery on a landscape scale.

### Core Landscapes

- a. Core Landscapes are large areas of land comprised of multiple land use parcels that are ecologically coherent, often sharing similar geology, soil types, habitats, landscape character and land use history. They are frequently those areas less impacted upon by urban development and often support features more typically

associated with rural landscapes. Core Landscapes typically support the highest abundance and diversity of semi-natural and Priority Habitats, and the species assemblages associated with these. They provide significant opportunity and are a priority for investment in ecological recovery (e.g. habitat restoration and creation).

### **Priority Network Restoration Zone**

- b. Priority Network Restoration Zones are areas where investment in ecological recovery outside of Core Landscapes has been prioritised. These zones have been selected on the basis of being those areas that contain the highest density of Core Habitat and Core Expansion land use parcels which collectively link Core Landscapes (or their component parts), and their purpose is to support the creation of a coherent ecological network across the Black Country landscape. Priority Network Restoration Zones comprise the full range of landscape components (natural and built environment) and, where these exist, follow linear blue and green corridors (e.g. canals, rivers and dismantled railway lines).

### **Core Habitat Zone**

- c. The Core Habitat Zone is comprised of the land use parcels that contain the most ecologically valuable habitats. The zone includes all parcels with an ecological value score of 4 or above (see ecological evaluation methodology); all sites with a nature conservation designation not included in the above (e.g. some Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation); and any additional areas identified in Natural England's Combined Habitat Network data set. The Core Habitat Zone is a priority for protection and restoration.

### **Core Expansion Zone 1**

- d. Core Expansion Zone 1 comprises those land use parcels that are of lower ecological value than those in the Core Habitat Zone but, due to inherent value or location, have the most potential to contribute to a coherent ecologic network. These sites are frequently within Core Landscapes and Priority Network Restoration Zones and are a priority for investment in the restoration and creation of new habitats. Included in this zone are all areas of green space scoring 3 in the ecological evaluation; all green space scoring 1 or 2 lying within 150 metres of a Core Habitat Zone; those areas identified as habitat bottlenecks; and vegetated railway cuttings and embankments.



## **Core Expansion Zone 2**

- e. Core Expansion Zone 2 comprises all areas of greenspace that do not meet the criteria for inclusion in Zone 1. These sites provide an opportunity for the restoration and creation of new habitats but investment in these areas is a lower priority than in Zone 1.

## **Urban Matrix Recovery Zone 1**

- f. Urban Matrix Recovery Zone 1 comprises all features of the built environment within 150 metres of the Core Habitat Zone, and may include residential and commercial properties, gardens, road verges, street trees and minor watercourses. Due to their proximity to sites of ecological value these features have the most potential of their type to contribute to a coherent ecologic network. The protection, enhancement and creation of green infrastructure within these areas is a priority.

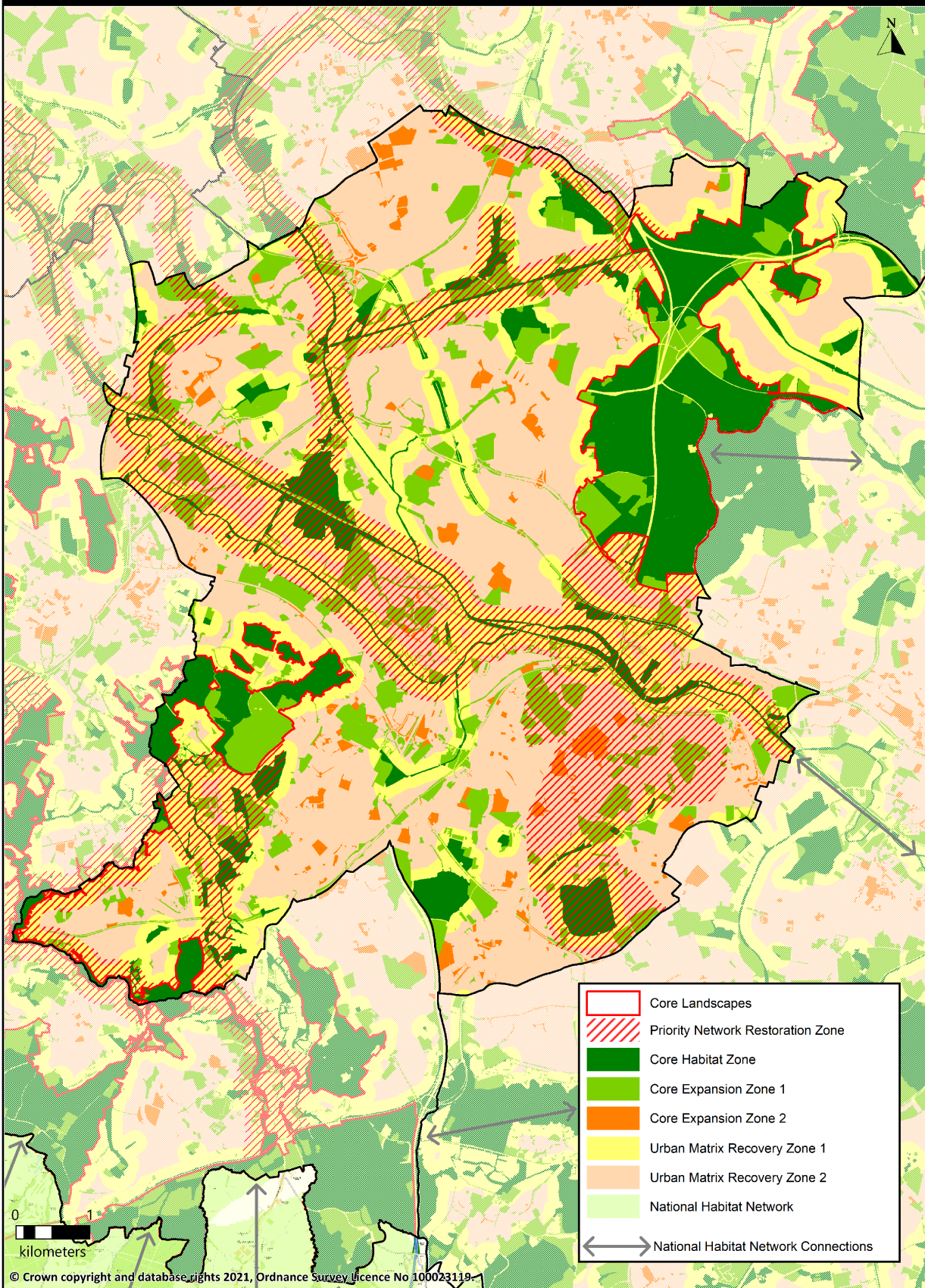
## **Urban Matrix Recovery Zone 2**

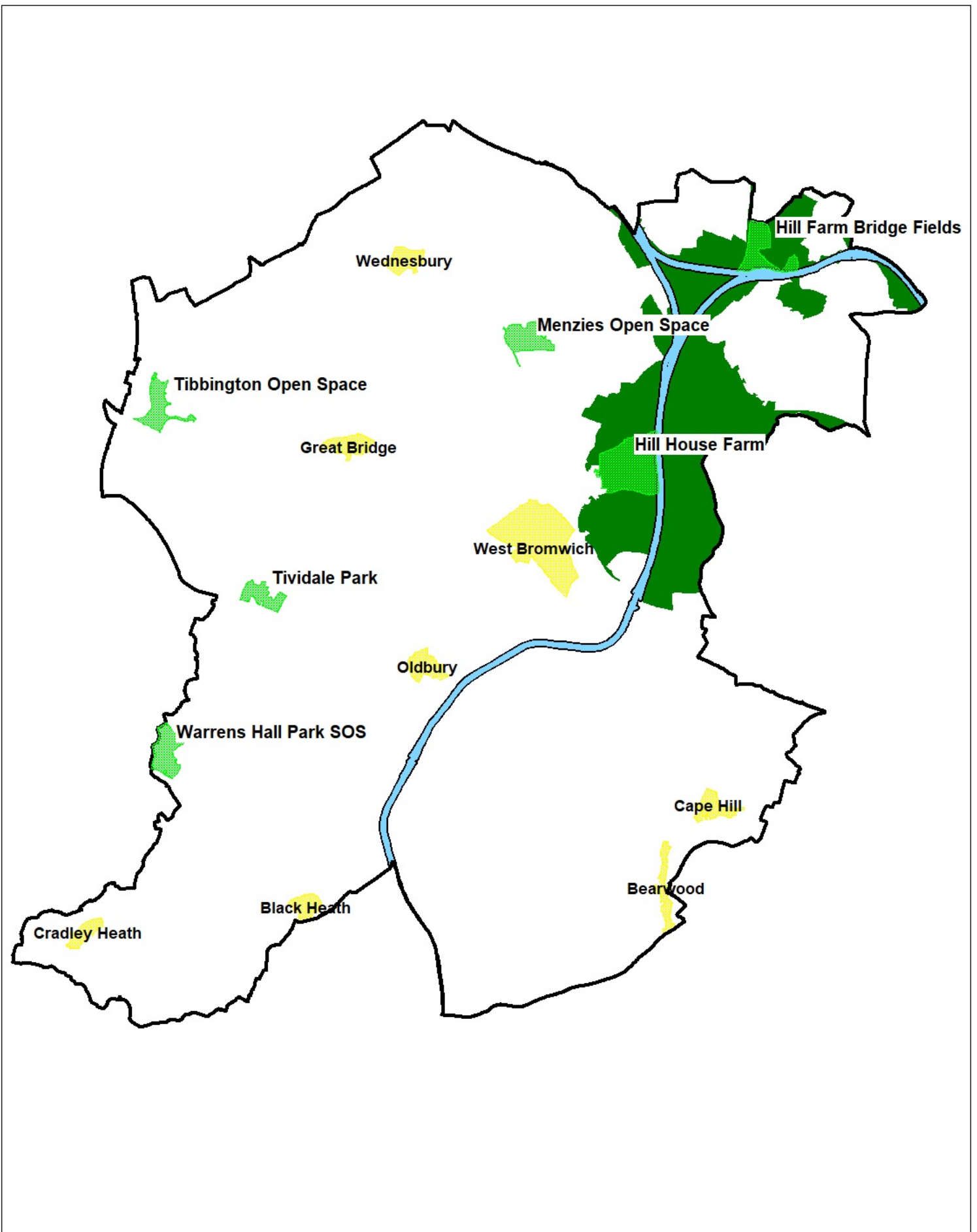
- g. Urban Matrix Recovery Zone 2 comprises all features of the built environment outside of Zone 1. These areas provide an opportunity for the protection, enhancement and creation of green infrastructure but investment in these areas is of a lower priority than in Zone 1.

## **National Habitat Network**

- h. Natural England's Combined Habitat Networks data set.

# Emerging Sandwell Local Nature Recovery Opportunity Map - April 2021





**Sandwell Biodiversity Net Gain Habitat Banks(Proposed)**

 Proposed Sites

**Scale**



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## Report to Cabinet

**6 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	The review of council tenant rents and housing related property charges
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Housing Councillor Laura Rollins
<b>Director:</b>	Dean Epton Interim Director of Housing
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Nigel Collumbell Assistant Director of Housing

### 1 Recommendations

That Full Council be recommended to authorise the Interim Director of Housing to adjust council rents and housing related charges with effect from 1 April 2024 as follows:

- 1.1 That the housing rental charges is increased by 7.7% which is the consumer price index 6.7% (September 2023) plus 1%, which is equivalent to a 7.7% increase.
- 1.2 That the housing service charges increase by the consumer price index (CPI)+ 1%, equivalent to a 7.7% increase.
- 1.3 That housing service charge is implemented on properties not currently being charged but are receiving the service in line with similar properties receiving the service provision, including heating, water and laundry facility following consultation with residents.
- 1.4 That subject to consultation with the residents of the site, to increase rent at the traveller's pitch in Hills View, Tipton by 7.7%.
- 1.5 That rental charges for garage sites be increased by 7.7% in line with other council fees and charges agreed by Cabinet and Council.




- 1.6 That properties managed by Riverside under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement receive a 7.7% rental increase and a 7.7% increase in service charges to match the council’s rent and service charge increase.
- 1.7 That properties that sit outside the Housing Revenue Account (including service tenants for Parks, Sandwell Valley and Caretaking) receive a 7.7% increase in rental charges and service charges equivalent to CPI plus 1%.
- 1.8 That the leaseholder annual management fee be increased by 7.7%, CPI + 1% in 2024/25 from £115.66 to £124.57.
- 1.9 That the Director of Housing be authorised to implement adjustments to council rents and housing related charges as set out in this report with effect from 1 April 2024; and
- 1.10 That the Director of Housing be authorised to introduce associated service charges in respect of Building Safety Regulation requirements for Leasehold properties.


**2 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 2.1 Each year council tenants, leaseholders and other residents are notified of the rent and other related housing charges to be set from the following April. The purpose of this report is to seek approval to implement these charges for the new financial year 2024/25.
- 2.2 The council has to achieve the right balance between supporting tenants to mitigate the continued cost of living pressures and protecting the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to ensure we can continue to provide affordable social housing for our residents.

**3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?**

	<p>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods</p> <p>Rental income is a key component of the financial wellbeing of the Housing Revenue Account. Funds support the council’s ambition to build more new and affordable council homes.</p>
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	<p>Rental income contributes to the maintenance and repairs of existing housing stock to become a decent standard and meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022.</p>
	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy</b></p> <p>Funds from rental and housing related charges will maintain / increase the capacity to build more affordable housing.</p> <p>Implementing a rental increase below the rate of inflation has a significant impact on our ability to deliver on new build schemes and maintain the quality of our existing housing stock.</p> <p>The requirements of the Building Safety Act will put pressures on the HRA. The significant of this will be identified when the stock condition surveys are complete.</p> <p>We will have fewer financial resources to deliver proposals within the 30year business plan. Every 1% 'lost' from rental income equates to a reduction in next year's rental income, estimated at £1.34m in year 1 (due to a 53-week rent year) and £39.57m over 30 years, based on 52/53 week rent year cycles).</p>

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### Background

- 4.1 In line with the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016, Sandwell Council reduced housing rents by 1% per year for four years, between 2016/2017 and 2019/20.
- 4.2 In 2019, the government set a rent policy for social housing that would permit rents to increase by up to CPI+1% per annum and made clear its intention to leave this policy in place until 2025.
- 4.3 From 2020 Sandwell Council has had control over its own rent setting in line with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) Rents Standard, and Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing.



- 4.4 In 2023, CPI was 10.1%, which would have permitted social landlords to increase rents by 11.1% (CPI+1%). However, the government amended the rent policy for 2023/2024 and imposed a rent cap of 7% for social housing. Sandwell made the decision to set rent at 5% to help support residents during the exceptional time of inflationary pressures and cost of living. Due to the rising supplier costs, other stock owned local authorities and social landlords took the decision to increase rents by the maximum 7%.
- 4.5 There is a recognition that the council needs to maintain the existing housing stock to a good standard and cover operational costs and to achieve the right balance between protecting our tenants, protecting tax payers (by limiting the welfare costs associated with housing rents) and ensuring the council can deliver on its commitments to build new social homes.
- 4.6 For 2024/25, the government have not announced a rent cap, therefore the council are permitted to increase rents by CPI+1% in line with the Rent Standard and Policy Statement on Rents for Social Housing issued annually in April.

### Rents

- 4.7 The Council applies two types of rents on its housing stock; Social Housing Rents (Formula) and Affordable Rent.
- 4.7.1 Formula rents take account various attributes such as post code area, type of property, local earnings and number of bedrooms; this ensures similar rents are charged for similar properties. The rents for new tenants letting existing stock are set using formula rent and it is proposed that this policy continues.
- 4.7.2 Affordable Rents are set at 80% of the market rent, inclusive of service charges. Affordable rent is charged on new builds under the affordable homes programme and any additional stock such as buy backs from previous Right to Buy or private acquisitions, or appropriated stock from the general fund. The proposal is to increase affordable rents by 7.7% in line with other rental increases.





#### 4.7.3 Rents are charged for the following council properties and buildings:

- Council tenant properties
- Properties managed by Riverside under the PFI
- Travellers Pitch – Travellers at Hillside View, Tipton
- There are a small number of properties that sit outside of the HRA and their income contributes to the General Fund

4.7.4 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed typical rent levels at 53 weeks for the main property types and sizes

4.7.5 It is estimated that 70% of our customers are full or partial benefits. This represents a mix of customers on Housing Benefit and Universal Credit.

Table 1 shows that 30% of our customers pay their rent in full.

Table 1 Customers in Receipt of Housing related benefits for Rents and Service Charges

Overall Summary	No. Customers	% Customers
Total properties	26,616	
Customers on full benefits (UC/HB)	12,112	45.5%
Customers on partial benefits	6,532	24.5%
Customers that pay full rent	7,972	30.0%

4.8 Customers who pay all of their rent and those on partial housing benefits will be impacted by a rental increase, however 45.5% of our customers who receive full benefits will be unaffected.

4.9 To demonstrate the impact a 7.7% rental increase would have, Table 2 below shows the financial impact for customers living in a 3-bedroom property in receipt of housing benefits for 20%, 50% or 70% of their rent.

For example, a customer living in a 3-bed house in receipt of 70% benefits would see a rental increase of £2.24 per week (example 3 below). Please see Appendix 2 for full details of all property types.



Table 2

**Example 1 - Customers on 20% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pays 80% of rent)**

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Grand Total
3	£6.32	£5.18	£5.57	£5.98	£5.96

**Example 2 - Customers on 50% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pay 50% rent)**

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Grand Total
3	£3.95	£3.24	£3.48	£3.74	£3.72

**Example 3 - Customers on 70% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pays 30% of rent)**

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Grand Total
3	£2.37	£1.94	£2.09	£2.24	£2.23

**Example 4 - Customers not in receipt of any benefits Impact of a 7.7% increase in rents (customers paying full rent)**

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Grand Total
3	£7.90	£6.48	£6.96	£7.48	£7.45

4.10 The Income and Money Advice Service have implemented positive initiatives to support tenants that contribute towards their rental payment. The Welfare Rights Team assist the residents of Sandwell to claim the benefits that they are entitled to through benefit maximisation, representing clients where claims have failed.

4.11 The Housing Income and Money Advice Services actively promote and signpost customers to services provided through the partnership work with agencies such as; Citizens Advice Sandwell, SCVO, Think Sandwell Employment and Skills Team, Connexions Sandwell and proactive promotion of these services.



- 4.12 Additional funds have been sought through the Local Welfare Provision (LWP) to purchase furniture and white goods. Where customers are not eligible to be supported via the LWP, the HRA Hardship Fund will be utilised where customers are eligible for support. The current hardship fund available is £100k.
- 4.13 Proactive use of Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) by applying to the Department of Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) to use funds from the HRA to off-set any shortfalls from the DHP fund for 2024/25. Sandwell's overall limit for 2023/24 is £1.786m.
- 4.14 The Council needs to get the right balance between protecting its tenants from rental increases and minimising lost income in order to achieve comments within the 30-year business plan.
- 4.15 The rental income is vital to the financial well-being of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Rental income offsets operational costs and financial charges, and the surplus is used to invest in capital improvements to the housing stock. This includes delivering the major works programme on our high-rise accommodation to meet the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022 and provisions to fund the council's affordable homes new build scheme.
- 4.16 The additional income generated from a 7.7% increase of £11.93million will contribute to the upkeep of our existing stock as well as enabling us to build more high-quality housing to meet the needs of our residents. A rental increase lower than CPI+1% would have a detrimental impact on the council's ability to maintain and improve and increase our social housing stock.
- 4.17 As at 31 March 2023 there are 974 properties in Wednesbury currently managed by Riverside under the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) agreement. It is proposed that PFI property rents are increased by 7.7% and service charges are increased by CPI+1%. This is in line with properties managed by the council.
- 4.18 There are a small number of properties that sit outside the Housing Revenue Account and their rental income contributes to the council's general fund finances. This includes service tenants for Parks, Sandwell Valley and Caretaking. It is proposed that rent and service charges on these properties are increased by CPI+1% from April 2024. These properties are heavily discounted.



## Service Charges

- 4.19 A decision was made to freeze service charges for council tenants during 2021/22. This was following the COVID pandemic as there was an interruption to some services provided.
- 4.20 Service charges were increase by CPI+1% in 2022/23 which was a 4.1% increase
- 4.21 Service charges were increased by CPI+1% in 2023/24 which was a 11.1% increase.
- 4.22 Analysis undertaken by Savills has highlighted a low level of service charge income in Sandwell (based on 2020/21 outturn) when benchmarking against other authorities.
- 4.23 The service charge freeze from previous years has had a detrimental impact on Sandwell's lower comparable service charges.
- 4.24 Service charges are outside of the government's legislative changes. The principle continues to be to recover the cost of service provision.
- 4.25 Service charges are charged to tenants living in flatted accommodation, and other properties having communal areas which require services such as:
- Cleaning - for internal and external cleaning of high and low-rise flatted accommodation
  - Security - for CCTV, Concierge and Door Entry
  - Aerials - for a digital aerial service
  - Heating, water and laundry services - relating specifically to some blocks, an estimated charge is set to recover costs but there may be retrospective adjustments between years to reflect actual costs
- 4.26 Service charges are annually reviewed, traditionally they have only been uplifted annually by inflation. The income generated from service charges contributes significantly to the HRA; however, the costs of service provision is subsidised by rental income as some charges do not cover actual costs.



- 4.27 A commitment was made in the Rent Review Cabinet Report in December 2021 to review all services charges to ensure charges applied cover the full cost of service delivery. This work has been completed; the review has identified a small number of properties are not being charged for the provision of services for heating and water where there is no independent metering for the property, and laundry facilities in a limited number of low and high-rise blocks. Consultation has commenced with residents and it is proposed that charges are implemented to these properties from 2023/24.
- 4.28 Cleaning charges relate to internal cleaning within blocks and other shared facilities, and the external cleaning of paths and gardens. There are higher costs associated with high rise blocks as they will receive more frequent inspections and cleaning.
- 4.29 Security charges are applicable in low and high-rise blocks. Most properties receive a secure door entry service with a fob key and intercom / buzzer link. Full provision includes CCTV at the entrance and around the block, a door entry service with a direct link to the 24/7 CCTV control room at Roway Lane. The block expansion project will increase this facility and ensure all residents in high-rise blocks benefit from the safety and security provided by a monitored CCTV system.
- 4.30 Aerial service charge relates to a digital aerial service provided to 10,163 properties. There is a contract to maintain and repair this service. The service charge contributes to a replacement fund for when these are renewed or replaced.
- 4.31 Other service charges for specific schemes include furniture costs, warden services and lifts. It is proposed that these charges increase by CPI+1% in line with other service charges.
- 4.32 Leaseholders are also charged service charges, in addition to services mentioned above there is a recharge for the management and administration functions.
- 4.33 The proposal is to increase service charges by CPI+1%. Appendix 3 shows how this will impact current charges. Customers who are in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit will largely not be affected by this increase.



4.34 In response to the requirements of the Building Safety Act 2022, additional services will be introduced to discharge new duties which can be recovered through the introduction of new service charges.

### Garages

4.35 Garages are within the council's general fund property portfolio. As of October 2023, 62% of garages were rented by private home owners or by tenants with more than one garage.

4.36 Increased revenue from garage rental would support the general fund. Garages rented by customers that are not tenants or leaseholders will be charged a higher rate as VAT is applied as a requirement of His Majesty's Revenues and Customs (HMRC).

4.37 A large proportion of garage tenants use this facility as a much cheaper alternative to storage costs. It is recommended that the weekly garage rental is increased in line with the council's fees and charges approved annual by Cabinet.

### Leaseholder Management fee

4.38 Leaseholders are charged a management fee to cover the resource costs of running the service. This includes employee costs, training, ICT costs, management of the billing process, repairs statements, printing and postage. The charge is currently £115.66 per annum.

4.39 It is proposed that the leaseholder annual fee be increase by CPI+1% in 2024/25 to £124.57. The council's leaseholder charges are significantly lower than neighbouring authorities; as a comparable, Dudley MBC increased their management fee from £140.00 per annum in 2022/23 to £230.00 per annum from 2023/24 following a review of the service provision to leaseholders.

4.40 A full review of the leasehold management fee will be undertaken during the next 12-18 months.



## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 It has been recommended from April 2024 to increase rents by 7.7% for tenants within the Riverside managed PFI estate of Wednesbury. The council does have the discretion to set PFI rent. It would be unfair and inconsistent for customers in council properties if PFI tenants did not receive the same increase.
- 5.2 Increasing rents below the rate of inflation creates financial pressures for the council to deliver key services. The provision of good quality Housing and Neighbourhoods are key to improving lives and life chances for our residents. Reducing the level of income to the HRA will seriously impact our 30-year business plans and less funding for maintenance of our own stock and funding for new homes.
- 5.3 An alternative would be to increase rents by a lower percentage. The budgetary pressures from this would significantly impact our ability to deliver key services and may result in reduced services where costs can't be met through operational budgets. The challenges presented through the Consumer Regulation Act and the Building Safety Act put financial pressures on the HRA to reshape our services to meet the requirements. Appendix 4 shows the rental impact on budgets.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	<p>Rent income is a key component of the HRA finances. As a ringfenced account, all costs must be met from this revenue source. This includes all day to day running costs and any financing costs associated with capital investment.</p> <p>In order to continue the investment in the Housing stock, rent increases are inevitably required. With increases in CPI and Building Cost Indices (BCI) and the current energy crises more pressure is being put on HRA finances to continue to deliver services to tenants and continue improvements to the stock to ensure high quality homes and services are provided to tenants.</p>
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	<p>Government policy allows an increase of up to CPI plus 1%, current inflation figure is 6.7% Applying rent increases lower than the CPI+1% is a risk to the Council as this results in a significant income loss to the HRA of £1.34m for every 1% reduction.</p>
<p><b>Legal and Governance:</b></p>	<p>Local housing authorities are required by s.74 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 to keep a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) unless the Secretary of State has consented to their not doing so. The HRA identifies major elements of housing revenue expenditure, such as maintenance, administration and contributions to capital costs, and how they are funded by rents and other income.</p> <p>S.24 of the Housing Act 1985 gives local authorities the power to make reasonable charges for the tenancy or occupation of dwellings. Rent setting must be seen in the context of the statutory duty to set a balanced HRA budget.</p> <p>The Council is required to review from time to time that the rents and service charges that it charges for the tenancy or occupation of its dwellings are fair and reasonable. The review of rents is now subject to further restrictions arising from the provisions of the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. In October 2017, the Government confirmed details for future social rents and from 2020/21, providers are able to increase rents up to a limit of CPI plus 1% each year. This policy is designed to provide more certainty over rent levels.</p> <p>The Council may amend the rent for its tenants by giving at least 28-days notice. The notice period arises from s.102 (1)(b) of the Housing Act 1985 and in the terms of the Council's standard tenancy agreement.</p>
<p><b>Risk:</b></p>	<p>Appropriate measures will be put in place to mitigate any risks identified up to acceptable levels once a decision is made what increases are to be applied.</p>





<b>Equality:</b>	Appropriate measures will be put in place to mitigate any risks identified up to acceptable levels once a decision is made what increases are to be applied.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There are no direct implications from this report but rent and service charge income will continue to be used to protect residents such as through the funding of support for the anti-social behaviour service, cleaning of estates, fire protection and building safety measures and CCTV.
<b>Social Value:</b>	There is not direct impact resulting from this report.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	The requirement to retro-fit properties to achieve net zero targets for our housing stock will require significant investment which the HRA currently doesn't have capacity to deliver. Any rent increases below the current levels of inflation will increase further the budget pressures on the HRA in future years putting at risk our ability to deliver on these targets.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The Council has a duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, to ensure that children leaving care and entering adulthood are not isolated and are able to participate social an economically in society. The Council provides training flats for care leavers aged 16 to 18 and access to social housing register as a care leaver of Sandwell Children's Trust aged 25 or below. Apprentice opportunities are being successfully explored within Housing and the Income Management Team have successfully appointed the first care leaver into an apprentice role.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Impact of Rental Increase on Average Weekly Rents

Appendix 2 – Impact of Rental Increase to Customers on Partial Housing Benefits

Appendix 3 – Rental from Service charges and Impact on weekly charges

Appendix 4 – Rental Increase and the Impact on Budgets



## 8. Background Papers

None.



Appendix 1 – Impact of rental increase on average weekly rents - varying property types and size

Average of Rent - 7.7% Increase

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Average
0	£73.61	£64.18	£68.75	£0.00	£67.41
1	£87.95	£74.78	£81.20	£85.77	£81.82
2	£109.04	£82.40	£90.07	£97.88	£91.32
3	£110.50	£90.61	£97.42	£104.58	£104.17
4	£125.89	£0.00	£0.00	£118.20	£118.22
5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£137.33	£137.33
6	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£128.14	£128.14
7	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£287.47	£287.47
8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£136.05	£136.05
Average	£90.66	£80.95	£84.73	£103.82	£94.71

Impact of 7.7% increase on weekly Rent

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Average
0	£5.26	£4.59	£4.92	£0.00	£4.82
1	£6.29	£5.35	£5.81	£6.13	£5.85
2	£7.80	£5.89	£6.44	£7.00	£6.53
3	£7.90	£6.48	£6.96	£7.48	£7.45
4	£9.00	£0.00	£0.00	£8.45	£8.45
5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£9.82	£9.82
6	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£9.16	£9.16
7	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£20.55	£20.55
8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£9.73	£9.73
Average	£6.48	£5.79	£6.06	£7.42	£6.77

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## Appendix 2 – Impact of Rental Increases for Customers on Partial Benefits

### Impact of a 7.7% Increase

Example 1 - Customers on 20% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pays 80% of rent)

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Average
0	£4.21	£3.67	£3.93	£0.00	£3.86
1	£5.03	£4.28	£4.64	£4.91	£4.68
2	£6.24	£4.71	£5.15	£5.60	£5.22
3	£6.32	£5.18	£5.57	£5.98	£5.96
4	£7.20	£0.00	£0.00	£6.76	£6.76
5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7.85	£7.85
6	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7.33	£7.33
7	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£16.44	£16.44
8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£7.78	£7.78
Average	£5.19	£4.63	£4.85	£5.94	£5.42

Example 2 - Customers on 50% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pay 50% rent)

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Average
0	£2.63	£2.29	£2.46	£0.00	£2.41
1	£3.14	£2.67	£2.90	£3.07	£2.92
2	£3.90	£2.95	£3.22	£3.50	£3.26
3	£3.95	£3.24	£3.48	£3.74	£3.72
4	£4.50	£0.00	£0.00	£4.23	£4.23
5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4.91	£4.91
6	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4.58	£4.58
7	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£10.28	£10.28
8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£4.86	£4.86
Average	£3.24	£2.89	£3.03	£3.71	£3.39

## Appendix 2 – Impact of Rental Increases for Customers on Partial Benefits

Example 3 - Customers on 70% Housing Benefits - Impact of a 7.7% increase in rent (pays 30% of rent)

Bedrooms	Bungalow	Flat High Rise	Flat Low Rise/Medium Rise	House	Average
0	£1.58	£1.38	£1.47	£0.00	£1.45
1	£1.89	£1.60	£1.74	£1.84	£1.75
2	£2.34	£1.77	£1.93	£2.10	£1.96
3	£2.37	£1.94	£2.09	£2.24	£2.23
4	£2.70	£0.00	£0.00	£2.54	£2.54
5	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2.95	£2.95
6	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2.75	£2.75
7	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6.17	£6.17
8	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£2.92	£2.92
Average	£1.94	£1.74	£1.82	£2.23	£2.03

## Appendix 3 Services Charges – Income and charges

### Income from Service Charges – Impact of Increases

Charge Description	Annual Income 2022/23	Current Income Est. (IE +11.1% Incr. Apr23)	Additional Income			
			5% Increase	7% Increase	7.7% Increase	9% Increase
Communal Cleaning	£1,290,532	£1,433,781	£71,689.07	£100,365	£110,401	£129,040
Security - CCTV/Concierge/Door entry	£1,159,765	£1,288,498	£64,424.92	£90,195	£99,214	£115,965
Aerial	£233,197	£259,082	£12,954	£18,136	£19,949	£23,317
Heating	£86,063	£95,616	£4,781	£6,693	£7,362	£8,605
Gap Service	£46,675	£51,856	£2,593	£3,630	£3,993	£4,667
Furniture	£71,043	£78,929	£3,946	£5,525	£6,078	£7,104
Willow Gardens	£95,950	£106,600	£5,330	£7,462	£8,208	£9,594
Communal Facility	£15,623	£17,357	£868	£1,215	£1,336	£1,562
Water (Walker Grange)	£9,179	£10,198	£510	£714	£785	£918
Lift Maintenance	£7,999	£8,887	£444	£622	£684	£800
Warden	£1,724	£1,915	£96	£134	£147	£172
Grounds Maintenance	£2,061	£2,290	£115	£160	£176	£206
<b>Total</b>	<b>£3,019,811</b>	<b>£3,355,010</b>	<b>£167,751</b>	<b>£234,851</b>	<b>£258,336</b>	<b>£301,951</b>

## Appendix 3 Services Charges – Income and charges

### Average Weekly Charges – Impact of increases on weekly charges

Average Charges	Details	Charges 2023/24	5% Increase	5% Inc. Difference	7% Increase	7% Inc. Difference	7.7% Increase	7.7% Inc. Difference	9% Increase	9% Inc. Difference
Cleaning	High rise flats	£5.36	£5.63	£0.27	£5.74	£0.38	£5.77	£0.41	£5.84	£0.48
Cleaning	Low/med rise flats	£4.83	£5.07	£0.24	£5.17	£0.34	£5.20	£0.37	£5.26	£0.43
Cleaning	Supported Accommodation	£10.33	£10.85	£0.52	£11.05	£0.72	£11.13	£0.80	£11.26	£0.93
Communal cleaning	Medium rise	£0.73	£0.77	£0.04	£0.78	£0.05	£0.79	£0.06	£0.80	£0.07
Aerial	Charge	£0.49	£0.51	£0.02	£0.52	£0.03	£0.53	£0.04	£0.53	£0.04
Furniture		£10.18	£10.69	£0.51	£10.89	£0.71	£10.96	£0.78	£11.10	£0.92
Lift	Scribbans Place	£7.94	£8.34	£0.40	£8.50	£0.56	£8.55	£0.61	£8.65	£0.71
Water	Walker Grange	£4.07	£4.27	£0.20	£4.35	£0.28	£4.38	£0.31	£4.44	£0.37
Security - CCTV		£4.27	£4.48	£0.21	£4.57	£0.30	£4.60	£0.33	£4.65	£0.38
Security - Concierge & CCTV		£9.91	£10.41	£0.50	£10.60	£0.69	£10.67	£0.76	£10.80	£0.89
Security - Door entry and CCTV		£6.23	£6.54	£0.31	£6.67	£0.44	£6.71	£0.48	£6.79	£0.56
Security - security door		£1.97	£2.07	£0.10	£2.11	£0.14	£2.12	£0.15	£2.15	£0.18
Warden	Walker Grange	£0.94	£0.99	£0.05	£1.01	£0.07	£1.01	£0.07	£1.02	£0.08
<u>Willow Gardens</u>										
Furniture		£3.14	£3.30	£0.16	£3.36	£0.22	£3.38	£0.24	£3.42	£0.28



### Appendix 3 Services Charges – Income and charges

Guttering		£0.16	£0.17	£0.01	£0.17	£0.01	£0.17	£0.01	£0.17	£0.01
Management Fee		£8.55	£8.98	£0.43	£9.15	£0.60	£9.21	£0.66	£9.32	£0.77
Oven / Hob		£1.99	£2.09	£0.10	£2.13	£0.14	£2.14	£0.15	£2.17	£0.18
Utilities (communal)		£9.18	£9.64	£0.46	£9.82	£0.64	£9.89	£0.71	£10.01	£0.83
Windows		£0.78	£0.82	£0.04	£0.83	£0.05	£0.84	£0.06	£0.85	£0.07
Grounds		£3.71	£3.90	£0.19	£3.97	£0.26	£4.00	£0.29	£4.04	£0.33
Cleaning		£9.93	£10.43	£0.50	£10.63	£0.70	£10.69	£0.76	£10.82	£0.89
Cleaning materials		£0.89	£0.93	£0.04	£0.95	£0.06	£0.96	£0.07	£0.97	£0.08
Lift		£0.50	£0.53	£0.03	£0.54	£0.04	£0.54	£0.04	£0.55	£0.05
<u>Other service charges</u>										
Gap	Gap	£33.24	£34.90	£1.66	£35.57	£2.33	£35.80	£2.56	£36.23	£2.99
Grounds	Parkside/ Scribbans Place	£1.20	£1.26	£0.06	£1.28	£0.08	£1.29	£0.09	£1.31	£0.11
Grounds	Norma Close	£0.62	£0.65	£0.03	£0.66	£0.04	£0.67	£0.05	£0.68	£0.06
Heating	Selby House	£6.89	£7.23	£0.34	£7.37	£0.48	£7.42	£0.53	£7.51	£0.62
Heating	Selby House	£7.34	£7.71	£0.37	£7.85	£0.51	£7.91	£0.57	£8.00	£0.66
Leaseholder charges	Per annum	£115.66	£121.44	£5.78	£123.76	£8.10	£124.57	£8.91	£126.07	£10.41

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Appendix 4 – Budgeted Rental Income and Impact of Increasing rents

	Annual Income 2024/25 (53 weeks)	Additional Annual Income PA (53 weeks)
Rental Income 52 weeks (2024/24 full year forecast)	£122,086,330	
6% Increase (53 weeks)	£131,900,193	£9,813,863
7% Increase (53 weeks)	£133,144,534	£11,058,204
<b>7.7% Increase (53 weeks)</b>	<b>£134,015,573</b>	<b>£11,929,243</b>
8% Increase (53 weeks)	£134,388,876	£12,302,546
9% Increase (53 weeks)	£135,633,217	£13,546,887

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## Report to Cabinet

**6 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	10 Year Business Rates Retention Agreement
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources Councillor Bob Piper
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Finance Brendan Arnold
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Acting Assistant Director – Finance Claire Spencer Claire_spencer@sandwell.gov.uk

### 1 Recommendations

Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

- 1.1 Approval be granted for the Council to enter into a 10-year business rates retention arrangement with the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC), the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the six other West Midlands metropolitan local authorities.
- 1.2 That the Director of Finance in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, be authorised to complete any necessary agreements for the retention arrangement referred to in 1.1 above.
- 1.3 That the Director of Finance be authorised to make an annual payment to the West Midlands Combined Authority of £1.264m in 2023/24, which constitutes the Council's proportion of the "WMCA Share" of regional business rates income collected in the current year under the existing 100% business rates retention pilot arrangements.
- 1.4 That subject to approval of recommendation 1.1, the Director of Finance be authorised to make an annual payment to the West Midlands



Combined Authority in each year throughout the 10-year period commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024, comprising of the Council's proportion of the "WMCA Share" of regional business rates income collected in that year.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

### Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines proposals for a new agreement with Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) which would allow the seven West Midlands metropolitan local authorities to retain 100% of their business rates income for the ten years from 2024/25, with a share payable each year to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) (and 1% payable to the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority).
- 2.2 This agreement is in accordance with the "West Midlands Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal", which was set out in a paper to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2023. Cabinet resolved to approve the Deeper Devolution Deal, as set out in the report, and resolved that further reports would be received by Cabinet on specific issues relating to the detail of the Deeper Devolution Deal. This report relates specifically to the proposed 10 year business rates retention agreement.

### Background

- 2.3 In 2017, the seven constituent local authorities of the WMCA entered into a pilot agreement with DLUHC allowing them to benefit from retaining 100% of the business rates generated within their respective local authority areas, compared with 50% nationally, in exchange for forgoing Revenue Support Grant ('RSG'). 1% of local business rates income under both the national and pilot schemes is retained by the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.
- 2.4 Whilst initially expected to be a short-term pilot in advance of national roll-out of 100% business rates retention, the arrangement has been rolled forward under the same terms and conditions annually and remains in effect during 2023/24.
- 2.5 As part of the West Midlands Deeper Devolution Trailblazer Deal, DLUHC has offered to local authorities forming both West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities only, the opportunity to extend the



arrangement on a more permanent basis; for 10 years commencing in April 2024.




### The Proposed Agreement

2.6 The proposed agreement is similar in many respects to the existing pilot arrangements and is therefore not expected to have any impact on projected business rates income in the short term. The Government may at some point in the future contemplate a reset of the business rates base nationally; however, that is a separate issue from the scheme discussed in this report and it is not expected that such a policy will emerge for consultation in the short or near medium term.




2.7 The new 10-year arrangement offers greater certainty for the West Midlands local authorities, which will improve medium term financial planning, and the arrangement is expected to be financially more advantageous than reverting to the national scheme of 50% retention. Broadly, the Council would expect to be financially better off under the new 100% retention deal than it would be in the national 50% scheme by the value of the following:

- 50% of any forecast growth above the baseline (expected to be relatively low in the years immediately following the reset), less the WMCA’s share, and
- the levy on any growth that the authority would be liable to pay to government under the 50% scheme.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.</p>
	<p>People Live Well and Age Well The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.</p>
	<p>Strong Resilient Communities The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the</p>



	region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.
	<b>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods</b> The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.
	<b>A Strong and Inclusive Economy</b> The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.
	<b>A Connected and Accessible Sandwell</b> The proposals in this report are part of the wider devolution deal which is expected to have a positive impact on the region and to deliver financial benefits which will support the delivery of the priorities in the Corporate Plan.

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### 2017-2023 Pilot Arrangements

- 4.1 Details of the existing 100% business rates retention pilot arrangements are set out in appendix 1 of this report.

### 10 Year 100% Business Rates Retention Offer

- 4.2 The process for entering into the new 10-year arrangement will require agreement to a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which has been drafted by DLUHC. Technically, the MoU is not a legally binding document, but it will set firm parameters for how the 100% business rates retention arrangement will be managed over the period for which it is effective.
- 4.3 If the region is not able to reach a timely agreement with DLUHC on the contents of the MoU, then DLUHC have confirmed that the existing pilot arrangements will continue for a further year (2024/25) with the opportunity to enter into a 9-year arrangement from April 2025. Whilst there may be no financial implications in 2024/25 for not agreeing the MoU, there is a risk that if DLUHC policy does change in the next 12 months, the region could lose the opportunity to continue with 100% business rates retention in the medium and long term.





4.4 WMCA, West Midlands local authorities and DLUHC have been negotiating the content of the MoU over recent months. WMCA officers have been supported in all discussions by officers from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council, who were nominated by the West Midlands Finance Director Group to represent the interests of local authorities in the negotiations.

4.5 The key considerations within the MoU are set out in appendix 2 of this report.

#### **“WMCA Share”**

4.6 At the outset of the pilot of 100% business rates retention, the West Midlands local authorities agreed to fund from business rates gains, the Combined Authority Investment Programme income profile in line with WMCA’s original financial modelling expectations; that being £1.5m in year one growing incrementally by £1.5m each year. This arrangement, which is subject to annual agreement, remains intact and the sum due to the Combined Authority for 2023/24 totals £12.0m. Sandwell MBC’s contribution is £1.264m in 2023/24.

4.7 A share of regional business rates being due to the Combined Authority is required to remain in place under the 10-year deal. In 2024-25, the Combined Authority share of retained business rates from constituent authorities will total £13.5m, with this expected to increase by a maximum of £1.5m per annum. Sandwell MBC’s contribution in 2024/25 is likely to be £1.422m, which is an increase of £0.158m compared with 2023/24. The annual increase is in line with agreements made with the seven local authorities under the first devolution deal.

## **5 Alternative Options**

5.1 The Council could choose to opt out of the proposed 100% business rates retention “Devolution Deal” offer proposed by DLUHC and would return to 50% business rates retention, in line with the arrangements of the majority of local authorities across England.



5.2 If the WMCA and West Midlands authorities do not agree to enter into a new ten-year business rates retention arrangement in time for 2024/25 or 2025/26, then it is assumed that the pilot would come to an end and the member authorities would revert to the national 50% scheme. This would mean that that the council was again liable to pay a levy on business rates growth above the baseline and would lose the enhanced safety net protection offered under the pilot, as described in appendices 1 and 2. In the absence of the additional regional share of business rates growth from which to fund the WMCA contribution, the WMCA would need to either seek financial contributions from the West Midlands authorities outside of the business rates scheme (which would then create a funding pressure for the individual authorities) or seek government support to ensure its ongoing sustainability.

## 6 Implications

<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p>According to modelling carried out by WMCA, the pilot of 100% business rates retention has resulted in an average gain in business rates income of £7.1m per annum to Sandwell MBC over the term of the pilot scheme. For context, retained business rates for the Council are forecast to be £109.6m in 2023/34.</p> <p>Whilst the 100% business rates retention pilot has meant that the Council has been in a gain position due to business rates growth compared with prior 50% retention arrangements, there is no guarantee that there will be any gain over the 10 year period of the revised arrangement and it is not possible at this point to quantify any potential gains or risks relating to the new agreement.</p> <p>A payment of £1.264m to WMCA in 2023/24 will require a virement of £0.328m from Contingency to Central items to top-up the budget within Central Items that is available to fund the “WMCA Share” payment that the council is obliged to make.</p> <p>The Council’s “WMCA Share” payment is forecast to increase by £0.158m per annum from 2024/25 and provision for this will be made within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>
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<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The MoU whilst not legally binding is a formal document which sets out the expectations of the West Midlands local authorities, WMCA and DLUHC and provides clarity for all parties in relation to the operation, review and limitations of the 10 year agreement.
<b>Risk:</b>	There is a risk that a business rates reset or downturn in business rates could potentially put the council or business rates pool into a detriment position due to business rates income potentially falling below the baseline position. However the MoU does provide some protection against this via discussions with DLUHC through a review of the arrangements, safety net and a local “no detriment” agreement.
<b>Equality:</b>	There are no inequalities implications arising from the proposals in this report.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	There are no health and wellbeing implications from the proposals in this report.
<b>Social Value:</b>	There are no social value implications arising from the proposals in this report.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	There are no climate change implications arising from proposals in this report.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no corporate parenting implications arising from proposals in this report.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1: 2017-2023 Pilot Arrangements

Appendix 2: 10 Year Agreement - Memorandum of Understanding Key Considerations

## 8. Background Papers

West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Deal

West Midlands Combined Authority Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal



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## 10 Year Business Rates Retention Agreement Report Appendix 1

### 2017-2023 Pilot Arrangements

1. The pilot of 100% business rates retention represented a fundamental change to the pre-2017 arrangements, where 50% of business rates were retained locally and the remainder was remitted centrally to Government; whilst RSG was also received from DLUHC by each West Midlands authority. The pilot arrangements essentially meant RSG was foregone, in exchange for the remaining 50% central share of business rates now being retained locally, rather than remitted to Central Government.
2. Given this fundamental shift in the local authority financing mechanism, DLUHC provided a “no detriment guarantee” which would be triggered if the resources generated for West Midlands authorities under the national business rates retention arrangements in effect at the time (50% retention) would have yielded a higher value of funding at pilot level (being all seven constituent local authorities as a collective) compared with the 100% retention arrangements under the pilot. In the event of a collective-level detriment, DLUHC agreed it would directly reimburse the pilot as a whole.
3. If, however, there were instances of isolated detriment (i.e. some local authorities worse off), the collective no detriment clause would not be triggered, and so no compensating funding from DLUHC would be received. However, the arrangement agreed with DLUHC stipulated that those authorities in a gain position would directly reimburse those in a detriment position.
4. The pilot also contained an enhanced “safety net” level for each West Midlands authority of 97% of its baseline funding level, compared with 92.5% nationally, to reflect the increased exposure to business rates risk by way of 100% retention. The safety net is the level below which DLUHC guarantees an authority’s income from business rates will not fall.
5. The 2016 Devolution Deal with DLUHC (which was effectively the catalyst for the WMCA and the associated Investment Programme) included an



arrangement whereby the Combined Authority would benefit from a share of business rates growth in the region.

6. At the time of the 2016 Devolution Deal, local authorities were in the national retention system (50% retained, 50% remitted centrally) and Central Government agreed to remit back to the Combined Authority any growth within the 50% Central Share that was due from the region to Central Government under the national arrangements in effect at that time.
7. The Combined Authority was initially expected to generate £3bn of income to fund the regional Investment Programme. This would facilitate £2bn of investment (with the remainder used for capital financing) and would be funded from Gainshare (a 30-year DLUHC Grant), Mayoral Precept, Mayoral Business Rates Supplement and business rates growth.
8. The move from the national 50% arrangements to the 100% retention arrangements complicated the calculations of business rates growth and hence the amount due to the Combined Authority. Nevertheless, local authorities agreed to fund from business rates gains, the Combined Authority Investment Programme income profile in line with the original financial modelling expectations; that being £1.5m in year one growing incrementally by £1.5m each year. This arrangement, which is subject to annual agreement, remains intact and the sum due to the Combined Authority for 2023/24 totals £12.0m. Sandwell MBC's contribution is £1.264m in 2023/24.
9. To note, the WMCA share is deducted in the gain/detriment calculations before the "no detriment" assessment is carried out.



## 10 Year Business Rates Retention Agreement Report Appendix 2

### 10 Year 100% Business Rates Retention Offer Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) Key Considerations

1. **Term:** The 10-year arrangement should allow authorities to assemble financial plans with more confidence and where enhanced incomes are projected, authorities may be enabled to make longer term investment decisions given the arrangements have a degree of longevity.
2. **Safety Net:** The safety net is a protection within the system for local authorities which guarantees that reductions in business rates income is limited to a minimum percentage of the baseline funding level. Under the pilot arrangements, each authority had an enhanced safety net level of 97%, compared with 92.5% nationally. WMCA and Solihull MBC have successfully negotiated for this enhanced level of protection to remain unchanged, at an individual authority level, under the proposed 10-year arrangements.
3. **Grants Rolled In:** There is no change to the grants rolled in compared with the pilot arrangements. West Midlands authorities will continue to forgo RSG only in exchange for increased business rates retention.
4. **Additional Levy:** The levy for the pool will remain at nil, unchanged from the pilot arrangements.
5. **WMCA Share:** A share of regional business rates due to the Combined Authority is required to remain in place. Under the 10 year deal, in 2024-25, the Combined Authority share of retained business rates from constituent authorities will total £13.5m, with this expected to increase by a maximum of £1.5m per annum. Sandwell MBC's contribution in 2024/25 is likely to be £1.422m, which is an increase of £0.158m compared with 2023/24. The annual increase is in line with agreements made with the seven local authorities under the first devolution deal.



6. **Impact of a Reset:** The 10 year arrangement will be affected by national resets to business rates baselines. At the point of a reset, at a national level, the resources available to local authorities are unchanged in aggregate. However, a reset changes how DLUHC distributes these resources nationally and as such, some local authorities could benefit from a reset whilst the reverse will be true for other authorities. All core funding systems underpinned by business rates (the pilot, the national 50% scheme and the ten-year arrangements) are exposed to this issue but the MoU describes how WMCA and the local authorities ensure protection from adverse outcomes associated with the reset, as far as is possible given the detail of how a reset will be undertaken has yet to be determined.
7. It is important to note that DLUHC has indicated that there will not be a reset until 2025/26 at the earliest. Additionally, it is as yet unclear what form a reset will take – for example whether it will be a full or partial reset, whether baseline funding levels will be updated in addition to business rates baselines (and if so on what basis) and which year(s) will be used to set the new baselines. These technical details are likely to have a significant influence on the outcome / impact of this national event. Nevertheless, the negotiating team have sought to agree appropriate protections which are acceptable to both sides.
8. A reset presents particular risks for the size of the WMCA share because in the year(s) immediately following a reset when business rates baselines are higher, the likelihood of there being insufficient business rates growth from which to fund the expected contribution is increased. Local authorities were concerned that in that scenario they might be expected to mitigate this risk from core resources, in which case they could be financially better off (particularly in the immediate year/s post re-set) in the national 50% scheme.
9. Through the negotiations with DLUHC steps have been taken to mitigate the loss of the no detriment protection. Firstly, the MoU includes a commitment from DLUHC that, in the event a reset has adverse, unintended consequences on the West Midlands authorities' ability to fund the WMCA share at the level expected, DLUHC will work with the region





to protect the substance of the WMCA share and secondly; it provides a means of reviewing and modifying the arrangements throughout the ten-year term with the agreement of all parties.

10. **No Detriment:** DLUHC is not willing to retain the “no detriment” protection that existed under the pilot arrangements, whereby DLUHC will reimburse the West Midlands authorities where they are collectively in a net deficit position.
11. The no detriment protection has not been called upon under the pilot arrangements, indicating it may be unlikely that the pool encounters a net detriment, however, the region is yet to experience the impact of a baseline reset which could make the overall position more marginal, particularly in the early years following a reset.
12. Outside of the MOU, locally-agreed no detriment protections (i.e. where authorities in a gain position may compensate authorities in a detriment position) will remain in place. The work regarding agreeing specific conditions for local no detriment has been delegated by West Midlands Finance Directors to the local authorities’ technical group to suggest a proposal. This is expected to be presented to Finance Directors and refined accordingly, and once the specifics are agreed, the expectation is that a MoU (rather than contract) would be signed by each Finance Director. Whilst not legally binding, this will ensure that clear expectations are agreed and set from the outset of the arrangements.
13. The following principles have been initially suggested:
  - The no detriment clause is applied on a cumulative basis. Annual results are heavily influenced by matters of judgement (appeals and bad debt provisions being key examples), which often have an impact on following years (for example, a loss due to a prudent provision in one year is likely to yield a higher gain the next year as the provision is unwound, etc).
  - At national resets, the cumulative gain/detriment position is reset to £nil.



- Any payments due under local no detriment must be supported by certified NNDR3 data, and any payments are conditional upon the relevant authority providing all evidence reasonably requested by the other members.

14. It should be noted that, during the existing pilot arrangements, no inter-local authority no detriment reimbursement has been requested or actioned to date.



## Report to Cabinet

**13 September 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member – Regeneration and WMCA Councillor Peter Hughes
<b>Director:</b>	Director – Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Tony McGovern <a href="mailto:Tony_McGovern@sandwell.gov.uk">Tony_McGovern@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal as set out in this report and attached Appendices, which includes the in-principle award of the Bus Operator’s Grant as a Mayoral function.
- 1.2 That the Leader of the Council is authorised to vote in favour of the Deeper Devolution Deal when it is considered at the West Midlands Combined Authority Board.
- 1.3 That any views of Cabinet on the draft Governance Review and Scheme for the devolution of Bus Services Operator Grant (BSOG) are submitted to WMCA by Wednesday 27 September 2023.
- 1.4 That the Director of Regeneration and Growth, Director of Finance and Monitoring Officer are authorised to engage on the detailed implementation of the agreed elements of the Deeper Devolution Deal.
- 1.5 That further reports are received by Cabinet (and Council if appropriate) on specific issues relating to the detail of the Deeper Devolution Deal such as opt-outs and approval of the making of the Statutory Instruments following the receipt of a draft order for BSOG.



- 1.6 That the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Monitoring Officer and Director Finance, undertakes such actions and exercises all necessary powers required to give effect to the Deeper Devolution Deal where it is considered expedient and necessary to do so.
- 1.7 That the financial benefits and risks as set out in Section 8 are noted.

## 2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Deeper Devolution Deal provides additional funding to the West Midlands Region and some additional powers to make local rather than national decisions.
- 2.2 The additional funding at high level can be summarised as follows:

Fund	Value	New Money
Growth Zones	<b>c.£0.5bn (minimum)</b>	Yes
Business Rates Retention	<b>c.£450m</b>	Difficult to Assess
Affordable Housing Programme	<b>£200-400m</b>	Yes
Single Regen' Fund	<b>£100m</b>	Yes
Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension	<b>£60m</b>	Yes
Smart City Region	<b>£10m</b>	Yes
Air Quality Sensors	<b>£0.5m</b>	Yes
Digital Devices	<b>£4.0m</b>	Yes
Industrial Decarb	<b>£10.5m</b>	Yes
Natural Environment	<b>£1m</b>	Yes
Cultural Infrastructure Fund	<b>£5m</b>	Yes

- 2.3 The benefits that could flow from this Deeper Devolution Deal for residents and businesses in Sandwell include the following:

- A. Greater certainty over retaining business rates growth locally.
- B. Growth Incentives arising from the Sandwell Levelling Up Zone from Wednesbury to Tipton based around the new Metro extension.



- C. Further investment in the Wednesbury to Brierly Hill Metro extension so that Sandwell residents can access employment opportunities more easily.
- D. Higher level of investment in affordable homes as Sandwell is only meeting 50% of the social housing need in the Borough.
- E. Housing regeneration funding for the derelict Chances Glassworks site that has important heritage monuments on site (expression of interest submitted for £20.8m gap funding) and to acquire and remediate brownfield land around the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital in Smethwick to facilitate new homes.
- F. Further funding to combat digital exclusion in the Borough – Sandwell has one of the highest levels of digital exclusion in the Region.
- G. Funding to support business to decarbonise their operations as part of the commitment to Net Zero.
- H. Investment in public realm technology through Smart sensors that could assist Sandwell in multiple ways.
- I. The devolution of the Bus Service Operators Grant opens an opportunity to transition to low carbon / EV buses in Sandwell – currently there is very little low carbon buses in the Borough despite Sandwell having the poorest air quality in the West Midlands region.
- J. Funding to improve the Cultural Offer in Sandwell which is a priority area for Arts Council funding due to low spend baseline on cultural facilities.

2.4 A detailed audit trail of benefits arising from Deeper Devolution Deal for Sandwell residents and businesses will be developed in conjunction with the West Midlands Combined Authority linked to the Implementation Plan. Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council will need to work proactively with the Combined Authority and a wide range of local and regional stakeholders to maximise the benefits from this Deeper Devolution Deal.



### 3. Background on West Midlands Deeper Devolution Deal

- 3.1 The West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities were identified in the Government's Levelling Up White Paper published on 2 August 2022 as the two areas for significant devolution of powers and resources as part of a Trailblazer Devolution Deal, now known as the Deeper Devolution Deal (DDDD). Detailed work and negotiations has been in progress over the last year since then with West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) setting up 20 Workstreams to identify proposals to be included in the DDD. There has also been continuous dialogue between WMCA officers and civil servants. Senior Local Authority (LA) officers and WMCA officers have been meeting very regularly to review the issues and in particular, to emphasise that whilst devolution from Government to WMCA is important, it is just as important that there is Double Devolution from WMCA to LA's on appropriate matters. There is also a Devolution Strategy Group which consists of all eight Chief Executive Officers of LA's and WMCA and regular briefings have been provided to Mayor and Leaders during this period to ensure political input into the negotiations on specific matters.
- 3.2 The outcome of these negotiations resulted in a final deal proposal from Government in March 2023. Whilst the offer on the table from Government does not meet the original ambitions of the WMCA and LA's, it is still a deal worth taking with potentially wide-ranging benefits.
- 3.3 On 10 March 2023 at the Mayor and Portfolio Leaders' (MPL) Group, local authority Leaders agreed in principle to the trailblazer deeper devolution deal (the deal) announced at Spring Budget. MPL does not have formal status within the WM Combined Authority's governance structure, so it was always recognised that there would need to be a formal process to ratify the deal at a later point. This formal decision has been scheduled for WMCA Board on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A two-thirds majority decision is required at WMCA Board to ratify the deal. Before Leaders vote on the ratification of the deal at WMCA Board, each is engaging with their own governance structures on deal ratification.
- 3.4 Since MPL on 10 March, a collective decision was taken at WMCA Board **not to pursue** the statutory process to provide WMCA with the 'health improvement duty' offered through the deal. The potential health








improvement duty, therefore, does not form part of the deal that local authorities are being asked to ratify.

- 3.5 The decision to submit the Governance Review and Scheme to the Secretary of State will require a unanimous decision of all the Constituent Authority members under the terms of the Constitution.
- 3.6 Following the receipt of a draft Statutory Order each of the Constituent Councils will be asked to give formal consent to the making of the Order.
- 3.7 After the deal is ratified at WMCA Board in October, there will be further decisions for local authorities on key workstreams. The most important of these are:
  - A. The Single Settlement: WMCA officers, with support from local authority senior officers and Finance Directors, are working collaboratively to prepare for negotiations with Treasury and DLUHC to agree a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the design of the single settlement. The negotiations on the MoU are unlikely to have concluded before October Board, however there will be a decision-point at a future WMCA Board to seek local authority agreement to the MoU; and
  - B. 10-year business rate retention. It is possible that insufficient detail on the workings of the 10-year business rate retention scheme offered through the deal will be available for October Board. If this is the case, there will be a further decision-point at a future WMCA Board to seek local authority approval to enter this arrangement.
- 3.8 WMCA Board will be engaged in other decisions on deal implementation; the accompanying implementation plan (Annex B) highlights a number of these instances. This is additional to the extensive engagement underway or scheduled across the region between Combined Authority and LA officers on the more detailed aspects of deal implementation.
- 3.9 This means there will be further decision-points for local authorities after the ratification decision at WMCA Board in October, particularly (but not exclusively) on the funding and financial elements of the deal.



#### 4. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People</b></p> <p>Opportunities for children and young people will be strengthened through the delivery of new homes in the Borough, better transport connectivity via the Metro extension and support to address digital exclusion for families.</p>
	<p><b>People Live Well and Age Well</b></p> <p>Opportunities for people to live and age well through more localised bus services, new homes, and opportunities for digital connectivity.</p>
	<p><b>Strong Resilient Communities</b></p> <p>The housing and regeneration funding provides an opportunity to develop a place-based approach in the Borough that supports the needs of specific communities.</p>
	<p><b>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p>The commitments in the deal provide a mixture of new funding streams of a value of £200-400m Affordable Housing Programme for the region which provides the opportunity for the delivery of an increased number of new and quality homes in the Borough.</p>
	<p><b>A Strong and Inclusive Economy</b></p> <p>The Deal provides a more stable arrangement for retaining business rates growth in the Borough to support the delivery of local services. The potential value of the deal to the region is, to a large extent, influenced by the region's ability to establish Growth Zones (formerly known as 'Levelling Up Zones') as intended, and the retained revenue which will flow back to local authorities through the business rates system.</p>







## A Connected and Accessible Sandwell

New monies of £60m for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension plus the benefits that should arise by local decision making and allocation of the Bus Service Operators Grant will make the Borough more connected in conjunction with the £168m CRSTS transport investment over the period 2022 – 2027 already secured in principle.

## 5. Context and Key Issues

5.1 The deal contains over 190 commitments of different types. These include:

- A. Commitments to provide new funds to the Combined Authority and its constituent authorities, such as for housing and regeneration.
- B. Commitments to increase flexibility and local decision-making power over existing and future funds, particularly though the single settlement.
- C. Commitments to new partnerships and co-working with government to design and deliver programmes, such as employment support, culture and heritage and working with Great British Railways; and
- D. Commitments to undertake further work with government on regional priorities, including transport innovation.

Taken together, the deal represents a significant step forward for the region's multi-year financial stability, particularly over local government revenue retention. This will help to reduce financial risks, de-risk investment decisions, provide new funding to deliver affordable housing, regeneration and transport schemes and give the region an influential role in shaping government policy in line with our shared inclusive growth agenda. The detail of the Devolution Deal is set out in the attached Appendix documents to this report.

5.2 At MPL on 10 March 2023, there are a number of commitments in the deal where even if the requisite number of local authorities ratify the deal at October WMCA Board, individual local authorities will still be able to opt out of these functions being exercised in their areas. These are as follows:



- A. Growth Zones
- B. Local area energy planning
- C. High street rental auctions

Once the detail is fully available on these issues, Cabinet will consider in future whether to opt in or out of these.

## 6. Overview of the Deeper Devolution Deal

- 6.1 The process to commence a 'Trailblazer Devolution Deal' for the West Midlands and for Greater Manchester was announced as part of the Levelling Up White Paper on 2 February 2022.
- 6.2 Following this, the WMCA, working with constituent authorities, instituted a complex programme with multiple workstreams to develop proposals for the deal, which were taken through various working groups and engagement with the constituent authorities and other partners such as the Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner. Alongside were ongoing negotiations with government. The constituent authorities were involved at various levels including Chief Executives, Finance Directors, the Senior Local Authority Officers Group, forums with subject leads (for example transport or public health), and the political leadership including the Met Leaders and Portfolios holders and WMCA Board.
- 6.3 The devolution deal was agreed in principle by the Mayor and Portfolio Leaders on 10 March 2023 and announced in the Chancellor's Budget on 15 March (with the Trailblazer Devolution Deal rebadged as the Deeper Devolution Deal). The health duty provisions in the deal were not agreed in-principle on 10 March and it was determined that these would be subject to further assessment and discussion between the constituent authorities and WMCA and would come back to a future meeting.
- 6.4 *Implementation:* Following the publication of the deal, the in-principle agreement (bar the health duty) was reaffirmed by the Mayor and Portfolio Leaders alongside the need for a more detailed implementation plan. This has been developed over the past months and is an ongoing live process.
- 6.5 The deal has around 190 paragraphs with different elements and activity mostly enhancing the existing functions of the WMCA, setting up new partnerships and unlocking around £1.5bn of new funds for the region. Almost all elements require further work to determine how they will be



implemented (hence the implementation plan), including double devolution and local delivery arrangements. Some elements require further negotiation with government, with the deal setting a headline aim and the detailed policy requiring further in-depth discussion and agreement.

6.6 The implementation is guided by a set of principles:

- A. The most should be made of every commitment in the deal, to derive as much value from the deal commitments ahead of the next general election and spending review.
- B. Local and regional engagement and collaboration is maximised through the implementation process, ensuring that delivery is driven at the most effective level with reporting on progress.
- C. Activity in different workstreams is integrated within mainstream work programmes so that devolved powers become business-as-usual for regional partners.
- D. A clear focus is retained on the need for more inclusive growth in the region in all aspects of deal implementation.

6.7 The deal elements are being monitored and progressed by the WMCA through a detailed 'tracker system'. In more general terms, the implementation plan is being structured around more than 20 different workstreams and looking at:

- A. How is implementation or further negotiations being conducted for the workstream i.e. which WMCA structure / group / local authority leads are determining this.
- B. How it is envisaged that the deal provisions will be administered, delivered, and decided upon (where this is needed).
- C. Key milestones and deliverables.
- D. Outstanding issues and questions.
- E. The implementation plan will also look at what the key outputs and outcomes that the deal elements should secure.



## 6.8 Deal elements: More significant areas of the deal include:

- A. Levelling Up Zones (aka Growth Zones) provision to establish up to six Levelling Up Zones with business rate growth retention for 25 years to fund infrastructure and other priorities.
- B. Up to £400m affordable homes funding to 2026 and £100m brownfield regeneration funding.
- C. Investment Zones - these were not technically part of the deal but were announced at the same time and are applicable to other Mayoral Combined Authority areas. The LUZ/IZ process is being developed in an interconnected way as they both cover growth and tax incentives for specific sites in the West Midlands.
- D. Business rate retention for 10 years.
- E. Measures to tackle digital exclusion including greater influence over high-speed broadband investment across the region and a £4 million fund for devices and data to get more people online.
- F. Greater local responsibility for developing and delivering careers advice and a partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions to target employment support.
- G. Devolution of the bus service operators grant and a new partnership with Great British Railways to offer greater local oversight and control of public transport services.
- H. The UK's first formally designated transport sandbox to deliver cleaner and safer vehicles and innovative transport services and supporting new jobs and investment.
- I. Single departmental-style settlement for the WMCA from 2025 at the next spending providing multi-year period covering five pillars: local growth & place; local transport; housing and regeneration; adult skills; and retrofit. The single settlement corresponds with new accountability arrangements and a single outcomes framework.



J. Within the single settlement is a commitment to devolve retrofit funding from 2025, to allow the WMCA, and partners, to set priorities for investment in insulation and green energy for homes.

- 6.9 *Single settlement and place plans:* The single settlement is the most significant reform with wide implications including how the WMCA may operate ahead. There are currently multiple sources of funding for the WMCA (and for local authorities) that are secured via competitive bids and with a range of requirements and criteria to follow. The idea of the single settlement is that instead of these arrangements there would be pillars or functions, with funding provided by government within these through a departmental-style, multi-year settlement. This should afford greater flexibility and therefore benefit and give certainty of funding. In turn, an outcomes framework would be agreed. The single settlement is part of a wider set of funding arrangements through the DDD. The emerging idea is for 'place plans' - plans draw up by local authorities including for growth corridors and key regeneration areas where funding can be applied in a more co-ordinated way including the single settlement. Both the form and operation of the single settlement and the place plans will require detailed work ahead and co-creation between the WMCA and constituent authorities. A Memorandum of Understanding on the single settlement is set to be agreed with government in January 2024.
- 6.10 *Affordable Homes Funding and Brownfield Regeneration Funding:* £100m Single Regeneration Fund will be deployed flexibly across the region, and for the first time, brownfield land funding will support commercial, employment land and mixed-use development, as well as delivering 4,000 homes in the region.
- 6.11 The commitment of up to £400m Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) funding to the region, and greater influence for the WMCA over affordable housing delivery and strategy acts a precursor to full devolution of the AHP, and additional extra funding to the region from 2026. This is the first time this has happened outside Greater London. The delivery of the AHP will be dependent on the appetite from providers and the development of joint pipeline and delivery plan, developed as part of the new Strategic Place Partnership as part of the deal. The Strategic Place Partnership will be established between Homes England and WMCA to support the WMCA on housing supply, investment, and urban regeneration and to bring new housing supply and regeneration



sites forward. The WMCA will work collaboratively with Homes England, constituent local authorities, and local delivery partners to develop a joint pipeline and delivery plan.

- 6.12 Should the concept of 'place plans' be agreed, the AHP and brownfield funding would likely form part of the suite of funding to underpin the plans.
- 6.13 *Levelling Up Zones/Investment zones*: LUZs and the IZs have been following an accelerated timetable given the government desire to move forward with IZs as quickly as possible. They are technically outside of the DDD and are being taken forward in other Mayoral Combined Authority Areas across the country too.
- 6.14 *Accountability*: A streamlined, overarching single accountability framework coordinated by DLHUC rather than multiple frameworks administered by different government departments is being developed. This will include the data sets used to monitor and chart outcomes. The WMCA will be held to account for delivering outcomes using the settlement funding and areas associated with devolved functions set out in the DDD and previous devolution deals.
- 6.15 The deal made provision for enhanced accountability arrangements. The WMCA governance team is looking at these and engaging with the WMCA Overview & Scrutiny Committee members with any changes brought to the WMCA Board for approval.
- 6.16 Additional scrutiny involves the Mayor and portfolio leads attending a full council meeting each year for each constituent council, if requested by the council, or if a Parliamentary select committee invites attendance. There will also be 'Mayor's question time', where the Mayor visits all parts of the region to take questions from the public, with an independent chair. The portfolio holders will present reports to the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the WMCA will arrange public, broadcasted sessions where Members of Parliament representing West Midlands parliamentary constituencies will be able to scrutinise the Mayor and other portfolio leads.
- 6.17 The government is set to publish a scrutiny protocol and the WMCA has committed to reviewing the scrutiny arrangements and reporting on them as part of the implementation plan. This will work through the details of



the arrangements and implications such as Parliamentary scrutiny of the WMCA's work and in turn the relationship with the constituent local authorities and their scrutiny arrangements and constitutional requirements.

- 6.18 The ability for Mayoral Combined Authorities to financially remunerate their Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee members is being taken through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. A WMCA Board paper on 21 July 2023 outlines the payments that would be available should the legislation be passed. *Health duty removal from the deal*: Following the publication of the DDD, and as agreed by the Met Leaders and Mayor, further discussions took place on the potential adoption of the WMCA public health duties within the deal. The decision was that these duties were not to be pursued and these are now no longer part of the deal.
- 6.19 *Bus service operators grant (BSOG) devolution and scheme and governance review*: The devolution of the BSOG to the WMCA is considered by the WMCA to be a public authority function, which can be dealt with under section 105B of the Local Democracy, Economic and Construction Act 2009 but requires a scheme, governance review and the consent of the constituent authorities to the laying of the order by government. The scheme and governance review are attached to this paper. An in-principle agreement of the devolution of the BSOG is part of this paper and further formal agreement will be needed after the WMCA Board in October, which will be considering this.
- 6.20 Warwickshire: There has been a proposal for Warwickshire to potentially join the WMCA as a constituent member. If Warwickshire had become a constituent member it would have led to implications for the DDD in relation to the new funding and powers. However, given the proposal is not moving forward the implications are no longer live considerations.
- 6.21 Timetable: The WMCA is developing a detailed timetable on the deal elements. The latest draft is included as appendix.



## 7. Alternative Options

- 7.1 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council could decide not to support the final Devolution Deal at WMCA Board on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023. However, this alternative option is not recommended as the Council would not be able to benefit from significant financial commitments from Government as set out in the Deal and this could lose some of the confidence that Government Ministers and officials have in the West Midlands and key local and regional partners. There are no specific reasons why Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council should consider this alternative option.

## 8. Implications

- 8.1 The deal is a non-statutory agreement between different Government departments and WMCA and its constituent authorities. Therefore, if the necessary two-thirds agreement at Board to ratify the deal is not obtained, the consequences are at the discretion of the SoS for DLUHC. Should the necessary agreement not be obtained, there is a risk that all or some of the commitments in the deal, and their benefits to the region, may be withdrawn or modified. There is recent precedent for this outcome in other parts of England that are in the process of seeking (non-deeper) devolution deals.
- 8.2 The financial implications of the DDD as a whole are still subject to further discussion and analysis, and specific elements, such as the Single Settlement, will require a further decision-making process. At this stage it is not anticipated that any elements of the DDD will bring any negative financial impact for the Council. The commitment to 10-year Business Rates Retention across the region is estimated to be worth £450m over the period and will drive confidence in public sector borrowing, de-risk investment modelling and accelerate delivery. It will also remove the uncertainty of the current pilot scheme, boosting public financial sustainability and local authority spending power. However, it should be noted that the deal text does refer to this being subject to future Spending Reviews.
- 8.3 Through its 'Single Settlement', the Government commits to giving WMCA single capital and revenue funding certainty, equivalent to government departments – increasing regional autonomy and the ability to prioritise decisions locally in the areas of:





- local growth and place
- local transport
- housing and regeneration
- adult skills
- housing retrofit

8.4 These settlements will cover an entire spending review period. In addition, Government has committed to a £25m capital fund to support business decarbonisation, culture, environmental programmes, and the West Midlands' Smart City Region initiative.

<p><b>Resources:</b></p>	<p>There are no direct financial implications that arise through this report. Any financial implications flowing from elements of the DDD will be reported to and approved through the governance structures of the WMCA and where necessary via the Cabinets of constituent authorities. This will form part of the implementation plan.</p> <p>The Single Settlement is the element of DDD with potentially wide funding implications, but this requires further detailed work which is ongoing.</p> <p>The commitment to 10-year Business Rates Retention is the continuation of the current pilot arrangement whereby all the business rates growth generated is retained locally. This would mitigate a significant risk in the Council's current Medium-Term Financial Strategy, although the DDD text does state that this is still subject to future Spending Reviews.</p>
<p><b>Legal and Governance:</b></p>	<p>Sandwell Council is one of seven constituent metropolitan local authority members of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Each local authority member (including Sandwell) has two votes, and the Metro Mayor has one, for a total of 15 votes on the Board.</p> <p>The WMCA advice is that the new powers in relation to the Bus Service Operators Grant are considered to be public authority functions, which can be dealt with under section 105B of the Local Democracy,</p>



	<p>Economic and Construction Act 2009 but require a scheme, governance review and the consent of the Constituent Authorities to the laying of the order by the government. An in-principle agreement of the devolution of the BSOG is part of this report and further formal agreement will be needed after the WMCA Board in October, which will be considering this.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	<p>There are significant risks relating to the Devolution Deal – especially in relation to the further detail relating to implementation of the Deal and the risk that Government changes some of the parameters of the Deal. There is also a risk that Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council does not realise the full benefits of the Devolution Deal due to capacity and other priorities.</p>
<b>Equality:</b>	<p>The proposed interventions are in development stage. Through the project development process, consideration will be given to the impact on and improvements that can be made for residents with protected characteristics. Equality Impact screenings and EqlAs will be conducted, as appropriate.</p> <p>The WMCA advice is that the development of the DDD has been undertaken with reference to an equalities lens and reflects a range of WMCA goals and commitments including to inclusive growth. WMCA officers have reviewed provisions and recommended alternative approaches to, or reinforcement of key aspects, which were incorporated. Ahead, through the implementation of the deal, there will an opportunity to further assess DDD elements and their delivery in relation to equalities.</p>
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	<p>One of the underpinning objectives of Regeneration is to ‘level up’ and reduce inequalities. Job growth and</p>



	transport connectivity should improve health and wellbeing
<b>Social Value:</b>	Any investment from the Devolution Deal into Sandwell needs to create local employment opportunities and local spend so that the local SME supply chain can benefit from new homes and transport connectivity.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	The funding for industrial decarbonisation will contribute to the net zero agenda. Housing and regeneration funding will need to deliver low carbon homes.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The Devolution Deal should create opportunities for the LA to deliver its responsibilities as a Corporate Parent by providing apprenticeship opportunities, digital devices, and an increase in the supply of affordable homes for care leavers.

## 9. Appendices

Appendix 1A - Governance Review– a requirement of the statutory process needed to implement the devolution of the Bus Service Operator Grant commitment in the deal.

Appendix 1B – Scheme – a requirement of the statutory process needed to implement the devolution of the Bus Service Operator Grant commitment in the deal.

Appendix 2 – Detailed Implementation Plan with thematic summaries.

Appendix 3 – DDD Implementation Plan

## 10. Background Papers

WM Devolution Deal Agreement with Government.



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# West Midlands Combined Authority Trailblazer deeper devolution deal

Subject to ratification of the deal by all partners and the statutory requirements referred to within this document, including public consultation, the consent of the West Midlands Combined Authority and its constituent local authorities, parliamentary approval of the secondary legislation implementing the provisions of this deal, and accompanying accountability arrangements.

15 March 2023

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# Introduction

1. The West Midlands has been a hub of innovation and creativity for hundreds of years. The West Midlands was the site of Britain's first bicycle factory, manufacturing the penny farthing; the birthplace of the first fuel-burning engine; and the home of world-famous chocolatier, Cadbury. Today, the region covered by West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) represents 2.9 million people across seven constituent authorities with a combined gross value added of over £70 billion. Prior to the pandemic, the West Midlands was the fastest growing city region outside London. It is home to world-leading businesses and sectors across advanced manufacturing, future mobility and life sciences, with key regional assets, including leading universities, on which to build.
2. The West Midlands has also been at the forefront of devolution in England. In November 2015, the government and WMCA agreed an ambitious devolution deal, including a directly elected mayor and powers to improve transport, skills, housing and to drive growth in the region. In 2017, devolution was deepened, and new funding agreed, including significant further investment in transport.
3. The West Midlands has seized these opportunities, demonstrating what local leaders can achieve when empowered with the tools they need. Local leaders have increased investment in transport from £38 million in 2016/17 to £363 million in 2021/22, pioneered new approaches to brownfield development and net zero homes and delivered the c. £130 million Adult Education Budget, securing an over 10% increase in 2020 alone in the portion of the population with Level 3 skills.
4. However, up to now, WMCA has lacked key levers and flexibilities to fully unleash the potential of devolution. Despite being home to the UK's second city, the West Midlands' economy continues to lag against international comparators in terms of productivity. The productivity of the region has remained at 90% of the national average for the past decade. Lifting the productivity of the West Midlands to just the UK average would deliver an estimated £7.8 billion per annum to the UK economy. Unleashing the potential of the people, entrepreneurs and businesses of the West Midlands requires a step change in our approach to realising local and regional economic growth.
5. That is why, in the Levelling Up White Paper, the government committed to open negotiations on trailblazer deeper devolution deals with the West Midlands and Greater Manchester Combined Authorities, acting as a blueprint for other areas to follow.

6. This document sets out the terms of the deal agreed between the government and WMCA. The deal sets out a landmark new approach to devolution in England, devolving responsibility for a clear set of policies to WMCA to support economic growth, alongside enhanced accountability with clear outcomes for delivery. This will be underpinned – from the next Spending Review – by a single funding settlement to invest in local priorities. Altogether, this will release WMCA to get on and deliver for its area, to try innovative new policy approaches, to drive forward the local economy and to be better held to account for delivery.



# Summary of the deal

## The ‘trailblazer’ deeper devolution deal is between the UK Government and the West Midlands Combined Authority.

7. The government and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) are minded to agree a trailblazer deeper devolution deal, which marks a step change in WMCA’s devolution settlement and the governance of England. Together, we have agreed new levers, functions and responsibilities for WMCA, underpinned by an enhanced approach to accountability.
8. This trailblazing deal provides WMCA with greater control than ever before over the levers of economic prosperity and will create job opportunities and increase productivity across the West Midlands. It demonstrates levelling up in action: empowering local leadership to make the right decisions to stimulate growth and inclusion across the towns and cities of the West Midlands. This deal takes WMCA’s ability to coordinate and locally-tailor devolved action to a new level, with commitments in policy areas previously untouched by English devolution and a deal that is unprecedented in both breadth and depth.
9. The sections of this deal document detail the specific agreements reached across a range of functions and policy levers. These include:
  - New arrangements for **accountability** to recognise the enhanced powers and responsibilities provided for by this deal. There is also a summary of the **governance** procedures in place to explain how WMCA will exercise its responsibilities and make decisions effectively.
  - A new Data Partnership and commitments to boost WMCA’s **data** capacity and capability, to underpin and support local decision-making, as well as to develop and evaluate policies and programmes with greater impact.
  - Delivering **fiscal devolution** by extending WMCA’s 100% business rates retention pilot for 10 years.
  - Providing a series of tools across the deal that will support WMCA’s vision to deliver **Levelling Up Zones** across the West Midlands.

- A consolidated, long-term budget for WMCA. This **single settlement** will be designed in the mould of government departments' budgets: set at Spending Reviews and based on thematic functions.
- A new **rail** partnership with Great British Railways, devolution of the payment of the bus service operators grant, and establishment of the West Midlands as a 'sandbox' for transport innovation.
- On **housing and regeneration**, a new, wide-ranging Strategic Place Partnership between Homes England and WMCA and local leadership of the Affordable Homes Programme for the first time outside of London – worth at least £200 million to the West Midlands – with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million and with greater powers and flexibilities over time. The deal also commits to devolution of £100 million brownfield land funding, joint working between the government and WMCA through the West Midlands Public Land Taskforce, and £3.8 million to support homeless families. The deal also includes the provision of essential infrastructure especially public transport connectivity to give communities access to essential services, facilities and opportunities, including £60 million of investment in the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.
- Devolution of non-apprenticeship adult **skills** functions and grant funding in the next Spending Review, local flexibilities, which will increase over time, over Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps during this Spending Review, and establishment of a strong joint governance board to provide oversight of post-16 technical education and of WMCA as the central convenor of careers provision in the city region.
- A co-design approach to all future contracted **employment support** programmes and commitments to explore data sharing, supported by a new joint board.
- Building on the Innovation Accelerator programme, a Strategic Innovation Partnership to give WMCA a new and influential role informing the national **research and innovation** ecosystem, a knowledge transfer programme focused on local strengths and a pilot to boost innovation adoption and diffusion by local businesses, transferring more autonomy to the West Midlands' developing regional innovation ecosystem.
- Boosting **business productivity** through a new Strategic Productivity Partnership, enabling WMCA to raise local priorities for future **business support** and advisory services and ensuring complementarity between national and local commissioning activities, alongside a new role for WMCA in the governance of the next generation of British Business Bank UK funds in the Midlands and stronger strategic and operational relationships with the UK Infrastructure Bank.
- Stronger partnership between the government and WMCA across a range of **international trade** activities.

- Piloting the devolution of **net zero** funding, including for buildings' retrofit, through allocation rather than competition in the period from 2025 onwards, which will form part of WMCA's single department-style settlement, recognition of WMCA's roles and activity across the energy system and further work on standards, green finance and advice to increase household energy efficiency.
  - To support the **environment**, WMCA leadership of the West Midlands Local Nature Recovery Strategy and government support to help build lasting capacity and capability to support natural environment financing.
  - A Regional Culture and Heritage Framework to support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration between **cultural** arm's length bodies and WMCA, development of a Social Economy Accelerator Programme and Growth Fund and work by the West Midlands Growth Company to become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership.
  - A new Digital Infrastructure Leadership Group to accelerate the roll out and take up of high-speed **digital** connectivity, alongside engagement in Project Gigabit and on digital inclusion.
  - A new formal duty on WMCA to improve the public's **health**.
10. In exercising existing and newly devolved functions, as well as in general decision-making and spending, WMCA (and the government when supporting implementation of the deal, where relevant) will continue to adhere to their public sector equality duties, subsidy control legislation, and relevant guidance set by HM Treasury for spending public money.
11. When referring to WMCA as the decision-making body in this deal, it means those members appointed by the seven constituent councils and the Mayor. When referring to the constituent councils, it means the councils for the local government areas of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.



# Governance and accountability

## Governance

12. WMCA was created under provisions in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and was formally established in June 2016. The first WMCA mayoral election was held in May 2017.
13. There have been a series of devolution deals between WMCA and the government. The deals have led to number of functions being devolved to WMCA via secondary legislation, including transport, housing, and adult education budget functions. These previous devolution deals mean WMCA already has a wide-ranging functionality so is able to take on many of the new areas contained within this deal without the additional conferral of functions.
14. The new functions contained in this deal will be devolved to WMCA by the government. Under WMCA's constitution, the conferral of new powers onto WMCA will require the unanimous agreement of all the constituent members and a simple majority of all other members entitled to vote on the matter.
15. The default position for decision-making in relation to all new functions devolved is that they will require the agreement of the Mayor, two thirds of the constituent members, and a simple majority of any other members who are subsequently given a vote on the matter by WMCA; anywhere this differs is set out below. Where new functions are designated as functions exercisable only by the Mayor, all decisions will be taken by the Mayor or under his delegation without reference to WMCA.
16. The government will devolve to WMCA the following functions:
  - a. Adult education and skills functions, including non-apprenticeship adult skills and funding, and delegated delivery of contracted employment programmes; decisions taken with agreement of the mayor and a two-thirds majority of constituent members of WMCA.
  - b. Transport functions: payment of the bus service operators grant; a function to be exercised by the Mayor, with decisions from WMCA inputting into the allocation taken by a two-thirds majority.

- c. A public health duty concurrent with local authorities; decisions taken on the basis of agreement of the Mayor and a two-thirds majority of WMCA.
  - d. Any other functions which are identified as necessary to implement the deal.
17. Unless otherwise stated in this deal, functions will be conferred through regulations created under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and are subject to:
- a. The ratification of the deal by WMCA and the agreement of its constituent councils.
  - b. WMCA undertaking a governance review, the development of and consultation on a scheme, and the submission of the results of the consultation to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, following agreement of WMCA and constituent councils.
  - c. The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being satisfied that the required statutory requirements have been met as set out in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction 2009.
  - d. Consents from the necessary parties locally to and parliamentary approval of the required secondary legislation.
18. The government will work with WMCA to determine how these functions apply within a framework of fiscal responsibility and accountability.
19. Subject to receiving Royal Assent and coming into force, the devolution provisions in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill will facilitate the deepening of devolution for existing mayoral combined authorities, including WMCA. Reforms include:
- a. Changes to statutory consents – to simplify the requirements for combined authority expansion and for mayors to take on new public authority functions.
  - b. Financial remuneration – the ability for mayoral combined authorities to financially remunerate their Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee members to ensure constituent authority councillors are compensated for their roles on the committees, strengthening local scrutiny and accountability.
  - c. Alternative mayoral titles – flexibility around mayoral titles so that the area can choose an alternative title to mayor - such as “governor” or “directly elected leader”, if desired.

## Accountability

20. The WMCA will, through this deal, be subject to three levels of accountability:
- a. As a local authority it is subject to the requirements of the Local Government Accountability Framework.
  - b. As an institution with devolved powers, WMCA will be subject to the English Devolution Accountability Framework which details additional accountability processes for all institutions with devolved powers and highlights those requirements of the Local Government Accountability Framework which are of particular significance for such institutions, including the decisions that mayoral combined authorities are responsible for and the recourse available to the government.
  - c. In light of the specific new powers being agreed in this trailblazer deeper devolution deal, including the single settlement, and in the spirit of greater power requiring greater accountability, WMCA commits to building a culture of greater scrutiny and accountability through the proposals set out in this section.

### Overview and Scrutiny and Audit Committees

21. The WMCA and Mayor will also continue to be subject to their existing scrutiny arrangements in place. These currently comprise of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Transport Scrutiny Sub-Committee and Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee.
22. To facilitate the building of a culture of scrutiny, government will legislate through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, subject to receiving Royal Assent and coming into force, to allow combined authorities to financially remunerate their Overview and Scrutiny Committee and audit committee members. This will ensure combined authorities are able to compensate constituent authority councillors for their roles on the committees, strengthening local scrutiny and accountability.
23. The government will, in the English Devolution Accountability Framework, also develop the scrutiny protocol for all institutions with devolved functions, which will set out the relationship between the mayor/elected leader, the institution and its scrutiny and audit functions. The scrutiny protocol will focus on ensuring that each institution has a sustained culture of scrutiny. In advance of its publication in summer 2023, WMCA will engage in the development of the protocol and then adhere to its proposals.
24. The scrutiny protocol will be designed to ensure that all areas with devolution deals, but especially those which manage single settlements, should have best in class scrutiny functions. Membership on committees and in particular the role of chair should be prized and competed for. Retention of members for several years should be common. Members should be able to devote the time to the role. The committees should have

the profile and cache to ensure that their findings are brought to the attention of the public wherever necessary.

25. The protocol will also look at the question of how to ensure that overview and scrutiny and audit committees are politically and geographically representative, so that as many different viewpoints as possible can be applied to scrutinising the performance, judgment and conduct of the mayor and combined authority.
26. In developing the scrutiny protocol, government will apply learning from the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Independent Review by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny. WMCA will consider the recommendations from the Independent Review of GMCA when reviewing its own overview and scrutiny arrangements and consider which recommendations might be appropriate for delivering its own culture of scrutiny, including:
  - a. A single Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
  - b. The chair and deputy chair, who must be from opposition parties to the Mayor of the WMCA, to have clear job descriptions.
  - c. Compensating members of scrutiny committees.
  - d. Requesting constituent local authorities appoint members based on their interests and skills and if possible, for two-year terms, enabling substitute members to take part in task and finish exercises.
  - e. New rules about how information will be shared with members between meetings, informed by members' existing rights of access to information.
  - f. A renewed commitment by WMCA officers to give committees the time to feed into the decision-making process.
  - g. Feedback from senior officers on where formal recommendations by committees have led to a change in the approach of WMCA; and
  - h. The scrutiny function itself should take the lead on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the new system, through on-going reflections and a formal review after one year of the new arrangements.
27. WMCA commits to reviewing their overview and scrutiny arrangements and reporting on the measures taken to strengthen them by March 2024.
28. In addition, in recognition of the new functions and funding being agreed through this devolution deal, WMCA commits to the following further actions to enhance the scrutiny and audit committees' resources and prestige:



- a. To provide reasonable resources sufficient for committees to be able to ask for ambitious research and analysis either through officers or external sources, such as local universities.
  - b. As a measure to ensure quoracy, members of the scrutiny committee are clear through their role description as to their responsibilities, including attendance at all meetings; and
  - c. To provide reasonable communications support to help ensure that the chairs of the committees and the reports they develop are able to get suitable profile. As part of this support, consideration will be made to what branding (including, if necessary, name changes) and communication techniques can help the media and public understand the role of the committees.
29. Government will also look to raise the profile of the chairs of the committees and will explore different options such as ensuring that they are able to get regular meetings with Ministers of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and are empowered to report any concerns they have to appropriate teams in the Department.
30. As a condition of this deal, the chair of WMCA (the Mayor) and other portfolio leads, appointed by the Mayor at the annual meeting of the WMCA each year, commit, where appropriate, to arranging and attending the following events to allow greater scrutiny by key local and national stakeholders:
- a. Full council meetings – up to one a year for each constituent council, if requested by the council.
  - b. ‘Mayors question time’, where the Mayor visits all parts of the city region to take questions from the public, chaired by an independent person – a local journalist or businessperson, for example.
  - c. Parliamentary select committees, when invited to do so by a select committee; and
  - d. WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committees, to present reports within their portfolio area on a regular basis.
31. In addition, the government and WMCA have agreed through this deal that WMCA will arrange with the Members of Parliament (MPs) representing West Midlands parliamentary constituencies for public, broadcasted sessions where MPs will be able to scrutinise the Mayor and other portfolio leads to aid and strengthen local scrutiny of WMCA. The sessions will allow for questions to be posed which cover at least the performance and strategic direction of WMCA and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

32. The government and the WMCA agree that implementation of these arrangements, and adherence to the scrutiny protocol, is a vital part of the implementation of the full range of commitments in the deal. Implementation of commitments from the government in this deal will be conditional upon consistent best and full efforts to delivering these improved arrangements.
33. The terms of reference for these MP sessions will be agreed between the government and the WMCA following engagement with West Midlands MPs by summer 2023, and consider questions of appropriate chairs, schedules, papers and the contribution of the chairs of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Audit Committee. The sessions will occur four times a year and will focus solely on the responsibilities of WMCA not those of the government or the constituent council. The government will also explore if these can be hosted as Grand Committees by Parliament. WMCA will then agree a resolution to introduce these with a commitment to review them and identify improvements at the end of the first spending review period for the single department-style settlement.

### **Publicising WMCA's role and performance**

34. WMCA will engage with the government, along with other areas with a devolution deal, in developing the outcomes and metrics that all English institutions with devolved powers will report against. This process will also inform the development of the outcomes framework which will be used to assess performance against the single mayoral settlements. The outcomes framework will be developed with WMCA based on a national set of objectives.
35. WMCA will engage in the development of the plain English guidance and support its dissemination to increase awareness across the city region of the roles of the Mayor, WMCA, local authorities and the government.

### **Accountability arrangements for the single settlement**

36. WMCA will agree with the government a streamlined, overarching single accountability process for the settlement. This will build on, and will be incorporated into future editions of, the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This process will include the assurance framework coordinated by DLUHC, the specific outcomes WMCA will achieve over the spending review period or funding period and appropriate spending control processes.
37. The government will work with WMCA to agree the more detailed elements of the settlement design ahead of the next Spending Review, including on spending control, the approach to managing financial and delivery risks, the outcomes framework and accountability arrangements.

# Data

38. The government acknowledges the value WMCA can add at the local level by undertaking strategic analysis of city region-wide data. The government will work with WMCA to continue to explore options, legislative and otherwise, to safely streamline the sharing of data between the government, the wider public sector and WMCA and its constituent local authorities for this purpose. A range of options to establish a legal gateway will be considered, potentially including amending the Digital Economy Act 2017, subject to sufficient Parliamentary availability. Any and all potential options will respect the provisions in the Data Protection Act 2018, UK General Data Protection Regulation in order to achieve compliance in design, the common law duty of confidentiality and the requirement for local authority consent to any future data sharing arrangements.
39. The government will agree a new Data Partnership with WMCA. The Data Partnership will establish principles for the legal, safe and secure sharing of data between the government and WMCA. The principles will aim to support and streamline WMCA's negotiations with individual government departments over access to specific datasets. This will, in turn, support the delivery of the accountability framework and broader policy commitments set out in this deeper devolution deal. The Data Partnership will be designed with particular regard to the roles and relationships between the parties in accordance with the controller and processor definitions in the data protection legislation and underpinned by the legal powers each of those parties may rely upon. A data protection impact assessment will be produced to underpin the design of the Data Partnership.
40. To support the development and delivery of the Data Partnership, and to facilitate discussions with the relevant government departments, WMCA will be invited to participate in the government's Chief Data Officers' Council. In addition, the government will explore establishing a new Local Chief Data Officers' Council, to facilitate data sharing, share learning and maximise the value of local data and statistics for local decision-making.
41. The Spatial Data Unit will help to increase WMCA's data capability, including in data science, and will engage with WMCA to further understand its needs and priorities. In addition, WMCA will convene a symposium with the relevant government departments and agencies, including the Central Digital and Data Office, Spatial Data Unit, Office for National Statistics, Alan Turing Institute, National Innovation Centre for Data and data

science and machine learning experts in the region, to leverage the benefits of data science capability to local policymaking and service delivery.

42. The government notes WMCA's initial priorities are to have timely access to data at the right local geographical level relating to skills and training, careers, employability and labour markets, business support, transport, trade and investment, energy use and climate resilience; and data held by the government pertaining to WMCA's devolved functions. WMCA will use the Data Partnership as the basis of negotiations to access datasets in these policy areas where appropriate and practicable. Any personal data sharing between the government and WMCA and its constituent local authorities will only be possible if compliant with the Data Protection Act 2018, where applicable the common law duty of confidentiality, UK General Data Protection Regulation and all other relevant legislation and guidance; and will be underpinned by appropriate technical and organisational measures to implement the data protection principles therein to safeguard individual rights.
43. The WMCA and its constituent local authorities commit, in return, to share data and evidence with the government to support the monitoring and evaluation of government programmes in line with the direction of travel towards a single outcomes' accountability framework, to improve the efficiency of public services, and to support the activities of the forthcoming Office for Local Government.
44. The government will work with committees and bodies, such as the local health and wellbeing boards in constituent local authority areas, integrated care boards and integrated care partnerships, and WMCA to explore secure and appropriate ways to share data across the public sector, including examining existing best practice, to help WMCA embed a 'health in all policies' approach to public health, with any improvements in data access being appropriate, safe and legal, and which improves and safeguards public trust in how data is used.

## Fiscal devolution

45. Through this trailblazer deal, the government commits to further fiscal devolution through allowing WMCA's constituent local authorities to retain 100% of their business rates for 10 years.
46. As with the existing model, adjustments will need to be made to ensure cost neutrality. The ability for local authorities to retain business rates over the 10-year term is conditional upon arrangements concerning the WMCA share remaining in place.
47. The government has already confirmed a reset of accumulated business rates growth will not happen until 2025/26 at the earliest. Any move to reset business rates growth would be accompanied by national consultation including with combined authorities. While the current pilot arrangements are in place, the current "no detriment" arrangement will continue until any new local arrangements, for example those proposed in this deal, come online. WMCA and its constituent local authorities and the government will need to work through further detail, including the right balance of risk and reward, ahead of the next Local Government Finance Settlement to enable this next phase of 100% business rates retention to be implemented. The government recognises that WMCA and its constituent local authorities would only sign up to arrangements where the balance of rewards outweighs the risks of being inside the scheme.
48. In addition, the government will work with WMCA and its constituent bodies towards the designation of a number of specific growth zones within which 100% of business rates growth above an agreed baseline will be retained for 25 years. Retained rates would not be subject to reset at any national reset of business rates within this period. The location of these sites will be determined locally – subject to criteria set out in a framework, to be developed by government with consultation with WMCA, and final business cases – provided the model can be sustainably delivered alongside the measures set out in paragraph 45.
49. Paragraph 45 and 48 above would be in addition to existing Enterprise Zone arrangements which would remain and would not limit WMCA from potentially participating in any new national 'incentive area' arrangements, such as the Investment Zones programme which is currently being developed.
50. The government will work with WMCA to agree the detail of these proposals, but noting that arrangements must:

- a. Be consistent with the sustainability and affordability of the overall local government finance position, fair to other local authorities across England and replicable with others.
- b. Be subject to technical design and not jeopardise the operations of the wider local government finance system.
- c. Strengthen accountability to local taxpayers; and
- d. Empower the Mayor as the accountable figure for promoting economic growth in the region working with WMCA constituent bodies.

# Levelling Up Zones

51. Devolution means providing local leaders with the tools to make their economies grow, drive levelling up and improve the lives and opportunities of residents.
52. WMCA and its constituent authorities have identified six key corridors across the region on the basis of their potential for growth and levelling up. These 'Levelling Up Zones' include East Birmingham-North Solihull corridor; Wolverhampton Corridor; Walsall Growth Corridor; Dudley Metro Corridors (including the Wednesbury to Brierly Hill link); and the Coventry and Warwickshire gigafactory zone.
53. The government recognises the WMCA's vision for these places across the region and envisages that the following tools made available in this trailblazer devolution deal will help WMCA to deliver its vision to catalyse growth and levelling up:
  - a. **Fiscal devolution and investment.** WMCA will be able to work with the government towards designation of specific, targeted "growth zones", in which 100% of business rate growth above an agreed baseline could be retained for 25 years. As set out in paragraph 48 a selection of these areas will be determined locally, subject to criteria set out in a framework, to be developed by the government with consultation with WMCA, and final business cases.
  - b. **The single settlement**, which will support WMCA to align funding provided to the region, can be prioritised to further support these sites, as per their own regional objectives for investment and growth.
  - c. **Investment in regeneration.** The government has committed to devolve £100 million brownfield funding to WMCA, subject to a final business case, to deploy across the region to drive placemaking including Levelling Up Zones, housing and urban regeneration. The government will also invest £60 million in the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.
  - d. **A trailblazing approach to affordable housing.** The government has committed that the WMCA will set the strategic direction of the Affordable Homes Programme, including strategic priorities for spend, worth at least £200 million to the West Midlands with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million. In any relevant successor programme, the government has committed to go further, with the WMCA able to select sites, providers, and standards. This will enable the WMCA to ensure

Affordable Homes Programme delivery is aligned with its strategic objectives, and those of its constituent authority partners, such as Levelling Up Zones.

- e. **Post-19 skills funding.** The government has committed to provide local flexibilities, which will increase over time, over Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps and devolve non-apprenticeship adult skills functions and grant funding in the next Spending Review. This will support WMCA to better align adult skills provision with priority growth sectors, such as the sectors WMCA may wish to catalyse through Levelling Up Zones.

54. It will be for the WMCA to determine how to use these tools, subject to the conditions and requirements set out throughout this deal.

55. When used in collaboration with a range of partners – including local government, central government, businesses and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector – these tools should impact positively on delivery of new homes, jobs, and opportunities for local people, turning levelling up into a reality.



## Single settlement

56. The government and WMCA recognise that the current system of funding for mayoral combined authorities is fragmented, overly reliant on centrally administered funds and lacks clear, lean and proportionate accountability structures.
57. The government therefore commits to give WMCA single capital and revenue funding settlements at the next Spending Review, agreed directly through a single process with the government. This will include the establishment of a streamlined, overarching, single accountability framework coordinated by DLUHC, rather than multiple frameworks administered by different departments. This settlement will increase WMCA's autonomy, ability to prioritise decisions locally, and ability to reprioritise across its own budgets. WMCA will no longer access certain funds. As part of the Spending Review, the government will set out how the settlement has been calculated and which funds WMCA will not be able to access during the Spending Review period. WMCA will receive the same level of long-term certainty over funding as government departments receive. Longer term fiscal arrangements, such as the Investment Funds, also referred to as Gainshare or Earnback, are not covered by the single settlement, and continue to be fully devolved to WMCA as per the existing devolution deal.
58. The government will work with WMCA to design these settlements, based on the principles that the funding settlement will:
  - a. Cover an entire Spending Review period.
  - b. Replace individual grant funding streams from across government departments and therefore mean mayoral combined authorities with single settlements would be exempt from bidding into certain national budgets.
  - c. Be the default mechanism through which WMCA receives its relevant share of additional funding for new national budgets or programmes announced during a Spending Review period associated with the functions that are devolved to WMCA. This includes any increases to relevant competitive pots that WMCA has been excluded from. WMCA will retain the right to bid into new competitive programmes which are not set out as funds WMCA will not be able to access during the Spending Review period. The government will retain the ability to direct some funding centrally.

- d. Give WMCA greater flexibility to plan and fund local priorities over the longer-term. The level of flexibility across the settlement will be agreed between the government and WMCA before the next Spending Review and will give WMCA greater funding flexibility across the pillars of the single settlement listed in paragraph 59 below for activity outside of that pillar in order to achieve the outcomes agreed with the government.
  - e. Be contingent on WMCA agreeing with the government a single, streamlined accountability framework for the settlement. This will build on, and will be incorporated into future editions of, the English Devolution Accountability Framework. This English Devolution Accountability Framework will include the assurance framework administered by DLUHC, the specific outcomes WMCA will achieve over the Spending Review period or funding period and appropriate spending control processes.
  - f. Represent a change to the wiring, nature and flexibility of funding from central government rather than the quantum. The quantum of funding will be decided by an agreed process between the government and WMCA.
59. WMCA will be held to account for delivering outcomes, using the settlement funding and relevant local resources, across areas associated with devolved functions set out in this and previous devolution deals. A single reporting framework across the single settlement against those outcomes will be agreed with the government. The government and WMCA anticipate that the single settlement will be structured around responsibility and accountability for five functions which will now be devolved through this or previous deals, or are already carried out by WMCA and its constituent bodies, with an appropriate split between capital and revenue funding:
- a. local growth and place.
  - b. local transport.
  - c. housing and regeneration.
  - d. adult skills.
  - e. buildings' retrofit for decarbonisation matters covered by the pilot agreement to devolve retrofit funding set out at paragraphs 208 – 214.
60. WMCA will be empowered to use funding under these devolved functions to invest in any lawful way associated with achievement of the outcomes agreed with the government. Where functions have not been devolved through this or other devolution deals, the government retains the right to direct specific funding programmes, and WMCA retains the right to continue to bid into competitive programmes. Funding for major infrastructure projects may be agreed in addition to the settlement.

61. Single settlements will be implemented at the next Spending Review and based on a methodology agreed between the government and WMCA. Therefore, their precise scope of the single settlement will be subject to Spending Review decisions. However, were single settlements to have been in place during this spending review period, the government and WMCA agree that they would have supported outcomes associated with the following budgets:
- a. Local growth and place: the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Levelling Up Fund.
  - b. Local transport: City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements which consolidate highways maintenance and integrated transport block funding for small scale renewals as well as transformational funding for local transport. In addition, the settlement would also have included revenue funding for buses, active travel funds and electric vehicle funds.
  - c. Housing and regeneration: the Brownfield Housing Fund and the Brownfield Infrastructure and Land fund.
  - d. Adult skills: the Adult Education Budget and Free Courses for Jobs.
62. The government will work with WMCA to agree the more detailed elements of the settlement design ahead of the next Spending Review, including around spending control; approach to managing financial and delivery risks; transitional arrangements; the outcomes framework; accounting arrangements; and accountability arrangements. The government will work with WMCA to agree a memorandum of understanding outlining how single settlements will work by the end of January 2024. WMCA will reserve the right to not agree the memorandum of understanding should it be deemed to be detrimental to WMCA. This timescale will be reviewed when the timing of the next Spending Review is confirmed, if this happens before January 2024. Outcomes agreed as part of existing programmes which span into the next Spending Review, such as City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, will be maintained.
63. Single settlements represent an ambitious step on the road to greater simplification of the funding mayoral combined authorities receive from the government. This programme will continue to progress through each spending review, drawing on lessons learnt from engagement with local partners, deepened strategic relationships with arm's length bodies, and the closer alignment with national government programmes set out in this deal.
64. The government and WMCA anticipate that single settlements will become a permanent feature of the landscape for financing WMCA. Nevertheless, it is recognised that this is a novel approach to financing WMCA, and so following the next Spending Review, the government and WMCA will review the approach.

# Transport

65. WMCA has significant transport powers and funding from the previous two devolution deals. The commitments set out below build on them and are intended to provide further autonomy to the WMCA to establish itself as a leader in transport innovation in the UK and improve the transport offer to its citizens.

## Transport planning

66. Transport is a critical element of place-making and has a huge impact on people's lives and communities. Well planned and supported transport improves quality of life, ensuring that the needs of all users are considered. Getting transport right is also critical to the government's efforts to achieve net zero and overall approach to safeguarding the environment.

67. The government recognises that every place is unique and has different transport needs. That is why an area's local transport plan is so crucial to ensuring good transport outcomes for the area. An area's local transport plan is both a process and public facing document that brings together evidence and aspirations to shape the future transport in a local area. local transport plans should be kept updated to make a stronger strategic case for transport investment in an area and provide a platform for accountability needed to support further devolution and funding simplification.

68. WMCA has developed its Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands local transport plan core strategy, and the government is committed to supporting WMCA as it looks to build on its success so far. The government will provide new guidance to assist WMCA in developing its local transport plan, including meeting defined environmental and decarbonisation standards and fully adopting planned new guidance on quantifying carbon reductions. The WMCA will act as a trailblazer with the government to ensure that quantifying carbon reductions are embedded as part of WMCA's local transport plan area strategies by the end of 2023.

69. A key feature of transport planning in WMCA is developing an inclusive economy where anyone, including disabled people, can access travel and play an active role in local economies. This means delivering inclusive local transport plans that support accessibility and reduce health, economic and social inequalities.

70. WMCA will work closely and collaboratively with local authorities to ensure better join up between strategic land use planning and transport planning, from the earliest stages of the funding and planning process. WMCA, along with its constituent local authorities, should provide an integrated system that unlocks homes while enabling more sustainable transport journeys by provision of public, sustainable and active travel, effectively densifies well-connected areas and ensures communities have access to employment, leisure and other opportunities they need. WMCA should work to ensure the benefits transport can provide to leverage regeneration and growth are realised.
71. As WMCA develops its local transport plan, it will host a complementary new trailblazing approach to collaborative research and learning programme. This programme will be coordinated through an influencing transport lab. The government is exploring sponsorship of the influencing transport lab. This approach will seek to better understand how to support the development and design of changes to the transport system that can more readily enable more sustainable choices.
72. The commitments set out below are intended to support and enable WMCA to ensure that it has the tools necessary to achieve the outcomes set out in their local transport plan.

## Funding

73. The government recognises the importance of a consolidated, devolved and long-term approach to transport funding and has provided a £1.05 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement to the WMCA area running until 2027. Clarity and certainty of funding are important to help areas plan appropriately to deliver the government's ambition to level-up local transport connectivity across the country to become significantly closer to the standards of London by 2030.

## Transport innovation

74. WMCA was the government's first future transport zone and will continue to be a leader in transport innovation in the UK. The WMCA will establish itself as a 'sandbox' to create economic benefits by attracting new global investment, catalysing additional growth in high-value clusters and boosting private sector confidence to deliver new transport services in the WMCA, with learning that can be applied across the UK. This will help the WMCA build on its excellence in the automotive and transport sector, such as TfWM Connected and Automated Mobility programme, and remain a leader in innovation.
75. WMCA and the government will form an ongoing relationship to accelerate and drive forward innovations that are priorities for the WMCA and match the government's policy priorities, including the future of transport regulatory review, transport decarbonisation plan and future of freight plan.

76. The sandbox will aim to exploit new transport service opportunities including challenging regulatory barriers where appropriate to provide a safe and secure space to test innovative products and services with private industry. To improve the user experience for travellers, the sandbox will look to modernise practices through digitising services and processes and identify smarter and quicker ways of working within existing regulatory frameworks.
77. New services and business models enabled by digitisation and advances in technology should provide opportunities for all and be designed from the outset on an inclusive and equitable basis, accounting for the needs of a diverse community including disabled people.
78. From spring 2023, the government and WMCA will begin conversations on a range of issues aimed at unlocking innovation. This will involve WMCA working closely with government across the Future of Transport programme on projects that will deliver shared outcomes. The government and WMCA will:
- a. Discuss how to best enable low speed zero emission and automated vehicle trials, with consideration for operational and regulatory challenges.
  - b. Explore the regulatory challenges facing demand responsive transport in the WMCA.
  - c. Explore the use of dynamic traffic management and digitising street spaces.
79. Additionally, the government is exploring a number of further projects that would support innovation and delivery of a safe, efficient, and reliable transport network within the WMCA:
- a. The government is exploring the implications of, and options for, introducing simplified side road zebra crossings, and recognises WMCA's ambitions to introduce these. The WMCA and the constituent authorities will support the government in developing a robust evidence case.
  - b. The government intends to introduce legislation, when parliamentary time allows, that will create a new low speed zero emission vehicle category which is distinct from the cycle and motor vehicle categories. Supported by evidence from trials in the WMCA, new powers would enable government to set proportionate rules for specific micromobility vehicles. The proposed legislation would also enable the creation of a licensing framework for rental micromobility operations, providing consistent powers for local transport authorities such as WMCA to shape rental operations to their local priorities.
  - c. Following the great success of Birmingham and the WMCA hosting the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the government will work with the WMCA to develop a

proposal for the West Midlands to bid to host the 2027 World Intelligent Transport Systems Congress.

- d. WMCA also intends to develop a local, last mile freight and logistics programme to support the area's growing high value logistics and distribution cluster, as identified in the WMCA's Plan for Growth.

## Buses

- 80. In line with the commitment in the National Bus Strategy, the government is working on the reform of the bus service operators grant. This will enable the bus service operators grant to support the governments and West Midlands' shared priorities to support important local bus services and reduce environmental impacts through facilitating the transition to zero emission buses.
- 81. The government will devolve powers for the payment of the bus service operators grant to the Mayor. WMCA will provide support to identify the funding for bus services entirely within the WMCA boundary that is paid to commercial operators and would be suitable to be devolved to WMCA, both currently and following national reform.
- 82. The government will work with WMCA and other key local authority stakeholders to finalise the design of a national reform package for the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant. The government will support WMCA by devolving the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant for services entirely within the WMCA boundary. The government and WMCA will work together to agree an ambitious timeline to implement the bus service operators grant bus service operators grant reforms in the West Midlands, by 2025.
- 83. WMCA has introduced bus bye laws to help improve passenger safety, increase bus patronage and reduce anti-social behaviour on public transport. The government shares this ambition and will work with WMCA to ensure TfWM has appropriate enforcement powers to enforce these existing bye laws and can introduce further byelaws, where necessary.

## Rail

- 84. The government will support the West Midlands Rail Executive, which represents the rail interests of WMCA and other local transport authorities in the region, and is chaired by the Mayor, in seeking a new rail partnership with Great British Railways. This will form part of the journey towards greater local accountability for the West Midlands rail network, in the context of Great British Railways' ultimate overall accountability for the national rail network. This will enable West Midlands Rail Executive to further embed itself as a central part of the rail industry in the region and, by extension, allow their priorities to drive future decisions regarding the local network. Local priorities will need

to be coordinated and compatible with the needs of the national network and surrounding areas.

85. This should build on the collaboration and successful joint working already in place on the WMCA's rail network demonstrated through the collaboration agreement with government and the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration. Delivery of rail reform in the WMCA will enable opportunities for enhanced local accountability, scrutiny, responsibility and influence that West Midlands Rail Executive will be at the forefront of due to their prior experience. Enhanced local accountability for the WMCA will be in the context of, and will not override, Great British Railways' ultimate accountability to the Secretary of State for Transport.
86. Partnerships between Great British Railways and mayoral combined authorities will be a key driver in progressing the levelling up transport mission for local public transport connectivity to be significantly closer to the standards of London with improved services, simpler fares, and integrated ticketing by 2030.
87. Reflecting WMCA's position with a trailblazer deal, and with a view to evolving today's successful collaboration agreement with government, the Great British Railways Transition Team is working with West Midlands Rail Executive to discuss local priorities for a partnership. The existing agreement, and the West Midlands Separable Business Unit, will act as a baseline for the future partnership with Great British Railways. The government is supportive of these discussions continuing and of exploring whether aspects of new local partnership working can be piloted ahead of Great British Railways operation.
88. West Midlands Rail Executive will continue to jointly oversee the delivery of rail services within the West Midlands Separable Business Unit and work with Great British Railways Transition Team and government on shared objectives and future outcomes. Partnership working will enable West Midlands Rail Executive to feed in their views regarding optimum services for WMCA's travel to work area, including their ambition for a separate contract for these WMCA services which will be considered within the context of the national network. Progress here will be subject to development of wider reform of the railways and industry processes that support this.
89. As steps to develop the existing agreement ahead of Great British Railways being operational, the government commits to:
  - a. Supporting West Midlands Rail Executive and TfWM to explore a fully integrated multi modal fares and ticketing structure, through the region's already existing Swift platform. In collaboration with West Midlands Rail Executive and TfWM, the government will initially progress pay as you go ticketing infrastructure pilots, to be developed and agreed by the end of 2023. These pilots will be revenue neutral and align with government's wider fares, ticketing and retail programme. Collaboration will allow Great British Railways Transition Team, government, West Midlands Rail Executive, TfWM and train operators to test the technology,



explore and agree potential options for rail fare simplification, and test the revenue raising potential of a genuinely integrated public transport offer. Subject to funding, this will include trialling agreed approaches within the WMCA. Great British Railways Transition Team is already discussing how pay as you go ticketing on rail could work with West Midlands Rail Executive aspirations for local pay as you go and simplifying fares for passengers.

- b. Supporting development of multimodal transport integration by working with West Midlands Rail Executive to co-develop a brand proposition that is compatible with the Plan for Rail's ambition for a single, national rail brand, while also retaining and strengthening the West Midlands Railway brand within the wider TfWM network.
  - c. Working collaboratively with Great British Railways Transition Team, and subject to discussions with Network Rail and train operating companies, to support West Midlands Rail Executive to better integrate local stations into the local public transport network and wider community. This will include exploring the local branding proposition across rail stations, provide opportunities to shape station design and drive-up standards to improve and simplify the customer experience.
  - d. Working closely with Great British Railways Transition Team and West Midlands Rail Executive, taking current responsibilities as a baseline, to ensure they continue to play a full role in future processes and are committed to exploring where that role can be enhanced in areas of rail delivery to enable greater local influence.
  - e. Providing greater access to local rail data to West Midlands Rail Executive, to improve local scrutiny of performance.
  - f. Continuing to engage with WMCA, so that local input is actively considered and exploring whether aspects of the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy could be incorporated in developing a long-term strategy for rail.
  - g. Giving West Midlands Rail Executive opportunities to promote infrastructure and service enhancement schemes by West Midlands Rail Executive, Network Rail and the government on the options for funding, timing and delivery given existing network challenges.
  - h. Supporting West Midlands Rail Executive in leading and distributing funding for community rail activity in the region. Such engagement can enable rail to connect communities in addition to offering social value and economic impact.
90. The details and progress on the above, including determining appropriate locations for trials of pay as you go ticketing, is subject to further discussions between government, Great British Railways Transition Team, and West Midlands Rail Executive.

## Mass transit delivery

91. The WMCA is driving forward the delivery of a comprehensive transport infrastructure programme including an extension of the Metro network in Birmingham and the Black Country. The government commits to consider solutions to be developed by the WMCA to resolve the pressures on the WMCA's capital programme.
92. WMCA and Coventry City Council are developing proposals for very light rail in Coventry (and tested in Dudley). The aim is to develop a new more cost-effective alternative to conventional light rail which could be deployed in major urban areas and exported globally. If this aim is realised, it could potentially create a reliable, frequent, battery-driven, hop-on hop-off transport system which provides an alternative to a traditional tram system.
93. The proposals for very light rail in Coventry are subject to ministerial approval at key business case stages. At each stage, the government will work with local partners to help ensure that the plans are best formulated to deliver benefits and improvements for the transport system. WMCA and Coventry City Council will provide feedback to the government on the very light rail experience of Transport and Works Act order processes to help inform potential reforms. Government will provide advice to WMCA on future Transport and Works Act order applications to ensure it can be processed as quickly as possible (without prejudice to what any final decision on such application might be).

## Roads

94. Building on the WMCA's flagship, multi-agency Regional Transport Coordination Centre, the government will work with the WMCA to explore whether opportunities exist for traffic officers on the WMCA's key route network to support management of periods of planned and unplanned disruptions.
95. The government is considering options for tackling pavement parking, and we will work with WMCA to explore appropriate powers for mayoral combined authorities and their constituent authorities in this area, once any decisions relating to the national framework are made.

## Housing and regeneration

96. WMCA has a history of success in leading housing delivery, land repurposing, urban renewal and brownfield regeneration across the West Midlands, leveraging private sector investment, driving new innovation in areas like modular construction and delivering high quality brownfield regeneration projects. This deal will build on the success of WMCA's previous devolution deals, and WMCA's track record to date, to be ambitious in delivering high quality regeneration schemes and policy innovation in areas like design quality and affordable housing.
97. This deal will support WMCA's continuing development of brownfield land and the building of new homes and will help the WMCA better manage a portfolio of housing and land funds which the Government and WMCA will continue to make sure is as efficient and effective as possible as we proceed to implementation. It will support the creation of new jobs and commercial floorspace, and repurposing of town and city centres. We will ensure that public sector land is better used, designed and developed as a result of this deal, supporting WMCA's ambitions on housing supply, including the supply of new social and affordable housing, and maximising the ability of the WMCA to continue to lead the way in brownfield development, public land disposals and urban renewal nationally.
98. We will also create a revolutionary new model of delivering affordable housing for the people of the West Midlands, putting WMCA at the centre of the key strategic decisions on how and where this new affordable housing should be delivered – providing the tools and mechanisms to support new affordable housing products, investors and suppliers.
99. At the next Spending Review, we will implement the new single settlement which seeks to better align housing policies alongside other key levers for local economic growth.

## Regeneration funding

100. The government will devolve £100 million brownfield funding to WMCA to drive placemaking, housing and urban regeneration across the region. This will be deployed within this spending review period, supporting WMCA to deliver 4,000 homes. From the next Spending Review, WMCA will receive a simplified single department-style settlement. This will better align housing policies alongside other key levers for local economic growth.

101. Subject to further discussions to refine the business case, WMCA intends that it will be deployed at scale and pace to de-risk stalled and challenging housing, urban and commercial development sites across the West Midlands, which include sites in the city of Wolverhampton, which was identified as a priority in the Levelling Up White Paper, in city centres like Coventry and Birmingham, in town centres (e.g. Walsall, Dudley, Sandwell) and along major transport corridors (e.g. East Birmingham to North Solihull)
102. This investment will support progression and delivery of emerging and adopted local plans, support brownfield first and town centre regeneration policy, and provide WMCA with the critical flexibility and strategic funding, and barrier-busting abilities necessary to tackle the most pertinent development issues for the region and the specific barriers facing individual sites.
103. This funding would have robust reporting and accountability provisions, which satisfy the Single Assurance Framework and the outcomes of which are aligned with the West Midlands Outcomes Framework, as agreed with the government and focussed on enabling placemaking and supporting conditions for growth.
104. There is untapped regeneration and development potential in parts of the WMCA area. As part of the trailblazing commitment to funding simplification, DLUHC commits to provide £60 million of additional funding towards the proposed metro line extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, subject to a subsidy control assessment and business case approval. All further costs for the scheme will be met locally.

## High street rental auctions

105. The government is committed to tackling high vacancy rates which can impact the economic prosperity and pride in place felt across our high streets. As such, the government commits to work closely with WMCA to empower them to take a role in convening its constituent authorities to implement new powers for high street rental auctions following the passage of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.
106. We want the West Midlands to be a first mover in the use of these new powers once the programme commences in autumn 2023.
107. We expect WMCA to identify areas on their patch which would benefit most from HSRA powers, and where the required capacity and capability lies to deliver them. WMCA should then oversee the delivery of high street rental auctions and act as a champion for the programme to encourage and support other areas to maximise take up high street rental auctions.

## Strategic Place Partnership

108. Government commits to working with the WMCA through a strategic place partnership with its housing delivery agency Homes England. Homes England commit to working in partnership with WMCA from the outset of this Deal to bring new housing supply and regeneration sites forward. To do so Homes England will be establishing a new wide-ranging Strategic Place Partnership with WMCA, to support the WMCA with their ambitious plans on housing supply, investment, and urban regeneration. Homes England will work with WMCA and its constituent local authorities to agree a set of place-making outcomes, focused on delivering transformational change across the West Midlands. The Strategic Place Partnership will align expertise, funding and other relevant assets to support the delivery of these outcomes, and other strategic priorities at combined authority level. A part of this new Strategic Place Partnership will include a joint pipeline and delivery plan to bring forward additional affordable homes, land and assets formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding and a future delivery plan.

## Affordable housing provision

109. The government commits to a new trailblazer approach to the delivery of affordable housing within the West Midlands. This will be centred on a new approach to the Affordable Homes Programme 2021-26 being piloted with the WMCA. The Affordable Homes Programme is the government's flagship programme for delivering affordable housing in England. It provides grant funding towards the supply of new social and affordable housing. This agreement relates to funding within the existing Affordable Homes Programme envelope.
110. The trailblazer approach means that the WMCA will set the overall strategic direction, strategy, objectives and local leadership for the deployment of the Affordable Homes Programme in its region. Operational management and administration of the programme will remain within Homes England and hence a strong partnership and collaboration, through the Strategic Place Partnership, will be important from the outset.
111. This provides for local leadership, direction and strategic oversight over the Affordable Homes Programme for the first time by the West Midlands, while retaining Homes England's delivery expertise, administration and operational management, ensuring the Affordable Homes Programme business case objectives are delivered and existing local authority arrangements are maintained.
112. The trailblazer approach will be delivered in two stages, allowing for an evolving picture that increases WMCA involvement, leadership, decision making and direction at each stage. This approach will protect in-flight delivery of the current Affordable Homes Programme, existing investment commitments and strategic partnerships, ensure the fund's business case objectives are met and provide the necessary accountability

arrangements. It will still ensure a trailblazing approach, with WMCA central to key decisions on the Affordable Homes Programme deployment in the West Midlands.

### **Current Affordable Homes Programme**

113. Within the first phase of the trailblazer approach (with timings aligned to the current Affordable Homes Programme):
- a. WMCA will be central to decisions on the Affordable Homes Programme in the region, responsible for setting the strategic direction, leadership and strategy of the Affordable Homes Programme, priorities for investment and strategic oversight within the WMCA area. WMCA will continue to work closely with its local authority partners on Affordable Homes Programme delivery, and work with Homes England, who will continue to lead on day-to-day management, monitoring, grant allocation and administration of the Affordable Homes Programme in the region during this pilot phase.
  - b. Through the Strategic Place Partnership, WMCA will work with local authorities, the government and its agencies, namely Home England, to jointly identify projects for affordable housing. This will be, in line with the strategic direction and policy framework for the Affordable Homes Programme set by WMCA in alignment with the overarching business case for the Affordable Homes Programme. Homes England, the WMCA and its local authorities will develop an effective pipeline of projects across the region within the strategic framework set by WMCA.
  - c. WMCA, local authorities and Homes England will work in close partnership to ensure effective delivery of Affordable Homes Programme funding. WMCA and Homes England will work together in formulating the necessary governance to help ensure strong partnership working and collaboration and support regional decision making on investments and spend of the Affordable Homes Programme. This will sit underneath the existing programme governance structure.
  - d. Where any funding decisions are not acceptable to the WMCA the mayor, as chair of the WMCA board, will have the right to challenge and escalate the decision to DLUHC before any final funding decisions are taken.
114. This represents the first time that decisions on local affordable housing priorities have been devolved, outside of London. Overall funding decisions will need to be aligned and consistent with the national targets set for the current Affordable Homes Programme, but, recognising the trailblazer nature of the deal, more flexibility may be granted to take greater account of regional priorities.

115. The specific arrangement will depend on the provider and/or whether funding has been allocated already and the approach will be formalised through a memorandum of understanding, signed between WMCA, DLUHC and Homes England.
116. Homes England will invest at least £200 million of AHP funding within the WMCA area by March 2026 with a clear ambition for WMCA, local partners and Homes England to work together to invest up to £400 million to build more social and affordable homes by 2026. This will be dependent on appetite from providers alongside the ongoing work to develop a joint pipeline and delivery plan, developed as part of the Strategic Place Partnership. WMCA will work collaboratively with Homes England, constituent local authorities and local delivery partners to develop a joint pipeline and delivery plan which alongside the other elements set out in this trailblazer approach will help bring forward additional funding opportunities beyond the minimum level, through the identification and development of pipeline projects by Homes England and WMCA.

### **Future affordable homes provision**

117. In the second phase of the trailblazer approach (to begin in any successor programme), WMCA will be responsible for adopting a strategic role on affordable housing, including in some decisions currently taken by Homes England, namely agreeing sites and providers and identifying standards, working in partnership with its local authorities. This will be subject to securing appropriate value for money and considering the risks of different standards across the country.
118. This would be subject to any relevant successor programme being agreed in the next Spending Review, the delivery of outcomes to be agreed at the start of any successor programme with the government, set out in a formal settlement including an expectation for the amount of funding to be delivered over the programme within the WMCA. This initial agreement will include the number of homes to be delivered over the programme, annual trajectories of delivery and possible interventions on the event of non-delivery.
119. In this new 'trailblazing' model of delivery, the WMCA will make the key strategic decisions over local investment and spend of Affordable Homes Programme in the WMCA area in line with its strategic framework. The WMCA will be held accountable for delivery through the new accountability framework, which is set out in the Governance and Accountability section of this deal. Day to day administration of the Affordable Homes Programme in the West Midlands will continue to be undertaken by Homes England working to the strategy, objectives and framework set by WMCA, with Homes England reporting to the WMCA on delivery of the agreed outcomes and outputs. Homes England will continue to provide its expertise were called upon, building on the partnership working set out in the Strategic Place Partnership.
120. The development of such an approach for a potential successor programme, including the nature of the relationship between WMCA and Homes England and whether this can be included in WMCA's single settlement, will consider how to maintain the

benefits of nation-wide competitive bidding and long-term contracting with national housing providers, alongside those arising from greater local control and place-led strategic delivery, innovation and objectives for some areas.

121. DLUHC will attempt to pilot this more flexible approach during the current programme, subject to protection of delivery of the existing programme, business cases and appropriate finance becoming available, and will apply the lessons learnt when designing the simplified single department-style settlement for the next Spending Review.

## Land reform and public land in the WMCA area

122. The government recognises that repurposing and redeveloping publicly owned land can represent a significant opportunity to drive regeneration, unlock private investment, create new jobs, repurpose town and city centres and increase housing supply across the WMCA area. For the first time, a combined authority will be involved in decisions on major UK government land disposals and reconfiguration of the government estate in a region – the WMCA and the West Midlands being the national pathfinder of this approach.
123. It is important that departments and arm's length bodies apply Green Book guidance for all public authorities regarding asset sales when designing the sale, disposal and development of public land and buildings. This guidance sets out how estimates of social value should include wider social costs and benefits that may be affected by a sale. It is also important that disposal of public sector assets is done transparently and where a department disposes of assets below market price that the reduced income is properly accounted for and recognised and the social value resulting from this is quantified.
124. Equally we recognise that in terms of the national picture, the government (Treasury and Cabinet Office, DLUHC included) has a role to play in ensuring the right systems and incentives are in place to ensure local needs can be met with local solutions while at the same time delivering for the public purse.
125. The Cabinet Office will continue to champion social and public value as part of their property control function on behalf of the Treasury. Their first priority will be to making this commitment real within the context of delivery in the combined authority trailblazer areas.
126. The government and WMCA agree a number of areas to ensure the full implementation of the West Midlands Public Land Charter and support the work of WMCA and its West Midlands Public Land Taskforce and showcase the contribution of public land and buildings to levelling up and placemaking including:



- a. A formal public land reform partnership with the government led by Cabinet Office will be signed which provides WMCA with new strategic leadership and clarity on government department and agency land and buildings centring on decisions on disposals/development in the government estate in the region. The new land reform partnership with Cabinet Office will include a joint plan to anticipate where there may be potential upcoming disposals and reconfiguration of government land and buildings within the West Midlands.
- b. DLUHC and the Cabinet Office will support the WMCA to become a leader in public land policy and delivery including being the first region for the Cabinet Office's new "place pilots" programme.
- c. The West Midlands is a regional trailblazer for the measures and principles set out in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, with the WMCA, local authorities and DLUHC working together to explore and demonstrate the more flexible compulsory purchase and land assembly opportunities for regeneration.
- d. DLUHC, the WMCA and its constituent authorities, will undertake a review of the effectiveness of local development orders in the West Midlands, explore how local authorities could be supported in their application to accelerate regeneration delivery, growth and investment, and pilot resulting models in the region.
- e. DLUHC and Cabinet Office will, as part of the public land reform partnership between WMCA and Cabinet Office, commit to work with the WMCA to better understand issues around use and redevelopment of public land and buildings.

## Housing quality

- 127. Homelessness.** The government will provide £3.8 million during financial year 2022/23 to WMCA on behalf of Birmingham City Council to lease good-quality private rented sector properties in the City for homeless families, supporting their ongoing work to end the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families
- 128. Live and Work.** The St Basil's 'Live and Work' model provides an excellent example of collaborative working to help young people enter employment and secure an affordable home. The Live and Work scheme was previously allocated funding for a pilot scheme in Sandwell, and DLUHC will work with Homes England, WMCA and suitable registered providers to consider how the Live and Work model may be expanded and tested in additional localities across the region to strengthen the evidence base for the proposed model.
- 129.** Such schemes would support young workers, and potentially others transitioning from supported housing or homelessness experience, to live, work and be benefit free.

130. DLUHC officials commit to continue to discuss with WMCA and Birmingham City Council what more can be done to increase the replacement of homes sold under the Right to Buy.

# Skills

131. Both the government and WMCA are committed to creating the conditions for West Midland's people, communities, businesses and economy to thrive. Central to that commitment is ensuring that the education, skills, and employment support system is truly responsive to local needs, including those identified by employers in the local skills improvement plan.
132. This deal sets out further commitments towards a more devolved adult skills system. The deal extends existing devolved adult skills functions to include further areas of post-19 education and skills activity; and provides greater oversight of post-16 technical education and skills and careers. In this Spending Review period, the deal proposes increased flexibility on adult skills programmes. The deal also proposes exploring pilots of new local skills and careers initiatives as well as increasing partnership between national government and WMCA.
133. The government recognises that there are distinct labour market challenges faced in the West Midlands to upskill the population, generate inclusive growth, and assist employers in filling vacancies requiring advanced and higher skills. Central to this deal is greater oversight of the local skills system and increasing alignment of careers provision. As a result, WMCA will play a crucial role in the region to ensure the local skills system responds to the local skills improvement plan.
134. This deal is underpinned by the enhanced accountability measures, outlined in the Accountability section of this deal. As a milestone to that devolution, WMCA commit to stretching but achievable targets, as set out in this deal, in the current Spending Review period in return for the greater flexibility and path to devolution that it creates. This will be underpinned by the English Devolution Accountability Framework. Further accountability arrangements as they relate to the single settlement are set out in the single settlement section of this deal. The government will also continue to work with WMCA to simplify the funding landscape for skills provision in the area.

## A new partnership for post-16 technical education and skills

135. The government recognises the critical role that mayoral combined authorities play in supporting education and skills and their alignment to regional economic growth. This is particularly true of technical education and skills up to and including Level 3, which draw their primary purpose from the workplace and employer need and have a line of

sight to occupations and occupational areas. Both WMCA and the government are committed to delivering a simplified technical education and skills system which is more closely aligned to employers' needs, connects people to high quality jobs, and harnesses opportunities to attract investment.

136. A strong joint governance board will be established to provide oversight of post 16 technical education and skills in West Midlands. It will ensure the link between the technical education offer within West Midlands and real time labour market intelligence about the needs of the West Midlands labour market.

137. The board would have four main roles:

- a. **Responsiveness.** Creating a strong strategic partnership between commissioners/funders (with senior representatives from WMCA and the government), the demand side (the designated employer representative body) and supply side (providers), to utilise all available levers and resources to secure a post 16 technical and vocational offer that is aligned to local skills needs. This should ensure sufficiency, capacity, capability and curriculum relevance and pathways.
- b. **Local skills improvement plan implementation.** As part of this responsiveness, the board will have strategic oversight (i.e., facilitating alignment and addressing issues) of relevant post-16 technical education or training offer linked to delivering the local skills improvement plan, including a role in signing off the local skills improvement fund application from the lead college to ensure alignment of local skills improvement fund-funded projects and wider labour market strategies.
- c. **Data sharing.** The board will commit to lawful and relevant data sharing to support effective planning functions linked to both sufficiency and alignment between the technical education offer and local labour market needs. This will include considering ways to join up on data collection to avoid placing avoidable burdens on providers.
- d. **Careers.** Responsibility to develop an all-age careers strategy for West Midlands that responds to the local skills improvement plan and reflects the skills ambition for the city-region. The board will help align the needs of business, the careers ambitions of our residents and the services and providers with the remit to support residents to develop their careers (see careers section of the deal

138. The government envisages that the role of the board will evolve as it becomes established. We will explore, in the next Spending Review, how to better reflect the board's views in relation to place-based capital investment.

## Adult skills

139. The government is committed to ensuring that adult skills functions and funding support people to access the skills they and the economy need, increasing productivity, supporting growth industries, and giving people the opportunity to progress. To ensure this happens at a national and local level, the government commits to devolving non-apprenticeship adult skills functions and grant funding to WMCA in the next Spending Review period.
140. However, there will be specific instances when the national government needs to direct the design of adult skills provision or allocation of adult skills funding – as such, the Secretary of State for Education will retain the ability to do so in next Spending Review period and beyond. However, this will be the exception rather than the rule, where the scale or urgency are such that a national response is judged required to deliver the required outcomes or where there are national skills priorities that the government believes are not being met sufficiently by the skills system. The government will work with the WMCA to ensure that any such direction can be aligned with the existing skills landscape.
141. In this current Spending Review period, the government commits to increasing the local flexibility for MCAs on Free Courses for Jobs and Skills Bootcamps – providing greater flexibility and a path to devolution in the next Spending Review. This will allow them to expand eligibility and select courses and subjects that best respond to the needs of WMCA’s residents, employers and the local labour market.

## Free Courses for Jobs

142. On Free Courses for Jobs, the government plans to remove the ringfence on this programme from the beginning of the next Spending Review by full devolution within WMCA’s single settlement, subject to WMCA demonstrating effective use of its budget that has been allocated for Level 3 provision. This will ensure we deliver more of these high value Level 3 skills, which the country needs, but with greater focus on ensuring resonance with local labour market needs including those identified in local skills improvement plans.
143. From financial years 23-24 the government commits to increasing the flexibility of Free Courses for Jobs funding by enabling WMCA to spend up to 50% on any Level 3 adult qualifications deemed necessary by WMCA to meet local skills needs – this is significantly more flexibility than currently available and will support them to meet their delivery targets.
144. In recognition of their trailblazer status, the government commits to fully devolving and removing all ringfences on Free Courses for Jobs for WMCA, subject to and once WMCA have delivered 80% of their available Free Courses for Jobs funding across an academic year by increasing the amount of delivery.

## Skills Bootcamps

145. Skills Bootcamps will retain the core purpose, policy intent and branding consistent with the national model, and maintain the focus on delivering employment outcomes which respond to local and national skills needs.
146. Commencing in financial years 23-24, to ensure ongoing value for money and guard against duplication, the government commits to sharing relevant commissioning activity, performance information and data with WMCA on Skills Bootcamps provision that will, or is likely to, include delivery to local residents or employers. In turn, WMCA commits to share relevant commissioning activity, performance information and data about local delivery.
147. In 2023-24, the government commits to increasing the flexibility mayoral combined authorities have to spend up to 30% of the available budget to develop bootcamps that meet local labour market/skills needs in any sector.
148. From 2024-25, in recognition of their trailblazer status, the government commits to then further increasing this flexibility for WMCA – to spend up to 100% of the available budget to develop bootcamps that meet local labour market and skills needs in any sector. WMCA will have the ability to flex the Skills Bootcamp model to meet local needs, subject to agreement from DfE about the nature and substance of these changes. This will allow WMCA the discretion to build on the core model, sharing and applying lessons learned to date around the most effective delivery models, tailored to each sector. We expect this provision to be aligned with priorities identified via the relevant local skills improvement plan.
149. As early as possible in the next Spending Review the government plans to provide WMCA with an un-ringfenced, devolved allocation of funding for the delivery of Skills Bootcamps that is representative of their national share of the total amount of funding allocated for Skills Bootcamps delivery, and subject to conditions that ensure that (where funding is used for Bootcamps) the core model and branding is protected.<sup>1</sup> The government will ensure that funding for Bootcamps is added to the single settlement once the activity is fully devolved.

## Careers: joint, place-based governance arrangements

150. With a mandate from the Secretary of State for Education, the government will work with WMCA to take forward the recommendations of the Holman review of careers education by offering a more place-based approach to careers education and develop joint governance arrangements for the delivery of careers services in the West Midlands. This will establish WMCA as the central convenor of careers provision in the

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<sup>1</sup> For any funding above this amount, national criteria will determine the remaining funding share and will be ringfenced for spend on Skills Bootcamps delivery.

region; facilitating more effective and joined up delivery between the National Careers Service and local careers hubs and ensuring greater regional tailoring of careers provision, including through locally agreed key performance indicators.

151. As part of this joint governance, WMCA will join DfE at the quarterly performance monitoring of the relevant National Careers Service regional contractor, allowing them to evaluate the impact of the programme locally and enable the Service to better respond to local need.
152. The government also commits to working with WMCA in shaping the design of future careers provision for all ages in the region, to ensure services more clearly reflect local priorities from the outset. Through this government will establish the WMCA's role in shaping the specification for future contracts and ongoing performance management of future regional careers services
153. The government will pilot a new strategic fund to respond to careers priorities for young people in the West Midlands, including to support those who are not in education, employment or training or at risk of becoming not in education, employment or training.

# Employment support

## Regional labour market governance

154. The DWP Secretary of State will ask WMCA to convene a new Regional Labour Market Partnership Board, which builds on the current collaborative structure that is already in place. The board will oversee the development and implementation of a strategy to tackle regional labour market challenges and move people back into the labour market and into work. This board will include senior representation from DWP, and, where relevant, other government departments, as well as key regional stakeholders.
155. To ensure a rapid and effective response to the actions agreed by the Partnership Board, regular engagement on both a strategic and operational working level between WMCA and DWP, including policy and Jobcentre Plus colleagues as necessary, will continue. This engagement will oversee the development and implementation of these actions.
156. By taking this approach WMCA and DWP will work together to ensure value for money, better use of public funding and achieving the best possible outcomes for clients locally and nationally.

## Contracted employment programmes

157. WMCA and DWP are both committed to ensuring the best employment outcomes and support for WMCA residents; to do this requires working towards alignment of national and locally funded public services, integration of public services so they can deliver to best effect for residents and reducing gaps or duplication. In turn, this requires strengthened partnership working and planning to ensure better value for money and achieve a more targeted approach nationally and locally is achieved. DWP is accountable for paying benefits to people who are out of work, and therefore needs to be sure employment provision is effective.
158. Both government and WMCA recognise that, whilst the core national Jobcentre Plus offer works well for many people, contracted employment programmes are a more impactful way of supporting those with more complex needs with more tailored support that addresses multiple barriers to work. Similarly, WMCA's local authorities are responsible for many public services, like public health and housing, which are crucial



in tackling the barriers that often prevent people moving into good, sustainable employment and which see the wider social consequences of unemployment and inactivity resulting in increased demand and poor outcomes. WMCA also has access to significant funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which is intended to support people furthest from the labour market.

159. In all circumstances, WMCA and DWP commit to formalised joint working as the basis of ensuring the best value for money and outcomes for residents on all new and future employment programme provision. DWP and WMCA will:

- a. Commit to a co-design approach to all future contracted employment support programmes, for young people and adults. This means understanding and agreeing the shared policy intent, pooling relevant data and evidence bases to identify gaps and identifying local need, circumstances, assets, and value-add when constructing the specification for the West Midlands contract package area. DWP and WMCA will reach joint agreement around the high-level design and objectives (purpose, outcomes and accountability), so that target cohorts, payment models, routes to market and referrals meet local need.
- b. This co-design needs to recognise that the programmes sit within the framework agreed between DWP and HMT when the funding is secured and ensure that any minimum standards or requirements that would exist in comparable national contracted employment programmes are met or exceeded.
- c. DWP's Secretary of State will have final sign-off of contracted employment programme design, procurement and delivery mechanisms, given the Annual Managed Expenditure implications, using written advice from the DWP Accounting Officer based on DWP and WMCA assurances.
- d. Agree that, in recognition of the special status of the trailblazers, any contracted employment programme activity within WMCA will start from the assumption of a delegated delivery model, but subject to WMCA satisfying conditions which provide assurance on readiness to deliver a value for money programme, including strengthened accountability arrangements, which are yet to be decided. WMCA will then commission on behalf of DWP on a WMCA footprint.

160. In exceptional circumstances, DWP does however reserve the right to adopt a national approach to new employment programmes, as they did in response to the rise in unemployment during the pandemic. DWP commits to exploring options with WMCA prior to reaching any such decision, and to setting out these circumstances in writing where this is the case. Even in these circumstances, recognising the importance of integrating any new interventions into the existing place-based employment support system which encompasses both national and local services, DWP will commit to actively engaging on the purpose of the national approach and attempt, wherever and as far as reasonably possible, to incorporate WMCA's views on the design and

implementation of the programme to ensure maximum alignment with the wider programmes, optimise value for money, and avoid any unnecessary duplication.

## Data sharing: labour market and skills

161. Alongside these new levers, which will ensure a stronger link between skills and jobs in the local labour market, the government and the WMCA will work together to develop an appropriate data sharing framework that promotes information and data sharing between national government and WMCA to aid the effectiveness of skills planning and delivery, as set out in the data section of this deal.
162. Dependent on the requisite legal gateway being defined, DWP and WMCA will work together to explore feasibility and potential for proportionate data sharing arrangements for programmes and services operating in the region to reduce duplication and facilitate better targeting and efficiency of an integrated employment and skills offer, and an immediate scoping exercise to identify additional areas for reforming data access arrangements. This will test how data can be lawfully shared to better target services and manage the experience of customers with the aim of improving impact and value for money.

# Innovation

163. The government has set itself an ambitious goal: for the UK to become a top global hub of innovation as part of our science superpower mission. But to achieve this, we need to support the research and development clusters all around the UK to ensure more places are able to harness the innovation economy. This is vital if we are to ensure that the industries of the future bring benefits to everyone – as growth and jobs boost productivity, opportunity, and prosperity for all.
164. The Levelling Up White Paper set out clear steps for making this ambition a reality. In it, the government committed to maximising the contribution of innovation to levelling up, by building on existing and emerging research and development strengths across our country's diverse economic landscape. It set out a new mission, led by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT): to increase domestic public investment in research and development outside the Greater Southeast by at least 40% by 2030, and by at least one third over this Spending Review period. This should result in an increase in public research and development investment in the West Midlands.
165. DSIT has set up a new unit to lead on mapping, and supporting clusters, and is working with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) on inward investment.
166. As the UK's largest public funder of research and innovation, UK Research and Innovation has made 'world-class places' a key objective in its 2022 – 2027 strategy, with a core commitment to drive levelling up by delivering impact in all parts of the UK, and to support the research and development cluster agenda.

## Innovation Accelerators: empowering local leaders

167. Home to the city of a thousand trades, the West Midlands has a long tradition of industrial innovation. The West Midlands is one of three areas selected as an Innovation Accelerator, in recognition of its research and development strengths, robust private and public innovation governance, and strong local leadership.
168. The Innovation Accelerator programme is pioneering a new model of research and development decision-making. The West Midlands Innovation Board, involving business and university leaders alongside the WMCA, has developed a plan for growing the city region's innovation ecosystem, and is taking the lead in allocating a

share of £100 million funding to transformative research and development projects, working closely with Innovate UK, to strengthen local clusters and attract investment. This plan puts local leaders at the very centre of decision-making, enabling them to harness innovation to local growth and align research and development investments with local economic strategy.

169. The whole of the government is backing the West Midlands Innovation Board and WMCA in its mission to create a globally competitive innovation cluster with access to dedicated support from DSIT, UK Research and Innovation and DLUHC over the lifetime of the Innovation Accelerator programme. This will help the board to attract vital private research and development investment and overcome barriers on the road to cluster growth.
170. Together, the Innovation Accelerators form part of a pilot programme. The government will evaluate the effectiveness of this approach as we work to empower local leaders in research and development decision-making. Depending on the outcome of the programme and future funding decisions, this will include the government and WMCA working together through the strategic innovation partnership to identify further mechanisms for accelerating innovation in the West Midlands and transferring more autonomy to the West Midlands' developing regional innovation ecosystem. In return, the West Midlands will need to demonstrate that their innovation evidence base, decision making capacity, and ability to generate private sector co-investment is sufficiently robust and mature.

## A Strategic Innovation Partnership

171. Alongside the Innovation Accelerator ways of working, this deeper devolution deal will give the WMCA a new and influential role informing the national research and innovation ecosystem at the strategic level. This will maintain progress towards delivering the commitments set out in this devolution deal. This will be achieved through:
- a. Formally and periodically inviting the WMCA to articulate its research and development priorities to UK Research and Innovation. This will enable local leaders to shape decisions about regional funding priorities and ensure that local priority sectors, technologies, and clusters are fully understood by key decision-making bodies. In return, the WMCA will demonstrate that these priorities are informed by local research and development ecosystem stakeholders in a well governed and inclusive manner.
  - b. Consulting the WMCA on the development of future UK Research and Innovation strategies where appropriate and inviting the WMCA to work with the government research divisions on their respective research and development strategies and programmes. This includes engagement on any long-term alternatives to Horizon programmes, should the UK not be able to associate.

- c. Annually inviting the WMCA to set out their regional research and innovation priorities to the government science ministers. This will ensure that local innovation priorities are understood at the highest level of the government; and provide the WMCA with a means to escalate and address barriers to realising innovation-led growth. Where possible and subject to ministerial agreement, this will include involving the WMCA in inter-Ministerial information sharing structures and fora.
- d. UK Research and Innovation working with the WMCA to support the identification of regional comparative innovation advantages, helping to identify corresponding funding opportunities. UK Research and Innovation will provide their publicly available data to the WMCA annually on UK Research and Innovation investment in the West Midlands including changes in investment levels over time in support of the research and development levelling up mission.

172. In progressing the above, the government remains committed to an impartial funding decision-making process for UK-wide open R&D competitions.

## Working in partnership to grow innovation clusters

173. Alongside the Innovation Accelerators programme and strategic innovation partnership, Innovate UK and DSIT will work in partnership with the WMCA to grow the city region's innovation ecosystem.
174. Innovate UK will co-develop regional action plans with the WMCA to identify and bolster regional innovation strengths.
175. The government and Innovate UK will work with WMCA to pilot new approaches to boost innovation adoption and diffusion across the local business base. This will include the pilot Innovate UK further education innovation fund, which will fund further education colleges to pursue innovation activities. The WMCA will work closely with Innovate UK to embed Innovate UK Edge as part of its business support ecosystem to drive productivity improvements across the region.
176. Innovate UK's Knowledge Transfer Network will work with the WMCA to co-design locally led place-based knowledge transfer programmes focused on regional innovation strengths. These programmes will generate new ideas partnerships, enabling innovation to flourish at a local level.
177. Subject to the Procurement Bill receiving Royal Assent, the government encourages the WMCA to become a trailblazer for use of the new, more flexible public procurement procedures, empowering all contracting authorities to use procurement as a tool to drive innovation and bring early-stage innovations to market. The Cabinet Office will support the WMCA to make full use of the provisions in the Procurement Bill.

## Business productivity

178. The Levelling Up White Paper sets a target to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector, especially in places where they are lagging. However, UK productivity growth, which is the bedrock of higher living standards, has slowed since the global financial crisis and lags behind comparative economies.
179. The commitments included in this deal will empower the WMCA to affect the drivers of productivity at a local level, from skills to infrastructure, to innovation and trade. The end goal of our joint efforts is ultimately to boost enterprise, business growth and jobs – the pathway to a stronger economy nationally and in the West Midlands.
180. At the firm-level, the uptake of business support is one of the key determinants of productivity, and businesses that seek external advice are more likely to experience high growth. The proportion of businesses in the UK accessing support and particularly for growth, however, is low compared to other countries, which evidence suggests is partly due to the complexity and fragmentation of the business support landscape. External finance, and particularly growth finance, can also help companies to achieve their entrepreneurial potential.
181. The government welcomes and will support WMCA's desire to bring greater coherence to the business support and finance landscape. This will be a key part of our joint efforts to boost local growth, and to raising living standards across the city region.

## Business support

182. The government recognises the WMCA as the lead institution for integrating business productivity interventions at the city region level. The WMCA will develop a service, working in conjunction with private sector providers, to make it much easier for enterprises to access programmes to boost productivity. The WMCA will, through this deeper devolution deal, have a new, empowered role in integrating, promoting and overseeing access to business support and advisory services, small and medium-sized enterprise finance and the broader commitments agreed as part of the deal. This will strip inefficiencies out of the system and increase small and medium-sized enterprise access to support.

183. The government – DBT, DLUHC and DCMS – and WMCA will establish a new Strategic Productivity Partnership, beginning immediately. Through this regular, at least biannual, initiative:
- a. The government and WMCA will share information and intelligence on live and upcoming business support and advisory services, with the aim of ensuring complementarity between national and local commissioning activities to maximise value for money.
  - b. The WMCA will have the opportunity to raise local priorities for future business support and advisory services to inform and influence government's future commissioning priorities, including as part of the next Spending Review. The government recognises the advantages of locally delivered business support programmes and will work pro-actively with the WMCA to put in place the structures and mechanisms for the devolution or co-commissioning of future business support where it makes sense to do so, as part of preparations for the next spending review. This means that business support may form part of the WMCA's simplified funding settlement in the future.
  - c. WMCA will work with the government and its delivery partners to encourage relevant businesses to engage with and take part in the help to growth management programme. WMCA will also work with the Chartered Association of Business Schools to co-design regional help to grow alumni events for businesses and entrepreneurs in the West Midlands and to improve the signposting of support for local businesses. This will help to ensure that when local business leaders and entrepreneurs 'graduate' from the programme, they are able to access additional follow-on support from across the local public and private sectors to further boost productivity.
184. The government will work with WMCA (plus Warwickshire County Council for former Coventry and Warwickshire local enterprise partnership functions) on the future of growth hubs to inform a refreshed approach to the service, which will be progressed quickly. The government and the WMCA will work together to ensure that as much as possible future delivery models enable effective join-up and co-ordination at the local level and complement business support services being delivered by the WMCA and its partners. This builds upon local decisions to invest over £40m of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to support local businesses and local growth initiatives.

## Small and medium-sized enterprise finance

185. WMCA will have a new, empowered role in the provision of finance to small and medium-sized enterprises. In particular, the WMCA will have a role in the governance of the next generation of British Business Bank UK funds in the West Midlands. In addition:

- a. The referral network between the WMCA's, commercial lenders and the British Business Bank UK funds will be strengthened to make it easier for more local businesses to access the finance they need.
- b. Partnership working and collaboration between the WMCA and the British Business Bank's UK network representatives for the relevant area will be strengthened to stimulate informed demand for finance among businesses. This could involve joint events and initiatives, as well as knowledge sharing.
- c. The WMCA and British Business Bank will work together to bring cohesion to the supply of investment across multiple programmes and institutions. This will include working together with the private sector on a shared understanding of business finance conditions in the West Midlands and priorities and activities, so businesses are financed to grow.

## UK Infrastructure Bank

186. The UK Infrastructure Bank is already working with local authorities, combined authorities, other public sector bodies and the private sector to increase investment in infrastructure across the UK. The bank has already supported WMCA with the transition to greener transport through financing infrastructure for sprint bus services. The bank will continue to strengthen its strategic and operational relationships with WMCA, including by engaging when the WMCA is at the outset of designing the commercial arrangements for infrastructure projects which aim to leverage greater investment locally.



## Trade and investment

187. The Commonwealth Games were an outstanding success and transformed the image of Birmingham across the globe. WMCA and the DBT have worked together to deliver the highly successful Commonwealth Games business and tourism programme to maximise the economic benefits of the games. This work is ongoing. The WMCA worked together with DBT in the Midlands and India to deliver a joint mission to India in early November and further missions are planned as part of the legacy of the games.
188. This document proposes how the WMCA and DBT should strengthen and deepen their successful partnership.

### Strengthening our partnership

189. Upon the West Midlands Growth Company obtaining agreement with all local stakeholders (including WMCA and its local authority members and respective local enterprise partnerships), DBT will:
- a. recognise the West Midlands Growth Company as the lead agency for trade and investment on behalf of the WMCA.
  - b. adopt the WMCA economic geography as the frame of reference for related DBT trade and investment matters for the WMCA area.
190. DBT and WMCA will:
- a. Formalise their engagement at the city region level through:
    - i. Co-development of a West Midlands international strategy and delivery plan spanning both trade and investment.
    - ii. Shared accountability for strategy and delivery; and
    - iii. West Midlands Growth Company board membership subject to formal approval from both sides and standard due diligence.
  - b. Work with local partners including WMCA to gain a holistic view of the UK business environment's competitiveness vis a vis peers specific to our ability to attract regional investment.

- c. Support West Midlands Growth Company in their bid for an extension of the business and tourism programme to secure more trade and investment to the region and the rest of the UK. West Midlands Growth Company will jointly develop the trade and investment business case with DBT and ensure that the programme is scoped in line with the priorities of the international strategy and to deliver the best return in the current macroeconomic environment based on evaluation of the business and tourism programme.
- d. Further to any wider data partnership between the government and WMCA, work jointly to better enable the sharing of intelligence and data owned by each party, to better inform mutual planning and strategy, within the requirements of UK General Data Protection Regulation or other data protection obligations. Note, however, that legally the decision on disclosure for much of the relevant data is for the Commissioners of His Majesty's Revenue and Customs.
- e. Jointly seek to maximise the engagement of appropriate businesses and stakeholders in the WMCA area so that global trade opportunities and activity are created and identified as a result of this deeper devolution agreement.
- f. Maximise the opportunity for WMCA, businesses and stakeholders within the WMCA area to contribute to national policy consultations, including the development of new free trade agreements, for example by responding to Calls for Input that inform the mandate for free trade agreements.
- g. DBT and WMCA to each nominate an official as the single point of contact at operational level to discuss joint plans and delivery on an ongoing basis.
- h. WMCA and West Midlands Growth Company to provide referrals of potential DBT investment and export champions from the WMCA region. DBT will agree to make appointments based on intake capacity and selection criteria.
- i. DBT and overseas international trade representatives for the Midlands Engine to continue to work together, which will in turn directly support WMCA.

## Investment

191. The WMCA will have support from the Office for Investment at regional level for transformation investment opportunities (i.e., those in excess of £100m). This will concentrate around two core elements – capital investment and traditional foreign direct investment. Both parties will work together through a long-term partnership with the aim of maximising large-scale inward investment – utilising WMCA's knowledge of capital investment propositions and opportunities, priority sites, innovation and sector/clustering opportunities. WMCA will provide/signpost to public support to help land inward investment and the Office for Investment will engage with high-value

projects and provide a cross-government convening role, working together to increase the profile of the WMCA area internationally as an investment destination.

192. DBT will continue to work in partnership in co-designing and developing operational support for investors in the city region:
  - a. DBT will undertake a review of key account management working with WMCA/ West Midlands Growth Company to consider various options e.g., delivery models which may include better leveraging West Midlands Growth Company's regional delivery capacity.
  - b. Where account management relationships with companies with a presence or interest in the WMCA area are held by DBT, the WMCA will support that relationship with access to information, local support and facilitation as needed to retain and attract high-profile companies in the UK. Likewise, DBT will provide business intelligence from such relationships to enable the WMCA to respond appropriately. Sharing of information will be within the requirements of UK General Data Protection Regulation or other data protection obligations.
  - c. DBT will seek to provide a longer-term commitment to this account management programme, to ensure stability- pending procurement approval from Treasury and business planning outcomes.
193. Future high potential opportunities that are strong UK offers for the WMCA area will continue to be jointly agreed between DBT and WMCA. DBT is currently reviewing the marketing and campaign approach across all local areas and will work with West Midlands Growth Company on promoting investment opportunities.
194. DBT will seek to co-develop a West Midlands city region-specific investment plan, which includes events and other promotional activity - including international visits; access to national marketing campaigns; sector themed inward visits; focus on supply chain opportunities etc – setting out where both parties will lead and or provide support to deliver this plan, which will support and the WMCA international strategy. DBT will work with WMCA to investigate capability/capacity required to reach the goals of the shared plan.
195. DBT will work with WMCA to explore creating a more formal network of local investment promotion agencies. With the aim of:
  - a. Increasing collaboration with investment promotion agencies across the United Kingdom to promote foreign direct investment to the UK and decreasing complexity for foreign investors.
  - b. Leveraging the benefits of the partnership between the Office for Investment and the WMCA at a local level, alongside the broader activities proposed as part of this devolution deal.

- c. Improving communication on policy and strategy.
- d. Sharing best practice and training to help build consistency of quality support, knowledge and understanding around how to effectively land investment, how to work with investors and how to work effectively with DBT.
- e. Improving knowledge and communication of local strengths and opportunities within the DBT network and externally.

## Exports

### 196. DBT will:

- a. Support the recruitment and management of business focussed trade mission delegations to accompany mayor-led market visits, such as the mayoral visit to India in November 2022.
- b. Seek to improve the take up of significant WMCA based companies in ministerial, and other high profile trade missions, in order to provide high value and high-profile opportunities for them to increase exports in strategic markets.
- c. Agree for a UK export academy representative to work with WMCA to enhance the offer based on needs of WMCA businesses.
- d. Seek to jointly develop WMCA-specific events and other activity such as sector themed workshops, sub-regional initiatives and supply chain projects.

## WMCA's commitments to the government

- 197. WMCA will utilise its devolved functions, particularly in relation to skills, housing and transport, to respond to investors' needs and smooth the path to landing greater levels of inward investment in the UK.
- 198. The WMCA will provide suitable match funding for programmes that are co-financed by DBT, such as the key account management programme.

# Net zero and the environment

## Strategic energy system planning

199. The government recognises the strategic role WMCA can play in planning our future energy system for net zero, with its ability to convene local authorities, the strategic transport authority, energy infrastructure providers and other key stakeholders, and is committed to ensuring that devolved regional institutions such as combined authorities have a meaningful role in planning our future energy system for net zero.
200. The government is considering the role of local area energy planning in delivering net zero and supporting efficient network planning, working closely with Ofgem and its review of local energy institutions and governance. The government is supportive of WMCA developing local area energy plans across the WMCA area. As part of their on-going work, the government and Ofgem will explore how local area energy plans can support local action, investment and delivery by energy system stakeholders.
201. As outlined in Ofgem's review, there is a need to look further at roles and responsibilities at a sub-national level, particularly to address known issues around co-ordination and accountability. WMCA is encouraged to engage both with this discussion and the future systems and network regulation workstream, which looks specifically at network investment.

## Networks

202. To overcome the energy crisis and meet our future needs, it is more important than ever that we rapidly develop a smarter, more integrated, low carbon energy system. Investment by network operators is central to achieving this, as is having the right input from stakeholders to inform it.
203. As part of the next electricity distribution price control framework starting from 1 April 2024, Ofgem required National Grid electricity distribution to engage with WMCA and other local stakeholders to inform its business plans. Where additional allowances are granted during the period, Ofgem expects National Grid electricity distribution to engage with WMCA and other local stakeholders to provide them with confidence that their proposed investment will meet local needs and enable the delivery of net zero and green growth objectives.

204. Ofgem welcomes WMCA's interest in innovation zones and the trialling of novel approaches to inform investment planning. Any decisions on future innovation zones will be considered through the price control review process or as part of wider Ofgem innovation work.

## Local plans

205. As per existing arrangements, local area energy plans can provide valid material evidence to justify planning policies related to energy efficiency and infrastructure. The government welcomes continuing to work with WMCA to explore how local area energy plans and spatial planning could be meaningfully integrated, and to understand implications for planning policy and local planning authorities' capacity and skills needs.

## Clean heat

206. The government has confirmed its intention to establish heat network zoning in England. Under the zoning proposals, zoning coordinators within local government will be able to designate areas as heat network zones where heat networks are going to be the most cost-effective way to decarbonise heating and hot water within the zone. This will enable WMCA or its constituent local authorities to assume the role of heat network zoning coordinator and play a key role in the delivery of heat decarbonisation infrastructure. This includes requiring certain buildings to connect to heat networks within the zones. Government is committed to have heat network zoning in place by 2025.

## Industrial decarbonisation

207. Industrial decarbonisation in the West Midlands is key to the economic competitiveness of the region, particularly in the Black Country and Birmingham, and energy-exposed businesses are an important provider of local jobs. Businesses in these areas often supply critical components into strategic national supply chains (defence, aerospace, energy, automotive) that export globally. The government is keen to explore new approaches to facilitating the net zero transition in the sector with WMCA and will explore a range of potential funding options to pilot a new approach to transitioning businesses and clusters to a net zero energy system, subject to business planning.

## Energy efficiency

### Retrofit

208. The government will pilot the devolution of net zero funding through allocation rather than competition in the period from 2025 onwards to WMCA, subject to confirmation of funding and policy design. The allocation methodology will be agreed between the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Chancellor, after discussion with WMCA. This pilot will include, but is not necessarily limited to, funding for buildings' retrofit. WMCA's funding allocation will form part of its single department-style settlement.
209. The agreement to pilot devolution of funding is subject to legally binding conditions set by the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, including agreeing outcomes and accountability frameworks so that the local and combined authorities involved demonstrate they are meeting the needs of the relevant schemes operated by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero to the level required. These conditions are expected to include, but are not necessarily limited to, requirements related to:
- a. the type and level of greenhouse gas emission reductions that must be achieved.
  - b. fuel poverty targets.
  - c. the primary objective of the devolved scheme.
  - d. value for money.
  - e. match-funding or private-sector leverage requirements.
  - f. quality standards for the work performed, and
  - g. monitoring, evaluation and audit requirements.
210. The agreement to pilot devolution of funding will also need to take into account work done through the local net zero forum with representative local government organisations and involving WMCA.
211. In addition:
- a. WMCA and its constituent local authorities will not be eligible to bid for funding from competitive national energy efficiency retrofit schemes from which funding has been devolved to them.
  - b. The government reserves the right to pursue non-devolved, non-allocative approaches to the delivery of energy efficiency retrofit schemes; and

c. The release of funding is subject to business case approval.

212. The government will facilitate work ahead of the 2025 period to develop a business case, design a pilot and evaluation approach and harness relevant events for sharing of best practice between local authorities where they are already taking innovative approaches on retrofit delivery. The government will identify and look to utilise opportunities for early activity.
213. During the current spending review period, WMCA can already submit applications to competitive energy efficiency schemes on behalf of its constituent local authorities with their consent.
214. After the pilot, the government and WMCA will undertake a review of the effectiveness of this approach for the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero and the Chancellor to consider and agree whether to continue it, and if so in what form, as part of future multi-year spending review periods.

### **Minimum energy efficiency standards**

215. The government plans to consult on the potential for a national minimum energy efficiency standard for social housing properties. The government will engage WMCA via a bi-annual, official-level forum to understand the extent to which any national standard meets the energy efficiency requirements of social housing properties in the WMCA area. The government is open to considering the case for enabling local areas to exceed any national standard, if there would be delivery advantages to doing so and subject to the resolution of regulatory and legislative pre-requisites. The government will, as part of the forthcoming consultation, seek views on the advantages of local approaches to energy efficiency in the social rented sector. Over the near-term, the government is open to exploring ways to support any voluntary efforts by WMCA to boost standards across the city region.
216. The government is open to considering the case for WMCA and its constituent local authorities to set minimum energy efficiency standards, which exceed the national standards, for properties in the private rented sector in their local areas. The implementation of any higher standards would be subject to appropriate legislation being in place and WMCA modelling the possible impact on landlord behaviour and supporting local housing markets to transition to any higher standard. The government will engage with WMCA via a bi-annual, official-level forum to explore this further.

### **Finance**

217. The government supports WMCA in wanting to leverage greater private investment to support the delivery of retrofit and energy efficiency measures. The government will engage with WMCA on the development of appropriate financial instruments and innovative funding models, underpinned by existing legislative frameworks and non-legislative options, to increase the number of energy efficiency upgrades.



## Advice

218. The government will work with WMCA to explore how more detailed advice can be provided to households on structural energy efficiency upgrades. This will involve looking at non-legislative options as well as considering potential future legislative options to identify the most effective route to increasing consumer choice within the retrofit market.
219. The government is enhancing its impartial consumer advice and information offer to support consumers with a more personalised advice service on retrofit. This provision includes an online 'MOT-style' checklist, providing clear direction on the structural changes they can make, including installing insulation and heating controls. The government will be launching an enhanced national phoneline shortly, to support those consumers unable to use the website or in need of further support. In addition, the government is working with the local net zero hubs to engage local and combined authorities and other local actors, on a series of regional in-person advice services. This will provide grants for innovative ideas to better support people locally. WMCA is encouraged to work with the local net zero hubs to promote these services in the most effective way.
220. The government and WMCA will continue to engage on proposals through the bi-annual official level forum proposed below, and through representative local government bodies represented on the local net zero forum.

## Climate adaptation

221. WMCA and its local partners are already demonstrating leadership in their work on climate adaptation through a new multi-stakeholder group, focusing on measures that will increase the region's resilience. Just as sub-national plans for net zero will support the government's 2050 plans, the WMCA and its local partners are committed to supporting delivery of adaptation measures across the regional, local and community level. Depending on the outcomes of the plans being developed by the multi-stakeholder group, the government could liaise with WMCA and its local partners to assist them, where possible, to develop and potentially publish a case study in the national adaptation programme, as an example of good adaptation practice.

## Natural environment financing

222. WMCA has been acting as the provisional responsible authority for the preparation of the local nature recovery strategy in the area to date. The intention is that the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will formally appointment the Mayor of WMCA as the responsible authority, who will work closely with the WMCA to develop the local nature recovery strategy. Formal appointments will be made following the publication of local nature recovery strategy regulations and guidance. Funding to

cover new burdens will be agreed at that point. The local nature recovery strategy will: map the most valuable existing habitat for nature; map proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals; and agree priorities for nature's recovery, making an important contribution to the government's environmental targets.

223. To deliver national, regional and local ambitions that support nature's recovery and the implementation of nature-based solutions for climate mitigation and adaptation, there is a need to establish an appropriate investment mechanism for nature. Natural environment solutions come with financing challenges, particularly around return on investment and the offer of accreditation required to secure finance.
224. The WMCA region brings scale to this challenge and the opportunity to provide attractive strategic projects that are suitable for a blended finance approach. The government, which is committed to increasing private investment in nature's recovery across England, will support WMCA in the development of an investment mechanism for nature. This support may include a proportion of revenue funding specialist expertise; co-ordination of peer support and networking; and/or local partnership working with the Defra's arm's length bodies, such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. Any funding provided will be subject to further agreement and approvals and conditional on participation in a programme of evaluation and shared learning.
225. The government's support will aim to build lasting capacity and capability within WMCA to continue to support natural environment financing in the longer term, moving away from working on a project-by-project basis. It will also support WMCA to take an integrated approach to delivering its place-based natural environment and climate adaptation ambitions.

## Air quality

226. The government recognises the work WMCA, and its constituent councils are already doing to improve air quality, and in particular towards developing a regional air quality framework, which aims to enhance local monitoring capability. This work will evaluate and inform air quality policy to ensure objectives and targets are met, especially in relation to particulates.

# Digital

## Infrastructure

227. DSIT will work with WMCA via a new Digital Infrastructure Leadership Group, to explore ways to accelerate the roll-out and take-up of high-speed connectivity in accordance with the agreed terms of reference.
228. The group will seek to align and refine place-based opportunities and interventions to create the best possible conditions to deliver competitive high speed fixed, mobile and smart digital connectivity and accelerate take-up and adoption by consumers, businesses and public services to increase productivity and prosperity across the WMCA.
229. In addition, WMCA and its constituent local authorities commit to use the levers at their disposal – pertaining to street works, planning and provisions under the electronic communications code – in support of the aim of the group.
230. Building digital UK will engage with WMCA alongside other local bodies to discuss the design of interventions and procurement lots for investment in digital infrastructure, at various points in the project gigabit process including but not limited to interrogation of open market review data, design of procurement lots and appraisal of social value elements of tenders.

## Inclusion

231. DSIT notes WMCA's commitment to ensuring the benefits of digital technologies are inclusively available to all residents. DSIT will continue to engage with WMCA to understand the work it is undertaking in this area and how this might interact with the development and future delivery of digital inclusion programmes and support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration in the region, to maximise the overall benefit of local, regional and national initiatives that drive local economic growth and support wellbeing.
232. DSIT supports WMCA's efforts to engage with operators and the private sector to provide affordable broadband access and will continue to work with local partners to maximise the reach, awareness and promotion of social tariffs.

233. WMCA has provisionally been awarded £4 million funding to support 20,000 residents with access to data and devices. This capital funding will be targeted at disadvantaged communities, to ensure they can benefit from wider services.

# Culture and tourism

## Culture

234. Both the government and WMCA recognise the crucial role that culture, heritage and sport can play in supporting levelling up, through giving people pride in the places they live, supporting a vibrant local economy and promoting wellbeing. In the West Midlands, the government recognises the opportunity to build on the recent success of the Commonwealth Games 2022 and Coventry UK City of Culture 2021, and to embed their cultural and sporting legacy. As such, the government has made available £70 million of contingency underspends from the Commonwealth Games to support the WMCA to capitalise on these opportunities.
235. To maximise the impact of this investment, and to explore new ways in which culture, heritage and sport can deliver on wider levelling up outcomes like health and wellbeing, the government will work with WMCA to support an ambitious regional culture and heritage framework.
236. As part of this, the government and arm's length bodies of the DCMS, including Arts Council England, Historic England, Sport England, the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the National Lottery Community Fund and the British Tourist Association (trading as Visit England / Visit Britain), will work with WMCA to support greater funding alignment, joint investment and strategic collaboration in the region, to maximise the overall benefit of local, regional and national initiatives that drive local economic growth, support wellbeing and build pride in place. Following agreement of this deal, WMCA will work with DCMS and the relevant arm's length bodies in spring 2023 to establish a terms of reference for the regional culture and heritage framework and agree a forward plan over the coming year, before finalising the framework in 2024.
237. This work could include increased alignment around funding, and programmes including Commonwealth Games legacy funding, heritage action zones, and the rollout of a new accreditation system for local destination management organisations. Investment decisions should consider strategic priorities, such as Arts Council priority places and levelling up for culture places, Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games legacy plans and other policies to develop identified cultural and heritage hubs and support skills, health and wellbeing.

## Social economy

238. WMCA is committed to doubling the size of the social economy in ten years, as set out in the plan, growing the social economy in the WMCA area. Recognising this, the government will work closely with the WMCA to develop a pioneering social economy accelerator programme and growth fund and local social economy clusters. There is potential to use dormant assets funding to support community and voluntary sector organisations to make a difference in their places.

## Tourism

239. West Midlands Growth Company is working with VisitEngland to become a local visitor economy partnership. Priorities for the West Midlands local visitor economy partnership will include a focus on the deliverables in the West Midlands tourism strategy and recovery plan and major event legacy, to raise awareness and improve perceptions of domestic and international visitors, using our strong cultural and heritage offer, hero themes, and business and major sporting event pipeline to drive visitors to the WMCA's destinations.

240. West Midlands Growth Company currently operates beyond local visitor economy partnership boundaries, in a similar way to a destination development partnership. Subject to confirmation of West Midlands Growth Company's Commonwealth Games legacy funding, and governance and delivery sign-off with VisitEngland and DCMS, WMCA proposes that West Midlands Growth Company works to achieve a second pilot destination development partnership status, an approach endorsed by VisitEngland, to work at a strategic level across the region to strengthen the visitor economy. WMCA will engage with DCMS and VisitEngland on the development and evaluation of their destination development partnership to demonstrate impact and return on investment of the approach, to ensure that ongoing and final learnings are captured. Additional activity will drive efficiencies across the wider destination development partnership area in research and insight, digital innovation, product development and business support.

# Public service reform

## Health

241. WMCA's Health of the Region report (2020) showed, at the time of publication, a disproportionate number of people in the West Midlands had worse health outcomes from preventable causes than the national average. In addition, two of the three integrated care systems areas in the West Midlands have a higher percentage of deprived neighbourhoods than anywhere else in the country. It is clear that health inequalities, poor health and economic inactivity cannot be tackled in isolation and require greater join up between local partners to improve outcomes for people in the WMCA region. The WMCA has a key role to play through exercising its transport, housing, skills and economic growth functions, which constitute the wider determinants of health and have a key impact on health outcomes.

### Population health improvement

242. The region's constituent local authorities and NHS partners play a crucial role in the public health and addressing health inequalities. The Levelling Up White Paper acknowledges the supportive role mayoral combined authorities can play in improving the public health through devolution. This is why the government will support WMCA to work in partnership with local health and social care partners and integrated care systems on population health improvement.

243. The government and WMCA will agree a new formal duty on WMCA to improve the public's health, concurrent with local authorities as set out in the NHS Act 2006. This will neither supersede existing duties of partners nor be subservient to them, rather it will be a supportive addition to bring about systemic change and will enable WMCA to act to improve health through its wider responsibilities. We will also explore how the government and WMCA can use their collective resources and expertise to develop and test innovative solutions to shared prevention and population health priorities.

244. As part of the government's commitment to funding simplification, government will also support WMCA's ambition to explore innovative ways to improve population health, address health disparities and prevent ill-health, by exploring opportunities to better join-up funding related to population health improvement and prevention.

245. Where relevant new future, funding streams relating to population health improvement and prevention are under consideration, government will engage with WMCA and its

constituent local authorities to discuss whether the WMCA' allocation could be included as part of the department-style single settlement. New funding streams do not include new allocations from existing funds.

246. Under a new health improvement duty and through simplified funding streams, the WMCA can work with its constituent local authorities to enhance the provision of and access to a healthier food environment for children and young people, establish a regional tobacco alliance with local public health and integrated care boards and pilot vaping as a quit tool to reduce smoking rates in the region; and drive forward the ambition to be an exemplar region for disabled people through the development of a pan-disability needs assessment and a regional disability strategy in conjunction with the Cabinet Office, and in line with proposals in the emerging disability action plan.

### **Data and digital**

247. As one of the first regions to develop a regional secure data environment for research and development, and as a trailblazer smart city region, the WMCA area is well-placed to build a more integrated, tech-enabled and population-based model of care. To support these ambitions, WMCA, and its local NHS partners, the government and NHS England will empower residents in the WMCA area through improving their understanding and use of health data through education and skills development within deprived areas and expanding patient access to data. WMCA will also work with NHS England to develop artificial intelligence lab(s) to support real-world research, working with local university partners and academic health science networks to provide patients with personalised and proactive care through predictive analytics and machine learning, encouraging early intervention and prevention through digital innovation.
248. In support of WMCA's new health improvement duty, the government will support the regional linkages of shared care records within the West Midlands integrated care boards, and work with WMCA to explore secure and appropriate ways within the existing legal framework to share data across the public sector, including examining existing best practice, with any improvements in data access being appropriate, safe and legal, and not damaging public trust in how data is used.

### **Workforce**

249. The government supports the commitment of WMCA to work with integrated care boards and other partners to explore the use of aligned budgets along with its adult education budget, to help tackle workforce shortages in the NHS and the wider health and care system, including exploring workforce training and boosting capacity within the voluntary and community sector.

### **West Midlands Smart City Region**

250. To improve public services, the WMCA will pioneer the extension of preventative healthcare, remote monitoring and community diagnosis. This will be delivered through



the Levelling Up: Smart City Region Health, Care and Connectivity programme which builds upon successful trials and complements government funding and priorities, including virtual wards and community diagnostics.

## Early years

251. DfE remains open to discussing the further development of regional early years collaboration across the WMCA area, building on existing work, including exploring initiatives which could be piloted in the area provided they are consistent with the government's wider early years strategy and policies.

## Homelessness

252. A newly established DWP and DLUHC Ministerial Housing Strategy Group will consider innovative approaches and piloting opportunities in partnership with WMCA, funded from within existing budgets and/or subject to consideration at the next Spending Review, to enable higher standards, improve outcomes for residents and communities and deliver better value for money.

253. DWP will continue working with WMCA to explore the development and implementation of a locally designed rent simplification pilot to enable young people in supported accommodation to transition into work whilst remaining, for an agreed period, in the supported environment that they require.

## Antisocial behaviour

254. Addressing antisocial behaviour is a priority for the government, as well as for WMCA. The government is working to drive further action to tackle antisocial behaviour and will discuss its emerging proposals with WMCA and the police and crime commissioner.

255. In particular, the government recognises that there are specific challenges facing all constituent authorities regarding littering, graffiti, contravention of smokefree legislation and managing street traders, performers, and preachers.

## Digital, cultural and environmental projects

256. The government will support WMCA with £25 million of additional capital funding during this spending review period for green and innovative projects, to drive economic growth, support businesses in the West Midlands to transition to net zero and improve public services through the Smart City Region project. The release of funding is subject to approval of a suitable business case.

# Places for Growth

257. Through the places for growth programme, more than 2,100 roles will relocate to the West Midlands by 2025 from departments and public bodies including the DfT, DLUHC, Home Office, Homes England and DfE. As of December 2022, 1,400 roles have been relocated to the West Midlands campus locations, including Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry.
258. The government's ambition to support the development of specialist skills clusters will bring together organisations with a shared policy interest, to encourage collaboration and foster effective engagement with industry and external stakeholders. The relocation of civil and public service roles builds on the existing expertise within the WMCA, including Network Rail and High Speed 2, and the development of a transport and infrastructure cluster, providing deep career pathways and a range of opportunities locally.
259. The government will build on existing progress and meet the commitments set out in the Levelling Up White Paper by working with WMCA to explore further opportunities for programmes to develop skills and career pathways into the civil service and public services. A West Midlands fast stream pilot will set a blueprint for establishing long-term career pathways by delivering a pipeline of civil service talent and skills in the region. This investment in skills pipeline development and the formation of a transport and infrastructure cluster will accelerate the government's places for growth programme, enabling government departments to consider functions that could be located across the WMCA footprint as part of its commitment to levelling up.

**THE END**



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## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	A461 Bus, Cycle & Walking Corridor – Initial scheme approval
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & WMCA, Councillor Peter Hughes
<b>Director:</b>	Director- Regeneration & Growth, Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Andy Miller Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager <a href="mailto:andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk">andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk</a> Talvinder Sandhu Transportation Team Leader <a href="mailto:talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk">talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

1.1 That Cabinet be recommended to:

1.1.1 Approve in principle the proposed sustainable transport and highway improvements that make up the A461 Bus, Cycle & Walking Corridor as shown on Drawing nos;

70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00101  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00102  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00103  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00104  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00105  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00152  
70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00155  
(attached at Appendix A).



- 1.1.2 Authorise the Director of Regeneration & Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA, to carry out public consultation on the proposed sustainable transport and highway improvements that make up the A461 Bus, Cycle & Walking Corridor.
- 1.1.3 In connection with 1.12 above, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & WMCA, be authorised to consider and determine any objections received at a future Decision Making Session.
- 1.1.4 Authorise the Director Regeneration & Growth to approve the submission an Outline Business Case to the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 1.1.5 Authorise the Assistant Director - Legal & Assurance in conjunction with Assistant Director - Highways to enter into an agreement with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council under section 8 of the Highways Act 1980 in connection with 1.1.
- 1.1.6 That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers (Executive side) be amended to include authority to the Assistant Director - Legal & Assurance in conjunction with Assistant Director - Highways to enter into agreements under section 8 of the Highways Act 1980 for future schemes as required.






## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor forms part of the West Midlands City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Programme approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The Sandwell elements of this programme were approved by Cabinet in July 2022.
- 2.2 The project is now at the stage where specific approvals are required to enable it to progress through the WMCA Single Assurance Framework Process, be consulted on with the public and stakeholders, and then be taken to the next stages of design and business case preparation.



2.3 The project is likely to include works within highways for which Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is the Local Highway Authority (LHA) as well as those within Sandwell's jurisdiction. An agreement under section 8 of the Highways Act 1980 will enable these works to be carried out by one LHA on behalf of the other. The precise details of these works, and which LHA will carry them out, is dependent on detailed design.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><i>People live well and age well:</i> The A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor includes extensive measures designed to encourage walking and cycling thus contributing to the health benefits of sustainable active travel.</p>
	<p><i>Strong resilient communities:</i> Successful communities need access to jobs, services and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. The transport network is an important enabler of this.</p>
	<p><i>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods:</i> New and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services and leisure facilities in order for them to be successful. The proposals will make a significant contribution to this objective.</p>
	<p><i>A strong and inclusive economy:</i> The provision of a high-quality transport network will reduce journey times and improve journey reliability for Sandwell business who rely on it to connect to their suppliers and customers.</p>
	<p><i>A connected and accessible Sandwell:</i> The provision of a high-quality, sustainable transport network catering for all modes is vital to enable Sandwell residents to access jobs, education and services both within and beyond the Borough's boundaries.</p>



## 4 Context and Key Issues

### Background

4.1 The A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor – Sandwell is a scheme that aims to support all users along the A461 between the A41 (Great Bridge) and Dudley. This is a Sandwell Borough Council scheme, however its scope extends partially into Dudley borough, to Castle Gate Island, to ensure continuity of development along this whole stretch of the corridor. The scheme is being developed in collaboration with Dudley MBC officers.

The scheme is designed to meet the following objectives:

- Increased safety, convenience and attraction of active travel trips along the corridor and to key trip generators, increasing active travel mode share on the corridor to up to 5% by 2030
- Reduced bus journey time variability, increasing bus passenger mode share on the corridor to up to 3% by 2030
- Improved accessibility for those without access to a private vehicle, particularly those with visual/mobility impairments
- Support economic growth through improved sustainable accessibility to future development sites
- Improve highway network conditions at key locations along the corridor, e.g. Great Bridge

4.2 The scheme that has been designed includes a uni-directional cycle route on each side of the A461 between Great Bridge Market Place and Burnt Tree junction (a section of which between Great Bridge and Dudley Port has been prioritised for delivery through the Active Travel Fund (3) to be delivered by June 2024). The cycle track from Burnt Tree continues as a bi-directional track along the northern kerblines to Castle Gate Island in Dudley. The scheme also looks at continuing cycling along Market Place via shared use surface, and then utilises Brickhouse Lane South, which will be converted to a quiet way by removing access from the retail park entrance to facilitate cycling to the existing crossings over the A41 over to George Henry Road and the nearby residential area.





- 4.3 Alongside the cycle track, there are proposed lengths of bus lane measuring 820m, made up of 460m bus lane (towards Dudley) between Anchor Drive and Bradley Street, and 360m between Peake Drive and Sedgley Road (towards Dudley). This direction has been identified as exhibiting more congested conditions and therefore having a bus lane in this direction will generate the most reliability for bus passengers. To fit in the bus lane, we have had to remove sections of central hatching and right-turn waiting pockets for general traffic, however, have not removed any running lanes for motorists.
- 4.4 For bus lanes travelling towards great bridge, we have planned for a right-turn bus gate for buses to turn into Market Place, avoiding Great Bridge roundabout where they suffer the most delays. This does not remove any current available driving areas for drivers, however the right-turn would require enforcement to ensure private vehicles do not also make this manoeuvre.
- 4.5 Great Bridge island itself is proposed for improvement by adding an extra exit lane from the roundabout onto New Road which should ease blocking back onto the roundabout which causing delays for vehicles entering from other arms.
- 4.6 Options for further improvements at Great Bridge island are being evaluated and, if appropriate, these will be reported to Cabinet separately.

### **Funding and timescales**

- 4.7 This scheme has £12.5 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding to deliver phase 2 of the corridor by 2027. Phase 1 is being delivered by Active Travel Fund (3) (ATF3) by summer 2024. This Phase 1 is an entire scheme in its own right, that connects Dudley Port to Great Bridge by a high quality cycle route, that will eventually form part of the wider corridor scheme.



4.8 The entire corridor is expected to cost in excess of the £12.5 million allocated. A prioritisation exercise will take place to ascertain which section of the scheme will be delivered in this CRSTS period however it is requested that approval in principal is given for the entire scheme so that delivery can subsequently happen in sections according to funding allocations. The remaining scheme will be delivered using additional funding to be sought through a subsequent round of CRSTS or other Government Funding.

### **Consultation**

4.9 The scheme in full has not yet been subject to public consultation. A comprehensive public consultation exercise is planned early 2024 to ascertain local sentiment around the proposed interventions.

4.10 Stakeholder agreement to the scheme has been sought previously through the assurance and appraisal process at the WMCA who have approved the Strategic Outline Business Case. Following this Cabinet review, the Outline Business Case will be submitted to the WMCA for approval, allowing for the release of funding for the final development stage, and for some funding for early delivery of some elements of the scheme.

## **5 Alternative Options**

5.1 One alternative option is to not continue with the scheme and reallocate the funding back to the WMCA for spending on a different scheme. This is not recommended, as it would leave the WBHE without essential connections to nearby communities and amenities. There is no guarantee that Sandwell Council would be able to retain the funding for a different scheme, and therefore Sandwell residents may be disadvantaged against other areas in the region.

5.2 Another alternative is to make significant changes to the scheme as it is drawn currently. This is not recommended as it would make it difficult to deliver by 2027 and would risk the funding being reclaimed.



## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The project will be funded through devolved allocations to the West Midlands Combined Authority as part of its City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. All fees, including SMBC staff time recharges, are including the estimated scheme cost.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The scheme involves the Council carrying out works in its capacity as Local Highway Authority.  The delegations described in this report are in accordance with paragraph 1.3 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Constitution.
<b>Risk:</b>	A full Risk Assessment will accompany the Outline Business Case. This is a precondition of funding.
<b>Equality:</b>	An Equality impact Assessment will accompany the Outline Business Case. This is a precondition of funding.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The project includes measures aimed to encourage the use of sustainable, non-car, modes. This will contribute towards improved air quality. In addition, the emphasis on active travel will have direct benefits for the health and wellbeing of residents using the facilities.
<b>Social Value:</b>	There are no social value implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.  When the scheme moves to the delivery stage, the appointed contractor(s) will be required to adhere to the Council's Social Value policies.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Decarbonisation of the transport system is central to the government's aims and objectives for CRSTS. It is also a principle theme within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. All projects within the programme need to demonstrate how they address climate change and contribute to decarbonisation through their business cases. The project includes measures aimed to encourage the use of sustainable, non-car, modes.



<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities arising from the recommendations contained in this report.
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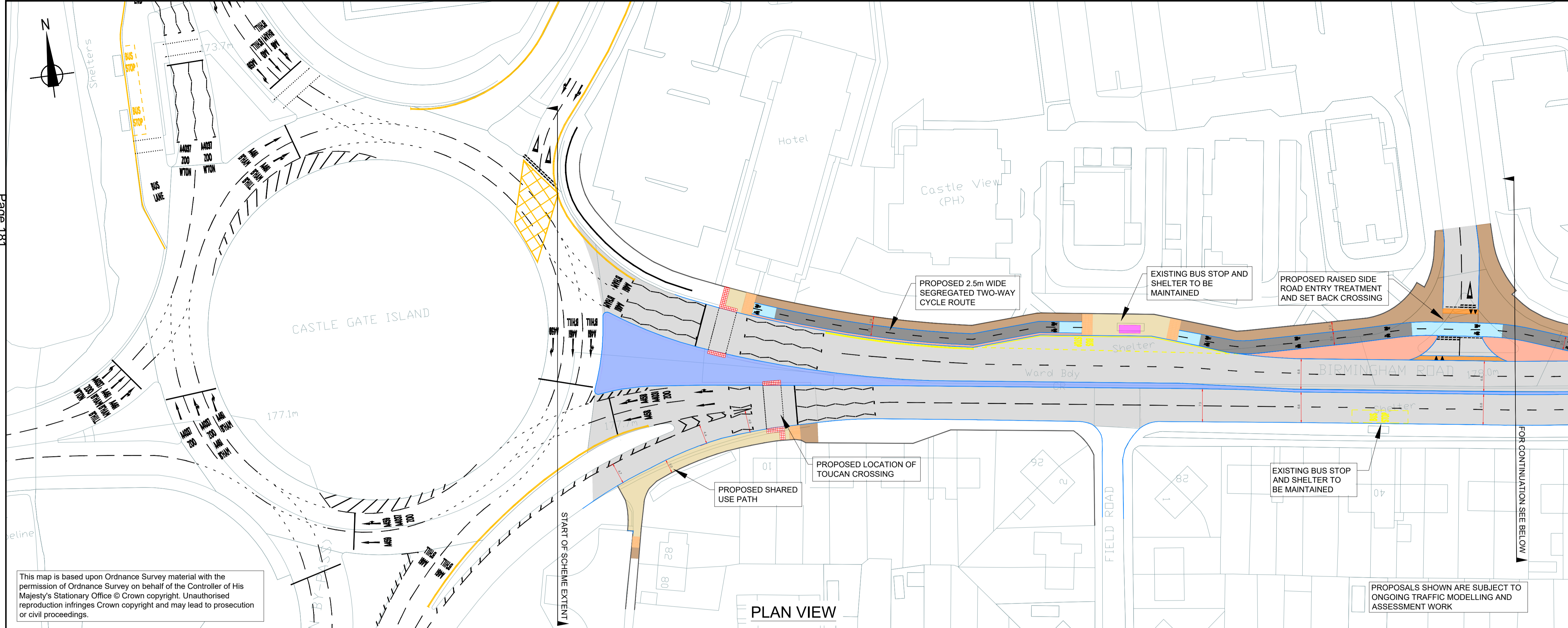
## 7. Appendices

Appendix A – Drg. No. 70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00101  
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Drg. No. 70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00103  
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Drg. No. 70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00105  
Drg. No. 70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00152  
Drg. No. 70102124-WSP-HGN-SAN-DR-CH-00155

## 8. Background Papers

West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth (2016)  
Report to WMCA Board 14:01:22  
Report to WMCA Board 18:03:22  
Report to Cabinet 23:03:22  
Report to WMCA Board 13:01:23  
Report to Cabinet 15:02:23

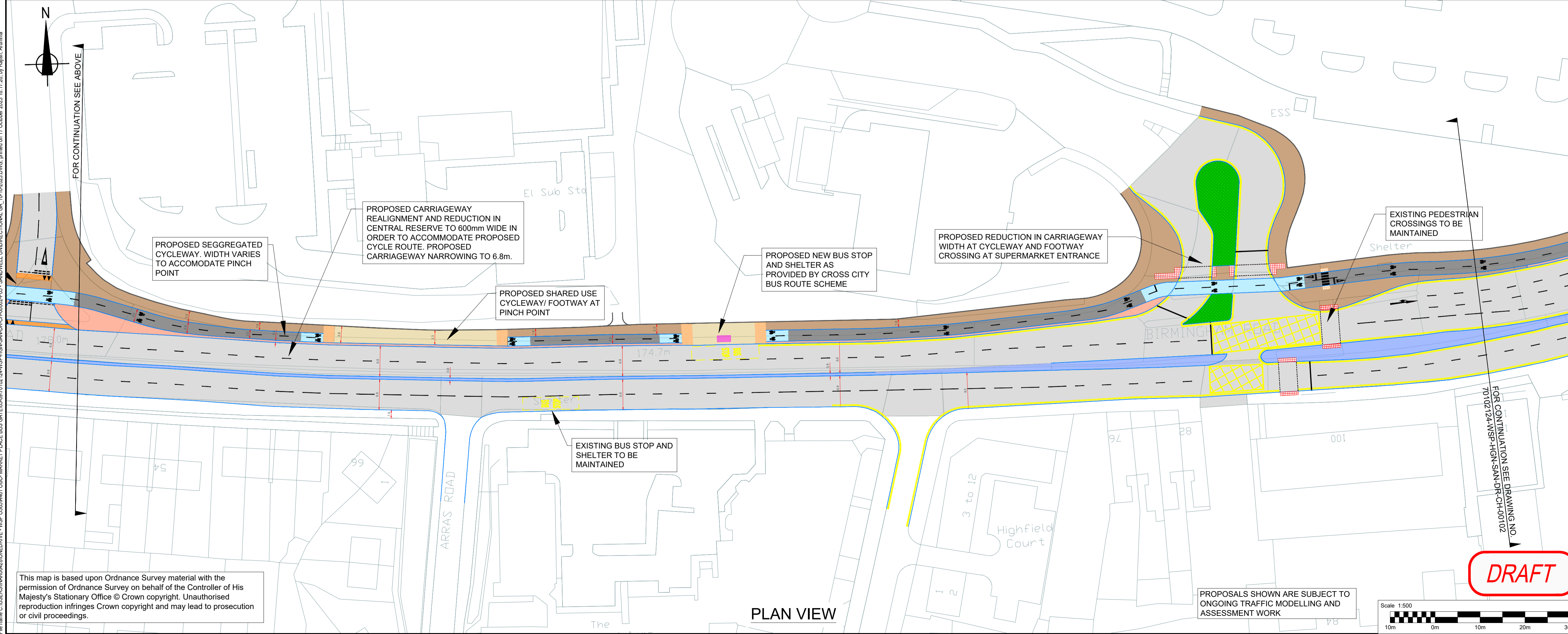




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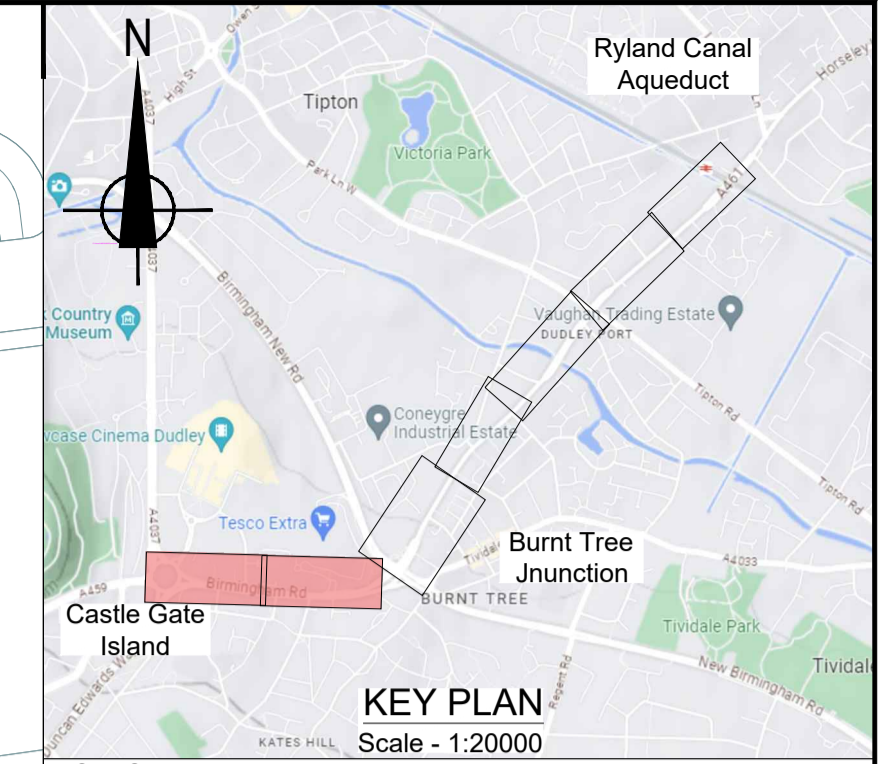
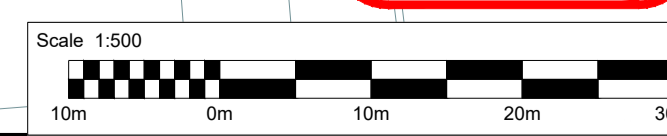
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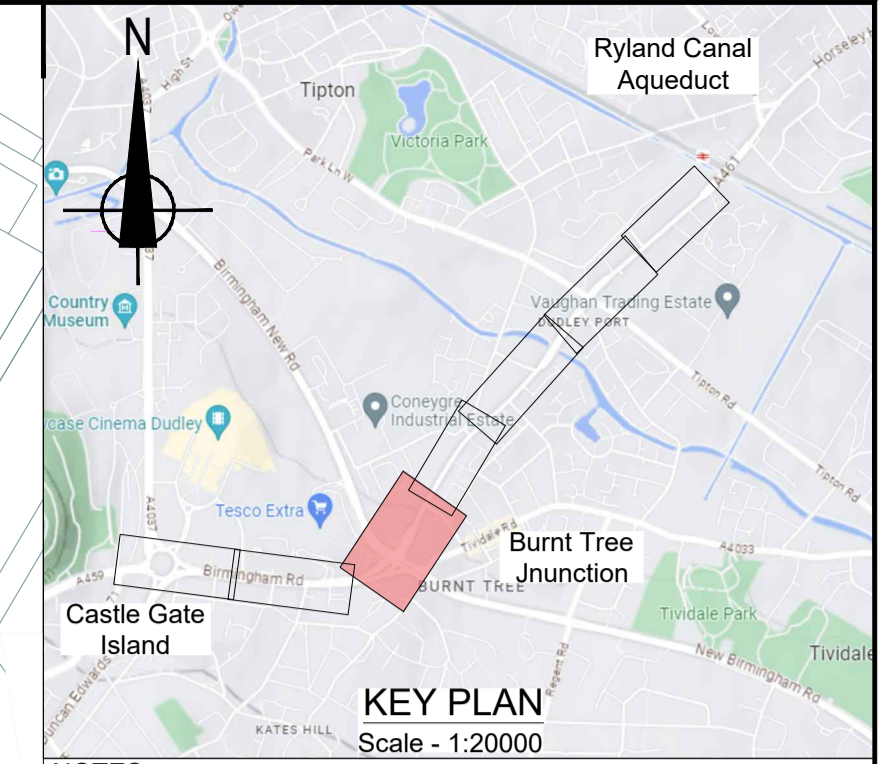
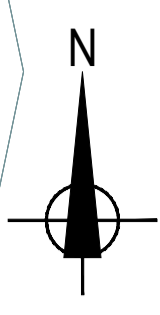
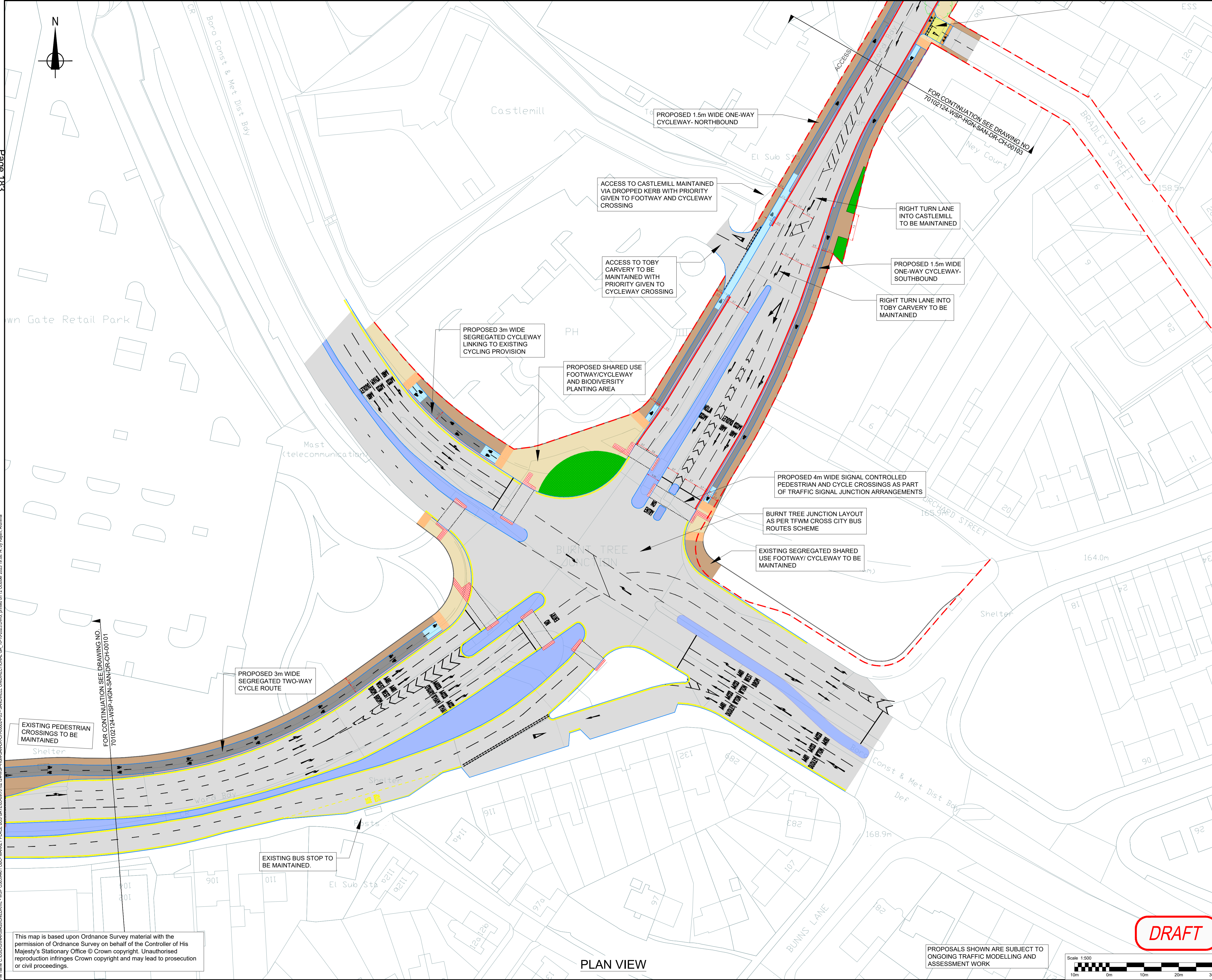
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P03	03/08/2023	DH	THIRD ISSUE - UNI-DIRECTION & BUS LANE	GN	XXX
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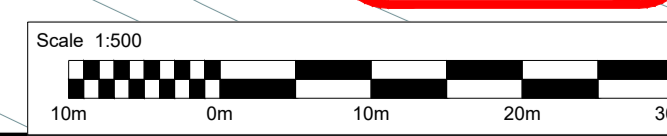
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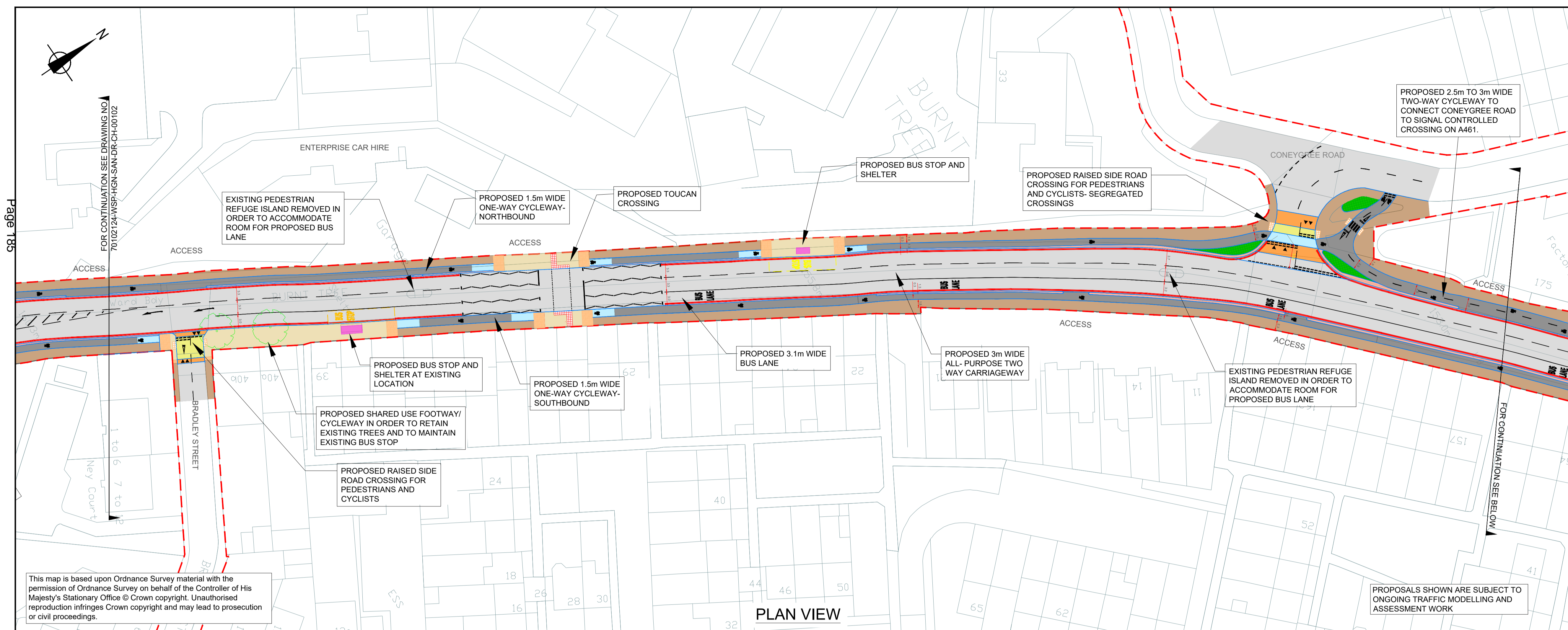
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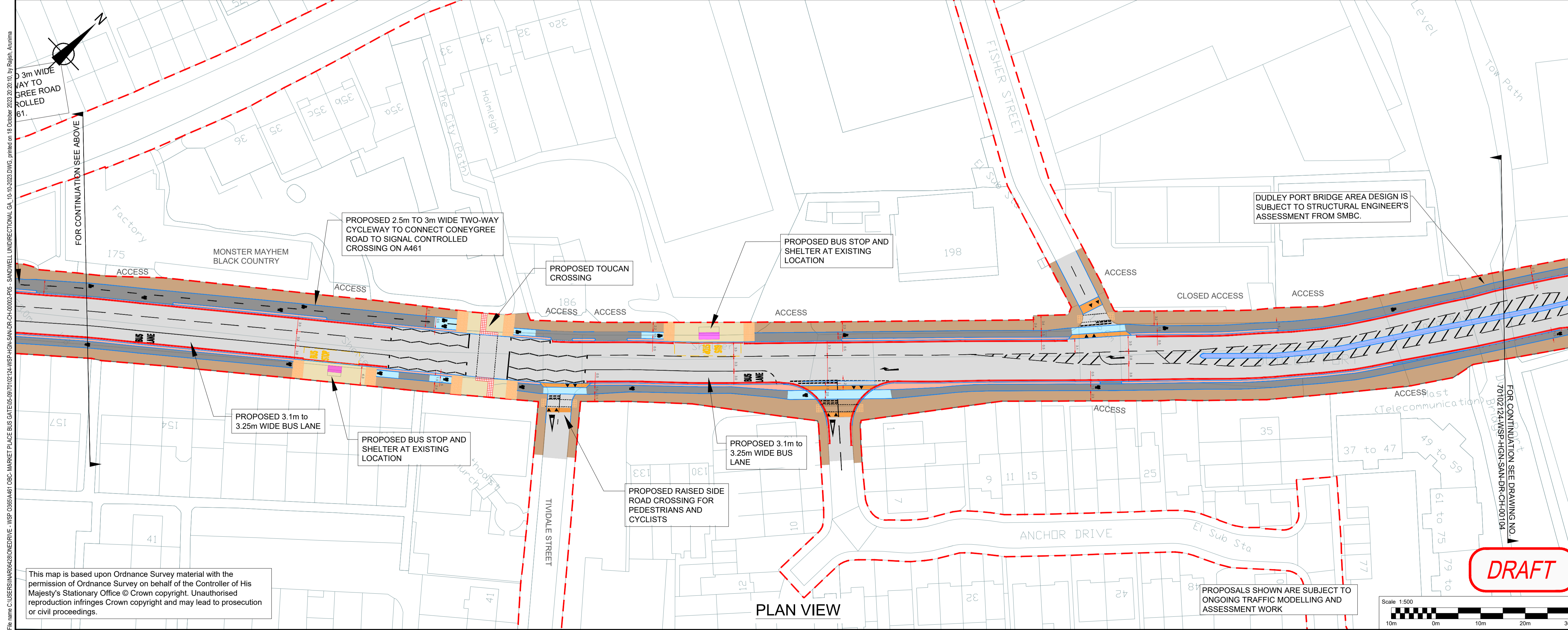
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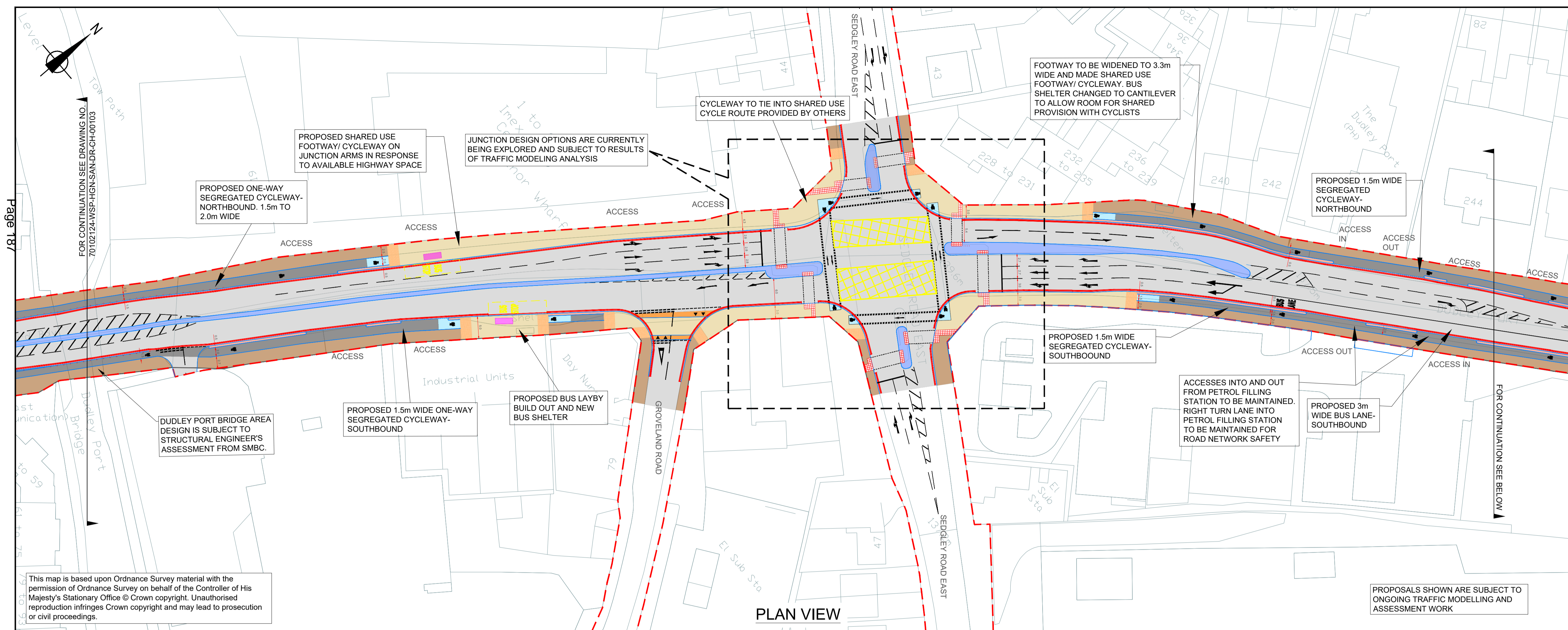
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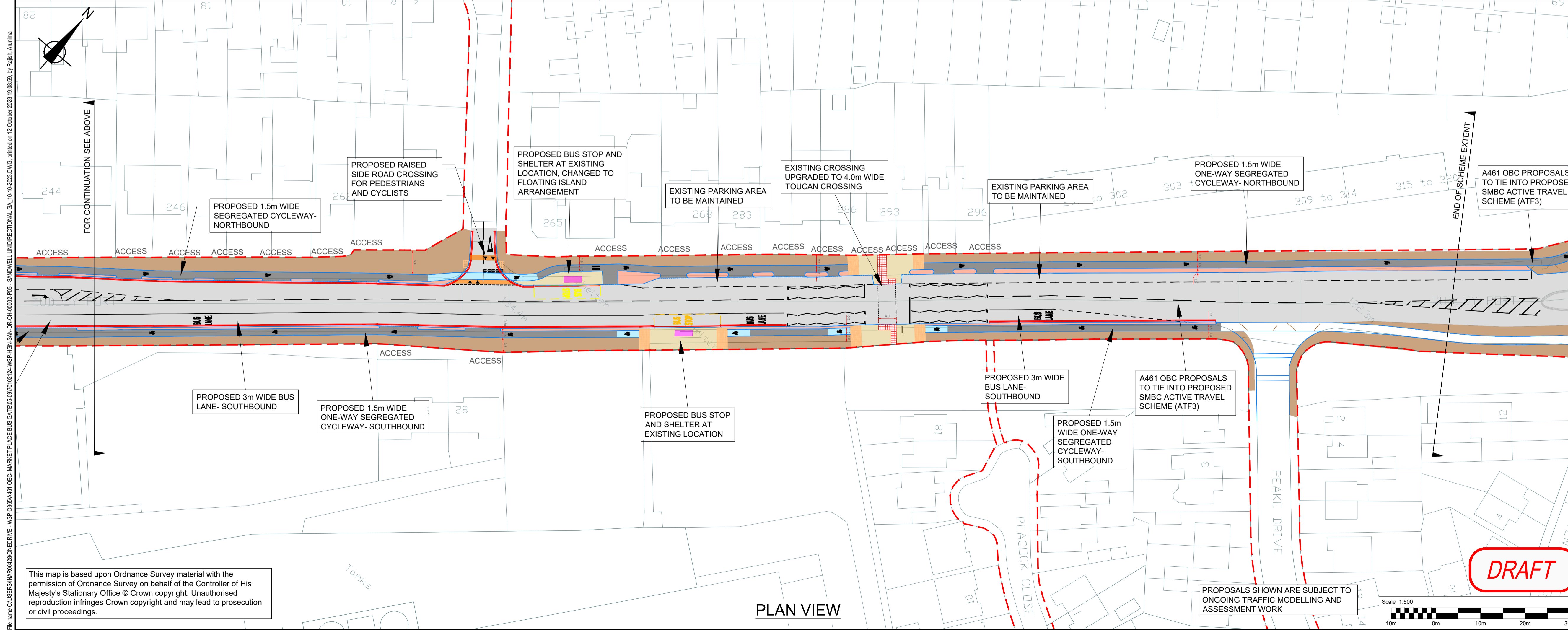
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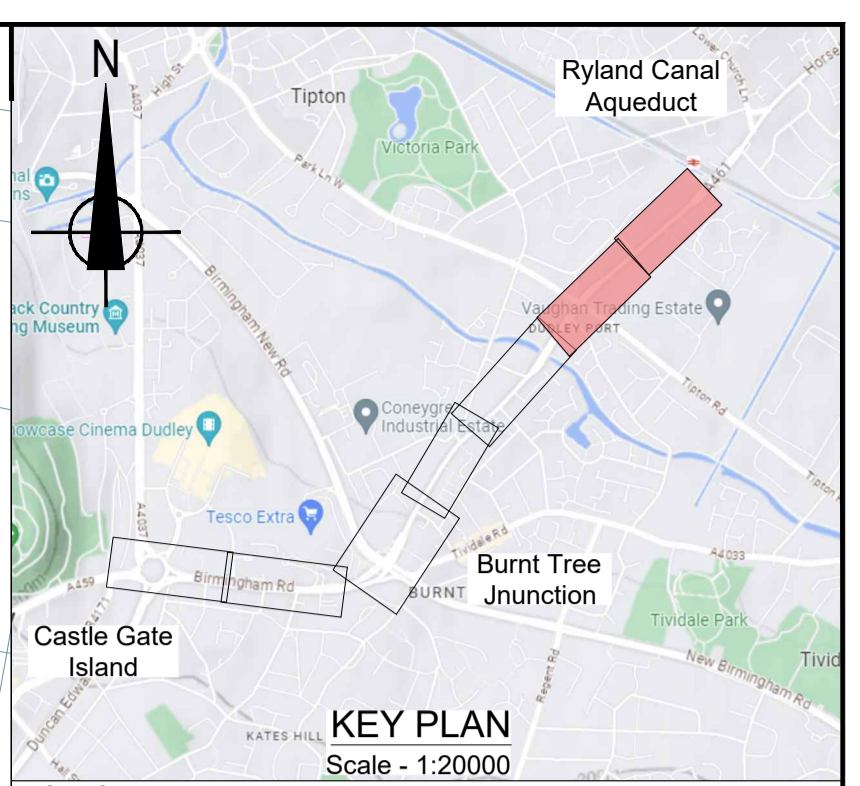
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P04	30/08/2023	RN	AMENDMENTS FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP	GN	XXX
P03	03/08/2023	DH	THIRD ISSUE - UNI-DIRECTION & BUS LANE	GN	XXX
P02	11/07/2023	DH	SECOND ISSUE - UNI-DIRECTIONAL DESIGN	GN	XXX

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TITLE: **SANDWELL SECTION  
GENERAL ARRANGEMENT DRAWING  
SHEET 04 OF 05**

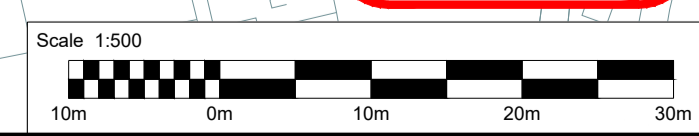
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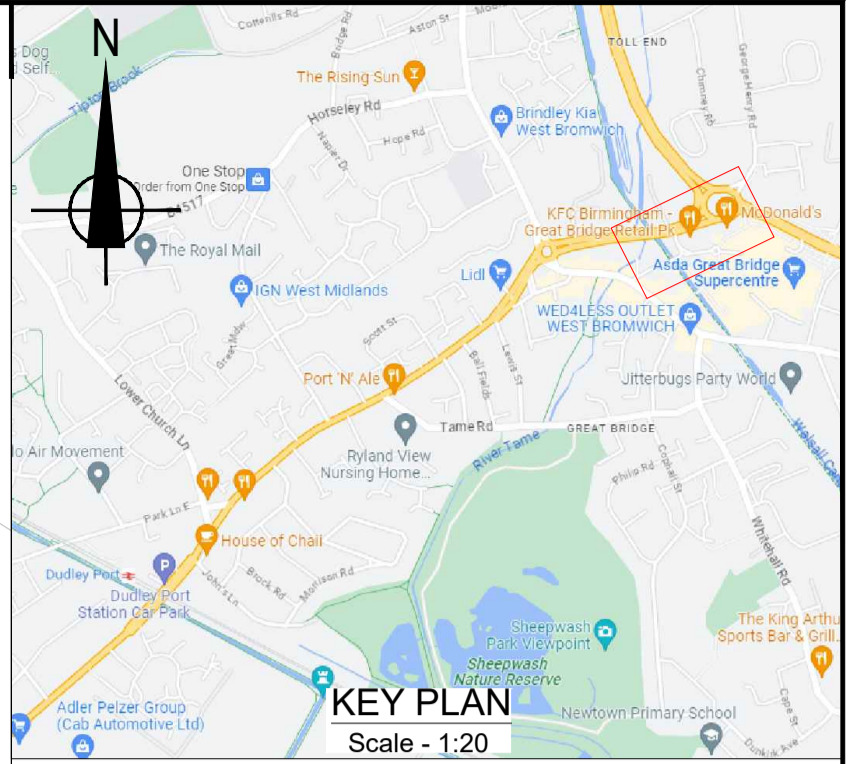
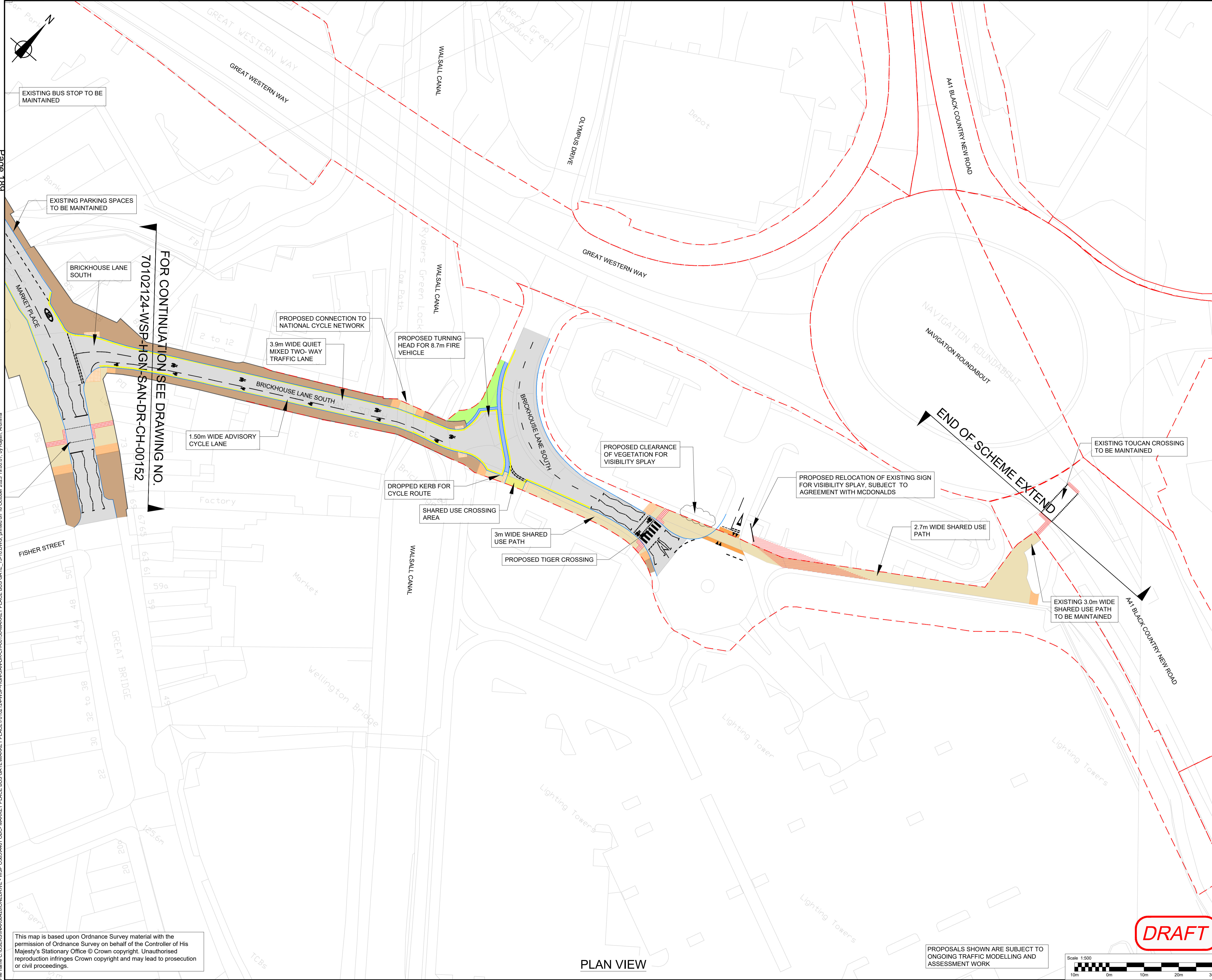
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P03	11/10/2023	AR	AMENDMENTS FOLLOWING CLIENT REVIEW	GN	XXX
P02	26/09/2023	AR	FOLLOWING STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP	GN	XXX
P01	14/06/2023	MN	FIRST ISSUE	AP	XXX

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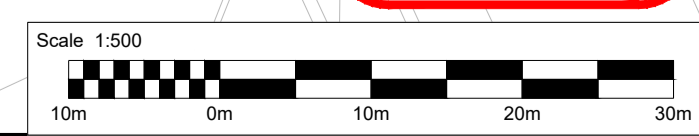
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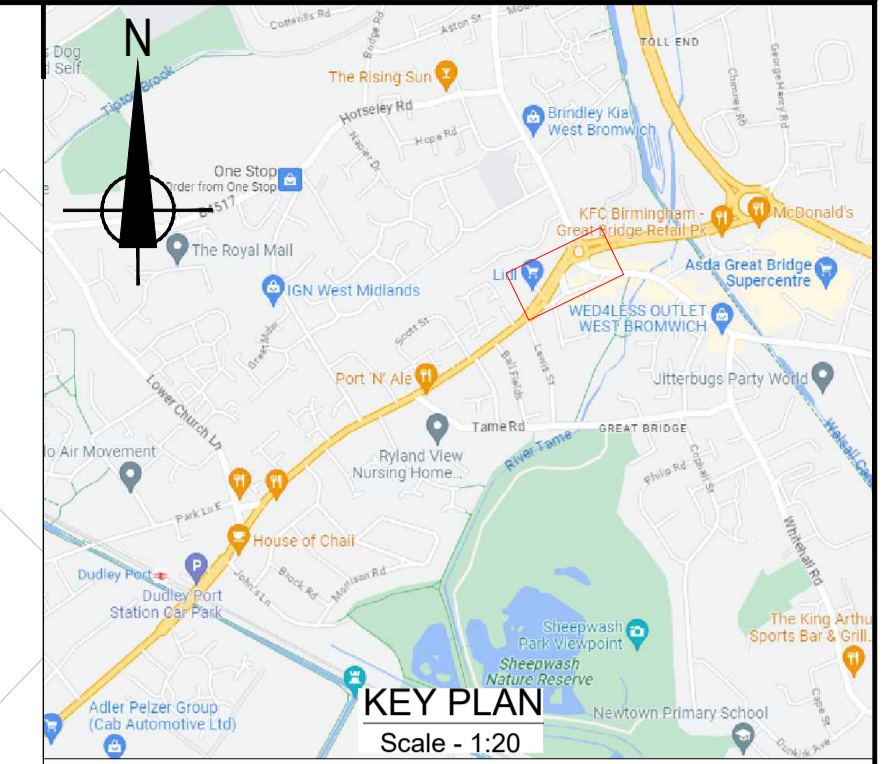
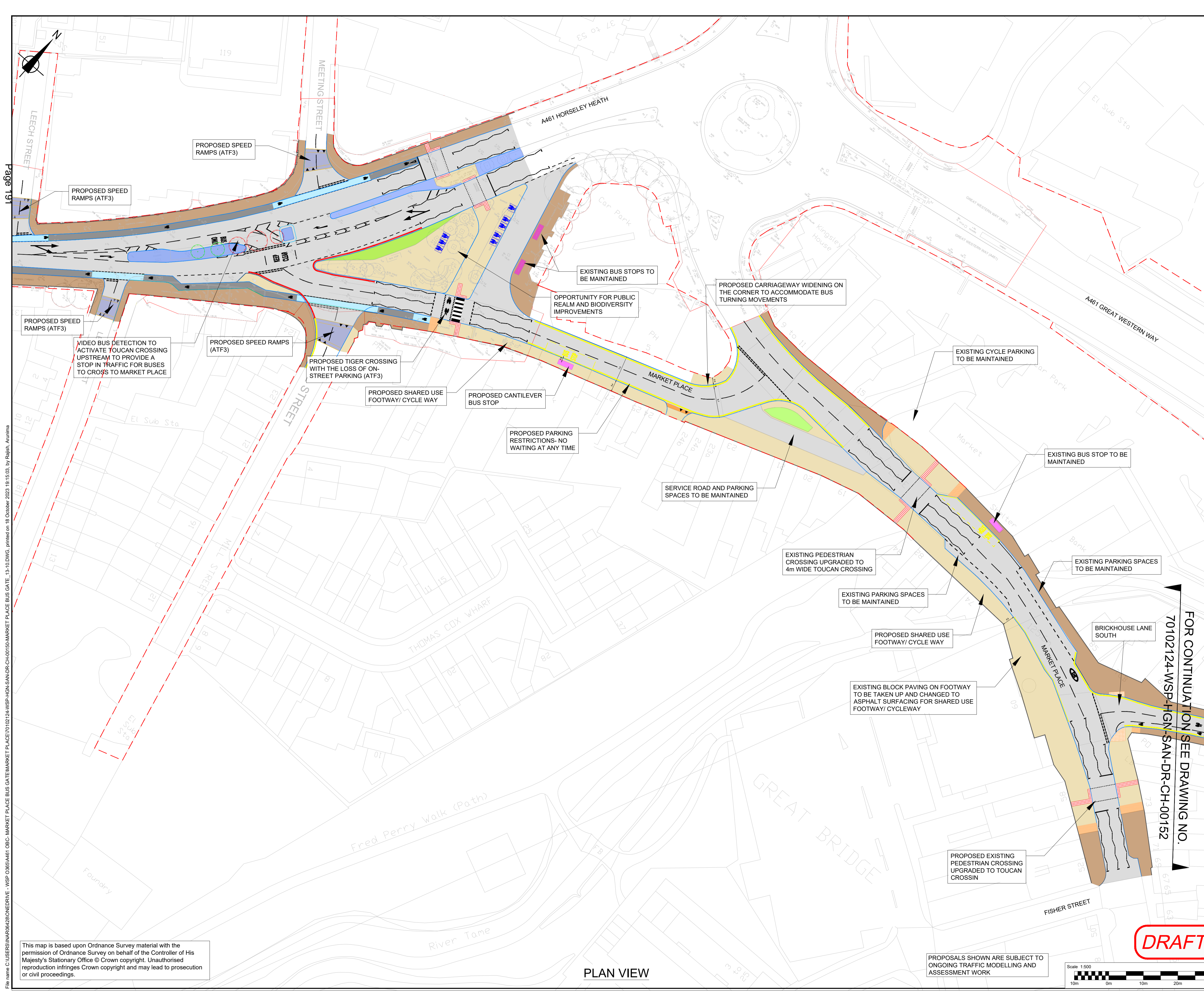
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TITLE: **MARKET PLACE BUS GATE - GENERAL ARRANGEMENT DRAWING**

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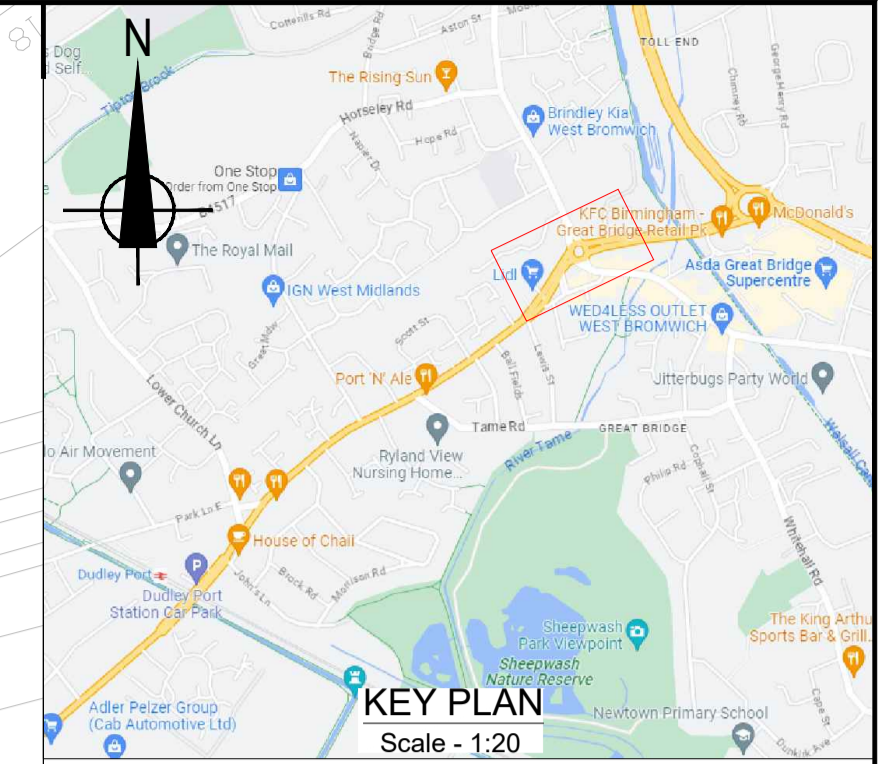
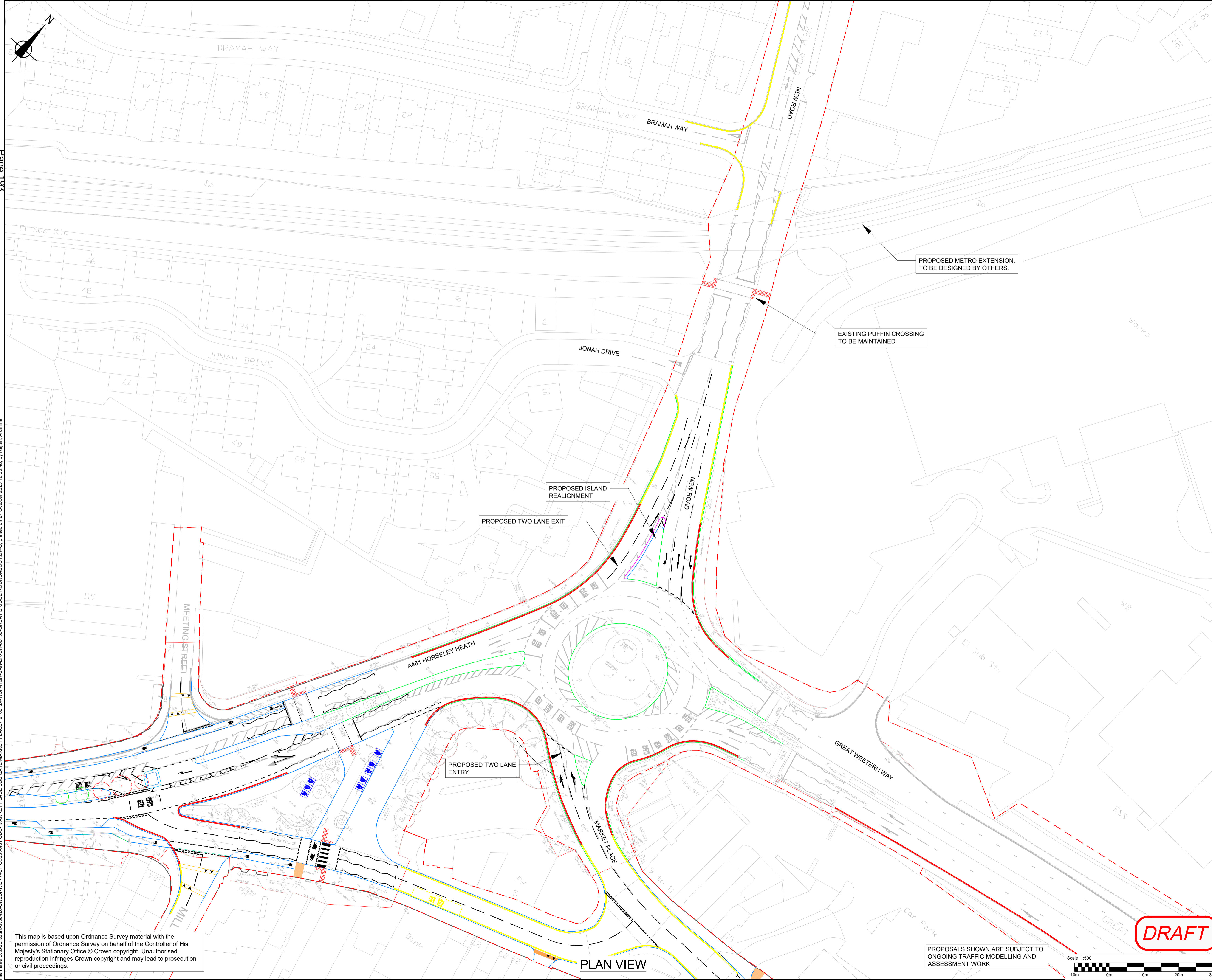
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TITLE: **GREAT BRIDGE ROUNDABOUT PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS**

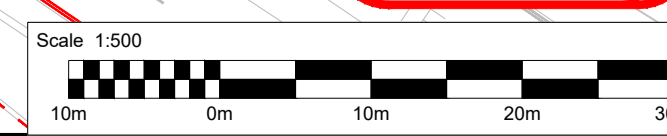
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PLAN VIEW

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## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, Councillor Danny Millard
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Borough Economy, Alice Davey
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Highway Network Development and Road Safety Manager, Simon Chadwick simon_chadwick@sandwell.gov.uk

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That approval be given to the Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 to inform and prioritise the delivery of road safety projects, initiatives and campaigns within the Borough until 2030.
- 1.2 That approval be given to the continued use of the Safe System approach to improving road safety and reducing road casualties, and adoption of the Vision Zero principle.
- 1.3 That the new road casualty reduction targets included within the new Road Safety Plan for the Borough be endorsed.
- 1.4 That approval be given to the publication of the Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 on the Council website.



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Every Highway Authority in England and Wales has a Statutory Duty under 'Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to carry out studies into road casualties arising from the use of vehicles on their road network and in light of those studies puts together and adopts a programme of works and initiatives to help prevent such incidents in the future. Therefore, the adoption of the new Strategic Road Safety Strategy 2024-2030 helps the Council discharge this Statutory duty.
- 2.2 Approval of the new Road Safety Plan as a strategic policy will also help to sustain Sandwell's excellent record in the reduction of road casualties over the period to the end of this decade. Over the past 22 years, total road casualties have halved on Sandwell's road network, including those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. More encouragingly child casualties have reduced by two thirds in Sandwell in that time period.
- 2.3 On 18 January 2022 (Minute No. 22/22(a)), the Council requested that the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board conduct a review into the Strategic Road Safety Plan. The Strategic Road Safety Plan covered the period 2017-2022 and was therefore due for renewal.
- 2.4 Several meetings occurred throughout the 2022/23 municipal year between members of the Scrutiny working group established and Highway Services officers to discuss the contents of the existing Road Safety Plan which had, for the first time, been based on the Safe Systems Approach, and to debate the way in which schemes and initiatives had been determined and selected for action. Following a change in membership of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board in May 2023, a final working group was established in July 2023 to complete the review.
- 2.5 On 23 October 2023, members of the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board working group, alongside officers from the Council's Highway Services department, met for a final time to consider the contents of the new proposed Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030.



- 2.6 Members received a detailed presentation of the proposed New Road Safety Plan which expanded on the principles of the successful Safe System approach where the five pillars of the road environment work together to minimise risk. The new plan also introduces the concept of Vision Zero for the first time, based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on the roads in Sandwell
- 2.7 The working group noted the importance of ensuring the safety of roads and how enabling sustainable mobility played an important role in providing for basic humans needs as well as helping mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 2.8 The Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment working group supported the adoption of the proposed Sandwell Strategic Road Safety 2024-2030 plan and the contents and local delivery plan included within.
- 2.9 The adoption of the Safe System approach to road safety, based on the principle of Vision Zero, will help to focus resources on reducing the most serious of collisions and reducing injuries to the most vulnerable and susceptible of road user groups through evidence-based studies and investigations.
- 2.10 Consequently, the new Local Road Safety Delivery Plan will be based on the 5 key pillars of Safe Roads and Roadsides, Safe Road Use, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles and Effective Post Crash Response. The new plan will consider that road safety is therefore a responsibility shared by all those that use the road, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide post-crash care.
- 2.11 The new Road Safety Plan will align the target for the reduction of those killed and seriously injured (KSI) casualties with that of the newly refreshed West Midlands Regional Road Safety Plan approved in September 2023, and the United Nations decade of Action for Road Safety, namely a 50% reduction in KSI casualties by 2030, against a baseline of the average 2015-2017.



2.12 The new plan will also introduce new local Sandwell targets for the reduction of total road casualties and child road casualties by 20% by 2030 based on the average 2015-2017 baseline. This will further help officers to prioritise projects, campaigns and initiatives in areas where risk analysis suggests the greatest road casualty benefit will be achieved, especially to the most vulnerable of road user groups.

### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>Best start in life for children and young people:</b> The new strategic road safety plan will help ensure good, well maintained and safe highway infrastructure to encourage more walking and cycling among our younger people increasing their wellbeing and health, improving road safety, reducing road casualties and promoting cleaner air quality.</p>
	<p><b>People live well and age well:</b> A safe and well-maintained highway environment plays an important role in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from health, independence, social inclusion and interaction.</p>
	<p><b>Strong resilient communities:</b> A safe highway infrastructure will make our communities feel safe, more protected and confident in their homes and neighbourhoods.</p>
	<p><b>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods:</b> The new strategic road safety plan will ensure all new housing estates are designed and construed with the community's safety in built from the start.</p>
	<p><b>A strong and inclusive economy:</b> Our local highways are the arteries of our communities. They connect our residents to employment, education, local services and the wider world. They enable economic growth, social mobility and are vital in ensuring good health and economy.</p>
	<p><b>A connected and accessible Sandwell:</b> Our residents will have excellent public transport that connects them to jobs and opportunities not only in the West Midlands region but across the nation and safe sustainable links to allow them to access these public transport services.</p>



## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 Mobility is integral to nearly every aspect of daily lives. People step from their homes into a road network that takes them to work, school, shopping, and recreation or to family, health and social needs. Therefore, ensuring the safety of roads and enabling sustainable mobility plays an important role in providing for basic humans needs as well as helping mitigate the impact of climate change.
- 4.2 Globally, road traffic crashes cause nearly 1.3 million preventable deaths per annum, making it the leading cause of death for children and young people worldwide. Recognising the importance of the problem the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations (UN) have declared a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. The new Global Plan calls on all stakeholders to implement a Safe System to prevent serious and fatal road collisions.
- 4.3 A Safe System approach is built on the principle of Vision Zero whereby the belief is that no one should be killed or seriously injured whilst using the road network. It also recognises that human bodies are fragile, and minds are prone to making mistakes. Consequently, a Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide post-crash care.
- 4.4 A Safe System approach considers 5 elements must work together as one to minimise risk; Safe Road Use, Safe Speeds, Safe Vehicles, Safe Roads and Roadsides, Post-Crash Response
- 4.5 The West Midlands Regional Refreshed Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030 integrated Vision Zero as the region's long-term mission, supported by the Safe Systems approach. The strategy also stretched the previous KSI casualty reduction target from 40% to 50% by 2030, to align with the UN General Assembly latest target.
- 4.6 Sandwell has traditionally had a good record of reducing road casualties in the Borough. Over the past 22 years, total road casualties in Sandwell have halved, including those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. More encouragingly child casualties in Sandwell have reduced by two thirds.



4.7 However progress has begun to plateau and even rise between 2012 and 2016. Hence the previous Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2017-2022 introduced the concept of the Safe Systems approach to Sandwell and consequently between 2017 and 2019 Sandwell recorded some of the best casualty reduction rates in the West Midlands.

	<b>Casualty Reduction % 2017-2019</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>KSI</b>	<b>Child</b>
Great Britain	-10.4	-2.0	-13.7
West Midlands	-4.6	-3.8	-5.3
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>-16.1</b>	<b>-15.0</b>	<b>-33.9</b>

4.8 The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 should be noted as it has resulted in any casualty figures during the intervening time being unrepresentative of 'normal' traffic conditions and it is only now in 2023 that the road network and casualty records are normalising once more. The unprecedented COVID lock down periods and travel restrictions resulted in decreases in traffic flows, increased vehicle speeds, adoption of risky driving behaviours and changes in travel modes.

4.9 On the request of the Council the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment (ESTE) Scrutiny Board conducted a review into the current Strategic Road Safety Plan, based for the first time on the Safe Systems approach, which covered the period 2017-2022 and was therefore due for renewal.

4.10 Several meetings occurred between members of the working group and Highway Services officers to discuss the contents of the existing Road Safety Plan and to debate the way in which future schemes and initiatives should be determined and selected for action. The working group noted the importance of ensuring safety on the road network and its important role in helping mitigate the impact of climate change.

4.11 Consequently the ESTE working group supported the adoption of the proposed new Sandwell Strategic Road Safety 2024-2030 plan and in recommending the new plan to Cabinet.

4.12 The new Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 will continue to utilise and build on the previously successful Sandwell Safe System approach to support and compliment the refreshed West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy at a local level.





- 4.13 The new Plan publishes the findings of an in-depth road traffic casualty analysis for Sandwell to identify the Authority's road safety priority groups and inform the development of the Council's new road safety Local Action Plan for 2024-2030.
- 4.14 It is proposed that Sandwell's new Strategic Road Safety Plan will stretch its casualty reduction target for killed and seriously injured casualties to compliment the regional and UN aspiration, as well as embracing Vision Zero. It is unrealistic to expect Vision Zero can be achieved within the timeframe of this new strategy, but it is vital that the right building blocks are put in place for the future to ensure that in time people will be able to use Sandwell's road network without the risk of death and serious injury.
- 4.15 In addition Sandwell proposes to introduce its own local targets for total road casualties and child road casualty reductions. Therefore, based on a baseline figure of average of 2015-2017, to compliment the WM Regional target, the new local Sandwell casualty reduction targets are;
- Reduce the number of Killed and Serious Injured casualties by at least 50% by 2030.
  - Reduce the number of All road traffic casualties by at least 20% by 2030,
  - Reduce the number of all Child casualties by at least 20% by 2030.
- 4.16 The findings of the road casualty analysis showed that Sandwell Council has an excellent track record in reducing road casualties, achieving a fall in total casualties from 1639 to 785 (52% reduction) between 2000 and 2022. KSI reductions were equally welcoming, with a reduction from 207 to 117 (44%) in the same period. Most noteworthy is the recorded 67% reduction in child casualties since 2000, with totals now just a third of those initially recorded (278 to 97). Further information regarding casualty reduction over time can be seen in Appendix A - New Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 - Section 4 Sandwell Road Casualty Summary.
- 4.17 However analysis has shown that the trend for road casualty reduction in Sandwell had slowed across all user groups by 2013 and plateaued until 2017. In 2017 Sandwell introduced its 2017-2023 Strategic Road Safety Plan which introduced a significant shift change towards the new Safe System approach to road casualty reduction. Between 2017 and 2019 casualty numbers began to significantly reduce once more.



However, the impact of the COVID-19 in 2020 resulted in any casualty figures recorded post pandemic being considered unrepresentative and only in 2022 are figures normalising once more.

4.18 Between the baseline and 2019, Sandwell had a very good record of reducing KSI casualties, performing almost 3 times better than nationally and the West Midlands as a region. This was even more pronounced between 2017 to 2019 (see 4.6). Importantly Sandwell had an excellent record in the reduction of child casualties in the same period, almost double national rates and 4 times better than the West Midlands as a region.

	<b>Casualty Reduction % Baseline to 2019</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>KSI</b>	<b>Child</b>
Great Britain	-14.7	-5.4	-14.8
West Midlands	-8.4	-6.5	-5.7
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>-12.1</b>	<b>-16.8</b>	<b>-22.7</b>

4.19 The significant casualty reductions recorded between 2017 and 2019 substantiated the decision to introduce the Safe System approach to road safety in Sandwell's previous Strategic Road Safety Policy and to continue and expand on this approach in the new 2024-2030 Strategy.

4.20 When comparing Sandwell to its local West Midlands neighbours, between the baseline and 2019 Sandwell had the best reduction rate for child casualties and was the second best performing West Midlands Council for the rate of reduction of Total casualties and KSI. Between 2017 and 2019 the reduction rates for Total and Child casualties was extremely encouraging and Sandwell ranked first across the region in reducing casualties in these particular groups during that time.

	<b>Casualty Reduction 2019 to Baseline</b>			<b>Casualty Reduction 2017 to 2019</b>		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>KSI</b>	<b>Child</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>KSI</b>	<b>Child</b>
<b>Great Britain</b>	<b>-14.7%</b>	<b>-5.4%</b>	<b>-14.8%</b>	<b>-10.4%</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>	<b>-13.7%</b>
<b>West Midlands</b>	<b>-8.4%</b>	<b>-6.5%</b>	<b>-5.7%</b>	<b>-4.6%</b>	<b>-3.8%</b>	<b>-5.3%</b>
<b>Birmingham</b>	-8.0%	+0.4%	-9.0%	-3.1%	+5.3%	-0.5%
<b>Coventry</b>	-13.2%	-14.9%	-8.1%	-9.4%	-12.1%	-5.4%
<b>Solihull</b>	-8.1%	-21.3%	+9.7%	-1.9%	-26.3%	-5.8%
<b>Black Country</b>	<b>-7.5%</b>	<b>-10.1%</b>	<b>-2.7%</b>	<b>-5.6%</b>	<b>-8.3%</b>	<b>-10.5%</b>



<b>Dudley</b>	-8.8%	-15.5%	-3.7%	+1.3%	-1.2%	-15.9%
<b>Sandwell</b>	<b>-12.1%</b>	<b>-16.8%</b>	<b>-22.7%</b>	<b>-16.1%</b>	<b>-15.0%</b>	<b>-33.9%</b>
<b>Walsall</b>	-3.8%	-10.0%	+5.1%	-2.3%	-19.2%	+1.1%
<b>Wolverhampton</b>	-4.2%	+6.6%	+17.7%	-0.3%	+8.9%	+21.3%

Further detailed analysis can be seen in Appendix A - New Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 - Section 5 National and Regional trends.

- 4.21 Sandwell also had the best rate of reduction for casualties per Km travelled in the region. Significantly Sandwell also had the most 100 million vehicle Km travelled through its Borough within the Black Country region during that same period.
- 4.22 The new Strategic Road Safety Plan delved deep into the analysis of 7 different road users groups including Total Road Casualties, Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties, Child Casualties (0-15 year olds), Pedestrian Casualties, Pedal Cyclist Casualties, Car Occupant Casualties and Powered Two Wheeled Casualties. The analysis helped identify trends, and those groups most susceptible, most vulnerable and those most exposed to the risk of injury. Further detailed user group analysis can be found in Appendix A - New Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 - Section 6 Sandwell Road Casualty Analysis.
- 4.23 The analysis demonstrated the vulnerability of certain user groups, as half of all KSI casualties were either pedestrians (38%) or cyclists (11%). Children are particularly vulnerable road users making up a third of all pedestrian injuries, with secondary school age children being the most at risk age group. 27% of all child casualties occurred on school journeys, but not necessarily outside of schools.
- 4.24 16 to 29-year olds were identified as the most at risk age group in Sandwell, accounting for a third of all road casualties. This highlights their in-experience as road users, making them more susceptible to mistakes and poor judgement, a key element to be considered when designing infrastructure as part of a Safe System approach.
- 4.25 Motorcyclists account for only 1% of all traffic but account for 18% of all KSI casualties in Sandwell. This is a strong indicator of this group's higher susceptibility to injury for every Km travelled.



- 4.26 2 in every 3 road casualties in Sandwell were car occupants. Particularly at risk are the 17-30-year-old group. This confirms that through continued high exposure to risk (as a result of the high number of Km travelled), car occupants are still the most likely group to become road casualties in Sandwell.
- 4.27 The results of the in-depth analysis over the period 2017-2022 have identified a number of key priority groups to be investigated and targeted during the new 2024-2030 Plan. These key priority groups are;
- Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties
  - Children
  - Pedestrians
  - Cyclists
  - Motorcyclists
  - 17-30-Year-Old Drivers
- 4.28 It is important that to help achieve the casualty reduction targets proposed by 2030 and to focus those reductions towards the identified key priority groups, then a robust but challenging 2024-2030 Local Action Plan will have a Safe Systems approach and Vision Zero at its core. The Safe System approach recognises that road transport is a complex system and that humans, vehicles and the road infrastructure must interact in a way that ensures a high level of safety for all concerned whenever possible.
- 4.29 The Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road network, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide emergency and post-crash care.
- 4.30 The proposed road safety projects and initiatives in Sandwell for the next 7 years in the new Local Action Plan are based mainly on the pillars of Safe Road Use, Safe Speeds and Safe Roads and Roadsides. The authority will have little influence on the design of safe vehicles and post-crash response and emergency care but it is important that all 5 elements need to work together in partnership to ensure that if, and when, crashes do continue to occur, then no-one is killed or seriously injured.



- 4.31 As Sandwell shares its borders and road users with the three other Black Country authorities and Birmingham City Council, collaborative and joint working on cross boundary issues is essential to help drive down casualties in the wider region. The latest Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan will require a full partnership approach from all stakeholders to help support the future West Midland Regional Road Safety Action Plan and assist in tackling road casualties across the Black Country.
- 4.32 Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and modification will be key to ensuring the success of any Safe System Approach and in achieving any long term casualty reduction and Vision Zero goals.
- 4.33 Importantly the new 2024-30 Strategic Road Safety Plan will also discharge Sandwell's Statutory Duty under Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988.
- 4.34 Over the past three years Sandwell has received on average an annual capital grant of £860,000 from the Department for Transport City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement to invest in evidenced road safety interventions. Moving forward it is proposed that the capital funding continues to be prioritised as in the previous strategy, by using a robust proactive and evidenced risk-based approach. Funding will be targeted at locations in the Borough where there are regular, treatable road injuries being recorded year on year which would likely continue to be recorded without intervention. Particular relevance will be placed on incidents involving the key priority groups identified in 4.26 above.
- 4.35 Consideration will be given to 'treatable' incidents and those locations where clusters of incidents of a similar nature have been identified which can be tackled through road safety improvements. Interventions can be through engineering improvements, road safety education or enforcement and more commonly a mixture of all three.
- 4.36 The Council also commits £92,000 of reactive revenue expenditure a year to help tackle community and elected member road safety concerns with cost effective safety measures where appropriate. It should be noted that only West Midlands Police have the statutory power to tackle speeding vehicles and as such the reactive budget can be utilised to gather traffic speed and volume data, which can then assist the police in developing a localised speed enforcement programme.



4.37 The new strategy also proposes for Local Area Budgets to be used, when suitable, to match fund Road Safety revenue allocations to expand the delivery of localised road safety measures, which will help tackle a greater number of community concern sites.

## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 Alternatively the Council could have no strategic vision and long-term plan to reduce identified road casualty problems in the Borough. Basing decisions on community concern and perceived problematic areas only would have a detrimental effect on the success in reducing road casualties in Sandwell since 2000, with the risk of road traffic injuries increasing significantly over the next few years.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Road safety and infrastructure improvements are funded through various approved Capital Budgets, Grants and revenue allocations, with spend being prioritised through evidence led campaigns and interventions. Interventions identified as part fo the Local Action will be fully funded within existing Revenue and Capital budgets. Additional funds will also be available through utilising other one off grants and developer contributions and hence there will be no new resource pressures within the service as a result.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	<p>The principal legal statutory duties and processes required to implement the highway improvement and traffic management requirements are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Highways Act 1980.</li> <li>• The Road Traffic Act 1988</li> <li>• The Traffic Management Act 2004</li> <li>• The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984</li> </ul> <p>Road Casualty Reduction Safety targets match those published by the United Nations and World Health Organisation and those required in the regional West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	Without a Strategic Road Safety Strategy, Policy and Action Plan the risk is that the Council will not meet its statutory duties in relation to road casualty reduction.



<b>Equality:</b>	The introduction of a targeted road safety policy will benefit the most vulnerable user groups on the highway network and will help balance the needs of all road users.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Improvements to the road safety environment will ensure all users of the highway network are protected and managed safely to reduce the risk of conflict and injury. Greater encouragement of sustainable travel choice will inevitably improve the health and wellbeing of the neighbourhood. Adoption of Vision Zero will aim to reduce all serious and fatal casualties to zero in the future.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Social Value benefits are derived from the important role a well-maintained and safe highway environment plays in the life of the community, particularly the positive opportunities that they can bring from social inclusion, sustainable travel choice and social interaction.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	A well maintained and safe highway infrastructure will encourage more walking and cycling, reducing car borne trips and improving air quality.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	No specific implications.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A - Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030

## 8. Background Papers

West Midlands Refreshed Road Safety Strategy October 2023  
World Health Organisation and United Nations Global Plan – Decade of Action 2021-2030

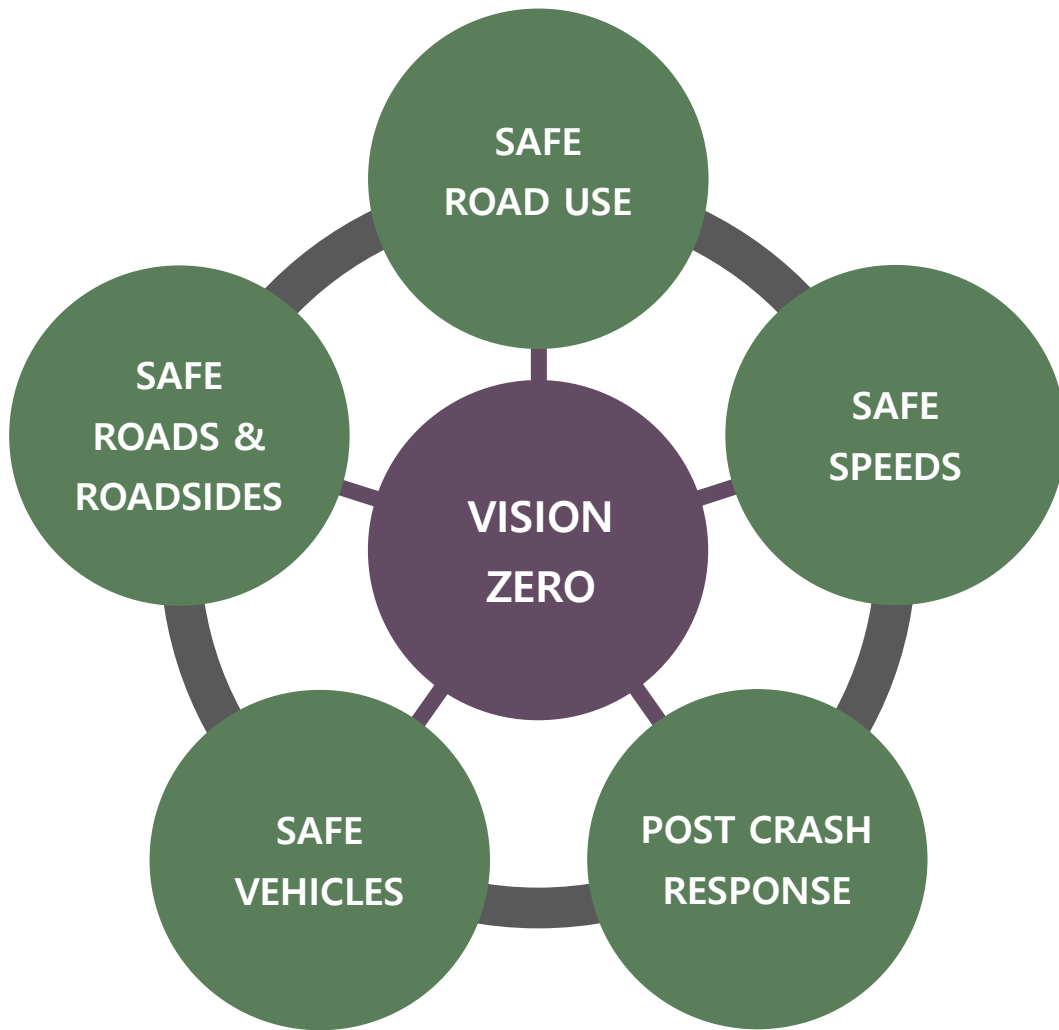


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## STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN

2024-2030



## FOREWORD



**Councillor Danny Millard**  
**Cabinet Member Environment & Highways**

In Sandwell we have an excellent track record for reducing road injuries. We have halved the number of casualties on our roads over the past twenty years. We have also reduced the number of children injured on our roads by two thirds in the same period.

However, we must not become complacent. The effects of road traffic accidents on our society are shattering, deeply affecting families, communities and businesses.

Sandwell's new Strategic Road Safety Plan will take a close look at recent trends in road casualties in our borough to make sure that moving forward we make plans and target our resources where they will have the greatest impact.

For the first time, Sandwell will adopt the principle of Vision Zero, where we believe that no death or serious injury is acceptable on our roads. However it is unrealistic to expect Vision Zero to be achieved within the timeframe of this current strategy, although it is vital that the right building blocks are put in place for the future.

Our new strategy will expand on the success of the Safe Systems approach used in our previous Plan, but now enhanced with Vision Zero at its core.

We understand that road safety is a responsibility shared by every driver, rider, pedestrian and cyclist that uses our roads, by the engineers that design, manage, construct and maintain our network and by our emergency service partners who enforce highway laws and provide emergency and post crash care when needed most.

Therefore we look forward to embarking on a journey of joined up working and developing new innovative ways of changing driver behaviour. We intend to do this by expanding partnership working with our emergency service colleagues and neighbouring councils.

We also understand the import role our community have to play in improving road safety and hence we will encourage everyone to play a part in reducing road injuries by taking responsibility for their own behaviour and getting involved in neighbourhood led road safety campaigns and projects.

# STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

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## BACKGROUND



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mobility is integral to nearly every aspect of daily lives. People step from their homes into a road network that takes them to work, school, shopping, and recreation or to family, health and social needs. Therefore ensuring the safety of roads and enabling sustainable mobility plays an important role in providing for basic human needs as well as helping mitigate the impact of climate change.

Globally, road traffic crashes cause nearly 1.3 million preventable deaths, making it the leading killer of children and young people worldwide. Recognizing the importance of the problem the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations (UN) have declared a Second Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021–2030. The new Global Plan calls on all stakeholders to implement a **Safe System** to prevent serious and fatal road collisions.

A Safe System approach is built on the principle of **Vision Zero** whereby no one should be killed or seriously injured whilst using the road network. It also recognises that human bodies are fragile and minds are prone to making mistakes.

Consequently a Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide post crash care.

A Safe System approach considers 5 elements which must work together as one to minimise risk;

**Safe Road Use - Safe Speeds - Safe Vehicles  
Safe Roads and Roadsides - Post-Crash Response**

Put simply, in a Safe System all elements of the road system must work together as one to minimise the chance of a crash, or, if a crash does take place, to prevent death or serious injury from occurring.

The West Midlands Regional Refreshed Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030 integrated Vision Zero as the region's long term mission, supported by the Safe Systems approach. The strategy also stretched the previous Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) casualty reduction target from 40% to 50% by 2030, to align with the UN General Assembly latest target.

Sandwell has traditionally had a good record of reducing road casualties in the borough. Over the past 20 years, total road casualties have halved, including those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. More encouragingly child casualties have reduced by two thirds.

However progress has begun to plateau and even rise between 2012 and 2016. Hence the previous Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2017-2022 introduced the concept of the Safe Systems approach and consequently between 2017 and 2019 Sandwell recorded some of the best casualty reduction rates in the West Midlands.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 has resulted in recorded casualty figures during the intervening time being unrepresentative of 'normal' traffic conditions and it is only now in 2023 that the road network and casualty records are normalising once more. The unprecedented COVID lock down periods and travel restrictions resulted in decreases in traffic flows, increased vehicle speeds, adoption of risky driving behaviours and changes in travel modes.

Therefore this new Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 will continue to utilise and build on the previously successful Sandwell Safe System approach to support and compliment the refreshed West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy at a local level.

This Plan publishes the findings of an in-depth road traffic casualty analysis for Sandwell to identify the Authority's road safety priorities and inform the development of the Council's new Strategic Road Safety Action Plan.

This strategy will stretch its casualty reduction targets in line with the regional and UN aspiration, as well as embracing Vision Zero. It is, however, unrealistic to expect Vision Zero to be achieved within the timeframe of this strategy although it is vital that the right building blocks are put in place to ensure that in time people will be able to use Sandwell's road network without the risk of death and serious injury.

This 2024-30 Strategic Road Safety Plan also helps discharge Sandwell's Statutory Duty under **Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988**.

## 2. SAFE SYSTEM APPROACH

### Vision Zero

Vision Zero is based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on the roads and follows the principles of the Safe System, where the five pillars of the road environment work together to minimise risk.

The Vision Zero concept for road safety was created in Sweden and is widely credited for significant reductions in fatal and severe collisions on Sweden's roads.

Vision Zero is an evidence based and design led approach for making decisions that can drastically reduce deaths and injuries on the road network.

It is unrealistic to expect Vision Zero to be achieved within the timeframe of this strategy but it is vital that the right building blocks are put in place for the future to ensure that in time people will be able to use Sandwell's road network without the risk of death and serious injury.

### Safe System

A Safe System approach is built on the principle of **Vision Zero** whereby no one should be killed or seriously injured whilst using the road network and

that people's life or health should not be compromised by the need to travel.

The Safe System approach recognises that road transport is a complex system and that humans, vehicles and the road infrastructure must interact in a way that ensures a high level of safety for all concerned and that safety should not be compromised for the sake of other factors such as cost or the desire for faster transport times

The Safe System approach to road safety puts human beings at its centre but recognises that humans are fallible and will be prone to poor judgement and making mistakes. It also acknowledges that humans are fragile and hence are vulnerable to being killed or seriously injured if they are involved in a crash or collision.

A Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road network, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide emergency and post crash care.

All these elements need to work together in partnership to ensure that if, and when, crashes do occur then no-one is killed or seriously injured.



Safe System Approach

## Safe Road Use

Everyone who uses the road has a responsibility to use the road safely and comply with rules and laws of the road. Emphasis is placed on the principle of shared but proportionate responsibility.

Although the Safe System acknowledges that people make mistakes, the impact of those mistakes can be minimised through positive and informed road use behaviours. Therefore safe road users need to be competent and pay full attention to the road ahead and the task in hand. They need to be able to adapt to the conditions ahead (such as weather, other users and physical environments etc.) whilst travelling at the appropriate speed for those conditions.

They should not drive whilst under the influence of alcohol or drugs including medicines or when feeling fatigued and not be distracted by in-vehicle technology. Importantly safe road users should ensure they give sufficient room to all other road users, no matter what their mode of travel.

Safe road users should be conscious of the hierarchy of road users. It is extremely important that those road users who can do the greatest harm take the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger or threat they could pose to others. They need to respect other road users at all times and assume responsibility for others' safety as well as their own.

Road safety education is an important part of influencing road user behaviour to ensure they are aware of the risks and their roles and responsibilities in keeping themselves and others safe on the road.

Safe road use can also be achieved by working together with partners to reduce car-based traffic. People can be encouraged and inspired to use active and sustainable modes of travel, such as walking and cycling, or to use public transport in preference to their own vehicles.

For road users that require greater encouragement to act in a responsible manner, enforcement is an extremely important tool to help deter dangerous road user behaviour that is likely to result in fatal and serious collisions.

## Safe Road and Roadsides

In a Safe System, roads and roadsides need to be designed and suitably maintained to help reduce the risk of collisions occurring, or if they do occur to mitigate the severity of any injury.

The focus for safe roads and roadsides is to take a proactive approach to identifying risk and recognise that proposals need to accept people will make mistakes, but be designed in such a way as when they do, no deaths or serious injuries occur as a consequence.

A major risk on the highway network is that different types of road users, some more vulnerable to injury than others, have to regularly share the same road space.

As far as possible, the Safe System approach should seek to segregate different road users if space allows, developing and enhancing safer routes for vulnerable users. Safe System roads should be 'self explanatory' to a driver to make them aware of what is expected from them and to behave accordingly.

It is therefore important to build safe road systems that can mitigate people's mistakes and manage their vulnerability whilst punishing those that put others at risk through dangerous behaviour.

Programmes of road safety initiatives, infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance will continue to be prioritised through data led interventions to help satisfy the statutory duties placed on local highway authorities.

However a greater emphasis will be placed on a proactive approach to road safety at perceived risky locations by utilising road safety tools such as the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) to identify and manage the levels of risk and help bid for additional capital funding.

## Safe Speeds

Excessive or inappropriate speeds for conditions is the main determining factor to the severity of a casualty in a collision.

Therefore the management of appropriate speed limits and vehicle speeds in a Safe System is extremely important and should be based on ensuring collisions are avoided or reducing the speed at which impacts occur. This ensures the human body's limit for physical trauma is not reached, or exceeded, and as a result no serious or fatal injuries occur.

However simply dropping speed limits with no other mitigating interventions in place to encourage drivers to slow down should be avoided. Effective speed management is one of the biggest challenges facing the successful introduction of a Safe Systems approach to road safety. Hence Safe Road Speeds must work collectively with other Safe System elements to create an holistically safe and forgiving road environment.

The effective, frequent and targeted police enforcement of inappropriate speeds is an important aspect of achieving a Safe Speed environment. Community groups also have an important role to play in achieving localised safe speeds by working in partnership with neighbourhood policing to undertake Community Speedwatch initiatives as well as behaving responsibly when driving around their local communities.

The education of drivers through campaigns and diversionary enforcement is extremely important in promoting behavioural change, particularly to the driver and passenger age groups most at risk of being in a collision.

## Safe Vehicles

Modern vehicles are designed and regulated to minimise the occurrence and improve the survivability of not only drivers and passengers, but also to pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

Most vehicles on the road today have passive safety features such as crumple zones, 3 point seatbelts, airbags and front end geometry and material designs to reduce pedestrian trauma in a Collision.

More recently new vehicles are now likely to be fitted with 'active' safety systems, such as autonomous

emergency braking, lane assist and collision alert which can prevent collisions occurring in the first place.

Technology within vehicles, such as driver fatigue warnings and seatbelt reminders also help alert drivers about safe road use.

Increasingly the next generation of vehicles will rely on autonomy and smart infrastructure, removing the human element of fallibility. Therefore as safety becomes hardwired into vehicle technology and road design, there is potential to further reduce road casualties and deaths.

Although a crucial element in a Safe System and very important in the overall reduction of road casualties, the design of safe vehicles is not within the zone of influence of Sandwell Council.

However the Council does have a part to play in ensuring taxis, private hire vehicles and their own fleet are maintained correctly and regularly tested to ensure roadworthiness is regulated to the highest standards through the use of MOT's and regular servicing programmes.

## Post Crash Response

Effective post collision emergency care and rapid response is an important element of any Safe System and is at the heart of post-crash response. It can make the difference between survival and death or can prevent injuries from becoming life changing.

It is also vital to facilitate meaningful and timely investigations into the causes of the most severe collisions and identify potential solutions for the future.

It is also essential that any information collected is accurately recorded and stored as this will be shared with partner organisations to identify specific safety issues that will help shape future interventions and programmes of road safety initiatives.

Inaccurate data collection could result in interventions being inappropriate and unnecessary, adversely affecting the ability to undertake justifiable initiatives elsewhere on the network.



## 3. POLICIES, STRATEGIES & TARGETS

### Statutory Duty

Every Highway Authority in England and Wales has a Statutory Duty under **Section 39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988** to promote road safety.

The Act states that each local authority;

- **Must** carry out studies into accidents arising out of the use of vehicles on roads or parts of roads, within their area.
- **Must**, in the light of those studies, take such measures as appear to be appropriate to prevent such accidents.
- In constructing new roads, **must** take such measures as appear to be appropriate to reduce the possibilities of such accidents when the roads come into use.

Hence local authorities have a key part to play in reducing road casualties through;

- The implementation of data led road safety engineering and maintenance measures.
- Developing evidence led, education, training and publicity programmes.
- The technical analysis and approval of developer led highway projects.
- Working in partnership with other agencies and the local community.

### Global Strategy

In 2021 the United Nations published its new **Global Plan - Decade of Action for Road Safety 2021-2030**. The Global Plan has been developed by the World Health Organization and the United Nations Regional Commissions, as a guiding document to support the implementation of the Decade of Action 2021–2030 and its objectives.

The Plan calls on world governments and partners to implement an integrated Safe System approach to achieve a target of;

**Reducing road traffic death and injuries by at least 50% by 2030.**

The Global plan recognises that all stakeholders have a responsibility in bringing about the proposed reduction in road deaths and injuries and states “it is aimed at senior policy makers and should serve as a blueprint for the development of national and local plans targets”

### National Strategy

In December 2015 the Department for Transport (DfT) published its latest road safety statement **Working Together to Build a Safer Road System**, setting out the Government’s national vision for road safety in Britain.

The statement recognises that safer roads and safer road users save lives whilst reducing the pressure on the NHS and emergency services but also acknowledges the challenges faced in introducing safety improvements within the current economic climate.

One of the key priorities of the statement is the adoption of the **Safe Systems** approach. At the heart of the approach is the belief that human life and health should be paramount and the first consideration when designing the road network.

It is therefore important to build safe road systems that can mitigate people’s mistakes and manage their vulnerability whilst punishing those that put others at risk through dangerous behaviour.

The document encourages more involvement from the excellent array of delivery partners and other bodies who collectively work towards road safety.

The strategy states that the Government will continue to actively invest in a safer road infrastructure and local innovation. It also acknowledges the key supporting role that emergency services and enforcement have in preventing and minimising road deaths and injury.

The DfT is due to launch its updated Strategic Framework for Road Safety in 2024 and will likely publish the issues affecting road safety in the UK and provide guidance on how further reduction in KSI casualties can be achieved.

Once published this will be reviewed against Sandwell’s latest Strategic Road Safety Plan to ensure they align or if changes are required to the local policy in time.

## West Midlands Regional Strategy

In 2019 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) launched the West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy 2019-2028. This was aimed at applying a regional approach to road safety by working alongside local and regional partners to coordinate regionwide evidence based road safety interventions.

This original regional approach set a performance target of a 40% reduction in killed and serious road safety casualties by 2028 based on a baseline period of the average of 2015-2017.

In 2021 an interim review began on the strategy which concluded that whilst current performance against the 40% reduction target was positive, more could be done. It was becoming clear that following changes to travel patterns and modal choice due to COVID-19 pandemic and the cost of living crisis and the resultant rapidly changing road safety landscape, an enhanced regional approach was required to reduce the danger to those most at risk of death or serious injury on the region's road network.

Therefore in September 2023 TfWM Midlands published the **West Midlands Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030**.

The purpose of the new strategy is to:

- Integrate Vision Zero as the region's long term road safety mission.
- Enhance implementation of a collaborative Safe System approach across the region.
- Recognise that reducing fatal and serious injuries is a collective responsibility between all stakeholders, including those who use the road.
- Align with the UN's casualty reduction target of **a 50% reduction in KSIs by 2030**.
- Use the refreshed strategy to secure additional funding over and above current local road safety budgets, to enable delivery of an evidence based Regional Road Safety Action Plan.
- Ensure the level and quality of data used to inform strategic road safety decisions is accurate, accessible and fit for purpose.

The Refreshed Strategy needs to sit within the context of overall regional transport policies and alignment to the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan is vital.

## Local Strategy

This new Sandwell Strategic Road Safety Plan 2024-2030 will align with the Global and Regional road safety strategies and integrate **Vision Zero** at the core of its policy. The Safe System approach adopted in Sandwell's previous 2017-2022 strategy will be enhanced and built upon in this new Strategic Plan.

The plan will embrace the new regional KSI casualty reduction target but will also introduce its own additional localised casualty reduction targets for slight casualties and those involving children.

Based on a **base year of average of 2015-2017** to compliment the WM Regional target, the new local Sandwell casualty reduction targets are;

- **Reduce the number of Killed and Serious Injured (KSI) casualties by at least 50% by 2030.**
- **Reduce the number of All road traffic casualties by at least 20% by 2030,**
- **Reduce the number of all Child casualties by at least 20% by 2030.**

Sandwell has a clear vision for what the borough should look and feel like by 2030, where it will be a thriving, optimistic and resilient community. It is where people will call home and be proud to belong, where they choose to bring up families and feel safe and cared for, enjoy good health, rewarding work, feeling valued in their communities and confident in the future.

**Sandwell Vision 2030** is based on 10 ambitions and Road Safety has a significant role in realising 4 of those;

- Ambition 2** - Become a place where people are healthier and safer for longer.
- Ambition 6** - Develop excellent transport links to the region and beyond.
- Ambition 7** - Create significant number of new homes and employment sites.
- Ambition 8** - Develop a better environment in which people will choose to bring up their families.

3.1 Sandwell Casualty Reduction Targets

	2015	2016	2017	Baseline Average 2015-17	2018	2019	2020*	2021*	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030 Target
<b>Total Casualties</b>	880	829	911		825	768	657	806	785								
<b>Local Target 20% reduction by 2030</b>				<b>873</b>	860	846	833	819	806	792	779	766	752	739	725	712	698
<b>All KSI Casualties</b>	116	128	120		102	102	97	106	117								
<b>Regional Target 50% reduction by 2030</b>				<b>121</b>	116	112	107	102	98	93	88	84	79	74	70	65	61
<b>Child Casualties (0-15)</b>	106	93	127		98	84	77	98	98								
<b>Local Target 20% reduction by 2030</b>				<b>109</b>	107	106	104	102	101	99	97	96	94	92	91	89	87

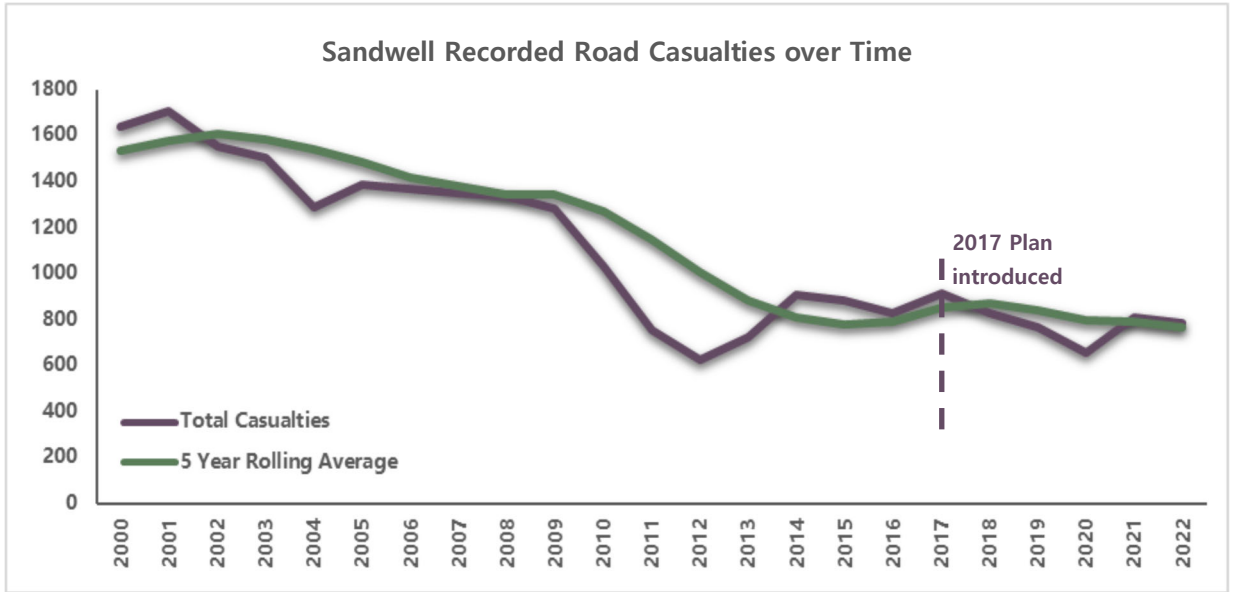
Yearly Targets Figures A linear regression to the 2023 target has been assumed from the 2015 - 2017 baseline, for monitoring purposes only.

\* Years 2020 and 2021 highlighted grey are considered unrepresentative due the affect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ANALYSIS



4. SANDWELL ROAD CASUALTY SUMMARY



Road Casualty Reductions in Sandwell

Sandwell has traditionally had a good record of reducing road casualties in the borough. Over the past 20 years, total road casualties have halved, including those resulting in fatalities or serious injuries. More encouragingly child casualties have reduced by two thirds in the same period.

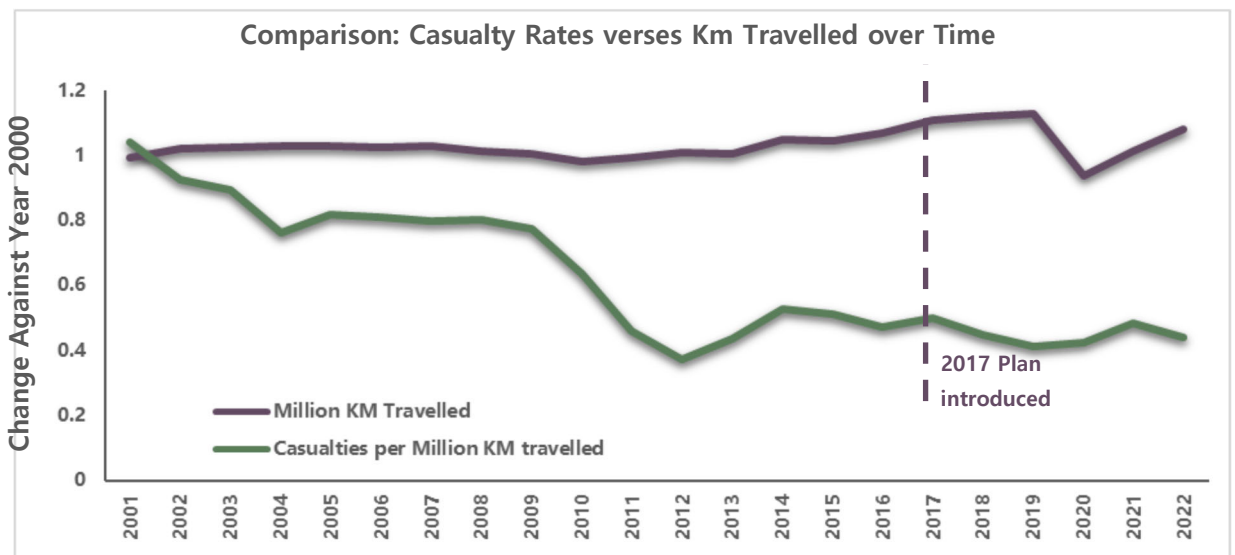
However, casualty rates rose between 2012 and 2014 in part due to changes in the legislation around small claims for minor injuries and the popularity of the 'no-win no-fee' culture, before plateauing out. In 2016 the DfT changed the way serious casualties were classified which again resulted in a rise to 2017.

In 2017 Sandwell introduced its 2017-2023 Strategic Road Safety Plan which introduced a significant shift

towards the new Safe System approach.

Between 2017 and 2019 casualty numbers began to significantly reduce once more. Unfortunately the impact of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 resulted in any casualty figures recorded during the intervening time being considered unrepresentative and only in 2023 are casualty records normalising once more.

Sandwell is an area which is land locked by 4 other heavily populated urban councils. Consequently it has a greater volume of commuter traffic passing through it than its Black Country neighbours. When considering casualty rates per million Km travelled over time, although traffic volumes generally increase year on year (except in 2020), casualty rates per million km travelled have fallen significantly by nearly 58% in the same period.



4.1 Sandwell Road Casualty Figures

		SANDWELL ROAD CASUALTIES OVER TIME																					
		HISTORIC															PREVIOUS STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2017-2023						
		2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020*	2021*
Total Recorded Road Casualties	1639	1702	1550	1501	1290	1384	1366	1350	1336	1280	1027	752	622	720	910	880	829	911	825	768	657	806	785
Total Rolling 5 Year Average	1531	1577	1606	1583	1536	1485	1418	1378	1345	1343	1272	1149	1003	880	806	777	792	850	871	843	798	793	768
Killed and Seriously Injured	207	195	179	146	120	103	133	125	104	112	106	116	111	97	122	116	128	120	102	102	97	106	117
KSI Rolling 5 Year Average	218	208	206	188	169	149	136	125	117	115	116	113	110	108	110	112	115	117	118	114	110	105	105
Total Child Casualties (0-15)	293	250	234	201	178	185	168	155	166	111	110	84	73	74	95	106	93	127	98	84	77	98	98
Child Rolling 5 Year Average	280	269	268	251	231	210	193	177	170	157	142	125	109	90	87	86	88	99	104	102	96	97	91
Pedestrian Casualties	310	271	252	248	203	206	194	198	210	181	156	134	134	124	148	147	139	146	152	143	111	134	154
Pedal Cyclist Casualties	79	79	78	65	62	55	72	75	87	49	37	46	51	46	45	57	37	57	37	44	46	55	52
Car Occupant Casualties	1045	1149	999	999	868	925	846	889	890	847	714	474	357	445	555	576	602	640	577	504	440	547	488
Powered Two Wheeled Casualties	81	86	80	103	76	92	98	85	80	85	57	52	47	68	68	58	59	58	50	38	45	45	47
Total Motorway Casualties**														57	80	51	67	61	68	23	30	33	57

\* Years 2020 and 2021 highlighted grey are considered unrepresentative due the affect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

\*\* Motorway casualties are recorded in Sandwell road casualty figures although the council has no control on road safety interventions on that network.

# STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

## 5. NATIONAL AND REGIONAL TRENDS

Comparison of casualty reduction trends at regional and national levels is a useful monitoring tool.

Comparisons have been completed over the periods baseline (average of 2015 to 2017) to 2019 and 2017 to 2019 (first period of Sandwell's previous Road Safety Plan pre-COVID) to determine ongoing trends.

In addition the period 2020 to 2022 has been included in an attempt to estimate the impact of COVID-19 and to demonstrate the unrepresentative and unusual nature of the figures during this time.

Sandwell is unique within the West Midlands, being entirely bordered by other Metropolitan or City authorities. Sandwell is almost entirely urban in nature and is used extensively for commuter journeys, many which pass straight through the borough or gain access to it's motorway network. Hence detailed comparisons can be made by analysing casualties per million miles travelled.

Motorway casualties have been considered, as the length of motorway in each West Midlands area differs greatly. Casualties on this network can make up a significant part of a council's casualty totals.

Whilst Motorway figures are recorded as part of the total road casualty numbers for each council area, any casualties recorded on this network are the responsibility of National Highways and cannot be influenced by the relevant local Highway Authority.

	% Motorway Casualties 2017-2022	
	All	KSI
West Midlands	3.1%	2.1%
Birmingham	2.1%	1.1%
Coventry	0.6%	0.8%
Solihull	11.7%	9.6%
Black Country	3.8%	2.6%
Dudley	1.0%	0.6%
Sandwell	5.7%	4.7%
Walsall	7.4%	4.6%
Wolverhampton	0.0%	0.0%

### National and Regional Comparison

Sandwell performs well in casualty reduction when compared to Great Britain and West Midlands regional trends.

	Casualty Reduction % 2019 to Baseline			Casualty Reduction % 2017 to 2019		
	Total	KSI	Child	Total	KSI	Child
Great Britain	-14.7	-5.4	-14.8	-10.4	-2.0	-13.7
West Midlands	-8.4	-6.5	-5.7	-4.6	-3.8	-5.3
Sandwell	-12.1	-16.8	-22.7	-16.1	-15.0	-33.9

Between 2019 and the baseline Sandwell had a very good record of reducing KSI casualties, performing almost 3 times better than nationally and regionally. This was even more pronounced between 2017 to 2019. Importantly Sandwell had an excellent record in the reduction of child casualties in the same periods.

The significant casualty reductions recorded between 2017 and 2019 substantiated the decision to introduce the Safe System approach to road safety in Sandwell's previous Strategic Road Safety Policy.

### Local Comparisons

Table 4.1 shows that at a local level, between the 2015-2017 baseline and 2019 Sandwell had the best reduction rate for child casualties and was the second best performing West Midlands council for the rate of reduction of KSI and Total casualties.

Between 2017 and 2019 the reduction rates for Total and Child casualties was extremely encouraging and Sandwell ranked first across the region in reducing casualties in these particular groups during that time.

Table 4.2 indicates that Sandwell had the best rate of reduction for casualties per Km travelled in the region. Significantly Sandwell also had the most 100 million vehicle Km travelled through its borough within the Black Country region during that period.

# STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

## 5.1 National and Regional Comparisons

	Casualty Reduction 2019 to Baseline*			Casualty Reduction 2017 to 2019			Casualty Reduction 2020 to 2022**		
	Total	KSI	Child	Total	KSI	Child	Total	KSI	Child
Great Britain	-14.7%	-5.4%	-14.8%	-10.4%	-2.0%	-13.7%	+17.7%	+24.2%	+29.2%
West Midlands	-8.4%	-6.5%	-5.7%	-4.6%	-3.8%	-5.3%	+24.8%	+24.0%	+22.0%
Birmingham	-8.0%	+0.4%	-9.0%	-3.1%	+5.3%	-0.5%	+30.9%	+29.2%	+33.9%
Coventry	-13.2%	-14.9%	-8.1%	-9.4%	-12.1%	-5.4%	-1.3%	+3.7%	-20.8%
Solihull	-8.1%	-21.3%	+9.7%	-1.9%	-26.3%	-5.8%	+35.2%	+69.0%	+3.8%
Black Country	-7.5%	-10.1%	-2.7%	-5.6%	-8.3%	-10.5%	+23.0%	+17.8%	+24.9%
Dudley	-8.8%	-15.5%	-3.7%	+1.3%	-1.2%	-15.9%	+41.5%	+18.8%	+15.5%
Sandwell	-12.1%	-16.8%	-22.7%	-16.1%	-15.0%	-33.9%	+19.5%	+20.6%	+27.3%
Walsall	-3.8%	-10.0%	+5.1%	-2.3%	-19.2%	+1.1%	+15.2%	+2.7%	+31.5%
Wolverhampton	-4.2%	+6.6%	+17.7%	-0.3%	+8.9%	+21.3%	+21.2%	+30.2%	+44.4%

\* Baseline average 2015-2017 figures

\*\*Figures highlighted in grey are considered unrepresentative due the affect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**TABLE 5.2 ROAD CASULTIES PER MILLION KM TRAVELLED**

	Million Km Travelled						Casualties per Million Km Travelled		Reduction in Casualties per Million Km Travelled	
	Baseline	2019	2019 to Baseline	2020	2022	% Drop in 2020	Baselin e	2019	2019 to Baseline	2017 to 2019
Great Britain	526158	544918	+3.6%	427914	521093	-21.5%	0.34	0.28	-17.7%	-12.0%
West Midlands	16717	17169	+2.7%	13677	16346	-20.3%	0.48	0.43	-10.9%	-5.8%
Birmingham	5876	6024	+2.5%	4825	5768	-19.9%	0.66	0.59	-10.3%	-4.9%
Coventry	1935	1974	+2.0%	1531	1863	-22.4%	0.45	0.38	-15.0%	-9.6%
Solihull	2448	2488	+1.6%	1857	2296	-25.4%	0.16	0.15	-9.6%	-2.5%
Black Country	6488	6684	+3.0%	5465	6419	-18.2%	0.44	0.40	-10.2%	-6.6%
Dudley	1720	1715	-0.3%	1370	1644	-20.1%	0.34	0.32	-8.5%	+2.0%
Sandwell	2076	2176	+4.8%	1811	2084	-16.8%	0.42	0.35	-16.2%	-17.5%
Walsall	1524	1591	+4.4%	1308	1578	-17.8%	0.47	0.43	-7.9%	-3.7%
Wolverhampton	1168	1202	+2.9%	976	1113	-18.8%	0.60	0.55	-6.9%	-2.4%

Between the 2015-2017 baseline and 2019, Sandwell saw the greatest rate of increase in million Km travelled across the region but recorded the best rate of reduction in casualties per million Km travelled.

During 2020 Sandwell also recorded the least reduction in traffic volumes during the pandemic and consequently did not see as much of a reduction in road casualties as most other authorities in the region during that period.



## 6. SANDWELL ROAD CASUALTY ANALYSIS

### User Group Analysis

Road safety is a major health issue that effects every road user in Sandwell. Whilst travelling on the Borough's road network, everyone is exposed to the risk of injury.

Implementing targeted road safety initiatives and schemes at specifically identified problems will reduce the number of people injured on the roads in Sandwell, reduce the severity of any injury and reduce road user exposure to future risk.

Certain groups of road user are inherently more at risk than others when using the road network. This can be considered in three ways.

#### Vulnerability

Pedestrians, the young, the old and cyclists are simply more vulnerable to receiving an injury in any collision.

#### Susceptibility

Some users are more susceptible to injury for every kilometre they travel, such as motorcyclists and inexperienced young drivers.

#### Exposure

Due to the numbers involved, Car occupants are more likely to be involved in incidents simply through greater exposure to collision risk.

The focus of any future road safety delivery plan must not only be targeted at user groups with the highest number of casualties, but should also include those groups that are the most vulnerable, those most susceptible to injury or those most at risk through exposure.

Detailed user group analysis is particularly important, as easily identifiable, localised cluster based casualty reduction opportunities are becoming harder to identify.

The Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road network. Therefore to add benefit to the more

traditional engineering interventions, it is felt that road safety education, law enforcement and collaborative partnership working will have extremely important roles to play in Sandwell's latest road safety strategy,

Equally as important will be the role the public and community must take as road safety is a shared responsibility between those who use the road and those that design, manage, build and enforce the laws.

Everyone who uses the road has a shared but proportionate responsibility for their behaviour. It is extremely important that those road users who can do the greatest harm take the greatest responsibility to reduce the danger or threat they could pose to others.

All these elements need to work together in partnership to ensure that if, and when, crashes do occur then no-one is killed or seriously injured.

The following road casualty user groups have been examined in detail over the period 2017-2022, the period of Sandwell's previous plan.

This will help identify the key priority groups which will inform, and help develop, strategies and policies for the 2024-2030 Strategic Road Safety Plan.

### USER GROUP ANALYSIS 2017-2022

Total Recorded Road Casualties

Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties (KSI)

Child Casualties (0-15 years)

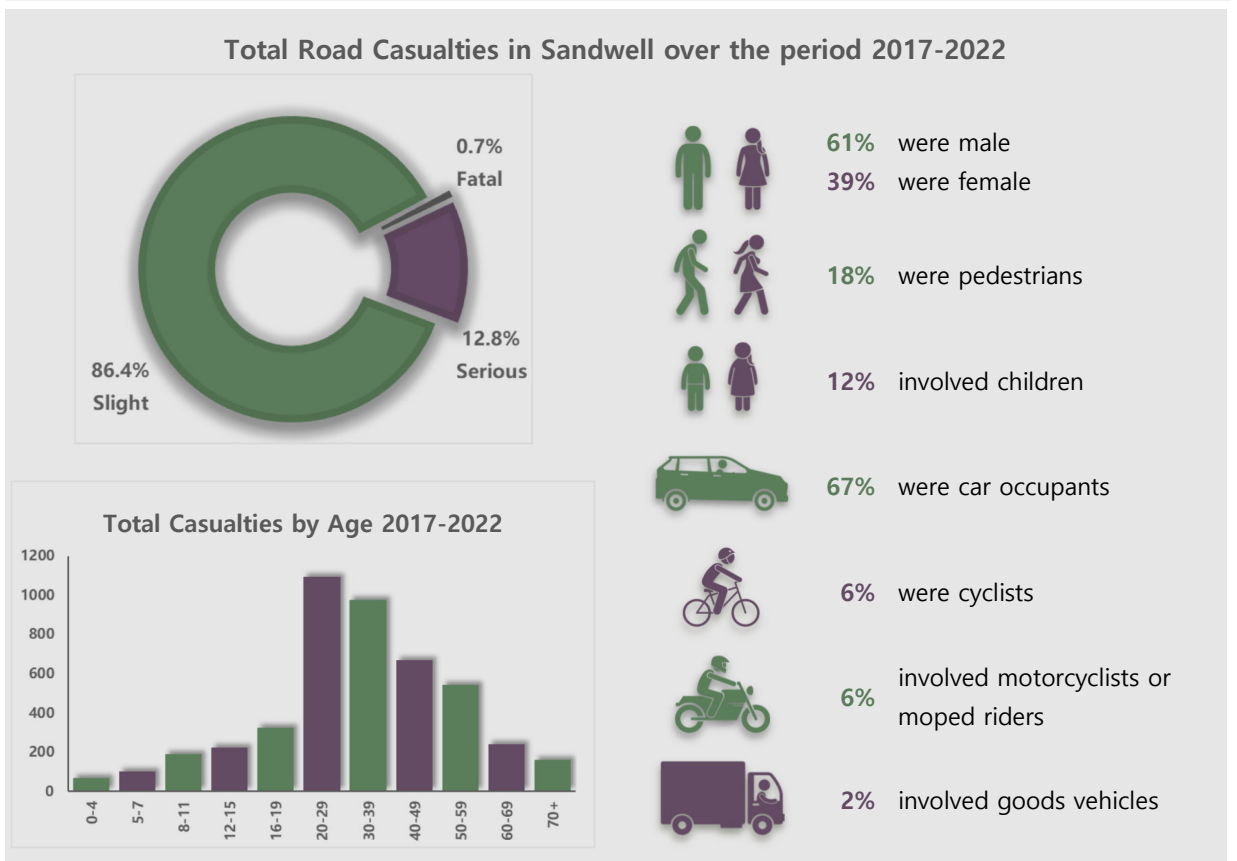
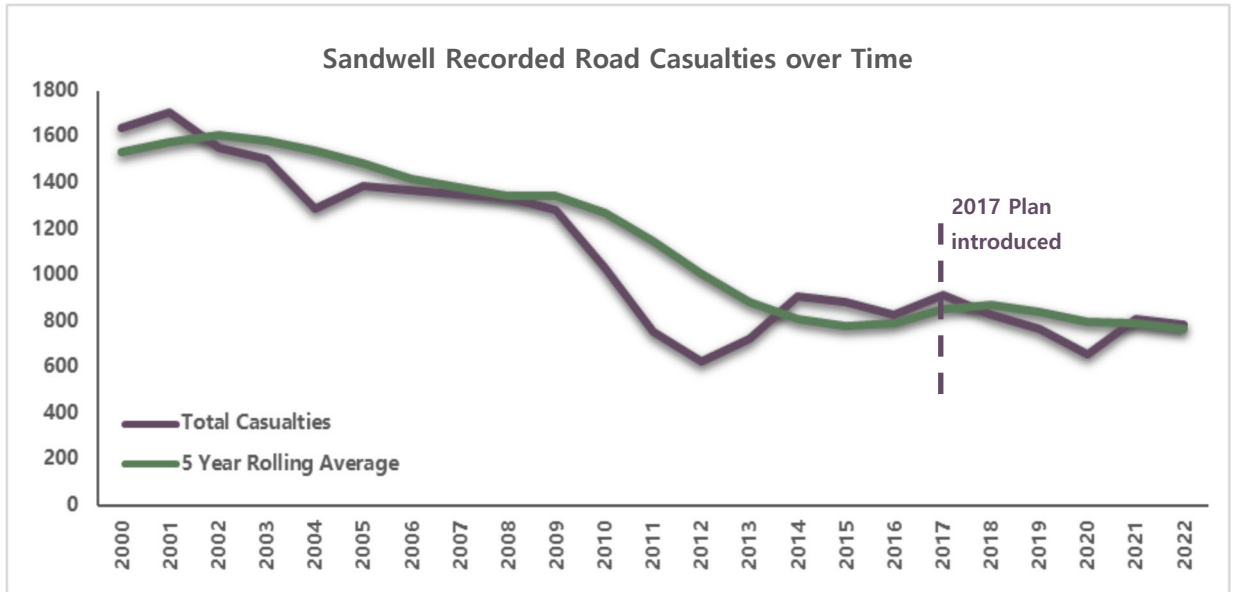
Pedestrians Casualties

Pedal Cyclists Casualties

Car Occupant Casualties

Powered Two Wheeled Casualties (PTW)

6.1 Total Recorded Road Casualties



Total casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 52% between 2000 and 2022.

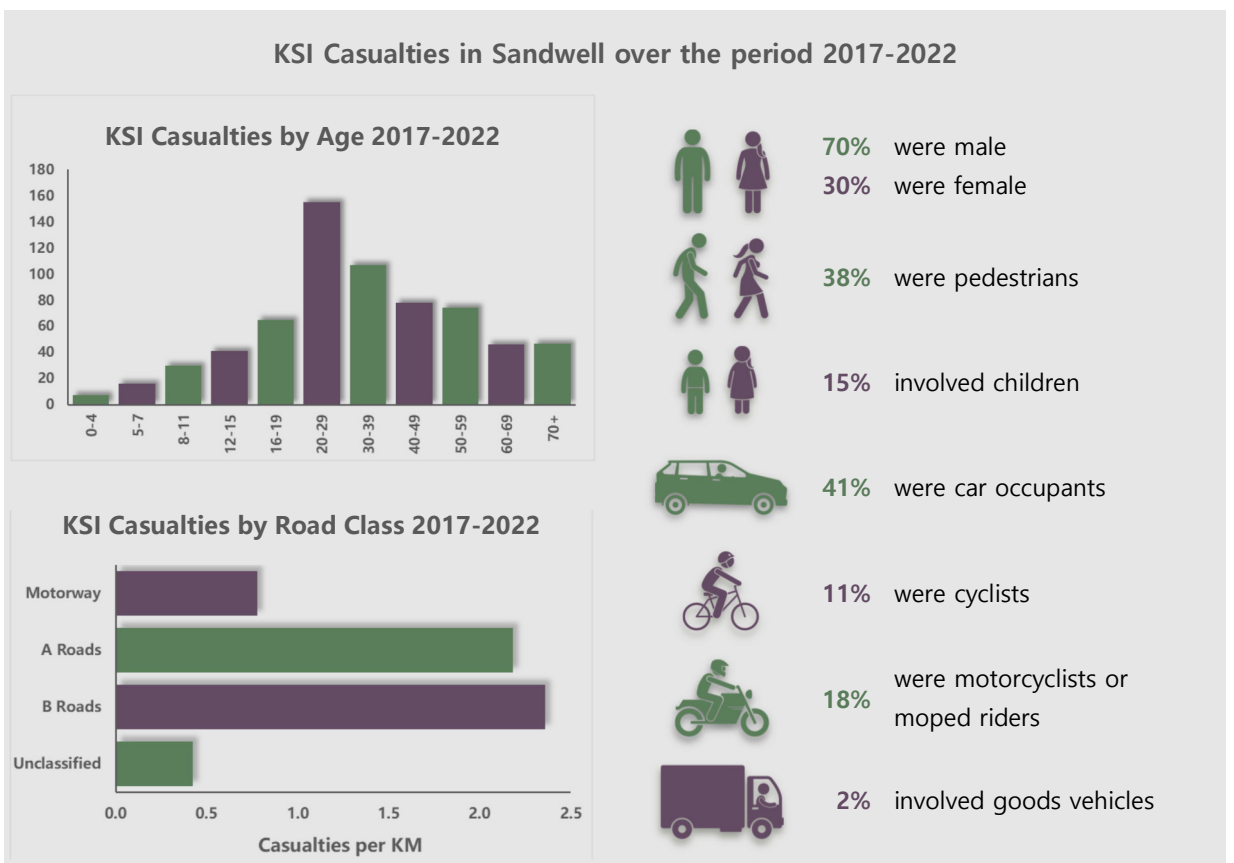
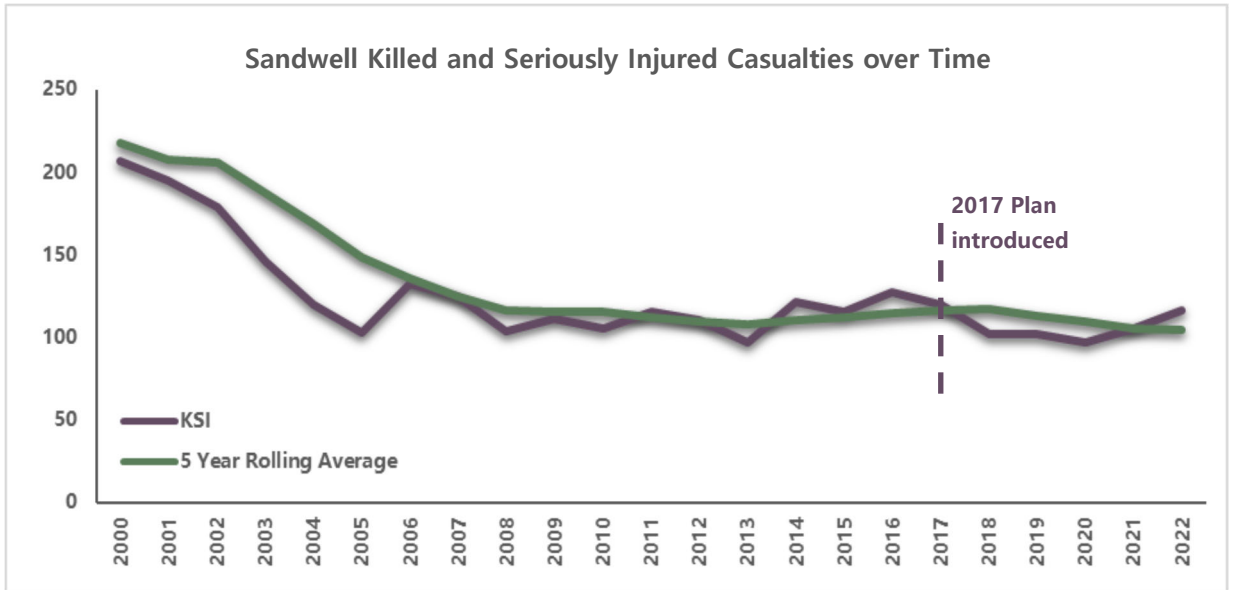
Casualty numbers rose between 2012 to 2014 before plateauing. A new Road Safety Plan was introduced in 2017 and between 2017-2019 casualties began to significantly reduce once more, but the impact of COVID-19 in 2020 resulted in ambiguous figures and only in 2022 are they starting to normalise again.

1 in every 8 casualties in Sandwell during 2017-2022 was killed or seriously injured, whilst 2 in every 3 casualties were male and 2 in every 3 casualties were car occupants.

A quarter of all casualties were in the 20-29 year old age group whilst 1 in 8 casualties were children.

November was the month with most casualties, whilst Friday was the most risky day to travel.

6.2 Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties (KSI)



Total KSI casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 44% between 2000 and 2022.

KSI casualties plateaued between 2008 to 2017 until the new 2017 Road Safety Plan helped significantly reduce KSIs before the post COVID-19 recovery period affected this progress.

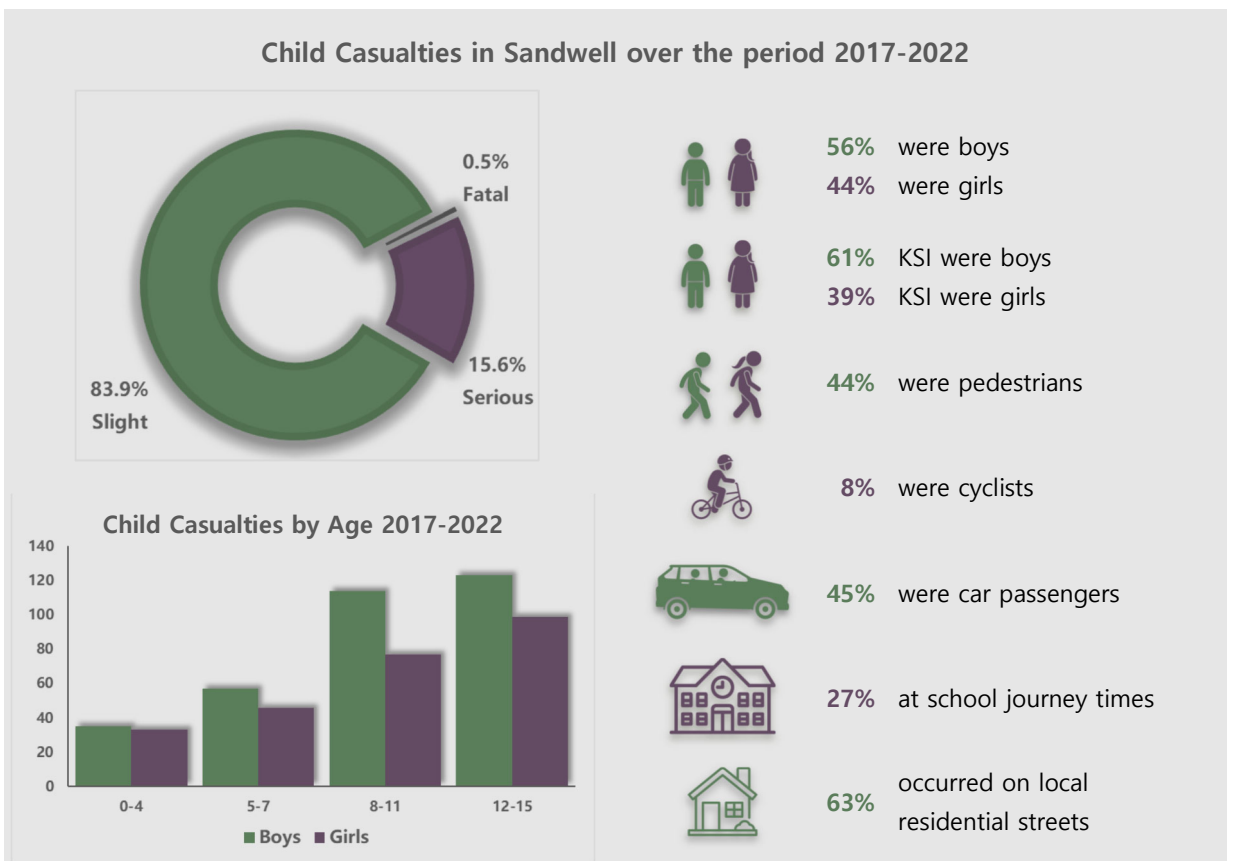
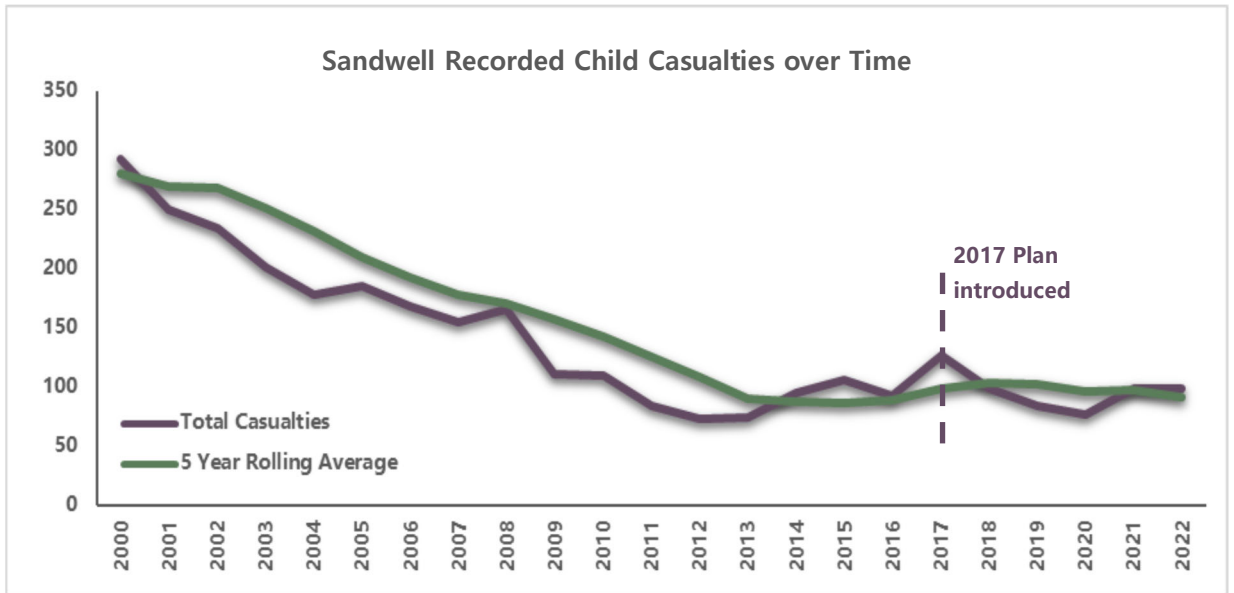
Men are more vulnerable to being seriously hurt, accounting for 7 in every 10 KSI injuries.

The most vulnerable groups were pedestrians, who recorded a third of all KSI injuries and PTW riders who accounted for a fifth of all serious casualties.

20-29 year olds were the age group most significantly at risk of serious injuries.

A and B roads were shown as having a higher risk of serious injury, recording 6 times more KSI casualties per Km than on residential streets.

6.3 Child Casualties (0-15 Years)



Total child casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 67% between 2000 and 2022.

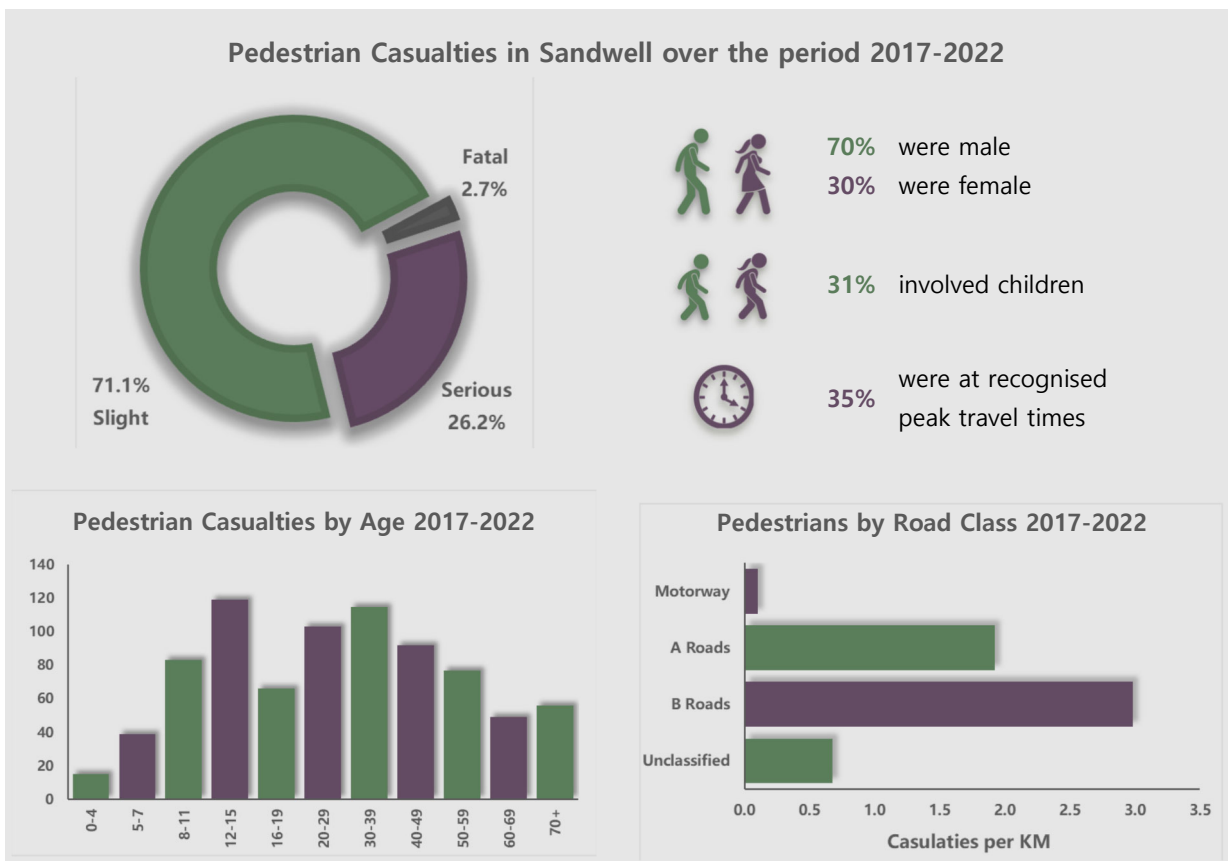
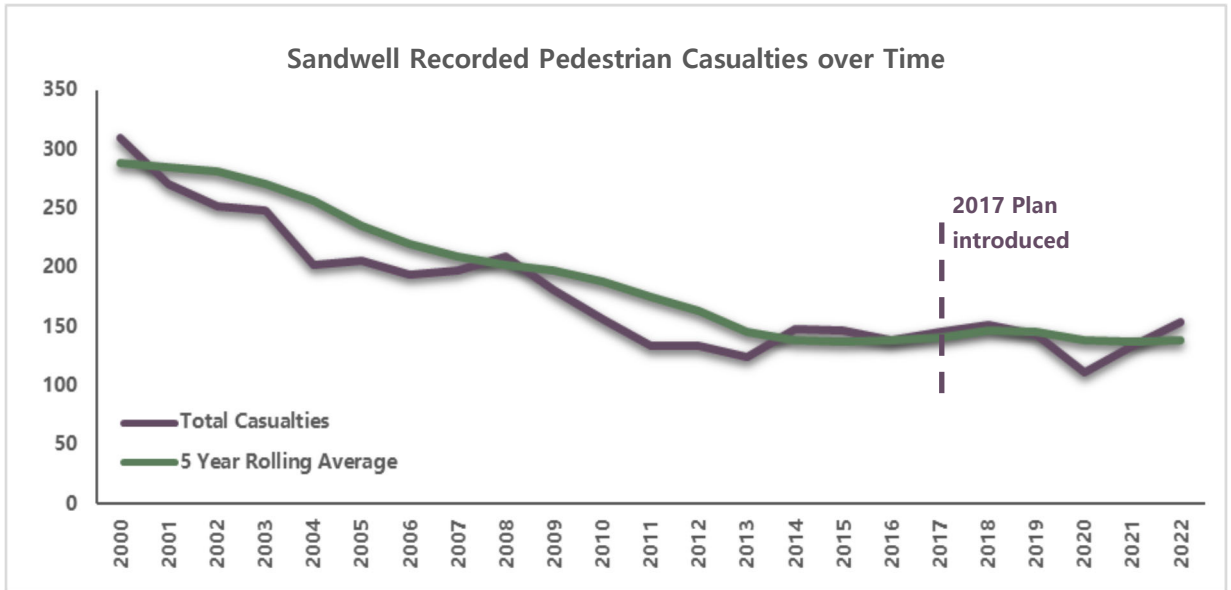
Child casualties rose between 2013 and 2017 until the new 2017 Road Safety Plan helped significantly reduce child injury rates before the post COVID-19 recovery period affected this progress.

Boys are more at risk of being injured than girls and twice as likely to be seriously hurt in any incident.

Nearly half of all child casualties were pedestrians, and a quarter of all injuries occurred on school journeys, although very few casualties were actually recorded on the roads directly outside of schools.

Secondary school age children were the most at risk of being injured as pedestrians whilst primary school children were more at risk as being injured as car passengers.

6.4 Pedestrian Casualties



Total pedestrian casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 50% between 2000 and 2022.

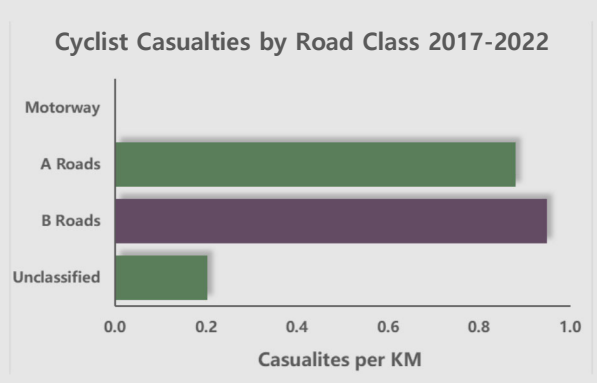
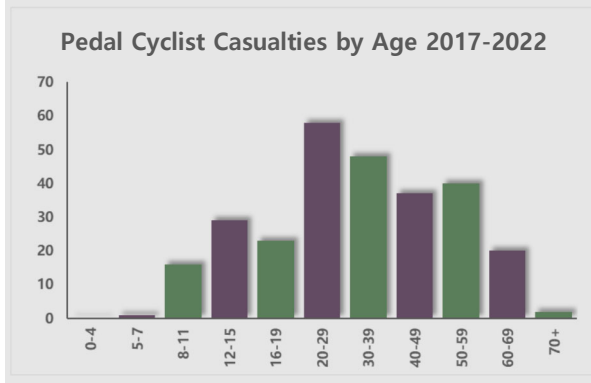
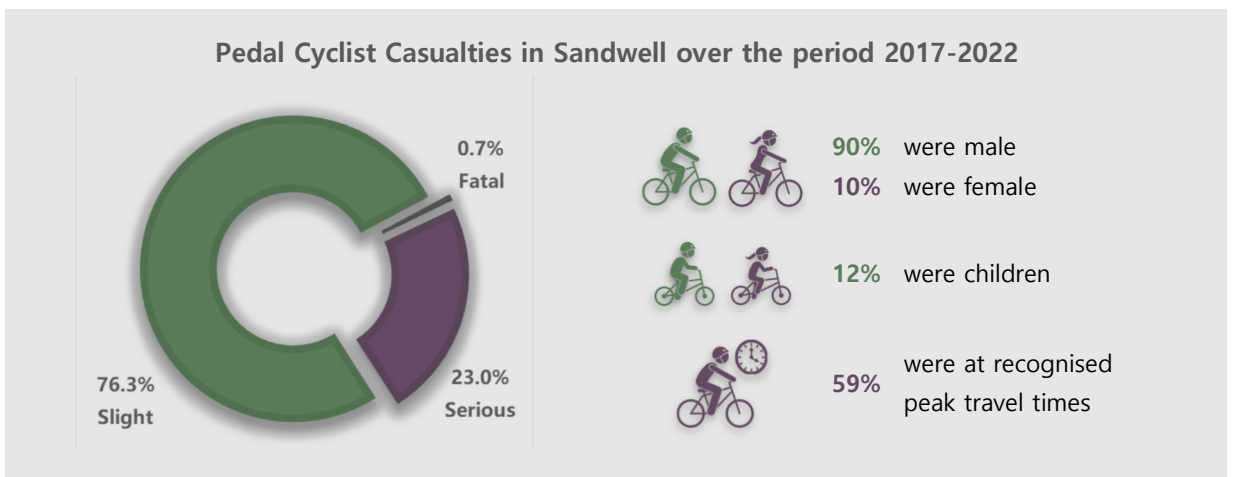
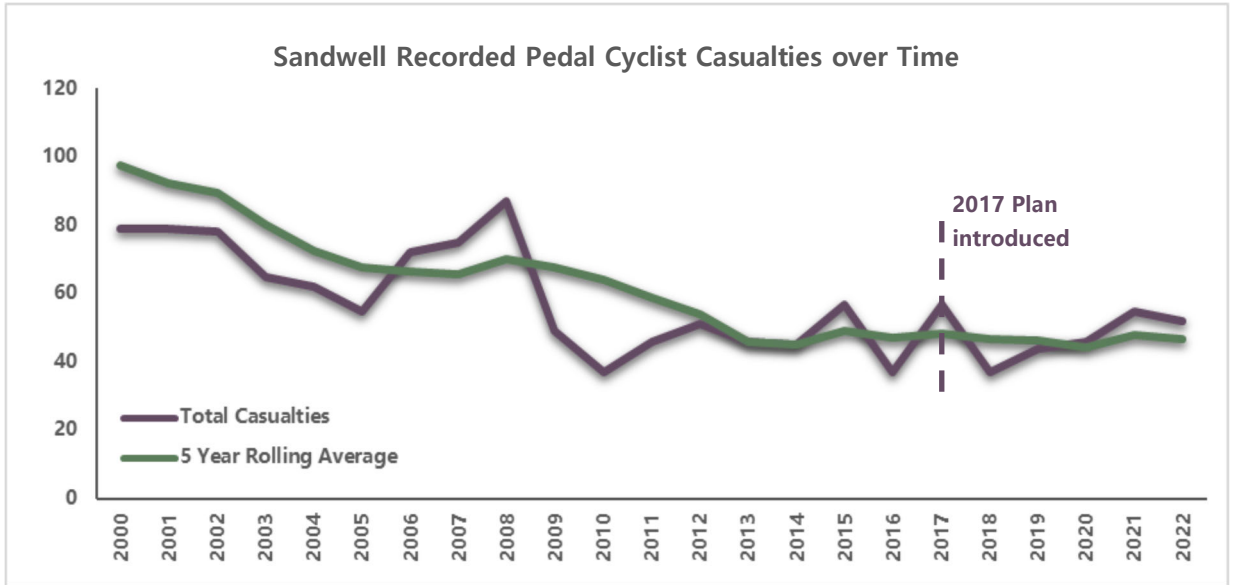
Pedestrian casualties initially fell significantly until 2012 but casualty reduction rates have plateaued ever since and only showed any significant fall during the 2020 lockdown period. This is certainly a user group that requires particular attention within the new 2024-2030 Local Road Safety Action Plan.

Between 2017 and 2022, 1 in every 4 pedestrian casualties were killed or seriously injured, stressing the vulnerability of this group.

Men were significantly more at risk, being involved in 7 of every 10 pedestrian incidents.

The age group most at risk of being injured as a pedestrian were 12-15 year olds, and the majority of pedestrian casualties occurred away from A roads.

6.5 Pedal Cyclist Casualties



Total cyclist casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 34% between 2000 and 2022.

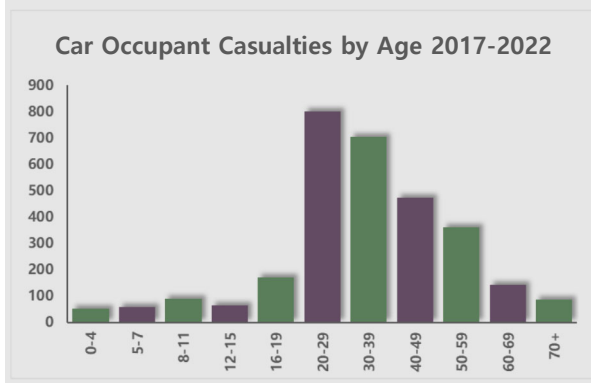
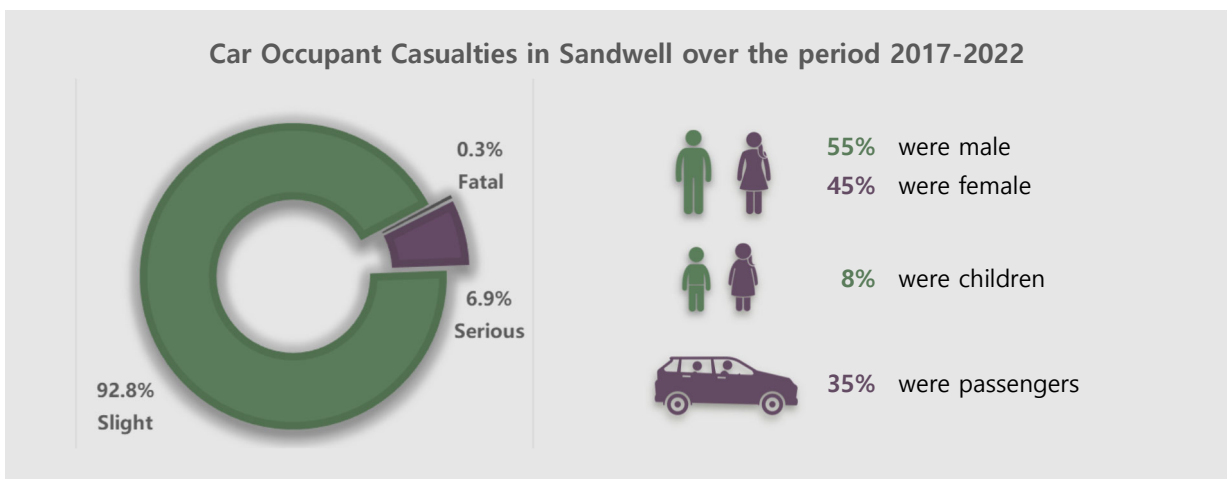
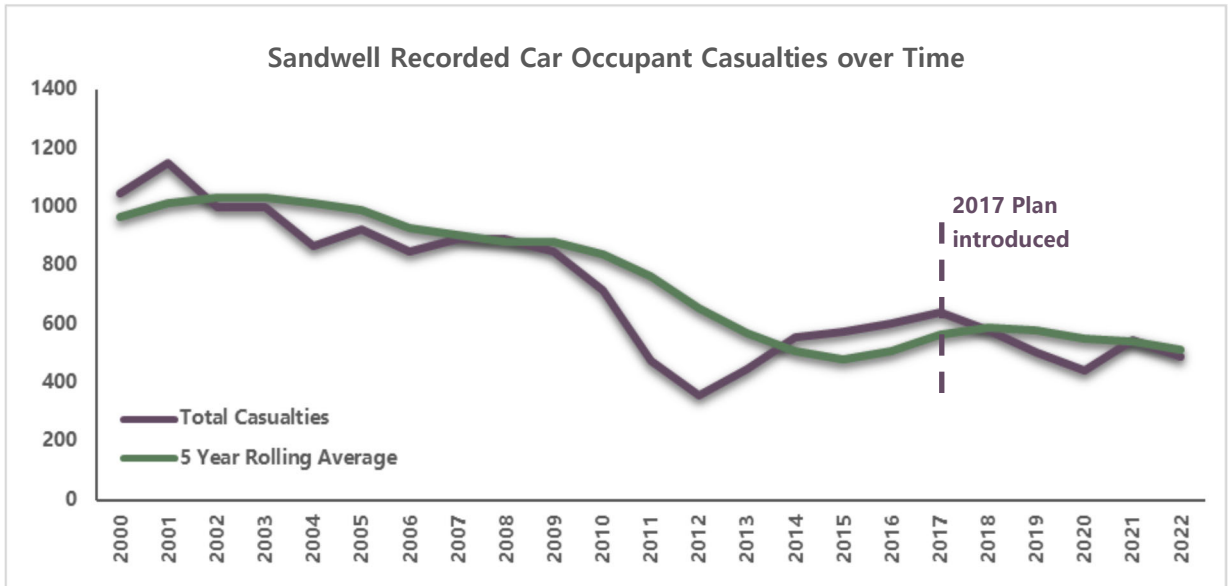
Cyclists casualty rates have been erratic over time although the general trend has been downwards. This was the only user group to record a rise in casualty rates during 2020, which has continued into 2022. This is likely due to the large uptake in cycling during lockdown coupled with large investment in

cycle infrastructure encouraging greater use and new user inexperience.

Men account for 9 in every 10 cyclist injuries and the age group most at risk are 20-29 year olds.

1 in 4 cyclist casualties were killed or seriously injured, highlighting the vulnerability of this mode. The vast majority of cyclist injuries per Km occurred equally on A and B roads with less on local streets.

6.6 Car Occupant Casualties



Total car occupant casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 54% between 2000 and 2022.

Car occupant casualties rose between 2012 and 2017 until the new 2017 Road Safety Plan helped significantly reduce casualty rates before the post COVID-19 recovery period affected progress.

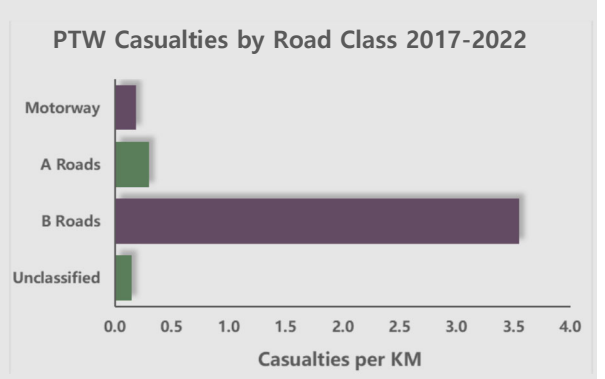
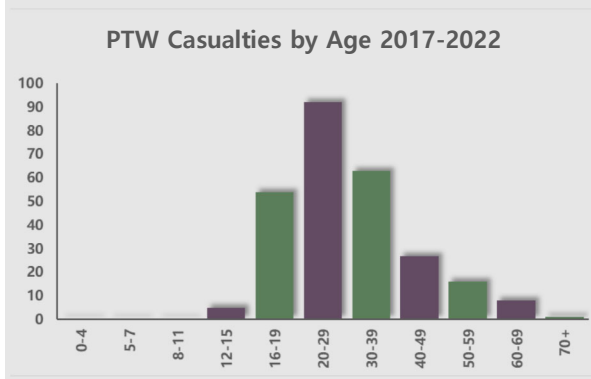
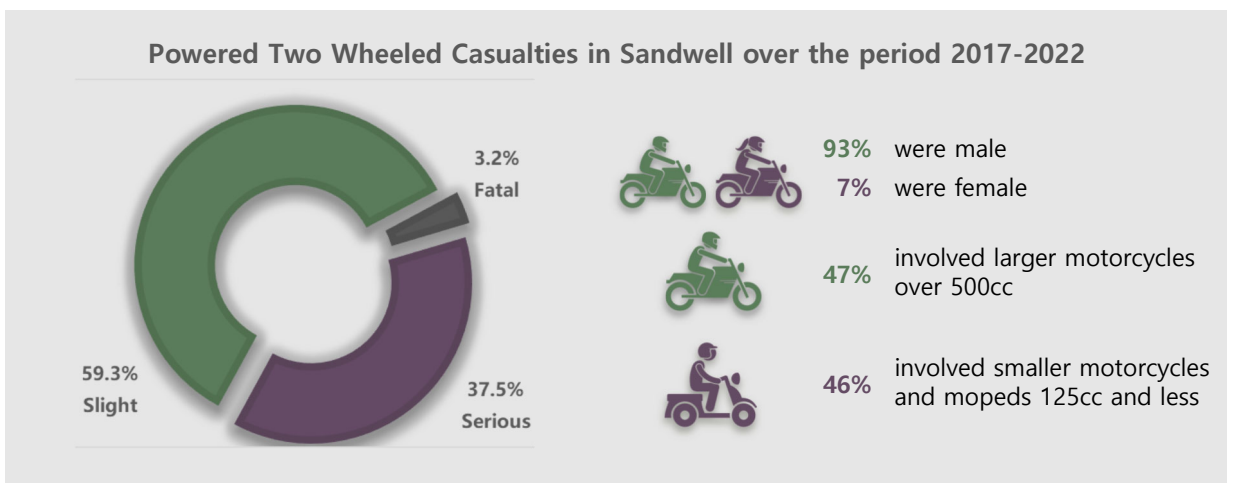
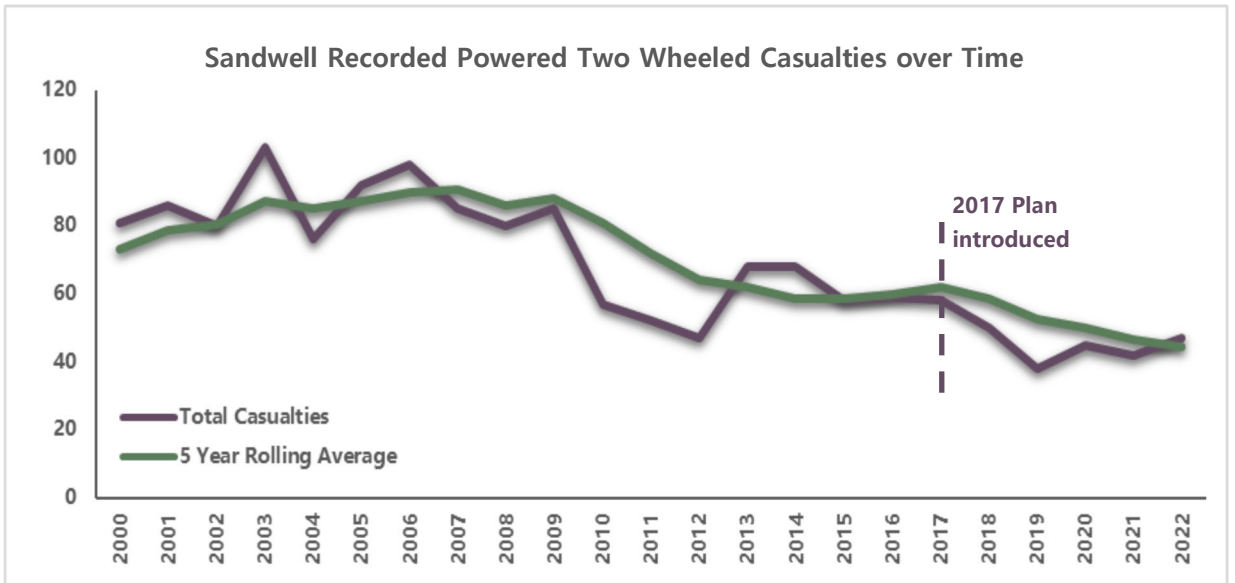
2 in every three casualties in Sandwell involves a car occupant. However due to ever increasing car safety

design, only 1 in every 14 car occupant casualty is classed as serious or fatal in nature

7% of all car occupant injuries occurred on the motorway network outside the sphere of influence of Sandwell Council.

17-29 year old driver and passengers were the group most significantly at risk, accounting for over 30% of all car occupant casualties.

6.7 Powered Two Wheeled (PTW) Casualties



Total powered two wheelers casualties in Sandwell have fallen by 58% between 2000 and 2022.

Powered Two Wheeler casualty reduction stalled between 2012 and 2017. The new 2017 Road Safety Plan helped reduce rates once more before the post COVID-19 recovery period affected this progress.

Men are the main group at risk from riding a PTW whilst women are more at risk as passengers.

2 in every 5 motorcyclist injuries were classified as killed or serious in nature, highlighting the vulnerability of this group for every Km travelled.

The majority of larger motorcycle casualties (over 500cc) are recorded on A road and motorways whilst conversely the majority of smaller bikes and moped injuries occur on B roads and residential streets.

16-29 year olds were involved in half of all casualties.



## 7. ANALYSIS SUMMARY & KEY PRIORITIES

Sandwell Council has an excellent track record in reducing road casualties, achieving a fall in total casualties from 1639 to 785 (52% reduction) between 2000 and 2022.

Killed and seriously injured (KSI) reductions were equally welcoming, with a reduction from 207 to 117 (44%) in the same period.

Most noteworthy is the recorded 67% reduction in child casualties since 2000, with totals now just a third of those recorded 22 years ago (278 to 97).

However analysis has shown that the trend for road casualty reduction in Sandwell had slowed across all user groups by 2013 and plateaued until 2017.

In 2017 Sandwell introduced its 2017-2023 Strategic Road Safety Plan which introduced a significant shift change towards the new Safe System approach to road casualty reduction. Between 2017 and 2019 casualty numbers began to significantly reduce once more. However, the impact of the COVID-19 in 2020 resulted in any casualty figures recorded post pandemic being considered unrepresentative and only in 2022 are figures normalising once more.

When comparing the percentage reduction in total casualties from 2019 (pre-pandemic) against the 2015-2017 average West Midlands baseline, Sandwell had an very good record of reducing killed and seriously injured casualties, performing over three times better than nationally (-16.8% to -5.4%). Importantly Sandwell had an excellent record in the reduction of child casualty rates in the same period, achieving -22.7% compared to -14.8% nationally.

The significant casualty reductions recorded between 2017 and 2019 substantiated the decision to introduce the Safe System approach to road safety in Sandwell's previous Strategic Road Safety Policy.

Between the 2015-2017 baseline and 2019 Sandwell had the best reduction rate for child casualties and the second best reduction for all casualties across the West Midlands region. In the same period Sandwell also recorded the best rate of reduction for casualties per Km travelled in the region. Significantly Sandwell also had the greatest increase in traffic and the most 100 million vehicle kilometres travelled through its

borough within the Black Country region during that period, which greater increases the risk of collisions, many involving non-Sandwell residents.

### Vulnerability

Analysis demonstrated the vulnerability of certain user groups, as half of all KSI casualties were either pedestrians (38%) or cyclists (11%).

Children are particularly vulnerable road users making up a third of all pedestrian injuries, with secondary school age children being the most at risk age group. Of those 27% occurred on school journeys, but not necessarily outside of schools.

### Susceptibility

16 to 29 year olds are the most at risk age group in Sandwell, accounting for a third of road casualties. This highlights their in-experience as road users, making them more susceptible to mistakes and poor judgement, a key element to be considered when designing roads as part of a Safe System approach.

Motorcyclists account for only 1% of all traffic but account for 18% of all KSI casualties in Sandwell. This is a strong indicator of this group's higher susceptibility to injury for every Km travelled.

### Exposure

2 in every 3 road casualties in Sandwell were car occupants. Particularly at risk are the 17-30 year old group. This confirms that through continued high exposure to risk (as a result of the high number of Km travelled), car occupants are still the most likely group to become road casualties.

#### KEY PRIORITY GROUPS 2024-2030

Killed and Seriously Injured Casualties

Child Casualties

Pedestrian Casualties

Cyclist Casualties

Motorcyclist Casualties

17-30 Year Old Driver Casualties

## LOCAL ACTION PLAN



## 8. SANDWELL LOCAL ACTION PLAN 2024-2030

It is important that to help achieve the casualty reduction targets proposed by 2030 and to focus those reductions towards the identified key priority groups, then a robust but challenging 2024-2030 Local Action Plan will have a Safe Systems approach and Vision Zero at its core.

The Safe System approach recognises that road transport is a complex system and that humans, vehicles and the road infrastructure must interact in a way that ensures a high level of safety for all concerned whenever possible.

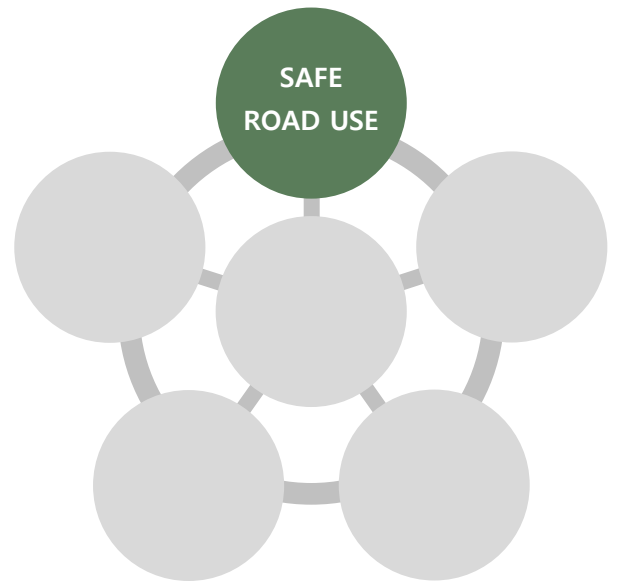
The Safe System considers road safety to be a responsibility shared by all those that use the road network, those that design, manage, construct and maintain the network, those that enforce highway laws and those who provide emergency and post crash care.

Proposed road safety projects and initiatives in Sandwell for the next 7 years will be based on the elements within the Safe System approach. All these elements need to work together in partnership to ensure that if, and when, crashes do continue to occur, then no-one is killed or seriously injured.

As Sandwell shares its borders and road users with the three other Black Country authorities and Birmingham City council, collaborative and joint working on cross boundary issues is essential to help drive down casualties in the region.

The Plan will require a full partnership approach from all stakeholders and will help support the future Regional Road Safety Action Plan and assist in tackling road casualties across the Black Country.

Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and modification will be key to ensuring the success of any Safe System Approach and in achieving any long term casualty reduction and Vision Zero goals.



# STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

## 8.1 Safe Road Use

Everyone who uses the road has a responsibility to use it safely and comply with rules and laws of the land. Emphasis is placed on the principle of shared but proportionate responsibility and It is extremely important that road users who can do the greatest harm take the greatest responsibility.

Road safety education, training and publicity (ETP) is key to equipping road users with the necessary skills and in influencing road user behaviour. This will have a long term impact in changing people’s attitudes towards road safety and in making them aware of the risks to keep themselves and others safe.

A key part to a Safe System approach is the effective and continued enforcement of traffic laws and orders, for road users that require greater encouragement to act in a responsible manner.

Safe road use can also be achieved by working together with partners to reduce car-based traffic. People can be encouraged and inspired to use active and sustainable modes of travel, such as walking and cycling, or to use public transport in preference to their own vehicles.

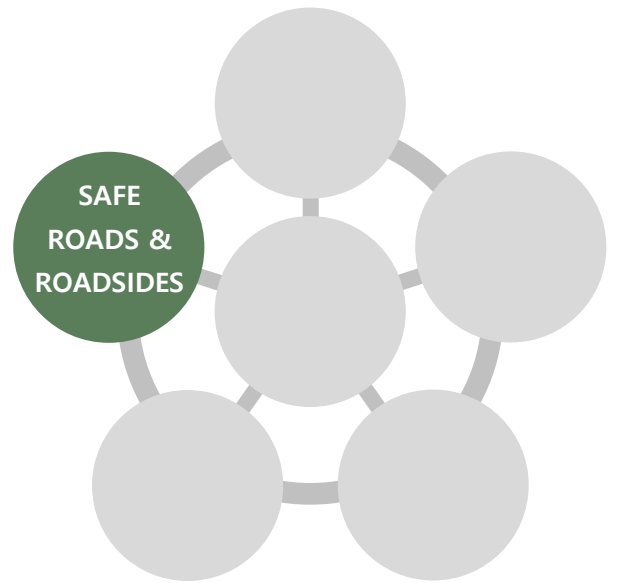
Initiative	Safe Road Use
<b>In-House Road Safety Education, Training and Publicity</b>	Sandwell will pro-actively deliver an on demand programme of bespoke road safety based assemblies in Infant, Junior & Primary schools.
	Sandwell will continue to work with Primary schools to deliver nursery and reception classroom road safety sessions. This will be achieved using role play equipment and classroom workshops to cover subjects such as safe pedestrian skills, seatbelt awareness, school gate parking, speeding and the correct use of child car seats.
	Sandwell have developed a modern approach to road safety education through its new <b>Digital Road Safety (DRS)</b> branding. Research has shown that children learn better through play and in a modern world, digital based media is well received and particularly effective.
	Launched in 2017, the first phase of DRS aimed at Key Stage 1 pedestrian skills is internet web based game play. Although well received, and still utilised extensively, its use is limited to teacher led, in class sessions due to limitations with access and password requirements.
	Therefore Sandwell are currently involved in an ambitious project to develop an Apple and Android App based version of the Digital Road Safety Pedestrian Training package. The vision is that it will be available to every child across the borough and will able to be used for learning at home, with family, through smart phone and tablet access.
	The development of the App will allow easier expansion of the Digital Road Safety brand to provide a series of bespoke road safety learn through play resources targeting all ages, to assist in delivering a full programme of road safety education to the whole community.
	Sandwell will continue to develop new road safety resources and deliver campaigns to colleges, libraries and relevant community groups as analysis of casualty records indicate.
	Working alongside community leaders from minority groups and emerging communities, we aim to develop a series of new road safety resources aimed specifically at cultural barriers to road safety and tackling ingrained cultural attitudes of recently arrived newcomers.
Road safety education officers will work pro-actively alongside highway engineers to disseminate information into the community when there are infrastructure changes and road safety improvements within the local area.	

## STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

Initiative	Safe Road Use
<b>Partnership Working</b>	Sandwell will take the lead role in restabilising the Sandwell Road Safety Partnership to deliver joint road safety initiatives with local Police, Fire and Public Health partners in the borough. These initiatives will be promoted under the Safe and Well in Sandwell road safety partnership branding.
	Sandwell will work with West Midlands Fire Service to deliver curriculum based road safety education programmes in Secondary schools
	Sandwell will expand its current Speed Indication Device (SID) initiative. Sandwell currently owns 2 SIDs devices which are maintained, installed and rotated to community concern sites by West Midlands Fire Service local crews. The wish is to expand the initiative to 6 SIDs devices, one for each of Sandwell's Towns.
	Sandwell will continue to be an active member of the Black Country Road Safety Partnership, and will work with the 3 other Black Country councils to co-ordinate delivery of joint road safety initiatives in the local region.
	Sandwell will continue to participate in 'Drive to Arrive', 'For the One I Love' and 'Older Driver' educational initiatives.
	Sandwell will support any Multi Agency Road Safety Operations, led by the police in the borough through providing roadside road safety education.
	Sandwell will remain an active member of the West Midlands Regional Road Safety partnership and will help to inform and develop the new Regional Road Safety Delivery Plan.
	Sandwell will support the Police and Crime Commissioner in helping to achieve commitments to road safety made as part of his Police and Crime Plan 2021- 2025.
	Sandwell will work to the mutual benefit of all parties and road users by developing region wide promotional campaigns jointly with our neighbouring authorities and other partner organisations.
<b>Behavioural Change</b>	Sandwell operates a vast array of electronic speed activated, interactive message and warning signs across the borough. These low cost but extremely effective road safety measures will continue to be used at community concern sites to help affect driver behaviour and focus their minds back onto road safety and road conditions ahead.
	Sandwell will continue to manage the School Crossing Patrol service at key identified risky locations across the borough to provide safe crossing facilities for children to encourage walking and reducing car dependency.
	Sandwell introduced its first School Street in 2023 to monitor the benefit of removing all traffic away from the school entrance and making the environment safer for children. Sandwell will investigate expanding its school street initiative if the trial proves successful.
	Sandwell will manage the provision of Bikeability training for primary and secondary children to provide children with the skills and confidence required to ride their bikes on local roads.

## STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

Initiative	Safe Road Use
<b>Enforcement</b>	Sandwell will continue to undertake parking enforcement duty and deploy civil enforcement officers on a regular basis to ensure that Traffic Regulation Orders are adhered to and inconsiderate parking is dealt with accordingly to ensure the local environment is kept safe for all road users.
	Operated and administrated by Sandwell Council, 2 Mobile Camera Cars will continue to be used to enforce parking on school zig-zags and red route contraventions. This invaluable enforcement aid will improve the safety of children around schools and help keep major routes free flowing.
	Sandwell will continue to enforce bus lane and bus gate contraventions via camera to ensure the free movement of buses and reduce the potential of conflict and injury to pedestrians.
	Expansion of the current level of bus lane and bus gate provision will be considered as part on any future route corridor and sustainable travel improvements to the network, should they be deemed viable and without resulting in increased risk to other road user groups.
	Following the change in legislation to permit civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions (MTCs) outside of London, in October 2023 Sandwell applied to the Secretary of State for Transport for a designation order for the enforcement of MTCs across the whole of its current civil enforcement area.
	Encouraging drivers to follow the rules at key evidence identified risky sites, will have a positive impact. It will help make roads safer for all road users (including improving safety around schools), reduce congestion, improve journey times for public transport and encourage more active travel such as cycling and walking.
<b>Community</b>	Sandwell highways officers will attend community and councillor led meetings and events when appropriate, to discuss community road safety issues and actively encourage residents to take ownership and assist in improving the road safety environment in their communities.





## 8.2 Safe Roads and Roadsides

### Safe Road and Roadsides

In a Safe System, roads and roadsides need to be designed and suitably maintained to help reduce the risk of collisions occurring, or if they do occur to mitigate the severity of any injury.

A major risk on the highway network is that different types of road users, some more vulnerable to injury than others, have to regularly share the same road space.

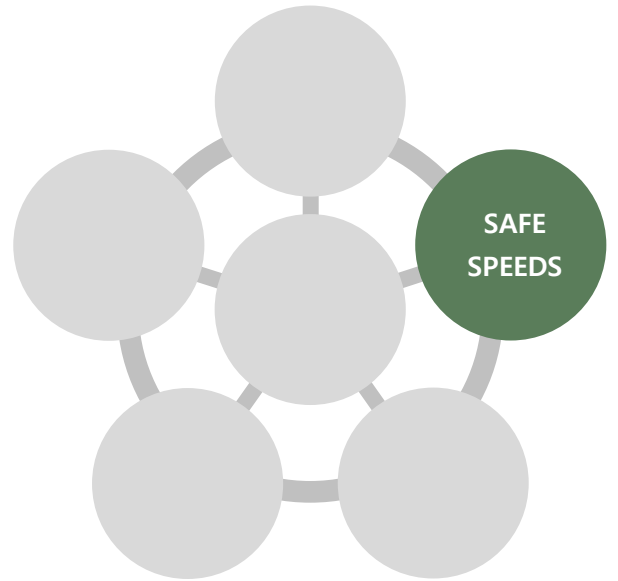
Programmes of road safety initiatives, infrastructure improvements and ongoing maintenance will continue to be prioritised through data led interventions to help satisfy the statutory duties placed on local highway authorities. Targeted engineering interventions have been a key contributor in driving down casualty numbers and will continue to form an integral part of this local strategy.

However a greater emphasis will be placed on a proactive approach to road safety at perceived risky locations and the identification of additional funding sources to assist with this approach.

Initiative	Safe Roads and Roadsides
<p><b>Casualty Reduction Schemes</b></p>	<p>A regular programme of road casualty reduction schemes will be proactively identified through robust road casualty injury analysis. Analysis will be specifically targeted at the identified Sandwell priority user groups. At the start of each new financial year, the identified road safety delivery programme will be reported to the relevant portfolio holder for approval.</p> <p>Capital budgets for road safety schemes are allocated from the West Midlands City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and are subject to regular monitoring, review and reporting back to Transport for West Midlands. Therefore any scheme must help towards achieving the priorities and strategies published in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and the targets in the Regional Refreshed Road Safety Strategy</p> <p>Following a full review of all existing 20mph zones and limits in the borough, a programme of rationalisation and formalisation will be completed. In addition, road casualty analysis will identify areas where a number of new 20mph zones will be introduced in the highest priority residential areas.</p> <p>All community, elected member and MP road safety enquiries and concerns are evaluated to determine if any cost effective road safety improvements can be introduced. A minor works budget will be made available to help tackle community concerns sites. Match funding through Local Area Budgets can be used to release road safety funding and allow for improved road safety interventions or undertake projects that would not normally have the evidence base to be considered.</p> <p>A greater emphasis will be placed on a proactive approach to road safety at perceived risky locations by utilising road safety tools such as the International Road Assessment Programme (iRAP) to identify and manage the levels of risk and help bid for additional capital funding.</p> <p>This will build on Sandwell's success in achieving additional capital grant funding in 2023 through Round 3 of the Department for Transport's Safer Roads Fund. This fund is fundamentally different than traditional budgets, by providing a budget specifically for the future prevention of casualties rather than tackling identified existing road safety issues.</p>

## STRATEGIC ROAD SAFETY PLAN 2024-2030

Initiative	Safe Roads and Roadsides
<b>Active and Sustainable Travel</b>	<p>Sandwell has been successful in securing significant capital budgets through Active Travel Fund, Towns Fund Connected and Cross City Bus Challenge Fund allocated to improve, introduce and encourage the use of buses, walking and cycling across the borough.</p> <p>This major pipeline of work for the next 5 years will generate large scale on and off highway schemes, primarily on the key route and strategic highway network, the routes that carry the greatest volume of traffic. Competent design and in house evaluation will ensure the schemes will provide a safer and where possible, segregated environment for the most vulnerable of users on the highway network.</p>
	<p>Partnership working is key as many of the major route improvement schemes cross several council boundaries. Stakeholders must work collaboratively to ensure a consistent approach is applied across the West Midlands to active and sustainable travel design.</p>
	<p>Highway maintenance has an important role in preventing road traffic accidents on the network and Sandwell will continue to make a significant capital commitment every year to improve the road infrastructure. Proactive major resurfacing programmes will be implemented, based on regular surface condition surveys and detailed wet condition and loss of control accident studies.</p>
<b>Asset Management</b>	<p>We will continue our programme of street lighting upgrade to LED white lighting. Detailed dark accident studies will assist in the prioritisation of the ongoing replacement programme.</p>
	<p>Proactive major resurfacing programmes will be implemented, based on regular surface condition surveys and detailed wet condition and loss of control accident studies.</p>
	<p>Planned systematic highway inspections will help proactively target areas before problems may arise in the future, reducing the potential of injury whilst rapid reactive attendance policies for road and street furniture repairs are in place which greatly assist in the reduction of risk of road casualties.</p>
	<p>The ethos of de-cluttering is embedded in any work being undertaken on the public highway to ensure future maintenance liabilities are reduced. The continued removal and rationalisation of street furniture will also help reduce the potential for collision damage and associated injuries.</p>
	<p>The reactive winter gritting service will continue to reduce the risk of loss of control incidents</p>
	<p>The safety, use and amenity of the highway network is an important aspect to be considered on all new major planning applications. Highway Services are a statutory consultee for planning applications and if deemed necessary, developers will be required through condition, to implement suitable mitigation measures to improve the road safety environment for all users.</p>
<b>Planning and Development Consultation</b>	<p>All new residential developments will be designed in accordance with Sandwell's Guide for The Design of New Streets. The guide has new resident safety at its core, ensuring any new road designs are technically approved and built to a safe and adoptable standard</p>



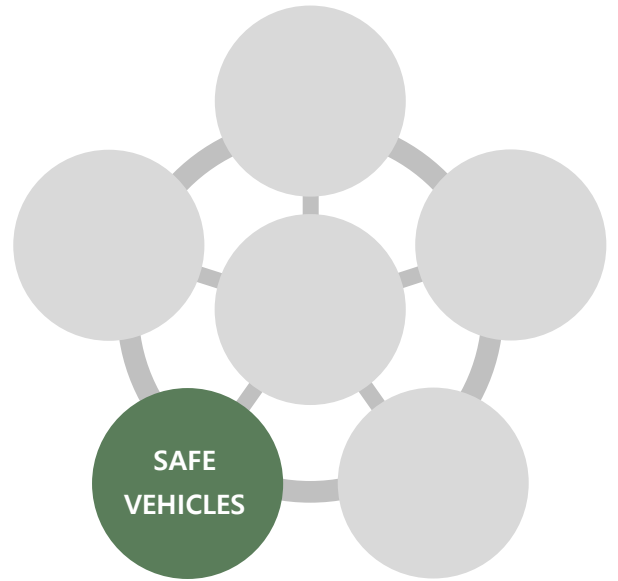
## 8.3 Safe Speeds

The management of appropriate speed limits and vehicle speeds in a Safe System is extremely important and should be based on ensuring collisions are avoided or reducing the speed at which impacts occur.

Effective speed management is one of the biggest challenges facing the successful introduction of a Safe Systems approach to road safety. Hence Safe Road Speeds must work collectively with other Safe System elements to create a holistically safe and forgiving road environment.

As well as the Police and Local Authority, community groups also have an important role to play in achieving a Safe Speed environment in their local areas

Initiative	Safe Speeds
<b>Enforcement</b>	<p>West Midlands Police Traffic Unit have a focus to stop crime on the region's roads and make them safer for all road users. WM Police are the only authority with the power to prosecute drivers for contravening speed limits.</p> <p>Sandwell will undertake vehicle speed counts and community concern locations and if problems are identified, liaise with WM Police to suggest speed enforcement takes place.</p> <p>Average Speed Enforcement is an important tool in reducing severe casualties caused by inappropriate speed. Sandwell introduced its first Average Speed Enforcement sites in January 2021. Sandwell is part of the Black Country Average Speed Enforcement (ASE) board and has signed up to the Black Country ASE agreement. The size and coverage of the current ASE stock is restricted by the Police's ability to process penalty notices and prosecutions.</p> <p>West Midlands police and the Police Crime Commissioner are supporting the development of a new West Midlands wide ASE agreement which could see greater enforcement levels and the potential for expansion of the ASE network in Sandwell and the wider region. Sandwell is part of the steering group currently discussing the detail of a potential regional agreement.</p> <p>West Midlands Police will continue to utilise mobile camera enforcement across the region at key accident hot spots. Sandwell will work with the Police to identify new sites for mobile enforcement and ensure those sites are viable.</p> <p>West Midlands Police currently offer the National Speed Awareness diversionary course for low-level and first time speeding offences as an alternative to penalty fines and this will continue to be supported.</p> <p>Sandwell will support the training and empowerment of neighbourhood police teams to undertake traffic speed enforcement on the local road network to help support the Traffic Police teams, whose current focus is on the key route and strategic road network, This will greatly assist is targeting locations that give communities the greatest concern.</p>
<b>Review</b>	<p>Sandwell will commit to undertaking a speed limit review across the borough to determine if speed limit reductions are appropriate to make the environment safe for all road users.</p>
<b>Community Involvement</b>	<p>Sandwell will continue to work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Policing Teams and to expand the Community Speed Watch programme, a scheme that enables volunteers to take ownership and undertake speed awareness campaigns within their own community.</p> <p>Sandwell will work with the Regional Road Safety partnership to develop a standardised Community Speed Watch process and application across the force.</p>



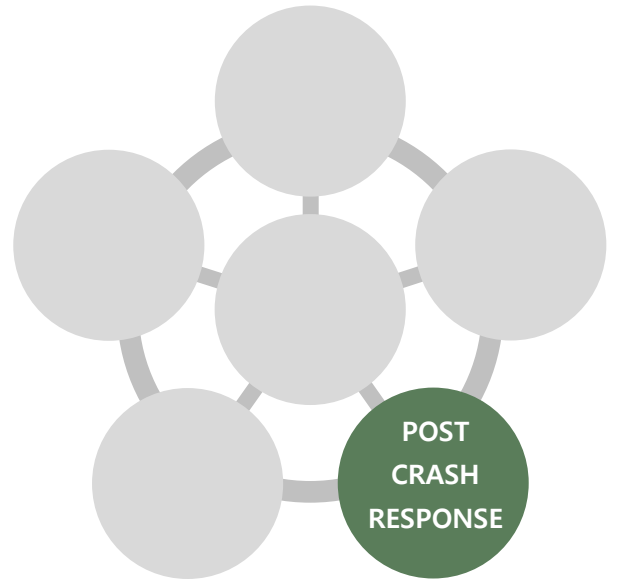
### 8.4 Safe Vehicles

Modern vehicles are designed and regulated to minimise the occurrence and improve the survivability of not only drivers and passengers, but also to pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists.

Increasingly the next generation of vehicles will rely on autonomy and smart infrastructure, removing the human element of fallibility. Therefore as safety becomes hardwired into vehicle technology and road design, there is potential to further reduce road casualties and deaths.

Although a crucial element in a Safe System and very important in the overall reduction of road casualties, the design of safe vehicles is not within the zone of influence of Sandwell Council.

Initiative	Safe Vehicles
<p><b>Regulation and Control</b></p>	<p>The Council has an obligation to ensure that Private Hire and Hackney Carriage driver licences are only issued to applicants that are considered to be 'fit and proper' and must follow a strict criteria. This includes a driving assessment, suitability test (including knowledge of the highway code), equality &amp; disability training, safeguarding training and medical.</p> <p><i>A condition of any licence is that 'the licence holder must take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers entering, conveyed in, or alighting from the vehicle'</i></p> <p>All Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles must pass the Council's Vehicle Test before a licence can be issued. Tests are carried out by the council in accordance with the Supplementary Vehicle Testing Criteria and includes an MOT and taxi test. Further 6 monthly interim checks are carried out by the council to ensure ongoing roadworthiness and safety.</p>
<p><b>Fleet Management</b></p>	<p>The council will ensure all vehicles within its own fleet are maintained, regularly tested and kept roadworthy.</p> <p>All drivers are trained and required to pass the relevant test requisite to the vehicle being driven and complete ongoing risk assessments and driver licence checks.</p>
<p><b>MARSO</b></p>	<p>Multi Agency Road Safety Operations, led by West Midlands Police but involving all partners, are operations regularly undertaken in the borough. MARSO's are spot checks whereby vehicles are pulled into a safe off road space and checked for roadworthiness (MOT, general condition, tyres etc.), legality (insurance, MOT, ownership etc.), and driver compliance (seat belt wearing, driving under influence, overcrowding etc.).</p> <p>All agencies are represented including Sandwell Council road safety education officers to undertake enforcement or provide on the spot behavioural change education.</p>



### 8.5 Post Crash Response

Effective post collision emergency care and rapid response is an important element of any Safe System and is at the heart of post-crash response.

It is also vital to facilitate meaningful and timely investigations into the causes and it is essential that any information collected is accurately recorded and stored as this will be shared with partner organisations to identify specific safety issues that will help shape future road safety initiatives.

Initiative	Post Crash Response
<p><b>Fatal Collison Protocol</b></p>	<p>Local authorities are notified directly and expediently by West Midlands Police of any fatal or life changing incidents on their highway network. The notification includes a Police description of the incident and the casualties involved. It also makes an assessment of the site, whether a road defect was a potential cause and if a site visit is required with a council representative.</p> <p>This gives councils the opportunity to identify any necessary infrastructure improvements and to understand the full reasons behind the causation of any fatal incident.</p> <p>Sandwell will continue to work with West Midlands Police within the scope of the protocol to ensure any identified issues are dealt with expediently.</p>
<p><b>Partnership Working</b></p>	<p>Sandwell will liaise with Public Health and NHS colleagues regarding the possibility of obtaining accident and emergency admission data in relation to road traffic accidents. This will allow detailed investigation to identify demographic, location and chronological patterns within those accidents, particular those not recorded by Police Stats 19 data.</p>



## Report to Cabinet

**6 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Q2 Budget Monitoring 2023/24
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Bob Piper, Finance & Resources
<b>Director:</b>	Brendan Arnold, Director of Finance
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Claire Spencer – Acting Assistant Director Finance <a href="mailto:Claire_spencer@sandwell.gov.uk">Claire_spencer@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 Note the financial monitoring position as at 30 September 2023 (Quarter 2) and refers the report to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for consideration and comment.
- 1.2 Approve the following budget virements above £1m in line with the revised delegated limits for Cabinet Members and Directors: -

Virements above £1m for approval by Cabinet		£'000	£'000
Contingency	Transfer of budget for asset rationalisation savings, achieved in year within Regeneration and Growth	1,660	
Regeneration and Growth	Transfer of budget for asset rationalisation savings, achieved in year within Regeneration and Growth		1,660
Contingency	Transfer of one-off property budgets held within Regeneration and Growth - no longer required	1,658	
Regeneration and Growth	Transfer of one-off property budgets held within Regeneration and Growth - no longer required		1,658
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>3,318</b>	<b>3,318</b>



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Section 151 of the 1972 Local Government Act requires the Chief Financial Officer to ensure the proper administration of the council's financial affairs. Budgetary control, which includes the regular monitoring and reporting of budgets is an essential element in discharging this statutory responsibility.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

- 3.1 The Council's financial status helps to underpin the Council's Corporate Plan and the associated aspirations.

## 4 Context and Key Issues

### General Fund Outturn

- 4.1 The overall projected outturn position for the General Fund is an overspend of £1.222m. This is an overspend of 0.4% when compared with the Council's net budget of £317.623m.
- 4.2 The overall projected net directorate outturn variance, excluding the HRA, is an overspend of £3.547m following the use of reserves. The variance for each directorate is summarised in the following table and analysed in more detail within Appendix 1.



Service Area	APPX	Total Budget £'000	Projected Outturn £'000	Projected Outturn Variance Before Transfers to/from Reserves £'000	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves £'000	Projected Outturn Variance £'000
Corporate Management	1A	304	584	280	(280)	0
Borough Economy	1B	69,543	70,794	1,252	(435)	816
Adult Social Care	1C	85,831	89,440	3,609	(4,617)	(1,008)
Regeneration & Growth	1D	15,039	17,733	2,694	(2,659)	35
Housing	1E	2,303	2,482	179	311	490
Children's Services	1F	91,455	100,195	8,739	(5,692)	3,047
Assistant Chief Executive	1G	7,550	7,473	(77)	0	(77)
Finance	1H	19,500	21,711	2,211	(2,015)	196
Law & Governance	1I	7,303	7,265	(38)	86	48
Public Health	1J	64	2,731	2,667	(2,667)	(0)
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>		<b>298,893</b>	<b>320,409</b>	<b>21,516</b>	<b>(17,969)</b>	<b>3,547</b>
Capital Charge Adjustment		(26,461)	(26,461)	0		0
External Interest Payments		15,000	15,000	0		0
Interest/Dividend Receipts		(7,500)	(8,500)	(1,000)		(1,000)
Use of Balances/RCCO/Central Items		37,692	37,176	(516)	(646)	(1,162)
<b>Net Service Expenditure, Central Items and Use of Balances</b>		<b>317,623</b>	<b>337,623</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>(18,615)</b>	<b>1,385</b>
Collection Fund Surplus		(102)	(102)	0		0
Council Tax		(127,008)	(127,008)	0		0
Business Rates		(109,560)	(109,560)	0		0
Business Rates Top-Up		(38,701)	(38,701)	0		0
Section 31 Grants		(38,188)	(38,188)	0		0
New Homes Bonus		(111)	(111)	0		0
Services Grant		(3,953)	(4,116)	(163)		(163)
<b>Net Service Expenditure, Central Items, Use of Balances and Sources of Funding</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>19,837</b>	<b>19,837</b>	<b>(18,615)</b>	<b>1,222</b>
<b>Quarter 1 Projected Outturn Variance</b>						<b>2,188</b>
<b>Movement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2</b>						<b>(966)</b>

4.3 The forecast overspend of £1.222m at Quarter 2 represents an improved position of (£0.966m) when compared with the Quarter 1 forecast overspend of £2.188m.

4.4 The forecast outturn position at Quarter 2 is explained in further detail within the following paragraphs.

### Corporate Management (1A)

4.5 The projected outturn for Corporate Management is nil variance from budget



## **Borough Economy (1B)**

- 4.6 The projected outturn for Borough Economy is an overspend of £0.816m. The main reasons for this forecast overspend are as follows:
- £0.424m overspend relating to the potential pay award and an increased rate of pension contributions.
  - £1.886m unachieved savings and income relating to Visitor Services and Events, Green Services and Libraries.  
Offset by:
    - (£0.776m) net in year savings on supplies & services budgets and use of earmarked reserves in order to reduce forecast budget pressures.
    - (£0.718m) in year vacancy management savings.

## **Adult Social Care (1C)**

- 4.7 The forecast variance to budget for Adult Social Care is an underspend of (£1.008m). There are pressures of £0.893m relating to the pay award, and £0.973m relating to external placements and delivery costs. These are wholly mitigated by staff vacancies and use of one-off grants (£2.874m).

## **Regeneration & Growth (1D)**

- 4.8 The projected outturn for Regeneration and Growth is an overspend of £0.035m. The main reasons for this forecast overspend are as follows:
- £0.341m overspend relating to the potential pay award and an increased rate of pension contributions
  - £0.434m reduced income from rechargeable jobs, as a result of staff vacancies
  - £0.350m reduced income from planning application fees and building regulation fees, due to the economic downturn
  - £0.238m loss of income due to building closures and tenant vacancies
  - £0.080m budget pressure relating to production of the Sandwell Plan
  - Offset by (£1.408m) in year vacancy management savings and other minor budget savings

## **Housing General Fund (1E)**

- 4.9 The projected outturn for Housing is an overspend of £0.490m. The main reasons for this forecast overspend are as follows:
- £0.166m delayed savings relating to reduction in grants paid to other organisations, fees & charges income and review of the community centres delivery model.
  - £0.202m income budget pressure relating to garage rental.



- £0.122m income budget pressure relating to the Home Improvement Agency.

### **Children's Services (1F)**

- 4.10 The forecast variance against budget for Children's Services is an overspend of £3.047m, largely due to budget pressures relating to SEND transport. The gross overspend relating to SEND transport is forecast to be £6.254m but will be partly offset by the use of reserves (£2.439m). The additional pay award pressure (of 2%) and superannuation (of 1.1%) in the directorate (totalling £0.685m) further contributes to the overspend. Finally, Sandwell Residential Education Services (SRES) will not be able to achieve £0.251m of its income target. These pressures are partly offset by staff vacancies savings and savings against supplies and services budgets and other income budgets (£1.704m).
- 4.11 The forecast overspend in the SEND transport service is due to a significant increase in demand over recent years, particularly for complex and out of borough placements which have the highest cost.

### **Assistant Chief Executive (1G)**

- 4.12 The projected outturn for Assistant Chief Executive is an underspend of (£0.077m). The main reasons for this forecast underspend are as follows:
- £0.359m overspend relating to the potential pay award and an increased rate of pension contributions
  - Offset by (£0.436m) in year vacancy management savings and other minor budget savings

### **Finance (1H)**

- 4.13 The projected outturn for Finance is an overspend of £0.196m. The main reasons for this forecast overspend are as follows:
- £0.400m budget pressure relating to the loss of Housing Benefits subsidy due to increased demand for temporary accommodation
  - £0.348m overspend relating to the potential pay award and an increased rate of pension contributions
  - £0.396m unachieved savings relating to redesign of Business Support functions and the hybrid print and mail project.
  - Offset by (£0.948m) in year vacancy management savings, rephasing of the implementation of cyber security and other minor overspends.

### **Law & Governance (1I)**

- 4.14 The projected outturn for Law and Governance is an overspend of £0.048m.



- £0.215m overspend due to the potential pay award and an increased rate of pension contributions
- £0.130m overspend on external legal advice on corporate projects and social care
- offset by (£0.297m) in year vacancy management savings and other minor budget savings.

### **Public Health (1J)**

- 4.15 Public Health is funded by a ringfenced grant and therefore any underspend at year-end is transferred into a specific Public Health grant reserve, and any overspend at year-end is funded from the reserve. The projected outturn variance is currently an overspend of £2.667m. This will be entirely funded from the Public Health grant reserve. There is a 3-year programme in place to bring down the reserve balance, which built up over the Covid-19 period.

### **Central Items/RCCO/Use of Balances**

- 4.16 The council has several centrally held budgets. The nature of these is such that they are not within a specific directorate's control. The council also makes use of balances towards one-off expenditure and as Revenue Contributions to Capital Outlay.
- 4.17 At Quarter 2 an underspend of (£1.162m) is forecast against Central Items and use of balances. The main reasons for this forecast underspend are as follows:
- £0.140m additional audit fee costs
  - £0.045m additional bank charges
  - £0.328m additional contributions to West Midlands Combined Authority
  - Offset by (£1.658m) surplus Contingency budgets not required in year

### **Non-General Fund**

#### **Housing Revenue Account (1K)**

- 4.18 The overall forecast variance against budget for the HRA is nil, as any surplus or deficit at year-end is offset by a corresponding transfer to/from HRA reserves. Prior to the use of reserves, the forecast variance against budget for the HRA is an overspend of £0.596m. The main reasons for this forecast overspend are as follows:



- Asset Management and Maintenance (overall nil variance after use of reserves)
  - (i) Repairs & Maintenance - £0.735m net pressure relating to responsive and void repairs including increased material and labour costs; Increase in gas and electrical service compliance costs which is partly offset by staff vacancies. (£0.735m) is to be drawn from the voids earmarked reserve.
  - (ii) Building Safety & Compliance - £0.229m net pressure relating to Highrise safety and compliance costs which is partly offset with vacancy savings. (£0.229m) is to be drawn from the voids earmarked reserve.
- Housing Management – (£1.248m) net underspend related to staff savings.
- Rents & Other Charges – £1.119m pressure relating to loss of rental income from voids and council tax charges on void properties
- PFI – Nil overall variance - £0.052m pressure due to increased unitary charge which is partly offset by one-off management fee income received. This pressure will be funded from the PFI sinking fund.
- Other HRA Services – £0.725m net pressure due to an increase in staff pension costs, project feasibility costs, tree works and increase in central support charges after use of tree works reserve & equipment reserve totalling £0.962m.

### **Dedicated Schools Grant – DSG (1L)**

4.19 The overall forecast variance against budget for the DSG is nil, as any surplus or deficit at year-end is offset by a corresponding transfer to/from the DSG reserve. Prior to transfers to reserves, the forecast outturn is an underspend of (£1.682m). The main reasons for this forecast underspend are as follows:

- High Needs Block underspend of (£1.562m) arising from out of borough placements, staffing vacancies and SEN development.
- Early Year's block underspend of (£0.120m) from funding for 2 year olds and disability access fund.

### **Use of Reserves**



4.20 At the end of 2022/23 £126.187m was held in earmarked reserves and a number of new reserves and contributions to capital have been actioned as part of the budget setting process for 2023/24 which increased the opening balance to £127.455. During the year, it is projected that £16.933m of these balances will be used leaving a remaining balance of £110.522m. A significant proportion of the use of reserves is the use of the remaining Covid Emergency Funding and Contain Outbreak Management Fund. Further detail is provided in Appendix 3.

## Capital

4.21 Expenditure on the Council's capital programme is forecast to be £75.289m within the General Fund and £75.700m within the Housing Revenue Account for the financial year 2023/24. Appendix 4 provides a detailed breakdown of the programme for the General Fund and appendix 5 provides a breakdown for the Housing Revenue Account.

## General Fund

4.22 The Quarter 2 Capital monitoring has been updated to include re-phasing from previous years, re-profiling and additional approvals. The main changes that have taken place since Quarter 1 are listed as follows:

4.23 Additional approvals within the Borough Economy directorate, relating to £2.164m received from the Department for Transport (DFT) in respect of the Birchley Island scheme and £0.640m received from the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in respect of the Haden Hill Leisure Centre scheme.

4.24 There has been re-phasing within Housing and Assets relating to Empty Properties (£0.585m) and The Public (£0.341m).

4.25 Law & Governance is reporting a re-phasing of (£3.560m) into 2024/25 in relation to the West Bromwich Cemetery scheme.

4.26 Re-phasing of around £7m is being predicted within the Regeneration & Growth directorate relating to the reorganisation of the Towns Fund budgets (£5.798m) and the clawback by government of Heat Pump Technology grant (£0.944m).

4.27 A decrease of (£3.794m) in the Children & Education budget mainly to reflect the re-phasing of Basic Need & School Condition resources into future years to continue various school improvement schemes.





## Housing Revenue Account

### Progress Against the New Council House Build Programme

- 4.28 The Council new build housing programme was approved at Cabinet in February 2023. The existing programme that completes in 2026/27 includes a total of 715 new homes.
- 4.29 Of the above programme, 47 units have been delivered in 2022/23 and an estimated 14 new Council house builds are anticipated to be completed by 31 March 2024. These are part-funded through Housing Revenue Account borrowing with grant provided by Homes England.
- 4.30 120 new homes will be progressed on site during the current financial year. Spend of £15.357m against the budget of £36.708m (including prior year carry forwards) is currently projected against the new build programme. This gives an underspend against the 2023/24 programme of (£21.351m) because of delays. However, the increased starts on site during 2023/24 will reduce the current forecast underspend towards the end of the financial year.
- 4.31 The delivery of the new build programme is delayed because of several reasons. The construction industry in both the West Midlands and at a national level continues to experience the impact of economic volatility. This is causing longer lead-in times and higher prices due to inflationary increases. The instability of the current economic climate is demonstrated by a reduction in tender returns for some projects and higher than estimated prices on returned tenders coupled with increased specification due to changes in building regulations. Ultimately, the higher costs affect the financial viability of these schemes. There have also been delays to physical starts on site, many of which are beyond the councils control such as ground conditions, wayleaves, easements, section agreements and licences.

### Progress Against the Housing Improvements Programme

- 4.32 At present there is an anticipated overspend of £4.365m on current year projects. The delivery of capital investment contracts has been impacted by challenges similar to the new build programme. This is particularly apparent for price volatility on tender returns and inflationary pressures on committed contracts. The Council remains committed to carrying out contractual commitments. Efforts are being made to prioritise certain works to ensure building safety and decent homes standards are maintained.



## Section 106/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

- 4.33 Section 106 monies are paid by developers towards the cost of providing community and social infrastructure but must be used for specific purposes. As at Quarter 2 £0.203m of these balances have been utilised leaving a remaining balance of £2.615m.
- 4.34 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge that local authorities can set on new development to raise funds to help fund the infrastructure, facilities and services which are needed to support new homes and businesses in the areas. As at Quarter 2 the Council is currently holding capital balances of £3.141m in relation to this Levy and is not forecasting any expenditure against this for the remainder of 2023/24.

## Treasury Management Outturn and Q1 Update

- 4.35 Attached are two reports relating the Council's Treasury Management activities. Appendix 7 provides the Quarter 2 Treasury Management update and appendix 8 provides the mid-year monitoring report on the Treasury Management Strategy and prudential indicators.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Leadership Team agreed that the vacancy controls that were in place for 2022/23 would be reinstated at their meeting on 8 August 2023 in order to reduce the projected overspend. As the forecast overspend has reduced since Quarter 1, no further management action is proposed at this stage, however other spending controls that may be needed to avoid reliance on use of reserves could be considered later in the year if necessary.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Resource implications are contained within the main body of the report.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.
<b>Risk:</b>	This information is contained within the main body of this report.
<b>Equality:</b>	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.



<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.
<b>Social Value</b>	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.
<b>Climate Change</b>	No direct implications arising from the recommendations.

## 7 Appendices

App 1 Outturn Summary for Directorates

App 2 Central Items

App 3 Reserves

App 4 General Fund Capital

App 5 Housing Revenue Account Capital

App 6 CIL and S106 Funding

App 7 Treasury Update Q2

App 8 Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators

Mid-Year Monitoring

## 8 Background Papers

Q1 Budget Monitoring 2023/24



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Service Area	APPX	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Outturn Variance Before Transfers to/from Reserves	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves	Projected Outturn Variance
		£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Corporate Management	1A	304	584	280	(280)	0
Borough Economy	1B	69,543	70,794	1,252	(435)	816
Adult Social Care	1C	85,831	89,440	3,609	(4,617)	(1,008)
Regeneration & Growth	1D	15,039	17,733	2,694	(2,659)	35
Housing	1E	2,303	2,482	179	311	490
Children's Services	1F	91,455	100,195	8,739	(5,692)	3,047
Assistant Chief Executive	1G	7,550	7,473	(77)	0	(77)
Finance	1H	19,500	21,711	2,211	(2,015)	196
Law & Governance	1I	7,303	7,265	(38)	86	48
Public Health	1J	64	2,731	2,667	(2,667)	(0)
<b>Net Service Expenditure</b>		<b>298,893</b>	<b>320,409</b>	<b>21,516</b>	<b>(17,969)</b>	<b>3,547</b>
Capital Charge Adjustment		(26,461)	(26,461)	0		0
External Interest Payments		15,000	15,000	0		0
Interest/Dividend Receipts		(7,500)	(8,500)	(1,000)		(1,000)
Use of Balances/RCCO/Central Items		37,692	37,176	(516)	(646)	(1,162)
<b>Net Service Expenditure, Central Items and Use of Balances</b>		<b>317,623</b>	<b>337,623</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>(18,615)</b>	<b>1,385</b>

Collection Fund Surplus		(102)	(102)	0		0
Council Tax		(127,008)	(127,008)	0		0
Business Rates		(109,560)	(109,560)	0		0
Business Rates Top-Up		(38,701)	(38,701)	0		0
Section 31 Grants		(38,188)	(38,188)	0		0
New Homes Bonus		(111)	(111)	0		0
Services Grant		(3,953)	(4,116)	(163)		(163)
<b>Net Service Expenditure, Central Items, Use of Balances and Sources of Funding</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>19,837</b>	<b>19,837</b>	<b>(18,615)</b>	<b>1,222</b>
<b>Quarter 1 Projected Outturn Variance</b>						<b>2,188</b>
<b>Movement from Quarter 1 to Quarter 2</b>						<b>(966)</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of) Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Chief Executive	884	1,164	280	(280)	0		0
Corporate Management	(580)	(580)	0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>304</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>280</b>	<b>(280)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Contracts, Projects, Strategy & Policy	39,447	39,524	77	(4)	73		73
Highways Services	19,775	19,850	75	0	75		75
Green Spaces, Visitor Services & Events	1,166	2,232	1,066	(356)	710		710
Public Protection and Community Safety	3,794	3,884	90	(28)	62		62
Libraries, Archives and Heritage	4,933	5,107	173	(47)	126		126
Directorate Management	427	197	(230)	0	(230)		(230)
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>69,543</b>	<b>70,794</b>	<b>1,252</b>	<b>(435)</b>	<b>816</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>816</b>



Adult Social Care

APPENDIX 1C

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Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of) /Contribution to Reserves& RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
					0		0
Management Team	1,764	4,210	2,446	(2,576)	(130)		(130)
Social Work & Therapy	5,684	4,711	(973)	0	(973)		(973)
External Placements	67,987	70,337	2,350	(1,000)	1,350		1,350
Direct Services	7,329	6,162	(1,167)	(41)	(1,208)		(1,208)
Commissioning	3,067	3,020	(47)	0	(47)		(47)
Better Care Fund	0	1,000	1,000	(1,000)	0		0
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>85,831</b>	<b>89,440</b>	<b>3,609</b>	<b>(4,617)</b>	<b>(1,008)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,008)</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Growth and Spatial Planning Service	2,743	3,184	441	(642)	(201)	(80)	(281)
Development Planning and Building Control Service	744	927	183	(14)	169	0	169
Strategic Assets and Land Service	10,933	12,711	1,778	(1,584)	194	0	194
Management	619	911	292	(339)	(47)	0	(47)
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15,039</b>	<b>17,733</b>	<b>2,694</b>	<b>(2,579)</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>(80)</b>	<b>35</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for Specific Purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of Reserves for specific	Use of Reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Community Partnerships and Support Services	1,153	1,493	340	0	340		340
Housing Solutions	1,476	1,095	(383)	383	0		0
Income Management and Money Advice	333	353	20	(73)	(53)		(53)
Tenancy & Estate Management	(828)	(626)	202	0	202		202
Management	167	167	0	0	0		0
				0			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,303</b>	<b>2,482</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>311</b>	<b>490</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>490</b>

Children's Service

APPENDIX 1F

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Director of Children's Services	8,543	8,268	(274)	0	(274)		(274)
Education Services	760	744	(16)	(217)	(233)		(233)
Inclusive Learning	2,592	2,646	54	0	54		54
Children & Education Support	8,869	15,105	6,237	0	6,237	(2,439)	3,798
Commissioning, Partnerships & Children's Social Care	10,496	13,235	2,739	(3,036)	(297)		(297)
BSF FM Contribution	0	0	0	0	0		0
	400	400	0	0	0		0
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,659</b>	<b>40,399</b>	<b>8,739</b>	<b>(3,253)</b>	<b>5,486</b>	<b>(2,439)</b>	<b>3,047</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Assistant Chief Executive	188	393	205	0	205		205
Human Resources	3,604	3,807	203	0	203		203
Strategy and Performance	1,380	1,075	(305)	0	(305)		(305)
Corporate Customer	1,605	1,600	(5)	0	(5)		(5)
Communications	774	599	(175)	0	(175)		(175)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,550</b>	<b>7,473</b>	<b>(77)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(77)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(77)</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Director	126	662	536	(48)	488		488
Oracle	711	711	0	0	0		0
Financial Management	2,790	4,280	1,490	(972)	518		518
Procurement	886	1,010	124	(50)	74		74
Revenues and Benefits	3,635	4,467	832	(83)	749		749
Business Management	3,222	3,322	100	0	100		100
ICT	7,594	6,653	(941)	(569)	(1,510)		(1,510)
Corporate Transformation	537	607	70	(293)	(223)		(223)
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19,500</b>	<b>21,711</b>	<b>2,211</b>	<b>(2,015)</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>196</b>

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Director	436	694	258	0	258		258
Democracy	3,642	3,294	(348)	0	(348)		(348)
Registration Services	(691)	(634)	57	0	57		57
Legal and Assurance	2,839	2,919	80	86	166		166
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	515	522	7	0	7		7
Leaders Office	562	470	(92)	0	(92)		(92)
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7,303</b>	<b>7,265</b>	<b>(38)</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>48</b>

Public Health

APPENDIX 1J

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Communicable Disease	3,237	2,840	(397)	0	(397)		(397)
Long Term Conditions	3,476	2,946	(531)	0	(531)		(531)
Childrens	11,530	11,361	(169)	0	(169)		(169)
Substance Misuse & Smoking	4,240	4,095	(145)	0	(145)		(145)
Wider Determinants	5,353	5,285	(68)	(12)	(81)		(81)
Public Health Management	2,932	2,862	(70)	(92)	(162)		(162)
Public Health Grant	(26,658)	(26,658)	0	0	0		0
Public Health Savings / Reserve	(4,048)	0	4,048	(2,563)	1,484		1,484
		0	0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>2,731</b>	<b>2,667</b>	<b>(2,667)</b>	<b>(0)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(0)</b>



Housing Revenue Account

APPENDIX 1K

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Asset Management & Maintenance	42,301	43,265	964	(964)	0	0	0
Business Excellence	1,947	1,486	(461)	0	(461)	461	0
Services in Borough Economy	4,152	4,813	661	(914)	(253)	253	0
Corporate HRA	48,193	49,218	1,025	0	1,025	(1,025)	0
Housing Management	16,454	15,252	(1,202)	(47)	(1,249)	1,249	0
PFI	(659)	(607)	52	(52)	(0)	0	0
Rents & Other Charges	(122,732)	(121,613)	1,119	0	1,119	(1,119)	0
SLA's	10,044	10,460	416	0	416	(416)	0
			0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>(300)</b>	<b>2,274</b>	<b>2,574</b>	<b>(1,978)</b>	<b>596</b>	<b>(596)</b>	<b>0</b>

Individual Schools Budget

APPENDIX 1L

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	L		Use of reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	(Use of)/ Contribution to Reserves & RCCO for RCCO for specific purposes £'000	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes £'000	£'000	£'000
Directorate Individual Schools Budget	0	(1,682)	(1,682)	1,682	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,682)</b>	<b>(1,682)</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Central Items

APPENDIX 2

Service Area	Total Budget	Projected Outturn	Projected Variance	(Use of)/ Contribution to reserves & RCCO for specific purposes	Projected Outturn Variance following use of reserves for specific purposes	Use of Reserves to offset pressures	Projected Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
			0	0	0		0
Local Authority Subscriptions	104	123	19	0	19		19
Wolverhampton: WMCC and WMRE	45	26	(19)	0	(19)		(19)
Combined Authority	1,060	1,388	328	0	328		328
Special Events	25	7	(18)	0	(18)		(18)
External Audit Fee	246	386	140	0	140		140
Insurance	(395)	(395)	0	0	0		0
Past Service Pension Costs	2,616	2,616	0	0	0		0
Bank Charges	335	380	45	0	45		45
Airport Rent Income	(100)	(100)	0	0	0		0
Apprenticeship Levy	480	480	0	0	0		0
Pensions General	4,560	4,560	0	0	0		0
COVID-19 Emergency Funding	0	646	646	(646)	0		0
COVID-19 Containing Outbreak	0	0	0	0	0		0
			0	0	0		0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8,976</b>	<b>10,117</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>(646)</b>	<b>495</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>495</b>

## Reserves

## Appendix 3

Earmarked Reserve	Balance as at 31 March 2023	Projected use / (addition to) in year	Other Reserve Movements	Projected Balance as at 31 March 2024
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Borough Economy</u></b>				
Portway Lifestyle Centre	(802)	0		(802)
Borough Economy General Reserve	(872)	75	(79)	(876)
Dartmouth Park HLF	(257)	0		(257)
Aquatics Centre UOW	(100)	0		(100)
SERCO Waste Commitments	(5,628)	4		(5,624)
BE Grant Carryforward Reserve	(191)	0		(191)
	(7,850)	79	(79)	(7,850)
<b><u>Assistant Chief Executive</u></b>				
ACE General Reserve	(869)	569		(300)
	(869)	569	0	(300)
<b><u>Corporate Management</u></b>				
Kickstart Revaluation	(1,553)	0		(1,553)
	(1,553)	0	0	(1,553)
<b><u>Finance</u></b>				
Finance General Reserve	(503)	503		0
SCT Reserve	(13)	0		(13)
	(516)	503	0	(13)
<b><u>Housing</u></b>				
H&A General Reserve	(1,613)	73	(234)	(1,774)

H&A Grant Carryforward	(451)	(383)		(834)
	(2,064)	(310)	(234)	(2,608)
<b><u>Children's</u></b>				
CS General Reserve	(2,377)	217		(2,160)
SCT Reserve	(1,058)			(1,058)
	(3,435)	217	0	(3,218)
<b><u>Adults</u></b>				
Adult Social Care Reserve	(3,908)	41		(3,867)
Better Care Fund	(15,056)	1,000		(14,056)
	(18,964)	1,041	0	(17,923)
<b><u>Law &amp; Governance</u></b>				
L&G General Reserve	(1,120)	0		(1,120)
POCA	(841)	(86)		(927)
	(1,961)	(86)	0	(2,047)
<b><u>Public Health</u></b>				
Learning for Public Health	(381)	92		(289)
Public Health Grant Reserve	(8,346)	2,563		(5,783)
Public Health Earmarked Reserves	(110)	12		(98)
	(8,837)	2,667		(6,170)
<b><u>Regeneration and Growth</u></b>				
R&G General Reserve	(1,681)	474	234	(973)
Sinking Fund Central 6th Building	(1,392)	500		(892)
Forge Mill Farm Demolition	(227)	227		0
School Repair Reserve	(120)	0		(120)
R&G Grant Carryforward Reserve	(147)	14		(133)
R&G Capital Project Support	(5,588)	985		(4,603)
	(9,155)	2,200	234	(6,721)

<b>Total Directorate Reserves</b>	<b>(55,204)</b>	<b>6,880</b>	<b>(79)</b>	<b>(48,403)</b>
<b>Finance - Central Items</b>				
Emergency Fund COVID 19	(8,665)	3,967		(4,698)
Insurance Reserve	(8,488)	0		(8,488)
Finance Grant Reserve	(9,062)	3,647		(5,415)
S31 Grant Reserve	(397)	0		(397)
	<b>(26,612)</b>	<b>7,614</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(18,998)</b>
<b>Corporate Items</b>				
General Capital Reserve	(3,700)	0		(3,700)
New Asset System	(331)	112		(219)
Exit Packages	(1,452)	72		(1,380)
Pay Award	(1,000)	0		(1,000)
Oracle Fusion	(1,446)	0		(1,446)
Business Rates Volatility Reserve	(8,500)	0		(8,500)
Invest to Save Reserve	(2,342)	825		(1,517)
Corporate Improvement Plan	(1,055)	323		(732)
Commonwealth Games	(129)	89		(40)
Cemetery RCCO Reserve	0	0		0
Social Care Grant	(2,439)	2,439		0
Financial Planning Reserve	(4,286)	0	79	(4,207)
Climate Change	(600)	250		(350)
LATC Risk Cover	(1,700)			(1,700)
Cost of Living	(3,000)	11		(2,989)
	<b>(31,980)</b>	<b>4,121</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>(27,780)</b>
<b>Total Non-Directorate Reserves</b>	<b>(58,592)</b>	<b>11,735</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>(46,778)</b>
				<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL GF RESERVES</b>	<b>(113,796)</b>	<b>18,615</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(95,181)</b>
DSG	(5,500)	(1,682)		(7,182)

BSF FM Sinking Fund	(3,365)	0		(3,365)
BSF PFI Sinking Fund	(4,680)	0		(4,680)
Post LAC Pupil Premium Grant	(114)	0		(114)
	(13,659)	(1,682)		(15,341)
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>(127,455)</b>	<b>16,933</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(110,522)</b>

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APPENDIX 4 - CAPITAL MONITORING GENERAL FUND

Service / Scheme	2023/24							2024/25			2025/26			2026/27
	Base Budget	Additional Approvals (incl prior year Re Phasing not incl in Base)	Current Budget	Predicted Spend	Variance	Predicted Re Phasing	Final Variance	Base Budget	Predicted Re-Phasing from 2023/24	Revised Budget	Base Budget	Predicted Re-Phasing from 2023/24	Revised Budget	Base Budget
<b>Adult Social Care</b>														
ASC Capital Grant	763	-	763	-	(763)	763	-	763	763	-	-	-	-	-
ASC System Development	-	260	260	260	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Contaminated Land Grant	-	8	8	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Swift Impress System	-	61	61	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Adult Social Care Total</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>1,092</b>	<b>329</b>	<b>(763)</b>	<b>763</b>	-	<b>763</b>	<b>763</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Borough Economy</b>														
Environmental Improvements to Neighbourhoods	-	17	17	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forge Mill Farm	-	2	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lightwoods Park	-	16	16	16	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Lightwoods Park HLF	403	(24)	379	379	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manor House - Phase 2	-	12	12	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Manor House Conservation Plan	241	-	241	241	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Oakhouse Barns Restoration Project	10	125	135	135	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Birchley Island	-	5,875	5,875	2,685	(3,190)	3,190	-	3,190	3,190	-	-	-	-	-
Total Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP)	-	3,767	3,767	2,756	(1,011)	1,011	-	1,798	1,011	2,809	1,798	1,798	1,798	1,798
Total Main Programme (Council Resources) (Excl Birchley Island)	-	9,913	9,913	8,077	(1,836)	1,836	-	295	1,836	2,131	295	295	295	295
Total Highways Maintenance & Structures	-	5,481	5,481	5,481	-	-	-	4,741	-	4,741	4,741	4,741	4,741	4,741
Total Self Financing Schemes (Excl TT)	-	4,541	4,541	3,330	(1,211)	1,211	-	-	1,211	1,211	-	-	-	-
Vehicles	1,500	-	1,500	1,500	-	-	-	1,500	-	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500
LUF - Haden Hill Leisure Centre	-	640	640	640	-	-	-	3,410	-	3,410	17,950	17,950	17,950	17,950
WMCA - PMF Play & Education Barn Project	-	190	190	190	-	-	-	360	-	360	-	-	-	-
WMCA - The Railer / Cracker improvement Projects	-	200	200	200	-	-	-	500	-	500	-	-	-	-
West Smithwick Park HLF	-	200	200	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Borough Economy Total</b>	<b>2,154</b>	<b>30,755</b>	<b>32,909</b>	<b>25,687</b>	<b>(7,248)</b>	<b>7,248</b>	-	<b>12,604</b>	<b>7,248</b>	<b>19,852</b>	<b>26,284</b>	-	<b>26,284</b>	<b>8,334</b>
<b>Assistant Chief Executive</b>														
Public Realm	33	-	33	-	(33)	33	-	-	33	33	-	-	-	-
<b>Assistant Chief Executive Total</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(33)</b>	<b>33</b>	-	<b>-</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Finance</b>														
ICT - End User Computing	2,000	823	2,823	2,823	-	-	-	1,200	-	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200	1,200
Oracle Fusion ERP System	6,013	469	6,482	6,482	-	-	-	1,195	-	1,195	-	-	-	-
<b>Finance Total</b>	<b>8,013</b>	<b>1,292</b>	<b>9,305</b>	<b>9,305</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	-	<b>2,395</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,395</b>	<b>1,200</b>	-	<b>1,200</b>	<b>1,200</b>
<b>Childrens</b>														
BSF - ICT Element	80	-	80	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orchard Building Works (Primrose)	-	37	37	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PLAY Pathfinder	6	-	6	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Devolved Formula Capital	-	1,300	1,300	1,300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Devolved Formula Capital - PRU's	-	80	80	80	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Devolved Formula Capital - School Contribution	-	1,200	1,200	1,200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Provisional Grant Allocation	10,000	(10,000)	-	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Youth Centre Queens Way	5	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Schools Capital Programme Schemes:														
Brades Lodge	-	1,344	1,344	344	(1,000)	1,000	-	-	1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-
Bristnall Hall Academy	-	10	10	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Connor Education Centre	-	40	40	40	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ESFA Shireland Primary Free school	-	61	61	61	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Feasibility Work Expansion of Secondary	-	300	300	300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Great Bridge Primary	-	19	19	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Health Futures UTC	-	2,776	2,776	1,476	(1,300)	1,300	-	-	1,300	1,300	-	-	-	-
New Oldbury Primary - Lightwoods	-	174	174	174	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Orniston Sandwell Community Academy (OSCA)	-	401	401	401	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Priory Primary Expansion	-	15	15	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
G3 Langley Phase 3	-	4	4	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School Condition - LifeCycle property maintenance	-	1,877	1,877	1,877	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
School Kitchen Repairs	-	3	3	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Shenstone (Evolve)	-	200	200	200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Bromwich Collegiate Academy - Phase 2	-	100	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Childrens Total</b>	<b>10,091</b>	<b>(59)</b>	<b>10,032</b>	<b>7,732</b>	<b>(2,300)</b>	<b>2,300</b>	-	<b>10,000</b>	<b>2,300</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>10,000</b>	-	<b>10,000</b>	<b>10,000</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Assets</b>														
Charlemont Community Centre	37	-	37	37	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
DFG	11,882	579	12,461	4,500	(7,961)	7,961	-	4,800	7,961	12,761	4,800	4,800	4,800	4,800
Empty Properties	677	8	685	100	(585)	585	-	-	585	585	-	-	-	-
HMRA Ringfenced Receipts - Vulnerable Homeowners	373	-	373	373	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Housing Stock Condition Survey	29	-	29	-	(29)	29	-	-	29	29	-	-	-	-
Self Service Customer Portal	91	24	115	115	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
The Public	341	-	341	-	(341)	341	-	-	341	341	-	-	-	-
Vulnerable Homeowners Improvements (Kick Start)	386	-	386	386	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Warm Homes Healthy People	-	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Housing &amp; Assets Total</b>	<b>13,816</b>	<b>612</b>	<b>14,428</b>	<b>5,512</b>	<b>(8,916)</b>	<b>8,916</b>	-	<b>4,800</b>	<b>8,916</b>	<b>13,716</b>	<b>4,800</b>	-	<b>4,800</b>	<b>4,800</b>
<b>Law &amp; Governance</b>														
New Cemetery - West Bromwich	3,671	(91)	3,580	20	(3,560)	3,560	-	-	3,560	3,560	-	-	-	-
Case Management System	-	100	100	50	(50)	50	-	-	50	50	-	-	-	-
Rowley Cemetery	-	127	127	127	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Law &amp; Governance Total</b>	<b>3,671</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>3,807</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>(3,610)</b>	<b>3,610</b>	-	<b>-</b>	<b>3,610</b>	<b>3,610</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>Regeneration &amp; Growth</b>														
Access Fund	300	34	334	334	-	-	-	300	-	300	300	300	300	300
Blackheath Library - Fit Out Costs	-	56	56	56	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brindley II	21	-	21	21	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BSF - Schools for the Future	-	73	73	73	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Childrens Trust Accommodation Works	145	-	145	145	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Coronors Court Refurbishment - Jack Judge House	-	434	434	434	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
King Street, Wednesbury Health Centre	-	1,467	1,467	1,467	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Mobile Working	-	41	41	-	(41)	41	-	-	41	41	-	-	-	-
PMA - The Central Sixth Form Building Works	-	500	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PMA Capitalisation	800	55	855	855	-	-	-	800	-	800	800	800	800	800
Property Refurbishment - WPV Sandwell Council House	1,712	216	1,928	1,928	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
PSDS Heat Pump Technology	1,000	(753)	247	247	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Regeneration Reserve	1,100	9	1,109	1,109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sandwell Aquatics Centre	2,640	2,342	4,982	4,514	(468)	468	-	-	468	468	-	-	-	-
Section 106 Schemes	2,578	241	2,819	204	(2,615)	2,615	-	-	2,615	2,615	-	-	-	-
UK Shared Property Fund	-	582	582	582	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
LUF - ASB & Crime in Wednesbury	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	400	-	400	-	-	-	-
LUF - Friar Park Urban Village	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11,500	-	11,500	-	-	-	-
LUF - Greenspace Improvements	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,600	-	1,600	-	-	-	-
LUF - Millennium Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,000	-	2,000	-	-	-	-
LUF - Public Realm Wednesbury Town Centre	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,500	-	4,500	-	-	-	-
Towns Fund:														
Kings Square	5,000	(5,000)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Rowley Regis - Blackheath Bus Exchange	2,720	(5)	2,715	27	(2,688)	2,688	-	-	2,688	2,688	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020

Rowley Regis - Britannia Park Community Hub	1,574	-	1,574	793	(781)	781	-	422	781	1,203	-	-	-	-
Rowley Regis - Canal and River Trust	673	(349)	324	324	-	-	-	188	-	188	-	-	-	-
Rowley Regis - Connected	718	-	718	116	(602)	602	-	276	602	878	494	-	494	-
Rowley Regis - Satellite Education Hub	8,074	-	8,074	500	(7,574)	7,574	-	-	4,016	4,016	458	3,558	4,016	-
Smethwick - Connected	2,172	70	2,242	2,242	-	-	-	1,000	-	1,000	-	-	-	-
Smethwick - Midlands Met Learning Campus	8,550	-	8,550	2,600	(5,950)	5,950	-	2,761	5,950	8,711	-	-	-	-
Smethwick - Rolfe Street Regeneration	537	325	862	862	-	-	-	818	-	818	255	-	255	-
Smethwick - Grove Lane Regeneration	-	35	35	35	-	-	-	2,611	-	2,611	1,698	-	1,698	-
Smethwick - Ron Davis Centre Expansion	-	15	15	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Brom - Connected	292	(1)	291	291	-	-	-	421	-	421	314	-	314	-
West Brom - Retail Diversification Programme	6,729	-	6,729	1,828	(4,901)	4,901	-	-	4,795	4,795	1,062	106	1,168	-
West Brom - Sandwell MEC	-	2,005	2,005	2,005	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
West Brom - Town Hall Quarter	6,217	-	6,217	2,093	(4,124)	4,124	-	31	4,124	4,155	-	-	-	-
West Brom - Urban Greening	270	83	353	353	-	-	-	20	-	20	-	-	-	-
Regeneration & Growth Total	53,822	2,475	56,297	26,553	(29,744)	29,744	-	30,648	26,080	56,728	7,401	3,664	11,065	2,100
Grand Total	92,363	35,540	127,903	75,289	(52,614)	52,614	-	60,447	48,950	109,397	49,685	3,664	53,349	26,434

### Capital Monitoring 2023-24 - General Fund

Service / Scheme	Base Budget	Additional Approvals (incl' prior year Re-Phasing not incl' in Base)	Current Budget	Predicted Spend	Variance	Predicted Re-Phasing	Final Variance
Adult Social Care Total	763	329	1,092	329	-763	763	0
Borough Economy Total	2,154	30,755	32,909	25,661	-7,248	7,248	0
Business Strategy & Change (ACE) Total	33	0	33	0	-33	33	0
Childrens Total	10,091	-59	10,032	7,732	-2,300	2,300	0
Finance Total	8,013	1,292	9,305	9,305	0	0	0
Housing & Assets Total	13,816	612	14,428	5,512	-8,916	8,916	0
Law & Governance Total	3,671	136	3,807	197	-3,610	3,610	0
Regeneration & Growth Total	53,822	2,475	56,297	26,553	-29,744	29,744	0
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>92,363</b>	<b>35,540</b>	<b>127,903</b>	<b>75,289</b>	<b>-52,614</b>	<b>52,614</b>	<b>0</b>

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Appendix 5 - Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

Housing Revenue Account Capital	Budget & Forecast 2023/24				
	Original Budget	Revised Budget (incl' prior year slippage not incl' in Base)	Spend to Date	Predicted Spend	Forecast Variance
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Council New Build Housing</b>	<b>50,829</b>	<b>36,708</b>	<b>3,880</b>	<b>15,357</b>	<b>(21,351)</b>
<i>Adaptations for Disabled</i>	3,000	3,040	2,209	1,000	(2,040)
<i>High Rise Repairs</i>	19,391	26,151	8,673	29,546	3,396
<i>Housing Improvements</i>	13,979	21,539	3,577	19,321	(2,218)
<i>Affordable Warmth</i>	4,000	4,500	4,617	7,200	2,700
<i>Other Schemes</i>	750	750	-	3,277	2,527
<b>Housing Investment &amp; Improvement Total</b>	<b>41,120</b>	<b>55,979</b>	<b>19,076</b>	<b>60,344</b>	<b>4,365</b>
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account Capital</b>	<b>91,949</b>	<b>92,687</b>	<b>22,956</b>	<b>75,700</b>	<b>(16,987)</b>

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## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures) – Initial scheme approval
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cabinet Member for Regeneration & WMCA, Councillor Peter Hughes
<b>Director:</b>	Director- Regeneration & Growth, Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Andy Miller Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager <a href="mailto:andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk">andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk</a>  Talvinder Sandhu Transportation Team Leader <a href="mailto:talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk">talvinder_sandhu@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

That Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approve in principle the proposed package of improvements that make up the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures) as shown on the drawings contained at Appendix A.
- 1.2 Delegate authority to carry out public consultation to the Director Regeneration & Growth in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways.
- 1.3 Delegate authority for consideration and determination of objections to the Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways at a future Decision Making Session.







- 1.4 Delegate authority to the Director Regeneration & Growth to submit an Outline Business Case to the West Midlands Combined Authority.

## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures) project forms part of the West Midlands City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Programme approved by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The Sandwell elements of this programme were approved by Cabinet in July 2022.
- 2.2 The project is now at the stage where specific approvals are required to enable it to progress through the WMCA Single Assurance Framework Process, be consulted on with the public and stakeholders, and then be taken to the next stages of design and business case preparation.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><i>People live well and age well:</i> Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension (Sustainable Access Measures) package of works includes extensive measures designed to encourage walking and cycling thus contributing to the health benefits of sustainable active travel.</p>
	<p><i>Strong resilient communities:</i> Successful communities need access to jobs, services and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. The transport network is an important enabler of this.</p>
	<p><i>Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods:</i> New and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services and leisure facilities in order for them to be successful. The proposals will make a significant contribution to this objective.</p>
	<p><i>A strong and inclusive economy:</i> The provision of a high-quality transport network will reduce journey times and improve journey reliability for Sandwell business who rely on it to connect to their suppliers and customers.</p>







*A connected and accessible Sandwell:* The provision of a high-quality, sustainable transport network catering for all modes 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

### Background

4.1 The WBHE Sustainable Access Measures scheme is aimed at ensuring the soon to be delivered Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension is linked up effectively with the surrounding community, ensuring that users can access the metro from their homes and nearby amenities via sustainable modes. The scheme aims to achieve the following objectives:

- Improve the walk and cycle routes to/from the new tram stops on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill metro extension
- Improve wayfinding to assist in the use of walk and cycle access to metro
- Improve the opportunities for bus/metro interchange
- Reduce the likelihood of increased on-street parking around metro stops.

4.2 The scheme includes a variety of interventions including:

- High-quality cycle tracks and shared use areas to facilitate cycling
- Resurfacing of pedestrian areas and adding tactile paving for visually impaired residents
- Traffic calming to allow on-road cycling
- New crossing points
- Allowing active travel through previously blocked off roads
- Wayfinding signage



#### 4.3 Measures are planned in the following locations:

- Richmond street
- New Road, Great Bridge
- Fred Perry Walk
- Tame Road
- Napier Drive/Broad Croft
- Clarkes Grove/Cinquefoil Leasow
- Horseley Road/Alexandra Road
- Puppy Green
- Park Lane East
- Park Lane West/Sedgley Road East and Tipton Road
- Coneygree Road
- Groveland Road
- Baker Street
- A4037

4.4 Together, and linked to the A461, this will create an entire network of areas where people can travel in sustainable ways, reducing the need for them to use their private car for short journeys, and maximising their ability to use the upcoming metro extension without creating the opportunity for unmanageable unofficial parking around the metro stops

#### **Funding and Timescales**

4.5 This scheme has £16 million City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding to deliver a range of interventions across the entire metro extension corridor by 2027, including elements in Dudley borough who share the allocation.

4.6 The entire collection of interventions is expected to cost in excess of the £16 million allocated. Therefore, a prioritisation exercise has taken place as part of the Outline Business Case development to ensure that the elements of most benefit to the community will be delivered by 2027, with delivery of the remaining elements following receipt of additional funding after 2027.



## Consultation

- 4.7 The scheme has not yet been subject to public consultation. A comprehensive public consultation exercise is planned in early 2024 to ascertain local sentiment around the proposed interventions.
- 4.8 Stakeholder agreement to the scheme has been sought previously through the assurance and appraisal process at the WMCA who have approved a previous Business Case. This Business Case has since been updated and following this cabinet review, it is anticipated that the updated Business Case will be resubmitted to the WMCA for approval, allowing for the release of funding for the final development stage, and some funding for early delivery of some elements. Early delivery of some elements is necessary if we are to deliver the full range of schemes by 2027.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 One alternative option is to not continue with the scheme and reallocate the funding back to the WMCA for spending on a different scheme. This is not recommended, as it would leave the WBHE without essential connections to nearby communities and amenities. There is no guarantee that Sandwell Council would be able to retain the funding for a different scheme, and therefore Sandwell residents may be disadvantaged against other areas in the region.
- 5.2 Another alternative is to make significant changes to the scheme as it is drawn currently. This is not recommended as it would make it difficult to deliver by 2027 and would risk the funding being reclaimed.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The project will be funded through devolved allocations to the West Midlands Combined Authority as part of its City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. All fees, including SMBC staff time recharges, are including the estimated scheme cost.
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<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The scheme involves the Council carrying out works in its capacity as Local Highway Authority. The delegations described in this report are in accordance with paragraph 1.3 of Part 4 (Executive Procedure Rules) of the Constitution.
<b>Risk:</b>	A full Risk Assessment will accompany the Outline Business Case. This is a precondition of funding.
<b>Equality:</b>	An Equality impact Assessment will accompany the Outline Business Case. This is a precondition of funding.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The project includes measures aimed to encourage the use of sustainable, non-car, modes. This will contribute towards improved air quality. In addition, the emphasis on active travel will have direct benefits for the health and wellbeing of residents using the facilities.
<b>Social Value:</b>	There are no social value implications arising from the recommendations contained in this report.  When the scheme moves to the delivery stage, the appointed contractor(s) will be required to adhere to the Council's Social Value policies.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Decarbonisation of the transport system is central to the government's aims and objectives for CRSTS. It is also a principle theme within the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. All projects within the programme need to demonstrate how they address climate change and contribute to decarbonisation through their business cases. The project includes measures aimed to encourage the use of sustainable, non-car, modes.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## 7. Appendices

Appendix A – Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-003  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-004  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-005  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-006  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-007  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-008  
Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-009



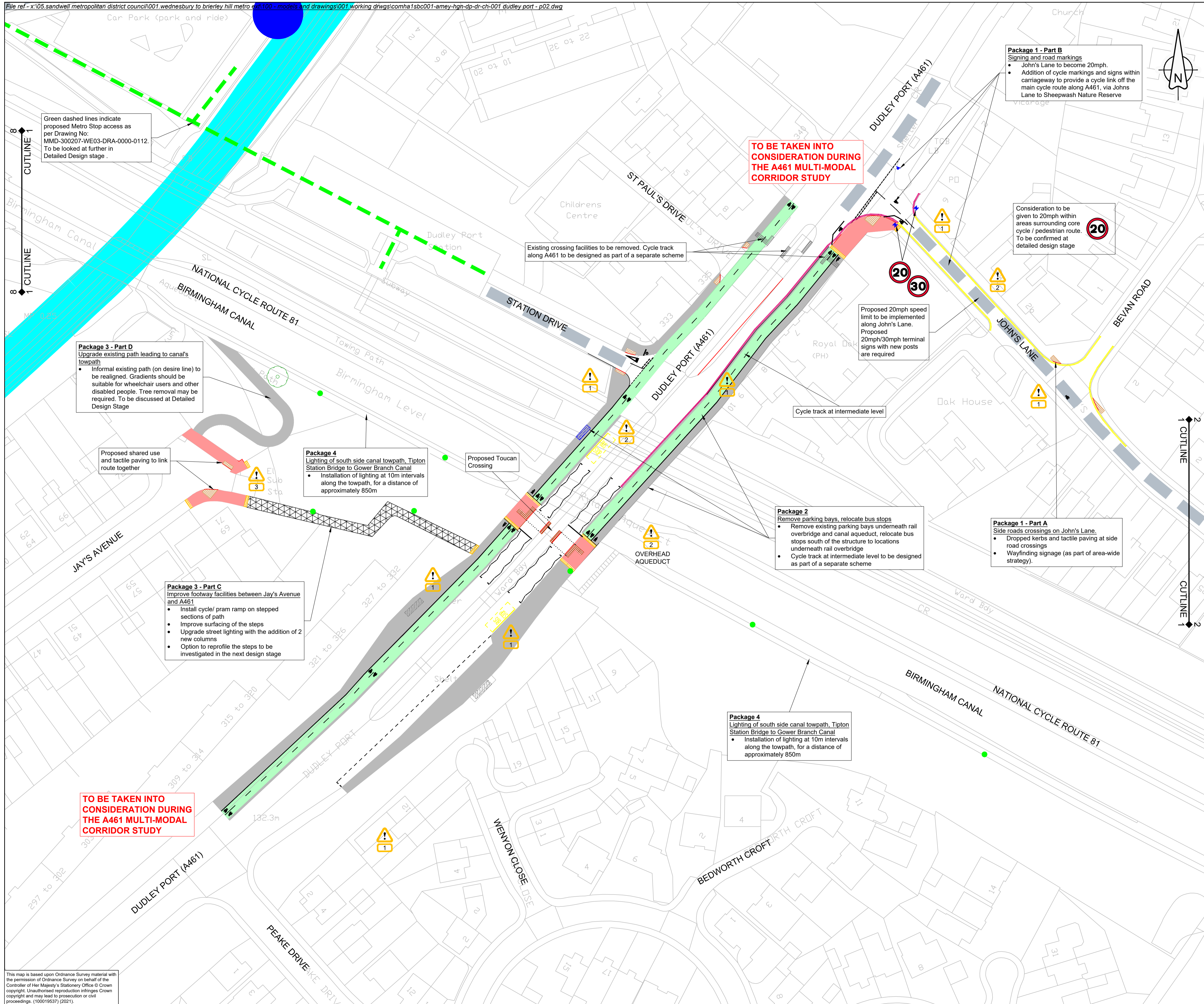
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Drg. No. COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-SR-DR-CH-008

## 8. Background Papers

West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth (2016)  
Report to WMCA Board 14:01:22  
Report to WMCA Board 18:03:22  
Report to Cabinet 23:03:22  
Report to WMCA Board 13:01:23  
Report to Cabinet 15:02:23



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P01	For Information	VP	MG	CB	29/09/21
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Checked:	MG	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	CB	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Client

**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

part of **bct** Black Country Transport

Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
Dudley Port Tram Stop  
Package 1 - Sheepwash Nature Reserve to stop via John's Lane and Station Drive  
Package 2 - A461 Dudley Port adjacent to Station Drive  
Package 3 - Tudor Street  
Package 4 - Birmingham Canal (New Main Line)  
Sheet 2 of 8

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Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

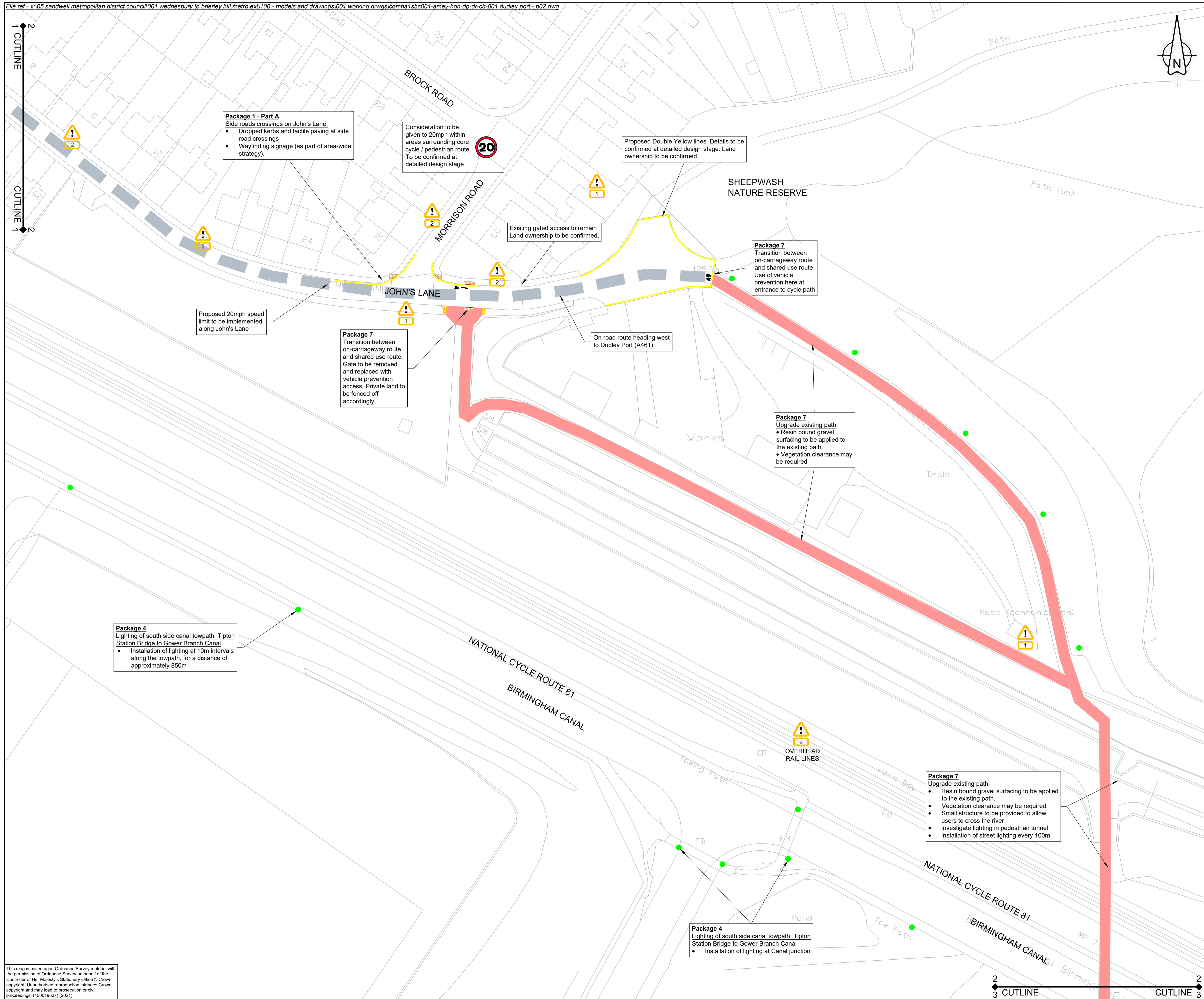
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-DP-DR-CH-002	Rev P02
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**Sandwell**  
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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
Dudley Port Tram Stop  
Package 1 - Sheepwash Nature Reserve to stop via John's Lane and Station Drive  
Package 4 - Birmingham Canal (New Main Line)  
Package 7 - John's Lane to Temple Way via pedestrian tunnel under Birmingham Canal Main Line  
Sheet 5 of 8

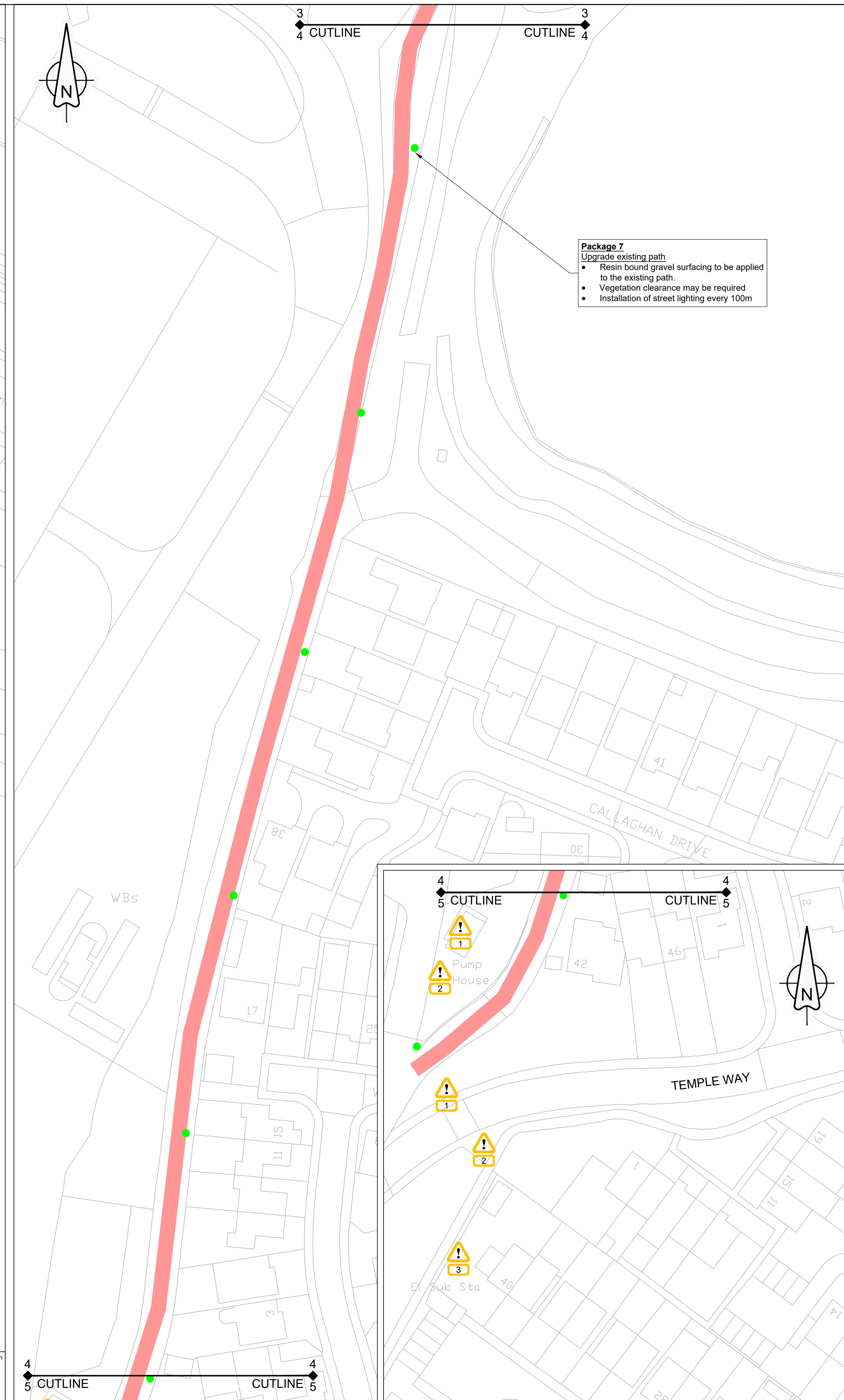
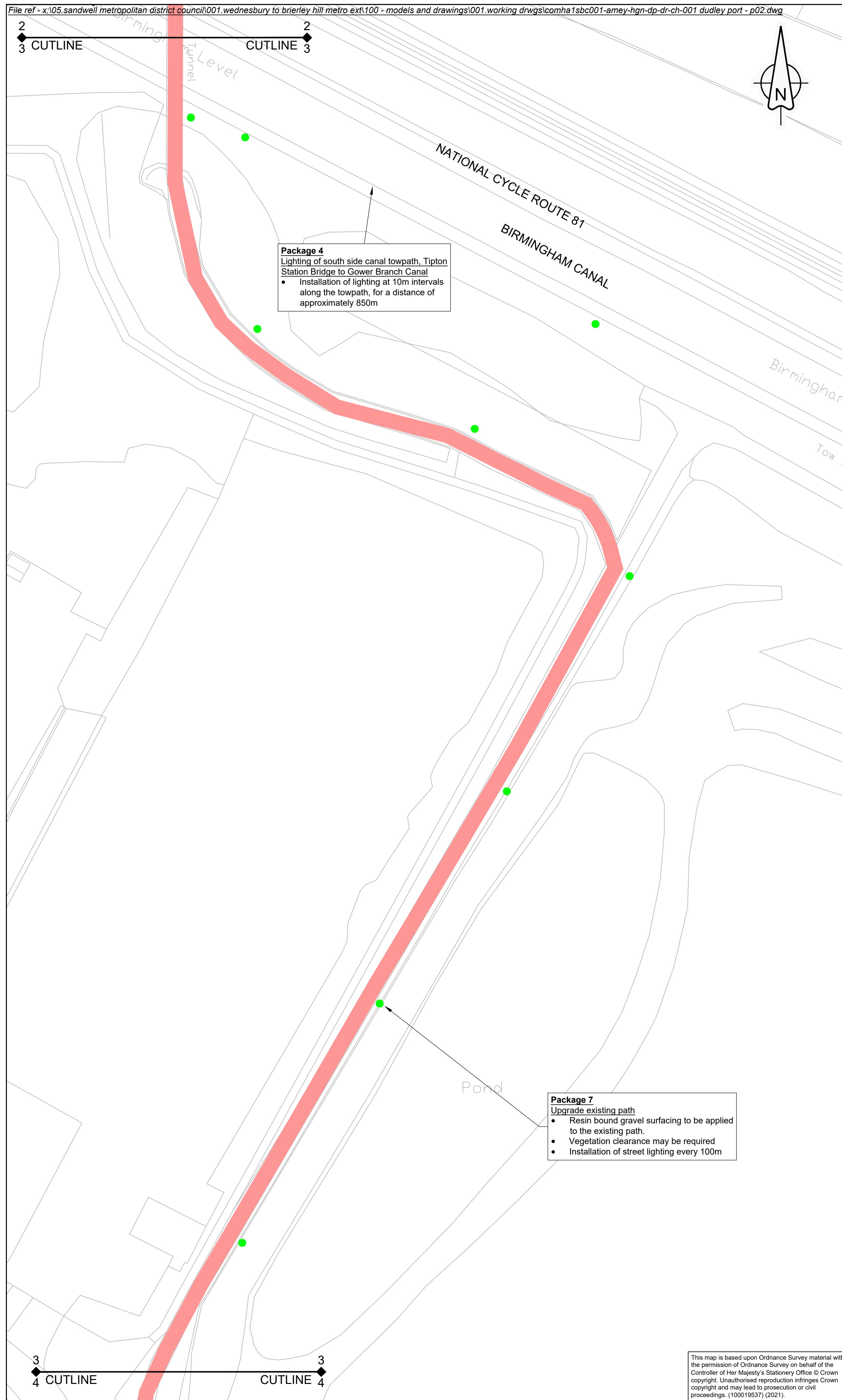
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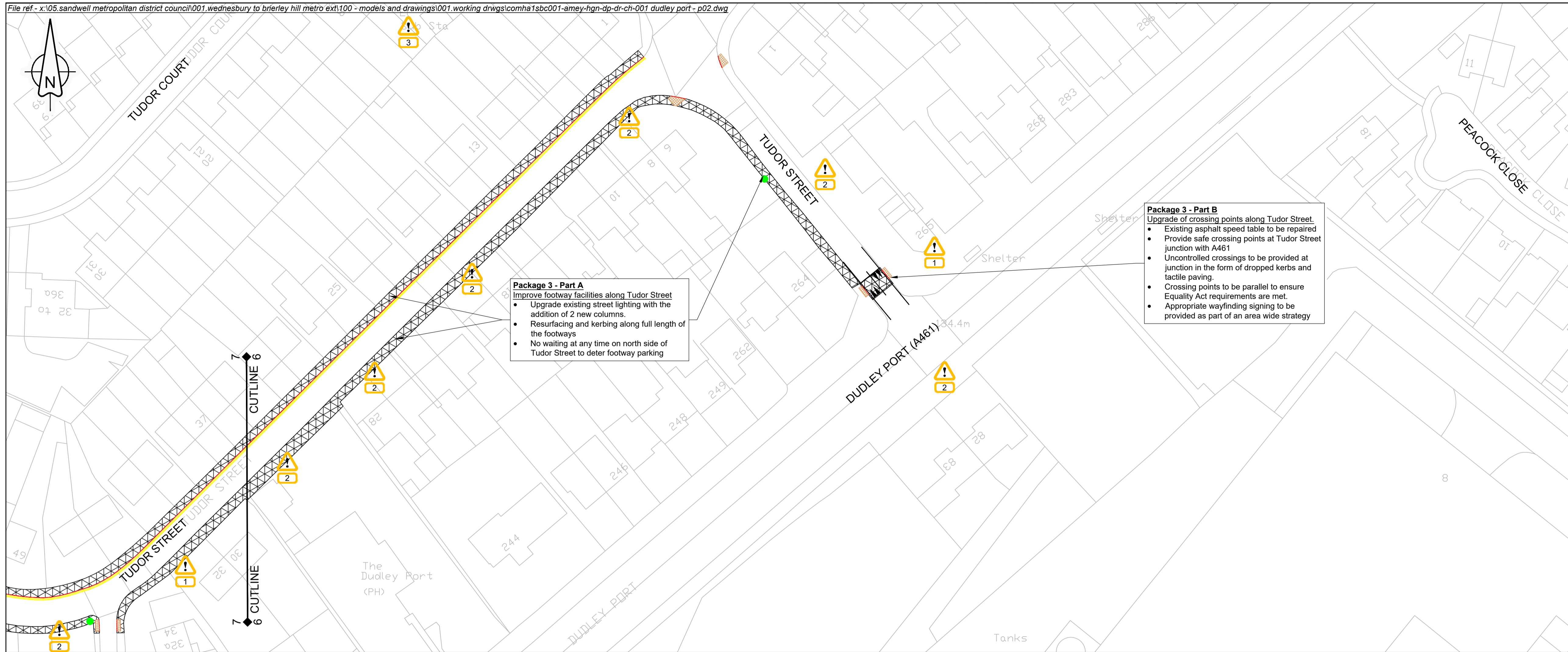
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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Dudley Port Tram Stop Package 4 - Birmingham Canal (New Main Line) Package 7 - John's Lane to Temple Way via pedestrian tunnel under Birmingham Canal Main Line Sheet 4 of 8**

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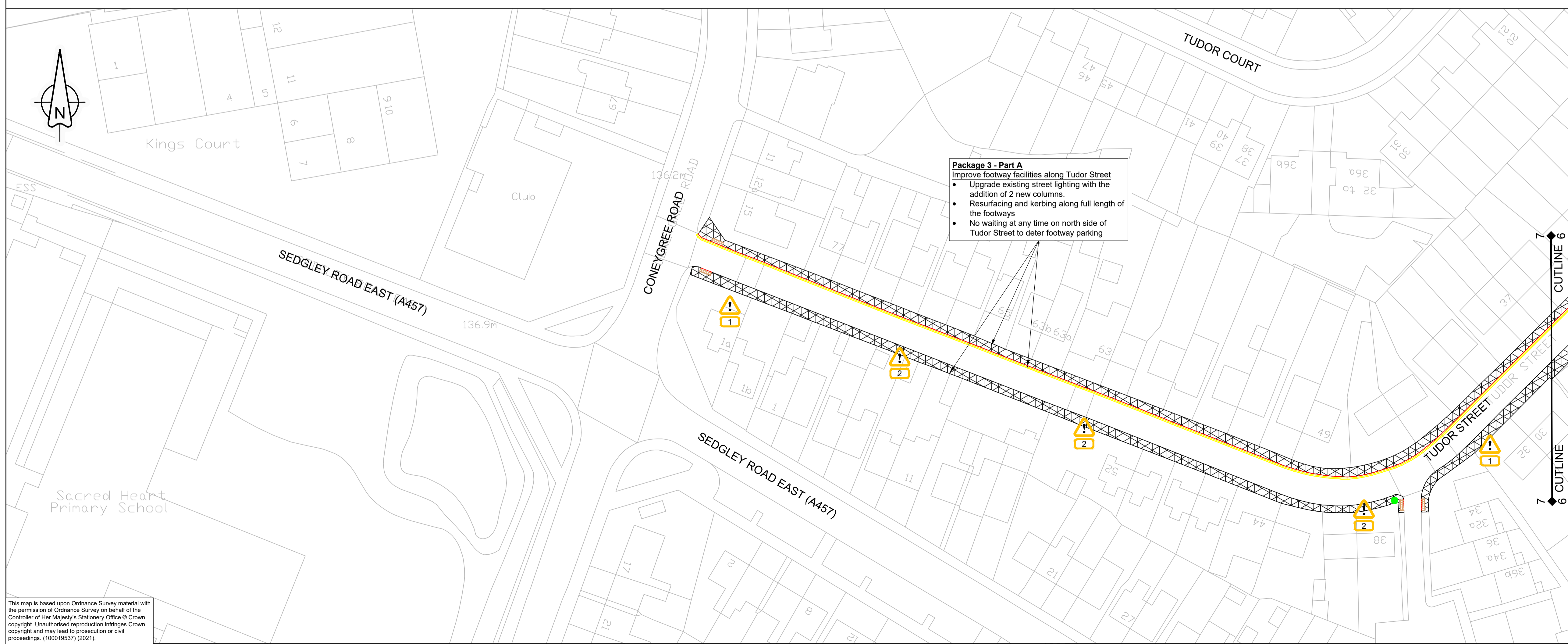


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Approved:	CB	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Dudley Port Tram Stop Package 3 - Tudor Street Sheet 5 of 8**

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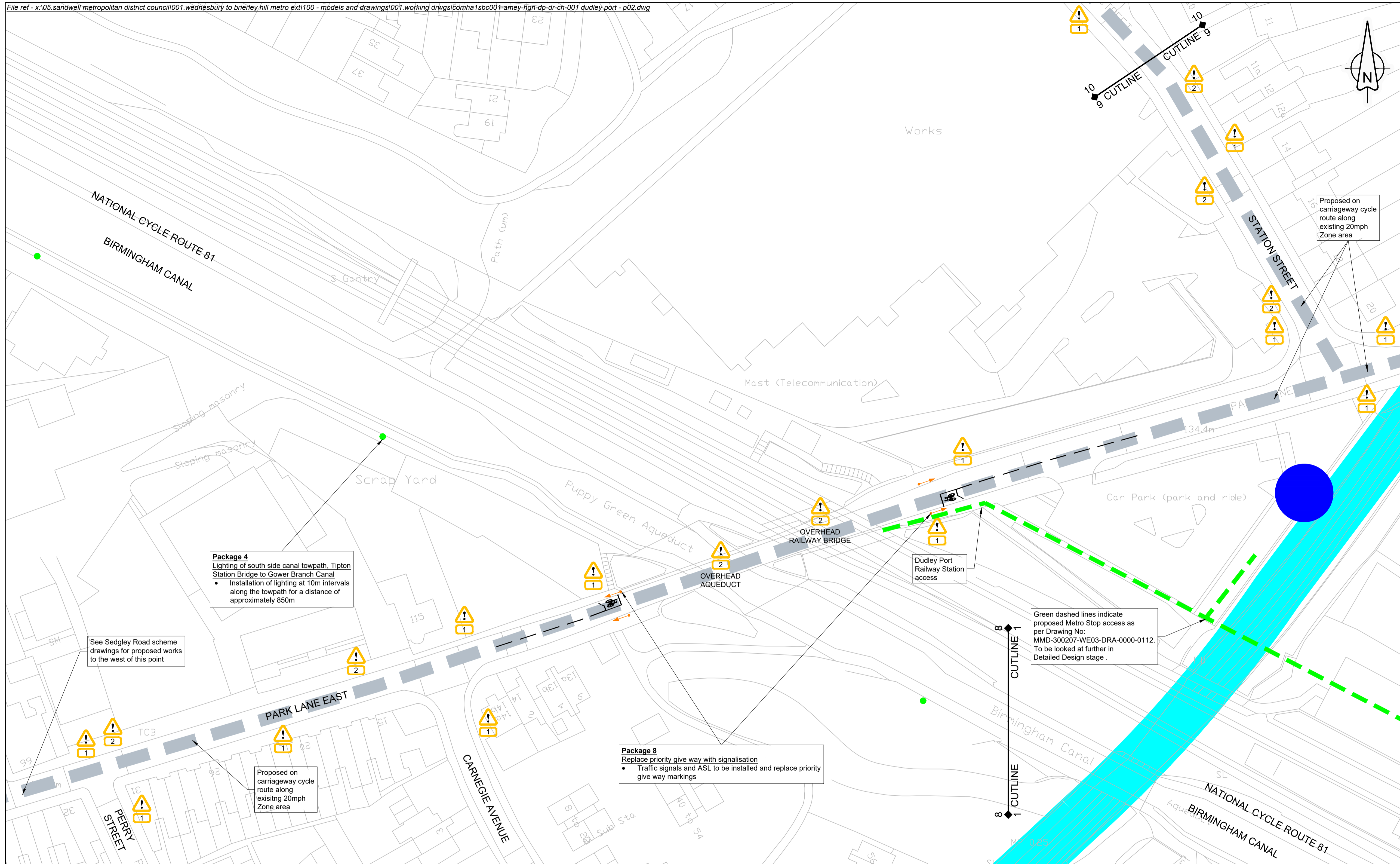
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Project Name  
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Drawing Title  
**Dudley Port Tram Stop Package 4 - Birmingham Canal (New Main Line) Package 8 - Park Lane East Sheet 6 of 8**

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**FOR INFORMATION**

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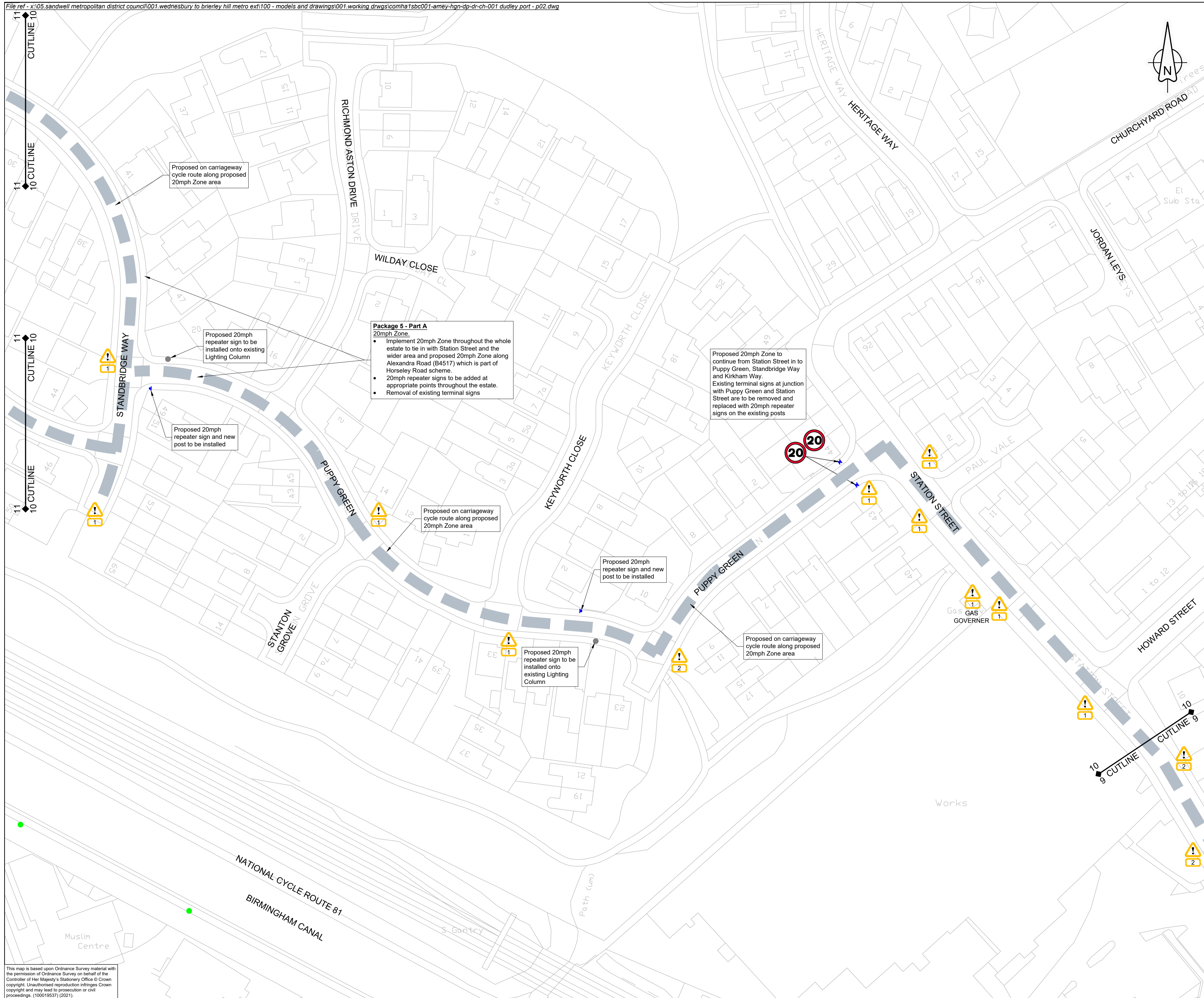
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Rev  
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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Dudley Port Tram Stop Package 4 - Birmingham Canal (New Main Line) Package 5 - Puppy Green, Standbridge Way and Kirkham Way Sheet 7 of 8**

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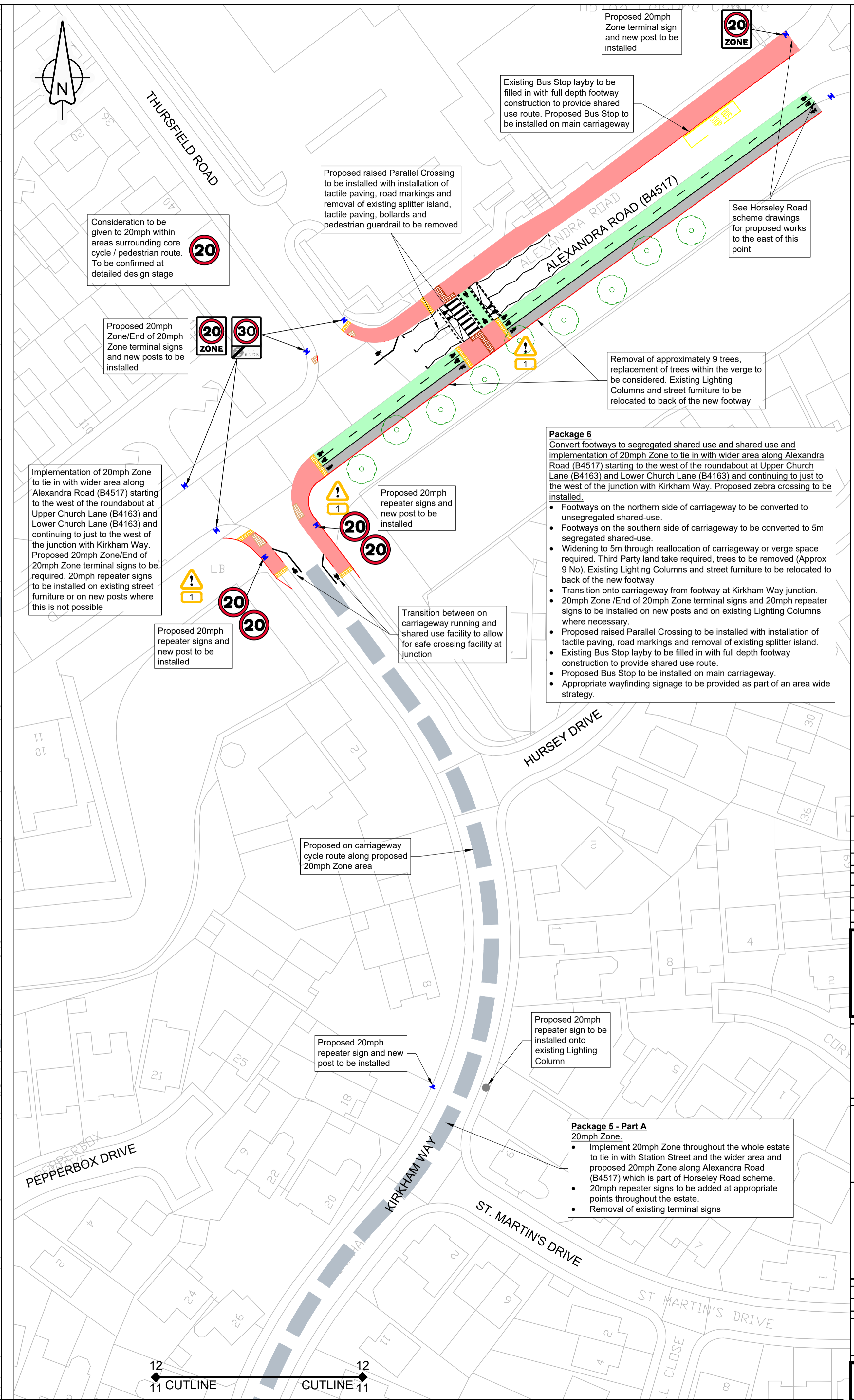
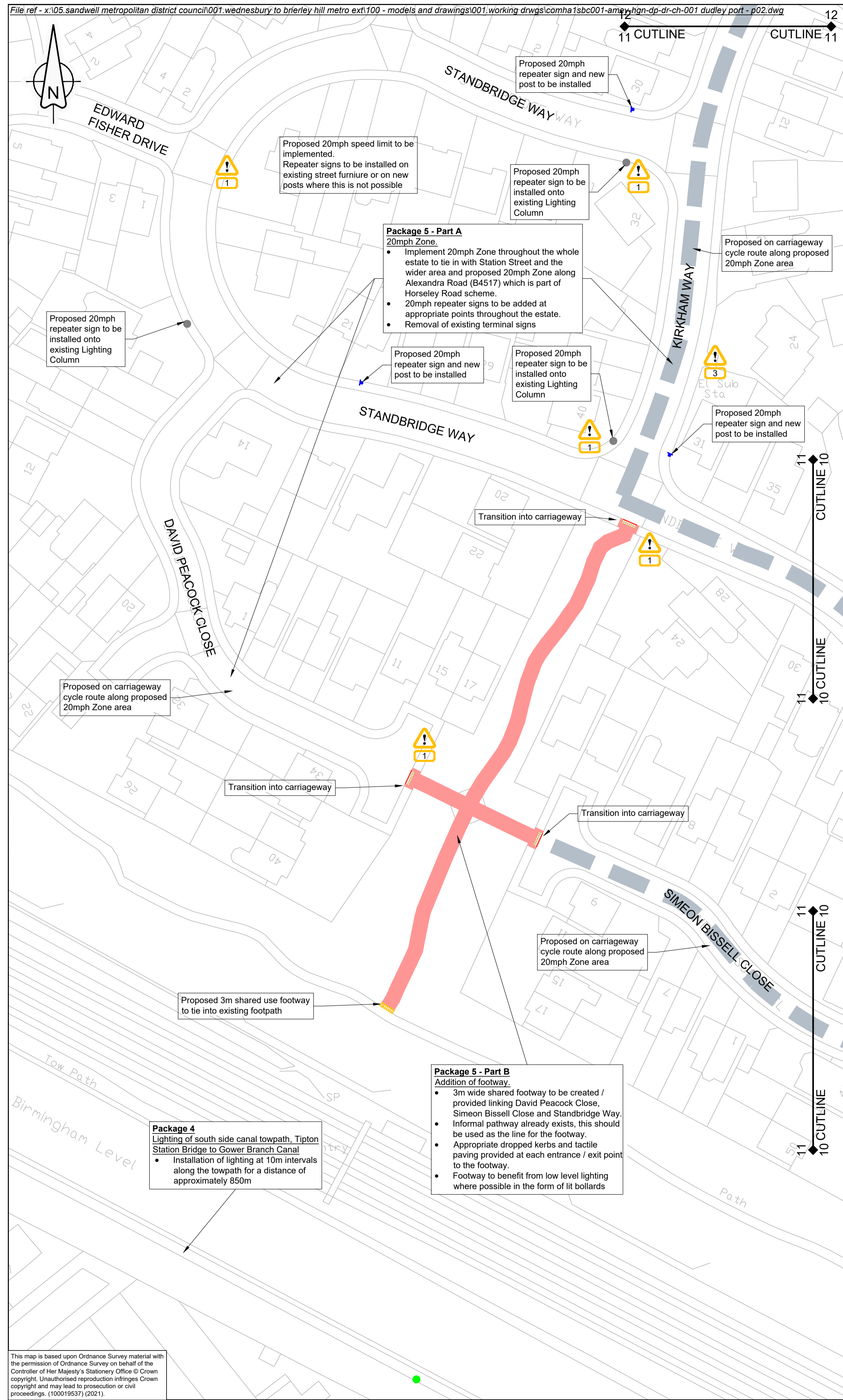
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Suitability  
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Drawing No <b>COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-DP-DR-CH-007</b>	Rev P02
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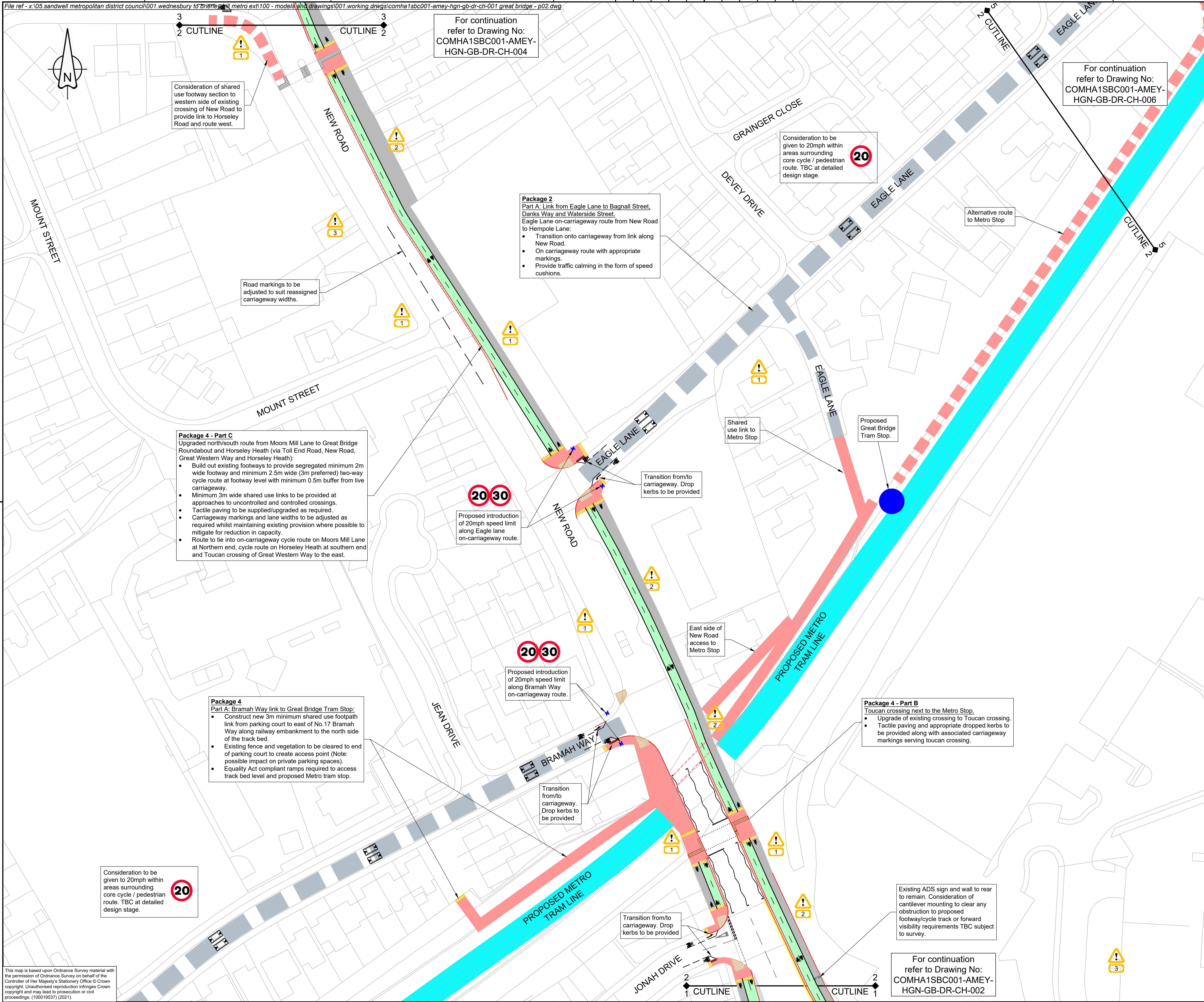
Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Dudley Port Tram Stop Package 5 - Puppy Green, Standbridge Way and Kirkham Way Package 6 - Alexandra Road adjacent to Kirkham Way junction Sheet 8 of 8**

Original Drawing Size:	A1	Scale:	1:500 @ A1	
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Drawing Status	FOR INFORMATION		Suitability	S2
Drawing No	COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-DP-DR-CH-008	Rev	P02	

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For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-004

For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-006

Consideration of shared use footway section to western side of existing crossing of New Road to provide link to Horseley Road and route west.

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. TBC at detailed design stage.

**Package 2**  
Part A: Link from Eagle Lane to Bagnall Street, Danks Way and Waterside Street.  
Eagle Lane on-carriageway route from New Road to Hempole Lane:  
• Transition onto carriageway from link along New Road.  
• On carriageway route with appropriate markings.  
• Provide traffic calming in the form of speed cushions.

**Package 4 - Part C**  
Upgraded north/south route from Moors Mill Lane to Great Bridge Roundabout and Horseley Heath (via Toll End Road, New Road, Great Western Way and Horseley Heath):  
• Build out existing footways to provide segregated minimum 2m wide footway and minimum 2.5m wide (3m preferred) two-way cycle route at footway level with minimum 0.5m buffer from live carriageway.  
• Minimum 3m wide shared use links to be provided at approaches to uncontrolled and controlled crossings.  
• Tactile paving to be supplied/ upgraded as required.  
• Carriageway markings and lane widths to be adjusted as required whilst maintaining existing provision where possible to mitigate for reduction in capacity.  
• Route to tie into on-carriageway cycle route on Moors Mill Lane at Northern end, cycle route on Horseley Heath at southern end and Toucan crossing of Great Western Way to the east.

**Package 4**  
Part A: Brahmah Way link to Great Bridge Tram Stop:  
• Construct new 3m minimum shared use footpath link from parking court to east of No.17 Brahmah Way along railway embankment to the north side of the track bed.  
• Existing fence and vegetation to be cleared to end of parking court to create access point (Note: possible impact on private parking spaces).  
• Equality Act compliant ramps required to access track bed level and proposed Metro tram stop.

**Package 4 - Part B**  
Toucan crossing next to the Metro Stop.  
• Upgrade of existing crossing to Toucan crossing.  
• Tactile paving and appropriate dropped kerbs to be provided along with associated carriageway markings serving toucan crossing.

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. TBC at detailed design stage.

For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-002

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P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JE	HH	CB	10/12/21
P01	For Information	JD	DM	HH	29/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	JD	Date:	29/09/2021		
Drawn:	JD	Date:	29/09/2021		
Checked:	DM	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		

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**Dudley**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

**Sandwell**  
Metropolitan Borough Council

part of **bct** Black Country Transport

Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 3 of 11**

Original Drawing Size : A1 Scale : 1:500 @ A1  
Dimensions : -

Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

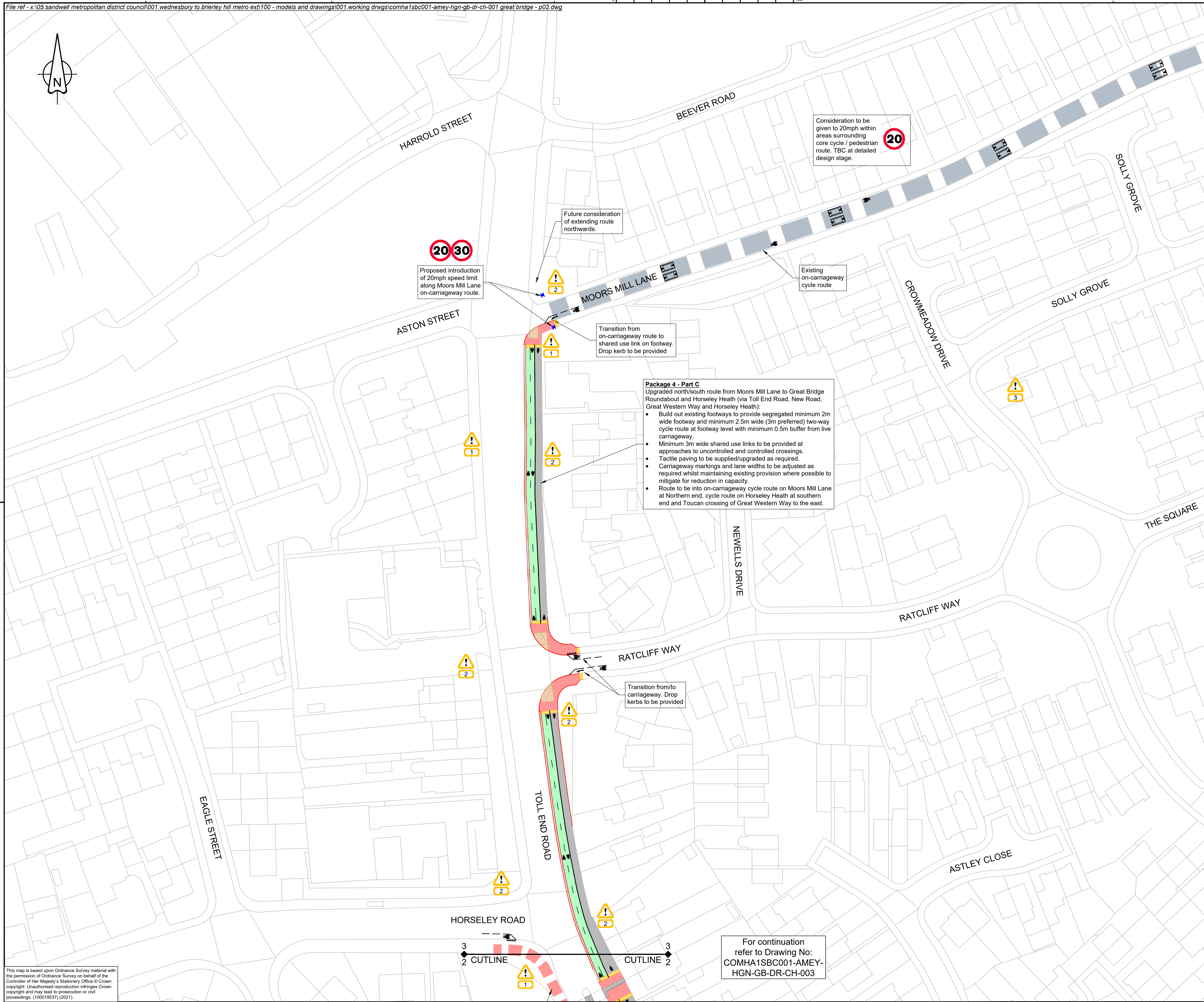
Suitability  
S2

Drawing No  
COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-003

Rev  
P02

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**Package 4 - Part C**  
 Upgraded north/south route from Moors Mill Lane to Great Bridge Roundabout and Horseley Heath (via Toll End Road, New Road, Great Western Way and Horseley Heath):

- Build out existing footways to provide segregated minimum 2m wide footway and minimum 2.5m wide (3m preferred) two-way cycle route at footway level with minimum 0.5m buffer from live carriageway.
- Minimum 3m wide shared use links to be provided at approaches to uncontrolled and controlled crossings.
- Tactile paving to be supplied/upgraded as required.
- Carriageway markings and lane widths to be adjusted as required whilst maintaining existing provision where possible to mitigate for reduction in capacity.
- Route to tie into on-carriageway cycle route on Moors Mill Lane at Northern end, cycle route on Horseley Heath at southern end and Toucan crossing of Great Western Way to the east.

P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JE	HH	CB	10/12/21
P01	For Information	JD	DM	HH	29/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
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**Sandwell** Metropolitan Borough Council

Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 4 of 11**

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
Dimensions : -	

FOR INFORMATION	Suitability S2
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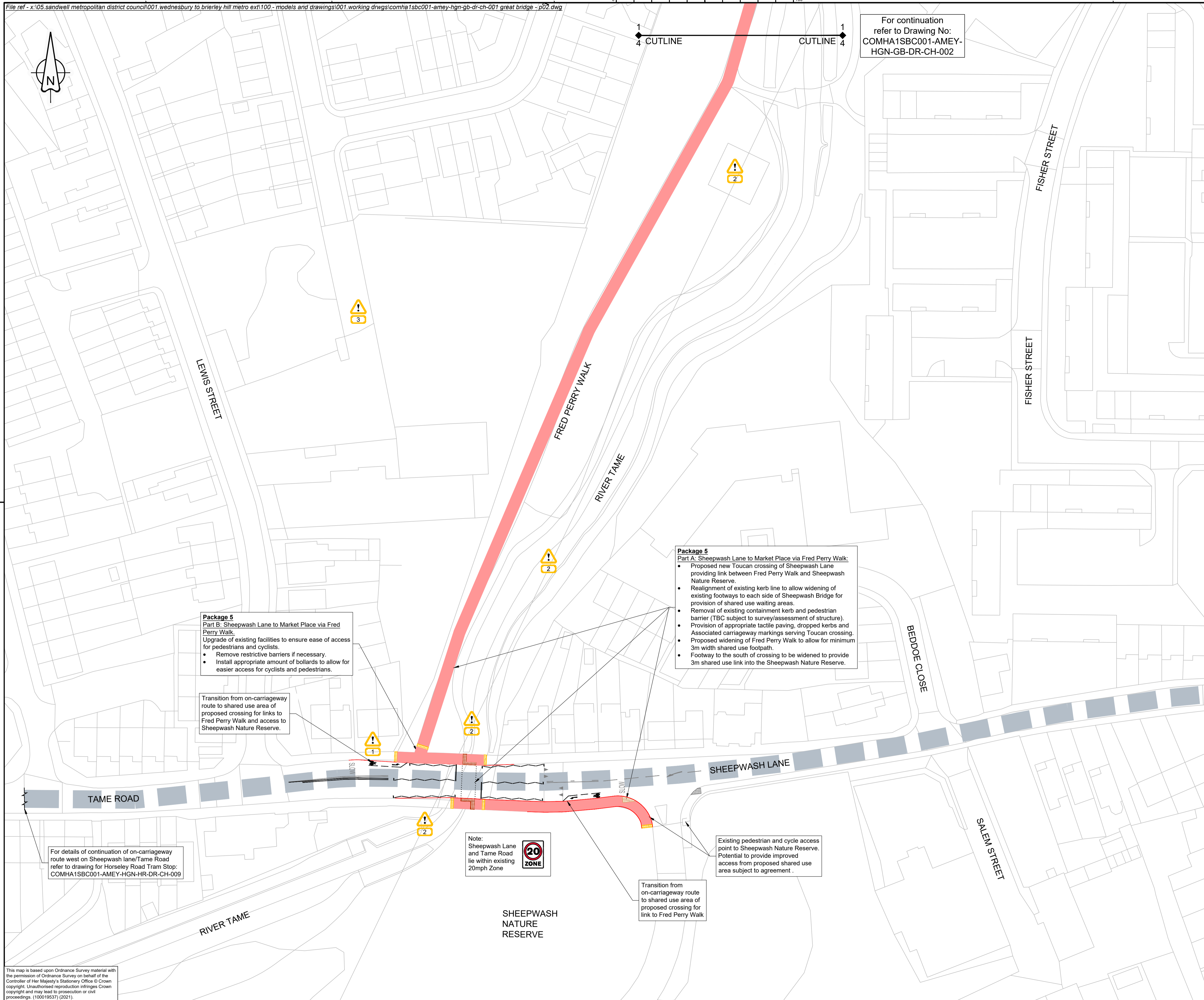
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For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-003

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For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-002

**Package 5**  
Part B: Sheepwash Lane to Market Place via Fred Perry Walk.  
Upgrade of existing facilities to ensure ease of access for pedestrians and cyclists.  
• Remove restrictive barriers if necessary.  
• Install appropriate amount of bollards to allow for easier access for cyclists and pedestrians.

Transition from on-carriageway route to shared use area of proposed crossing for links to Fred Perry Walk and access to Sheepwash Nature Reserve.

**Package 5**  
Part A: Sheepwash Lane to Market Place via Fred Perry Walk.  
• Proposed new Toucan crossing of Sheepwash Lane providing link between Fred Perry Walk and Sheepwash Nature Reserve.  
• Realignment of existing kerb line to allow widening of existing footways to each side of Sheepwash Bridge for provision of shared use waiting areas.  
• Removal of existing containment kerb and pedestrian barrier (TBC subject to survey/assessment of structure).  
• Provision of appropriate tactile paving, dropped kerbs and Associated carriageway markings serving Toucan crossing.  
• Proposed widening of Fred Perry Walk to allow for minimum 3m width shared use footpath.  
• Footway to the south of crossing to be widened to provide 3m shared use link into the Sheepwash Nature Reserve.

Note: Sheepwash Lane and Tame Road lie within existing 20mph Zone



Existing pedestrian and cycle access point to Sheepwash Nature Reserve. Potential to provide improved access from proposed shared use area subject to agreement.

Transition from on-carriageway route to shared use area of proposed crossing for link to Fred Perry Walk

For details of continuation of on-carriageway route west on Sheepwash Lane/Tame Road refer to drawing for Horseley Road Tram Stop: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-009

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Checked:	DM	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 5 of 11**

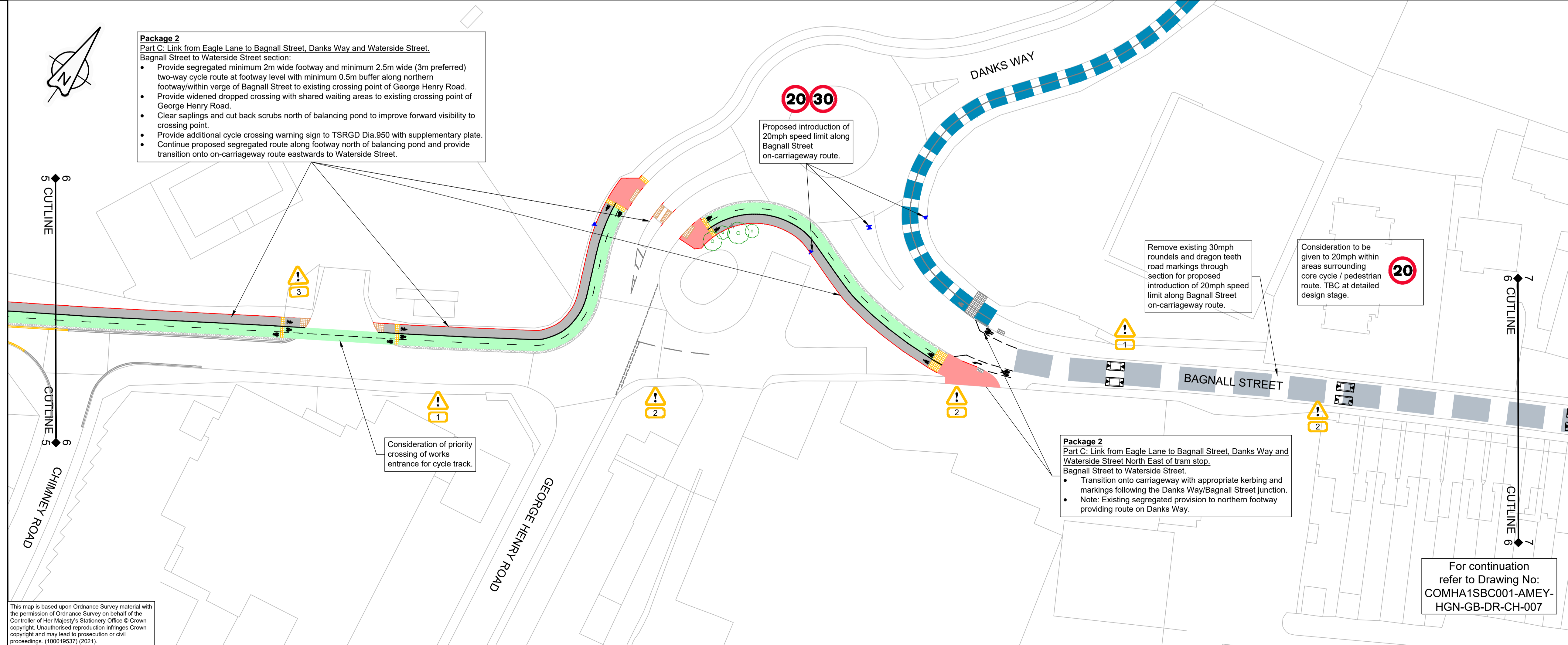
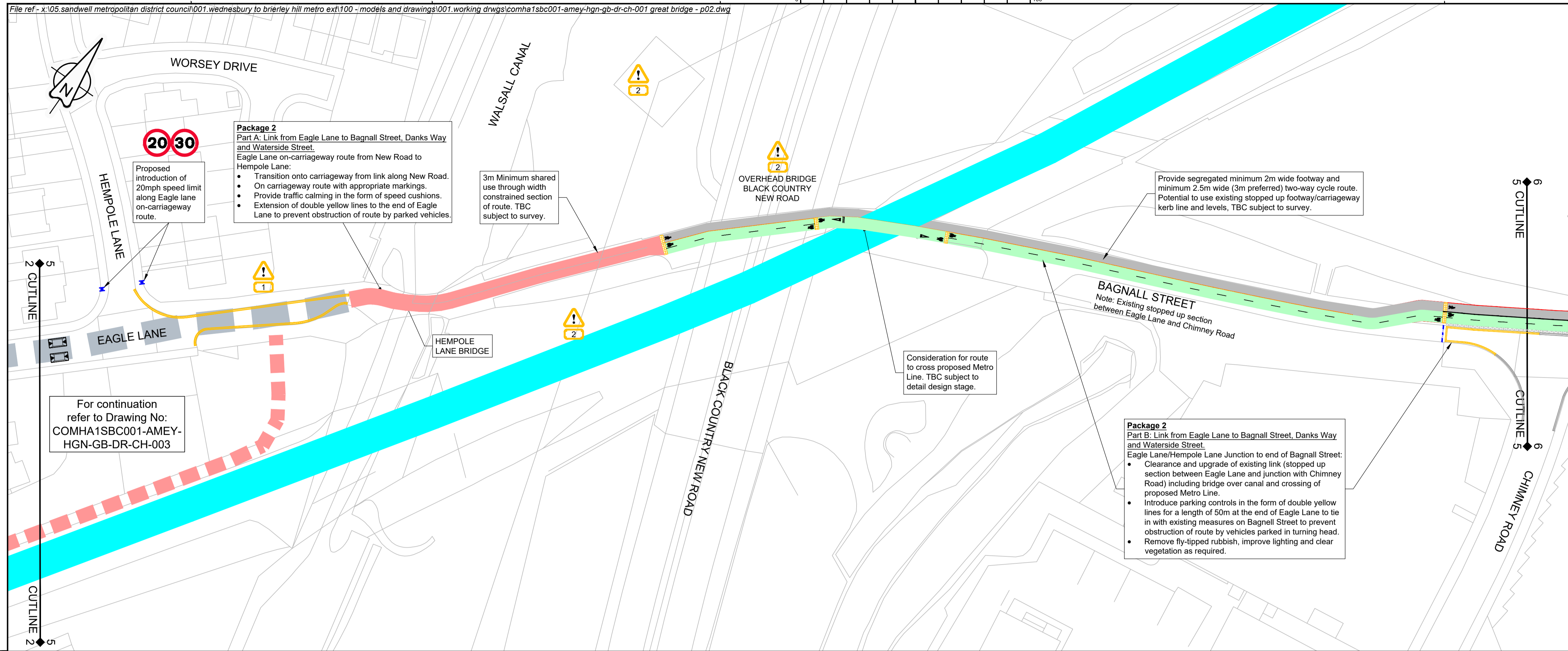
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FOR INFORMATION	Suitability S2
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-005	Rev P02
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Designed:	JD	Date:	29/09/2021		
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Checked:	DM	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		



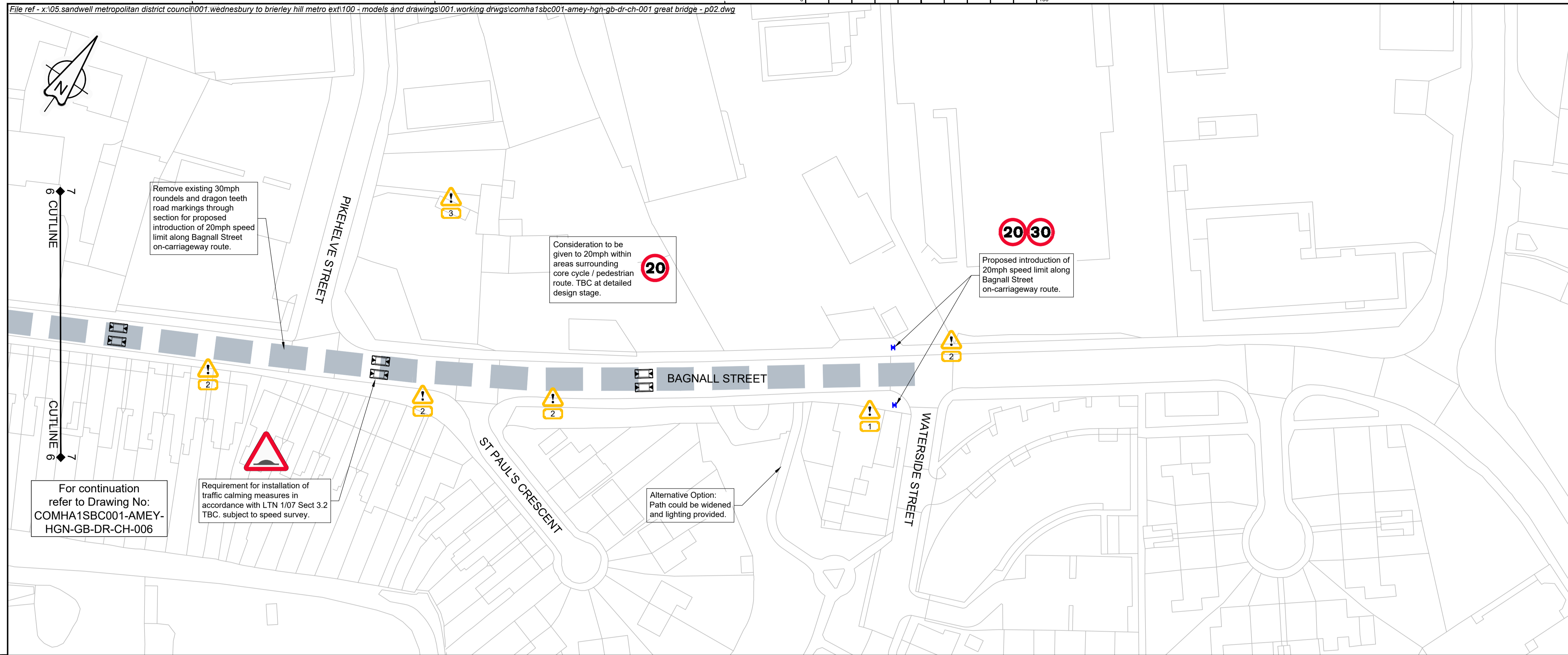
Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 6 of 11**

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
Dimensions : -	
Drawing Status <b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	Suitability S2
Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-006	Rev P02

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Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 7 of 11**

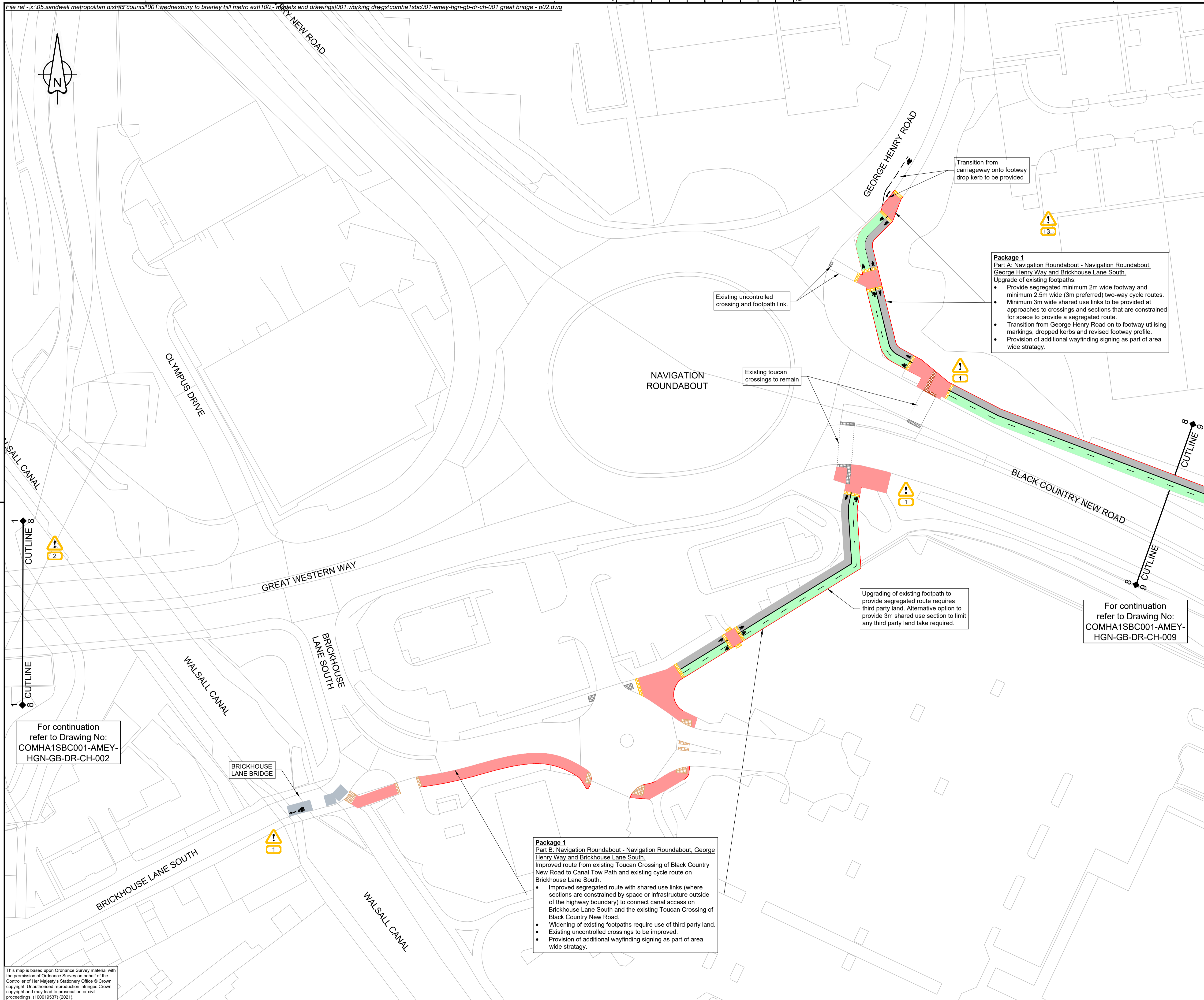
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Drawing Status <b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	Suitability S2
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Drawing No <b>COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-007</b>	Rev P02
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**Package 1**  
**Part A: Navigation Roundabout - Navigation Roundabout, George Henry Way and Brickhouse Lane South.**  
 Upgrade of existing footpaths:

- Provide segregated minimum 2m wide footway and minimum 2.5m wide (3m preferred) two-way cycle routes.
- Minimum 3m wide shared use links to be provided at approaches to crossings and sections that are constrained for space to provide a segregated route.
- Transition from George Henry Road on to footway utilising markings, dropped kerbs and revised footway profile.
- Provision of additional wayfinding signing as part of area wide strategy.

**Package 1**  
**Part B: Navigation Roundabout - Navigation Roundabout, George Henry Way and Brickhouse Lane South.**  
 Improved route from existing Toucan Crossing of Black Country New Road to Canal Tow Path and existing cycle route on Brickhouse Lane South.

- Improved segregated route with shared use links (where sections are constrained by space or infrastructure outside of the highway boundary) to connect canal access on Brickhouse Lane South and the existing Toucan Crossing of Black Country New Road.
- Widening of existing footpaths require use of third party land.
- Existing uncontrolled crossings to be improved.
- Provision of additional wayfinding signing as part of area wide strategy.

For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-009

For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-002

P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JE	HH	CB	10/12/21
P01	For Information	JD	DM	HH	29/09/21
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Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 8 of 11**

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
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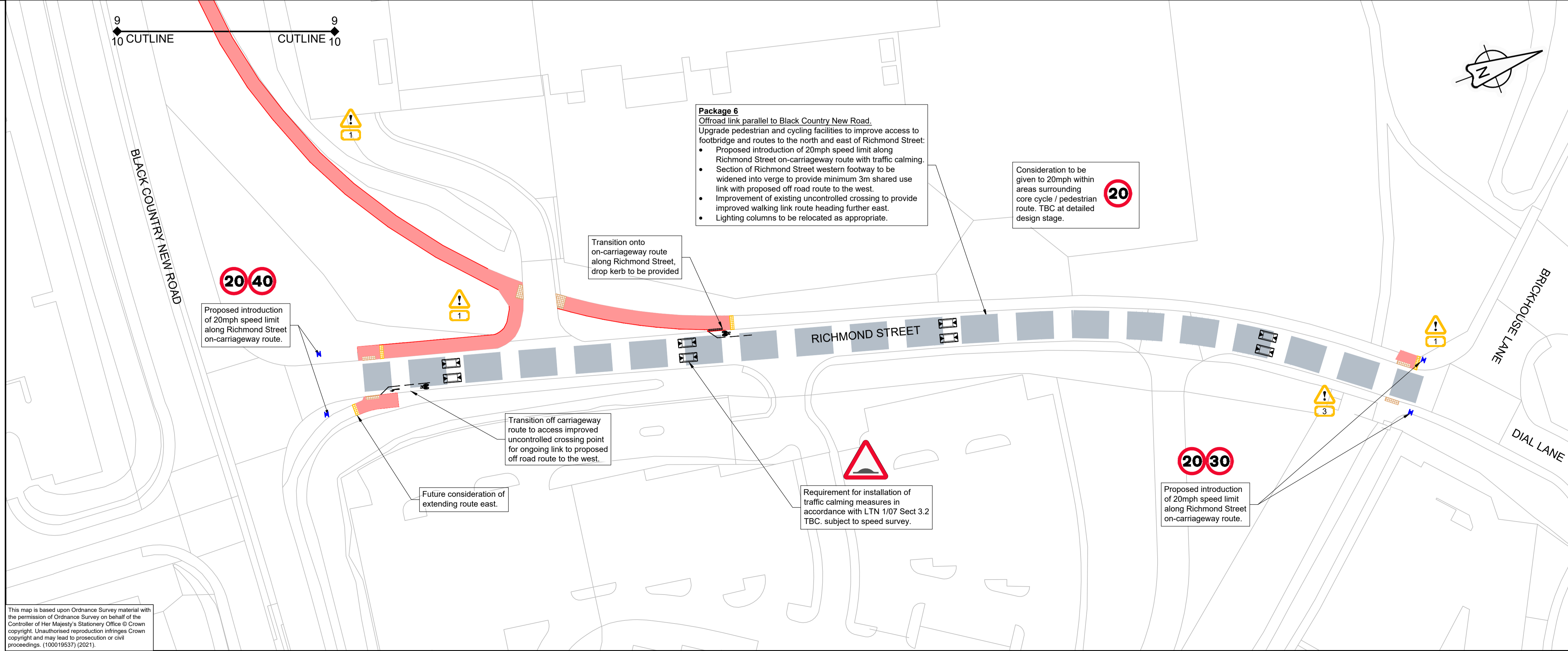
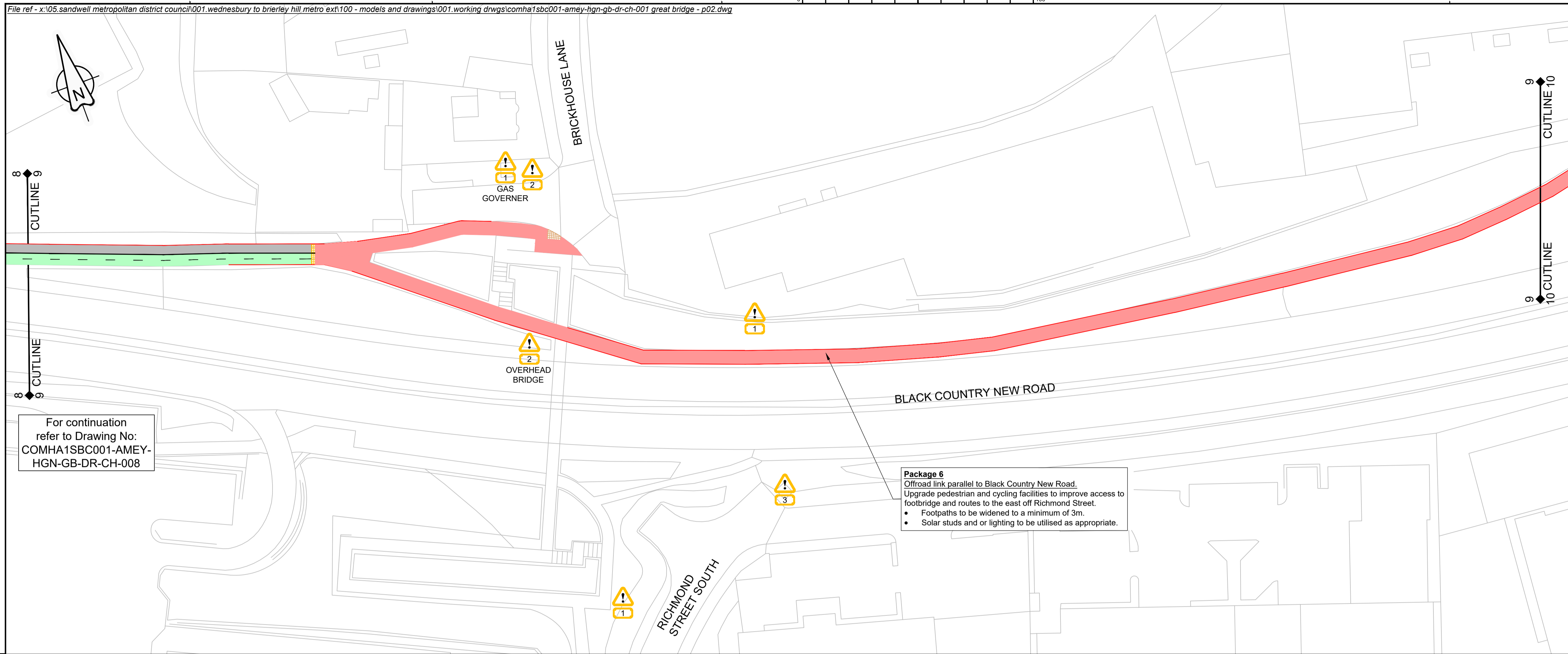
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-008	Rev P02
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For continuation refer to Drawing No: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-008

**Package 6**  
Offroad link parallel to Black Country New Road. Upgrade pedestrian and cycling facilities to improve access to footbridge and routes to the east off Richmond Street.

- Footpaths to be widened to a minimum of 3m.
- Solar studs and or lighting to be utilised as appropriate.

**Package 6**  
Offroad link parallel to Black Country New Road. Upgrade pedestrian and cycling facilities to improve access to footbridge and routes to the north and east of Richmond Street:

- Proposed introduction of 20mph speed limit along Richmond Street on-carriageway route with traffic calming.
- Section of Richmond Street western footway to be widened into verge to provide minimum 3m shared use link with proposed off road route to the west.
- Improvement of existing uncontrolled crossing to provide improved walking link route heading further east.
- Lighting columns to be relocated as appropriate.

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. TBC at detailed design stage.

Proposed introduction of 20mph speed limit along Richmond Street on-carriageway route.

Transition off carriageway route to access improved uncontrolled crossing point for ongoing link to proposed off road route to the west.

Future consideration of extending route east.

Requirement for installation of traffic calming measures in accordance with LTN 1/07 Sect 3.2 TBC, subject to speed survey.

Proposed introduction of 20mph speed limit along Richmond Street on-carriageway route.

P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JE	HH	CB	10/12/21
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Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 9 of 11**

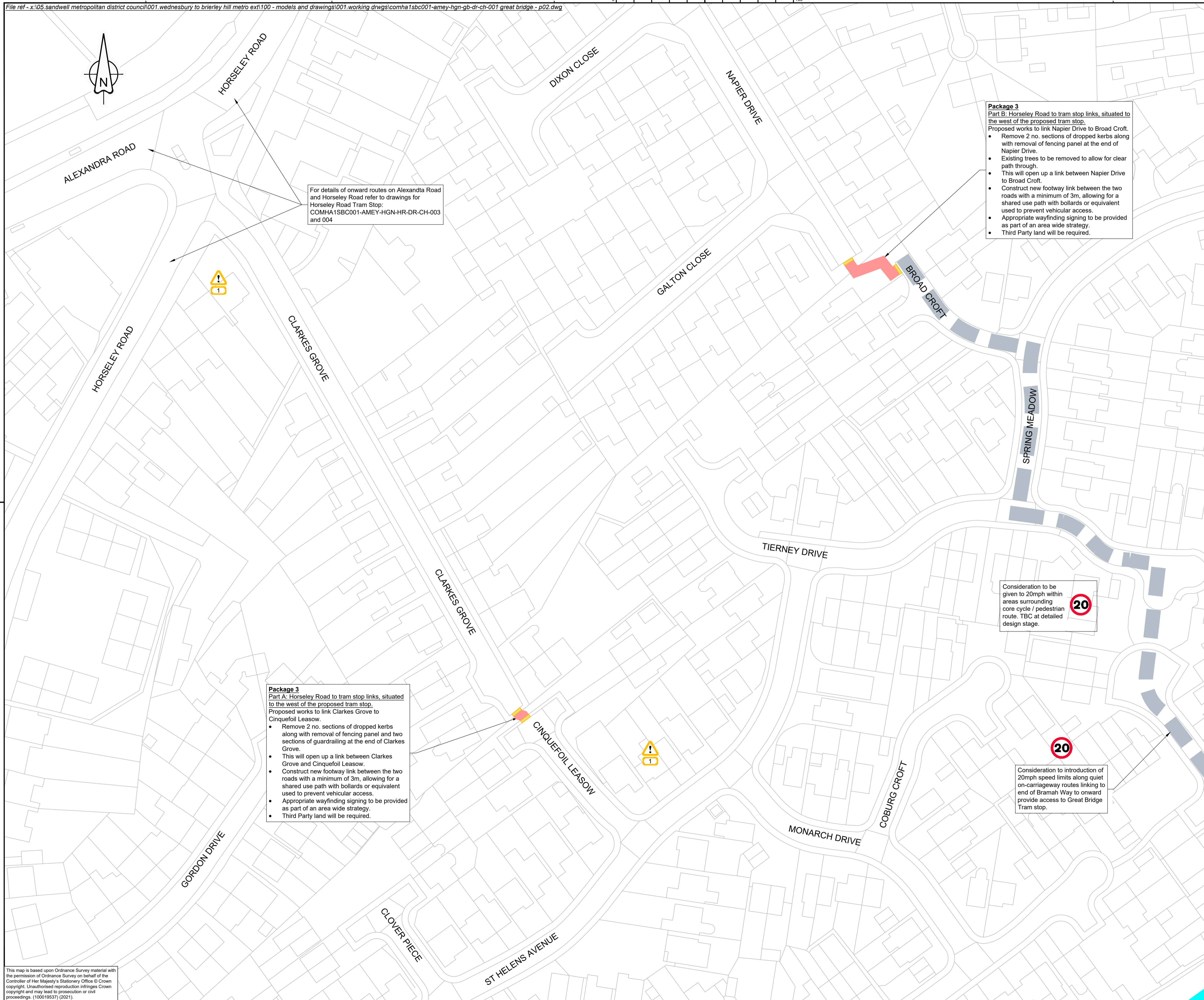
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Drawing Status <b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	Suitability S2
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Drawing No <b>COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-009</b>	Rev P02
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For details of onward routes on Alexandra Road and Horseley Road refer to drawings for Horseley Road Tram Stop: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-003 and 004

**Package 3**  
**Part B: Horseley Road to tram stop links, situated to the west of the proposed tram stop.**  
 Proposed works to link Napier Drive to Broad Croft.

- Remove 2 no. sections of dropped kerbs along with removal of fencing panel at the end of Napier Drive.
- Existing trees to be removed to allow for clear path through.
- This will open up a link between Napier Drive to Broad Croft.
- Construct new footway link between the two roads with a minimum of 3m, allowing for a shared use path with bollards or equivalent used to prevent vehicular access.
- Appropriate wayfinding signing to be provided as part of an area wide strategy.
- Third Party land will be required.

**Package 3**  
**Part A: Horseley Road to tram stop links, situated to the west of the proposed tram stop.**  
 Proposed works to link Clarkes Grove to Cinquefoil Leasow.

- Remove 2 no. sections of dropped kerbs along with removal of fencing panel and two sections of guardrailling at the end of Clarkes Grove.
- This will open up a link between Clarkes Grove and Cinquefoil Leasow.
- Construct new footway link between the two roads with a minimum of 3m, allowing for a shared use path with bollards or equivalent used to prevent vehicular access.
- Appropriate wayfinding signing to be provided as part of an area wide strategy.
- Third Party land will be required.

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. TBC at detailed design stage.

Consideration to introduction of 20mph speed limits along quiet on-carriageway routes linking to end of Bramah Way to onward provide access to Great Bridge Tram stop.

**RESIDUAL DESIGN HAZARDS**

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P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JE	HH	CB	10/12/21
P01	For Information	JD	DM	HH	29/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	JD	Date:	29/09/2021		
Drawn:	JD	Date:	29/09/2021		
Checked:	DM	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Client

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**Sandwell** Metropolitan Borough Council

Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 10 of 11**

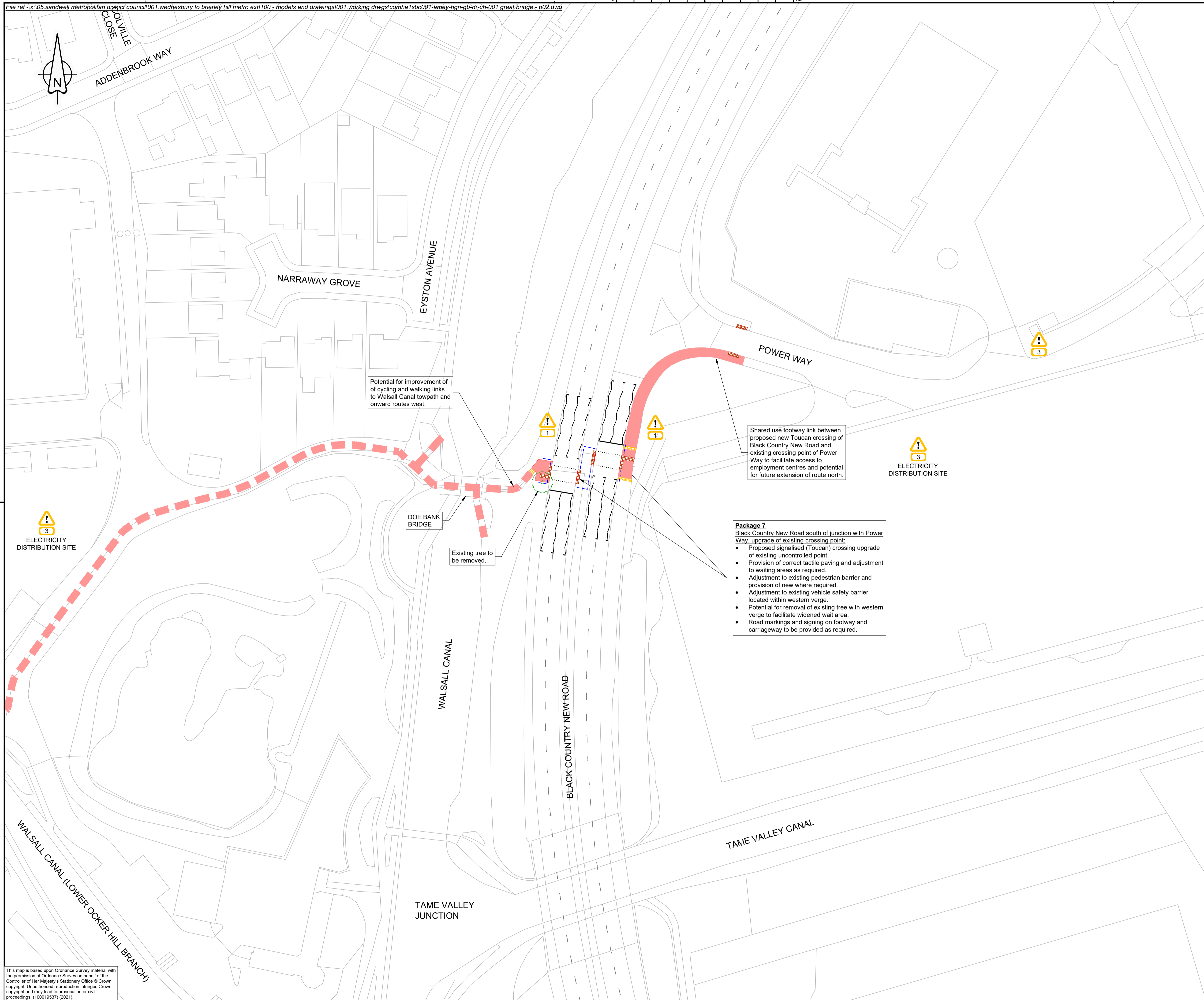
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Drawing Status	Suitability
<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	S2

Drawing No	Rev
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Checked:	DM	Date:	29/09/2021		
Approved:	HH	Date:	29/09/2021		

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Project Name

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Drawing Title

**Great Bridge Tram Stop General Arrangement Sheet 11 of 11**

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
Dimensions : -	

Drawing Status

**FOR INFORMATION**

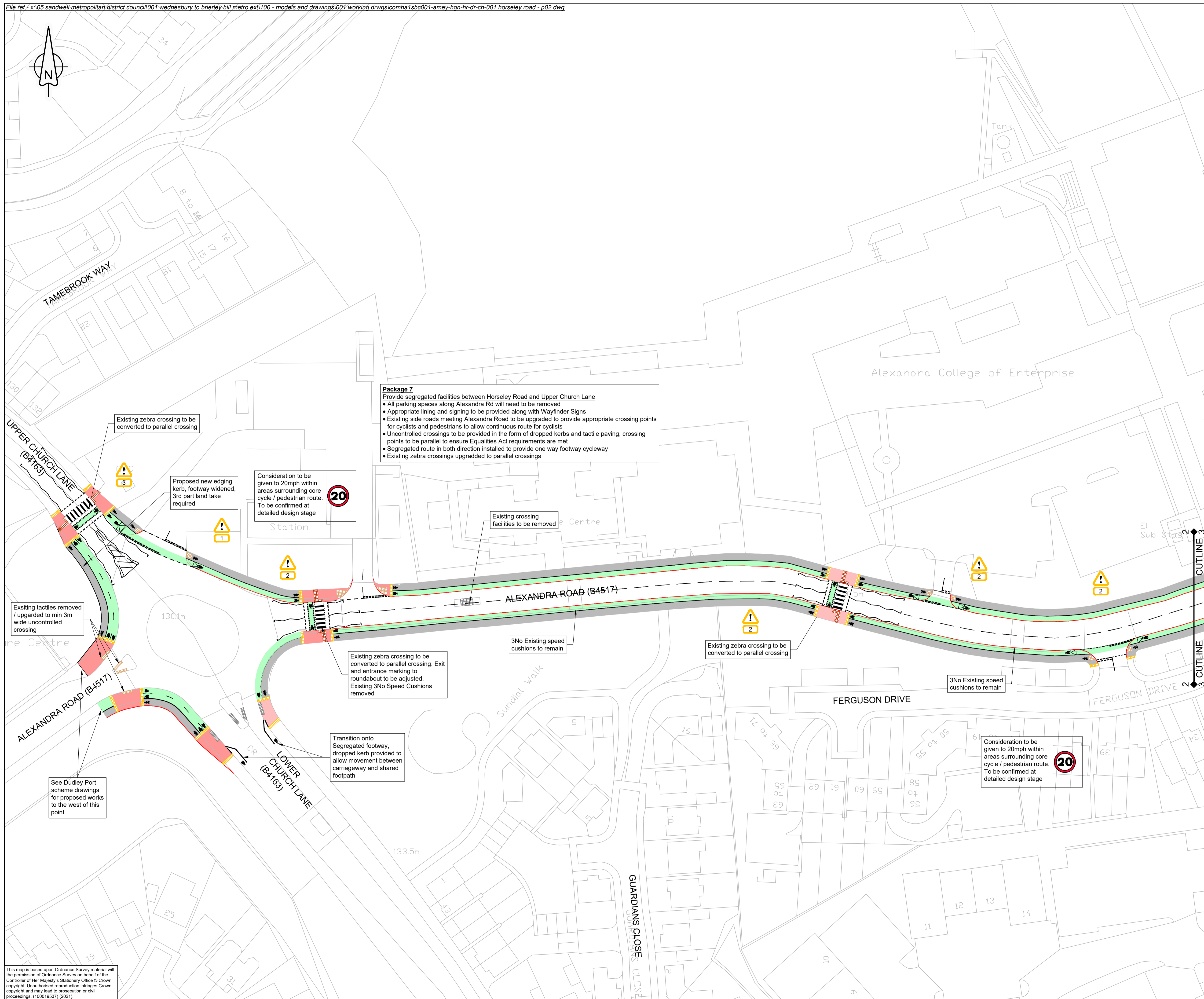
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Drawing No	Rev
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**Package 7**  
 Provide segregated facilities between Horseley Road and Upper Church Lane

- All parking spaces along Alexandra Rd will need to be removed
- Appropriate lining and signing to be provided along with Wayfinder Signs
- Existing side roads meeting Alexandra Road to be upgraded to provide appropriate crossing points for cyclists and pedestrians to allow continuous route for cyclists
- Uncontrolled crossings to be provided in the form of dropped kerbs and tactile paving, crossing points to be parallel to ensure Equalities Act requirements are met
- Segregated route in both direction installed to provide one way footway cycleway
- Existing zebra crossings upgraded to parallel crossings

P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	DM	HH	CB	09/12/21
P01	For Information	RC	MG	HH	30/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	VP	Date:	30/09/21		
Drawn:	RC	Date:	30/09/21		
Checked:	MG	Date:	30/09/21		
Approved:	HH	Date:	30/09/21		

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 7 - Alexandra Road Sheet 2 of 10**

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
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Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

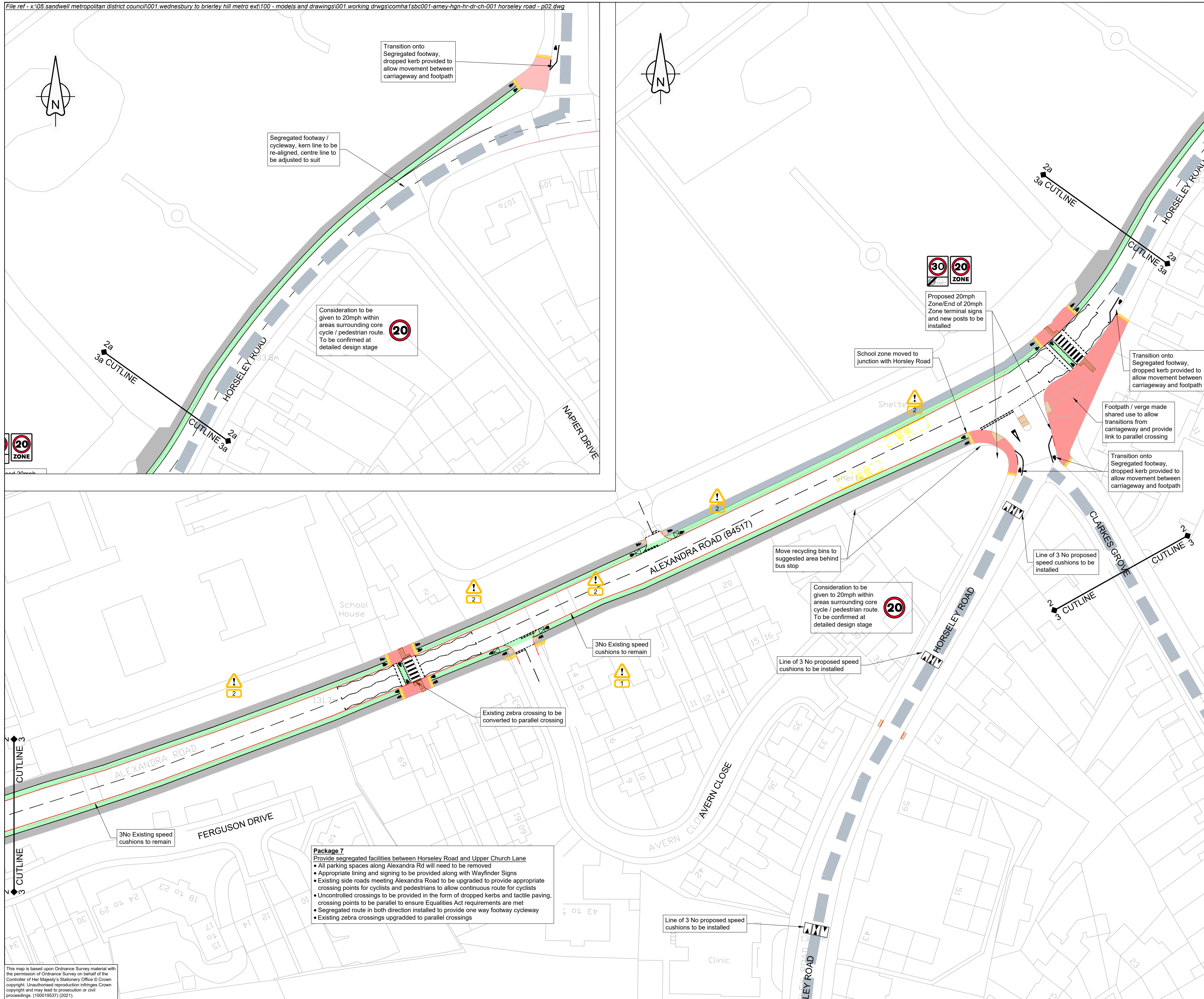
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-002	Rev P02
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Drawn:	RC	Date:	30/09/21		
Checked:	MG	Date:	30/09/21		
Approved:	HH	Date:	30/09/21		

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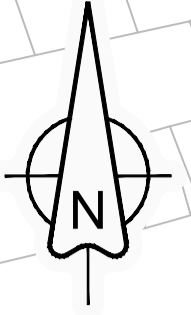
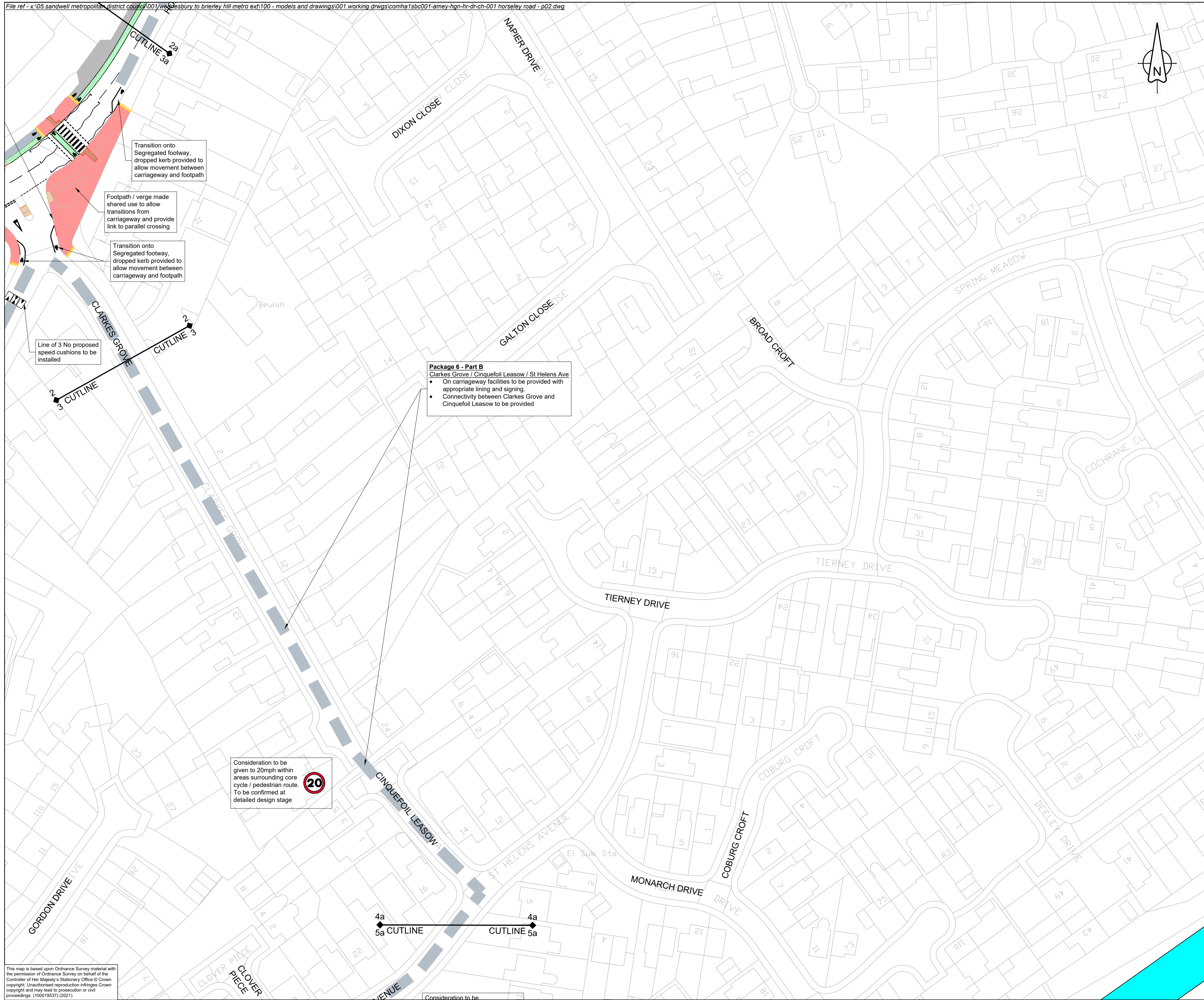
Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 7 - Alexandra Road Sheet 3 of 10**

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Drawing No	COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-003	Rev	P02

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Checked:	MG	Date:	30/09/21		
Approved:	HH	Date:	30/09/21		

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 6 - Crossroads Sheet 4 of 10**

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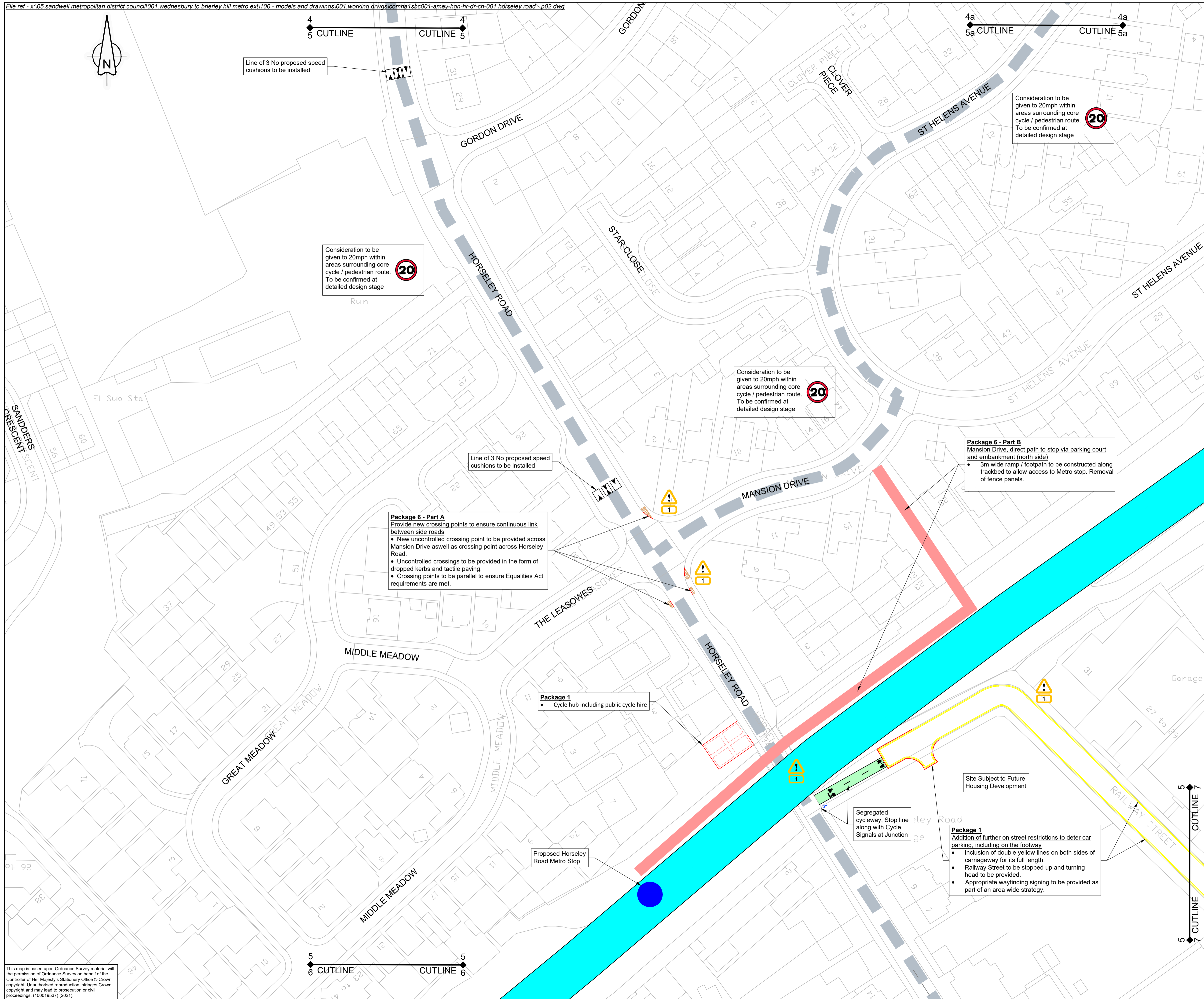
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Suitability  
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-004	Rev P02
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P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	DM	HH	CB	09/12/21
P01	For Information	RC	MG	HH	30/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	VP	Date:	30/09/21		
Drawn:	RC	Date:	30/09/21		
Checked:	MG	Date:	30/09/21		
Approved:	HH	Date:	30/09/21		

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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 1 - Railway Street Package 6 - Crossroads Sheet 5 of 10**

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Drawing Status  
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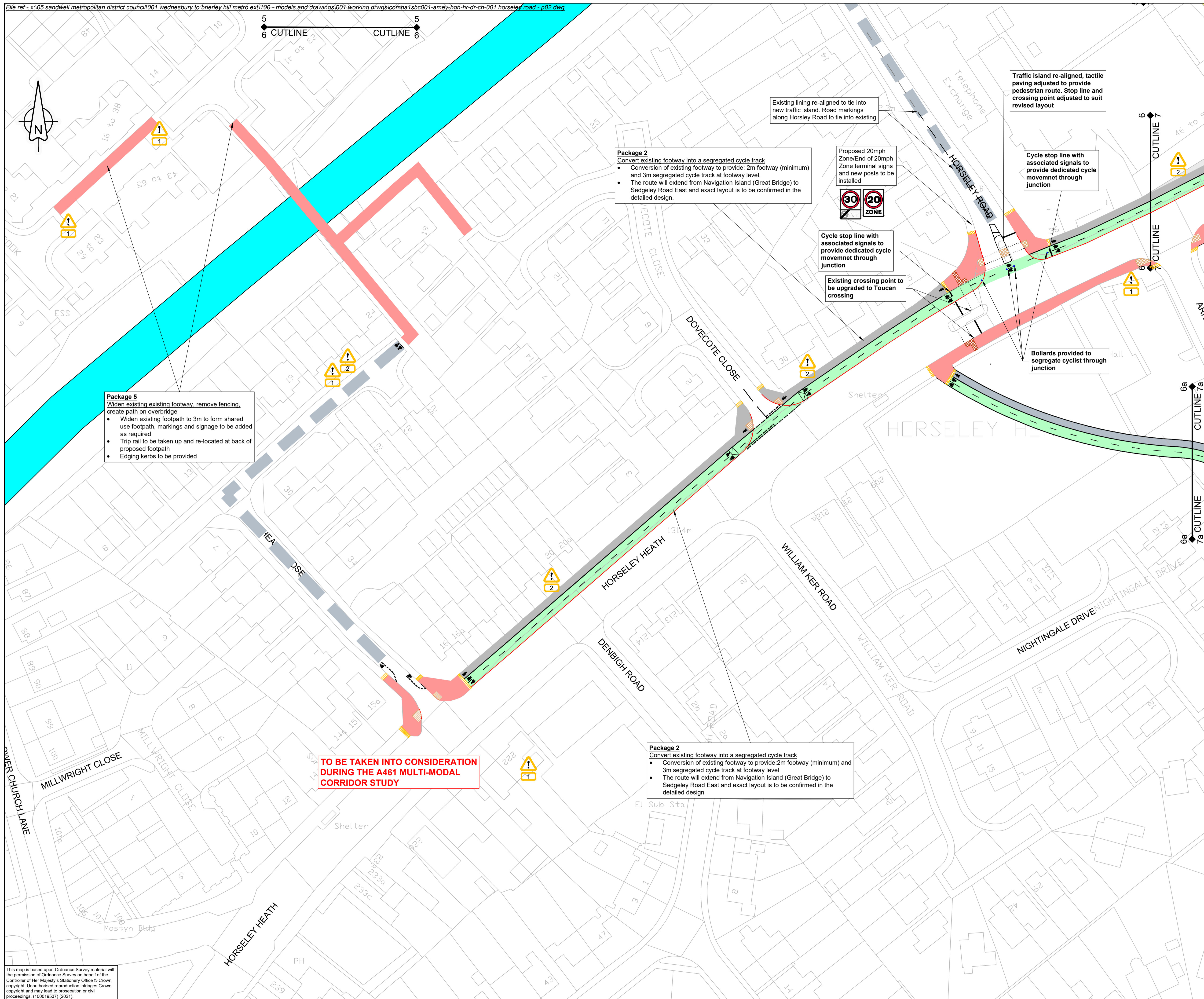
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Drawing No  
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Rev  
P02

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Drawn:	RC	Date:	30/09/21		
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Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 2 - Horseley Road / Horseley Heath Package 5 - Middle Meadow to Heath Close Sheet 6 of 10**

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Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
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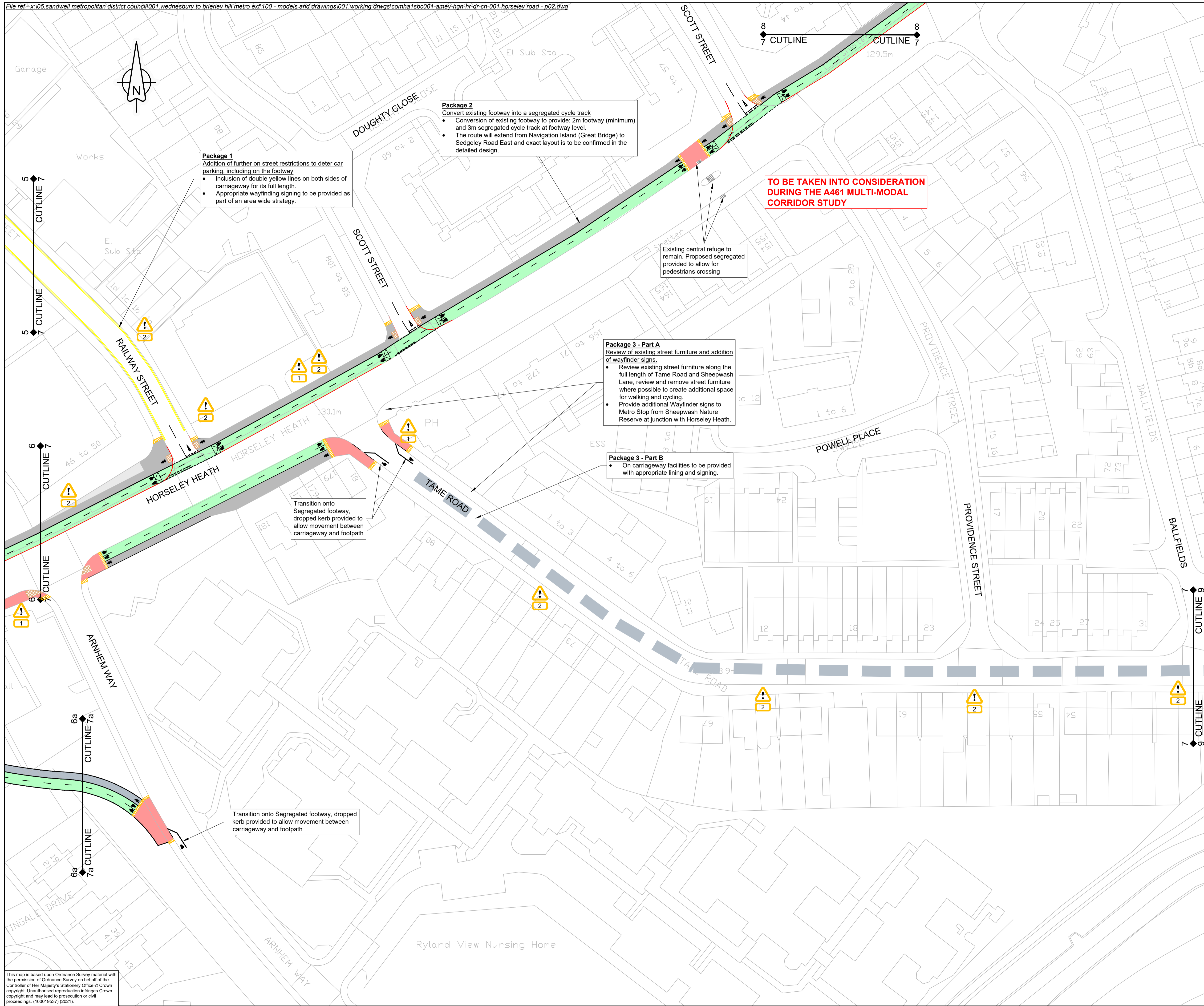
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P02

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**Package 1**  
 Addition of further on street restrictions to deter car parking, including on the footway

- Inclusion of double yellow lines on both sides of carriageway for its full length.
- Appropriate wayfinding signing to be provided as part of an area wide strategy.

**Package 2**  
 Convert existing footway into a segregated cycle track

- Conversion of existing footway to provide: 2m footway (minimum) and 3m segregated cycle track at footway level.
- The route will extend from Navigation Island (Great Bridge) to Sedgely Road East and exact layout is to be confirmed in the detailed design.

**Package 3 - Part A**  
 Review of existing street furniture and addition of wayfinder signs

- Review existing street furniture along the full length of Tame Road and Sheepwash Lane, review and remove street furniture where possible to create additional space for walking and cycling.
- Provide additional Wayfinder signs to Metro Stop from Sheepwash Nature Reserve at junction with Horseley Heath.

**Package 3 - Part B**

- On carriageway facilities to be provided with appropriate lining and signing.

**TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION DURING THE A461 MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR STUDY**

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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop  
 Package 1 - Railway Street  
 Package 2 - Horseley Road / Horseley Heath  
 Package 3 - Tame Road and Sheepwash Lane  
 Sheet 7 of 10**

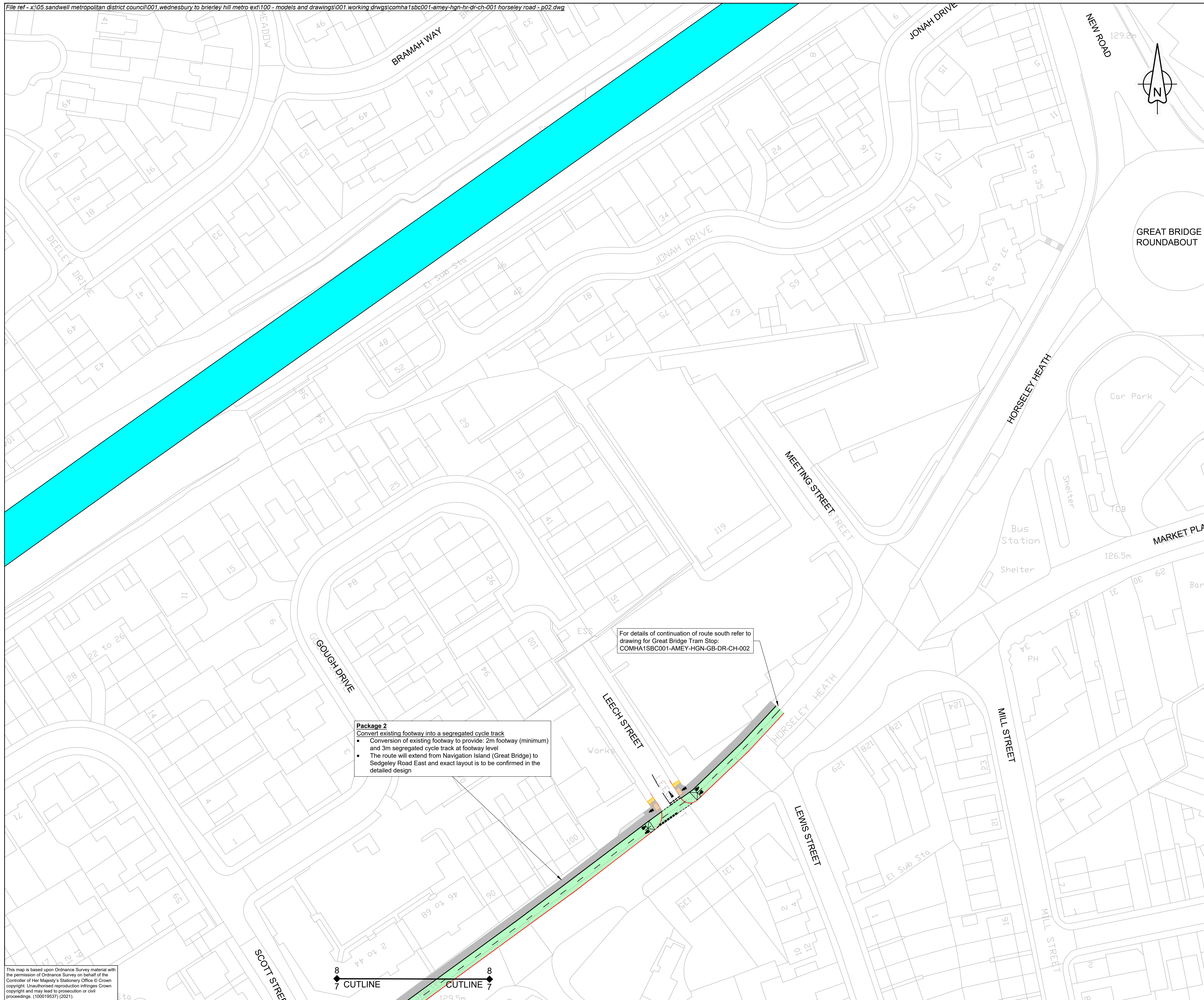
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Drawing No	Rev
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For details of continuation of route south refer to drawing for Great Bridge Tram Stop: COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-GB-DR-CH-002

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Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 2 - Horseley Road / Horseley Heath Sheet 8 of 10**

Original Drawing Size : A1      Scale : 1:500 @ A1  
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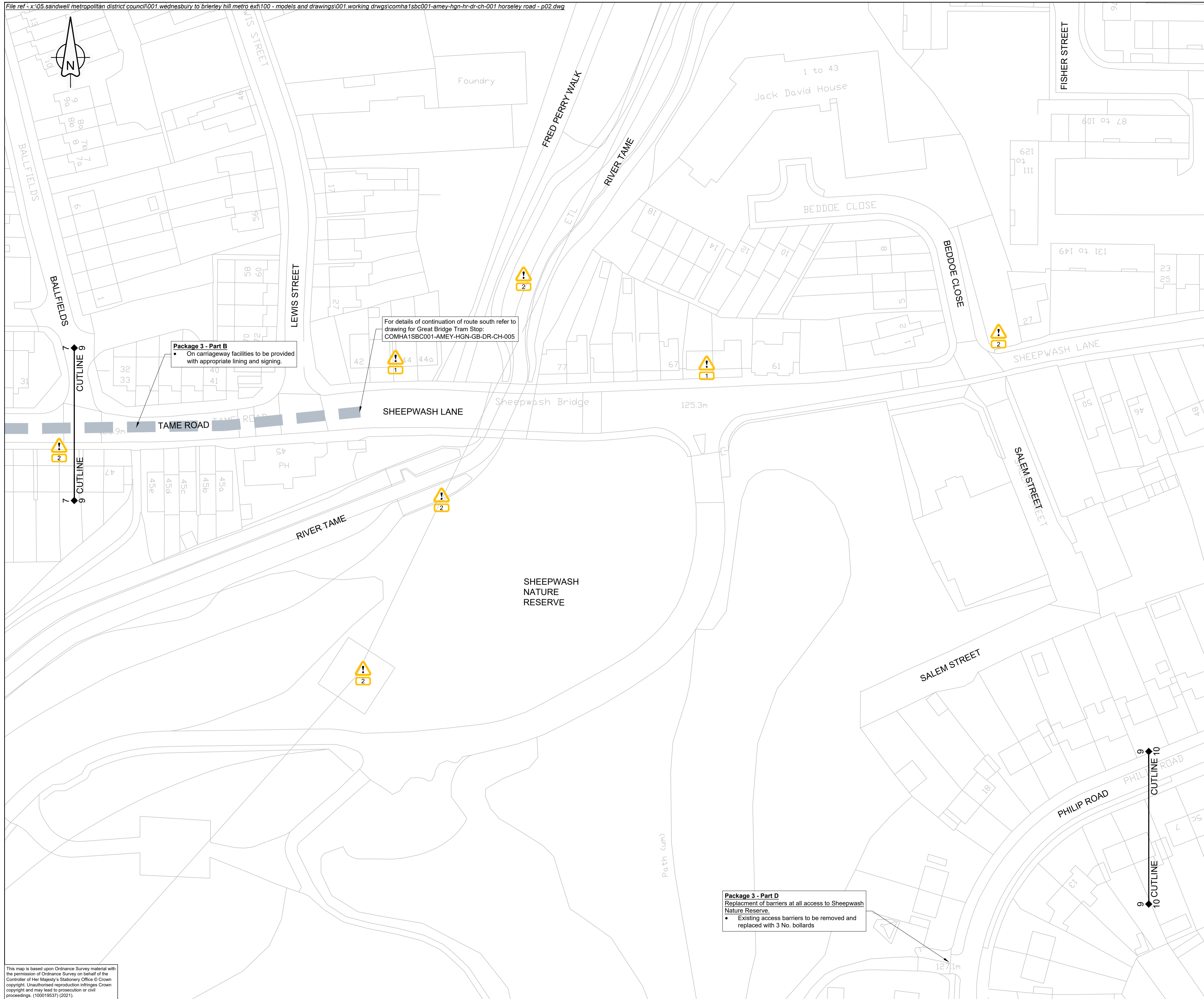
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**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
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Drawing No  
**COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-008**

Rev  
 P02

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Drawn: RC		Date: 30/09/21			
Checked: MG		Date: 30/09/21			
Approved: HH		Date: 30/09/21			

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 3 - Tame Road and Sheepwash Lane Sheet 9 of 10**

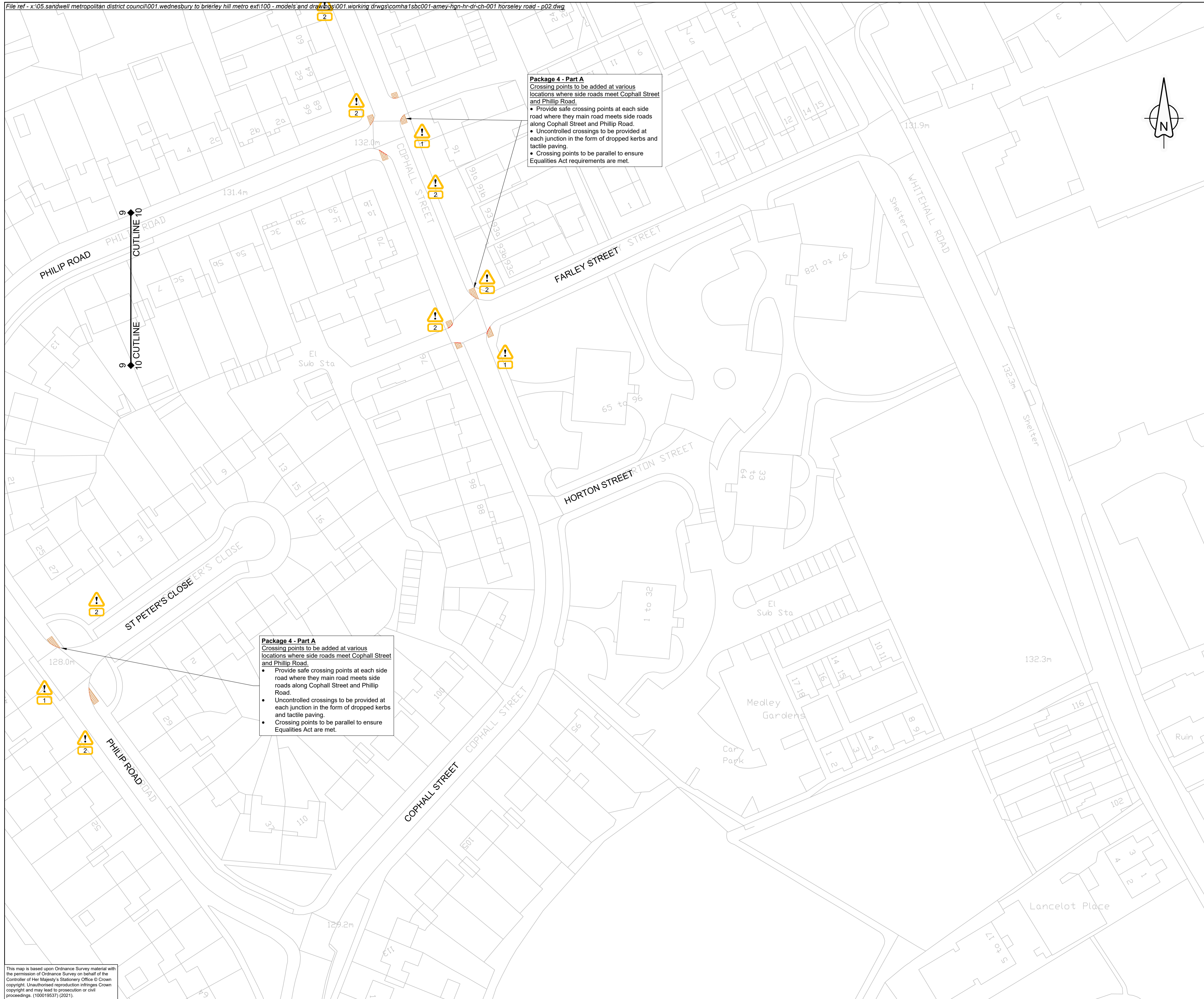
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Drawing Status <b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	Suitability S2
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-HR-DR-CH-009	Rev P02
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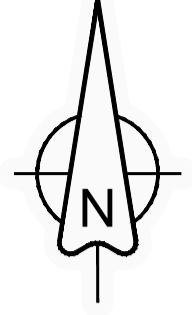


**RESIDUAL DESIGN HAZARDS**

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P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	DM	HH	CB	09/12/21
P01	For Information	RC	MG	HH	30/09/21
Rev	Revision details	Drwn	Chkd	Appd	Date
Designed:	VP	Date:	30/09/21		
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Drawing Title  
**Horseley Road Tram Stop Package 4 - Cophall Street and Philip Road Sheet 10 of 10**

Original Drawing Size : A1 Scale : 1:500 @ A1  
 Dimensions : -

Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
 S2

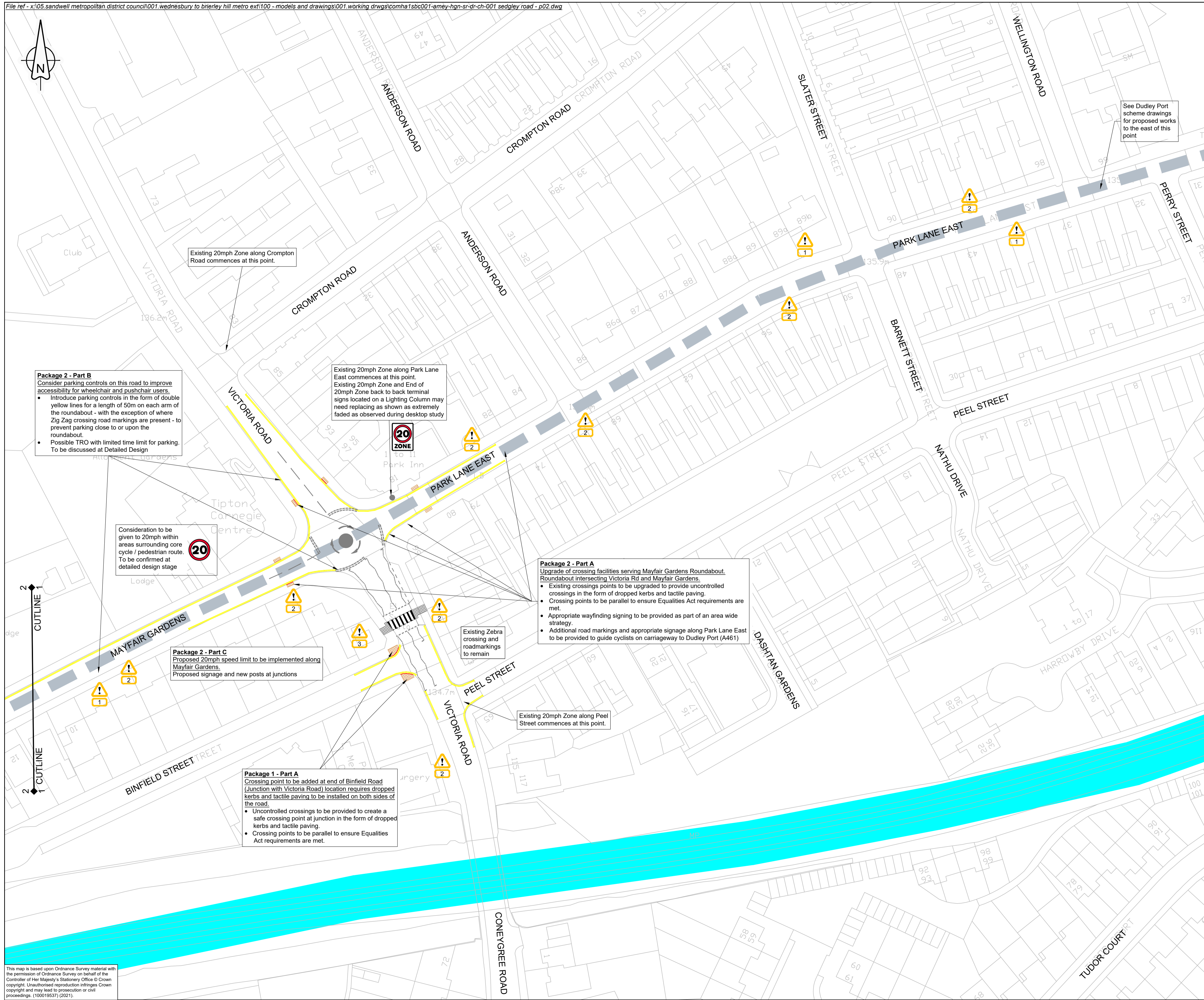
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Rev  
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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 1 - Binfield Street and Mayfair Gardens, links to stop Package 2 - Mayfair Gardens Roundabout and linking roads**

Sheet 2 of 8

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
Dimensions : -	

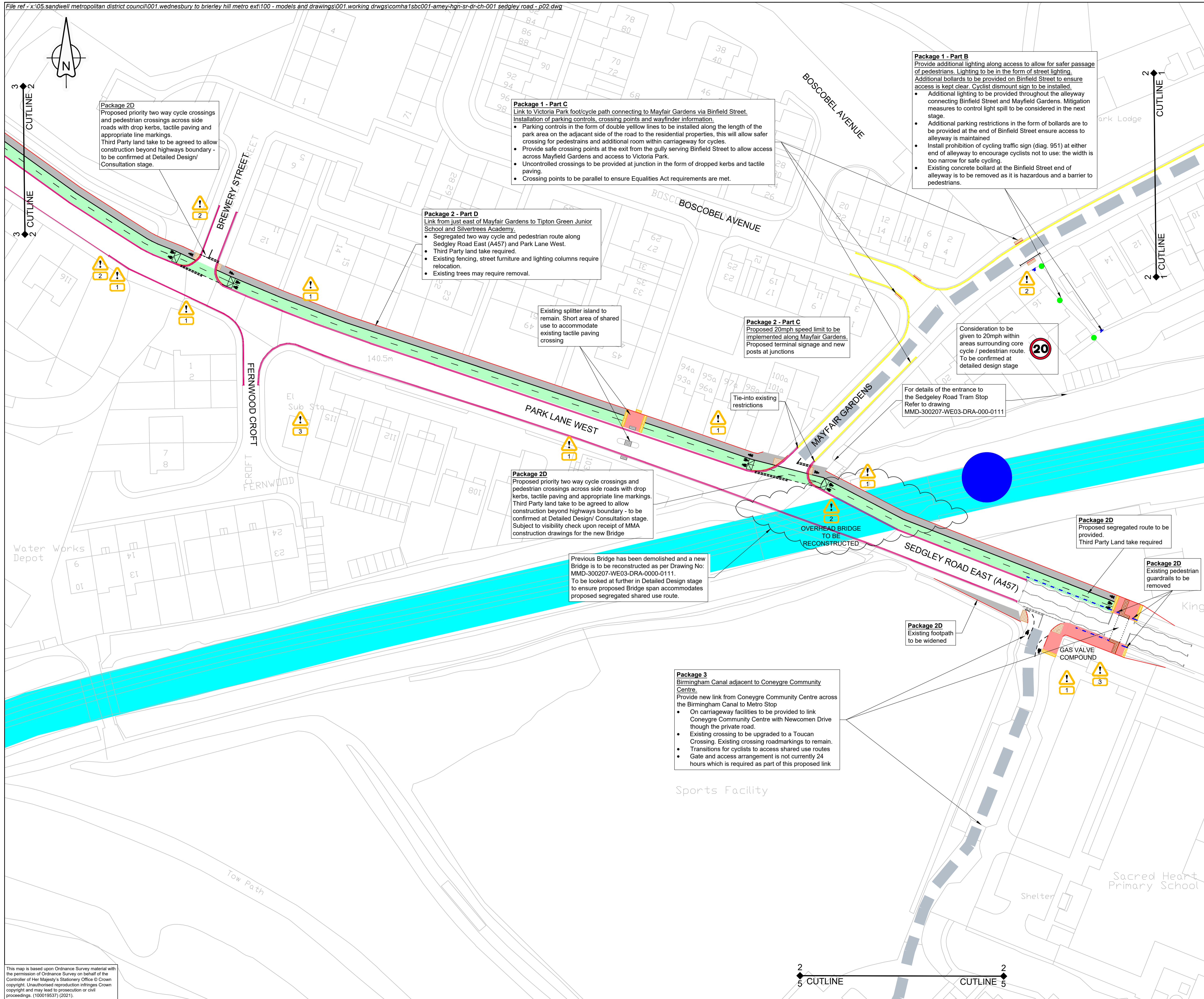
Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-SR-DR-CH-002	Rev P02
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Designed:	MG	Date:	29/09/2021		
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Checked:	MG	Date:	29/09/2021		
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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 1 - Binfield Street and Mayfair Gardens, links to stop Package 2 - Mayfair Gardens Roundabout and linking roads Package 3 - Birmingham Canal (old Main Line) adjacent to Coneygre Community Centre Sheet 3 of 8**

Original Drawing Size:	A1	Scale:	1:500 @ A1
Dimensions:	-		

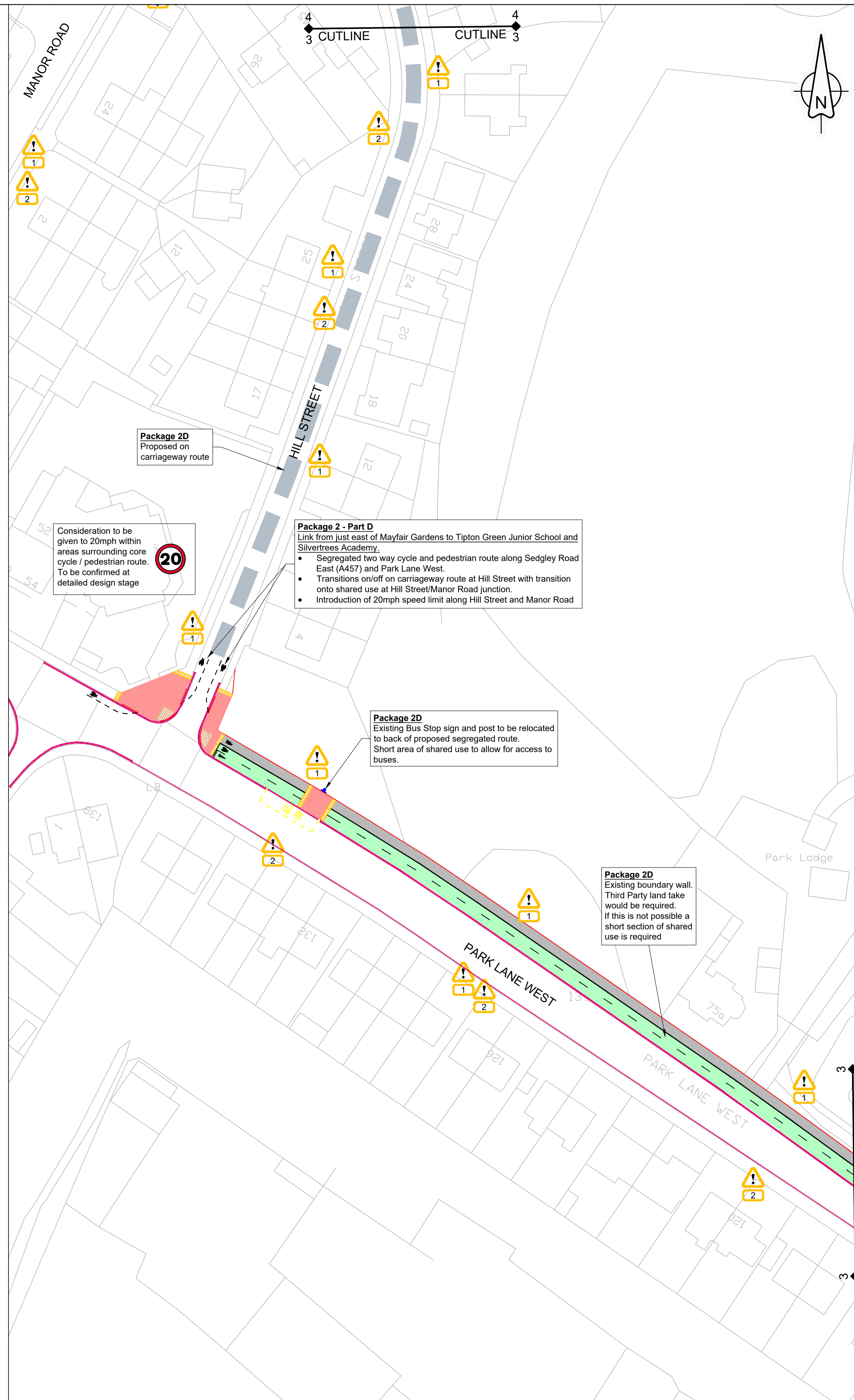
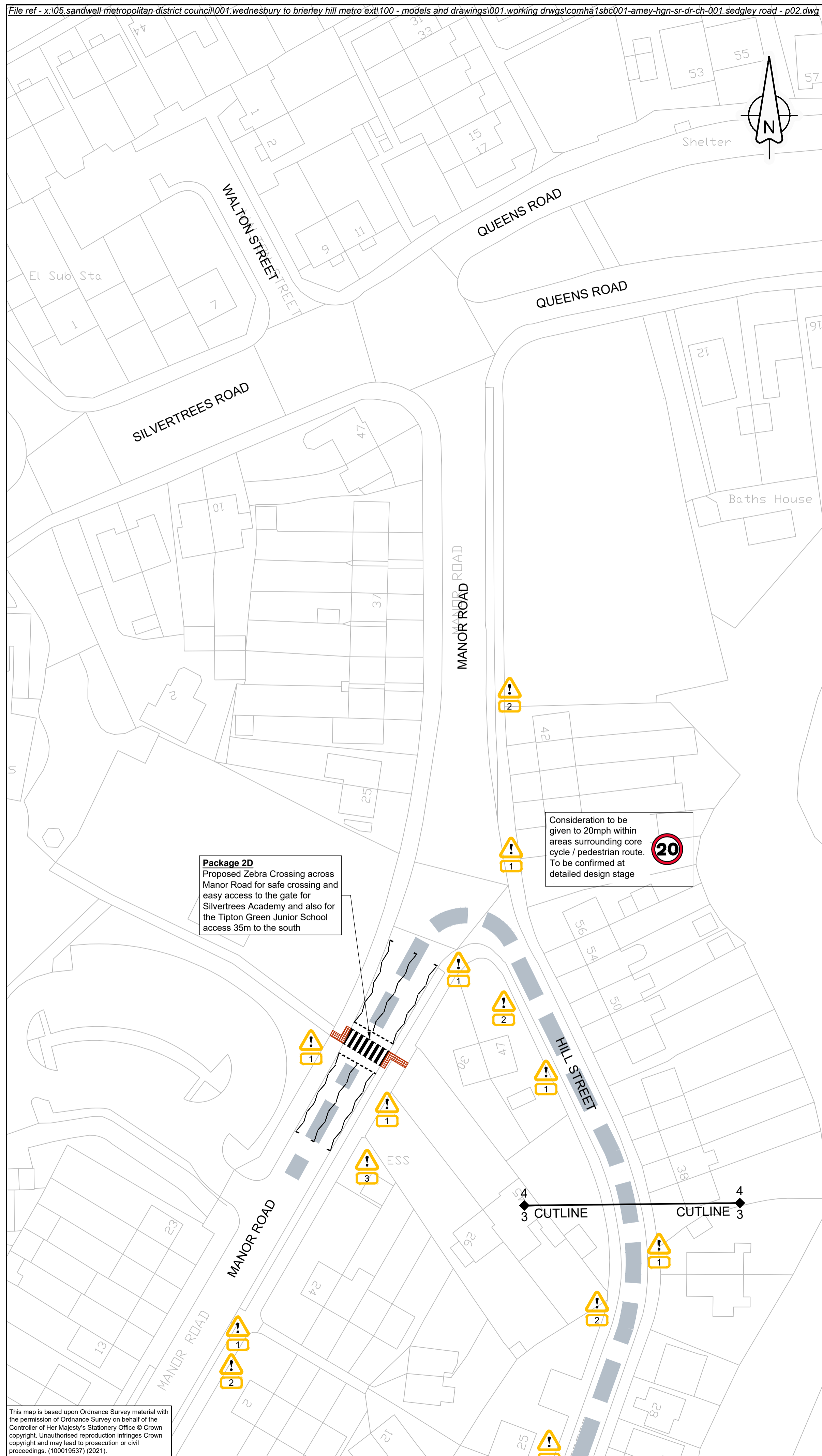
Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-SR-DR-CH-003	Rev P02
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Designed:	MG	Date:	29/09/2021		
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Checked:	MG	Date:	29/09/2021		
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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 1 - Binfield Street and Mayfair Gardens, links to stop Package 3 - Birmingham Canal (old Main Line) adjacent to Coneygre Community Centre**

Sheet 4 of 8

Original Drawing Size : A1	Scale : 1:500 @ A1
Dimensions : -	

Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

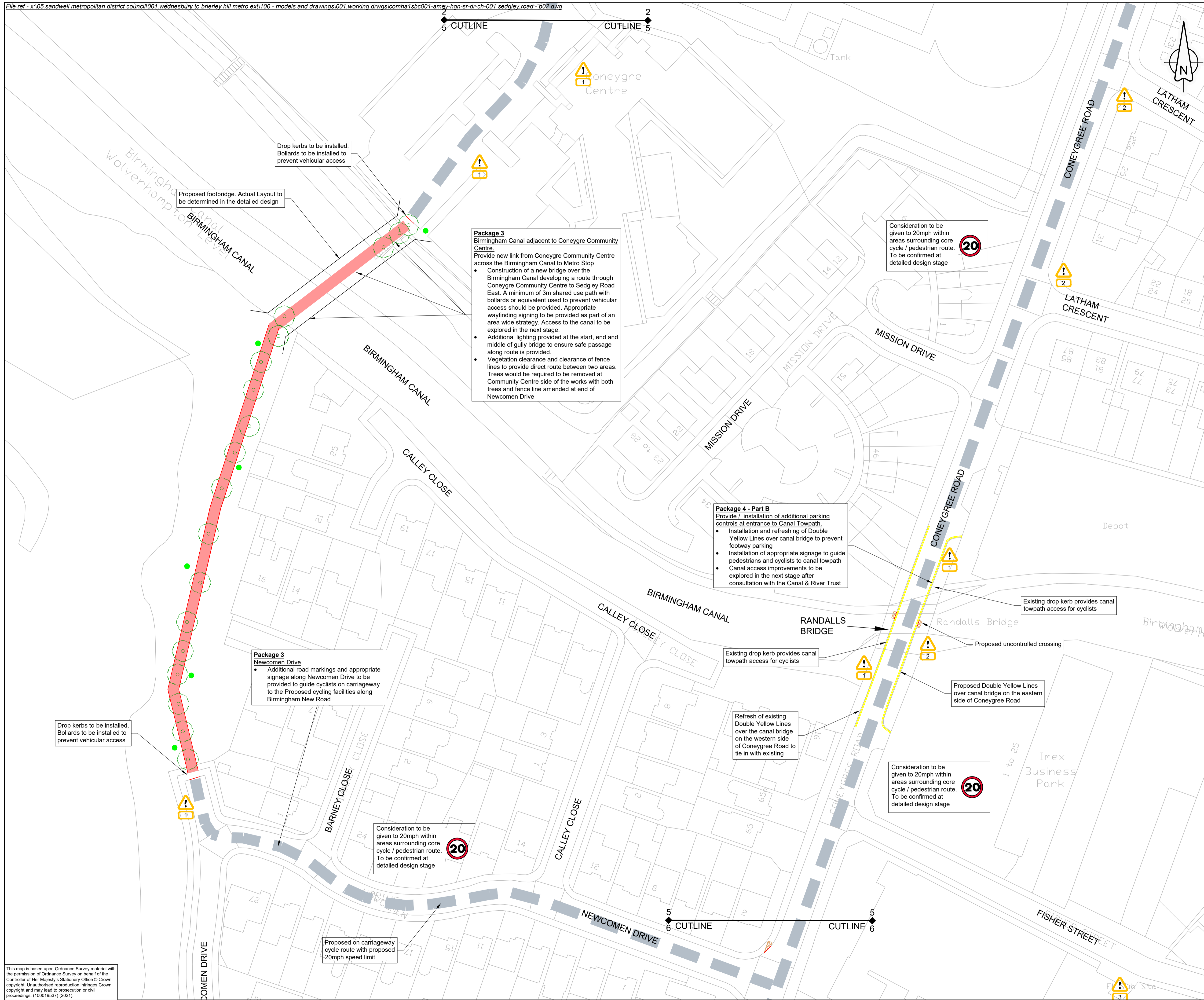
Suitability  
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Drawing No  
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Rev  
P02

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**Package 3**  
**Birmingham Canal adjacent to Coneygre Community Centre.**  
 Provide new link from Coneygre Community Centre across the Birmingham Canal to Metro Stop

- Construction of a new bridge over the Birmingham Canal developing a route through Coneygre Community Centre to Sedgley Road East. A minimum of 3m shared use path with bollards or equivalent used to prevent vehicular access should be provided. Appropriate wayfinding signage to be provided as part of an area wide strategy. Access to the canal to be explored in the next stage.
- Additional lighting provided at the start, end and middle of gully bridge to ensure safe passage along route is provided.
- Vegetation clearance and clearance of fence lines to provide direct route between two areas. Trees would be required to be removed at Community Centre side of the works with both trees and fence line amended at end of Newcomen Drive

**Package 4 - Part B**  
 Provide / installation of additional parking controls at entrance to Canal Towpath.

- Installation and refreshing of Double Yellow Lines over canal bridge to prevent footway parking
- Installation of appropriate signage to guide pedestrians and cyclists to canal towpath
- Canal access improvements to be explored in the next stage after consultation with the Canal & River Trust

**Package 3**  
**Newcomen Drive**

- Additional road markings and appropriate signage along Newcomen Drive to be provided to guide cyclists on carriageway to the Proposed cycling facilities along Birmingham New Road

**RESIDUAL DESIGN HAZARDS**

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Project Name  
**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
 Sedgley Road Tram Stop  
 Package 3 - Birmingham Canal (old Main Line) adjacent to Coneygre Community Centre  
 Package 4 - Junction with Coneygre Road and A4123  
 Sheet 5 of 8

Original Drawing Size:	A1	Scale:	1:500 @ A1
Dimensions:	-		

Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

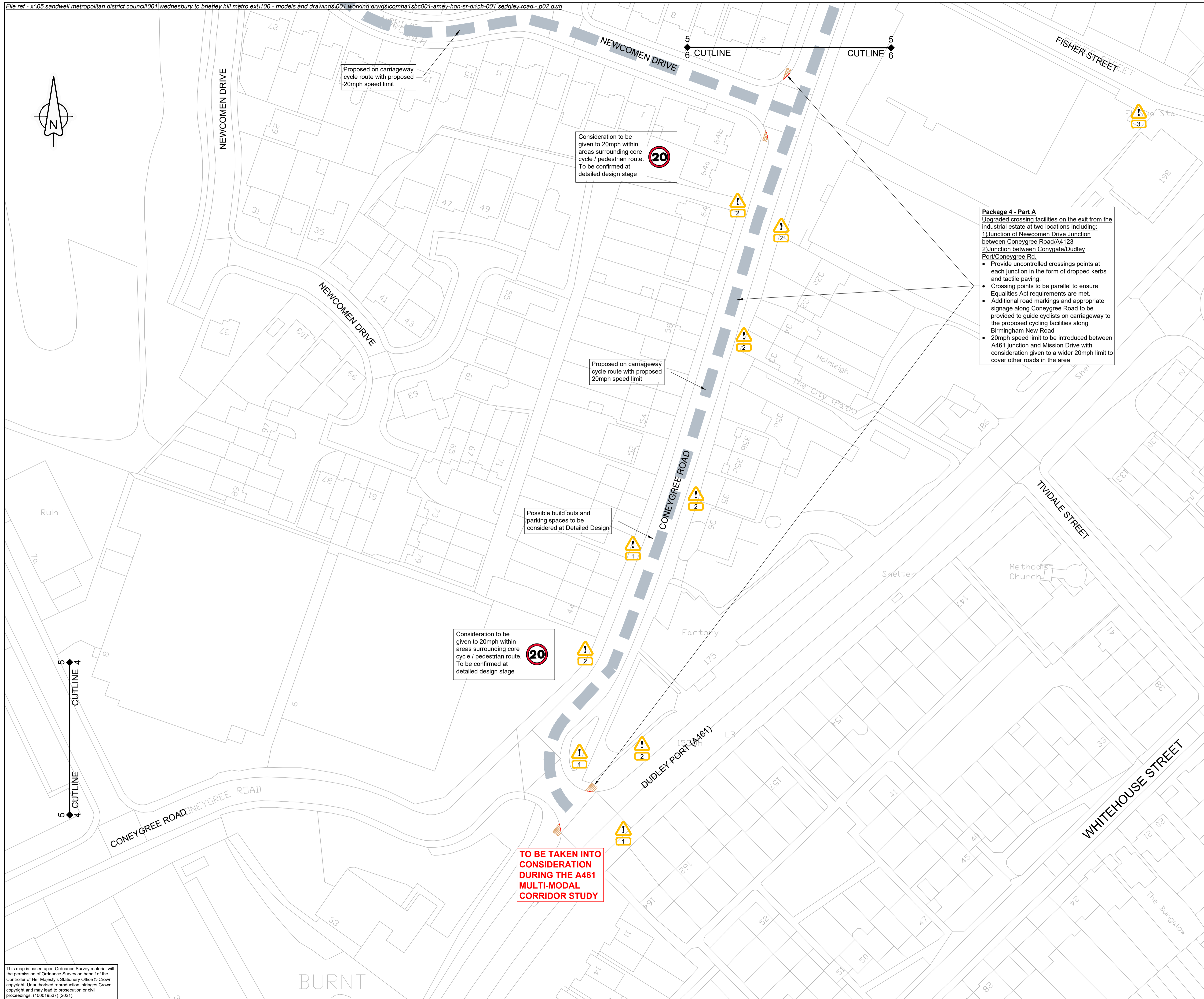
Suitability  
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Drawing No COMHA1SBC001-AMEY-HGN-SR-DR-CH-005	Rev P02
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**Package 4 - Part A**  
 Upgraded crossing facilities on the exit from the industrial estate at two locations including:  
 1) Junction of Newcomen Drive Junction between Coneygree Road/A4123  
 2) Junction between Conygate/Dudley Port/Coneygree Rd.

- Provide uncontrolled crossings points at each junction in the form of dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- Crossing points to be parallel to ensure Equalities Act requirements are met.
- Additional road markings and appropriate signage along Coneygree Road to be provided to guide cyclists on carriageway to the proposed cycling facilities along Birmingham New Road
- 20mph speed limit to be introduced between A461 junction and Mission Drive with consideration given to a wider 20mph limit to cover other roads in the area

P02	Changes following Sandwell MBC comments	JD	HH	CB	09/12/21
P01	For information	VP	MG	CB	29/09/21
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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 4 - Junction with Coneygree Road and A4123 Sheet 6 of 8**

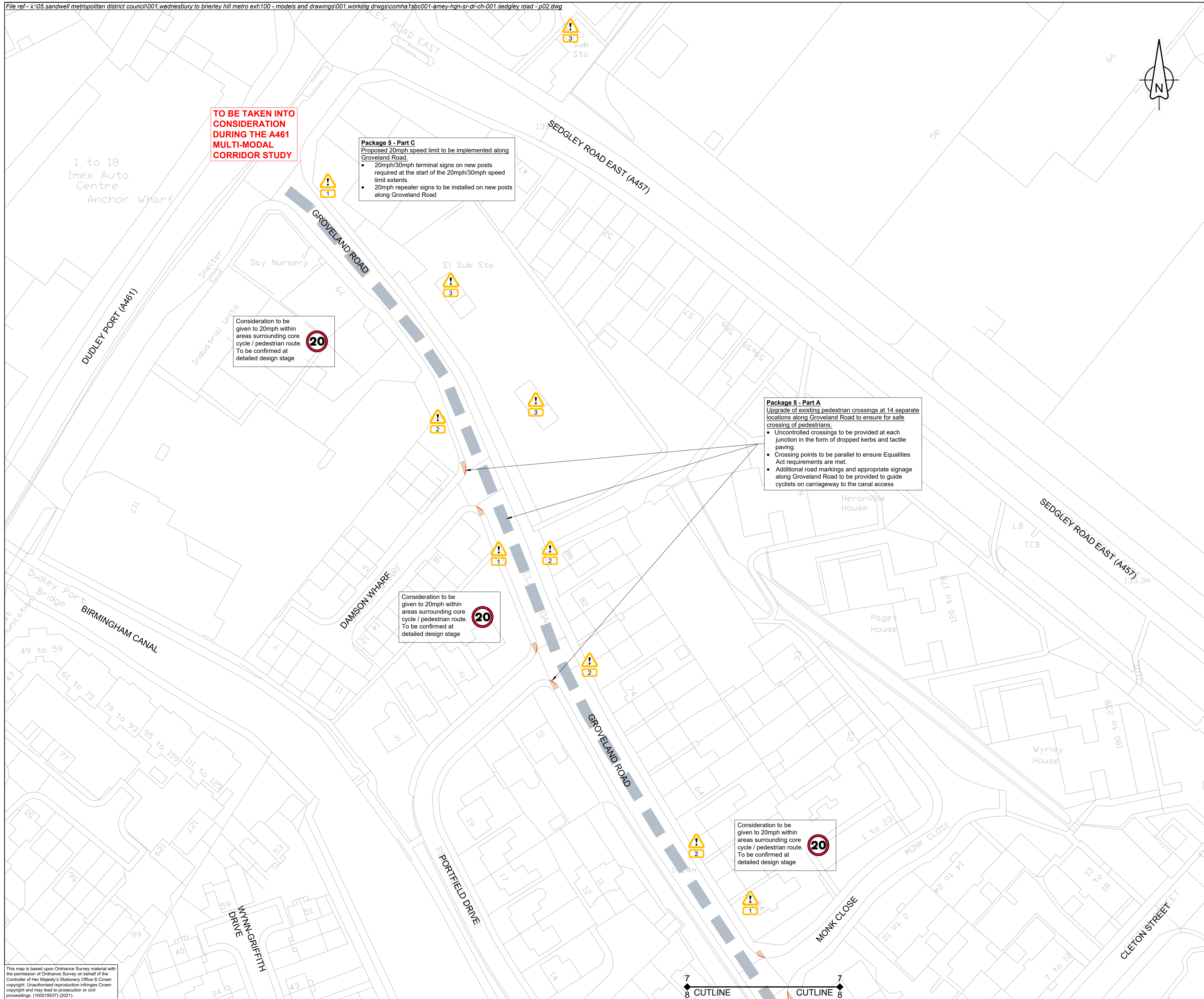
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Drawing Status	Suitability
<b>FOR INFORMATION</b>	S2

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**TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION DURING THE A461 MULTI-MODAL CORRIDOR STUDY**

**Package 5 - Part C**  
Proposed 20mph speed limit to be implemented along Groveland Road.

- 20mph/30mph terminal signs on new posts required at the start of the 20mph/30mph speed limit extents.
- 20mph repeater signs to be installed on new posts along Groveland Road

**Package 5 - Part A**  
Upgrade of existing pedestrian crossings at 14 separate locations along Groveland Road to ensure for safe crossing of pedestrians.

- Uncontrolled crossings to be provided at each junction in the form of dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- Crossing points to be parallel to ensure Equalities Act requirements are met.
- Additional road markings and appropriate signage along Groveland Road to be provided to guide cyclists on carriageway to the canal access

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. To be confirmed at detailed design stage

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. To be confirmed at detailed design stage

Consideration to be given to 20mph within areas surrounding core cycle / pedestrian route. To be confirmed at detailed design stage

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**Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension: Improved Active Travel Access to Stops. Preliminary Design**

Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 5 - Groveland Road (A461 to Birmingham Canal Old Main Line) Sheet 7 of 8**

Original Drawing Size:	A1	Scale:	1:500 @ A1
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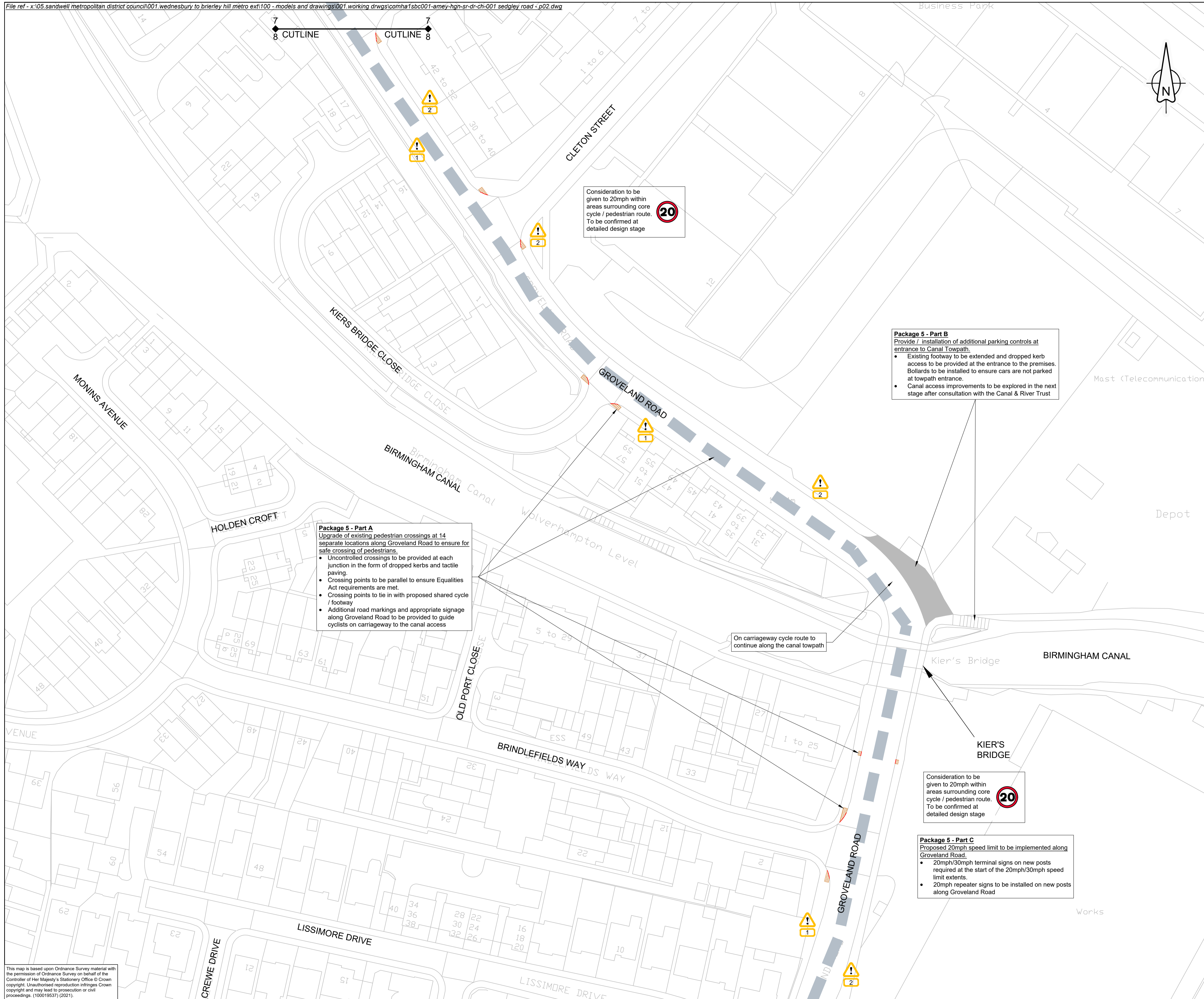
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Suitability  
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Drawing Title  
**Sedgley Road Tram Stop Package 5 - Groveland Road (A461 to Birmingham Canal Old Main Line) Sheet 8 of 8**

Original Drawing Size:	A1	Scale:	1:500 @ A1
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Drawing Status  
**FOR INFORMATION**

Suitability  
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## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Council's Use of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Leader of the Council Councillor Carmichael
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer Surjit Tour
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	David Elliott Solicitor -0121 569 3272 – <a href="mailto:david_elliott@sandwell.gov.uk">david_elliott@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the information regarding the Council's use of powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and Investigation of Powers Act 2016 from July 2017 to October 2023 be received and noted.
- 1.2 That the following policies be approved:
  - i) Corporate Policy: Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources;
  - ii) Corporate Policy: Acquisitions of Communications Data
- 1.3 That the Director of Law and Governance be authorised to make administrative amendments to policies referred in 1.2 above as required.



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

2.1 The Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (“IPCO”) has responsibility for reviewing the use of investigatory powers by public authorities, such as intelligence agencies, police and local authorities. They undertake regular reviews of the Council’s compliance with Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016.

2.2 In October 2020 the IPCO conducted a review and made certain recommendations, including that:

- Training be continued. To this end training by Legal Services was provided to 48 staff in September 2021 from the Trading Standards, Environmental Health, Planning, Licensing and Adults/Social Services disciplines. Further training has been provided by an external provider, Aquila Training on 14<sup>th</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023.
- A report on the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 be placed before members (this being it).
- That the intranet staff instruction manual/policy document be updated and amended. The guidance available to staff on the intranet pages dealing with Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources and Access to Communications Data have been duly updated to reflect new legislation, codes of practice and new Council Structure and new Scheme of Delegation.
- In addition, it has been noted that there is no (and has never been) policy on these matters for the benefit of the wider public and other stakeholders on the internet. Accordingly, draft policies have been proposed for publication and are set out in this report for consideration and approval.
- It is also proposed that the Councils Information retention policy be amended to retain RIPA and IPA authorisations for 3 years unless it becomes prosecution file evidence or unused material in which case it be retained for 7 years after closure of the prosecution file.

2.3 The IPCO has conducted a desktop review this year. The Council has complied with the recommendations and IPCO is satisfied with the











Council's compliance with RIPA 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. As such, the Council will not require further inspection this year.

### 3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

The powers have not been used at all since 2018 but if needed they assist with law enforcement to promote strong and resilient communities.

It is also best practice to have a public policy in relation to the powers and the Council's use of them to ensure transparency.

	The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People
	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 Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 specify the circumstances in which a Local Authority may carry out covert surveillance and access communications data which may otherwise constitute a breach of the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 4.2 The Powers can only be used to seek to detect crime punishable by at least a 6 month prison sentence as regards covert surveillance, or a crime involving underage sales of alcohol or tobacco. These powers are regulated by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- 4.3 As regards the accessing of communications data these powers are regulated by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016. The offence being investigated must be punishable by at least a 12 month prison sentence if the Council seeks to access “events data” and crime and disorder if accessing “entity data”.
- 4.4 The powers have not been used at all since 2018. The last time they were used were to -
- i. Conduct covert surveillance on suspected suppliers of illicit tobacco in summer 2017. Whilst the surveillance material was not used in evidence at trial a defendant was ultimately sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment.
  - ii. Obtain limited access to communications data in January 2018 to establish the presence of a post redirect service with the Post Office whilst investigating an applicant for a Council property suspected of already owning a house privately. The suspect was ultimately charged with more serious immigration offences by the police and imprisoned.
  - iii. Conduct covert surveillance on a suspected seller of counterfeit goods (sports clothing) in summer 2018. The matter was concluded without prosecution action. Since then the powers have not been used at all. This is a common trend nationwide in local government. The powers are used extensively by the Police, the National Crime Agency and MI5 to give examples.



- 4.5 Use of the powers are authorised by senior internal officers authorising investigating officers. However after that is done use of the powers is not lawful until the application has been presented to a Magistrates Court and judicially approved. This happened with the last 3 above applications.
- 4.6 As referred to above, training for staff awareness remains ongoing. In September 2021 internal training was provided by legal services to 48 staff from Trading Standards, Environmental Heath, Planning, Licensing and Adults/Social Services. Training with an external provider has been delivered on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2023 and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2023 an included staff from Trading Standards, Environmental Heath, Planning, Licensing, Private Sector Housing, Fraud Team and Legal Services.
- 4.7 Whilst the Council has always had internal guidance available to officers via its intranet page, it is good practice to have a Policy document available to the public.

## 5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 None as compliance with the legislation is a legal requirement.
- 5.2 The Council could decide not to have a public policy, but this would not be transparent and would not meet with good practice expectations.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The external training of 41 staff cost £2,255.00 (plus vat) (£55 per person). Each service agreed to meet the costs of attendance of their own officers.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The Powers have not been used for 5 years. Prior to that they were used on 3 occasions (above) in the previous 3-5 years so the implications are not thought to be great as of now. It is still necessary for transparency purposes to have a policy that is available to members of the public.



<b>Risk:</b>	Use of the powers is currently non-existent and that use is broadly not expected to change. Ongoing training is however needed to ensure unlawful enforcement related surveillance and communications access activity does not take place. Advice is sought from the Solicitor internally on such issues. Light or non-existent usage is not currently untypical of local government generally.
<b>Equality:</b>	No specific implications
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	This legislation seeks to provide powers to assist in the prevention of Crime
<b>Social Value:</b>	None
<b>Climate Change:</b>	None
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	There are no implications in relation to corporate parenting.



## 7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Proposed Corporate Policy – Directed Surveillance and Covert Human Intelligence Sources

Appendix 2 – Proposed Corporate Policy for Acquisition of communications Data

### Background Papers

1. [Code of Practice-2018-Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Code of Practice](#)
2. [Code of Practice 2022-Covert Human Intelligence Source Code of Practice](#)
3. [Code of Practice -2018-Communications Data Code of Practice](#)



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## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 AND INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2016

#### DIRECTED SURVEILLANCE

#### COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES

#### CORPORATE POLICY

Author:	Legal and Assurance
Owner:	Director of Law and Governance
Version:	1.0
Modified by:	Legal and Assurance
Date:	October 2023
Review Date:	October 2024



## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Some of the Council's activities may involve covert (secret) surveillance of individuals and organisations. Service areas likely to engage in covert surveillance include those dealing with Counter Fraud, Trading Standards, Environmental Health and Licensing.
- 1.2** The Human Rights Act 1998 protects the rights and freedoms of the individual, particularly the rights to privacy and private life. These rights are not unqualified. They can be breached in appropriate circumstances.
- 1.3** The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 were enacted in order to give a statutory framework for the lawful use of investigative and surveillance techniques in order to comply with the Human Rights Act 1998. Of particular relevance to Local Authorities are the authorisation of, and use of, Directed Surveillance, Covert Human Intelligence Sources and the Interception of Communications Data. The latter can only be carried out in exceptional circumstances by Local Authorities and is the subject of a separate policy document called 'Interception of Communications Data'.
- 1.4** The aim of this policy is to ensure a consistent simple and effective system of authorising Directed Surveillance and using Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) throughout the Council.
- 1.5** Councils enforce and prosecute serious offences and some less serious offences. Surveillance intrudes into private life. For the use of Directed Surveillance or Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) to be lawful, the investigation must be into a "serious" offence as defined by the legislation.
- 1.6** The definition is an offence that is punishable by at least a maximum penalty of 6 months imprisonment or suspected sale of alcohol or tobacco to under-age persons (ie persons under the age of 18). -See sections 146, 147 or 147a of the Licensing Act 2003 or Section 91 or 92 of the Families Act 2014 respectively. Many offences prosecuted



by Local Authorities are punishable by fine only. However even an unlimited fine is less serious than 6 months imprisonment. An offence so punishable cannot be investigated by Directed Surveillance or the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source. Nor can activity that is not of itself criminal, for example activity that may lead to the service of a statutory notice but not (at that stage) prosecution.

- 1.7 It follows that a good many of the criminal offences the Council is charged with enforcing cannot be investigated with the use of Covert Directed Surveillance or by using a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS). **The Council would not purposefully act outside of its statutory powers to conduct such surveillance on a person within Sandwell Borough.**
- 1.8 Even if this seriousness threshold is met the proposed method of investigation **still** has to be deemed necessary and proportionate by an authorising officer. That judgment **has to be confirmed by a Magistrates Court who must authorise an application made by the Council to carry out Directed Surveillance or use a CHIS.** The Court has the power to grant or refuse such an application. The Council cannot legally do either without a written authorisation from the Magistrates Court.
- 1.9 The Local Authority also may use these processes to investigate `Disorder`.

## 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A person's right to privacy can only be lawfully `invaded` when serious circumstances require surveillance and appropriate authorisations are obtained. The Human Rights Act 1998 protects a person's private life including information about an individual such as official records, photographs, letters, diaries and medical information kept private and confidential. **Public Bodies should not collect information such as this without good reason.** The term `private life` is to be interpreted quite widely to include the right to establish and develop relationships in the wider sense and can include business activities.

**2.2** The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 apply to other public bodies aside from Local Government. More intrusive surveillance such as surveillance within residential premises (Intrusive Surveillance) **cannot be carried out lawfully by Local Authorities at all. The legislation does not permit it.** Powers such as this and intercepting very private communications are generally given to organisations such as the Police and the Serious Crime Agency though the Council has limited powers as regards Communications contained in a separate “sister” policy concerning Communications Data.

**2.3 Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is committed to respecting the right to privacy of its citizens. It will only seek to conduct surveillance or seek to intercept communications data when it is 1) lawful and 2) it is necessary and proportionate to do so and 3) properly authorised internally and by the Courts**

### **3. DIRECTED SURVEILLANCE**

**3.1** ‘Surveillance’ is defined in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 as

- Monitoring, observing, and/or listening to persons, their movements, conversations other activities or communications and/or
- Recording anything monitored, observed or listened to in the course of surveillance
- Surveillance can be directed or intrusive. **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council is not authorised to carry out Intrusive Surveillance (see above).**

**3.2** Directed Surveillance is

- Covert Surveillance if and only if it is carried out in a **manner calculated to ensure that person (s) subject to the surveillance are unaware that it is taking place**
- **Is not intrusive.** Surveillance is intrusive only if it is covert and is -
  - Carried out in relation to anything taking place on residential premises or in a private vehicle, and
  - Involves the presence of an individual on the premises or vehicle or is carried out by a surveillance device -See the Code of Practice - Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Code of Practice 2018 **The Council cannot lawfully engage in intrusive surveillance.**
- Is undertaken for the purpose of a specific investigation or operation in a way likely to obtain private information about a person whether or not that person is specifically targeted for the purpose of an investigation UNLESS
- It is an immediate response to events which would otherwise make seeking an authorisation under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 unreasonable (for example spotting something suspicious in a manner that was unplanned and continuing to observe it [see the 2018 Code of Practice])

#### **4. COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCE (CHIS)**

- 4.1** A person is a CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Source) if he or she establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything that
- Covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to information to another person: or
  - Covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship, or as a consequence of the existence, of such a relationship

- The authorising officer must be satisfied that the “use” of a CHIS is proportionate to the objectives and that arrangements are in place to ensure levels of management and oversight of the CHIS, and that those records are available on a “need to know” basis

**4.2** “Use” is defined actions inducing, asking or assisting a person to act as a CHIS in the 2022 CHIS Code of Practice

## **5. GENERAL**

**5.1** The use of Directed Surveillance and CHIS may be authorised by authorising officers (see Annex A for more detail on authorised officers).

**5.2** All applications for Directed Surveillance and CHIS must engage the proportionality test, that is to say, is it reasonably necessary in order to achieve the Surveillance Objective? The degree of intrusion into the privacy of the surveillance target and any collateral intrusion (incidental intrusion affecting other persons) needs to be balanced against the need for the surveillance activity.

**5.3** If legal due process is observed in all respects **including judicial authorisation being obtained from the Magistrates Court** any interference with privacy and family life will be lawful for all purposes.

**5.4** The carrying out of Directed Surveillance will often require the use of technical surveillance equipment. The precise piece or pieces of, equipment used shall be identified in writing on the authorisation form by the investigating officer and approved by signature by the authorising officer

## **6. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

- 6.1** The Covert Surveillance and Property Interference Code of Practice provides that it is considered good practice that a Senior Responsible Officer should be responsible for the process of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- 6.2** The Senior Responsible Officer for all aspects of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 is the Director of Law and Governance (Monitoring Officer).
- 6.3** The process is regulated by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO).
- 6.4** There will be regular training for Council staff in dealing with this legislation.
- 6.5** The Council's compliance with this legislation (and associated secondary legislation through Regulation and Codes of Practice) is monitored by the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO). Inspections are undertaken every 3-4 years. IPCO also publishes procedure and guidance which will be provided to the affected Council Officers.

## **7. AUTHORISATIONS**

### **DIRECTED SURVEILLANCE**

- 7.1** Authorisations can only be granted for the purposes outlined in this policy.
- 7.2** The use of overt CCTV cameras by public authorities does not normally require authorisation under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 or the Investigation of Powers Act 2016 relating to Directed Surveillance. The Council has a list of authorised accredited CCTV Cameras and a Drone. Provided this equipment is labelled as providing overt ie "Street Scene" or Buildings assessing type of surveillance this is overt not covert

surveillance and therefore not Directed Surveillance. (See 2018 Code of Practice-Covert Surveillance and Property Interference).

- 7.3** Similarly a letter sent to an intended subject of surveillance informing them activity will be subject to surveillance for a period of three months overt, not covert, surveillance.
- 7.4** The use of the Internet and drones are a feature of modern society and are dealt with specifically in the 2018 Code of Practice-Covert Surveillance and Property Interference. Paragraph 3.10 of the Code states that the use of the internet prior to an investigation should not usually engage privacy considerations. However should the study of an individuals on line presence become persistent, or where any material obtained is to become extracted or recorded and may engage private considerations, a RIPA Authorisation may need to be considered by the Council.
- 7.5** Paragraph 3.11 of the Code of Practice states that where online monitoring or investigation is conducted covertly for a specific investigation and is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about a person or a group an authorisation should be considered. Where there is proposed active engagement with others without the true identity of the officer or true purpose for gathering the information being revealed an authorisation for a CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Source) may be required and should be considered by the Council.
- 7.6** An external individual or non-governmental organisation may act on behalf of the Council as authorised agent. Any activities undertaken by them that fall within the definition of Directed Surveillance or the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) will be considered for authorisation by the Council. This is confirmed as recommended practice in the 2018 Code of Practice -Directed Surveillance and Property Interference.
- 7.7** When the Council acts in partnership with another public sector agency (for example the Police) consideration will be given as to who the lead public body for the purpose of seeking a Directed Surveillance or CHIS (Covert Human Intelligence Source)

authorisation is going to be. Relevant factors include who is the lead investigator, who owns the surveillance equipment, and who has the more extensive powers (if appropriate to use) under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and/or the Investigation of Powers Act 2016.

- 7.8** A centrally retrievable record of all authorisations will be held by the Council. This will be regularly updated when an authorisation is granted, renewed or cancelled. The record will be made available to the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO) upon request. This will be kept in accordance with the Council's Retention Schedule (link).
- 7.9** The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigation of Powers Act 2016 do not prevent material obtained from properly authorised surveillance or interception of data from being used in other investigations aside from the investigation referenced on the application form. Service areas ensure arrangements are in place for the handling, storage and destruction of material obtained through the use of covert surveillance/covert human intelligence sources (CHIS) or interception of data in accordance with Data Protection requirements, currently in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 which enacts the "GDPR" -The General Data Protection Regulations 2018.
- 7.10** RIPA does not provide special protection for confidential Information but care will be taken by the Council where information consists of legally privileged information confidential personal information or confidential journalistic material relating to issues of security, local or national. In these circumstances (anticipated to be very rare) the Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive) or Assistant /Deputy Chief Executive will give the necessary authorisations.

## **8. PROCESS**

### **RIPA AUTHORISATIONS**

- 8.1** RIPA authorisations must be authorised by those with power to authorise in the Councils scheme of delegation contained in Annex A of this policy. **Once made the internal authorisation has to be judicially approved by a Magistrates Court.**
- 8.2** A written authorisation lasts for 3 months from the date Judicial authorisation (Magistrates Court approval) is given.
- 8.3** One authorised internally, the Council will apply to the Magistrates Court to seek judicial authorisation. **Only once that is given will the Council be able to carry out Directed Surveillance or use a Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS). Procedures for the Interception of Communications Data are dealt with in a separate policy.**
- 8.4** Reviews of the authorisation will take place regularly between investigating and authorising officers to determine:
- (1) Whether Directed Surveillance should continue and if so whether the authority should be renewed after 3 months and
  - (2) The identity of individuals the subject of the surveillance and the risk of collateral intrusion shall be reviewed.
- 8.5** A renewal takes effect at the time at which the authorisation would have ceased to have effect but for the renewal. An application for renewal should not be made until shortly before the authorisation period is coming to the end. Authorisations can be renewed more than once, provided they continue to meet the criterion for authorisation.
- 8.6** A renewal should assess broadly the value of the surveillance, the reasons for continuing with it and the benefit of the surveillance so far.
- 8.7** All authorisations both internal and approved by the Magistrates Court must be in writing.
- 8.8** If the decision is taken that the directed surveillance should be discontinued and is no longer justified, the authorising officer



should cancel the authorisation by instructing those involved in the Directed Surveillance to cease the operation.

- 8.9** Authorisation forms under the legislation are not public documents.

## **COVERT HUMAN INTELLIGENCE SOURCES**

- 8.10** A Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) is defined in paragraph 3.3 above.

- 8.11** In practice, the use of a CHIS by the Council is likely be very limited.

- 8.12** The requirements of necessity, proportionality and collateral intrusion are the same as for directed surveillance as is the authorisation process including that of seeking judicial approval. Similar authorisation forms are to be used as for Directed Surveillance too but will be designated to apply to Covert Human Intelligence Sources.

- 8.13** A CHIS authorisation lasts for 12 months not 3 months, unlike a Directed Surveillance authorisation.

- 8.14** The receipt of a complaint, or complaint log/petition from a member of the public is not considered to be using a Covert Human Intelligence Source. Provided the Council have not asked for that person to strike up a relationship with a suspect in order to collect evidence then no CHIS relationship should be in existence.

- 8.15** Should a CHIS be employed the Investigatory Powers (Source Records) Regulations 2000 require the Council to maintain detailed records to protect the source which it would do.

- 8.16** From October 2021 the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 has been amended to allow a Covert Human Intelligence Source to engage in criminal conduct to covertly gather information/evidence to assist a criminal investigation .However

these powers, whilst available to some other enforcement agencies on authorisation being granted, are **NOT under this amendment to the Act, available to local authorities** .Accordingly Sandwell MBC cannot and would not, seek to use these powers.

- 8.17** Any manipulation of a personal relationship by a public authority is likely to engage Article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 (which includes the right to establish and develop human relationships) **whether or not private information is intended to be gathered.**
- 8.18** An authorisation can be renewed provided there is good reason to renew after it has been reviewed by the authorising officer after reading a renewal application form submitted by the investigating officer before the existing authorisation has expired. Similarly if there is no good reason to continue with Directed Surveillance or the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source the authorisation may be cancelled.
- 8.19** All authorities for Directed Surveillance and the use of Covert Human Intelligence Sources **must be** given in writing not verbally by Sandwell MBC.
- 8.20** All authorities granted by the officer process internally **must be** affirmed externally in writing by the Magistrates Court following an application by officers of the Council for approval. The decision maker will be a lay bench of Magistrates or a District Judge who also have the power to quash an authorisation made internally if they are not satisfied with it.
- 8.21** As a matter of law referred to in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 a subject of Directed Surveillance or of a Covert Human Intelligence Source will **NOT** be notified of the surveillance activity or application to authorise it as that would defeat the object of carrying out covert surveillance

## **AUTHORISING PROCESS – ANNEX A**

The following Directorates within the authority may be affected by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the Investigation of Powers Act 2016 in terms of investigating serious offences which are also listed (but are examples only-they are not exhaustive) together with Officer Level and other circumstances relevant to level of authorisation.-

The Officers posts listed have power to authorise under the Officer Scheme of Delegation introduced in October 2022

### **Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive in their absence.**

Authorisations concerning confidential or privileged Information or vulnerable persons being used as Covert Human Intelligence Sources, and any other authorisations if required to do so.

### **Director of Finance**

Power to authorise also delegated by the Director of Finance to the **Audit Services Manager and Counter Fraud Manager** by virtue of the Officers Sub-Delegation Scheme /Agreed Policies referred to in the Scheme of Delegation above.

Power to investigate delegated by the Director of Finance to **Team Counter Fraud Investigators and Accredited Financial Investigator (if in post)**

For Investigation of offences under eg the **Fraud Act 2006, Theft Act 1968, Proceeds of Crime Act 2002**

## **Director of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer**

Authorisations concerning confidential or privileged information or vulnerable persons being used as Covert Human Intelligence Sources, and any other authorisations if required to do so.

## **Director of Borough Economy**

Power to **authorise** also delegated by the Director of Borough Economy by the Officer Sub-Delegation Scheme/Agreed policies to **Regulated Services and Transformation -Borough Economy-Service Manager, Citizens and Consumer Protection Business and Consumer Manager ,Citizens and Consumer Protection Team Manager (Trading Standards) and Citizens and Consumer Protection Team Manager (Environmental Health) ,Operations Manager Citizen and Consumer Protection -Private Sector Housing Team**

Power to **Investigate** delegated by the Director of Borough Economy by the Officer Sub-Delegation Scheme/Agreed Policies to **Senior Trading Standards Officer /Inspector of Weights and Measures (Citizen and Consumer Protection),Trading Standards Officer (Citizen and Consumer Protection) Senior Environmental Health Officer (Citizen and Consumer Protection),Environmental Health Officer (Citizen and Consumer Protection) Enforcement Officer, Private Sector Housing Team**

For Investigation of offences under eg **The Fraud Act 2006, The Trade Marks Act 1994, The Tobacco Packaging Regulations 2015 and 2016, The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and the Consumer Protection Act 1987, Anti -Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 54 in relation to aerosol paints, Licensing Act 2003 Sections 145-154 in relation to alcohol and Section 141A of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 in relation to Knives and the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 in relation to tobacco (“Under Age Sales” related offences)**

## **The Environmental Protection Act 1990 Sections 33 and 34 (“Fly-tipping”)**

### **Director of Regeneration and Planning**

Power to **authorise** also delegated by the Director of Regeneration and Planning by the Officer Sub-Delegation Scheme /agreed policies to **Service Manager -Development Planning and Building Consultancy**

Power to **Investigate** delegated by the Director of Regeneration and Planning by the Officer Sub-Delegation Scheme/agreed policies to **Senior Enforcement Co-ordinator and Planning Enforcement Officers.**

Most offences in the sphere of Planning and Building Control are offences that carry a maximum penalty of a **fine only**. The Council cannot therefore authorise covert surveillance or the use of a Covert Human Intelligence Source .The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 and the Building Safety Act 2022 contain some more serious offences based on the supply of false information that carry sentences above the minimum threshold, ie more than 6 months imprisonment.

### **USEFUL CONTACT POINTS**

The Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office (IPCO)-

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## SANDWELL METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 AND INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2016

### ACQUISITION OF COMMUNICATIONS DATA

### CORPORATE POLICY

Author:	Legal and Assurance
Owner:	Director of Law and Governance
Version:	1.0
Modified by:	Legal and Assurance
Date:	October 2023
Review Date:	October 2024

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1** Originally the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA 2000) provided qualified powers to enable local authorities including Sandwell MBC to access the communications data of its citizens for specified purposes in qualified circumstances. These powers still exist but are now regulated by the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA 2016).
- 1.2** This policy explains the context in which these powers exist their extent as far as local government is concerned and how Sandwell MBC will use them.

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1** The European Convention on Human Rights is a binding international agreement that enshrines fundamental civil and political rights. The Human Rights Act 1998 has made Convention Rights enforceable in our domestic courts. The HRA gives people a clear legal statement of their basic rights and fundamental freedoms.
- 2.2** The Human Rights Act 1998 covers 17 convention rights and 3 additional rights in the First Protocol and 2 additional rights in the Sixth Protocol. Key rights engaged in the context of the acquisition of communications data are Article 8 (A right to respect for private and family life) and Article 1 of the First Protocol (The Protection of Property).
- 2.3** The Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA 2016) in conjunction with RIPA 2000 provides for and regulates the use of a range of investigative powers by a variety of public authorities .IPA 2016 to quote the Acts own overview, sets out the extent to which to which certain investigative powers may be used to interfere with privacy.
- 2.4** There are powers in Part 2,(Interceptions of Communications),Part 5(Equipment Interference),Part 6 (Bulk Warrants) and Part 7 (Bulk Personal Database Warrants) that the Council have no legal powers to apply for and as a matter of policy would clearly not seek to do so



as unauthorised activity will ,in addition be a criminal offence. The 2016 Act abolishes previous general powers to access communications data and generally seeks to protect privacy other than in quite specified circumstances.

- 2.5** Whilst IPA 2016 is the main legislation regulating access to Communications Data further protections can be found in the Human Rights Act 1998, Section 170 of the Data Protection Act 2018, (unlawful obtaining of personal data) , Section 48 of the Wireless Telegraphy Act 2006 (offence of intercepting/disclosing messages) , Section 1-3A of the Computer Misuse Act and the offence of Misconduct in Public Office.
- 2.6** A public authority such as Sandwell MBC can interfere with a person`s Article 8 or Article 1 First Protocol rights (protection of private life and protection of property) but must do so on a clear legal basis. If the Council are seeking to access “Events Data” (see later) they must broadly be investigating a criminal offence carrying a maximum penalty of at least 12 months imprisonment upon conviction. If they are seeking to access “Entity Data” (see later) they must be investigating Crime or Disorder. Quite independently of this the use of these powers must be necessary and proportionate-not just reasonable.

### **3. ACQUISITION OF COMMUNICATIONS DATA**

- 3.1** The Councils powers to access Communications Data are contained in Section 60A of the Investigatory Act 2016. They are dependent upon the thresholds of seriousness reaching the level described in 2.6 above.
- 3.2** “Entity Data”- Is information about a person or an item such as a phone, computer or tablet. It includes Account Information; Subscribers to e mail and telephone accounts; Installation and Billing Addresses and sign up data.
- 3.3** “Events Data” is more private information and therefore requires a higher threshold (basically serious crime carrying at least a maximum

sentence of 12 months imprisonment) and includes Itemized telephone call, text and connect records; Itemised timing and duration of calls; Connect/Disconnect /Reconnection of Data; Mobile Phone Data Records ,Device Data Records, the Use of forwarding/postal redirection services and records of postal items.

- 3.4** Communications Data concerns the “who,when where and how” of communications **but not the content**. The Council do not have the power to access the **content** of a communications via a communications system.

#### **4. ADDITIONAL SAFEGUARDS**

- 4.1** An application to access Communications Data must firstly be authorised by the authorising officer from within the Council.
- 4.2** The decision to authorise must, under Section 76 of the IPA 2016 be reached after consultation with a “Single Point of Contact” (SPoC) at the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN) currently based at Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. They will assess and quality control the application. If the application meets the legal threshold for obtaining communications data then the SPoC will act as a go -between to facilitate co-operation between the local authority and the Communications Service Provider (CSP), thereby acting as a “gatekeeper”.
- 4.3** At this stage the Council must then seek authorisation from the Magistrates Court. This is the responsibility of the Council and not the National Anti-Fraud Network (NAFN). The JP or District Judge will then complete a Judicial Order to the SPoC at NAFN. The Notice is then served on the Communications Service Provider (CSP) by the SPoC. Once the data is obtained the SPOC will provide the data to the applicant.
- 4.4** All records are kept centrally by NAFN who will record and report any reportable errors to the SRO as well as notifying the Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office who has oversight of the exercise and performance of duties under the IPA 2016.

**4.5** In addition the Council will have regard to the 2018 Communications Data Code of Practice.

## **5. PROHIBITIONS**

**5.1** The Council will only seek to access communications data in accordance with its legal authority to do so under Sections 60A and 73 of the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 as outlined above.

## **ANNEX A**

The holders of the following post is designated to grant authorisations and give notices for the acquisition of communications data:

Director of Law and Governance/Monitoring Officer

## **CONTACTS**

NAFN (National Anti-Fraud Network\_  
PO Box 304  
Ashton Under Lyne  
Tameside OL6 06A  
Tel 0161 342 3662

IPCO (Investigatory Powers Commissioners Office)  
PO Box 29105  
London  
SW1V 1ZU  
Tel 0207 389 8900

OCDA (Office for Communications Data Authorisations)  
[info@OCDA.org.uk](mailto:info@OCDA.org.uk)

See also Communications Data Code of Practice November 2018

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## Report to Cabinet

**6 December 2023**

<b>Subject:</b>	Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael, Leader of the Council
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Borough Economy: Alice Davey
<b>Key Decision:</b>	Yes - to Implement Animal Welfare Policy
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Matthew Huggins, Assistant Director: Borough Economy (Green Spaces, Green Services, Visitor Services, Events) – <a href="mailto:matthew_huggins@sandwell.gov.uk">matthew_huggins@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations




- 1.1 That the Cabinet notes and approves the Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy.
- 1.2 That the Assistant Director of Borough Economy be authorised to implement and review the policy in line with legislation, best practice guidance and advice from industry experts/ veterinary professionals.

### 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Forge Mill Farm's ambition is to become a centre of excellence in animal welfare food and farming education. This policy sets the framework for how this will be achieved and monitored.
- 2.2 This policy ensures that as Forge Mill Farm's public facing operations expand, animal welfare continues to be at the centre of that growth.
- 2.1 The endorsement of the policy will ensure high standards of animal welfare persists through any future changes in leadership, management or comically direction.



### 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p><b>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People</b></p> <p>Set higher standards of animal welfare to show best practice, this will be advocated to Sandwell residents through our education and outreach services for them to use in their lives and communities.</p>
	<p><b>People Live Well and Age Well</b></p> <p>This policy ensures that Forge Mill Farm’s public facing operations are enabled to expand, improving opportunities and days out in Sandwell.</p>
	<p><b>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods</b></p> <p>This policy ensures that Forge Mill Farm’s public facing operations are enabled to expand, improving opportunities and days out making it an attractive place to live, work and raise a family Sandwell.</p>
	<p><b>A Strong and Inclusive Economy</b></p> <p>This policy ensures that Forge Mill Farm’s public facing operations are enabled to expand and maximise income generation opportunities whilst ensuring that animal welfare is at the centre of that growth.</p>





## 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 This policy is to be used by Sandwell Council and Forge Mill Farm staff, managers, supervisors, and team members to deliver high standards of animal welfare, to identify what best practice looks like, and to provide indicators for success/improvement in relation to animal health and well-being.
- 4.2 This policy includes the provision of regular inspection, accreditation and certification from external organisations including a nominated vet practice. Forge Mill Farm's ambition is to become a centre of excellence in animal welfare food and farming education.
- 4.3 This policy is written for all animals within the management control of Forge Mill Farm across Sandwell Valley Country Park, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and Forge Mill Farm and any other location animals within Sandwell Council's management control are located. This includes a variety of rare breed animals including sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, alpacas, horses, ponies, donkeys, chickens, ducks and rabbits.
- 4.4 The *Animal Welfare Act 2006* is the principal law relating to animal welfare. This law highlights the responsibility of owners and keepers to have a duty of care for their animals and make sure that their needs are met.
- 4.5 The welfare of farmed animals is additionally protected by the *Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulation 2007* which set a minimum standard for all farm animals.
- 4.6 It is the expectation that this policy goes above and beyond the legal requirements of animal welfare standards in the UK.



4.7 A strong working relationship with the nominated vet practice (reviewed through regular procurement timelines) will ensure that there is external involvement in animal welfare procedures to ensure best practice is being followed and to monitor and improve animal welfare.

4.8 The Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy has been reviewed by the farm’s nominated vet practice, whose updates and amendments have been taken on board. The vet practice will continue to guide the farm and update the policy in line with legislation, best practice guidance and advice.

## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 The Cabinet can choose not to endorse the policy presented and the farm can continue to base decisions on legal minimum requirements and best practice recommendations outside of a council policy. However, having a clear policy sets standards and expectations, against which performance can be measured.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Some additional costs incurred associated with more vet visits, blood and faecal testing, memberships, subscriptions and accreditations and staff training. Up to approximately £8,000 a year on top of existing budget.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	The <i>Animal Welfare Act 2006</i> is the principal law relating to animal welfare. This law highlights the responsibility of owners and keepers to have a duty of care for their animals and make sure that their needs are met.



	<p>The welfare of farmed animals is additionally protected by the <i>Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007</i> which sets a minimum standard for all farm animals.</p> <p>It is the expectation that this policy goes above and beyond the legal requirements of animal welfare standards in the UK.</p>
<b>Risk:</b>	Reduced risk to reputation and harm to animals.
<b>Equality:</b>	N/A
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Excellent animal welfare and continued monitoring ensure public health is protected from zoonotic diseases. The animals at Forge Mill Farm provide many Sandwell residents with improving mental health and well-being opportunities which are only possible if the welfare of the animals is maintained and protected.
<b>Social Value:</b>	Setting higher standards of animal welfare will show best practice, ensure the long-term resilience of Forge Mill Farm, ensure that as Forge Mill Farm's public facing operations is enabled to expand, improving opportunities and days out making it an attractive place to live, work and raise a family Sandwell.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Antibiotic and anthelmintic resistance is a growing problem alongside climate change. This policy outlines strategies to reduce and prevent this.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	Setting higher standards of animal welfare shows best practice to Sandwell residents for them to use as a standard in their lives and communities. This will be reflected in our education and outreach team work, targeting some activities towards our children in care and care leavers.

## 7. Appendices

Forge Mill Farm Animal Welfare Policy

## 8. Background Papers

None Required



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## Forge Mill Farm- Animal Welfare Policy December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Animal Welfare Policy 2023
<b>Director:</b>	Director of Borough Economy: Alice Davey
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Alex Dunn: Forge Mill Farm and Education manager Alex_dunn@sandwell.gov.uk  Assistant Director: Borough Economy (Green Spaces, Green Services, Visitor Services, Events) – <u>matthew_huggins@sandwell.gov.uk</u>

### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 This policy is to be used by Sandwell Council and Forge Mill Farm staff managers, supervisors, and team members to deliver high standards of animal welfare, to identify what best practice looks like and to provide indicators for success/improvement in relation to animal health and well-being.
- 1.2 This policy includes the provision of regular inspection, accreditation and certification from external organisations including a nominated vet practice. Forge Mill Farm’s ambition is to become a centre of excellence in animal welfare food and farming education.

### 2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy is written for all animals within the management control of Forge Mill Farm across Sandwell Valley Country Park, Sandwell Valley Visitor Centre and Forge Mill Farm and any other location animals within Sandwell Council’s management control are located.



- 2.2 This includes a variety of rare breed animals including sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, alpacas, horses, ponies, donkeys, chickens, ducks and rabbits.
- 2.3 Forge Mill Farm is also responsible for the care of all the rescued rabbits living in rabbit village at Sandwell Valley visitor centre.

### 3 Responsibilities

- 3.1 Forge Mill Farm and Sandwell Council take animal health and welfare seriously and are committed to delivering best practice and the highest standards of animal welfare. This policy has been produced to ensure that best practice standards are being met now and in the future.
- 3.2 The day-to-day management of this policy is the responsibility of the Forge Mill Farm manager, farm charge hand/supervisors and farm team members.

### 4 The law

- 4.1 *The Animal Welfare Act 2006* is the principal law relating to animal welfare. This law highlights the responsibility of owners and keepers to have a duty of care for their animals and make sure that their needs are met.
- 4.2 The welfare of farmed animals is additionally protected by the *Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2007* which sets a minimum standard for all farm animals. It is the expectation that this policy goes above and beyond the legal requirements of animal welfare standards in the UK.

### 5 Industry Guidance - Five Freedoms

- 5.1 The internationally recognised five freedoms as recommended by the UK farm animal welfare committee has been used as a framework to guide this animal welfare policy and subsequent checklists, inspections, and third-party audits
- **Freedom from Hunger and Thirst** - by ready access to fresh water and a diet to maintain full health and vigour.



- **Freedom from Discomfort** - by providing an appropriate environment including shelter and a comfortable resting area.
- **Freedom from Pain, Injury or Disease** - by prevention or rapid diagnosis and treatment.
- **Freedom to Express Normal Behaviour** - by providing sufficient space, proper facilities, and company of the animal's own kind.
- **Freedom from Fear and Distress** - by ensuring conditions and treatment which avoid mental suffering

## 6 Forge Mill Farm Best Practice

6.1 To ensure consistent best practice and high standards of animal welfare the following sections will be used as indicators of what best practice looks like at Forge Mill Farm to guide decisions made on the farm and direct current and future team members and farm managers.

### 6.2 Animal Feeding and Nutrition

- All animals to have continuous access to fresh, clean water.
- Species-specific animal feeding plans to be followed daily and updated based on animal need at each production stage.
- All ruminants, equines and rabbits to have continuous access to fresh forage- hay, silage, fed straw or grass.
- All poultry animals to have continuous access to concentrate feed/ grain.
- All animal concentrate/supplementary feeds/minerals to be purchased through agricultural suppliers in marked bags with clear ingredients list and traceable source of origin.
- All concentrates to be kept in rodent proof bins, clearly marked in compartments separated by species/food type.
- Animal feeding plans to be discussed and signed off by nominated vet practice.
- To pass an annual inspection of feed storage and feed analysis conducted by local authority representatives.

### 6.3 Housing and Environment

- All animal housing/shelters must have clean, dry bedding (straw or shavings)



- Animal Pens within barns and animal shelters to be ‘spot cleaned’ daily to remove animal faeces and wet bedding to be replaced with clean, dry bedding.
- Animal pens within barns to be ‘spot cleaned’ a second time in the afternoon to remove additional faeces.
- Stocking densities to show best practice bettering minimum industry standards.
- Barns to have good ventilation, to be free from excessive drafts and excessive heat/humidity.
- Animals in fields without a formal built shelter to have access to a suitable hedgerow/tree to provide shade in the summer.
- Animals and fields in the winter to have a dry stand-off area free from poaching and bare ground/mud.
- Animal pens and fields to be secure, free from damage and to cause no harm.

#### 6.4 Animal Behaviour

- Animals to be grouped to allow them to exhibit their natural behaviour and should be grouped by species, breed, age, production cycle, dominants, gender and/or condition where appropriate.
- Animals to have appropriate space/environment to exhibit natural behaviour to allow them to run, scratch, nest, perch, hide etc.
- Animals monitored daily for changes in behaviour group dynamic and appropriate action taken on discovery of problems/concerns.
- All animals to have minimum of six hours of daylight and six hours of darkness during a 24-hour period.

#### 6.5 Public Exposure

- All animals should be able to remove themselves from public reach/direct contact.
- All animals should have at least one side of their pen against a wall or away from public access to allow them to rest/sit/eat/drink out of reach of the public.
- Animals to be monitored throughout the day for signs of distress/being uncomfortable with the presence of visitors.
- Only animals comfortable with public presence should be placed within barns with high ‘visitor traffic’.
- Animals that have given birth to be kept out of public reach the first 48 hours.
- Members of public are not allowed within animal fields/pens.





## 6.6 Animal Interactions

- Trained/briefed member of staff to be present for all animal interactions.
- Animals selected for animal interactions should be trained and slowly exposed to groups of visitors at the speed they are comfortable with before taking part in demonstrations in front of large crowds.
- Animals that are unwell or heavily pregnant should not be used for animal interactions.
- All animal interactions to take place in 'neutral location' away from animals' pen/field.
- No rabbits to be held by members of the public.
- No horses or donkeys to be ridden by members of the public.

## 7 Animal Health Planning

7.1 Each species to have an individual health plan updated annually and signed off by a nominated vet practice. Health plans should be proactive and written to prevent/reduce the incidence of disease and maximise animal welfare and should contain:

- Current group numbers
- Changes since the previous year
- Required vaccinations
- Internal and external parasite control
- Foot care procedures
- Disease surveillance
- Management dates, scanning, lambing, shearing, weaning
- Young animal management and husbandry processes
- Animal treatment plans
- Breeding plans
- Condition scoring targets
- Goals for the species for the current year.



## 8 Antibiotic use

- 8.1 In line with the UK wide strategy to reduce antibiotic use and resistance in the UK following the O'Neil report published in 2016, Forge Mill Farm is committed to reducing antibiotic use.
- 8.2 A proactive, vaccine led approach to animal health and welfare is to be prioritised to reduce incidence of disease outbreak and the need for antibiotics. A focus on colostrum management and neonatal care is also to be prioritised to ensure that passive immunity is past to youngstock further reducing the need for antibiotics. No preventative group treatments of antibiotics are to be given unless specifically advised by a vet in exceptional circumstances.
- 8.3 Animal treatment plans are to be produced including animal treatment protocols for different types of illness/injury disease which are to include the correct time, type, and dose of antibiotic to be used. Treatment plans should be signed off and approved by a vet.
- 8.4 Any animal sickness/disease discovered without a signed off treatment plan must have an individual approved treatment protocol, discussed, and signed off by the farm manager. If there is any uncertainty around the type of antibiotic to be used a conversation with a vet on the phone is required to confirm the correct type.
- 8.5 Dosing instructions are to be followed exactly and courses of antibiotics are to be finished in line with dosing instructions to prevent resistance.

## 9 Anthelmintic Use

- 9.1 Forge Mill Farm is committed to preventing and reducing Anthelmintic resistance in line with the UK wide focus on the sustainable control of parasites within livestock.



- 9.2 A proactive, data led approach is to be taken to the prevention and treatment of internal and external parasites. Faecal egg counts are to be conducted during risk periods, at least three times a year, to determine the level of treatment required and the type of treatment to be used.
- 9.3 Blanket pre-emptive preventative treatments of mature breeding stock are not to be conducted unless specifically advised by a vet in exceptional circumstances.
- 9.4 Monitoring of the NADIS parasite forecasts, local environmental conditions, animal presentation and other risk factors are to guide decisions on the use of anthelmintics in high-risk groups when FEC results are not available and a speedy response as required to prevent an outbreak/animal welfare issue.
- 9.5 Group 1 wormers are to be used for youngstock treatment of nematodirus preserving group 2 and 3 wormers for later in the season. Group 4 and 5 workers are not to be used unless specifically directed to by vet in exceptional circumstances. An annual monitoring of anthelmintic effectiveness should take place to check for resistance.
- 9.6 Best practice procedures should be followed including appropriate dosing for the weight of the animal, following manufacturer's instruction, using the correct drug for the correct parasite and effective grazing management to reduce worm burden/resistance following treatment.
- 9.7 Within Sandwell Valley, long rest periods are to be left between grazing groups to reduce worm burden. In addition to this, rapid moves during high-risk periods to prevent re-grazing dirty fields and not grazing fields grazed in the previous year by ewes and lambs will further reduce worm burden.
- 9.8 On Forge Mill Farm Trail, careful management of grazing groups is required to ensure that high-risk animals are not followed by growing or immunocompromised animals and appropriate rest periods are left between grazing groups/species following the discovery of a worm burden.



9.9 The proximity to water course and environmentally sensitive fields should be taken into consideration before animals are treated with anthelmintics to prevent damage to local flora, fauna, invertebrates, and aquatic life.

## 10 Disease Surveillance

10.1 Appropriate disease surveillance to be undertaken in line with advice from the nominated vet practice directed by the national picture/national guidance.

Disease	Surveillance	Action
Bovine Tuberculosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual testing for bovine TB to take place in accordance with the Animal Plant and Health Agencies instruction.</li> <li>Pre-movement testing bovine animals leaving the holding is to take place in accordance with instruction from the APHA.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any animals identified with the disease are to be euthanised</li> <li>The holding will be locked down until two consecutive clear tests of all stock has been achieved</li> </ul>
Bovine viral diarrhoea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All cattle born on the holding are to be tested at tagging through tissue samples sent to a designated lab for testing.</li> <li>Any cattle brought onto the holding should have a negative BVD test or a BVD vaccination history.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any animals identified with BVD are to be isolated from the group and culled.</li> <li>On identification testing of the whole herd will be needed.</li> </ul>
Johne's disease	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any new animals brought onto the farm are to be tested for Johne's disease before arrival or during quarantine.</li> <li>Any cattle who show signs of wasting/reduce production/infertility should</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any animals discovered with Johne's disease are not to be purchased or brought onto the holding.</li> <li>Goats are to be vaccinated against</li> </ul>



	be tested for Johne's disease and isolated from the group.	Johne's disease at birth. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individual plans created for any individuals identified with Johne's disease.</li> </ul>
CAE and CLA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Random blood testing to be conducted alongside other blood tests</li> <li>Testing of old sheep/goats who are losing condition quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Animals identified euthanised</li> <li>Further testing to be conducted on discovery of disease</li> </ul>
Toxoplasmosis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Testing of suspicious abortions on discovery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discovery of disease, isolation of affected individuals</li> <li>Treatment plan for whole flock/heard created with the use of vaccinations.</li> </ul>
Sheep scab	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring and testing of suspicious individuals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Isolation of infected individuals</li> <li>Group treatment in line with Vet advice</li> </ul>

## 11 Anthelmintic Use

11.1 Animal breeding plans to be produced as part of the animal health planning process with the aim to improve flock/heard health, productivity, breed standards, genetic diversity, and animal temperament

11.2 Animal breeding to take place to feed into existing animal stocks to reduce the number of replacement animals brought onto the farm from other locations and to generate teaching opportunities through showing commercial 'grass-based' livestock production across Sandwell Valley country Park.



- 11.3 Breeding plans to work towards the aims of the Rare Breeds Survival Trust with a focus on key species on the RBST watchlist. Breeding plans to work in conjunction with other RBST accredited farms to improve the national status of rare breeds kept at Forge Mill Farm.
- 11.4 Ruminant animals should not be bred more than once per calendar year and should be bred in line with their natural cycle of production without artificially inducing animals to come into season. Other animal should be bred in line with industry best practice.
- 11.5 Elderly animals, animal showing poor form, health status, breed standards, negative behaviours and any animals who had significant difficulty breeding in the previous year should not be bred from. Breeding decisions should be made in line with advice from the nominated vet practice.

## 12 Transport of Animals

- 12.1 Any animal transport will take place in line with the welfare of animals (transport) order 2006. Any individuals transporting animals should have a certificate of competence. Journeys are to be kept under 8 hours apart from in exceptional circumstances.
- 12.2 Journeys over eight hours, additional 2 transporter authorisation is required in addition to a journey log. Any journeys over eight hours should be signed off and approved by the nominated vet practice and farm manager.
- 12.3 Only registered animal transport companies/individuals are to be used for the transport of animals from Forge Mill Farm with modern, high welfare transport vehicles/trailers and appropriate training/certification.
- 12.4 Movement documents are always to be prepared prior to animal transport and carried with the transporter. Regular checks on animals during transport to be conducted to ensure appropriate space, ventilation, temperature, and welfare conditions are maintained.
- 12.5 Animals should be transported with appropriate groups in line with their size, breed, sex, and social grouping. Sick or injured animal should not be transported and animals with wet navels should not be moved off the farm.



## 13 Farm to Town

13.1 As part of the education outreach activities at Forge Mill Farm several events are planned throughout the year in which some animals from Forge Mill Farm and farming/food related activities are taken to parks, green space, and town centres within Sandwell.

13.2 The following conditions to be met to ensure high welfare standards are maintained:

- Only confident animals, used to public exposure, busy environments, loud noises, and regular handling/transport are to be selected for farm to town activities.
- Animals selected should be in good physical condition, not heavily pregnant and not injured, sick or suffering from any disease, diarrhoea, lameness, or other condition.
- Journey time of less than 45 minutes each way to selected location.
- No more than six hours on location
- Animals to have continuous access to food, hay, water, and dry/soft place to lie away from hazards.
- Animal pen to have one side away from public interaction so that they cannot be fully surrounded by members of the public and have an area to sit, lie, rest, eat and drink away from public reach.
- Animal pens to be under a gazebo to provide shade, shelter from rain and a sense of security/normality for animals that live in barns at Forge Mill Farm.
- Animals are to be with a trained member of farm staff throughout entire journey and time on location.
- Dogs and other animals are not allowed within the 'farm zone.'
- The livestock trailer should be kept within close proximity to the animal pens to allow for quick evacuation in and emergency.

## 14 Extreme weather



- 14.1 Hot weather and extreme winter weather plans to be produced and followed during indicated periods where the weather experiences considered to be extreme.
- 14.2 In the summer, the hot weather plan should be implemented when temperatures exceed 23°C.
- 14.3 These plans include actions to be taken to manage at risk groups and guidance on handling, increased checks, feeding, water provision and shade/shelter provision.
- 14.4 In winter, the extreme winter weather plan should be implemented during periods when temperatures drop below 5° for more than two consecutive days of snow is present on the ground for more than 3 consecutive days or if extreme wind and rain causes difficult environmental conditions for animals grazing within Sandwell Valley.

## 15 Sale of Livestock

- 15.1 Breeding, store, and finished animals are to be sold through reputable markets, direct to buyers or to other farms/farm parks.
- 15.2 Due diligence is to be conducted prior to the sale of animal's director buyers to ensure the receiving keeper has a legitimate holding number, suitable training, has experience to care for the animals and suitable space environment for them to live in. Animals are not to be sold to live in back gardens.
- 15.3 Abattoirs selected to send sheep, cattle, goats, and pigs directly to must follow the processes outlined by the Humane Slaughter Association, be regularly inspected with all animals being stunned prior to slaughter.

## 16 Young Animal Management

- 16.1 Tagging and castration of all animals must be completed between 24 hours and 7 days old. Tail docking of lambs must also be completed between 24 hours and 7 days old. Elastrator bands should be used for all Docking and castrating.
- 16.2 Disbudding of calves should be completed before eight weeks old using local anaesthetic, Metacam and a hot disbudding iron.
- 16.3 Tail docking and teeth clipping in piglets and beak clipping in chickens is prohibited.

## 17 Euthanasia





17.1 When an animal needs to be euthanised on the farm to prevent suffering it must be conducted by vet or a registered fallen stock service only. The farm manager is responsible for the decision to euthanise. The option to euthanise should be used proactively to prevent suffering and pain. In more complex situations a vet should be consulted to advise on the most appropriate actions to take.

## 18 Fallen Stock Collection

18.1 Any animal that dies at Forge Mill Farm is to be collected by a NFSCo registered fallen stock service within three days of death to be appropriately disposed of.

18.2 Whilst waiting for collection animals should be stored in a clean, leakproof bin with a lid out of reach of the animals, birds and members of the public.

## 19 Unexplained or Suspicious deaths

19.1 Unexplained deaths with no obvious cause/suspicious cause or a pattern of deaths (two or more) of a similar cause/type should be investigated quickly to identify cause and prevent the spread of disease/any further mortality.

19.2 The nominated vet practice should be called and discussion with a vet should take place to determine the best next cause of action. In all cases of suspicious death/pattern of death a post-mortem should be conducted to identify cause.

19.3 Following this an appropriate action plan should be made with the vets along with increased monitoring other at-risk individuals. All deaths, suspicious or not, should be reported and the appropriate processes followed is outlined later in the document.

## 20 Farm Biosecurity Policy

Potential Source of Disease	Action taken to control
Incoming livestock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarantine on arrival for 4 weeks in designated isolation area.</li> <li>• Vaccinated and treated for internal and external parasites at start of 4 weeks.</li> <li>• Blood tests were required for disease under surveillance.</li> </ul>



People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• External contractors handling livestock (scanners/sharers/vets) to wear clean clothing, disinfected boots, and equipment.</li> <li>• Public advised to wash hands on exit and entry.</li> <li>• No public access to inside grazing fields or pens.</li> </ul>
Buildings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing is to be washed and disinfected between groups.</li> <li>• Animal pens to be constructed to prevent animal faeces moving between animal housing areas and public areas</li> </ul>
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Livestock trailer to be cleaned and disinfected after every change of group.</li> <li>• Handling systems to be washed and disinfected after each use.</li> <li>• Foot trimming/sheering/medical equipment to be washed and disinfected after each group/application.</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitoring the wider environment for disease outbreaks and changes in trends.</li> </ul>

## 21 Isolation Protocol

<b>Isolation trigger</b>	Animals that are identified as being unwell, contagious or a threat to visitor safety in addition to new, incoming animals.
<b>Location</b>	Walled pen in pig barn.
<b>Disinfection Protocol</b>	<p>Fully emptied and washed following every use.</p> <p>Disinfected using Vircox.</p> <p>Wash and disinfect all buckets and tools used.</p> <p>Foot dip on entry and exit with Vircox.</p> <p>No students, work experience students, volunteers, or visitors to enter the area.</p>



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## 22 Broken Needle Policy (sheep and cattle)

22.1 If a broken needle is left in an animal during treatment the farm will take the following action:

1. Mark the animal with a distinct and permanent form of identification and record the date, animal identification and injection site in the veterinary medicine record.
2. When the animal leaves the farm, the animal will be consigned direct to the abattoir and not sold to another producer. The movement/means of disposal will be recorded in the herd/flock record book.
3. If the animal is to be retained as breeding stock or for longer than 7 days the farm will check its health regularly and when it leaves the farm, follow the procedure at point 4.
4. If the animal is marketed after 7 days it will be sent straight to the abattoir and inform the abattoir in writing of the broken needle, providing details of the injection site and the date on which it occurred. The injection site with the broken needle will be marked on the animal before consignment.



## 23 Report and Recording

23.1 To ensure best practice is being followed appropriate reporting and recording processes should be put in place across Forge Mill Farm. This will increase accountability and improve animal welfare through improved management, better pattern recognition to detect problems and the ability to pre-empt/prevent future problems utilising data from previous years/incidences. Appropriate reporting and recording are also crucial for compliance with legislation surrounding keeping livestock.

### 23.2 Checklists and Spot Checks

23.2.1 Daily morning animal Health checks on every animal recorded on PSS live to include food, water, bedding, enclosure, and welfare checks to be completed by farm staff and collected by farm Charge hand/supervisor.

23.2.2 Afternoon animal welfare checks prior to closing include food water and welfare to be completed by farm staff and collected by farm Charge hand/supervisor.

23.2.3 Weekly Random spot checks to check for compliance with best practice guidelines to be conducted in-house to be completed by farm Charge hand, supervisor, or farm manager.

23.2.4 Additional external spot checks to be conducted by nominated vet practice outlined in the following section.



### 23.3 Sick, injured and Dead Animal Reporting

- 23.3.1 Sick/injured animal reporting process in place to identify animal, location, symptoms and timelines and escalation points to be completed by farm staff.
- 23.3.2 Sick/injured animal investigation form to be conducted by farm charge hand/supervisors to determine cause of sickness/injuries/patterns within the group to be signed off by farm manager.
- 23.3.3 Individual Treatment plan for all reported sick/injured animals to be put in place and signed off by farm manager.
- 23.3.4 Animal death reporting process including investigation form to identify animal, cause/reason for death, pattern recognition, steps to take to prevent further sickness/death, death date and collection date to be completed by farm charge hand/supervisor and signed off by farm manager.
- 23.3.5 Eight weekly checks of previous sickness, injury and death with nominated vet practice outlined in the following section

### 23.4 Medication Records

- 23.4.1 Animal medication purchase and stock record including expiry dates, medicine batch numbers and quantities to be kept up-to-date and accurate.
- 23.4.2 Animal medication administration record with administration dates, names, dosage, reason for treatment, animal identification, withdrawal periods, medication batch number and expiry date to be completed each time animal medication is administered.
- 23.4.3 Eight weekly checks by nominated vet practice outlined in the following section.

### 23.5 Births, Sale, and death records



23.5.1 Records of all births and deaths to be held in a flock/herd book to include lineage.

23.5.2 Registration with appropriate breed societies and government bodies of births/deaths.

23.5.3 The list of all animals on the holding to be always up to date.

## 23.6 Digital Systems

23.6.1 The utilisation of digital systems to streamline processes, maximise efficiency and improve traceability and resilience as a priority.

23.6.2 PSS live is to be used for all daily health checks and random spot checks. The farm management app Agri webb is to be used for registering animal's births, medications, movements, sales, deaths, and records of animal medications stored on site.



## 24 External Accreditation

### 24.1 Partnership with Nominated Vet Practice

24.1.1 A strong working relationship with the nominated vet practice will ensure that there is external involvement in animal welfare procedures to ensure the best practice is being followed and to monitor and improve animal welfare.

24.1.2 Once a year the nominated vet practice should conduct an unannounced visit and formal audit to cover all aspects of animal welfare, housing, feeding, storage, medication storage/recording and any other KPIs considered to be useful.

24.1.3 This will include a pre-booked vet visit to the farm approximately every 8 weeks during which the following will take place:

- Farm walk with senior charge hand, supervisor and/or farm manager the farm to observe the animals in their environments.
- A formal compliance checklist to cover animal welfare, animal environments, feed storage, medication storage/recording to be completed by visiting vet.
- Joint scrutiny of sick, injured, and dead animal reporting, investigating and treatment plans to discuss best practice, observed patterns and preventative measures.
- Advice and guidance for farm team around specific issues identified in the previous eight weeks including examining animals in question.
- Advice and guidance for the farm team to cover the upcoming eight weeks and any changes in feed planning, management and production cycles and health planning including any required vaccinations/medications.
- Faecal egg count sample collection of all animal groups
- Any routine medical procedures including vaccinations, dental work, dis budding and any other plan procedures.
- A 30-minute toolbox talk for all farm staff and volunteers about current disease concerns, plan procedures or new policies/management changes.





## 24.2 Animal Attraction Assured Certification

24.2.1 The National Farm Attractions Network, of which Forge Mill Farm is a member, have developed an Animal Attraction Assured Certification scheme (AAA certification) in conjunction with the Health and Safety Executive and Kiwa Agri Food.

24.2.2 The certification scheme covers the industry code of practice of animal attractions written to ensure visitor safety when visiting animal attractions in addition to auditing and assuring animal welfare needs are met in line with the five freedoms.

24.2.3 The scheme involves an external annual audit which includes a site tour and documentation checks to confirm compliance with the scheme. Forge Mill Farm is to be accredited by the scheme by the end of 2023 and is to maintain certification.

## 24.3 Animal Health and Welfare Pathway Participation

24.3.1 Forge Mill Farm is to take part in the new Animal Health and Welfare Pathway released by government in 2022.

24.3.2 The first stage of the animal health and welfare pathway is a fully funded annual animal welfare review conducted by a vet. The farm will operate this in conjunction with its current plans to partner with a nominated vet practice for regular farm visits.

24.3.3 Future applications of the scheme include animal health and welfare capital grants and disease eradication and control programs and the possibility of entering a 'result led' reward scheme for improving animal welfare by 2025

## 24.4 Rare Breeds Survival Trust

24.4.1 Forge Mill Farm is an approved Rare Breeds Survival Trust farm Park and should look to retain its status by focusing on the improvement of rare breed livestock which currently includes Traditional Hereford Cattle, Golden Guernsey Goats, Bagot Goats, Leicester Longwool Sheep, Bore ray Sheep, Landrace Pigs, Oxford Sandy and Black Pigs, Tamworth Pigs with the aim to expand into rare breed poultry.



## 25 Team Training

25.1 To ensure the whole farm team can identify and treat animal welfare concerns appropriate training should be given to all staff.

### 25.2 Vet led eight-weekly toolbox talks

25.2.1 During each eight-week vet visit a 30-minute vet led Toolbox talk will take place of all farm staff members, volunteers and apprentices current disease concerns, plan procedures or new policies/management changes.

25.2.2 Toolbox talks will include information about fly strike, parasite control, condition scoring, health checking, feeding requirements etc.

### 25.3 Mastering Medicines

25.3.1 All core farm staff to take part in annual mastering medicines course delivered by nominated vet practice to cover the safe use of medicines, identifications of animal welfare concerns, appropriate recording and reporting processes and up-to-date information on new best practices in antimicrobial resistance

### 25.4 Lambing Training

25.4.1 Before lambing, all core farm staff, volunteers and bank staff expected to work during the lambing period should take part in annual lambing training delivered by nominated vet practice to cover pre-lambing management, feeding, housing arrangements, health checks, lambing assistants, neonatal care, colostrum management, tagging, ducking and castrating, reporting and recording.

### 25.5 Animal Transport certificate of competence

25.5.1 Any core farm staff required to transfer animals needs to have an Animal Transport Certificate of Competence, which allows the transport on journeys over 65 km up to 8 hours. This should be renewed every five years.

25.5.2 Shorter journeys do not legally require certification although internally all staff will be required to have a certificate of competence to move animals off the holding.



## 26 Key performance Indicators and Animal Welfare Goals

26.1 To measure success key performance indicators (KPI's) will be used in conjunction with checklists to monitor animal welfare and show any areas that require further progress.

26.2 The current indicators for success and goals for animal welfare at Forge Mill Farm can be found below. These will change over time following guidance from the nominated vet practice that the farm will be working with closely to continue to show best practice in animal welfare.

Species	Goal	Reason	KPI
All	Complete Utilisation of daily check lists	To promote best practice and accountability	100% checklist completion compliance
All	Achieve excellent standards of animal welfare and management	To promote best practice, improve animal welfare and accountability	Achieve a satisfactory or above in every eight weekly inspections.  Satisfactory or above or above in annual unannounced inspection
All	Achieve annual AAA accreditation	To maintain certification	Annual success during site inspection
Sheep	Reduce lameness prevalence within flock.	Previous problem with foot rot	Lameness below 5% annually (national average 10%)
Sheep	Improved standards of breeding ewes.	Ageing flock	50% of breeding ewes under five years old.
Sheep	Review sheep scab prevention policy	Minimise risk of resistance	Zero cases of sheep scab
Sheep	Reduce ewe mortality	To promote best practice	Ewe mortality of below 2.5% (national average 6%)



Sheep	Reduce lamb mortality from scanning to weaning.	To promote best practice	Under 10% lamb mortality scanning to weaning (national average 20%)
Goats	Reduce springtime lice problem	Ongoing problem with springtime lice	6 out of 8 weeks (May/June) of lice free population
Goats	Breed high quality Golden Guernsey and Boar Kidd replacements	To further populations and reduce ageing heard	One litter per year of purebred kids
Cattle	Reduce cases of joint/naval ill	Three cases in 2022 causing change in management practice	One or less cases per year of joint/naval ill
Cattle	Fence line weaning trial	to reduce stress and growth implications at weaning	Two-year trial of fence line weaning
Chickens	Reduce springtime mite problem	Historical problem with springtime mites	6 out of 8 weeks (May/June) of mite free population
Rabbits	Ensure full compliance with vaccination and parasite control programme	Prevent disease outbreak and mortality	100% completion/compliance with vaccination/parasite control programme.



## 27 Supplementary Documents

### 27.1 Health Plans

27.1.1 Sheep health plan

27.1.2 Goat health plan

27.1.3 Cattle health plan

27.1.4 Other species health plan- horses, donkeys, alpacas, poultry, pigs

27.1.5 Rabbit village health and well-being management plan

27.1.6 Species-specific treatment protocol

### 27.2 Management Plans

27.2.1 Animal feeding plan and map

27.2.2 Rabbit village feeding plan a map

27.2.3 Forge Mill Farm cleaning regime

27.2.4 Rabbit village cleaning regime

### 27.3 Checklists

27.3.1 Forge Mill Farm animal welfare morning checklist

27.3.2 Forge Mill Farm animal welfare afternoon checklist

27.3.3 Forge Mill Farm animal welfare spot checklist

27.3.4 Rabbit village animal welfare morning checklist

27.3.5 Rabbit village animal welfare afternoon checklist

27.3.6 Rabbit village animal welfare spot checklist

### 27.4 Recording and reporting Documents

27.4.1 Sick/injured animal reporting form

27.4.2 Sick/injured animal investigation form

27.4.3 Individual Treatment plan form

27.4.4 Animal death reporting and investigation form

27.4.5 Fallen stock pick up form

27.4.6 Digital flock, herd, and other animal records



## 27.5 Emergency Plans

27.5.1 Forge Mill Farm hot weather plan

27.5.2 Rabbit village hot weather plan

27.5.3 Forge Mill Farm extreme winter weather plan

27.5.4 Rabbit village extreme winter weather plan

27.5.5 Forge Mill Farm Flood evacuation plan



## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Improvement Plan Progress to 1 November 2023 and Letter to Secretary of State December 2023
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Leader of the Council Cllr Kerrie Carmichael
<b>Director:</b>	Chief Executive Shokat Lal
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Strategic Lead – Service Improvement Kate Ashley <a href="mailto:Kate1_ashley@sandwell.gov.uk">Kate1_ashley@sandwell.gov.uk</a>  Lead Officer – Service Improvement Dawn Webster <a href="mailto:Dawn_webster@sandwell.gov.uk">Dawn_webster@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1. Recommendations

- 1.1. That progress against the Improvement Plan up to 1 November 2023 be received.
- 1.2. That Cabinet receive the Improvement Plan Risk Register.
- 1.3. That Cabinet receive changes to the Improvement Plan.
- 1.4. That Cabinet receive any recommendations or comments made by Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board and Audit and Risk Assurance Committee in relation to the Improvement Plan progress.



- 1.5. That Cabinet recommend to Council that this report along with the October progress report and an accompanying letter be submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to form the Council's six-monthly update on progress against the Improvement Plan.

## 2. Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1. This report provides a quarterly update on progress against the Improvement Plan agreed by Council on 7 June 2022. The Improvement Plan incorporates all recommendations from the original Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review, the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and the CIPFA Financial Management Review, as well as the Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.
- 2.2. The Improvement Plan was refreshed to include the recommendations from the follow up visits from Grant Thornton, CIPFA and LGA in 202. Cabinet approved this in March 2023.
- 2.3. The Improvement Plan is intended to be a live document updated to take account of progress and relevant changes. Changes to the Improvement Plan are tracked through the established change control process to form a refresh of the Improvement Plan. These changes are formally reported through to Cabinet on a quarterly basis for transparency.
- 2.4. Risk management is embedded within the council's programme management of the Improvement Plan. A risk register is in place which underpins the council's strategic risk relating to the Improvement Plan (59a 02/22). Cabinet is asked to receive the Improvement Plan Risk Register to provide assurance that risks are being managed effectively and to provide contextual information for future decision making
- 2.5. As part of the governance and assurance arrangements for the Improvement Plan, Audit and Risk Assurance Committee and Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board review progress of the Improvement Plan and utilise the plan for work programming purposes. Both Committees are due to consider progress at their meetings in November and any recommendations or comments will be presented for Cabinet's consideration.











2.6. Under the Statutory Directions, the council is required to report progress against the Improvement Plan to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities every six months. Reports have been submitted in December 2022 and June 2023. It is proposed that this report and the quarterly update received by Cabinet in September 2023 (appendix 7) form the basis of the report to the Secretary of State along with a covering letter (appendix 8). Council are responsible for approving the report made to the Secretary of State and Cabinet will make a recommendation to Council.

### 3. How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

3.1. Sandwell Council's Improvement Plan focuses on the governance arrangements of the council and areas of improvement across the organisation. The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure that the council is able to deliver on the aims and priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. The deliverables set out in this Improvement Plan will achieve long-term sustainable improvements in how the council operates and is able to make effective decisions focused on improving outcomes for residents and experiences of service users. Therefore, this impacts on the council's ability to deliver all the objectives in the Corporate Plan.

	Best start in life for children and young people
	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. Background

- 4.1. A single Improvement Plan was agreed by Council on 7 June 2022 to address recommendations from a Value for Money Review into the council's governance arrangements, a CIPFA financial management review, an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge, and Statutory Directions from the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. The single Improvement Plan replaced the Governance Review Improvement Plan which was approved in January 2022.
- 4.2. To ensure that senior officers and members have oversight of delivery against the Improvement Plan, Council approved that progress will be monitored by Leadership Team monthly and reported to Cabinet quarterly. This will continue until all actions have been completed, or changes have been embedded into business-as-usual management mechanisms.
- 4.3. This report is the sixth update to Cabinet on progress of the Improvement Plan

## 5. Improvement Plan Quarterly Progress

- 5.1. Over the three months to 1 November, we have continued to deliver at pace and embed changes. We are seeing more evidence of the impact of our improvements. We have received an Area SEND inspection and have now moved up a level, we achieved a key milestone with the signing of our 2020-2021 accounts and implemented our Asset Management System providing the tools for us to address an area of concern previously raised by external reviewers.
- 5.2. A comprehensive monitoring tool has been developed which includes a progress status rating for all actions. The monitoring tool provides quick reference around which actions are on track for delivery, as well as highlighting areas that may require remedial action or additional levels of assurance. The Improvement Plan Monitoring Tool is included at Appendix 1.
- 5.3. Progress against each theme of Improvement Plan is contained within Appendix 2. This includes a description of workstream progress including progress against milestones and achievements, and any progress issues. A summary by theme is provided below.



## 5.4. Organisational Culture Theme

### 5.4.1. Achievements this quarter:

- Proposal of new approach to Employee Performance Review presented to Trade Unions to further embed the One Team Framework
- Forward plan of all Member briefings is in place for the next three sessions to ensure topics covered are relevant and timely.
- Social media policy completed with engagement/support of Trade Unions

### 5.4.2. Organisational Culture Progress Issues:

- **New Member Survey conducted, and any required amendments made to Member Development Programme (MDP)/New Member Induction programme**
  - Lower than expected return rate for New Member survey means results cannot be relied upon. However, Members have been completing analysis after each training session.
  - Further analysis of these will be undertaken and this, along with findings from face-to-face Member sessions on the Member-Officer relationship and engagement with LGA will be used to inform the Autumn review of MDP and inform new Member induction for 2024-2025.
  - Review will commence in November.
- **Governance Training and Development**
  - 23 attendees completed Decision making training in October for key decision makers which included scenario-based learning on procurement and financial regulations, Training material and guidance available to all staff on intranet.
  - Regarding broader scenario-based learning, Officers involved in pulling training across finance, procurement and governance have undergone significant changes of personnel.
  - Next step is still to bring a new project team together to agree training detail and to diarise. Amber rating reflects need to bring project group together and progress the planning.



- **Delivery of Directorships and Trusteeships Training**

- Training carried out 31 October, 20 members attended along with 5 officers The training session was recorded and will be made available for others to view. This training will be delivered annually. Amber rating reflects that training date is later than originally intended.
- The reason for the exception report is that training date is later than originally intended of July 2023.

## 5.5. Corporate Oversight Theme

### 5.5.1. Achievements this quarter

- Oracle Fusion approval for Gateway 2 Exit from Modelling phase for HR and Payroll
- Oracle Fusion system configuration for Finance, Procurement and EPM complete
- Q1 monitoring to Leadership Team, Scrutiny and Cabinet
- Workforce development plan skills gap analysis and training programme complete
- Corporate Debt Policy agreed
- 2020/21 accounts signed off by external auditor with no qualifications
- Verto project management software user acceptance testing complete

### 5.6. Corporate Oversight Progress Issues:

- **Develop a Continuous Improvement Framework**

- Service planning approach developed to build corporate agendas and improvement areas into business planning discussion - evidence bundle to include performance, resident feedback, internal audit and risk management to identify improvement activity at service level.
- Business planning workshops scheduled for November and December 2023.
- Approach to be reviewed in early 2024 following completion of workshops and business plans; continuous improvement built into service planning and performance management framework.



- **Directorate level restructuring and review of Spans and Layers-On Hold.**
  - Senior Leadership Team structure approved at Full Council 24/10/23 and analysis of spans and layers due to be discussed by senior officers in November 2023.
  - The new roles have gone out to advert on 9th November 2023 and a recruitment timetable is in place.

## 5.7. Strategic Direction Theme

### 5.7.1. Achievements this quarter

- Corporate Procurement Strategy action plan finalised
- Corporate Narrative engagement carried out with stakeholders from across the organisations
- Contract commenced on Stock Condition Surveys for housing stock
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion draft audit presented to Leadership Team
- Equality objectives approved

### 5.7.2. Strategic Direction Progress Issues

- **Customer Journey Strategy**
  - Customer engagement sessions need to take place but due to resourcing issues an external partner will be required.
  - Director of Finance along with Assistant Chief Executive has agreed funding will be provided for external support to produce Customer Engagement Strategy, due to limited resources and other commitments.
  - Specification work commenced but in early stages.
  - The reason for the exception report is that there is a need to procure a delivery partner and delivery will take a longer time period than was originally planned.

## 5.8. Decision Making Theme

### 5.8.1. Achievements this quarter

- Scrutiny Committee's Annual Report presented to Council 24 October 2023



### 5.8.2. Decision Making Progress Issues

- No issues in this theme

## 5.9. Procurement and Commercial Theme

### 5.9.1. Achievements this quarter

- SEND Transport Project team members identified, launch meeting scheduled.
- Completion of Phase 2 Tech Forge Asset Management System implementation

### 5.9.2. Procurement and Commercial Progress Issues:

- **Performance Management System: Options Appraisal**
  - A performance management system is being explored to support improved business intelligence across the council and facilitate reporting within the performance management framework.
  - The reason for the exception report is that the original timescales to bring forward an options appraisal have been pushed back due to supplier availability for system demos. The final system demo was held August.
  - Options appraisal and business case are being finalised, further engagement with service areas being conducted to refine requirements.

## 5.10. Partnerships and Relationships Theme

### 5.10.1. Achievements this quarter

- Transitions Projects: Review of the transition from children's' to adults' services Benchmarking findings report complete and draft shared with Corporate Transformation Manager.

### 5.10.2. Partnerships and Relationships Progress Issues

- **Sandwell Childrens Trust- KPI's (along with accompanying tolerances) implemented in Q2**
  - KPIs and tolerances are currently under review by the DfE appointed independent chair of the SCT Improvement Board and in negotiation with the DCS and CEO of SCT.
- **Consultation on VCS Draft Strategy**
  - Annual report on 2022/23 grants produced and shared with Leader, Cabinet Member for Communities and Chair of Budget &



Corporate Scrutiny Management. Further work in progress to develop approach for wider VCS engagement.

- Relationship with VCS continues to be positive - second Cost of Living Summit involved 30 local partner organisations to launch the joint Tackling Poverty Plan

## 6. Statutory Recommendations

- 6.1. The Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review 2021 included three statutory recommendations that the council has a legal obligation to respond to. These recommendations are incorporated into the single Improvement Plan and are embedded across each of the six themes.
- 6.2. In their follow up review 2022, Grant Thornton recognised progress against all three statutory recommendations.
- 6.3. To provide an overview of progress against these three specific recommendations, Appendix 3 extracts the key actions that respond to each of the recommendations, and they are summarised below.
- 6.4. **Statutory Recommendation 1** - It is imperative that senior officers and senior members take effective corporate grip of long-standing service issues highlighted by the findings in this report (including SLT, SCT, the waste service, the ERP system, and Lion Farm) and prioritise corporate effort in managing the issues identified and embed the solutions into the Council.
  - Progress update:
    - Continuing to implement strategies to address the service issues highlighted in the Grant Thornton report.
    - Sandwell Leisure Trust – agreement reached to extend SLT’s operation of leisure centres to March 2027.
    - Handover of Sandwell Aquatic Centre to SLT
    - Sandwell Children’s Trust – Governance arrangements remain in place. Joint work in place with SCT in relation to corporate parenting and early help. Revised contract commenced April 2023
    - Waste Contract – Contract Monitoring framework progressing well and embedded in PMF reporting. Review of the Contract is complete.
    - ERP (Oracle Fusion) – support provider in place and implementation commenced. Project Management and Governance arrangements are in place.



- Regeneration Strategy and Pipeline to underpin significant regeneration in Sandwell approved by Cabinet 23 March 2022. Monitoring provided to Cabinet in November 2022 and July 2023.

6.5. **Statutory Recommendation 2** - The Council must ensure that the learning in relation to commercial decisions, procurement and contract management highlighted in this report are understood through the organisation.

- Progress Update
  - The first phase of the Governance Review has completed with the Constitution refresh.
  - Corporate Governance Training - Programme of training and development commenced in September 2022 on effective decision-making, good governance, and revised contract procedure rules. Next phase of Corporate Governance Development is being rolled out during 2023-2024.
  - Commercial Strategy approved in March 2023 within the MTFs.
  - Corporate Asset Management Strategy approved by Cabinet in November.
  - SEND Transport lessons learnt completed and shared with Wider Leadership Team

6.6. **Statutory Recommendation 3** - Senior leadership, both officers and members, must demonstrate that they can continue to work together effectively, that they operate in line with the Council's values, codes, policies and procedures, and that there is zero tolerance to inappropriate behaviours. This includes changing the organisational culture in relation to complaints so that they restore balance and proportionality.

- Progress Update
  - Member Development – New Member induction arrangements are in place. Member Development Programme is being regularly reviewed by Ethical Standards and Member Development Committee. Member Handbook created for Municipal Year 2023-24.
  - Officer Development – A consolidated programme of fundamental training for managers on Corporate Governance matters has commenced. A broader Management Development Programme will be rolled out in 2023 following the approval of the Workforce Strategy.





- Organisational Culture – Extensive engagement held to inform the One Team Framework (Values and Behaviours) which was approved in March 2023. Values and behaviours launched.
- Meeting structures to facilitate Cabinet Member and Leadership Team cross-working in place and meeting needs.

## 7. Reporting Framework, Governance and Assurance

- 7.1. To ensure that senior officers and members have oversight of delivery, Council approved the reporting mechanism for the Improvement Plan in June 2022. This set out that progress will be monitored by Leadership Team monthly and reported to Cabinet quarterly until all actions have been completed, or changes have been embedded into business as usual. The diagram included at Appendix 6 sets out the governance framework.
- 7.2. This report forms the sixth quarterly update to Cabinet on the Improvement Plan. Leadership Team have reviewed progress against the plan every month.
- 7.3. The Government Directions require reporting on the delivery of the Improvement Plan at six monthly intervals to the Secretary of State from the council and the Commissioners. The last report was made in June 2023. The next report is due December 2023
- 7.4. Member-led committees, such as the Governance & Constitution Review Committee, Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and Scrutiny Committees, are used for providing a steer and maintaining oversight of the actions and implementation of the Improvement Plan.
- 7.5. The Governance & Constitution Review Committee and cross-party Working Group have been integral to the development and review of the governance documents, ahead of decisions taken by Council last year.
- 7.6. Audit & Risk Assurance Committee receive quarterly updates on the Improvement Plan and the Improvement Plan Risk Register. They received the last quarterly update in September 2023 and are due to consider this quarterly progress update in November 2023.



- 7.7. Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board has included several elements of the Improvement Plan on their work programme as well as regular reports on overall progress. This has included a 'deep dive' focus on the work under the Organisational Culture theme and engagement with the workforce, as well as Customer Journey. The Board will receive this quarterly update in November 2023.
- 7.8. Following consideration of the progress report to Audit & Risk Assurance Committee and Budget & Corporate Scrutiny Management Board, those members will identify areas for further exploration and reporting. Any recommendations or comments from these committees for Cabinet's consideration will be presented to Cabinet at a future meeting.

## 8. External Reviews

- 8.1. External assurance continues to play a part in our improvement journey to monitor our progress in addressing the recommendations made through external reviews. Grant Thornton, LGA and CIPFA conducted follow up reviews in late 2022 with all reviews acknowledging the positive progress made.
- 8.2. Reports from Sandwell's Commissioners have been submitted to the Secretary of State on a six-monthly basis. In their June 2023 report, Commissioners noted the considerable progress made over the first fifteen months of the intervention towards addressing the significant challenges facing the authority. In their third report, the Commissioners outlined that their focus over the coming months will be in the following areas:
- Developing the strategic capacity of the organisation
  - Implementation and embedding of the council's values and behaviours (One Team Framework)
  - Establishing a comprehensive transformation programme linked to the delivery of the medium-term financial strategy
  - Approval of the 2020/21 accounts by the external auditors and a clear timetable for approval of the 2021/22 accounts



8.3. Grant Thornton returned to Sandwell in October 2023 to conduct a further follow up review and monitoring the council's further progress in addressing the Statutory Recommendations made in 2021 and the additional key and improvement recommendations made in 2022. Following the receipt of the second follow-up report, the Improvement Plan will be reviewed to ensure the council is addressing any further recommendations at either corporate level or within 'business as usual' mechanisms. Changes to the Improvement Plan will be reported to members through the normal quarterly reporting schedule.

## 9. Resources

- 9.1. In the development of the Improvement Plan, a review of the resources available to deliver the plan was carried out. Resources to deliver the Improvement Plan have been allocated from within existing commitments in the majority of cases. In 2022, Cabinet approved funding of approximately £1.768m for one-off funding to progress improvement plan actions. A summary of the quarterly position is provided within the council's quarterly budget monitoring report.
- 9.2. The fund has enabled recruitment to key positions including corporate transformation capacity, work on organisational culture and resources to support the implementation of finance improvements and the Governance review. Where longer-term staffing capacity has been required, this has been built into base budgets to ensure sustainability.
- 9.3. To provide additional capacity across improvement activities, the Improvement Reserve is being used to fund a small number of graduate placements within the National Graduate Development Programme from October 2023. These placements will not only provide capacity to council's current improvement journey but will also develop skills in the workforce of the future that will support sustainability.

## 10. Risk Management

- 10.1. The Improvement Plan Risk Register underpins the council's strategic risk relating to the council's Improvement Plan (59a 02/22) and is currently rated as an overall Amber risk. The risk register is reported monthly to Leadership Team and quarterly to Cabinet and Audit & Risk Assurance Committee.



10.2. The current risk register is attached as Appendix 4. The main risks are associated with:

- **Resources** – for delivery of key components of the plan including the corporate programme management office. The financial resources required have been identified and were approved by Council in June. To provide additional capacity across improvement activities, the Improvement Reserve is being used to fund graduate placements within the National Graduate Development Programme which will commence from September 2023.
- **Communication** – to ensure everyone is aware of their respective roles and responsibilities. Communication is taking place through a range of methods including briefings, live events, and regular messages.
- **Investment and Financial Resources** – to ensure financial resources are made available resource gaps/ pressures associated with the Improvement Plan have been identified
- **Constitutional Changes**- If key governance changes (agreed during 2022) are not embedded throughout the organisation then opportunities will be missed. First round of training has been delivered along with revised templates and guidance. Phase 2 of the Corporate Governance Review is underway, and this will focus on embedding the constitutional changes

10.3. Since the last quarterly report to Cabinet, no risks have reduced.

10.4. Since the last quarterly report to Cabinet, no risks have been closed.

## 11. Changes to the Improvement Plan

11.1. The Improvement Plan is intended to be a live document updated to take account of progress and relevant changes.

11.2. The Improvement Plan report to Council in June 2022 set out that changes (which may include the addition of new workstreams or objectives, or the amendment of timescales for delivery of actions) will be tracked through programme management mechanisms and that Cabinet will retain oversight of changes through regular formal reporting.

11.3. The list of all changes is provided in Appendix 5. Where new actions have been added to the Improvement Plan, these are displayed within the monitoring tool with red font colour.



11.4. The changes made are summarised below.

- 3 changes made to action delivery timescales (with 1 being more than three months)
- 1 assurance action has been added
- 7 sub-actions have been added (marked in red within IP).
- 4 main actions are proposed to be closed (2 action closure will result in closure of workstream)
- 3 Assurance actions are proposed to close
- 3 changes to delivery lead

## 12. Alternative Options

12.1. The Value for Money Governance Review was undertaken as part of the external auditor's role to provide assurance on the council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. As the report includes statutory recommendations the council has a legal obligation to respond appropriately.

12.2. The Directions issued by the Secretary of State are a statutory requirement and the council has a legal obligation to respond appropriately. Failure to do so would likely result in further intervention measures.

12.3. Reviewing progress against the Improvement Plan enables senior officers and members to have oversight of delivery, and take corrective action, as necessary. Alternative methods of monitoring progress could be adopted. The current monitoring method is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains fit for purpose and provides Leadership Team with the oversight they require.

## 13. Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	The monitoring of the Improvement Plan is being carried out within existing resources. Council's approval of the single Improvement Plan included allocation of resources to ensure delivery of the Improvement Plan. These resources are monitored regularly by the Programme Management Office and Leadership Team.
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<p><b>Legal and Governance:</b></p>	<p>On 22 March 2022, The Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities issued Directions under Section 15(5) and (6) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the 1999 Act) in order to ensure that the council can comply with the requirements of Part 1 of the 1999 Act. Failure to comply with these Directions may lead to further intervention measures for the council.</p> <p>The delivery of actions within the Plan agreed by Council in June 2022, as well as any subsequently identified actions, will support the council to achieve sustainable improvement. This will support the end of government intervention.</p> <p>Ultimately, the changes made through the Improvement Plan will enable the council to effectively deliver its strategic priorities and ensure it is delivering value for money for Sandwell.</p>
<p><b>Risk:</b></p>	<p>If the Council fails to take appropriate action to meet the requirements set out in the government Direction, or the Commissioners appointed by the Secretary of State do not have sufficient confidence that appropriate actions are being taken to implement and sustain the required improvements, then the council risks not having appropriate arrangements in place to comply with its best value duty under Part 1 of the 1999 Act. This could lead to further government intervention, increased costs and damage to reputation.</p> <p>A risk register is in place and will be maintained for the duration of the Improvement Plan which will underpin the council's strategic risk relating to the council's Improvement Plan (59a 02/22). This will be reported monthly to Leadership Team, quarterly to Cabinet and will be regularly reported to Audit and Risk Assurance Committee.</p>



<b>Equality:</b>	The successful delivery of this Improvement Plan will require the development and review of many of the council's policies and procedures. These changes will build in consideration of the impact on equalities throughout the development and will include an Equality Impact Assessment where appropriate.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. These priorities focus on improving the health and wellbeing of our residents and tackling health inequalities in a multi-faceted way. Therefore, improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to deliver services that will improve the health and wellbeing of Sandwell.
<b>Social Value</b>	Within the Improvement Plan, the council is committed to developing the Social Value Policy in conjunction with the refresh of the Procurement & Contract Procedure Rules. Through strengthening our asks of contractors through this Social Value Policy and linking them to the Corporate Plan objectives, the council will be able to maximise its social value return.
<b>Climate Change</b>	The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Green in everything we do is one of the Fairer Sandwell principles running throughout the Corporate Plan. Any improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to embed this principle and further the climate change agenda.
<b>Corporate Parenting:</b>	The underpinning objective of the Improvement Plan is to ensure the council is able to achieve the strategic priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. These priorities include being a good Corporate Parent for the children in our care and supporting young people once they leave care. Therefore, any improvements to the council's governance structures will strengthen the council's ability to be a good Corporate Parent.



## 14. Appendices

1. Statutory Recommendation Status Summary October 2023
2. Improvement Plan Risk Register October 2023
3. Changes to the Improvement Plan October 2023
4. Improvement Plan Governance Diagram
5. Secretary of State letter

## 15. Background Papers

- [Sandwell Council Improvement Plan](#)
- Approval of Sandwell Council Improvement Plan [Report to Council 7 June 2022](#)
- Reports to the Secretary of State for Levelling up Housing and Communities:
  - June 2022 Reports
    - [Sandwell Council Report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities](#), June 2022
  - December 2022 Reports:
    - [Sandwell Council Report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, December 2022](#)
    - [Sandwell Council Commissioners: second report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, December 2022 \(published March 2023\)](#)
    - [Ministerial response to second letter \(March 2023\)](#)
  - June 2023
    - [Sandwell Council Commissioners: third report to Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities, June 2023 \(published July 2023\)](#)
    - [Ministerial response to third letter](#) (July 2023)
- Improvement Plan Progress Reports:
  - To Council:
    - [13 June 2023](#)
    - [13 December 2022](#)
  - To Cabinet:





- [September 2023](#)
  - [June 2023](#)
  - [March 2023](#)
  - [December 2022](#) including LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report Nov 2022
  - [September 2022](#)
- To Audit and Risk Assurance Committee
  - [September 2023](#)
  - [June 2023](#)
  - [March 2023](#)
  - [January 2023 \(External Review Reports\)](#)
  - [November 2022](#)
  - [September 2022](#)
  - [June 2022](#)
- To Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board
  - [September 2023](#)
  - [June 2023](#)
  - [March 2023](#)
  - [November 2022](#)
  - [September 2022](#)
- External Review Reports
  - [Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review Follow-up Report 2022](#)
  - [Grant Thornton Value for Money Governance Review December 2021 – reissued October 2022](#)
  - [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Progress Review Report 2022](#)
  - [LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report February 2022](#)
  - [CIPFA Financial Management Report January 2022](#)



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## Appendix 1 – Statutory Recommendation Status Summary October 2023

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Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
<p>S1 - It is imperative that senior officers and senior members take effective corporate grip of long-standing service issues highlighted by the findings in this report (including SLT, SCT, the waste service, the ERP system, and Lion Farm) and prioritise corporate effort in managing the issues identified and embed the solutions into the Council</p>	<p><b><u>Organisational Culture</u></b>  <b>Assurance Activity to ensure effective contributions of Scrutiny and Audit and to sustain positive Officer and Member Relationship.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ongoing mechanisms for insight and assurance around the Officer Member Relationship include views from external reviews, standards cases, feedback from Directors, Group Leaders and Chief Whips.</li> <li>• New Member sessions will be held with the LGA to bring them up to speed on the content delivered in Autumn 2022 to other Members.</li> <li>• Semi-structured interviews with Members carried out early October. The data will feed into LGA sessions planned for January, delayed due to LGA availability, alongside regular insight. Ongoing approach to be determined following those results</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Corporate Oversight</u></b>  <b>ERP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modelling phase complete- Programme Board on 21st Sep provided approval for: Gateway 2 Exit from Modelling Phase for HR &amp; Payroll.</li> <li>• Gateway 3 Exit from Realisation Development Phase and entry to SIT (Systems Integration Testing) for Finance, EPM and Procurement.</li> <li>• The programme will continue in to work in a phased approach with SIT commencing on time on 25th September.</li> <li>• Finance and Procurement will go-live in April 2024.</li> <li>• HR &amp; Payroll will go-live in July 24.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oracle Fusion Implemented- Modelling phase complete. Next phase to focus on realisation phase/development stage. Go live date April 2024.</li> <li>• Regeneration pipeline: strategic delivery partner in place – Cabinet approval to procure July 2023</li> </ul> <p>Completed milestones:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review of SCT Contract concludes- Complete</li> <li>• Review of scrutiny arrangements- Complete</li> <li>• Approval of any changes to scrutiny (if required following review)- Complete</li> <li>• Termination notice for SLT contract approved by Cabinet- complete</li> <li>• Revised contract governance arrangements in place for Serco contract- complete</li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Benefit rationalisation taking place across the Programme workstreams following completion of Design Phase.</li> <li>Benefit profiles will be developed and baselined ahead of Go-Live.</li> <li>Working group established with Heads of Services to progress financial benefits.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Strategic Direction</u></b></p> <p><b>Strategy Development and Refresh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Regen Strategy and Pipeline:</b> Pipeline 6 monthly update presented to Cabinet July 23.</li> <li>Regeneration pipeline- approval to procure a strategic delivery partner was agreed at Cabinet in July 23. Report will return to Cabinet once procurement has been successful.</li> <li>VERTO- build is currently underway. User Acceptance Testing complete and Go live anticipated for November.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Decision Making</u></b></p> <p>No actions in this theme</p> <p><b><u>Procurement &amp; Commercial</u></b></p> <p><b>Waste Contract:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuation of quarterly corporate monitoring through PMF.</li> <li>Annual reports on Leisure and waste due November 2023</li> <li>Work continues with Intend – scheduled go-live end October</li> <li>Waste Contract Review reported to Leadership Team. Proposed to progress "Shared Improvement Plan" with Serco.</li> <li>Lessons Learned on industrial action has commenced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waste and Recycling Recovery Plan Implementation - <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Street Cleansing Recovery Plan approval – Resubmission to Waste Management Board in - <b>Complete</b></li> <li>SERCO contract performance reporting embedded in Performance Management Framework - <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Option appraisal for future leisure management options – <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Scrutiny work Planning event - <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Procure new support provider to deliver Oracle Fusion-<b>complete</b></li> <li>Approval of Regeneration Strategy and Pipeline- <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Early Help Strategy approved and launched- <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Corporate Parenting Strategy Refresh Approved- <b>Complete</b></li> <li>SEND Transport procurement published- <b>complete</b></li> <li>SMBC/SCT Leadership meetings - <b>Complete</b></li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next tranche of fleet replacement remains due end of 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>SEND Transport:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project Team members identified, launch meeting diarised and Terms of Reference's to be agreed</li> <li>SEND 3 to be a strand of the overall transformation plan. Task &amp; Finish Group to drive delivery.</li> <li>Report findings to be considered by Transformation Project Team with agreed recommendation embedded in SEND 3</li> </ul> <p><b>New System Procurement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Performance Management System-</b> Systems demos have taken place. Options appraisal and business case being finalised, further engagement with service areas being conducted to refine requirements.</li> <li><b>Asset Management</b> - The phase two for Techforge implementation has now been completed. The team have undertaken a project closedown exercise detailing everything that has been completed across both phases along with any workstreams/actions that will now become business as usual.</li> </ul> <p><b>Lion Farm:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expert Determination process has been completed and removed from the Improvement plan to be managed as Business As Usual.</li> </ul> <p><b>Leisure Contract:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supplementary agreement with SLT agreed 13.07.23 to extend SLT's operation of leisure centres (including SAC) to 31.03.27.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SCT Contract performance reporting embedded within Council PMF-Complete</li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhanced contract management regime and framework in place.</li> <li>Aquatic Centre Handover to operator (Sandwell Leisure Trust) took place as scheduled on 13 July, open to the public 24 July</li> <li>Continuation of quarterly corporate reporting through PMF.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Partnerships &amp; Relationships</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Sandwell Children's Trust</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The new KPIs along with accompanying tolerances will be finalised in Q1 for implementation in Q2 due to start in September 2023</li> <li>Continuation of quarterly reporting through PMF alongside Sandwell Children's Trust governance arrangements</li> <li>Monthly schedule of meetings will recommence in Autumn Term, and include the Chair of SCT Board and CE of Trust, Lead Member and Director of Education and Children's Services</li> <li>KPIs and tolerances are currently under review by the DfE appointed independent chair of the SCT Improvement Board and in negotiation with the Director of Children's Services (DCS) and CEO of Sandwell Children's Trust.</li> </ul>	
S2 - The Council must ensure that the learning in relation to commercial decisions, procurement and contract management highlighted in this	<p><b><u>Organisational Culture</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Officer Learning and Development</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Value embedding on existing learning is on-going.</li> <li>Senior Leadership development programme: Further discussions around scope and desired outcomes required and to align to Leadership restructuring plans. Research into potential providers and good practice from other councils has been explored.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Governance Training Delivery – <b>Commenced and approach to next phase agreed</b></li> </ul> <p>Completed milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular Resident Survey in place – 2023 surveys in place</li> <li>Commercial Strategy approved – <b>approved</b></li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
<p>report are understood through the organisation</p>	<p><b>Embedding Constitutional Changes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decision making training in place early October for key decision makers.</li> <li>• Regarding broader scenario-based learning, Officers involved in pulling training across finance, procurement and governance have undergone significant changes of personnel.</li> <li>• Next step is bringing a new project team together to agree training detail and to diarise. Intention to deliver in November/ December.</li> <li>• Delivery of Directorships and Trusteeships Training -Date confirmed 31st October. Offer to be extended to Officers with council appointments to boards etc and will be carried out on an annual basis</li> <li>• CIPfA to carry out the Annual refresher of Corporate Governance Training scheduled to the end of December.</li> </ul> <p><b>Member Learning and Development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership Team conversation held 18/07/23 around All Member briefings and agreed level of detail to be shared and approach.</li> <li>• New Member survey conducted. 1 return. Members have been completing analysis after each training session. Further analysis of these training evaluation forms will be undertaken and this, along with findings from face-to-face Member sessions on the Member-Officer relationship and engagement with LGA will be used to inform the Autumn review of MDP and inform new Member induction for 2024-2025. MDP Review will commence in November.</li> <li>• New Member sessions will be held with the LGA to bring them up to speed on the content delivered in Autumn 2022 to other Members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HRA 30 Year Business Plan approved</li> <li>• Revised Financial Regs - approved</li> <li>• Implementation of Asset Management System -phase 1 complete</li> <li>• Revised Scheme of Delegation – approved</li> <li>• Corporate Asset Management Strategy Approved- Approved</li> <li>• Budget Holder Role Profile agreed - Complete</li> <li>• Establish Performance Management Framework – Complete</li> <li>• First Performance Management Report - - Complete</li> <li>• Revised PCR, and Sale of Land and Buildings Protocol – Complete</li> <li>• New Member Induction- Complete</li> <li>• Member Development Programme - Complete and BAU</li> <li>• Asset Management System Procured- complete</li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<p><b><u>Corporate Oversight</u></b></p> <p><b>Performance Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quarterly reporting of corporate performance management framework in place to senior officers and members via Cabinet and Budget &amp; Corporate Scrutiny Management Board. Q2 report due to Scrutiny and Cabinet in January 2024.</li> <li>• Corporate Performance Management resources in place from February 2023.</li> <li>• Budget pressures and mitigations are discussed at LT each month</li> <li>• Benchmarking used in budget planning up to date and used as part of refresh of MTFs and planning for 2024/25 budget onwards.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Strategic Direction</u></b></p> <p><b>Strategy Development and Refresh</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commercial Strategy: Engagement with staff on the corporate narrative will conclude this month. All staff briefing being held to update colleagues on the progress of the improvement plan and the next step. The 4 workstreams are at various stages. Education commercial services – BC in development, completion date end of October, H&amp;S – scoping underway Neutral vendor – Pre OBC activity due to commence. Pest control – alternative options been considered. Updates to be presented at next Corporate Transformation Board</li> <li>• Engagement with staff on the corporate narrative will conclude this month. All staff briefing being held to update colleagues on the progress of the improvement plan and the next steps on how we become an outstanding council as we get ready for exiting intervention.</li> </ul>	



Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<p><b><u>Procurement &amp; Commercial</u></b>  <b>Corporate Asset Management:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Phase 1 implemented.</li> <li>Phase 2 commenced. The integration of data into the system complete</li> <li>Phase 2 Configuration and organisation of data completed – September</li> <li>Project closedown exercise complete detailing everything that has been completed across both phases along with any workstreams/actions that will now become BAU.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Partnerships &amp; Relationships</u></b>  No actions in this theme</p>	
<p>S3 - Senior leadership, both officers and members, must demonstrate that they can continue to work together effectively, that they operate in line with the Council's values, codes, policies, and procedures, and that there is zero tolerance to</p>	<p><b><u>Organisational Culture</u></b>  <b>Establishing Organisational Culture</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Strategy themes and priority documents on track for Leadership Team 17.10.23.</li> <li>Projects to embed the One Team Framework continue to progress as per plan presented in September</li> <li>Proposal of a new approach to Employee Performance review presented to Trade Unions to commence information and consultation. Change management support and training being developed.</li> <li>Risk to technical/process recording as Oracle Talent module may not be live until July 2024</li> <li></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Workforce Strategy – Due to be agreed at October Leadership Team.</li> </ul> <p>Completed milestones</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Culture – Part 2 Engagement – determining the desired culture – complete</li> <li>Approval of document / statement setting out desired organisational culture – ‘Our Values: Our Behaviours’- Complete</li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
<p>inappropriate behaviours. This includes changing the organisational culture in relation to complaints so that they restore balance and proportionality.</p>	<p><b><u>Officer Learning and Development</u></b> -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior Leadership development programme: Further discussions around scope and desired outcomes required and to align to Leadership restructuring plans.</li> </ul> <p>Research into potential providers and good practice from other councils has been explored.</p> <p><b><u>Officer and Member Relationship</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ongoing mechanisms for insight and assurance around the Officer Member Relationship includes views from external reviews, standards cases, feedback from Directors, Group Leaders and Chief Whips.</li> <li>Semi-structured interviews with Members early October are being conducted to capture insight into relationship. The data will feed into LGA sessions planned for January 2024 alongside regular insight. Ongoing approach to be determined following those results</li> <li>Sessions with LGA will be confirmed following the insight gathering on Employee Engagement Survey and Member face to face sessions. LGA sessions planned for January, delayed due to LGA availability, alongside regular insight.</li> <li>New Member sessions will be held with the LGA to bring them up to speed on the content delivered in Autumn 2022 to other Members</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Member Learning and Development</u></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organisational Culture - Part 1 Engagement – Starting the Conversation- <b>Complete</b></li> <li>New Member Induction - <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Meeting structures to support Senior Leadership (Officer and Member) – <b>Complete</b></li> <li>Member Development Programme approved- <b>Complete</b></li> </ul>

Statutory Recommendation	Summary	Milestones
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forward plan of all Member briefings is in place for next 3 sessions. Agendas are routinely discussed by Leadership Team</li> <li>• New Member survey conducted. 1 return. Members have been completing analysis after each training session. Further analysis of these training evaluation forms will be undertaken and this, along with findings from face-to-face Member sessions on the Member-Officer relationship and engagement with LGA will be used to inform the Autumn review of MDP and inform new Member induction for 2024-2025. MDP Review will commence in November.</li> <li>• New Member sessions will be held with the LGA to bring them up to speed on the content delivered in Autumn 2022 to other Members.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Corporate Oversight</u></b> No Actions in Theme</p> <p><b><u>Strategic Direction</u></b> No actions in Theme</p> <p><b><u>Decision Making</u></b> No actions in Theme</p> <p><b><u>Procurement &amp; Commercial</u></b> No actions in Theme</p> <p><b><u>Partnerships &amp; Relationships</u></b> No actions in Theme</p>	

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# Improvement Plan Risk Register

October 2023



1. Best start in life for children and young people



2. People live well and age well



3. Strong resilient communities





4. Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods





5. A strong and inclusive economy





6. A connected and accessible Sandwell


Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP1	<p><b>Improvement Plan objectives and member / officer engagement in those objectives</b></p> <p>If programme objectives are not clearly defined to ensure they are within scope, deliverable, understood and agreed and/or that there is unclear ownership of actions and workstreams, then the programme will proceed with no clear direction, may become unmanageable (incl. scope creep ), and/or missed opportunities resulting in slower progress than planned, failure to meet external review recommendations and a prolonged Government intervention</p>	6 (Green)	6 (Green)	3 (Green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement as part of the development of the Improvement Plan - sharing themes and workstreams with staff and members</li> <li>Communications Plan implemented for governance review, CPC and Statutory Notice</li> <li>Objectives for each Theme within the Improvement Plan identified</li> <li>Regular reporting to Cabinet, ARAC and Scrutiny in place. Council approval of Improvement Plan and reports to SoS.</li> <li>Regular Staff communications on progress of Improvement Plan in place</li> <li>Improvement Plan Actions embedded into Corporate Plan and Business Plans to provide assurance of sustainable improvement</li> <li>Key components of Finance Improvement Plan embedded in IP and Corporate Plan</li> <li>All Improvement Plan actions have an identified Responsible Officer and Cabinet Member</li> <li>Arrangements in place to provide business continuity following SH &amp; GD departure</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communications Plan delivered including all staff briefings including key messages around Improvement Plan</li> <li>Staff and member engagement through Organisational Culture change programme</li> </ul>
IP3	<p><b>Allocation of sufficient resources to project management and project delivery/ maintaining Business as Usual while delivering the Improvement plan</b></p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	4 (green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Terms of Reference for internal Improvement Plan Review Meeting updated to reflect government intervention, single Improvement Plan and assurance framework</li> <li>PMO support being provided by existing experienced resources within Service Improvement</li> </ul>



Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
	<p>If sufficient resources (capacity and capability) and where necessary additional resources are not allocated to the management and delivery of the improvement plan then this may result in officer fatigue, loss of motivation and the programme will fail to deliver all of its objectives.</p>					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resource gaps / pressures associated with actions within the Improvement Plan have been identified</li> <li>Council on 07/06/22 approved Use of Improvement &amp; Capacity Reserve and 2021/22 underspend allocated to Improvement Plan actions</li> <li>Resource issues and risks associated with the Improvement Plan reviewed monthly by Leadership Team and Register maintained</li> <li>Appointment of interim corporate transformation capacity to establish programme and project management governance arrangements, as well as moving forward key transformational activity</li> <li>Improvement Plan Actions embedded into Corporate Plan and Business Plans to provide assurance of sustainable improvement</li> <li>Local Partnerships Review of PMO concluded</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>LT work on prioritisation to conclude to ensure that the improvement priorities are clear and resources are available to manage risk of officer fatigue and loss of motivation.</li> <li>Establishment of resourced Corporate PMO</li> <li>National Graduate Development Scheme - placements to be focused on IP priorities</li> </ul>
IP4	<p><b>Project and risk governance assurance arrangements</b> If a robust assurance framework is not put in place to in respect of project assurance, including detailing roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders (eg Cabinet, Scrutiny, ARAC, partners, IB, etc) then the council may be unable to effectively monitor and evidence the improvement required.</p>	6 Green	6 Green	3 (green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appointment of additional capacity to support delivery and implementation of key projects taken place in Asset Management, Finance, Service Improvement and Legal Services</li> <li>Terms of Reference for Improvement Plan Review Meeting in place</li> <li>Governance approach included within Council report 07/06/22</li> <li>Risk identification has taken place</li> <li>Agreement for Grant Thornton, LGA and CIPFA to review progress regularly</li> <li>Improvement Plan Risk Register in place</li> <li>Terms of Reference for internal Improvement Plan Review Meeting updated to reflect government intervention, single Improvement Plan</li> </ul>

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<p>and assurance framework including role of Scrutiny and Audit Committees.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roles of Cabinet, Scrutiny and Audit agreed with Chairs</li> <li>• Quarterly reports to Cabinet, Audit and Scrutiny well-established and on forward plan for 2023-24</li> <li>• Scrutiny consideration of culture theme progress in Dec 22</li> <li>• Consideration of external review reports by Scrutiny and Audit</li> <li>• Update to Improvement Plan to reflect findings from GT, LGA and CIPFA follow-up reviews</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrutiny regular review on Culture Theme progress</li> <li>• Agreement for ongoing external assurance activity</li> </ul>
IP5	<p><b>Communication Strategy</b>-If a robust communications strategy is not put in place detailing how, when and what information is shared with the various internal and external stakeholders, then not everyone will be aware of their respective roles and responsibilities for delivering the improvement plan and effective service delivery. In addition, the DLUHC may lose confidence in the council's ability to improve resulting in extended/ additional intervention.</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	4 (green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review visits from GT, LGA and CIPFA held Autumn 2022. Reports received from GT and LGA and presented to Cabinet. Review report from CIPFA received Jan 23 and presented to ARAC. Due to be presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny in March</li> <li>• Communications Approach set out in Improvement Plan approved by Council 07/06/22</li> <li>• Key messages document for stakeholders in place</li> <li>• Regular PMO/Communications meetings to ensure key messages are embedded within internal and external communications</li> <li>• Communication with stakeholders to share details of transition between KBD and SL.</li> <li>• Communication with stakeholders to share progress update and annual report June 2023.</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication with stakeholders to share details of Improvement Plan</li> <li>• Recruitment to vacancy within comms structure</li> </ul>



Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
IP6	<p><b>Investment and Financial Resources</b></p> <p>If sufficient/ additional financial resources are not made available, and the IP is expected to be delivered from existing budgets then the IP may not be delivered within the necessary timescales or to scope.</p>	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)	8 (Amber)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular comms with stakeholders taking place as per comms plan including incorporation in all staff briefings</li> <li>Resource gaps / pressures associated with actions within the Improvement Plan identified</li> <li>Council on 07/06/22 approved use of Improvement &amp; Capacity Reserve and 2021/22 underspend allocated to Improvement Plan actions</li> <li>Resource issues and risks associated with the Improvement Plan reviewed monthly by Leadership Team</li> <li>Appointment of interim corporate transformation capacity to establish programme and project management governance arrangements, as well as moving forward key transformational activity</li> <li>Regular monitoring of improvement plan is in place and key milestones are being delivered</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review resource allocation to deliver the Improvement Plan and determine if there are any gaps</li> <li>Identify additional resources or reprioritise activity following identification of resource gaps</li> <li>Graduate recruitment to focus on IP priority projects</li> </ul>
IP10	<p><b>Performance Management Framework (PMF) and Data Quality</b></p> <p>If a robust PMF is not put in place and appropriate quality data captured then the council will be unable to effectively monitor and evidence improvement, delivery of the Improvement Plan and delivery of the Corporate Plan resulting in a failure to achieve the Council's objectives.</p>	4 (Green)	4 (Green)	4 (Green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Performance Management Framework approved in April 2022</li> <li>Evidence of success outlined within each of the Improvement Plan themes focusing on outcomes for each theme</li> <li>Improvement Plan Monitoring approach approved by Council and regular monitoring in place</li> <li>Resources approved by Council to address staffing resources required to sustain PMF</li> <li>2022/23 Quarterly Corporate Performance Report presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny (Q1 Sept/Oct 22, Q2 Dec 22/Jan 23)</li> <li>Residents Survey and Budget Consultation exercise conducted in Summer 2022 to feed into PMF and 2023/24 service and financial planning</li> </ul>

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Process in place for monthly and quarterly monitoring at corporate level</li> <li>Corporate approach to consultation and engagement with residents, including regular residents survey agreed by Leadership Team.</li> <li>Member Officer Survey conducted to provide a temperature check on the relationship</li> <li>Improvement Plan activity embedded in Corporate Plan and Business Plans</li> <li>Refreshed KPIs included in Corporate Plan refresh and streamlined reporting to Leadership Team (from Q1 report)</li> <li>Development of Customer Experience metrics as part of Corporate Plan refresh</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evidence collation to be produced to support IP</li> <li>Recruitment to additional corporate performance team posts</li> <li>Performance Management System options appraisal and procurement to provide capability for performance management</li> <li>Refresh of Member Officer Survey / alternative mechanism conducted to provide a temperature check on the relationship</li> </ul>
IP11	<p><b>Continued focus and resources allocated to historic issues</b></p> <p>If the council does not focus on the Improvement plan and corporate plan priorities and continues to focus and allocate resources on historic issues, then this will impact the timely delivery of both the Improvement Plan and Corporate Plan.</p>	4 (Green)	4 (Green)	4 (green)		<p><b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assurance from LGA CPC Follow up Review around development of PMF</li> <li>Improvement Plan contains activity to be concluded, and lessons learnt embedding from historic issues</li> <li>Cabinet and Leadership Team approach to historic issues</li> <li>Regular monitoring of improvement plan is in place</li> <li>Progress on GT recommendations specifically related to the proper functioning of Scrutiny and Audit Committees.</li> <li>Lessons learnt captured in relation to SEND transport</li> <li>Leader has confirmed executive's position in relation to a further review in relation to Wragge/Cox and this was reported to ARAC in June 2023</li> </ul>

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<b>Further Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lessons learnt framework to be introduced as part of continuous improvement plan. Lessons learnt to be collated relating to historic issues and shared across organisation</li> <li>Maintain watching brief of council activity to ensure resources are not diverted to historical issues</li> </ul>
IP12	<b>Risk approach and progress monitoring (optimism bias)</b> If the approach taken to risk scoring and/or progress monitoring against the delivery plans is unrealistic (e.g. being overly optimistic around progress and timescales or likelihood and severity of a risk) then there will be a failure to appropriately manage the programme and a loss of confidence in its delivery.	6 (Green)	6 (Green)	6 (Green)		<b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grant Thornton follow up review of progress against historical issues</li> <li>Corporate risk scoring definitions applied</li> <li>Definition in place for progress monitoring Red/Amber/Green progress monitoring for Improvement Plan</li> <li>Roles of Scrutiny and Audit confirmed</li> <li>Reports to Scrutiny and Audit Committees presented in September 2022</li> <li>PMO reviewed use of RAG ratings for consistency and to ensure that progress monitoring is presenting a realistic view and reflecting risk associated with actions as well as progress against plans (September 2022).</li> </ul> <b>Further Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular reporting to Cabinet, Scrutiny and ARAC and Commissioners' views</li> </ul>
IP13	<b>Constitutional Changes</b> If key governance changes (agreed during 2022) are not embedded throughout the organisation and put into practice, then opportunities will be missed, progress will be limited, and there may be non-compliance with council processes.	9 (Amber)	9 (Amber)	6 (Green)		<b>Current and Ongoing Controls</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GT, LGA, and CIPFA follow up reviews provide assurance</li> <li>Alignment of workstream with organisational culture theme through Officer participation in Culture Working Group</li> <li>Revised set of guidance and templates in place to support the changes made around key decisions</li> <li>First round of training delivered to budget holders and procurement card holders in relation to spend thresholds and procurements processes.</li> <li>New Scrutiny Handbook launched</li> <li>New EIA guidance issued for decision-making</li> <li>Sub-delegation schemes developed with Directors</li> </ul>

Risk Ref	Risk Title and Description	Previous Risk Score (July 23)	Current Risk Score (Oct 23)	Target Risk Score	Direction of Travel	Progress to Date (incl. current risk mitigating controls and further actions to be taken to manage risk)
						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Member Development Plan Refreshed</li> <li>• Decision-making arrangements (forward plan, report sign off etc.) reviewed.</li> <li>• Governance Review Phase 2 project plan in place to embed the constitutional changes (Corporate Governance Development Programme)</li> </ul> <p><b>Further Actions</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Phase 2 of Mod.Gov</li> <li>• Implement a programme of learning for Officers around effective-decision making</li> <li>• Development of local KPIs to monitor performance in relation to decision-making e.g. timeliness of report submissions, publication of reports, use of exemptions, forward plan notice given on time.</li> <li>• MDP Delivery</li> <li>• Monitoring of local KPIs (once introduced)</li> </ul>

## Summary of Changes to the Improvement Plan – October 2023

**IPRM Decision Required:** To agree changes to the Improvement Plan as set out in detail in the accompanying change control log and as summarised below.

1. The Improvement Plan is intended to be a live document updated to take account of progress and relevant changes. Changes are considered by Leadership Team on a quarterly basis.
2. The list of all changes is attached. Where new actions have been added to the Improvement Plan, these are displayed within the monitoring tool with red font colour.
3. The changes proposed are summarised as follow:

- 3 changes made to action delivery timescales (with 1 being more than three months)

Ref	Theme	Action ref	Action Title	Date from	Date to	Rationale
324	Organisational Culture	CO.D3.4	Programme of end to end process reviews	May 23	Nov 23	C.co report due 4.11.23 re future model.

- 1 assurance action has been added
- 7 sub-actions have been added (marked in red within IP).
- 4 main actions are proposed to be closed (see below- 2 action closures will result in closure of workstream)

- 3 Assurance actions are proposed to close (see below)
- 3 changes to delivery lead

4. The actions proposed to be closed along with the rationale are as follows:

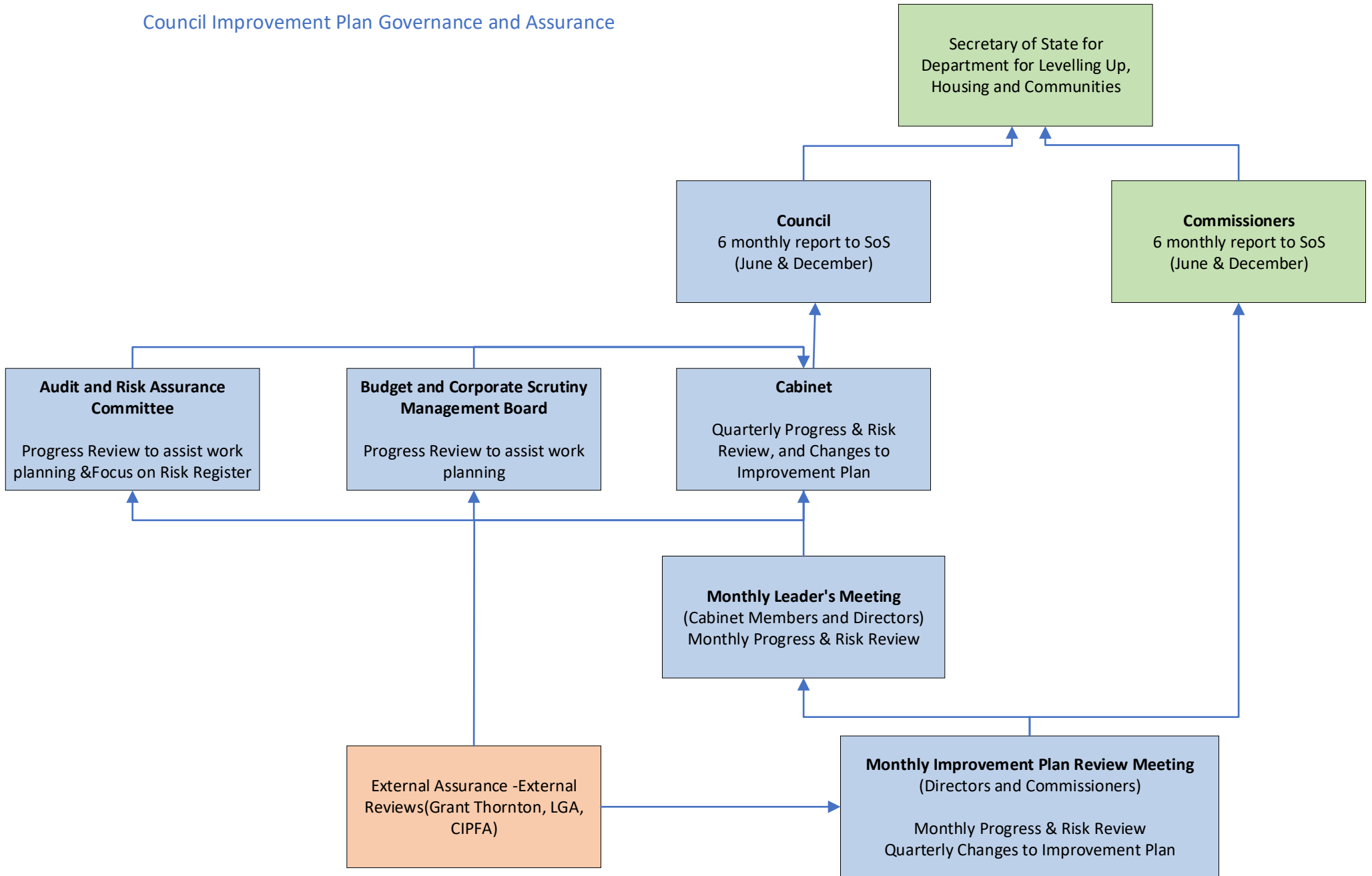
Change Ref	Theme	Action Title	Rationale for closure
322	Strategic Direction	Refresh the Early Help Strategy	Proposal to remove from IP on basis that Early Help Partnership Board is in place and conducted an annual review, and KPIs included within PMF.
315	Partnership & relationships	Assurance action: Receive a quarterly update from DPH and DAS to provide assurance that governance remains in place to test adequacy of partnerships through system-wide thematic deep dives and that any issues are being addressed by the partnership.	Proposal to lose this assurance action and create a new one for 6monthly review
325	Corporate Oversight	Assurance Action: GT sign-off of 2020/21 Accounts (assurance that previous issues raised have been resolved)	Propose closure of assurance action- action complete
332	Partnership & relationships	Assurance action- Twice yearly performance reports tabled at Children and Education Scrutiny Board	Action completed, timetable confirmed, and the process is embedded.

333	Procurement & Commercial	Asset management	Phase 2 Techforge implemented. Impact will be monitored through the completion of accounts strand
334	Strategic Direction	Closure of workstream and main action- Regen pipeline development and Delivery	actions complete- Continued monitoring through updates presented to Cabinet.
335	Procurement & Commercial	Closure of workstream and main action- Governance arrangements to manage, develop and support the current and future delivery of leisure services across the borough, including the new Aquatic Centre	All actions complete- report was taken to Cabinet October 23 and can now be taken off IP monitoring tool.





Council Improvement Plan Governance and Assurance



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## **DRAFT Letter to Secretary of State from Sandwell Council Leader December 2023**

Dear Secretary of State,

Our focus since the start of intervention has been to make sure that we are set up to deliver the best possible outcomes for our residents. From the outset we understood that this meant making changes to the way we work, and are proud of the progress made.

We believe we are not the same organisation we were when intervention began, and are now looking to the future with confidence and optimism. Our ambition is to become an outstanding council, and recognise this means we cannot be complacent about the progress made to date. We are now focussed on growing a culture of continuously looking for ways to improve and deliver better services.

Since our last letter to you, we have continued to deliver at pace and are seeing more evidence that these improvements are having a positive impact for our residents.

Over the last six months, we received an Area SEND inspection and have now moved up a level, to Category 2. The report recognises that children and young people with special education needs and disabilities (SEND) are valued and describes a “renewed dynamism in Sandwell” where “Leaders across the local area partnership [...] are making sustained improvements for children and young people with SEND.”

In July, we officially opened the Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Smethwick as a community leisure facility. Since opening, we have welcomed an average of 15,500 visits per week, more than 4,600 fitness members have joined, 2,171 children are learning a vital life skill through our learn to swim programme, and 46 schools are booked in for school swimming.

We are also proud to have won four awards in the last six months which recognise the hard work and dedication by officers to deliver for our residents.

We have won the Regional Large Employer of the Year at the Apprenticeship Awards recognising our commitment to apprentices and the contribution of apprentices to the organisation. Our offer includes ring-fenced apprenticeships for care leavers and we work to ensure that

apprenticeships help us to diversify our workforce so it better reflects the residents we serve.

Josh Singh, Planning Regeneration Team Leader was awarded National Young Planner of the Year 2023, after becoming the West Midlands Young Planner of the Year 2023 earlier in the year. In his time with Sandwell Council, Josh has led on a number of improvements to West Bromwich town centre, and we are determined to use the investment through the Towns Fund as a catalyst for further regeneration and to create good jobs and opportunities for our residents.

Sandwell also secured two awards at the Children and Young People's Awards last month, the Supporting Child Refugees Award for our Sandwell Transition Education Partnership Service, and the Partnership Working Award for the Horizons Exploitation & Missing Team, led by the Sandwell Children's Trust and including the council's youth service as part of the Sandwell County Lines Intensification Week Partnership.

We have also welcomed Grant Thornton's return visit to review our progress against their recommendations and look forward to their report in the New Year.

Some of our achievements and the improvements we've made since June are summarised below, along with how our changes have been embedded.

## **Organisational Culture**

Our cultural change is being driven from the top but is owned and led throughout the organisation. Over Summer, managers came together with Senior Leaders in a series of events to commit to embedding the One Team Framework (organisational values and behaviours) throughout their teams. We also held our first in person all staff event since the COVID-19 pandemic as part of the opening of Sandwell Aquatic Centre and introduced the framework to staff. The values and behaviours are informing recruitment and have been built into our revised staff appraisal approach that will be launched next year.

The impact of the framework can be seen throughout the organisation with numerous examples of staff living and breathing the values in our [We are Sandwell](#) campaign.

We are also seeing the impact of cultural change in the relationship between Members and Officers. The relationship has continued to strengthen, and we are becoming more Member-led as an organisation. Examples of this include our work around becoming a child-friendly borough driven by the Cabinet's manifesto pledges.

We are continuing to value insight into how our culture is changing to make sure we are on track. We have conducted an employee engagement survey this Autumn to follow on from our 2022 survey and are continuing to gather Members' perspectives on the Member-Officer relationship to inform continuous improvement. Staff groups are working to explore the results of the engagement survey, identifying areas of good practice and developing actions for improvement. These will feed into our continuing cultural transformation journey to embed our values and behaviours framework

Our Chief Executive is now well-established. We have welcomed a new appointment to our Senior Leadership Team, increasing our strategic capacity. The Assistant Chief Executive Directorate has been brought together to make up the 'engine room' of the local authority, helping to shape our culture and how we transform ourselves as an organisation.

Council approved a new senior leadership team structure in October which is fundamental to driving the next phase of the council's transformation journey at pace, with a leaner and strategically focussed Leadership Team more able to deliver in an agile and joined up way. Recruitment to the new Executive Director posts commenced in November.

Our confidence is growing, and Sandwell is more outward-looking. The opening of the Sandwell Aquatic Centre in Summer 2023 was a major cause for celebration, and we enjoyed sharing our pride with national media. We are also in the spotlight amongst our peers. Council staff were invited to share Sandwell's approach on voter ID and accessibility measures at a national conference of the Electoral Commission and Electoral Management Board for Scotland.

### **Corporate Oversight & Strategic Direction**

Through our focus and grip on our finances, we remain financially stable. We are managing an in-year overspend and are forecasting a balanced

budget for 2023-24. The majority of savings adopted for the 2023/24 Budget have been secured or are in delivery and we are well on the way to developing our plans for 2024/25 onwards.

The Council's transformation approach is strengthening and comprises an important part of the emergent plans to balance the MTFS especially in the medium term. For the second year running we have worked collectively across Cabinet and Leadership Team through a series of star chamber sessions and away days.

The Council has an agreed plan to deliver £1.6m in savings from its asset base in 2023/24 by increasing commercial income and reducing expenditure by rationalising buildings and exiting leases that are no longer required. It has just completed a significant review of 139 surplus assets and recommendations on future use and disposal will be coming through for Member decision soon. The Council is progressing the establishment of a Corporate Landlord so that its assets are managed, and maintenance is prioritised in a consistent manner. Work continues to deliver the savings target of £2.5m from asset rationalisation from the 2024/25 financial year.

In relation to our financial oversight, we achieved a key milestone with the signing of our 2020-2021 accounts. Our 2021-2022 accounts are due to be provided to our auditor in line with agreed timescales and have secured the technical resource to oversee the production of our accounts up to and including 2023/24. We have largely completed the implementation of our asset management system, providing the tools for us to address an area of concern previously raised by external reviewers.

We are seeing the benefit of our performance culture and Performance Management Framework which are stimulating discussion and leading to action. For example, our exploration of school attendance performance has led to us making a strong case for Sandwell and we have gained recognition as a priority education investment area.

Other examples include:

- Our 2023 State of Sandwell report indicating areas of positive change in outcomes for Sandwell residents since 2017 as well as areas for focus

- Incorporation of SEND within our transformation programme with new performance metrics in place and weekly review because we know that we need to target work in this area
- ‘Evidence bundles’ compiled across core corporate functions being used to inform business planning for 2024/25, building on our approach last year and now becoming an embedded feature of business planning
- Our newly produced Ward and Town plans are bringing additional insight to shape our local priorities and our approach to neighbourhood working
- Continued focus on residents’ concerns, issues, and opinions e.g.
  - Residents consultation undertaken for the second consecutive year to inform business plans and budget priorities
  - Hosting a tenant engagement conference
  - Growth of our Consultation Hub platform to provide organisational oversight of consultation feedback
- Staff brought together to commence work on a business intelligence strategy
- Assistant Director workshop on improving employment, training and work experience opportunities for care leavers building on training in Corporate Parenting Week and performance reporting on Care Leavers NEET
- We are committed to a culture of corporate oversight and continuous improvement, and whilst we are proud of the progress we have made, perhaps the best demonstration of this commitment is seen in what we do when we identify something has gone wrong. As part of a corporate review, it was identified that not all processes had been followed in relation to a number of repair contracts. When this was understood, we transparently reported this to Cabinet, setting out the actions we put in place both to remedy the situation and learn the lessons in order to avoid it happening again.

Building on our recent work to set targets for performance metrics in the framework, our intention over coming months is to create and use corporate performance dashboards and integrate our performance and financial reporting.

We continue to progress our work on our Customer Journey and see it as a corporate priority, establishing a robust framework, resources, and performance improvement programme.

- We have procured a new cloud-based telephony system which is anticipated to go live April 2024.
- We have seen sustained improvements across responses to SARs, FOIs and Member enquiries through our corporate oversight. Work has been carried out with Members around the Member portal resulting in an Action Plan being drawn up, 70% of the actions have been completed and we are continuing to work on the rest.
- We have extended the Community Hub Pilot for a further 6 months, continuing to provide face to face services for residents that require this. The new Neighbourhood model is being piloted, and we have taken on 3 Ward Co-ordinators to work with Elected Members on Ward plans and priorities.
- The new Council website has been launched and we have purchased a Navigation Bot that is in User Acceptance Testing phase. This should aid residents in using the website to find information and raise queries.
- We have commenced a review of our Neighbourhood Working model, to develop a new and refreshed coherent, cross -council model for neighbourhood working which has elected members and communities at the core delivering outcomes in their localities.

We continue to be ambitious for the future of Sandwell and have secured grant investment of £459m over the past 2+ years from a range of national and regional public funding bodies to deliver the Regeneration Pipeline projects from now to 2027. This includes investment in the delivery of ten new education and skills facilities in the Borough at primary, secondary, special needs and further education level.

## **Decision Making**

In our last letter, we relayed to you our pride at our work around the Cost-of-Living crisis which shows Leadership Team increasingly focusing on strategic matters and working effectively with our partners.



A Cost-of-Living Emergency Summit in March 2023 brought together more than sixty public, private, and voluntary sector partners to coordinate our efforts to support our community through this crisis. Since March, we have worked collaboratively with partners to codesign the [Sandwell Tackling Poverty Plan](#), seeking to address the underlying causes of poverty in Sandwell. The plan was launched at a further Cost-of-Living Summit in October, where over 80 partners joined us to agree ways, we will work together to deliver the plan.

Cabinet continues to work well as a team, and we have continued to take difficult decisions. We recently reviewed our approach to the management of leisure services in light of changed circumstances. The business case to provide leisure services through a Local Authority Trading Company was reviewed and Cabinet demonstrated our commitment to take agile decisions that are responsive to a changing external environment and to obtain value for money through revising our approach. This was made possible through our improved relationship with Sandwell Leisure Trust.

Scrutiny and Audit Committees continue to focus on the subjects that matter most. The scrutiny work-planning process is now well-established and embedded as part of how scrutiny works in Sandwell. For example, the following topics have been discussed by Scrutiny over last six months:

- Playing Pitch Strategy- request to establish a steering group to support the completion, adoptions and implementation of the strategy
- Europa Avenue Cycle Path consultation in response to residents' feedback
- Haden Hill Leisure Centre Rebuild- request for consideration and comments on the three options available.
- Customer Journey performance and transformation programme.

The Audit & Risk Assurance Committee regularly receives reports from both the internal and external auditors and operates with a specific focus on improving governance across the council. Audit & Risk Assurance Committee has been keen to ensure that the council mitigates its key risks appropriately. The Committee regularly receives and reviews the Council's strategic and improvement risk registers and has sight of a wide range of directorate risk registers. The Committee has called in items such as the customer journey for a more detailed deep-dive review. In June,

Audit Committee resolved long standing historical committee related matters.

We are developing a set of new measures as part of the performance management framework to provide us with further insight into the quality of the decision-making process and drive our continuous improvement. We continue to strengthen our arrangements for accountability and scrutiny.

## **Partnerships and Relationships, Procurement and Commercial**

We continue to invest in our work with partners. Our recently launched Family Hubs, supporting families with children aged 0-19 (or 25 with SEND), show the strength of our partnerships at a local level. At the official launch of the Family Hubs parent forums were held with the parent representatives of each town.

I am pleased to be leading the Inclusive Communities Portfolio for the WMCA and in September Sandwell hosted the launch of the Race Forward Strategy for the region.

We are becoming a more mature partner. Our recent State of Sandwell report is the foundation of a review of our partnership wide Vision 2030 which is being undertaken during this Municipal Year.

We have seized partnership opportunities such as our effective working with Government on our Levelling Up Partnership to bring forward robust proposals. We have also demonstrated our strength through our approach to the Devolution Deal and holding firm on red lines that matter most to outcomes for Sandwell residents.

Our performance management framework continues to enable oversight and management of key major contracts. Through a period of industrial action over Summer, we worked closely with our waste partner (Serco) to continue delivering a service to residents and were able to recover service levels quickly once a resolution had been reached. We have engaged with West Midlands Police and Serco in a debrief exercise to ensure that lessons are learned for the future.

Our established governance arrangements for the Sandwell Children's Trust contract have provided strong oversight of the Trust's financial position enabling us to work proactively with them to address the increase in their projected outturn for 2023/24.

Accompanying this letter are our quarterly progress reports to Cabinet which provide a greater level of detail around progress issues, risks, resources and changes to the Improvement Plan.

Our key areas of focus over forthcoming months continue to be driving our plans around organisational culture and the successful recruitment of a new senior leadership team, improving our customer journey, and delivering the Medium-Term Financial Strategy through a robust transformation programme.

We are also looking further ahead and working with the Local Government Association to develop the mechanisms we will put in place to continue our improvement journey after March 2024 and assure ourselves of our onward trajectory. Our ambition is to be an excellent authority, delivering for our residents – the journey we have been on over the last two years has established a sound basis from which to achieve that goal.

Yours faithfully

[Leader's Sign-off]

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## Report to Cabinet

6 December 2023

<b>Subject:</b>	Regeneration Programme Performance
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Regeneration & West Midlands Combined Authority, Councillor Peter Hughes
<b>Director:</b>	Director Regeneration & Growth, Tony McGovern
<b>Key Decision:</b>	No
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Business Manager Regeneration & Growth, Jenna Langford <a href="mailto:jenna_langford@sandwell.gov.uk">jenna_langford@sandwell.gov.uk</a>

### 1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Cabinet note the Performance of the Regeneration Programme.
- 1.2 That the Director of Regeneration & Growth be authorised to make the recommended amendments to the Regeneration Pipeline:
  - Add Long-Term Plan for Towns programme to the project pipeline.
  - Add Millennium Centre expansion project to the project pipeline.
  - Add Levelling Up Fund Round 3 - Grove Lane, Smethwick to the project pipeline.



## 2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 On the 23 March 2022, Cabinet approved the Regeneration Strategy, Regeneration Project Pipeline, and the Inclusive Recovery Action Plan for Business. Taken together, they set out the corporate regeneration priorities for the period 2022 to 2027. The pipeline is a live document, and Cabinet resolved for it to be monitored via a report submitted to Cabinet every 6 months. The last report was submitted in July 2023.
- 2.2 In addition, Cabinet resolved that approval be sought to make additions to the project pipeline and for updated pipelines to be published on the council website and the Regenerating Sandwell website.

## 3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?



### **Best start in life for children and young people**

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.



### **People live well and age well**

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.



### **Strong resilient communities**

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.



### **Quality homes in thriving neighbourhoods**

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.



### **A strong and inclusive economy**

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.





## A connected and accessible Sandwell

The diverse nature of the projects within the Regeneration Project Pipeline stand to contribute towards this objective.

### 4 Context and Key Issues

- 4.1 The Regeneration Project Pipeline sets out the major investment projects that the Council, its partners, and the private sector intend to deliver. It identifies the infrastructure priorities for the council and establishes where resources will be focused. The pipeline now comprises 67 live projects, in addition to the 11 projects that are now complete, bringing the estimated total investment value to £2.9b by 2027.
- 4.2 The Regeneration Programme Pipeline now comprises 67 live projects, in addition to the 11 projects that are now complete, bringing the total projects in the pipeline to 78 (see figure 1). Detailed information on all 78 pipeline projects is provided in the Performance Report (Appendix A).



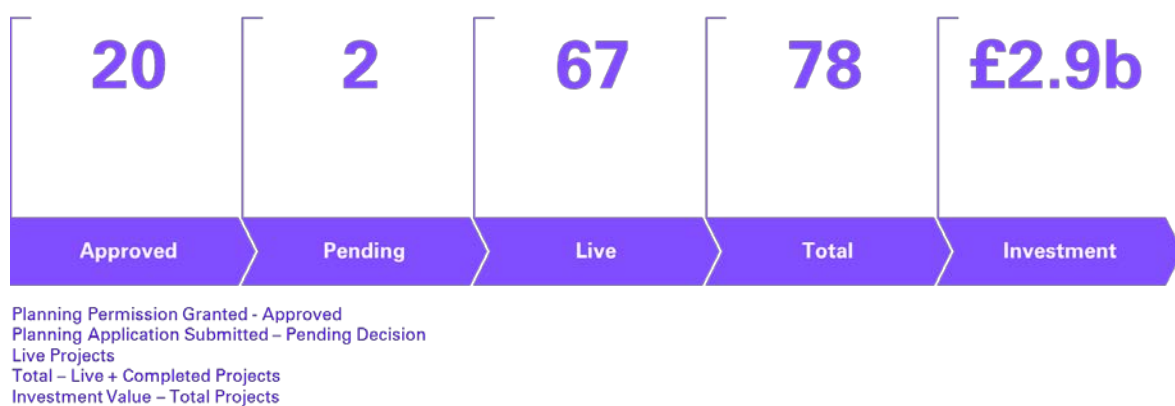
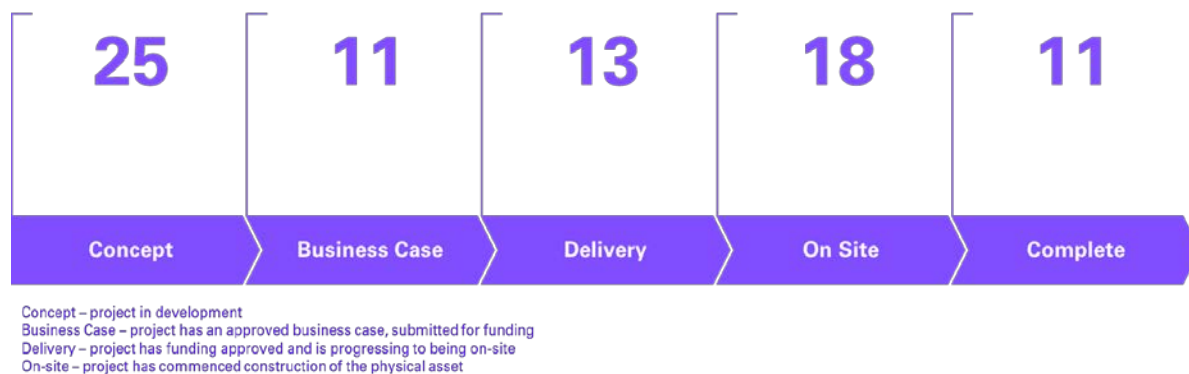


Figure 1 Performance Summary

4.3 Key project updates and risks escalated to the Regeneration Programme Board for action on the 26 October 2023 are captured in figure 2. Of note, since the last performance update to Cabinet in July 2023, 5 more projects have completed, and planning permission has been secured on several key sites:

- Brandhall Urban Village – planning approved
- Causeway Green School – planning approved
- Edwin Richards Quarry – planning approved
- Midland Met Learning Campus – planning approved
- King Street Health Centre and Housing – project completed





- Sandwell MEC – project completed
- Windsor Olympus – project completed
- Shireland – project completed
- Elm Tree – project completed



RAG	Project	Commentary
	Heat Network Commercialisation	Regeneration Programme Board requested that this project be added to the pipeline following the Cabinet approval of the Business Case.
	Levelling Up Zone Sites	Sites agreed with the Director of Regeneration & Growth. Site details submitted to the WMCA. Awaiting further guidance from the WMCA before sites are put forward to Cabinet for inclusion on the pipeline.
	LUF Round 3 Grove Lane	Government Announcement expected November 2023.
	Majestic Site	£2.2m viability gap identified working with the WMCA and DLUHC to secure funding. Regeneration Programme Board agreed for this to be added to the pipeline following update report to Cabinet in December 2023.
	King Street, Wednesbury	Completed. Project completed over budget, awaiting final cost report from the contractor.
	Brandhall Urban Village	Planning Approved October 2023.
	Causeway Green	Planning Approved October 2023.
	Wednesbury Masterplan	Added to pipeline following LUP Cabinet approval. Consultants commissioned.
	Shireland CBSO Academy	Completed.
	Elm Tree Primary Academy	Completed.
	Sandwell MEC	Completed.
	Windsor Olympus Academy	Completed.

RAG	Project	Commentary
	Long Term Plan for Smethwick	Recommendation submitted to Director Regeneration & Growth recommending that we commence procurement for consultancy support ahead of the capacity funding becoming available. Recommendation was approved by the Regeneration Programme Board and for it to be added to the pipeline given the announcement from Government.
	Millennium Centre	New project added to pipeline following Cabinet approval for LUP Funding allocation. Tight timescale for Delivery. Regeneration Programme Board agreed this to be added to the pipeline.
	HRA Programme	Budget allocations from the HRA to the programme are uncertain on a number of regeneration schemes. Board agreed for a 5-year pipeline of regeneration sites that will require HRA investment.
	Town Hall Quarter	Final costs for restoration works submitted Oct 23 which is in excess of budget. Some works removed to allow for 10% contingency, but significant risks have been excluded by the contractor. Regeneration Programme Board agreed for Legal Services to review with Land & Assets.
	Carrington Road	This site has been removed from the HRA Programme. Alternative development options being explored. Regeneration Programme Board requested this be added to the pipeline given it is a priority site for the council.
	Tipton Town Centre	Approved by Cabinet Oct 23. Financial Appraisals to be undertaken and BCRs produced on development options before this is agreed and submitted to DLUHC to enter into the MoU. Profiling of the HRA match funding will be included as part of the financial modelling for the scheme. Director of Regeneration & Growth requested a briefing with project leads.
	Blackheath Interchange	Project continuation is in serious doubt following feedback from consultation exercise. Options paper to be presented to Cabinet Members and to the Rowley Regis Town Deal Board.
	Haden Hill	Project re-scoped due to original scheme becoming unaffordable due to inflation costs. Project Adjustment request submitted to DLUHC.

RAG	Project	Commentary
	Retail Diversification Programme Indoor Market	Stage 4 Cost Plan received in September 2023 which exceeds the total project budget of £4.2m. Value engineering exercise is underway
	Acquisitions	Negotiations continue to acquire properties and assemble sites within the Retail Diversification Programme boundary. Formal valuations have been procured and completed for the two interests within the red line. Land & Assets to liaise with Legal Services. Change request approved by West Bromwich Town Deal Board and submitted to DLUHC to remove properties which cannot be acquired from the project scope and reprofile the spend to alternative project elements.
	Demolition	Revised demolition cost estimates have been procured across the programme. One site demolition estimate has been received, and there is a degree of confidence that the current demolition budget is sufficient.
	Midland Met Learning Campus	Partnership Agreement negotiations continue though the NHS Trust have not as yet been able to overcome their difficulties in providing sufficient insurance for the building, meaning the council as Accountable Body has not been able to agree to passport the Towns Fund funding. On Cabinet Forward Plan for consideration December 2023. The WMCA will also be made aware of the insurance issue as this will also affect the match funding agreement to the NHS Trust.

Figure 2 Programme Board Escalations



- 4.4 Since the establishment of the Regeneration Strategy and Project Pipeline in March 2022, £340.99m of public investment has been levered for regeneration delivery (Appendix B). Of this, the council have secured £41m since August 2023 comprising the Levelling Up Partnership (£20m); Brownfield Land Remediation Fund (£1.37); and Long-Term Plan for Towns (£20m).
- 4.5 In October 2023 the Government announced their 'Long-term Plan for Towns' which sees £1.1 billion investment into 55 towns to be spent on local people's priorities such as regenerating local high streets and town centres or securing public safety. The announcement is accompanied by the publication of 'Our Long-Term Plan for Towns' prospectus. Each selected town will receive £20m endowment-style funding to invest over the next 10 years – financial year 24/25 – financial year 34/35.
- 4.6 Towns have been allocated funding by Government according to the Levelling Up Needs Index which considers metrics covering skills, pay, productivity, and health, as well as the Index of Multiple Deprivation. A full methodology note has been published by Government. For Sandwell, Government have allocated funding to Smethwick. Other Black Country towns allocated funding are Darlaston (Walsall), Dudley (Dudley), and Bilston (Wolverhampton).
- 4.7 The £20m funding (25% Resource, 75% Capital split) is to provide a range of interventions for Sandwell to deliver over a 10-year period, providing long-term certainty to achieve significant improvements.
- 4.8 As a result of the Long-Term Plan for Towns announcement for Smethwick, it is recommended that this project be included on the Regeneration Pipeline.
- 4.9 In September 2023, the details of the Levelling Up Partnership (£20.4m) were formally announced by Government. This followed a set of Cabinet approvals to establish governance arrangements, approve the target geography as Wednesbury, and to agree the set of projects as follows:

- Friar Park Urban Village



- Wednesbury Community Safety Scheme
- Wednesbury Town Centre Improvements
- Wednesbury Greenspaces Improvements
- Friar Park Millennium Centre expansion

4.10 The Levelling Up Partnership is set to enable delivery of the Friar Park Urban Village, a major component of the Regeneration Pipeline, and lead to:

- 630 new homes (157 Affordable)
- Land acquisition for future housing delivery
- New and upgraded CCTV and environmental cameras
- Nuisance bike measures
- Improvements to 4 green spaces and 10ha new public open space for sport and recreational use
- An extended community centre offer in Friar Park; and
- Improved public realm

4.11 A Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership Board is in the process of being established to oversee the programme and this is modelled on arrangements in place within the Towns Fund Programme. Project development has commenced. As part of the Cabinet approvals in September 2023, Cabinet agreed to add the Wednesbury Town Centre Improvement project to the Regeneration Pipeline. This report recommends that the Millennium Centre expansion project also be added to the pipeline. An update on the Levelling Up Partnership is scheduled for Cabinet in March 2024.

4.12 In November 2023 Government announced that Grove Lane, Smethwick had provisionally been awarded £18m from the Levelling Up Fund Round 3. The Grove Lane proposal had previously been submitted to the Levelling Up Fund Round 2 in August 2022 but was unsuccessful. For Levelling Up Fund Round 3 Government have made provisional offers to high quality bids that were made in Round 2. The Section 151 Officer has confirmed with Government that subject to the on-boarding process with Government officials, Sandwell Council wish to proceed with the Grove Lane project.



#### 4.13 Towns Fund Programme Update

The Towns Fund Programme has secured £67.5m to deliver 16 of the Regeneration Pipeline projects across Smethwick, Rowley Regis, and West Bromwich. The Programme continues to be governed by SMBC and the three Towns Fund Boards who meet on a quarterly basis to review project progress and approve financial returns to Government. Board members are committed to securing Social Value (local spend and jobs) from existing/new contractors and subcontractors as part of project delivery.

4.14 The funds for financial year 23/24 have been released following satisfactory performance returns submitted for the previous financial year. The Programme spend forecast for financial year 23/24 is c£14.7m subject to agreeing final cost plans and completion of procurement exercises. This is significantly lower than original profile due to several challenges including cost pressures as well as dealing with planning and procurement matters.

4.15 The next monitoring return is due to be submitted to DLUHC on 4<sup>th</sup> December following Town Board and S151 sign off. Ongoing monitoring will be undertaken throughout the year to ensure that slippage is kept below the 40% threshold which triggers audit assurance reviews by Government.

4.16 Value engineering and descopeing of some projects has been essential due to final cost submissions exceeding Towns Fund budget. To mitigate the cost inflationary pressures on projects, the Towns Fund Board and Accountable Body have delegated authority from DLUHC to make changes of up to 30% reduction to project scope. To date all Project Adjustment requested have been within this threshold.

4.17 A summary of progress for each town is provided below, with more detailed information on progress and financial spend per town included in Appendix C of this report:



## Smethwick

- Forecast spend to March 24: £8.4m
- Slippage to future years: £11.3m
- **Key Risks:**  
Grove Lane – project delivery subject to successful CPO outcome  
Midland Met Learning Campus – Planning application approved on 25 October. Negotiations continue between the Council as Accountable Body for the project, and the Trust regarding a partnership agreement. awaiting confirmation of £4.7m of match funding from WMCA which is expected in December 23

## West Bromwich

- Forecast spend to March 24: £13.9m
- Slippage to future years: £9.5m
- **Key Risks:**  
Retail Diversification Project – Key Acquisitions subject to on-going negotiations. Indoor Market slipped to 24/25 financial year due to final costs significantly higher than allocated budget.  
Town Hall Quarter – value engineering costs and descoping with the addition of Regeneration reserve to enable a 10% contingency.

## Rowley Regis

- Forecast spend to March 24: £4.5m
- Slippage to future years: £12.8m
- **Key Risks:**  
Blackheath Bus Interchange – Towns Fund Board to consider alternative options to utilise funding if project does not proceed.  
Cradley Heath Skills Centre – no additional match funding identified to mitigate any cost increases during construction phase.

4.18 All projects are required to submit top three risks as part of DLUHC monitoring return. Following recent procurement exercises and final cost plans being submitted, projects have experienced cost inflation pressures which has increased risks to projects. The red RAG rated projects are detailed in Appendix D.



## 5 Alternative Options

5.1 This is a bi-annual update requested by Cabinet on 23 March 2022. In accordance with the Cabinet Decision, Cabinet are to consider additions to the project pipeline. There is no alternative option.

## 6 Implications

<b>Resources:</b>	Resources have been identified and agreed by Budget Board. Recruitment to the approved posts is underway. Finance representatives attend the Regeneration Programme Board.
<b>Legal and Governance:</b>	Legal representatives attend the Regeneration Programme Board. Governance has been approved for the Regeneration Programme Board.
<b>Risk:</b>	A programme risk register is being developed, with key risks being escalated to the Regeneration Programme Board.
<b>Equality:</b>	Equality Impact Assessments will be undertaken as and when required.
<b>Health and Wellbeing:</b>	Health and Wellbeing is a category of projects on the pipeline.
<b>Social Value</b>	Social Value is a priority within the Regeneration Programme and performance against Social Value outputs and outcomes will be monitored by the Regeneration Programme Board.
<b>Climate Change:</b>	Climate Change measures are considered as part of regeneration projects, with sustainability being a category of projects on the pipeline.
<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	There are no implications arising from this report. All projects to be added will be reviewed and assessed to ensure follows SMBC Corporate Parenting requirements



## 7. Appendices

- A Performance Report
- B Regeneration Funding Secured
- C Towns Fund Financial Profiles
- D Project Risks

## 8. Background Papers

None.





# REGENERATION PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE REPORT

26 October 2023

Jenna Langford

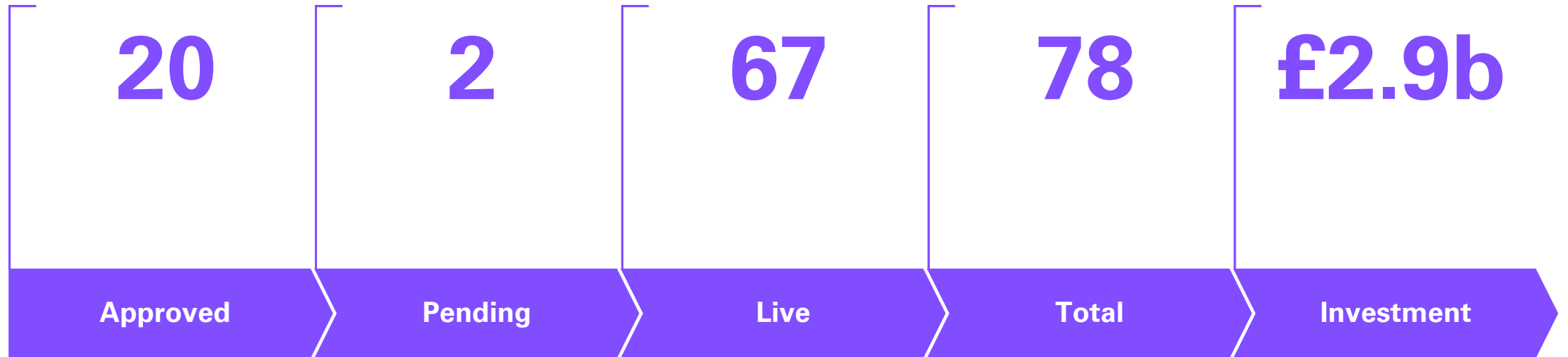
Business Manager Regeneration & Growth

# Summary



Concept – project in development  
Business Case – project has an approved business case, submitted for funding  
Delivery – project has funding approved and is progressing to being on-site  
On-site – project has commenced construction of the physical asset

# Summary



Planning Permission Granted - Approved  
Planning Application Submitted – Pending Decision  
Live Projects  
Total – Live + Completed Projects  
Investment Value – Total Projects

# REGENERATION PROGRAMME BOARD ESCALATIONS



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# 25 CONCEPT PROJECTS

Town Centres = 2

Transportation = 6

Education & Skills = 2

Housing = 11

Heritage = 3

Digital = 1

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# Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

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Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Smethwick Long-Term Plan	Concept	Public	£20m	No Status	TBC	2024	2027+	Smethwick Awarded £20m through Government Long-Term Plan for Towns.
West Bromwich Masterplan sites	Concept	Public/Private	£165m	Various	1100 Homes	Various	2026	Delivery Options for West Bromwich Masterplan approved by Cabinet 16 Nov 2022.

# Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Inclusive Growth Corridor Smethwick to Bham	Concept	Public	£16m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvements	2025	2027	CRTST Programme – WMCA. SOBC submitted to WMCA September 2023. Circa £19m scheme, but this crosses B'ham boundary so £16m in Sandwell estimated. 2025 start, reliant on land acquisition for site assembly for associated housing schemes – Grove Lane. Scheme approval and highway improvement lines report on Cabinet Forward Plan for 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2023. OBC due January 2024.
A4123 Multi Modal Corridor	Concept	Public	£12m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvements	2025	2027	OBC due to be completed November 2023 but delays to modelling work may delay this. Scheme approval report on Cabinet Forward Plan for 6 <sup>th</sup> December.
A461 Multi Modal Corridor	Concept	Public	£12.5m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvements	2025	2027	SOBC completed January 2023. OBC to be submitted January 2024. Scheme approval report on Cabinet Forward Plan for 6 <sup>th</sup> December.

# Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
WHE Sustainable Access Wbury to Dudley	Concept	Public	£16m	Permitted Dev	TBC	2024	2027	<p>CRSTS &amp; Transforming Cities Fund TfWM Sandwell Delivery. Outline Business Case completed July 2022. FBC to be completed August 2024. An element of the OBC has been funded from value £2.2m of Active Travel Fund 3)</p> <p>Given the FBC will not complete until August 2024, the stage has been amended from B Case to Concept. Investment value has also been amended to £16m.</p>

## Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Sandwell BC LCWIP West Bromwich - Cradley Heath	Concept	Public	£4m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvements	2025	2027	SOBC completed but submission subject to discussions with TfWM Walking & Cycling Commissioner. Target remains November 2023 OBC submission May 2024
SANDWELL BC LCWIPs Smethwick - West Bromwich - Wednesbury	Concept	Public	£5m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvements	2025	2027	SOBC completed but submission subject to discussions with TfWM Walking & Cycling Commissioner. Target remains November 2023 OBC submission May 2024

## Education & Skills Theme

Theme Manager – Sue Moore

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
George Betts	Concept	Public	£9m	No Status	New School	TBC	TBC	DfE Delivery Due to a number of project delivery challenges, DfE are now forecasting a planning application to be submitted mid-November 2023. No indication of a start on site or completion date from the DfE.
Millennium Centre Expansion	Concept	Public	£2m	No Status	Expanded Community Centre	TBC	TBC	Levelling Up Partnership LUP Awarded £20m Approved by Cabinet October 2023.

# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
London St, Smethwick	Concept	Private	£75m	Approved	382 Homes	TBC	2024	DC/22/67165. No update this quarter.
Former King's Cinema, West Bromwich	Concept	Private	£23m	Approved	77 Homes	TBC	2024	DC/21/65989. No update this quarter.
RSL Delivery	Concept	Public/ Private	£70m	Various	400 Homes	Various	2027	71 units delivered by RP's in 2022/23 285 units are on site. 147 programmed. Programme Office to break-down programme of sites for reporting purposes.
Langley Baths	Concept		£7.3m	No Status	25 new homes 0.46ha	May 2024	September 2025	Former Langley Baths Site. 100% Affordable Homes Residential Apartments proposed currently. Awarded £625,000 funding – One Public Estate Petition Committee – October 2023 agreed for demolition to proceed. Demolition works being programmed. Subject to Financial Appraisal and Cabinet approval for the site to be added to HRA Programme. Awaiting for development option to be confirmed i.e. housing or apartments.

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# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
HRA Programme	Concept	Public	£50.7m	Various	266 Homes	Various	2027	67 units completed since Jan 22 to Sep 23 across 5 sites 44 units on site 65 units approved by Cabinet. 76 units awaiting approval. Programme Office to break-down programme of sites for reporting purposes. 86 units currently on site across 10 sites (including high rise new units 36) Stanhope Road – Awaiting final report on ground conditions expected 20/10/23. 17 units are likely to be removed from the programme remaining 16 units subject to viability. If the remaining 16 units are viable there is an option to transfer the two sites below from 1-4-1 programme to 123 HE programme Crosswells and St Vincent's – Seeking delegated approval to award build contract.

## Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Sandwell General Hospital Site, West Bromwich	Concept	Private	£18.75m	Approved	121 Homes 0.7 ha	TBC	2025	DC/20/64894 Homes England Community Housing Fund grant secured in 2019 for feasibility work and planning application to develop affordable housing for Keyworkers. Meeting to be convened with Catalyst Mutual Enterprise in the autumn 23 for a progress update with the NHS along with cost plan review.
Carrington Road	Concept	TBC	TBC	No Status	TBC	TBC	TBC	Awarded £266k funding – One Public Estate Removed from HRA Programme. Alternative development options for the site being considered.



# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Edwin Richards Quarry, Rowley Regis	Concept	TBC	£5m	Approved	276 Homes 13.95 ha	TBC	2027+	DC/23/67924 Approved 25 October 23 subject to conditions.
Qualtronic, Tipton	Concept	TBC	£27.5m	Pre-app	137 Homes	TBC	2027+	PA/22/00546
Woods Lane, Rowley Regis	Concept	Private	£6.8m	Approved	34 Homes	2024	2027+	DC/21/66444 Keon Homes Ltd Anticipating to start on site 2024. Application for discharge of conditions 4 (S.I) and 11 (EV charging) received 27 <sup>th</sup> March 2023
Phoenix Collegiate, Wednesbury	Concept	Private	£17m	Pending	105 Homes 4.8 ha	TBC	2027	Revised Planning application submitted from Persimmon w/c 16 October 23 for 105 units.

# Heritage Theme

Theme Manager – Tony McGovern

Update October 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Chance Glassworks, Smethwick	Concept	TBD	£20m	No Status	3.08 ha	TBD	2027+	Chance Heritage Trust MoU – Cabinet Consideration 16 November 2022 £144k BCLEP Funded Business Case for PH1 Development complete. EOI has been submitted to WMCA for funding of circa £20m. Proposal from CHT for additional £60k funding from the BC EZ fund.
Soho Foundry, Smethwick	Concept	TBD	TBD	No Status	TBD	TBD	2027+	Chance Heritage Trust Community Renewal Funding has been utilised to produce feasibility studies and an outline business case in the context of restoring and repurposing the foundry & mint including a separate access road.
Archives Centre, Smethwick	Concept	TBD	£12m	No Status	TBD	TBD	TBD	Funding from National Archives was obtained for feasibility work. Consultants have been appointed and have developed a number options. A preferred option has been selected which is now being worked up into a detailed specification (expected by the end of the Oct 23). The funding strategy will follow once we have agreed the design and identified more accurate costs. Scheduled for Cabinet Jan 24.

Page 5 of 5

## Digital Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Broadband Full Fibre Infrastructure, Borough	Concept	Netomnia	£30m	Permitted Dev	120,000 connections	TBD	TBD	The Netomnia investment future-proofs the infrastructure from ‘copper switch off’, where 85% of the copper network will not be maintained from 2025. The works incur low disruption, as the installation predominantly utilises existing BT open-reach infrastructure. Engagement with the council’s Highways Team has commenced.

# 11 BUSINESS CASE PROJECTS



Housing = 3

Sustainability & Health = 1

Education & Skills = 1

Transportation = 6

# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Brandhall Urban Village, Oldbury	B Case	Sandwell Council	£36m	Approved	190 Homes Eco-Park	2024	2027+	DC/23/68540 Outline Planning Application approved October 2023. Masterplan Development Approved by Cabinet 16 Nov 2022. ES Scoping Opinion confirmed June 2023. Soft market testing of developers to be undertaken Oct/Nov 2023 to determine appropriate disposal mechanisms and procurement route. School On-site construction forecast Summer 2024 Housing On-site construction forecast Winter 2024 Engagement with community interests commenced on park. Further engagement anticipated once consultants appointed to assist design process. Appointment of consultants to progress park design and development underway School design progressed to RICA Stage 2.

## Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Tipton Town Centre	B Case	Sandwell Council	£33.3m	No Status	65 Homes 0.47 ha 1991sq ft	2023	2026	LUF Project £20m Funding Award Subsidy Control Issue resolved. Approved by Cabinet Oct 2023. SIU Appraisal to be undertaken. Agreed development option to be submitted to DLUHC to form the MoU.

# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Friar Park, Wednesbury	B Case	Public/ Private	£111.5mm	No Status	630 Homes	2026	2027+	Sandwell Council and WMCA (JV) Masterplan approved March 2023. Additional LUP funding (£11.5m) approved Sept 2023 Developer Procurement commences Autumn 2023, to be appointed Summer 2024. Remediation Works commence Autumn 2024 Housing Start On-site forecast summer 2026.

# Sustainability & Health

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Heat Network Commercialisation	B Case	Public/Private	TBC	No Status		2023	2027+	Business Case approved by Cabinet. Procurement process to be undertaken. Soft Market Testing undertaken.



## Education & Skills Theme

Theme Manager – Sue Moore

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

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Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Causeway Green Primary School, Oldbury	B Case	Public	£15m	Approved	School Replacement	2024	2025	DC/23/68540 Outline Planning Application approved 25 Oct 2023. RIBA Stage 1 complete and project costs are now forecast to exceed £15m. RIBA Stage 2 to be instructed October 23. An options paper to be developed for Passivhaus v Traditional construction to determine final design solution prior to submitting a report to Cabinet. The report will set out capital budget profile and proceed with procurement. Start on site date now delayed, completion expected end 2025.

## Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Blackheath Interchange	B Case	Public	£4.3m	Permitted Dev	TBD	TBD	2025	Towns Fund Project Project Continuation is at risk due to feedback from consultation. Options paper being prepared for the Rowley Regis Town Deal Board.

## Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Birchley Island Upgrade (A4123 / M5 J2) – Oldbury	B Case	Public	£30m	Permitted Dev	TBD	2025	2027+	<p>Land acquisition by negotiation 21st January 2024</p> <p>Publication of Draft Orders 16th November 2023</p> <p>Confirmation of Orders by the Secretary of State for Transport 27th November 2024.</p> <p>Procurement of a contractor through the Leicestershire Medium Scheme Framework (MSF4) Early Contractor Involvement (ECI) This stage has commenced.</p> <p>Submission of Full Business Case to the DfT to secure £24.4M MRN Funding 27th November 2024.</p> <p>Approval of Full Business Case by DfT to secure £24.4M MRN Funding 12th January 2025</p> <p>Commencement of construction works 1st February 2025.</p> <p>Completion of construction works 5th January 2028</p> <p>Post Construction Report to the DfT one year after opening 5th January 2029.</p>

## Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
West Bromwich East Towpath Link	B Case	Public	£3m	Permitted Dev	TBD	TBD	2025	No update available for this quarter.
WBHE Sustainable Access Measures, Tipton	B Case	Public	£4m	Permitted Dev	TBD	TBD	2026	No update available for this quarter.
Dudley Port Integrated Transport Hub (Phase 1A), Oldbury	B Case	Public	£2.4m	Permitted Dev	TBD	2024	2025	WMCA led project. OBC Brief is currently being developed. Programme Level Business Case has been approved.
Metro Line 1 renovation	B Case	Public	£10m	Permitted Dev	TBD	TBD	2027	WMCA led project. No update available for this quarter.

# 13 DELIVERY PROJECTS

Employment = 1

Sustainability & Health = 2

Housing = 3

Education & Skills = 2

Town Centre = 2

Transportation = 3

## Employment Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Coneygre Manu Facility, Tipton	Delivery	Private	£40m	Approved	150 New Jobs 1 Apprentice 153 Con Jobs	2023	2024	DC/21/66125 Grant offer from WMCA accepted - Terms and formal approval from WMCA are expected in December 2023. Revised target for commencement of works is March 2024.

## Sustainability & Health Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Haden Hill Leisure Centre, Rowley Regis	Delivery	Sandwell Council	£23m	No Status	New Leisure Centre	2023	2026	RIBA Stage 1 Complete. Scope unaffordable due to construction cost inflation. Project re-scoped to be new wet facilities and refurbishment of dry facilities. Approved by Cabinet 18 October 2023. Project Adjustment request to be submitted to DLUHC.
Battery Energy Storage, Danks Way Hill Top, West Bromwich	Delivery	Private	£40m	Pre-App submitted.	20 New Jobs 2 Apprentices 264 Con Jobs	2023	2024	Storing Energy from clean sources project. Avon Utilities & Generation. JRB Regeneration Limited. The 18-month agreement for lease has been signed. An enabling works are underway.

# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Rife St Canal-side, Smethwick	Delivery	Public	£2m	Pending	115 Homes	2023	2025	Towns Fund Project. Vacant possession achieved. Site works to commence Nov 2023 Ecology survey completed Sept 2023 and disconnections currently in progress and are scheduled to complete December 2023. Demolition contractor has been appointed. Planning Application has been submitted October 2023 for demolition of site. Awaiting Validation. High level programme currently estimating demolition and site remediation completed July 2025.



# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Grove Lane, Smethwick	Delivery	Public	£4.4m	No Status	145 Homes	2024	2026	Towns Fund Project. Remediation anticipated to complete 2026. A report was approved by Cabinet in November 2022 which requested authorisation to commence Compulsory Purchase action on the Cranford Street site. CPO advice obtained and Legal assistance in the process of being finalised. , planning application to be prepared to support CPO case – aiming for submission November 2023 2023. Local Authority to re-engage with landowner to continue negotiations in November 2023.

## Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Gas Showrooms	Delivery	Black Country Housing Group	£6m	No Status	26 new homes 0.107ha	June 2024	December 2025	Former Gas Showroom Site Residential Apartment scheme – 100% Affordable. Awarded £479,547 funding – One Public Estate. £1,456,000 Homes England grant

## Education & Skills Theme

Theme Manager – Sue Moore

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

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Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Satellite Education Hub, Rowley Regis	Delivery	Public	£9m	Approved	4 New Jobs 1 Apprentice 32 Con Jobs	2024	2025	Towns Fund Project Sandwell College DC/22/67785 – Application Approved June 2023 Appointment of Contractor for Stage 1 will progress now for approval Contractor expected to be on site March 24 Forecast completion and operational August 25
Midland Met Campus, Smethwick	Delivery	Public	£12.9m	Approved	30 New Jobs 6 Apprentices 100 Con Jobs	2023	2025	Towns Fund Project NHS Trust DC/23/68220 Approved 25 Oct 2023 SMBC Partnership Agreement still in negotiation due to Building Insurance provisions. Decision for £5m funding from WMCA expected Dec 23.

# Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Retail Diversification Programme	Delivery	Public	£13m	Various Approved	255 Con Jobs	2023	2025	<p>Towns Fund Project <b>Indoor Market</b> DC/23/68118 (Indoor Market) approved in July 2023.</p> <p>Stage 4 Cost Plan received September 2023, exceeding project budget of £4.2m.</p> <p>Comprehensive VE exercise being undertaken and agreed with project stakeholders and end user. Once completed, the independent review will provide a revised project cost. This will form the basis of a revised procurement approach with a new contract in place early Q1 2024.</p>

## Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Retail Diversification Programme	Delivery	Public	£13m	Various Approved	255 Con Jobs	2023	2025	<b>Acquisitions</b>  Negotiations continue to acquire properties and assemble sites within the Retail Diversification Programme boundary. Formal valuations have been procured and completed for the two interests within the red line. Land & Assets to liaise with Legal Services. Change request approved by West Bromwich Town Deal Board and submitted to DLUHC to remove properties which cannot be acquired from the project scope and reprofile the spend to alternative project elements.

## Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Retail Diversification Programme	Delivery	Public	£13m	Various Approved	255 Con Jobs	2023	2025	<b>Demolitions</b>  Revised demolition cost estimates have been procured. For the one site that these have been returned, there is a high degree of confidence that the current budget will be sufficient.

# Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update October 2023

Previous

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Wednesbury Town Centre Masterplan	Delivery	Public	£130k	Various	Masterplan	2023	2024	Levelling Up Partnership Consultancy Commissioned October 2023.

# Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Rowley Regis Walking & Cycling	Delivery	Public	£1.5m	Permitted Dev	10 Construction Jobs	2024	2025	Towns Fund Project Pre-site works scheduled to commence Oct 2023 - Delays due to Resources in Transportation Team. Anticipated start on site 2024. Risk that the project costs will be over budget.
SPRINT A34/A45 PH2, West Bromwich	Delivery	Public	£250k	Permitted Dev	TBD	2024	2025	CRSTS Programme – WMCA. Fully funded Business Cases approved. £50m scheme, majority of investment is in Walsall and Solihull, £250k in Sandwell.  Detailed Design complete, Forecast on-site early 2024.
M5 J1 (Ph1 Development of SOBC only)	Delivery	Public	£3m	Permitted Dev	Connectivity Improvement	2023	2027	*Note this project reflects level of investment to develop a Business Case for the scheme. Capital Funding for physical project not yet obtained. SOBC Commissioned, due March 2024.



# 18 ON SITE PROJECTS

Sustainability & Health = 5

Heritage = 2

Employment = 1

Housing = 3

Town Centres = 1

Digital = 1

Transportation = 5

## Sustainability & Health Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

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Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Retro-fit Council Housing Stock	On Site	Public	£89m	Permitted Dev	400 Con Jobs 20 Apprentices	2022	2027	HRA & Government Grant Energy Efficiency Council House Stock. Progressed from Delivery to On Site. Information provided to the Programme Board July 2023 which indicates the value of the retro-fit programme is between £89m - £113m. Need to agree future reporting with the Board.
Grid Scale Battery Storage Facility, West Bromwich	On Site	Private	£30m	Approved	20 New Jobs 2 Apprentices	2021	2023	Pivot Power EDF Renewables DC/20/64437 Event planned for autumn 2023 to mark project completion.
Midland Metropolitan University Hospital	On Site	NHS Balfour Beatty	£700m	Approved	New Hospital	2015	2024	DC/15/58384. The date for opening of MMUH is still noted as 2024. The exact date has not been confirmed and is under constant review by the NHS Exec Board.

# Sustainability & Health Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Britannia Park	On Site	Public	£2.46m	Approved	1 Apprentice 10 Con Jobs	2022	2024	Towns Fund Project DC/23/68486- Planning application for changing rooms approved in September 2023. Procurement of skate park and playground equipment due to be submitted in Q2.
Energy from Waste Plant, West Bromwich	On Site	Enfinium	£500m	Approved	TBC	2021	2025	DC/17/61177

## Employment Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Metro Depot, Wednesbury	On site	Public TfWM	£50m	Approved	150 New Jobs	2023	2025	DC/20/64976 TfWM confirmed in May 23 that investment was circa £50m and the project would house additional 21 trams. Therefore the 150 jobs covers construction, drivers and maintenance. Sandwell Social Value Team have been briefed to contact TfWM to determine what support is needed to maximise Social Value opportunities.

## Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Land at Hall Green Road, West Bromwich	On-Site	Countryside Properties	£35.7m	Approved	223 Homes 8.59 ha	2021	2024	DC/20/65059 69 private sales completed. 6 plots exchanged, 5 plots reserved and 3 plots unsold for FY23. On PRS handed over 47 plots to Gatehouse bank.
Fountain Lane, Oldbury	On-Site	Lovells	£47m	Approved	246 Homes 6.02 ha	2021	2025	DC/20/64152 Build completion estimated = May 2024 for the affordable dwellings, October 2024 for open market units. Sales completions forecast to end in March 2025. Secured 64 Legal Completions with another 12 anticipated before year end. Average of 3.5 sales per month. Remainder of housing units profiled to complete in 2024 with only final block of 24 dwellings running into 2025.

# Housing Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Swan Lane, West Bromwich	On-site	Private	£29.8m	Approved	149 Homes	2023	2025	Green Square Accord DC/22/66532 BCLEP Funding £3.2m secured 19 Oct 2022. Homes England Funding £4,998,000 secured. Site acquired December 2022. Development on-site 3 <sup>rd</sup> April 2023.

# Heritage Theme

Theme Manager – Jenna Langford

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Heritage Action Zone (HAZ), Wednesbury	On Site	Public	£3.2m	Various	1 Apprentice 71 Con Jobs	2021	2024	SMBC & Historic England Project. Shop Front Improvement and First floor Conversions anticipated to commence 2023 and complete 2024 – subject to eligibility of grant applicants. Grant Awarded to 8 Market Place. Project Underspend – new projects identified.
Town Hall Quarter, West Bromwich	On Site	Public	£7.56m	Approved	1 Apprentice 6 Con Jobs	2023	2024	Towns Fund Project. DC/23/68022 and DC/23/68021 granted planning with conditions as of April 2023. Scaffolding installed April 2023 Final costs for restoration works submitted Oct 23 which is in excess of budget. Some works removed to allow for 10% contingency, however risks have been excluded from the costs, which need to be reviewed by Land & Assets and Legal Services.

## Town Centres Theme

Theme Manager – Luke Dove

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Urban Greening, West Bromwich	On Site	Public	£1.22m	Permitted Dev	Public Realm improvement.	2022	2024	Towns Fund Project Funding secured. Project progressed from Business Case to On Site. Phase 1 complete. Phase 2 is now complete. University of Birmingham have secured funding to run an evaluation project on the benefits/disbenefits of the new UG area. All outputs delivered, with £20k remaining in the budget. Underspend options being discussed with the Towns Fund Programme Manager.



# Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Smethwick Walking & Cycling	On Site	Public	£3.8m	Permitted Dev	1 apprentice 10 Con Jobs	2022	2024	Towns Fund Project. Phase 2 and 3 completed Phase 4 expected to start early 2024 due to need for second round of consultation. DMS 1st November 2023. Phase 5 expected to start in Q2
Canal Connectivity Rowley Regis	On Site	Public	£2.3m	Permitted Dev	1 apprentice 20 Con Jobs	2022	2024	Towns Fund Project – Canal River Trust On Site as of October 2022 Scheduled to complete June 2024, with additional works approved following underspend. Additional match funding secured to enhance project, as a result some works slipped to enable utilisation of match funding first.
Wednesbury - Dudley Metro Extension	On Site	Public	£160m	Permitted Dev	TBC	2021	2024	No update available this quarter.
West Bromwich Walking and Cycling Infrastructure	On Site	Public	£1.1m	Permitted Dev	10 Con Jobs	2022	2025	Towns Fund Phase 2 delayed due to public consultation following elections & scheme design. Consultation taking place in November/December 2023. Delivery expected early 2024.

# Transport Theme

Theme Manager – Andy Miller

Update October 2023

Previous July 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Midland Met Canal Gateway	On Site	Public	£1.5m	Permitted Dev	TBC	2023	2024	Towns Fund Project - Canal River Trust The project is funded via £870k from the Sustainable Transport fund; £600k from the Smethwick Town Deal fund; and £100k in Section 106 contributions. CRT Partnership Agreement between SMBC and CRT signed. On-site September 2023, anticipated completion Feb 2024.

## Digital Theme

Theme Manager – Tammy Stokes

Update July 2023

Previous June 2023

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Full Fibre Connectivity	On Site	BT Open Reach	£30m	Permitted Dev	TBC	TBC	2024	No update available this quarter.

# 11 COMPLETED PROJECTS

Education & Skills = 6

Sustainability & Health = 3

Employment = 1

Transportation = 1

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completes	Performance Update
Shireland CBSO Academy, West Bromwich	Complete	Public	£16.29m	Approved	New School	2022	2023	DfE Delivery PDC/22/6650 Complete September 2023
Elm Tree Primary Academy, Wednesbury	Complete	Public	£10m	Approved	New School	2022	2023	DfE Delivery DC/21/65308 Site of former Manor High School. Complete September 2023.
Sandwell MEC, West Bromwich	Complete	Public	£2.7m	Approved	14 Jobs 1 Apprentice 29 Con Jobs	2022	2023	Towns Fund Project Sandwell College DC/22/66495. Forecast completion Aug 2023 Operational September 2023. Opening Ceremony provisional date 22 Nov 23.
Windsor Olympus Academy, Smethwick	Complete	Public	£20m	Approved	New School	2021	2023	DfE Delivery. DC/21/65892 Complete September 2023
King Street, Wednesbury	Complete	Public	£5.6m	Approved	35 Homes 1 Apprentice 35 Con Jobs	2021	2023	DC/18/62165 Focussed discussion scheduled for October Programme Board.

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commenced	Completed	Performance Update
Sandwell Aquatic Centre, Smethwick	Complete	Public	£89.6m	Approved	16 Apprentices 254 Con Jobs	2022	2023	Public Funds sourced from SMBC, WMCA, BCLEP, DCMS, OC DC/19/62642 SAC Opens to the public w/c 24 July 23. Legacy Plan approved by Cabinet 12 July 23.
Heat Network Dev Phase, West Bromwich	Complete	Public	£390k	N/A	Business Case	2022	2023	Outline Business Case was approved by Cabinet 12 July 2023. Project updated to complete. Commercialisation project now added to the pipeline.
Ron Davis Centre, Smethwick	Complete	Public	£358k	Approved	1 Apprentice 15 Con Jobs	2022	2023	Towns Fund Project SAFL Delivery Planning Ref - DC/22/66762 Construction of 2 classrooms is complete. IT equipment to be installed.

Project	Stage	Developer	Investment	Planning	Outputs	Commences	Completed	Performance Update
Ambulance Service Hub, Oldbury	Complete	Private	£22m	Approved	475 New Jobs 6 Apprentices	2021	2022	Stoford Delivery Planning Ref - DC/20/65084 Completed.
Digital Den, West Bromwich	Complete	Public	£42,600	Permitted Dev	Digital Facilities and Learners Assisted	2022	2022	Towns Fund Greets Green Community Centre
SPRINT A34/A45 Phase 1	Complete	Public	£5m	Permitted Dev			2022	TfWM Scheme

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Appendix 1: **REGENERATION INVESTMENT SECURED FROM PUBLIC FUNDING BODIES – 2022 AND 2023 TO DATE**

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<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>How Secured</b>
Towns Fund Programme	£67.5m	May 2022	16 Treasury standard Green Book Business Cases submitted and approved by DLUHC
City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (2022 – 2027) – DfT via WMCA	£168m	2022	Negotiation and submission of bids via WMCA incl. letter from Leader to Mayor
Levelling Up Fund – Round 2: Haden Hill Leisure Centre	£20m	Jan 23	Business Case submitted and approved by DLUHC as part of competitive process
Tipton Town Centre Regeneration	£20m	March 2023	Business Case submitted and approved by DLUHC as part of competitive process
Social Housing Decarbonisation Funds (SHDF 1 and 2; LAD and HUG)	£12.82m	2022/23	Various bids submitted in 2022 and 2023 as part of national competitive exercise – multiple awards
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£9m	2022	By negotiation with WMCA in a competitive process with 6 other LA's
Commonwealth Games Underspend (£70m) – SAC Utility Cost pressures	Up to £2m	March 2023	By negotiation and then formal WMCA Board decision with support of 6 LA Leaders.
OPE Funding for Brownfield Remediation	£1.37m	August 2023	Competitive bidding process at national level via WMCA – only one of two LA's in West Midlands successful.
Wednesbury Levelling Up Partnership	£20.3m	2023	Negotiation about priorities and overall package with DLUHC civil servants after national announcement of 20 LA's selected for LUP
Long Term Plan for Towns (Smethwick)	£20m	Oct 2023	PM announcement at Conservative Party Conference
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£340.99m</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	

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WEST BROMWICH							
Project	Rev/Cap	21/22 Actual	22/23 Actual	23/24 Forecast	24/25 Forecast	25/26 Forecast	Project Total
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	42,600.00	-	-	-	-	42,600.00
<b>Digital Den (External)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>42,600.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>42,600.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	169,914.58	525,487.57	2,004,597.85	-	-	2,700,000.00
<b>Central St Michaels - Sandwell Science, Engineering &amp; Manufacturing Centre (External)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>169,914.58</b>	<b>525,487.57</b>	<b>2,004,597.85</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,700,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	10,731.71	70,000.00	42,634.15	21,634.14	145,000.00
	Cap	25,726.66	675,766.61	353,227.45	20,279.28	-	1,075,000.00
<b>Urban Greening</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,726.66</b>	<b>686,498.32</b>	<b>423,227.45</b>	<b>62,913.43</b>	<b>21,634.14</b>	<b>1,220,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	48,017.33	98,851.67	-	-	146,869.00
	Cap	203,516.34	331,425.80	2,093,496.29	4,154,692.57	-	6,783,131.00
<b>Town Hall Quarter</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>203,516.34</b>	<b>379,443.13</b>	<b>2,192,347.96</b>	<b>4,154,692.57</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>6,930,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	66,489.00	66,489.00	-	132,978.00
	Cap	3,960.00	5,073,197.69	1,827,705.12	4,794,596.43	1,167,562.76	12,867,022.00
<b>Retail Diversification Project</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>3,960.00</b>	<b>5,073,197.69</b>	<b>1,894,194.12</b>	<b>4,861,085.43</b>	<b>1,167,562.76</b>	<b>13,000,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	10,770.00	63,422.27	658,455.00	196,861.73	170,491.00	1,100,000.00
<b>West Bromwich Connected</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>10,770.00</b>	<b>63,422.27</b>	<b>658,455.00</b>	<b>196,861.73</b>	<b>170,491.00</b>	<b>1,100,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL WEST BROMWICH</b>		<b>456,487.58</b>	<b>6,728,048.98</b>	<b>7,172,822.38</b>	<b>9,275,553.16</b>	<b>1,359,687.90</b>	<b>24,992,600.00</b>
<b>Difference</b>		<b>48,887.58</b>	<b>- 8,614,663.02</b>	<b>- 565,631.62</b>	<b>8,115,719.16</b>	<b>1,015,687.90</b>	<b>0.00</b>

SMETHWICK							
Project	Rev/Cap	21/22 Actual	22/23 Actual	23/24 Forecast	24/25 Forecast	25/26 Forecast	Project Total
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	11,356.35	333,493.64	15,150.01	-	-	360,000.00
<b>Ron Davis Centre Expansion</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>11,356.35</b>	<b>333,493.64</b>	<b>15,150.01</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>360,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	2,250.00	63,078.22	862,021.78	817,650.00	255,000.00	2,000,000.00
<b>Rolfe Street Canalside Regeneration</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,250.00</b>	<b>63,078.22</b>	<b>862,021.78</b>	<b>817,650.00</b>	<b>255,000.00</b>	<b>2,000,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	1,575.00	3,955.77	35,000.00	2,611,000.00	1,698,469.23	4,350,000.00
<b>Grove Lane Regeneration</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,575.00</b>	<b>3,955.77</b>	<b>35,000.00</b>	<b>2,611,000.00</b>	<b>1,698,469.23</b>	<b>4,350,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	445,062.00	1,143,545.90	2,599,955.00	8,711,437.10	-	12,900,000.00
<b>Midland Met Learning Campus (External)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>445,062.00</b>	<b>1,143,545.90</b>	<b>2,599,955.00</b>	<b>8,711,437.10</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>12,900,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	25,100.00	605,861.35	2,241,838.65	1,000,000.00	-	3,872,800.00
<b>Smethwick Connected</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>25,100.00</b>	<b>605,861.35</b>	<b>2,241,838.65</b>	<b>1,000,000.00</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>3,872,800.00</b>
<b>TOTAL SMETHWICK</b>		<b>485,343.35</b>	<b>2,149,934.88</b>	<b>5,753,965.44</b>	<b>13,140,087.10</b>	<b>1,953,469.23</b>	<b>23,482,800.00</b>
<b>Difference</b>		<b>485,343.35</b>	<b>- 5,267,515.12</b>	<b>- 6,581,834.56</b>	<b>10,018,387.10</b>	<b>1,345,619.23</b>	<b>-</b>

ROWLEY REGIS							
Project	Rev/Cap	21/22 Actual	22/23 Actual	23/24 Forecast	24/25 Forecast	25/26 Forecast	22/23 Total
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	-	463,309.45	793,216.60	1,203,473.95	-	2,460,000.00
<b>Britannia Park Community Hub and Greenspace Improvements</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>463,309.45</b>	<b>793,216.60</b>	<b>1,203,473.95</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,460,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	-	1,787,826.42	324,127.00	188,046.58	-	2,300,000.00
<b>Canal Network Connectivity (External)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,787,826.42</b>	<b>324,127.00</b>	<b>188,046.58</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,300,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	105,151.25	362,376.24	200,000.00	4,316,236.26	4,016,236.25	9,000,000.00
<b>Sandwell College - Cradley Heath Skills Centre (External)</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>105,151.25</b>	<b>362,376.24</b>	<b>200,000.00</b>	<b>4,316,236.26</b>	<b>4,016,236.25</b>	<b>9,000,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	-	4,475.04	27,060.00	2,688,170.96	1,020,294.00	3,740,000.00
<b>Blackheath Bus Interchange and Public Realm</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,475.04</b>	<b>27,060.00</b>	<b>2,688,170.96</b>	<b>1,020,294.00</b>	<b>3,740,000.00</b>
	Rev	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Cap	117.60	11,263.26	116,494.00	878,000.00	494,125.14	1,500,000.00
<b>Rowley Regis Connected</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>117.60</b>	<b>11,263.26</b>	<b>116,494.00</b>	<b>878,000.00</b>	<b>494,125.14</b>	<b>1,500,000.00</b>
<b>TOTAL ROWLEY REGIS</b>		<b>105,268.85</b>	<b>2,629,250.41</b>	<b>1,460,897.60</b>	<b>9,273,927.75</b>	<b>5,530,655.39</b>	<b>19,000,000.00</b>
<b>Difference</b>		<b>105,268.85</b>	<b>- 2,041,189.59</b>	<b>- 11,150,948.40</b>	<b>7,902,633.75</b>	<b>5,184,235.39</b>	<b>-</b>

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	Risk Name	Consequences	Pre-mitigated Impact	Pre-mitigated Likelihood	Pre-mitigated Raw Total Score	Mitigations	Post-Mitigated Impact	Post-mitigated Likelihood	Post-mitigated Raw Total Score	Proximity
Town Hall Quarter	<b>Rising Costs/Inflation</b>	Impact of project deliverability asno further funding available to cover any costs over and above contingency. Reduction to scope of works will be required which may also impact BCR	4 - Significant impact	3 -High	12	Following submission of Stage 4 final cost plan, considerable value engineering has been undertaken by SMBC Urban Design Team to ensure work packages are agreed prior to contract sign off. Regeneration revenue reserve is requested to enable a 10% contingency. Strict contract monitoring is required to ensure costs remain within budgets.	3 - Medium impact	2- Medium	6	5 - Imminent: next month
Blackheath Bus Interchange & Public Realm	External Stakeholder Management - If consultation isn't sufficient, there is a risk that external stakeholders object or appeal to the project design.	External stakeholders do not approve of project proposals	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	SMBC and Towns Fund Board to agree direction of project.	3 - Medium impact	2 - Medium	6	5 - Imminent: next month
		Delays in programme delivery				Alternative options being pursued to support changes request submission to DLUHC				
		Need to review project scope/ design								
	Increased material costs - Inflation is causing rapid cost increases	Costs exceeding project budget	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Monitor supplies	2 - Low impact	1- Low	2	2 - Distant: next 12 months
		Impact on final BCR (both Public Realm and Transportation elements jointly)				Use agreed frameworks				
Cradley Heath Skills Centre	<b>Budget</b> - Due to the cost volatility of construction materials as well as the substantial demand for contractors, there is a level of uncertainty relating to pricing.	Project delay requiring redesign and / or building shrinkage to achieve the budget	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Early stage research in the market and early contractor engagement. Certainty in the design and agreeing scope. Have an agreed idea of VE that can be implemented post-tender. Suitable contingency allowance & monitor market.	4 - Significant impact	2 - Medium	8	4 - Close: next 3 months
	<b>Design</b> - Due to the budget constraint, and rising market costs, there is a risk the design will need to be adapted . Such adaptations could be unacceptable to the planning department.	Project delay requiring redesign and / or building shrinkage to achieve the budget	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Due to the budget constraints, a Value Engineering exercise has been carried out to make cost reductions to the Design. Reviewing whether existing Pagabo approach can still be utilised to enable contract start in March 24. Building size may need to be reduced to achieve the budget, impacting outputs and outcomes requiring a DLUHC funding change control submission.	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	4 - Close: next 3 months
Midland Met Learning Campus	<b>Additional Funding Availability:</b> Inability to secure additional funding beyond Towns Fund grant.	Requirement to redesign the scheme to remove net zero ambitions.	5 - Major impact	3 -High	15	Awaiting WMCA decision on matchfunding application expected in December 23. Active pursuit of additional funding opportunities to fulfil net zero ambition.	5 - Major impact	2 - Medium	10	4 - Close: next 3 months
	<b>Cost Inflation:</b> Inflation & Super Inflation	Reduced affordability requiring scheme redesign.	4 Significant impact	3 -High	12	Design does not incorporate single source products. Additional inflation allowance in cost plan.	3 - Medium impact	3 -High	9	2 - Distant: next 12 months
	<b>Partnership Agreements:</b> Partnership Arrangements between Partners not concluded in good time	Learning Campus does not deliver learning outputs	4 Significant impact	3 -High	12	Formal partnership agreement entered into early in scheme design phase.	4 Significant impact	1- Low	4	3 - Approaching: next 6 months

	Risk Name	Consequences	Pre-mitigated Impact	Pre-mitigated Likelihood	Pre-mitigated Raw Total Score	Mitigations	Post-Mitigated Impact	Post-mitigated Likelihood	Post-mitigated Raw Total Score	Proximity
Retail Diversification Project	<b>Negotiations with Land Owners fail.</b>	The project is dependant on being able to acquire a number of key interests across the town centre which are currently privately owned. Failure to agree by negotiation will impact the delivery of the project. Change of scope and/ or financial reprofile. Outputs will need to be amended.	5 - Major impact	3 -High	15	Appoint consultancy support and early preparation of CPO process if required	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	3 - Approaching: next 6 months
	<b>Unforeseen costs emerged at project delivery stage.</b> Costs for the delivery of the indoor market can only be estimated at inception stage, therefore unforeseen costs may occur.	Increase in project delivery costs presents high risk of reduced BCR and not delivering the project. Will also negatively impact outputs and financial profile	5 - Major impact	3 -High	15	Stage 4 costs plan from current Indoor Market contractors is in excess of budget. Revised procurement approach required with independent review of costs to agree packages deliverable within budget.	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	3 - Approaching: next 6 months
Grove Lane Regeneration	<b>Acquisition of Site</b> - Inability to negotiate with landowners	Project will not be able to proceed unless CPO is successful Project is reliant on landowners being willing to dispose of site or relocate. Not being able to acquire properties by agreement may lead to increased timescales as other options pursued (e.g. CPO)	5 - Major impact	3 - High	15	Undertake CPO to acquire the site	4 - Significant impact	3 - High	12	2 - Distant: next 12 months
	<b>Unforeseen Costs emerged at delivery stage</b>	Additional funding sources will need to be acquired to fund the financial gap Remediation Costs exceed expectations. Ground conditions will not be known until detailed site investigations are undertaken. A remediation strategy will be required to understand the scope and costs of remediating the site.	5 - Major impact	2 - Medium	10	Instruct early site investigations once site is within our control	3 - Medium impact	2 - Medium	6	2 - Distant: next 12 months
Brittania Park	<b>Financial Management:</b> Project costs exceed Towns Fund value of funding.	Not completing all key deliverables and subsequently not meeting outputs and outcomes.	4 Significant impact	3 -High	12	To develop and refine designs, specifications & costs for all elements of the project and to use expert advice via Urban Design Lead, suppliers and surveyors as part of any value engineering. The project is run via a series of work packages, with some (such as the Play Area, Car Park and Skatepark) allowing scope for alterations within budget.	3 - Medium impact	2 - Medium	6	4 - Close: next 3 months