

Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board

16.11.2022

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| Subject: | Black Country Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan Consultation |
| Director: | Director, Regeneration and Growth Tony McGovern |
| Contact Officer: | Strategic Planning and Transport Manager – Andy Miller – Andy_Miller@sandwell.gov.uk Senior Transport Planning Officer – Wayne Moore – wayne_moore@sandwell.gov.uk |

1 Recommendations

That the Board notes the contents of the report.

2 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

- 2.1 The provision of a safe and convenient network of cycle routes will help address the health impacts of inactivity thus contributing to Vision 2030 Ambition 2.
- 2.2 All three tiers of the cycling network; National, Metropolitan and Local, contribute to the provision of a high-quality transport system linking homes and communities to jobs and facilities (Vision 2030 Ambitions 6, 7 and 8).

3 Context and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published in April 2017 with the aim of making cycling and walking the



natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey. The strategy seeks to double the 2013 number of journeys, or part journeys, made by cycle by 2025. It recognises that achieving this will require a sustained investment in cycling infrastructure by Central Government, Local Transport Authorities and third parties. The Government anticipates that Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) will be the principal vehicle for targeting this investment.

- 3.2 The West Midlands Combined Authority has developed an LCWIP that identifies and enables a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout the West Midlands up to 2028. Subsequently Sandwell developed an LCWIP that identifies and enables a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout the Sandwell up to 2030.
- 3.3 To complement the WMCA and Sandwell LCWIP's Black Country Transport commissioned work to develop a Black Country LCWIP that will identify and enable a plan to develop local cycling and walking networks throughout the Black Country till 2032. The BCLCWIP will be published in Spring 2023 subsequently to cabinet approval.
- 3.4 Consultants AECOM were appointed by Black Country Transport to prepare Black Country's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to support mode shift to active modes across the four local authority areas. The process undertaken conformed to the Department for Transport (DfT)'s defined six-stage LCWIP process. The geographical scope was the whole of the area within the four authority's boundaries. A policy and data led analysis was carried out to establish areas of highest cycle and walking demand. The areas within Sandwell were then reviewed by Sandwell's Transportation team to select those which aligned with Sandwell's policy objectives. These included: air quality improvement areas, regeneration corridors, proximity to secondary schools, proximity to transport hubs, current and planned 20mph zones and areas of high congestion. A map of the selected cycle routes and core walking zones can be found in Appendix A.

4 Next Steps

- 4.1 Black Country Transport are due to undertake a public consultation on the Black Country Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan early 2023 (date to be confirmed).



- 4.2 Once the public consultation is complete Sandwell MBC Cabinet approval of BCLCWIP will be sought.
- 4.3 Each project within the BCLCWIP programme will be subject of individual consultations in line with exiting highway and transportation procedures and processes.

5 Implications

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| Resources: | <p>The majority of funding for ‘standalone’ cycle infrastructure projects comes from Sandwell’s allocation from the Integrated Transport Block (ITB). ITB is allocated annually by Central Government to Local Transport Authorities, such as the West Midlands Combined Authority. In the West Midlands the WMCA then re-allocates this funding to the districts on a ‘per-capita’ basis.</p> <p>£125k of ITB is allocated to the ‘Measures to Encourage Cycling’ category in 2019/20. In addition, some of the projects to be funded from other categories such the ‘Measures to Encourage Walking’ and the various safety-related categories include a cycling element.</p> <p>As well as ITB, cycle infrastructure is also funded through regional/sub-regional initiatives such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, Active Travel Fund, Towns Investment Fund and similar funding streams. These will be combined with ITB allocation to deliver the project within the BCLCWIP</p> <p>Highway infrastructure including cycle infrastructure is maintained in accordance with the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Policy, Strategy and Plan on a risk assessed basis within the limits of funding allocations from the IT Maintenance Block,</p> |
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| | Council Revenue budgets and occasionally from Council Capital Allocations |
| Legal and Governance: | <p>Under section 65 (1) of the Highways Act 1980, a highway authority may, in or by the side of a highway maintainable at the public expense by them which consists of or comprises a made-up carriageway, construct a cycle track as part of the highway; and they may light any cycle track constructed by them under this section.</p> <p>To convert all or part of a footway to a shared pedestrian and cycle route, all or the appropriate part of the footway must be removed under section 66 (4) of the Highways Act 1980, and a cycle track 'constructed' under section 65 (1) of the act. No physical construction is necessary but there needs to be clear evidence that the local highway authority has exercised these powers. This can be provided by a resolution of the appropriate committee or cabinet member.</p> |
| Risk: | <p>That highway maintenance budget allocations are only sufficient to operate the road network and maintain the highest risk infrastructure based on condition surveys. This is likely to result in the gradual deterioration of cycle infrastructure condition until it becomes a high risk priority for the use of limited maintenance budgets.</p> <p>There is also a risk that SMBC will be unable to deliver cycling and walking infrastructure. This is an unlikely scenario but would result in reputational damage, potentially limiting SMBC's future ability to successfully apply for Infrastructure funding in the future.</p> |
| Equality: | As stated in the BCLCWIP Full Outline Business Case walking and cycling are among the cheapest modes of transport and so help build equality throughout the Black Country as it offers affordable options of travel to employment and higher education which in turn will encourage economic growth of the borough. The |



routes and zones identified are spread across the entire sub-region to benefit as many communities as possible.

Where AECOM have identified cycle interventions, the preferred (and costed) options are for segregated provision. Safety and not wanting to mix with traffic is the main barrier given for why people don't cycle. This is especially true for women who make up only 25% of those cycling (Sustrans). Women are also more likely to make 'escort' trips with children (National Travel Survey). Good quality cycle infrastructure is designed to be suitable for a child who has completed their level 2 Bikeability (previously known as Cycling Proficiency). Cycle facilities to schools and colleges provides greater freedom for children, and the ability for families to travel in an active way.

Cycle infrastructure and good walking environments also gives older people, and those with physical disabilities more transport options and greater independence. Cycles are available for almost every type of disability and can act as a mobility aid for those who find walking difficult. Evidence where high quality cycle infrastructure has been built has shown it is often shared with wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other assistive modes of transport.

When considering the recommended interventions for both cycling and walking, the user hierarchy, as set out in Manual for Streets (2007), has been followed. This considers the most vulnerable user's needs, pedestrians, first, followed by cyclists and then users in motorised forms of transport.

As individual schemes from the BCLCWIP are developed they will be subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their formulation and the results reported to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment to further ensure an inclusive approach, so all groups are considered



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| <p>Health and Wellbeing:</p> | <p>Nationally Sandwell is the 13th most deprived local authority out of a total of 326, with unemployment rates at 7.3%, which is higher than the national average of 5.4%. In Sandwell 34% of households do not have access to a car. Limited travel choices and high costs of public transport can limit social mobility by restrict residents from accessing employment, education and services. Sandwell residents that have limited travel choices and sparse resources can be disadvantaged in their aspirations. This has implications for council budgets in terms of benefits, housing, health, social care, and council tax revenue</p> <p>In 2012 24.5% of Year 6 children and 25.4% of adults in Sandwell were classified as obese; with levels physical activity and life expectancy being worse than the England average. Obesity and lack of exercise costs the Black Country £37 million a year and data published in 2018 showed Sandwell was the sixth worst area for obese children in the country. The West Midlands on the Move 2017-30 Physical Activity Strategy identifies that nearly two million adults or 29% of the West Midlands population are doing less than 30 minutes of activity a week. Inactivity is holding back economic growth and the better life chances, raised aspirations and better quality of life and leads to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorer health • Less productivity at work • More isolated society • Reduced educational attainment <p>In order to mitigate the health impacts of inactivity in the West Midlands, the LCWIP's aims to provide a working partnership with local authorities and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) "to create an extensive, safe and coherent network of well-designed off and on-road links connecting key destinations irrespective of administration boundaries to promote walking, cycling and running".</p> |
| <p>Social Value</p> | <p>Installation of infrastrucutre will generate additional demand for skilled labour, likely focussing on the civil</p> |



and engineering disciplines. Local employment and supply chains are used from the procurement framework.

6 Appendices

A - Map of BCLCWIP Map

