

Report to Decision Making Session for the Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways

26 February 2024

Subject	West Bromwich Towns Fund scheme along the High street between Bull Street and Beeches Road including Roebuck Lane
Cabinet Member:	Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways, Councillor Danny Millard
Director:	Alice Davey - Director Borough Economy Tammy Stokes - Assistant Director Growth & Spatial Planning
Key Decision	No
Contact Officer:	Andy Miller Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager, andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

1 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the objections received via the public consultation process and the proposed response to them are noted.
- 1.2 That approval is given to implement the new cycle track along the High Street between Bull Street and Beeches Road and along Roebuck Lane as per the scheme drawing in Appendix A.
- 1.3 That subject to 1.1, the Director – Borough Economy be authorised to complete the necessary statutory procedures.
- 1.4 That the Director – Borough Economy informs objectors of the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways.



2 Reasons for Recommendations

- 2.1 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) published a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (or LCWIP) in 2018, which focusses on walking and cycling infrastructure along strategic transport corridors on the West Midlands Key Route Network and local facilities around transport nodes throughout the West Midlands.
- 2.2 Sandwell published its own LCWIP in 2020, which focusses on local walking and cycling infrastructure connecting communities to town centres, transport hubs, employment, education and services. This document superseded the previous Sandwell Cycling Strategy that was published in 1999.
- 2.3 Sandwell Transportation Planning Team put forward 4 LCWIP schemes for inclusion in the West Bromwich Towns Fund bid. On 22nd July 2020 Cabinet delegated authority to approve the supporting Town Investment Plan for West Bromwich and its component projects to the Sandwell Towns Fund Super Board.
- 2.4 The four LCWIP schemes were submitted as a single, multi-phase project called 'West Bromwich Connectivity' as part of the Town Investment Plan. A Full Business Case (FBC) for the West Bromwich Connectivity project was submitted to Government in March 2022 and subsequently approved by the Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities (DLUHC) in June.
- 2.5 The consultation relates to phase 2 of the West Bromwich Connected programme. It aims to create a segregated pedestrian and cycle route along High Street, linking West Bromwich Town Centre with National Cycle Network Route Number 5 at Birmingham Road, along Beeches Road linking into Sandwell Valley and Roebuck Lane to Smethwick Galton Bridge Railway Station (see Appendix A plans).
- 2.6 The consultation was carried out between 24th November 2023 and 15th December 2023 and between 12th January and 19th January 2024. This included two letter drops to 527 properties along the route and details of








the scheme were posted on Sandwell Council's Consultation Hub <https://consultationhub.sandwell.gov.uk/> which uses Citizen Space platform which enables residents to make comments online. Four public facing consultations were held in King Square West Bromwich on Wednesday 6th and Saturday 9th December 2023 and Saturday 13th and Wednesday 17th January 2024.

- 2.7 11 posted questionnaire responses were received with 6 in support and 5 opposed. An email was received from a resident on Roebuck Lane opposing the scheme and 1 online response also opposing the scheme. Therefore, in total there were 6 responses in favour of the scheme, 9 opposed and 512 did not respond to the consultation. A response was also received from Councillor Tirath S Dhatt Appendix B on behalf of residents on Roebuck Lane who would have preferred that the cycle lane was on the opposite side of the road away from the houses. This was considered at design stage, but on balance putting the cycle lane on the residential side was considered safer and posed less issues with crossing side roads and parking. Please see Appendix C for consultation responses.
- 2.8 As objections have been received, a decision in response to the objections is required by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways.
- 2.9 Delivery is programmed to take place during 2024.



3 How does this deliver objectives of the Corporate Plan?

	<p>The Best Start in Life for Children and Young People: The funding will deliver cycling and walking improvements to public transport services as well as near schools and will encourage active travel which is good for our physical and mental health. Switching more journeys to active travel will improve health, quality of life and the environment for children and young people.</p>
	<p>People Live Well and Age Well: The funding will deliver cycling and walking improvements to encourage active travel which is good for our physical and mental health. Switching more journeys to active travel will improve health, wellbeing, quality of life and the environment.</p>
	<p>Strong Resilient Communities: Successful communities need access to jobs, services and facilities to enable them to remain healthy and vibrant. Improving access to the transport network via active travel modes is an important enabler of this.</p>
	<p>Quality Homes in Thriving Neighbourhoods: Both new and existing residential developments rely on good quality access and links to shops, services, and leisure facilities for them to be successful. Funding to implement measures by which access to the transport network is improved and maintained is key to this.</p>
	<p>A Strong and Inclusive Economy: Transport plays a vital role in connecting people to jobs and learning opportunities. Health-promoting transport systems are pro-business and support economic prosperity. They enable optimal travel to work with less congestion, collisions, pollution, and they support a healthier workforce. The provision of improved high-quality cycling and walking connectivity will therefore play a key role in connecting Sandwell residents and businesses to economic and social opportunities.</p>





A Connected and Accessible Sandwell

The provision of high-quality cycling and walking links and improved access to the transport network is vital to enable Sandwell residents to access jobs, education and services both within and beyond the Borough's boundaries.

4 Context and Key Issues

4.1 The scheme provides a segregated off-road cycle route in both directions along the High Street/Birmingham Road between Bull Street and Beeches Road, including a two-way Cycle route on Roebuck Lane. The scheme will include improved footways, improved existing pedestrian crossings, implementation of new crossings which cater for both pedestrians and cyclists, and the relocation and rationalisation of bus stops as well as road safety improvements on side roads along the corridor. Please see consultation plans in Appendix A

5 Alternative Options

5.1 Retain the shared cycle and 20 mph and 30mph motorised traffic route on High Street, Birmingham Road and Roebuck Lane which is not in accordance with the Governments' LTN 1/20: Cycling Infrastructure.

6 Implications

Resources:	The cost of delivering the projects will be met by the approved and allocated funding as part of Towns Fund West Bromwich Connected. Staff resources to manage the project are already in place within the Strategic Planning & Transportation Team and within Highway Services for delivery of the schemes.
Legal and Governance:	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.



	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.
Risk:	The main risks are delaying the delivery of the schemes on site until approval is given and therefore missing the spend deadline, resulting in a loss of funding for Sandwell MBC
Equality:	An equality impact assessment was carried out during the development of the Sandwell and West Midlands Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans and the proposed infrastructure adheres to latest Government Guidance. Furthermore, an independent Road Safety Audit has been undertaken to ensure the schemes facilitate the safety of all users of the highway.
Health and Wellbeing:	A transport system that is easily accessible, reliable, and affordable contributes to life satisfaction and wellbeing in multiple ways. It enables access to work, friends, and family, as well as health-supporting facilities such as schools, colleges, parks, libraries, and health care centres. The proposed walking and cycling scheme will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of local communities by encouraging active travel and the associated health benefits of increasing physical activity and minimising the time spent sitting down.
Social Value:	The proposed cycle route will form part of a network that will link communities to employment, education, transport hubs, town centres and services.



Climate Change:	Sandwell Council has joined other councils in England that have declared a Climate Emergency and as a result developed and adopted a Climate Change Strategy 2021-2041. Within Sandwell’s Climate Change Strategy Action Plan 3 for Transport states that Sandwell Council will “Implement highway measures and transport facilities that fully accommodate and promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking, making journeys by such methods easier, faster and safer, alongside measures to discourage car use. This active travel scheme aims to do this.
Corporate Parenting:	The funding will deliver cycling and walking improvements to public transport services as well as near schools and will encourage active travel which is good for our physical and mental health. Switching more journeys to active travel will improve health, quality of life and the environment for children and young people

7. Appendices

Appendix A: High Street Cycle Route Consultation Plan

Appendix B: Councillor Tirath S Dhatt

Appendix C: Consultation Responses

8. Background Papers

Sandwell’s Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan

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

Sandwell’s Climate Change Strategy 2021-2041

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

