

Appendix 1

Investing in our Well-Connected Communities Transport Capital Programme 2023-2024 Appendix 1

Additional Background Information

- 1.1 The Transportation Capital programme has been developed to take account of a number of 'key transport priorities' for the City of Wolverhampton that have been developed in conjunction with the Council's regional partners to support the regeneration of the city and the wider Combined Authority agenda. These include the Stafford Road, Willenhall Road and Birmingham Road Corridors, improvements to the ring road and arterial route network, further development of the city's cycle network and enhancing the public realm of our city and local centres.
- 1.2 The Government's Road to Zero strategy remains a priority consideration with an emphasis on sustainability within the Transportation Capital Programme, and the continued inclusion and development of new projects encompassing Zero Emission Vehicle strategies and electric charging. Emerging considerations for the 2023-2024 period also include cost of living and inflationary pressures on construction projects, as these will influence our priorities and capacity to deliver.
- 1.3 Of equal importance is the maintenance of our existing Highways (to help the increasing demand the highways are being put under). There is national recognition that the level of investment in highway maintenance has been significantly insufficient for many years. The Local Government Association estimate that the current funding gap between what is available and would be needed to keep our roads in a reasonable condition would be circa £20 million whereas the annual maintenance budget is in the region of £3 – 4 million. This emphasises the need for the City to make the absolute most of its available resources and prioritise its activities carefully and efficiently.
- 1.4 The capital programme includes separate allocations for the development of the highway network and for capital maintenance. These programmes are predominantly funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) for Highway Maintenance and delivery of Local Network Improvement Plans. As CRSTS is a 5-year settlement, indicative allocations for this funding have been confirmed though to 2026 and formal confirmation from the WMCA of the 2023-2024 figures is imminent. This settlement is further supplemented by Council prudential borrowing and third-party funding secured through planning obligations or agreements through section 278 or section 39 of the Highways Act.
- 1.5 This report seeks approval of a list of projects, for implementation during the financial year 2023-2024 and a further list of projects for which development

work should be authorised with a view to implementation in future years subject to funding availability.

- 1.6 This approach recognises the need to develop a 'pipeline' of future projects by undertaking the initial development work that might be necessary to get projects 'shovel ready'. Such work might include traffic modelling, feasibility, site investigation, detailed design, and public consultation, among other activities. This preparatory work is important as it enables the programme to be flexible, dynamic and positions the council to respond to changing circumstances. For example, the council has been particularly successful in securing additional funding allocations which have been announced at short notice, further supporting our regeneration ambitions and building resilience into our network.
- 1.7 This method also allows for flexible management of budgets with the ability to bring forward alternative projects to accommodate any slippage within the programme to react to changing circumstances or new funding opportunities. This flexibility and 'pipeline' approach has allowed the Council to bid successfully for a number for major projects over the last few years.
- 1.8 The priority given to each project will depend on several factors including objective analysis such as accident and speed data, highway condition surveys, lifecycle planning, public consultation results etc. Relative priority will also be governed by the project's merits in terms of supporting local and regional objectives, regeneration ambition and contributing to the overarching Our City, Our Plan priorities of the Council.
- 1.9 Progress reports will be submitted to councillors at least annually to provide an update on the work completed; review the priorities for future work; add further projects to the List of Projects for Development; and to seek necessary approvals for the development and delivery of projects as required.
- 1.10 The Interchange project and Metro extension near completion, and whilst the project sits largely outside of the Transportation Capital programme, it remains a key transport priority for the City and employees are working with partners to assist their delivery.
- 1.11 Cabinet is requested to note the successful delivery of the many and varied Transportation Capital projects over the previous three years, as highlighted at Appendix 2. It is worth noting that a large proportion of investment is directed at the local economy with use of local contractors and Social Value contributions.
- 1.12 The proposed projects that form the Transportation Capital Programme for 2023-2024 are set out in appendices 3 and 4, while the projects for development for future years are set out in Appendix 5. The estimated cost of

each project is indicated, although costs will be refined as each scheme progresses through the feasibility/design/consultation process. There is an intentional 'over programming' of projects to reflect the reality that some projects will inevitably be delayed due to unexpected circumstances, changes to priorities or outcomes of consultation. The various work programmes, and the individual projects which make up those programmes, will be managed with the overall available resources for the relevant financial year and in accordance with the Authority's developing priorities. All works on the highway are coordinated by traffic managers to ensure that any disruption is minimised.

- 1.13 As host authority for Black Country Transport (BCT) the report also includes the anticipated funding to be received, spent and also passported to other organisations through BCT activities, in accordance with the existing Collaboration Agreement. The programme contained within the report does include revenue and capital funding for development and some delivery of major transportation schemes across the Black Country area.

2.0 Progress

- 2.1 The right-hand column in Appendix 3 and 4 indicates the approval status of each project in the programme. It should be noted that Appendix 3 contains more of the strategic schemes that are largely funded through external provision, outside of highway maintenance and LNIP. Some of the scheme values are large and budgets have not yet been approved, but approval is sought to pursue development and funding opportunities. The development funding associated with BCT are also contained within Appendix 3 with all funding associated for these coming from external grants, including CRSTS Development Funding, Local Authority Capability Fund (LACF) and Transforming Cities Fund.

- Projects marked 'prior' indicate that projects have previously been approved for implementation but have yet to commence or are in delivery.
- Projects marked 'Approve' indicate that Cabinet is requested to approve the project for implementation subject to confirmation of funding (or to confirm approval in the case of projects that were previously approved); this category typically applies to projects where a separate consultation with local residents / businesses is not required because they do not involve any significant change to the network or the status of the project is now well advanced.
- Projects marked 'IEDN' are generally those which require further development work such as public consultation exercise to be undertaken before the design can be finalised and therefore this report seeks delegated authority to the authorise the Cabinet Member for City Environment and Climate Change, in consultation with the Director of Resident Services and Director of Finance to approve the implementation of any development and delivery works on

projects on appendices 3, 4 and 5 subject to the satisfactory outcome of public consultation, budget approval and any other relevant considerations. This would assume that all budget approvals are through supplementary budget approvals or the normal budgetary approval processes as required.

- 2.2 Cabinet is requested to approve the projects in Appendix 5 for development in anticipation of them being implemented in future years. 'Development' may include surveying, site investigation, options appraisal, feasibility analysis, traffic modelling, detailed design, statutory advertising and public consultation, among other activities. Approval is also requested to delegate authority, by means of an IEDN (as per section 2.1 above), for projects in Appendix 5 to be brought forward into 2023-3024 if necessary, to respond to changes in priorities and provide the necessary flexibility in the programme.
- 2.3 Delivery of the programme will be achieved using a combination of the Council's own employees and external contractors.
- 2.4 Employees will seek to deliver the programme in the most cost-effective way and minimise the impact upon communities and highway users by, wherever possible coordinating maintenance projects with those for developing and improving the highway network.
- 2.5 The programme contains nine separate components, of which five relate to Network Development and four to Capital Maintenance:

Network Development

2.6 Major Schemes and Black Country Transport

The programme includes projects funded (or intended to be funded) in partnership with other organisations and thorough external funding opportunities. These include CRSTS, LACF, Transforming Cities, Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) and Active Travel Funding. It also includes funding from the West Midlands Combined Authority and Transport for west midlands as part of their available funding mechanisms relating to housing and employment growth, HS2 connectivity, network management, sustainable transport and innovation (part of the wider CRSTS programme). These projects aim to unlock growth and development through investment in transport infrastructure, promote new approaches to infrastructure provision and management, facilitate a shift in mode to more sustainable journeys and support innovation and carbon reduction. Projects referred to in this report include City north gateway, City East Gateway, City Centre Public Realm, Electric Vehicle Charging and all of the BCT pipeline of projects.

2.7 Highway Improvement Programme

This category includes projects that will have a significant impact on the network in reducing congestion and improving access to regeneration and development sites, thereby helping to encourage economic growth. They also contribute to facilitating a change in journeys to more sustainable modes and

support innovation. Such projects vary in size and scale but can be large and significant in both cost and benefit terms. Funded primarily through the Local Network Improvement Plan grant, part of the CRSTS funding, they are also supplemented in some cases by developers' contributions or individual project grants.

2.8 Local Safety Programme

This programme has been a major contributory factor in the reduced number and severity of road traffic personal injury accidents in Wolverhampton. The programme is developed using a prioritisation process in which each location is assessed on a range of factors including accident history, traffic flow, vehicle speeds and community surroundings. Potential projects are included in the programme based on issues that have been identified, often by local residents and businesses, as traffic management or road safety concerns. However, the list of projects requested is extensive and the prioritisation process means that some locations may remain on the list for many years.

2.9 Cycling Programme

This is a programme of projects to assist cyclists and promote cycling. Many of the projects are identified through liaison with local cycling groups, regional partners, the City Council's Cycle Forum, road safety plan and Local Cycling and Walking Improvement Plan.

2.10 Safer Routes to School Programme

This programme contains projects which are developed in conjunction with schools with the aim of tackling road safety concerns, reducing traffic congestion, improving air quality, and localised on-street parking problems. The programme contributes to the Council's objectives in relation to tackling child obesity and improved fitness by encouraging children to walk and cycle to school rather than being driven.

2.11 Capital Maintenance

Funded through the CRSTS allocation as the major source of funding for highway maintenance projects, this includes both carriageways and footways. Some additional funding is provided from local resources. These programmes are developed from data collected before the worst of the winter weather. It is essential to build in flexibility to allow for exaggerated deterioration and conflicting issues such as utility works, or major projects / developments.

2.12 Capital Maintenance of Classified Roads

This programme involves reconstruction and resurfacing of classified (A, B and C class) roads and is funded primarily from CRSTS allocation. The priority given to each scheme will depend on a number of factors including condition survey data, maintenance records, visual inspections, customer complaints and ward councillor requests. The approach accords with the Council's Highway Asset Management Plan and incorporates the principle of

lifecycle planning. The programme will be managed within the available resources each financial year and in accordance with developing priorities.

2.13 Capital Maintenance of Unclassified Roads

This programme covers the 'minor' roads in the network and includes both carriageway and footway resurfacing. As with classified roads, the projects to be implemented each year will depend on the availability of funding and the relative priority of each project. A life cycle-based planning programme has been developed for 2023-2024. It follows similar logic that previously used for the classified network and strengthens our asset management approach.

2.14 Highway structures

The Council is responsible for approximately 120 bridges, subways, footbridges and retaining walls, which are inspected on a two-year cycle. Defects identified are then programmes to be dealt with, where practical, from the approved capital budget. Larger projects such as bridge strengthening, or replacement will usually require separate funding and will involve applying for specific government grants and securing budget approval.

2.15 Other Programmes

The Disabled Access programme is a package of measures to improve the accessibility of our footway network for users with physical or sensory disabilities. The Street Lighting Replacement Programme has been developed and approved using the established street lighting prioritisation process for replacing worn out columns and upgrading to new energy efficient lighting.

2.17 The capital expenditure on the reconstruction and resurfacing of roads and footways as part of a planned Asset Management programme, has the effect of reducing the need for reactive maintenance and hence the pressure on the Council's revenue budget for maintaining the highway network. It has also been shown to reduce the number (and cost) of insurance claims against the Council and improve overall resident satisfaction.