



## Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel

7 January 2014

<b>Report title</b>	Review of the Wolverhampton Cycle Strategy	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Peter Bilson Economic Regeneration and Prosperity	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Tim Johnson, Education and Enterprise	
<b>Originating service</b>	Transportation	
<b>Accountable officer(s)</b>	Lydia Barnstable	Head of Transportation
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<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	N/A	

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### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Panel is recommended to:

1. Provide comments and feedback with regard to the review of the cycling strategy for Wolverhampton.

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 Wolverhampton City Council's Cycle Strategy was adopted in 2005 and work to review and update the strategy has commenced. This report therefore sets out the key issues contained in the current Wolverhampton Cycle Strategy (2005) and explores more recent issues to help develop an updated strategy.
- 1.2 The views of the Scrutiny Panel are sought on the scope, content and direction that the draft revised Cycle Strategy for Wolverhampton should take.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Wolverhampton City Council last produced a specific cycling strategy in 2005. The strategy sought to address a number of issues that are still relevant now, notably the need for coherent infrastructure and effective promotion. However, this strategy is in the process of being reviewed to ensure it accords with the latest thinking on planning for, and investing in, cycling infrastructure, training and promotion.
- 2.2 The Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS), adopted in Feb 2011, forms the basis of the Black Country authorities' local development plans. Policy TRAN 4 of the BCCS, Creating Coherent Networks for Cycling and for Walking, outlines clearly the objectives of the four local authorities to promote sustainable transport, develop a network of cycling infrastructure and provide cycle parking facilities.
- 2.3 Cycling is becoming an increasingly high-profile activity nationally. This has been seen in the:
  - International success of British cyclists at the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics, Tour de France and Cycling World Championships
  - Pledge from the Prime Minister "to make it easier and safer for people who already cycle as well as encouraging far more people to take it up"
  - Ground-breaking debate in Parliament initiated by the All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group concluding in the report "Get Britain Cycling"
  - Seminal legislation recently enacted in the Welsh parliament to ensure each local authority in Wales has a statutory Active Travel Plan to direct strategy and investment in cycling and walking
  - Groundswell of opinion brought about by The Times "Cities Fit For Cycling" campaign which focuses on safer cycling.
- 2.4 There are other, more local, drivers influencing approaches to cycling, such as:
  - The opportunity to bid for Cycle City Ambition Grants in the Black Country and Birmingham. Ultimately the Black Country bid was not successful but the bid document is seen as strong and the partners in the bid are continuing to explore funding options.
  - Centro's proposed Regional Cycle Charter; and
  - Investment in canal towpaths and other routes by Canals and Rivers Trust (CART) and Sustrans.

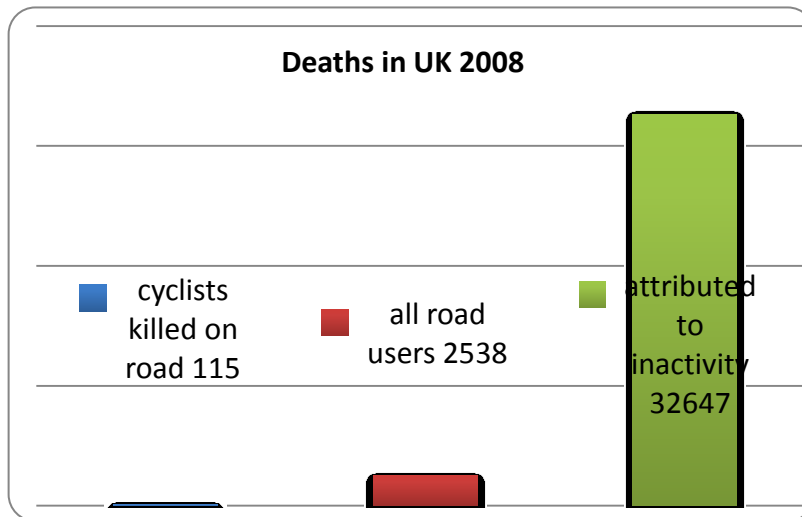
- Continued Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) investment in cycle promotion and infrastructure.
- Cycling infrastructure is integral to Area Action Plans (AAPs) in Bilston, the city centre and Stafford Road which seek to guide future development in these areas up to 2026.

### 3. The Rationale for Cycling

#### 3.1 What can the promotion of cycling achieve?

- Getting motorists cycling can help reduce road congestion and so support economic growth
- It can increase people's physical activity levels resulting in improving quality of life and reducing premature death (see Figure 1 comparing deaths while cycling with deaths through inactivity)
- Getting motorists cycling can improve the environment by helping to reduce carbon emissions, air pollution and noise
- It is a relatively low-cost form of transport, so can help to reduce social exclusion caused by a lack of personal wealth
- It can enhance independent mobility in areas of transport poverty
- Leisure cycling is a family-friendly activity that can enhance social cohesion
- Increased presence of cyclists on-road can lead to a general increase in caution by motorists and so enhance road safety.

Figure 1



#### 3.2 Cycling supports the aims of the Wolverhampton City Council Corporate Plan in the following ways:

**Aim: Encouraging Enterprise and Business** – modal shift from private car to bicycle can support businesses by reducing road traffic, so making journey times more reliable, and by creating a healthier work force

Aim: **Empowering People and Communities** – cycle training and promotion can give disadvantaged children and adults the confidence and opportunity to seek new social, educational and work-related challenges

Aim: **Re-Invigorating the City** – new cycle routes can be a catalyst for the creation of more accessible and attractive neighbourhoods

3.3 Broader policy documents such as the Black Country Core Strategy and the statutory West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) aspire to see provided safe, direct, integrated cycle networks to help achieve wider objectives of improved quality of life, physical regeneration and economic prosperity.

### 3.4 **Investment to date and planned further investment**

Investment in cycling is already supporting regeneration in the city as follows:

Wolverhampton City Centre:

- More cycle parking being investigated at the new rail station
- Cycleway proposed alongside Metro on Railway Drive
- Contra-flow cycle lanes being constructed as part of the Public Realm Improvements in the City Centre

i54 Enterprise Zone:

- Shared path for cyclists and pedestrians being constructed on the north side of Wobaston Road
- Toucan crossings installed on Stafford Road at Vine Island
- Local Pinch Point Fund (LPPF4) bid for Stafford Road area proposes measures to further improve cycle access to Wobaston Road from the Northwood Park area
- Support for cycling from i54 Travel Plan Steering Group has already achieved canal towpath improvements in this area in partnership with CART

Local Sustainable Transport Fund:

As part of the £33.0 million award to the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, LSTF is funding three cycle routes in the Bilston Road corridor, improving cycle access to East Park, Hickman Park and the old Low Level railway line.

### 3.5 **Partnership Working**

The Council continues to work with partners of many years to deliver cycling infrastructure, training and promotion and to develop policy. These include:

- Local schools (thousands of students trained to up to Level 3 Bikeability training and around 1000 cycle parking stands installed)
- CART / Sustrans (for canal towpath improvements, notably in Smestow Valley with the Tettenhall District Community Council)
- i54 stakeholders (in developing cycling facilities around the Enterprise Zone)
- Cycle Forum and Wolves on Wheels assist in the development of policy issues
- Cycle Training West Midlands provides tuition for trainers for all West Midlands Authorities and further afield
- Cycle Acti-Fit (local training providers for children and adults)

- Centro / Black Country Consortium (on funding, Cycle City Ambition Grant etc.)
- Commercial and residential developers to provide cycle parking and access in relevant planning applications
- Bike purchase for council staff, operated in conjunction with Cycle Scheme, attracted around 80 applicants between January and September 2013

3.6 Partnership working has helped deliver substantial investment in cycling infrastructure in recent years in Wolverhampton. While there are specific lessons to be learned from some of the individual schemes installed, we acknowledge that a more coherent approach to provide a joined-up network is key to increasing the number of cyclists. A framework within which to work, in the form of an up-to-date strategy, will put the Council in a better position to take advantage of cycling opportunities as they arise.

### 3.7 **Cycle Training**

Many people recognise the social value of increasing uptake of cycling and the personal benefits it can bring, but perceive it to be difficult, demanding or unsafe. The Council seeks to overcome negative perceptions of cycling through a range of training activities. Much of this activity is focused on children as they offer the opportunity to form good habits early in life.

3.8 Government funded Bikeability training is offered to all schoolchildren aged 7-13 in Wolverhampton. Currently around 1500 pupils annually are trained to Bikeability Level 2 (suitable for quiet roads) and around 200 to Level 3 (suitable for most roads). A small number of adults also enrol for training each year. Organised leisure rides are offered to children during school holidays as resources permit.

3.9 As the lead partner in Cycle Training West Midlands Wolverhampton City Council facilitates training for cycling instructors to enable delivery of on-road, off-road and bike maintenance training. We support the local Community Interest Company *Cycle ActiFit* in promoting the benefits of cycling at community events.

## 4. **A revised Cycle Strategy for Wolverhampton**

### 4.1 **New Thinking**

A number of studies and schemes have taken forward thinking about cycling in Britain that we can learn from. These include:

<b>Study / scheme</b>	<b>Progressive measures</b>
Cycling Demonstration Towns (DfT / Cycling England)	Continuous routes etc.
Sustrans National Cycle Network	Design standards etc.
Cycling and Health – what’s the evidence? (Cycling England)	Cycling for health promotion
Shared Use Routes for Pedestrians and Cyclists (DfT, Local Transport Note 1/12)	Safer cycling in shared space
Achieving Cycle Friendly Infrastructure (Cycle Craft)	Design principles in Britain

	and abroad
London Barclays Cycle Hire	“Turn Up and Go”

#### 4.2 **Key Concepts and Design Principles**

These ideas should inform the revised Cycle Strategy for Wolverhampton and raise certain questions, in particular:

- How do we encourage current non-cyclists to cycle – for health, environmental and mobility reasons, to meet Cycle Charter and LTP targets etc
- How can short trips be better catered for to encourage mode shift from the private car – 80% of trips under five miles are driven, a distance that can be cycled in 30 minutes
- The best way to link together locations with potential to generate many cycling trips
- How to create a door-to-door journey time advantage for cycling over car use
- What infrastructure investment is required to overcome barriers to cycling
- The need to prioritise utility trips
- Better cycling integration with public transport
- Short and long-term cycle parking to build confidence in security
- Need for a long-term cycling strategy rather than piecemeal scheme installation
- Cross-boundary links to key adjacent sites

#### 4.3 **“Hub and Spoke” Concept**

The physical layout of Wolverhampton lends itself to the development of a radial network of cycle routes joined up in the city centre and linked by an outer orbital route serving significant potential traffic generators such as Bilston, Wednesfield, New Cross Hospital, i54 and Tettenhall. Such a network would provide direct routes into the major destination of the city centre whilst also improving accessibility for trips within the suburbs that public transport finds uneconomic to serve.

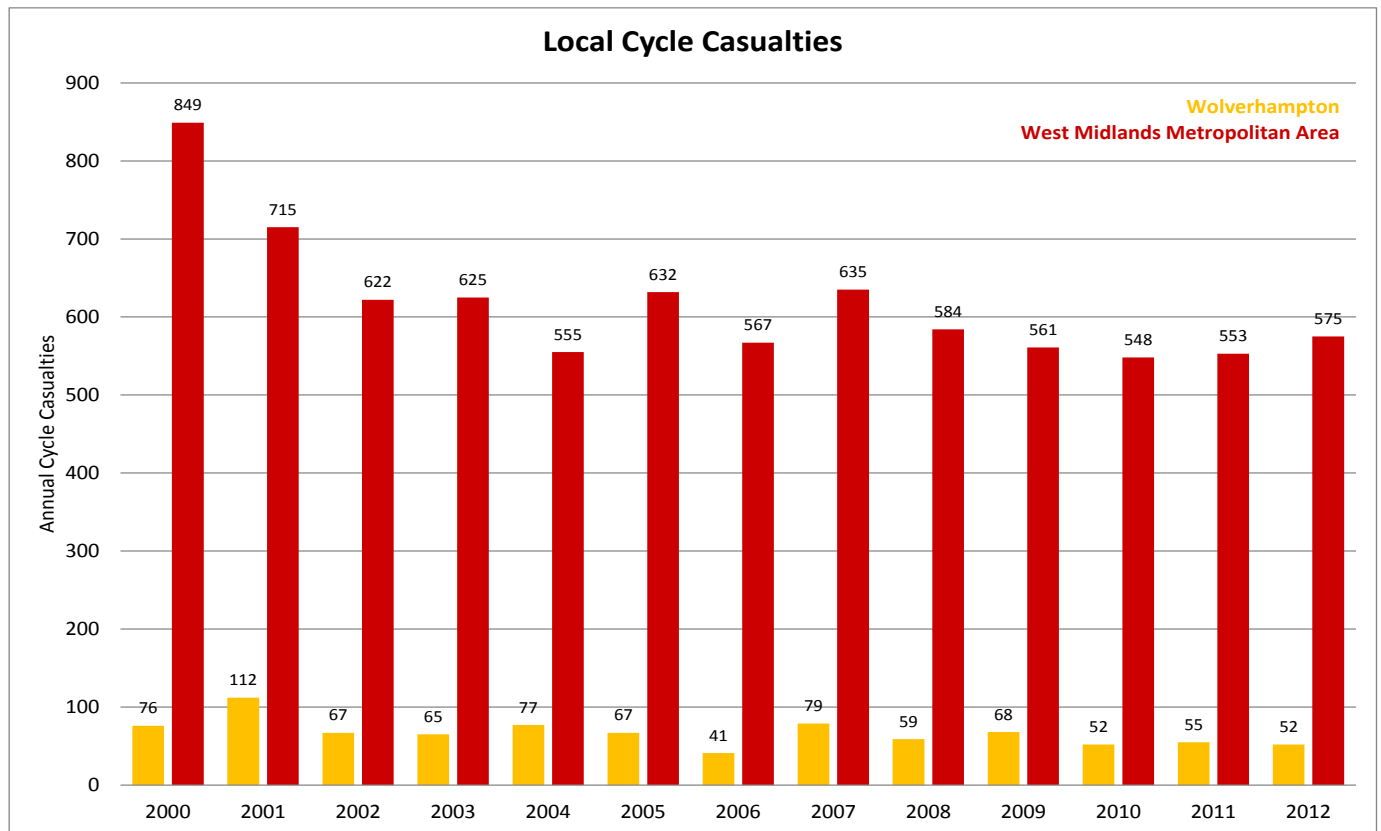
#### 4.4 **Canal Network**

One of the Black Country’s greatest assets, the canal towpath network, offers traffic-free connectivity in Wolverhampton between significant trip generators such as the city centre, i54, Wednesfield / New Cross Hospital, Tettenhall and industry in south Wolverhampton. Indeed the canals were the focus of the Black Country 2013 Cycle City Ambition Grant bid “The Water Cycle” (see 2.4). When some issues of access and surfacing are addressed the towpath network can form an even more useful component of the more comprehensive “Hub and Spoke” concept envisaged.

#### 4.5 **Safe Cycling**

Unfortunately cycling’s media profile has also risen recently as a result of six cycling deaths in a fortnight in London, mostly as a result of incidents involving lorries. Wolverhampton needs to consider the wider evidence on safety and casualties to decide how important this issue is locally and, if necessary, what options there are for its resolution. For reference annual cycle casualties in Wolverhampton are compared with those in the West Midlands Metropolitan Area in Figure 2 below. At the simplest level of analysis casualties in both Wolverhampton and the Metropolitan Area fell by 32% between 2000 and 2012.

Figure 2



4.6 Working through the West Midlands Road Safety Partnership, Wolverhampton participates in publicity campaigns to promote better understanding between cyclists and motorists. This has included lorry stickers advising cyclists not to pass on the nearside, bus-back advertising encouraging motorists to be aware of cyclists approaching from behind, and a poster campaign encouraging both cyclists and motorists to resist distraction.

#### 4.7 Promotion of Cycling

Consideration needs to be given to maintaining and enhancing the scope of cycling promotion activities. This may involve extending cyclist training to potential users of new cycling routes such as staff of businesses and other organisations located nearby. A revised cycle strategy for the city will allow a revision of the existing Wolverhampton cycling and walking map to show up-to-date route information. Digital media including the Council's website can offer opportunities to showcase cycling opportunities as they arise.

#### 4.8 Cycling and Highway Schemes

To support cycling safety and promotion there is the opportunity to state what specific cycle facilities are to be included in individual future highway scheme designs. Alternatively it should be explained why nothing can be done where this is the case.

#### 4.9 Funding Opportunities

The options for funding major cycling infrastructure for the foreseeable future include:

Black Country Strategic Economic Plan – bids for:

- Sustainable Transport & Innovation (£5.0 million annual programme) and
- Short Trips Strategy (creating an attractive Active Travel Network, £10 million bid)

- 4.10 Public Health Transformational Fund – Wolverhampton City Council intends to bid with partners Moseley Park Academy and Cycle Acti-Fit to develop cycle infrastructure, training and promotion for the benefit of pupils and residents in this relatively deprived area of the city. There is possibly up to £500,000 available which would need to be spent over two years.
- 4.11 Funding for small scale cycle improvements and provision of supporting facilities needs to be embedded within all transport improvements and new development proposals. Mechanisms such as planning conditions, financial contributions from new developments and regeneration schemes will be used to secure additional works in line with strategic aims.

## **5. Financial implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, however the availability of funding is critical to most aspects of delivering improvements in cycling and its supporting infrastructure. Pressure on the Council's Capital Programme increases each year and continued funding for cycling infrastructure from this source will require a clear strategy and strong support while being subject to competing demands at a time of reducing public resources nationally.
- 5.2 Funding opportunities from Central Government and other sources arise periodically, and an up-to-date and robust Cycle Strategy for Wolverhampton is essential to demonstrate an on-going commitment to improvement to support external funding bids.
- 5.3 Currently the Bikeability cycle training programme, amounting to £94,000 in 2013/14, is funded by an annual grant from the Department for Transport. This funding has been secured for 2014/15 but it is unclear whether it will continue beyond then.  
[RT/20122013/N]

## **6. Legal implications**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. [RB/19122013/F]

## **7. Equalities implications**

- 7.1 There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report. A full analysis will be undertaken as part of the further development of the Wolverhampton Cycle Strategy and for the planning and delivery of the individual cycle projects.



**8. Environmental implications**

- 8.1 There are positive implications for the environment in terms of reduced air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and noise if some modal shift from car use to cycling can be achieved.

**9. Human resources implications**

- 9.1 There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

**10. Schedule of background papers**

- 10.1 Wolverhampton Cycling Strategy 2005  
Black Country Core Strategy – Policy Tran 4 extract