

# Cabinet Meeting

## 16 September 2015

<b>Report title</b>	West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan	
<b>Decision designation</b>	AMBER	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Peter Bilson City Assets	
<b>Key decision</b>	Yes	
<b>In forward plan</b>	Yes	
<b>Wards affected</b>	All	
<b>Accountable director</b>	Nick Edwards, City Assets	
<b>Originating service</b>	Transportation	
<b>Accountable employee(s)</b>	Marianne Page Tel Email	Service Lead, Transport Strategy 01902 551798 Marianne.Page@wolverhampton.gov.uk
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel Strategic Executive Board	3 September 2015 8 September 2015

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

The Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Approve the City of Wolverhampton Council's formal response to the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan consultation as detailed in Section 4 of this report.

### Recommendations for noting:

The Cabinet is asked to note:

1. The intention to combine the City of Wolverhampton Council's response within a wider Black Country representation which will include input from each of the Black Country Authorities and as far as possible the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This will be submitted before the consultation closing date of 16 October 2015.

## **1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to approve the content for a formal response to the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, ensuring the strategic issues for the City of Wolverhampton Council are appropriately represented as part of this process.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) was established in 2014 to provide strong, clear leadership to strategic transport planning for the West Midlands Metropolitan Area. The ITA, with local authority officer input, has developed a strategic transport plan aimed at delivering strong economic growth and the ability to be the regional powerhouse the UK needs us to be. This plan forms the metropolitan area's overarching Urban Mobility Plan; around which each authority can develop their own bespoke strategies which suit their needs but fit under the umbrella of the overarching objectives for the West Midlands. The strategic transport plan, titled 'movement for growth' is currently subject to public consultation for 12 weeks, ending on Friday 16 October.
- 2.2 The ITA have outlined three main questions on the plan which they are looking for responses to:
1. Is the overall approach supported?
  2. Is there anything significant which is missing? If so, what?
  3. What local sources of finance should be considered for additional investment?
- 2.3 As part of the consultation process Wolverhampton City Council will be providing a formal response on the document content, structured around the 3 questions posed by the ITA. The intention is to combine this response with those of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC), Dudley MBC and Sandwell MBC to form a Black Country combined response. This will also seek input from the Black Country LEP.
- 2.4 Wolverhampton's proposed response has been informed through internal consultation with relevant staff, management teams and has been the subject of an Enterprise and Business Scrutiny Panel (3 September).

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Through an evidence based approach and discussion there are four challenges for the West Midlands which have been identified for which an excellent transport system is an essential part of the solution. These challenges are:
1. Economic Growth and Economic Inclusion,
  2. Population Growth and Housing Development
  3. Environment and Public Health
  4. Social Well-being

In order to take on these challenges, a vision for transport in the West Midlands has been drawn up:

**“We will make great progress for a Midlands economic ‘Engine for Growth’, clean air improved health and quality of life for the people of the West Midlands. We will do this by creating a transport system befitting a sustainable, attractive conurbation in the world’s sixth largest economy.”**

- **Introduce a fully integrated rail and rapid transit network that connects our main centres with quick, frequent services, and which is connected into wider local bus networks through high quality multi-modal interchanges.**
- **Increase the number of people that are within 45 minutes travel time by public transport to a minimum of three main centres and the two main HS2 stations.**
- **Reduce transport’s impact on our environment – improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and improving road safety.**
- **Use transport improvements to enhance public realm and attractiveness of our centres.**
- **Ensure that walking and cycling are a safe and attractive option for many journeys especially short journeys below 1 or 2 miles, by delivering strategic cycle network and enhancing local conditions for active travel.**
- **Facilitate the efficient movement of people on our transport networks to enable access to education and employment opportunities and health and leisure services.**
- **Enable businesses to connect to supply chains, key markets and strategic gateways through improved strategic connections by road and rail.**
- **Maintain and develop our transport infrastructure and services to help ensure they are safe and easily accessible for all.**

The vision reinforces the importance of the West Midlands as a part of the world economy and creates a clearly understood objective which can then be translated into more specific work-streams, actions and deliverables. Each of the above support existing transportation themes within the the Council’s Corporate Plan, these include network management, accident reduction and active travel promotion. They also support wider city objectives including public health, environmental health, regeneration and economic development. From this vision a set of defined objectives and policies for transport improvements have been developed, these are listed within the plan document and can be measured against to determine success of the plan.

3.2 The long term approach of the plan is based upon making better use of existing road and rail capacity, more public transport capacity, limited new highway capacity, better junctions at bottlenecks, a new strategic cycle network joined-up with local cycle networks and improved conditions for walking, all integrated with smart technology. This is set out in four tiers of an integrated transport system:

1. National / Regional
2. Metropolitan

- 3. Local
- 4. Smart Mobility

The approach has a good strategic fit with the HS2 Growth Strategy, Midlands Connect, Birmingham connected and the transport elements of the metropolitan area's three Strategic Economic Plans. It also integrates with the existing core strategies of the area. Below is a summary of the strategic issues within each tier.

- 3.3 National / Regional -  
Proposing to pursue better use of M6 Toll, Improved motorway junctions and rail service improvements.
- 3.4 Metropolitan area -  
Supporting the re-allocation of road space for high volume public transport (bus lanes or new infrastructure for SPRINT vehicles), developing HS2 Connectivity, improving the strategic highway network and implementing a metropolitan area cycle network.
- 3.5 Local area -  
Continued implementation of area wide 20mph zones, local bus network improvements, further developing a walking and cycling network, smarter choices promotion and improved asset management.
- 3.6 Smart Mobility -  
Using technology for improving traffic management, develop a new road safety strategy and establish a personal mobility platform for the West Midlands.

#### **4.0 Proposed Response**

##### **4.1 Is the overall approach supported?**

The overall approach of the plan strongly supports the delivery of economic growth for the West Midlands. The vision reinforces the importance of the West Midlands as a part of the world economy and creates a clearly understood objective which can then be translated into more specific work-streams, actions and deliverables for Local Authorities. The plan supports existing transportation themes within the Council's Corporate Plan, but also supports wider city objectives including public health, environmental health, regeneration and economic development.

Wolverhampton would like to continue to see a greater commitment to the Black Country's future growth and connectivity. In order to do this we see the WMSTP alongside the High Speed 2, Combined Authority, Devolution Deal and Midlands Connect work as needing to reflect a greater level of support by recognising certain requirements. These include the delivery of the Brierley Hill Metro (or Rapid Transit) connection, I54 SPRINT (or alternative rapid transit) and a commitment to supporting the Wolverhampton aspirations for released rail capacity.

#### 4.2 **Is there anything significant which is missing? If so, what?**

The following comments and questions have been raised to date and will be included within the response:

Health and Inclusion:

- There should be an enhanced emphasis on public transport users with disabilities along with references to affordability, inclusion, disadvantaged groups, well-being and the impact upon people's lives.

Infrastructure:

- Keeping the traffic in the City moving is essential along with a greater focus on unlocking growth and competitiveness. It is a positive step to work towards a public transport, walking and cycling focus but a balance needs to be maintained, and attractive alternatives need to be in place before we can discourage car use too much.
- Bus lanes receive greater public approval when they can be seen to carry frequent buses particularly at peak travel times and shared road space with cyclists can present issues; the quality of provision for cyclists will be essential when we look to implement any facilities. Off road and direct routes are important for walking and cycling and the role of waterways routes should be emphasised not only for this but for the potential to move goods.

Journeys:

- The demands of different people's journeys are complex and need to be clearly understood as one size solution does not fit all. For many connectivity between modes is important, a focus on the reliability of for example a bus connection to a rail service will be important to try and reduce short journeys in the car.
- Supporting revenue activities ('Smarter Choices') are essential to support the infrastructure investment and ensure promotion of options is tailored to their target audiences.
- World class customer service should be a priority, encouraging friendly drivers and on board staff could make a big difference in people's journeys. This will also contribute to the perception of safety on and around public transport, particularly during evenings when people may feel isolated or intimidated.
- Where will "smart mobility" be focused? This should be expanded upon.

Mode of Travel:

- The HS2 benefits for Wolverhampton need to be focused upon, these include the delivery of the Brierley Hill Metro (or Rapid Transit) connection, I54 SPRINT (or alternative rapid transit) and a commitment to supporting the Wolverhampton aspirations for released rail capacity.

- Car parking charges across the West Midlands should be co-ordinated to help discourage car use.
- The role of the coach and the benefit it brings to city and town economies should be highlighted.

#### Technology:

- Use of technology to enhance transport is important and information on all modes of travel should be available on one mobile application, along with access to high speed free wifi to encourage professionals in particular to use public transport, but also to ensure people can access the public transport information available whilst on their journeys.
- Transportation has a big part to play in noise and air quality issues, the document should recognise the work already undertaken in these fields and be reflect a greater emphasis on these issues within the document, particularly when referring to green infrastructure. The smart mobility underpin tier should give more weight to the need to support the development and implementation of green technology.

It was also noted that the timescales of the plan are not obvious when reading.

#### 4.3 **What local sources of finance should be considered for additional investment?**

Possible sources of finance to support the delivery of the plan include the use of existing transportation Capital Programme, other local Authority revenue generating activities such as bus lane enforcement, or Local Authority borrowing to support major scheme delivery. The council are not committing to use of these funding streams at this time, and any of these options would be subject to detailed discussions following the approval of the plan.

### 5.0 **Financial implications**

5.1 To achieve the benefits of the plan an indicative twenty year capital programme has been assembled; combined with minor works and maintenance the cost to achieve the vision is estimated to be £6.5bn. Equating to approximately £330m per annum for the twenty year life of the plan. Opportunities to bridge the funding gap for the plan are being considered which includes a new approach to funding, recognising the need for a sustainable local source of financing to contribute to the sums required. Options include;

1. A new local West Midlands Transport Investment Fund, sources of this funding would be contributions from existing and future businesses, developers and residents.
2. Working with Government to ensure greater national government local transport funding.
3. Network Rail financial support for projects.
4. European Union funding streams related to sustainable urban mobility.
5. Other existing and new funding sources, including the potential for public health funding of walking and cycling improvements.

5.2 The third consultation question asks what local sources of finance should be considered for additional investment. Paragraph 4.3 includes some potential funding options for consideration without commitment. [JB/24082015/G]

## **6.0 Legal implications**

6.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report. [Legal Code: TS/21082015/M]

## **7.0 Equalities implications**

7.1 An equalities impact assessment is being undertaken for the consultation draft, and the equalities implications of the final strategic plan will be considered prior to final approval by the ITA

## **8.0 Environmental implications**

8.1 The strategic transport plan includes objectives to support environmental improvement.

## **9.0 Human resources implications**

9.1 There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

## **10.0 Corporate landlord implications**

10.1 There are no corporate landlord implications arising from this report.

## **11.0 Schedule of background papers**

11.1 Movement for Growth: The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan – Public Consultation Draft.

11.2 Movement for Growth: The West Midlands strategic Transport Plan – Summary Report, Public Consultation Draft.

11.3 Link to ITA Consultation: <http://www.wmita.org.uk/strategy-and-publications.aspx>