

# Briefing Note

**Title: Active Travel – Scrutiny Briefing****Date: 31 Oct 2022****Prepared by: Marianne Page****Job Title: Service Manager – Transport Strategy****Intended Audience:**Internal Partner organisation Public Confidential 

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## Purpose

To provide an overview of the current transport service activities related to Active Travel, including strategic policy direction, current funding priorities and schemes for delivery, and to highlight the existing political oversight for these activities.

## Cycling Policy and Strategy

Following on from #WM2041 and other Local Authority commitments to addressing climate change, Transport for West Midlands produced a Green Paper which articulated the challenges and opportunities for achieving these commitments through transport investment. From this a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) is being developed which identifies key themes for change, this will include a clearly supported commitment to cycling.

As the LTP will establish fairly high-level policy direction, the work will include the production of Area Based Strategies for smaller geographies. In Wolverhampton's case we will form part of a Black Country approach to more detailed work on delivery of the LTP objectives. This work will sit alongside the Wolverhampton Strategic Plan refresh which will include aspects to re-enforce the essential connection between land use planning and cycling infrastructure, creating clear policy guidelines for future developments. The Black Country have also commissioned a specific Black Country Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (BC LCWIP) which is a bespoke document identifying key cycling infrastructure and activities for investment in the area.

The culmination of these emerging documents over the next twelve months will allow Wolverhampton to tailor the outputs and actions to a local level, to produce an effective vision for transport. This will include a strategic approach to cycling investment which is fit for purpose for the people of Wolverhampton and appropriately matches our wider ambitions to achieve an uptake in the number of journeys made by bike.

Nationally there is a significant commitment to the promotion of cycling and the provision of cycling infrastructure, most clearly demonstrated by recent Local Transport Note (LTN 1/20) which provides clear guidance that all promoted transport schemes should only be funded if they clearly demonstrate high quality provision for cycling. Further commitment to funding of cycling oriented schemes is clear through the recent guidance on the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), the bulk of transport funding for the region over the next 5 years.

The city is committed to prioritising the objectives of reducing car dependency and promoting alternative options for all journeys. Work is progressing to establish a regional policy framework which embeds a commitment to cycling as part of the wider green agenda, this will create the essential platform for an effective local approach which achieves meaningful outcomes. There has been a surge in specific external funding opportunities including Active Travel funding and CRSTS, which is refocusing the possibilities and priorities regionally and locally.

The West Midlands Combined Authority area has submitted a CRSTS bid for a 5 year settlement totalling £1.05bn in transport investment for the region. Cycling infrastructure and promotion are embedded within all of the transport investment proposals as an essential element for delivery (as per LTN 1/20). This includes the major corridor investment proposals for Wolverhampton which all have a multi modal focus and include high quality cycling infrastructure. There is also specific funding aligned to delivering outcomes from the LCWIPs.

Active Travel England (ATE) has been established to provide oversight and input on active travel infrastructure projects and planning applications of a certain size. ATE represents a commitment by government to ensuring the active travel agenda is prioritised by local authorities and that funding for all transport improvements reflect the appropriate infrastructure to promote behaviour change and mode shift away from single occupancy car use.

## **Recent Activity**

The City of Wolverhampton has recently continued its successful delivery of new infrastructure and promotions to support cycling across the area, highlights include:

- During the pandemic several dedicated cycle routes were implemented as part of emergency measures funded through the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF), the majority of these are now being translated into permanent features as part of the improvements to the City Centre Public Realm, and consultation is ongoing for other elements. These works included reducing the ring road speed limit to promote a safer environment for all non-motorised users, and new crossing points to connect key desire lines.
- There has been a continuous programme of 'Dr Bike' maintenance sessions operating within the city centre and at key locations over the past 12 months, supported by successfully secured Big Bike Revival funding.
- The Cycle Hire scheme for the region has been successfully launched with key facilities in the city, and now includes an electric bike offer
- Active Travel Funding (ATF) has been used to deliver 2 key lengths of dedicated cycle infrastructure along the ring road and the key arterial route of the A4124 connecting the city centre and Wednesfield.
- There is an ongoing local commitment to the cycling agenda through a well attended cycle forum meeting, facilitated by the City of Wolverhampton Council.
- There is also an existing well defined plan for infrastructure investment which has been used to inform investment to date and has been instrumental in securing the recent infrastructure funding, this will be built upon as part of the further strategy development

Active Travel Funding (ATF3) – Over £3.5 million of further Active Travel Funding has been secured to deliver further improvements along the Wednesfield Road, and to provide a new segregated cycling route connecting Neachells Lane along the A454 to the boundary with Walsall. The projects are currently in development, with delivery commencing in Spring 2023.

### **Future Planned Activity**

Black Country Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan (BCLCWIP) - The Black Country LCWIP is currently under development and will add detail to the routes already within the West Midlands LCWIP whilst also identifying additional priorities for investment. As part of this commission there will be a number of specific proposals identified in Wolverhampton which will feed into our own Cycling Strategy / Action Plan. The BCLCWIP is to be scheduled for CWC Cabinet Approval in December / Early 2023.

Active Travel Officer Group - Embedding cycling and walking activities across all service areas is key to achieving our desired outcomes. It is proposed to create an Active Travel Officer group to bring together internal stakeholders in the first instance, to ensure that active travel and opportunities for promotion, infrastructure and investment are recognised across disciplines. This group will liaise with external stakeholders, including the well established Cycle Forum which meets quarterly

It is proposed that this group report active travel updates to the already established Climate Change Advisory Group as a pre existing forum with cross party and cross services representation, and continue to inform updates for the Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel and wider established meetings as required.

### **Recommendation**

That the Residents, Housing and Communities Scrutiny Panel:

- Note the content of the briefing note and presentation provided.
- Note the intention to establish an Active Travel Officer Group reporting to the Climate Change Advisory Group for information

### **Additional Background Information – Key Strategic Documents, Guidance and Organisations:**

Cycling Walking and Investment Strategy (CWIS) - [Cycling and walking investment strategy - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/cycling-walking-investment-strategy)

Published by the Department for Transport (DfT), the strategy outlines the government's ambition to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey by 2040. This document recommended that Local Authorities prepare Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans for their areas.

Gear Change – A bold vision for Cycling and Walking [Gear change: a bold vision for cycling and walking \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/consultations/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking)

Published by the DfT in July 2020, the plan describes the vision to make England a great walking and cycling nation. It sets out the actions required at all levels of government to make that a reality.

Local Transport Note 1/20 (LTN 1/20) - [Cycle infrastructure design \(LTN 1/20\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Published in July 2020 by the DfT and following on from the CWIS, LTN 1/20 is comprehensive design guidance and good practice examples for cycle facilities. Core advice being that networks should be coherent, safe, direct, comfortable and attractive. It also provides clear guidance that all promoted transport schemes should only be funded if they clearly demonstrate high quality provision for cycling.

West Midlands Cycle Charter - [cycle-charter-print\\_wmca.pdf](#)  
A vision to raise levels of cycling across the region.

Local Cycling Walking and Investment Plans (LCWIPs) -  
[BCC 14 A West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2019.pdf](#)  
The West Midlands LCWIP defines key corridors and schemes for investment in cycling, the WMCA Board report provides a comprehensive background and overview. A Black Country LCWIP is currently being developed.

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) - [City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements: guidance for mayoral combined authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

There are also a number of charitable and special interest groups which have a part to play in the promotion of active travel, including Sustrans, Cycling UK, British Cycling and Canal and Rivers Trust.