

# Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

<b>Date</b>	22 January 2024
<b>Report title</b>	West Midlands Local Transport Plan – Area Strategies and Implementation Plan development update
<b>Portfolio Lead</b>	Transport - Councillor Mike Bird
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<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Strategic Transport Officers Group – 18 December 2023 Executive Board – 10 January 2024

## Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

### The Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Note progress to date on developing the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and next steps and timelines for finalisation and adoption.
- (2) Note the response to and key messages from the LTP Big Moves engagement which took place in 2023.
- (3) Provide views on the proposed approach and next steps for finalising the initial Area Strategies and developing the emerging pipeline of proposals for CRSTS 2.

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update TDOSC on progress of developing the LTP, a summary of the consultation on the Big Moves earlier in 2023 and the 4 Area Strategies. The report sets out an updated timeline for finalisation and adoption of the new LTP in 2024.

## 2. Background

- 2.1 Under the Transport Act 2000, Local Transport Authorities (LTAs) have a statutory duty to produce and review a Local Transport Plan (LTP). As a consequence of the Local Transport Act 2008 and the West Midlands Combined Authority Order 2016, WMCA is the LTA for the seven constituent metropolitan districts/boroughs.
- 2.2 The LTP must set out policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within the LTA area as well as proposals for the implementation of those policies. WMCA and the seven-metropolitan district/borough councils of the West Midlands must carry out their functions so as to implement these policies.
- 2.3 The LTP carries statutory weight in a range of decisions made by many public authorities as they execute their functions under their relevant statutory provisions. It is a critical document for ensuring the West Midlands public interests with regards to transport and its impacts, are considered in such decisions. The LTP must be developed collaboratively between the WMCA (as Local Transport Authority) and its constituent authorities to be implemented in partnership with other agencies and organisations such as National Highways, Network Rail, and public transport operators. Transport for West Midlands has been developing a new, fifth West Midlands LTP, intended to cover the period up to the mid 2030s.

## 3 Overview of the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan

- 3.1 To address the big social, economic, and environmental issues we face, the objectives in the new LTP are framed around 5 'Motives for Change' where changing transport could help better support inclusive growth by providing a transport system that's fair to everyone and minimises the impacts on the environment.



- 3.2 In summary our policies are to:

- **Improve accessibility** for those facing the greatest transport barriers.
- Locally **reduce traffic** (e.g. reduce through traffic in particular neighbourhoods).
- **Electrify the transport system** and support a shift to zero emission vehicles.

3.3 The Core Strategy is clear, that in order to achieve our aims we will need to change behaviours which people choose to make and that simultaneous measures would be required to:

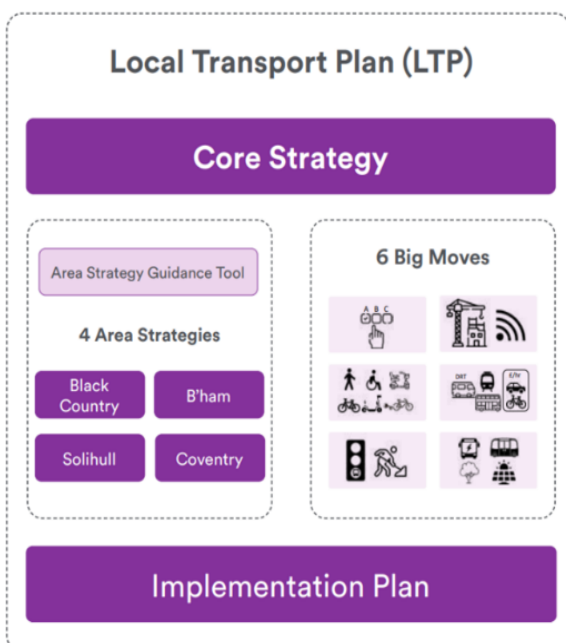
- *Enable people to travel by cleaner, lower impact and more cost effective alternative means by investing in measures that support better access to the services and opportunities that people need via these alternatives; and*
- *Manage demand by discouraging the travel choices which have the highest adverse impact on other people by using physical measures (such as allocating less space to particular vehicles), and regulatory measures (such as increasing the price of travel by particular means, restricting access to particular roads or limiting speeds).*

3.4 To help us to do this we have committed to maintain a balanced programme of measures which deliver actions across the LTPs 6 Big Moves to ensure impacts and progress is felt against our Motives for Change.

3.5 The Core Strategy also commits the region to develop Area Strategies for the Black Country, Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry. These will apply the policy principles and interventions of the Core Strategy within the context of a more detailed understanding of places. The Area Strategies (for Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Solihull) will also help to translate the Core Strategy and the policies of the Big Moves into clear implementation and action plans across the region building on work already being undertaken.

#### 4 Progress on developing WM Local Transport Plan 5

4.1. The new Local Transport Plan is made up of a suite of documents and their development has been undertaken in a number of stages:



- The **LTP Green Paper** was published and consulted on in summer 2021 to ‘start a conversation about to change’ and to help inform the approach to the new Local Transport Plan. Engagement on key themes to shape the new LTP were discussed with Leaders in autumn 2021.
- Subsequently the **LTP Core Strategy** was consulted on in 2022 and the final version was approved by WMCA Board in February 2023.
- Earlier this year TfWM published and consulted on the draft **6 LTP Big Moves** which set out more detailed policies and in some cases specific action to support the delivery of the LTPs aims and objectives.
- **4 draft LTP Area Strategies and the Implementation Plan** are currently being finalised.

## LTP 6 Big Moves Engagement

- 4.2 Following WMCA Board in February TfWM undertook consultation on the draft Big Moves. The engagement ran from 22<sup>nd</sup> February to 5<sup>th</sup> May 2023. Overall, there were 740 complete responses to the consultation 710 were online responses; 30 were responses to a paper edition of the survey available at public libraries. There were an additional 1200 partial responses, and the comments have been considered and reviewed, for presentational purposes they have been excluded from the analysis. There were 34 individuals recruited for the online community activity. The LTP website had a total of 42,918 views.
- 4.3 As experienced in previous engagement activities, when compared to 2021 Census data\* for the West Midlands; individuals who responded to the consultation were biased towards males, aged 45+ and from White ethnic backgrounds. Therefore to ensure hardly reached groups were better represented in the consultation, several focused sessions were held with groups representing young people, women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities.
- 4.4 Following the main consultation period, in-depth research was conducted on TfWM's online community, 'Keep WM Moving!'. The primary objective of this research was to gather additional deep dive feedback on the 6 Big Moves from audiences who are underrepresented or less engaged with, namely younger individuals, ethnic minorities and female community members. TfWM's independent research partner Mustard Research conducted the research. The online community discussion was live between Monday 31st July and Thursday 17th August 2023.
- 4.5 Overall, around 60% of respondents were supportive of the plan and the 6 Big Moves. The 'deep dive' engagement enabled a more informed view of how people felt about the policies and proposals set out across the Big Moves. Table 1 provides a summary of views on the 6 Big Moves.

Table 1. Summary of views on the Big Moves from the Deep Dive engagement.

Move	What stands out for respondents.
<b>Behaviour Change</b>	<p>There is no doubt in people's minds that, though important, this Big Move will represent a huge challenge in changing mindsets and behaviours.</p> <p>However, this challenge shouldn't take away from the fact that many say this Big Move is encouraging. They mostly acknowledge that change needs to happen, and so like the focus on challenging current behaviours &amp; encouraging healthier, more eco-friendly alternatives</p> <p>The proposed move away from private car use is also, for many, a positive step. There seems to be an acknowledgement and willingness from individuals to change their own behaviours. Though this will be a challenge for some everyday journeys.</p>
<b>Accessible &amp; Inclusive Places</b>	<p>The idea of better connected neighbourhoods where essential amenities and services are within a 15-minute radius really appeals to them. They believe it could greatly benefit the community and make daily tasks more convenient, while reducing long commutes.</p>

	<p>There is appreciation for the Big Move’s focus on improving accessibility and inclusivity – not just for disabled individuals but for everyone. There’s scope to further highlight considerations for the needs of various demographics and equal access for all.</p>
<p><b>Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot</b></p>	<p>People were encouraged to see that there is a focus on an increase in safety for these modes of transport – something that acts as a barrier for many. Speaking about the health benefits is also a positive – health messaging resonates with them. As seen in previous engagement, concern around the safety of e-scooters is still apparent. Though it is important to note that this is to a lesser extent than seen before – some are open to the idea of them if regulated and / or given lessons.</p> <p>Young individuals in particular like the focus on reducing the number of cars on the street, and less reliance on private vehicles. They are more likely to acknowledge that this is an issue that impacts the environment and their local air quality.</p> <p>Concerns about a lack of regulation will need to be addressed to make this Big Move resonate. Within this comes things such as information on speed limits, age restrictions but also plans for integrating into the existing network as last-mile connectivity options.</p>
<p><b>Public Transport &amp; Shared Mobility</b></p>	<p>This Big Move is a favourite for many and it stood out as one that they had almost been waiting to hear more about. Public Transport is at the heart of this all, so this particular Big Move is very important!</p> <p>Mentions of one single system were spontaneously cited as something that stuck with them. It appears that this is again something many had been hoping for and were pleased to see mentioned. Positives come from creating a simplified, seamless and better connected service that should be more reliable. Opposition is largely down to other issues being more urgent.</p> <p>There are three clear themes for what an Integrated Transport System means to these audiences. When talking about the public transport system, connectivity, efficiency and the benefits need to be the focus.</p> <p>With most people positive towards this Big Move, it is already doing a good job of feeling achievable and relatable. Any further improvements on this come from the specifics for individuals and how it will impact their daily lives, costs and punctuality.</p>
<p><b>Safe, Efficient &amp; Reliable Network</b></p>	<p>With traffic being an ever-present theme in travel discussions, people are happy to see this Big Move begin to think about how traffic can be reduced.</p> <p>Reliability comes up whenever public transport is mentioned – so it’s important to understand just what this looks like. For respondents it means consistent, efficient, and predictable travel</p>

	<p>experiences that positively impact their daily lives, the economy, and the environment.</p> <p>The majority agree that better maintenance is required, and that things need to change. However, there is a worry that to get to a 'Safe, Efficient &amp; Reliable Network' there is a lot of work that needs to be done – meaning more roadworks and traffic.</p> <p>There is a feeling that this Big Move could be necessary and important for other Big Moves to work. It links to others, as without this 'Safe, Efficient &amp; Reliable Network' things such as public transport and moving around will be made more difficult.</p> <p>Safety is one of the things that was spontaneously mentioned as an area that stands out to individuals within this Big Move. With other Big Moves having such a focus on public transport or alternative methods, safety becomes even more important.</p>
<p><b>A Green Transport Revolution</b></p>	<p>As with earlier Big Moves, any messaging around improving physical or environmental health are widely appreciated. This kind of language resonates with most people, who can see how the Big Move will benefit them directly.</p> <p>The general sentiment is largely positive, and people say they are already doing what they can or are willing to do more to support the goal. It is apparent, however, that younger residents are much more open to supporting this big move and to changing their behaviours.</p> <p>Green Transport understandably still has many barriers and is feeling 'new' to many, so encouraging behaviour change is a challenge. Beyond this, the cost of green vehicles and perceived lack of infrastructure puts many off switching to zero emission vehicles.</p>

4.6 Other key themes that emerged from both the main consultation / surveys and the online community discussions included:

- Younger respondents to the consultation and online community discussion felt most positively towards the Six Big Moves - older respondents were more likely to express negative sentiments.
- Respondents to the consultation and online community emphasised the need to improve public transport to achieve success.
- Both groups of respondents thought TfWM needed to be better at communicating and engaging with members of the public.
- Respondents to both pieces of research saw achieving any of the changes as a challenge.
- Both groups of respondents thought cycling needed to be made safer before it was a viable alternative.
- Both groups of respondents thought it was important that the plan didn't exclude anyone.

- Both groups recognised more needed to be done to support transfer to zero emission vehicles in terms of cost and infrastructure.

4.7 A consultation report which provides an analysis of responses has been developed and the feedback to the consultation is being used to finalise the Big Moves documents. As with previous engagement activities, there have been some key learnings from this stage of engagement and these will continue to improve our approach. In particular a key area will be continuing to improve how we can ensure that communications on strategic issues such as the LTP are more relatable and accessible to a range of people and groups to encourage more engagement.

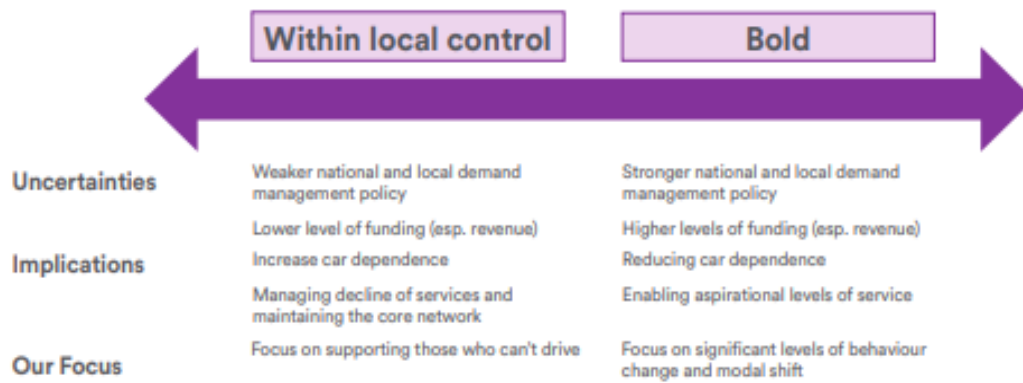
## **5 Developing the LTP Area Strategies and Implementation Plan**

5.1 At WMCA Board in February 2023 it was agreed to progress with the development of the Area Strategies. TfWM is currently working with local authorities to develop the Area Strategies (for Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Solihull) building on existing work already being done.

5.2 The approach in the new Local Transport Plan is based on the widely acknowledged and accepted need to think differently about transport and accessibility if we are going to respond to our challenges. In particular tackling the inequity of transport in terms of access to opportunity together with the impact transport has on people and places.

5.3 The LTP Core Strategy explains that there are constraints and limitations on how transformational LTP policies can be. Addressing these demands the appropriate support for policies which would prompt changed behaviours, such as measures which make car use relatively less convenient or more expensive; delivered alongside an increase in subsidies for sustainable transport services (potentially in lieu of significantly increased patronage). Government's current positioning as framed within Plan for Drivers is a key example of this and in the detail actually embraces such an approach (although that is less apparent in the headlines).

5.4 The WM LTP Core Strategy also considers two plausible scenarios for the context within which the its policies can be delivered, namely 'Within local control' and 'Bold'. These reflect one scenario where the region is attempting to deliver change largely independently with only access to mechanisms which is directly control, but in which is subjected to many external contexts which are outside its control such as fuel pricing, the design and operation of the national road and rail networks which the region sits at the heart of etc. The other more ambitious scenario envisages a more joined up approach where there is a clear national transport strategy and delivery framework which aligns with national land use, digital and energy policies.



- 5.5 It is considered that we are currently in the “Within Local Control” scenario, although as stated this may change over time. The evidence base we have developed for the LTP Area Strategies has helped us to identify a core set of indicative ‘no regrets’ measures that would be sensible to consider delivering across different parts of the region in both scenarios.
- 5.6 Measures that are considered no regrets include improvements to encourage more walking, wheeling, cycling and where appropriate scooting; improving the reliability of core public transport services; reallocating roadspace, priority and access for sustainable forms of transport and increasing the availability of charging/refuelling infrastructure for Zero Emission Vehicles. The majority of schemes coming forward were assessed to be no regrets.
- 5.7 The starting point for developing the Area Strategies and Implementation Plan was the existing known local and regional proposals and priorities (including those currently being progressed as part of the current City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)).
- 5.8 The development of the first set of Area Strategies has focused on measures in two periods:
- A set of “committed” proposals for delivery in the next 0-5 years (up to 2027)
  - A set of “indicative” proposals for the next 5-10 years (up to the mid 2030s and beyond)
- 5.9 The assessment of the Area Strategies has focused on demonstrating how the proposals perform against the three primary outcomes sought from the LTP Core Strategy and will set out:
- Background and approach to developing the LTP and the Area Strategies.
  - Region-wide initiatives and connections to the wider UK.
  - How proposals help develop out strategic cycle network and connected safer streets,
  - our integrated public transport network and the Key Route Network.
  - An overview of each area including key information e.g. the scale and nature of local growth, key local challenges.
  - How the LTP supports the delivery of local aims and objectives.
  - What we are planning to deliver by 2027 and how it is meeting LTP outcomes.
  - The developing pipeline of schemes and policies and how it can support LTP outcomes.



- 5.10 The draft Area Strategies are currently being finalised and TfWM will refine the content with local authority partners during 2024.
- 5.11 The single settlement agreed as part of the Deeper Devolution Deal will have a central, clearly-defined role in the West Midlands' policy and investment landscape – supporting the delivery of the majority of regional and local priorities. The LTP Area Strategies will help to ensure that transport priorities are joined up with wider regional priorities and in particular will support the development and delivery of the region's targeted Place Based Strategies.

## 6 Next Steps

- 6.1 The original programme for the LTP would have seen the draft Area Strategies and Implementation Plan presented to WMCA Board in early 2024. However, following discussions with the WMCA Lead Member for Transport and Strategic Transport Board the Area Strategies are now planned to be presented to WMCA Board during the summer of 2024. There are a number of reasons for this:
- Government is still yet to publish updated guidance on Local Transport Plans. Based on earlier drafts seen by TfWM we are confident that WM LTP5 is broadly in line with the approach that Government will set out, however, following the publication of 'Plan for Drivers' it is considered sensible to try and wait until the final guidance has been published.
  - The outputs of the Area Strategy work are demonstrating that whilst there are some positive impacts of the current proposals, there remain some significant gaps and a need to consider how we could improve the impact against outcomes. There are significant questions about how best to respond to the wider challenges facing the transport system including the future shape of the public transport network and how we might tackle the wider issues of behaviour change.
  - The recent announcements on funding following the cancellation of HS2 north of Birmingham and the Network North announcements mean that there has now been a significant uplift in the amount of funding that will be available as part of the second City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS 2) from 2027 (from £1.3bn to £2.6bn). This now provides the need to revisit the proposed pipeline of schemes as part of the second delivery period and ensure that development can start to allow the region to be ready to deliver from 2027.
  - Linked to this the region will need to show Government how well it is delivering against outcomes / targets linked to the Single Settlement process and the LTP, as the functional strategy for transport within the Single Settlement, will need to ensure we are achieving the agreed outcomes using the funding being devolved to the region. The workstreams around the Single Settlement, functional and place-based strategies and the single outcomes framework which are linked to the LTP and CRSTS 2 mean that a revised timetable which lands the Area Strategies in Summer 2024 should help ensure improved alignment with these wider policy positions, and in particular the local authority led place based strategies.

- 6.2 To inform the on-going work, informal engagement on the Area Strategy outputs / Investment Strategy options will take place with residents using the Keeping the West Midlands Moving Online Community early in 2024. This will help provide local views on the issues and the options within the Area Strategies that would most likely be supported. This in turn will inform formal consultation and wider engagement later in 2024.

## **7 Strategic Aims and Objectives**

- 7.1 The statutory LTP supports the delivery of many of the WMCA's strategic objectives. Transport is an enabler of social and economic activity connecting employers to labour markets and customers, people to friends and family and providing vital access to shops and services. The policies in the LTP will influence how the region invests in and manages the transport system. Improvements to the transport system can help to unlock housing and regeneration supporting inclusive economic growth. Decarbonising and creating a net-zero transport system, improving air quality and reducing the number of people killed and seriously injured are central to the LTP aims and objectives.
- 7.2 The LTP helps to make a stronger strategic case for transport investment in the region and for further devolution and funding simplification. WMCA has committed as part of the Deeper Devolution Deal to act as a trailblazer with the government to ensure that quantifying carbon reductions are embedded as part of WMCA's local transport plan area strategies once the Government has published updated guidance.

## **8 Financial Implications**

- 8.1 There are no direct finance implications from this progress report. Development of a local transport plan is a statutory duty of WMCA through its role as the Local Transport Authority and funded through levy.
- 8.2 As noted within the report, the new proposed timeline for the development of the area based strategies has been realigned to reflect recent key funding announcement timelines, namely CRSTS2 and Single Settlement. This will ensure alignment of transport and funding strategies to be developed conterminously and reflect in the Medium Term Financial Plan as applicable.

## **9. Legal Implications**

- 9.1 The purpose provides an update in relation to the matters set out under recommendations: to note progress with the Local Transport Plan prior to adoption; to note the response to and key messages from the LTP Big Moves engagement during 2023; and to provide views in relation to the proposed approach required to finalise the initial Area Strategies including developing proposals related to the announced City Regions Sustainable Transport Settlement 2 package (CRSTS 2, providing between £1.3bn and £2.6bn in funding from Central Government for the stated purposes). Central Government have provided headline funding allocations, however, no funding agreement or funding letter or other terms, have been provided at this stage.
- 9.2 Once CRSTS 2 funding is received by WMCA, all onward grant funding provided to support related projects/programmes, will be require assessment as to whether intended

funding arrangements are subject to Subsidy Control under the purview of the Competition and Market Authority (where relevant thresholds and criteria apply).

## **10. Equalities Implications**

- 10.1 The overall equalities implications are likely to be positive, although older respondents were less likely to be positive about the LTP. There is evidence within the report that effort has been made to consult with a cross section of the WM population in relation to the protected characteristics of age, gender/sex, disability and ethnic minorities.
- 10.2 Transport is an essential part of our lives and plays a critical role in creating a fairer society. The aims of the LTP motives for change have been informed by the needs of people in the West Midlands and the role of the transport system in helping to meet those needs. An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA), as required by section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 as amended, is being completed as part of the Integrated Sustainability Assessment undertaken alongside the development of the LTP.

## **11. Inclusive Growth Implications**

- 11.1 Equity is at the LTP motives for change which have been heavily informed by the WMCA Inclusive Growth Framework. The LTP is of most positive relevance to the Connected Communities fundamental of this framework, but pertains to several others:
- Climate resilience: achieving the objectives laid out in WM2041 is also at the heart of the motives for change, and is embedded across the six 'big moves' that frame the next 20 years of activity.
  - Affordable and safe places: the LTP connects safety and perceived safety to uptake of active travel and mass transit options.
  - Health and wellbeing: this is at the heart of the vision for the LTP, which connects the way places are shaped to positive health outcomes – notably, how easy and safe they are to walk, ride and cycle through. Achieving this will realise other health benefits, including those associated with clean air.
  - Equality: the inequalities experienced by people in the West Midlands have been reflected in the motives for change.
  - Inclusive economy: affordable mobility is key to an inclusive economy, and this too is at the heart of the LTP vision.
- 11.2 Through the development of policy and strategy against the objectives set in the LTP the harmful impacts of transport and places can be reduced, people who have no or limited access to a car today will be better able to participate in society and our economy, and a better legacy will be secured for future generations. It will be important to ensure that these objectives hold firm, as there are many competing drivers for mobility investment that often supersede inclusive growth considerations.

## **12. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

- 12.1 The WMCA exercises transport powers overwhelmingly in respect of the area covered by its constituent authority members, however, there is significant interaction with the wider area. The health and performance of the transport system in the metropolitan area has a profound impact on the wider area and vice-versa. Deep engagement with surrounding Local Transport Authorities and with Midlands Connect will be essential. Additionally opportunities to align policies and timescales with surrounding

Local Transport Authorities will be explored, especially noting that transport does not stop or start at administrative boundaries.

### **13. Schedule of Background Papers**

**Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands: A Conversation About Change. LTP Green Paper, WMCA, 2021**

**Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands, LTP Core Strategy, WMCA 2023**  
**Draft LTP Big Moves, WMCA 2023**