

A transport system fit to tackle climate change?



Transport for
West Midlands

We are facing one of our greatest challenges with COVID-19.

The events of 2020 have impacted our citizens, especially the elderly and most vulnerable in our region. We have seen the biggest impact on the transport system since the Second World War with traffic reduced to levels not seen since the 1950s and people advised not to use public transport (buses, trams and trains) for the first time.

“Less traffic, more cycling. I love hearing birdsongs & quiet. Better mental health for me.”

“A chance to get some exercise, on quieter/safer roads.”

Although the Covid-19 pandemic has had a tremendous negative effect on many people, for some it has given them the opportunity to change the way they live their lives in a positive way. More people are walking and cycling, working from home and spending time in their local communities – the air is cleaner, the roads are quieter and carbon emissions are down.

“Less cars on the road makes it feel safer to cycle. I would cycle more if the roads were like this.”

“Fewer larger shopping trips. Walked and cycled to shops more due to quiet streets.”

Following our survey in May many people have told us that they want to keep these changes if possible and we are already investing in a range of measures to support walking, cycling and safe social distancing, ensuring that the network is available for those who need it most.

A fairer, greener, healthier recovery

Transport for West Midlands, part of the West Midlands Combined Authority, plays an important role in the region's ten-point recovery plan that has been designed to enable and support a strong and successful recovery for our residents and businesses.



1. Ensure our residents are kept safe and healthy



2. Accelerate our transport construction plans



3. Build more homes, faster and reshape town centres



4. Get people who lose their jobs back into work quickly



5. Supporting local businesses

Connectivity is key to a successful economy and we will continue to build our key infrastructure projects. This will increase choice and capacity on the network, while continuing to lead the UK in transport innovation, delivering new, greener solutions that remain affordable and accessible to all.



6. Huge investments in technology and innovation



7. Step up Green Growth Plans



8. Take the West Midlands out to the world



9. Making sure recovery is inclusive and works for everyone



10. Regain control of our own recovery

The Climate Emergency

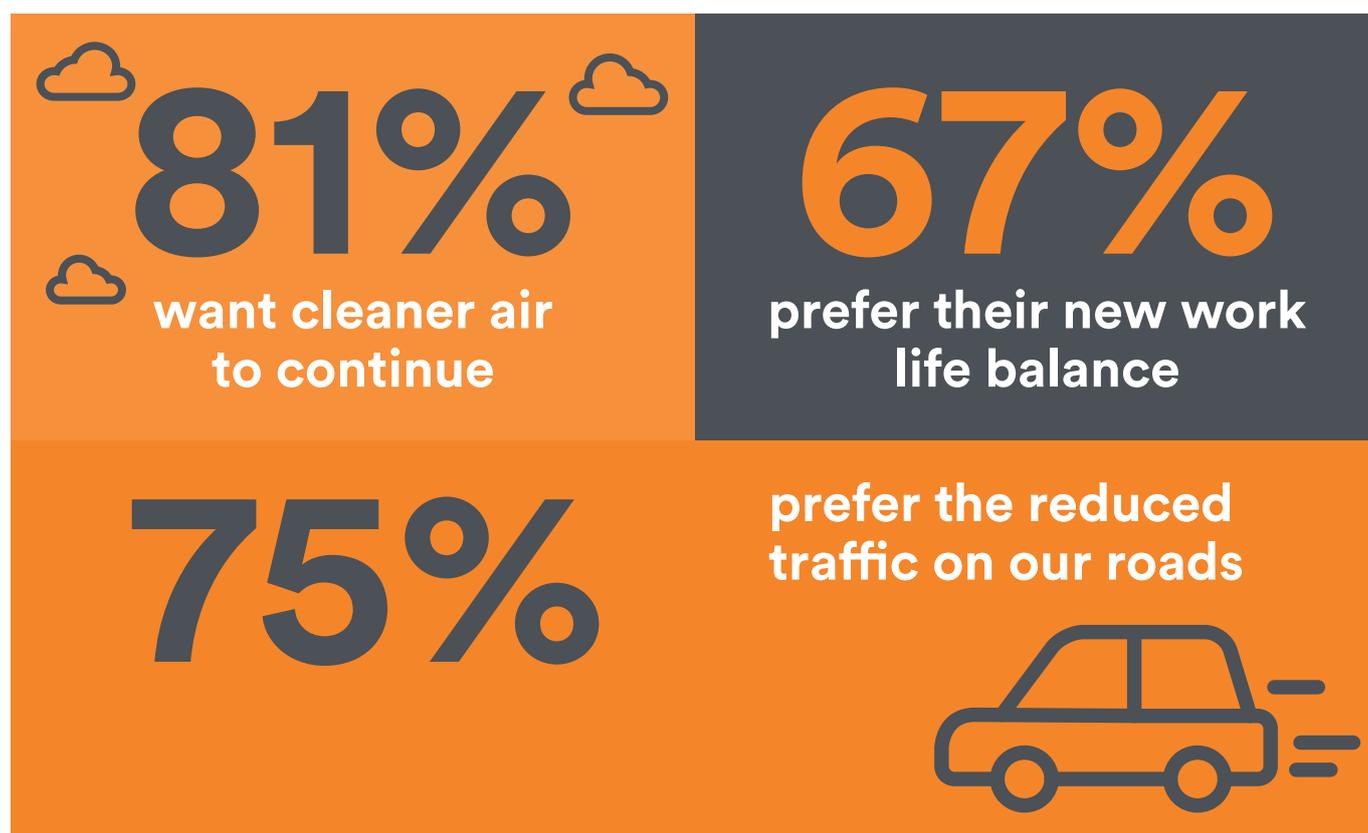
The West Midlands Combined Authority with the support of its member authorities has set a target for the West Midlands to be carbon neutral by 2041.

There is international consensus that we could have just 10 years left to limit extensive climate change. Our local actions will help the UK to meet the national target to be carbon neutral by 2050 in line with the Paris Agreement which seeks to limit global warming to well below 2°C (ideally no more than 1.5°C).

Short-term measures being rolled out in light of the Covid-19 recovery will help to lock in some of the positive behaviour changes being undertaken by citizens and limit the number of journeys being made by private car.

However, with social distancing reducing public transport capacity there is a danger that our recovery is a high carbon one. We have seen car use start to climb back towards pre-covid levels, so fast action and targeted interventions are needed to support our ambitions.

Public feedback from our recent covid recovery survey says:



Our Transport Challenges

3,000

People die each year prematurely in the West Midlands due to bad air quality

978

People are killed or seriously injured on the West Midlands roads



Transport accounts for over a third of all of the West Midland's carbon emissions – the majority from private cars

62%

of all car trips are single occupancy

73%

of all car trips are under 5 miles, 41% less than 2 miles

94%

of all cycle trips are under 5 miles

37%

Childhood obesity levels are one of the highest in the country - 37.1% of year 6 children are overweight or obese, compared to 31.1% nationally.

Our Transport Plan

We developed the West Midlands Local Transport Plan in 2006 and have made huge progress in delivering Movement for Growth which had a target date of 2026. However, recent events have highlighted the need to revisit our plan earlier and ensure it is fit to meet the needs of a greener and fairer society.

The image below sets out the key issues we will need to tackle if we are to have a transport system fit for the 21st Century.



A new journey starts here

The West Midlands transport recovery is being implemented in collaboration with our local authority partners and it begins our push towards a greener and fairer transport system.

We have immediate actions to focus our efforts in line with the regional recovery plan and supporting the needs of our residents and businesses.

- 1** Travel that is safe and secure
- 2** Getting workers and businesses back up and running (where safe)
- 3** Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe
- 4** Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise
- 5** Supporting a green recovery

We are already making significant improvements to the West Midlands transport system.

Measures to improve walking, cycling and wheeling are already being implemented.

We will shortly be publishing our Recovery Transport Plan setting out how we will ensure that the transport system is ready to respond to the challenges of the pandemic over the next 12 to 18 months.

We will continue to deliver our major infrastructure projects delivering better bus, metro and rail services and targeted highway improvements as we get the region ready for the Commonwealth Games and HS2.

E - scooters – First UK trial area

As one of the UK's Future Transport Zones we are also at the forefront of trialling the use of eScooters to provide a financially viable and sustainable mode of transport that encourages a transition from single occupant car travel.



Social distancing –

More space for walking, cycling and wheeling is being created across the region such as in Kings Heath in Birmingham.

Continuing major transport initiatives using new funding is addressing historic under investment and building new capacity.



Delivering our integrated transport system - improved Bus, Sprint, Metro, Rail, Cycling

Commonwealth Games



HS2

Walking & Cycling



What does a transport system fit to tackle climate change look like?

As we recover from the pandemic some of the changes we have been happy to see will need to be the new normal in the future. Tackling climate change creates new opportunities for us to improve the transport system and to do things better. We think transport should be about 'connecting people, cleanly and safely'.

We are working to make the West Midlands a global lead for clean mobility, putting people first and designing our integrated and inclusive transport system so it delivers real benefits for residents, business and the environment in a rapidly changing world.

We know that people want things to change. We already have some understanding and ideas about how our transport system could adapt to create the sorts of places that people in the West Midlands want to live, work and visit.

We have sketched our some examples of how the places we live, work and shop could be different in the future. Could you imagine yourself in one of these locations?





A POSSIBLE FUTURE VISION FOR TRANSPORT ON OUR HIGH STREET:

Your local High Street is designed for you, rather than for other people's cars. There are plenty of green spaces, wide footways and places for you to sit.

The street is accessible, regardless of age or ability, and provides a pleasant and safe environment for you to enjoy. There are many local shops and services and flexible co-working spaces save you making longer trips out of your neighbourhood.

The street is connected by shared and active transport, including bike and scooter hire schemes, as well as car-clubs and ride hailing services. Access to all of these services is available via one app and at your nearest travel hub.

WHAT COULD WE DO TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS?

Taking public transport or walking and wheeling on your journey reduces traffic on your own and other people's high streets.

Think before you travel outside of your own neighbourhood - can you make a shorter trip to stay local.

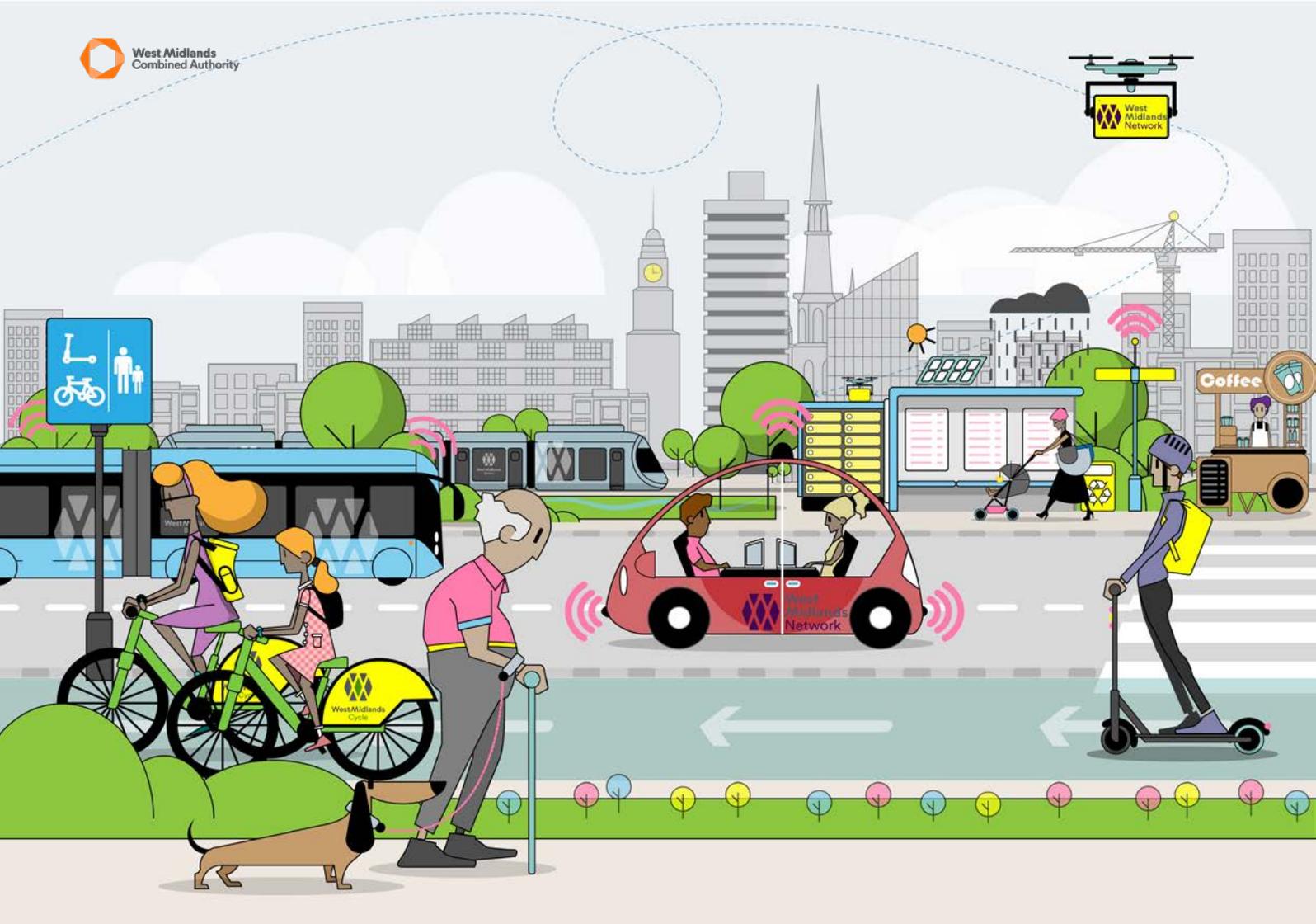
Spaces for people are provided instead of space for cars.

Parking spaces will be limited and reserved for those who really need them.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT USING A LOCAL PARCEL LOCKER IF IT WAS ATTACHED TO A BUS/ TRAM STOP OR TRAIN STATION RATHER THAN ALWAYS HAVING DELIVERIES DIRECT TO HOME?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT WALKING MORE TO THE SHOPS IF YOUR LOCAL SHOPS WERE ARRANGED TO DELIVER HEAVY AND BULKY ITEMS LATER THAT DAY USING AN CARGO BIKE OR AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

CONNECTING LIVES, CLEANLY & SAFELY



A POSSIBLE FUTURE VISION FOR TRANSPORT ON OUR MAIN ROADS:

This street prioritises walking, cycling, wheeling and public transport. The cleaner air and reduced noise levels results in a welcoming place for you to access different travel options. Travel information, booking and payment that is personalised to you makes travel easy and enjoyable.

The streets are active with more people around, heading to many dynamic workplaces and leisure activities. There is more space for you to walk, cycle and scoot, and the street is designed to be accessible to everyone, including people of all ages and abilities.

It is easy to travel without having a negative impact on the planet - public transport is cleaner and more comfortable and with less traffic on the roads it is faster and more reliable

Roads will be clean, safe and smooth with vehicles communicating with each other to reduce accidents and pot holes detected and fixed before they appear.

WHAT COULD WE DO TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS?

Public transport might look different with shared autonomous vehicles operating alongside conventional buses and trams.

More of the space on our streets will be given over to cycling and walking.

We will use our cars less as we work from home more and use new, innovative and clean transport services.

All of these services can be booked through an easy to use app that lets you know you are getting good value for the journey you are taking

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT WALKING AND CYCLING MORE IF YOU HAD PRIORITY OVER CARS AND VANS AND IF THERE WAS LESS TRAFFIC?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT GETTING IN A SHARED VEHICLE (WITH COMFY SEATS AND WIFI) WITH OTHERS TO GET TO YOUR NEAREST PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUB OR DESTINATION?

CONNECTING LIVES, CLEANLY & SAFELY



A POSSIBLE FUTURE VISION FOR YOUR LOCAL NEIGHBOURHOOD

There is a greater sense of community spirit as you spend more time in your neighbourhood. Your local neighbourhood is safe, quiet and pleasant to walk around. The street has become a social space and is now designed for people. There is safe space for kids to play outside and for you to stop and chat with your neighbours.

Working from home is easy and you can receive your online shopping to your door by cargo bike or electric van. When you need to leave the neighbourhood there is public transport and cycle paths nearby.

People own fewer cars and remaining cars are electric and shared within the community. This results in a quieter and cleaner environment which is positive for people's physical and mental health. Reduced need for parking results in space you can use for other needs.

WHAT COULD WE DO TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS?

You might not own your own car, but you will have access to car sharing, public transport and walking and cycling paths.

If you do need to own a car, electric vehicles will be the default option with easy to access EV charging solutions.

Saving a journey by working from home or on line shopping will result in less traffic in your neighbourhood.

Your neighbourhood is inclusive, safe and enjoyable as there is a greater sense of community.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT WALKING MORE IF PEDESTRIANS WERE PRIORITISED OVER CARS IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT NOT HAVING YOUR OWN CAR AND USING AN ELECTRIC CAR CLUB IF IT WAS AVAILABLE NEAR YOUR HOME INSTEAD?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT LETTING YOUR KIDS PLAY IN THE STREET IF THE MOVEMENT OF CARS WAS REDUCED AND RESTRICTED?

CONNECTING LIVES, CLEANLY & SAFELY



A POSSIBLE FUTURE VISION FOR OUR CITY AND TOWN CENTRES:

This is an inclusive urban centre that attracts all kinds of people and businesses. The many unique experiences on offer has created an exciting and popular destination in which to live, work and play. Deliveries are made to the area using small electric vehicles and cargo bikes that are effective but low impact.

Getting to your nearest urban centre is quick and easy using the clean and efficient public transport network that connects the region. An increase in digital working and shopping means that people travel at different times, resulting in quieter and more reliable transport network.

Moving around the centre itself is easiest by walking, wheeling and cycling which is prioritised and provided with plenty of space. Low levels of traffic have created a quieter and cleaner urban centre for you to enjoy. Public spaces are engaging and fun places for you to interact with the environment and with other people.

WHAT COULD WE DO TO ACHIEVE THIS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS?

There will be more opportunities to live within urban centres close to transport hubs which will make it easier for you to travel by sustainable modes.

Embrace changes to our lifestyles and working practices which allow us to think about how and when we travel differently.

You will have the opportunity to try out and support new transport innovations which help to you to connect with people and places cleanly and safely.

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT SHARING YOUR DATA IN ORDER TO GET A MORE PERSONALISED TRANSPORT SERVICE?

HOW WOULD YOU FEEL ABOUT WORKING FROM HOME MORE (IF IT WAS POSSIBLE FOR YOU) IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE LEVEL OF TRAFFIC IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD?

CONNECTING LIVES, CLEANLY & SAFELY

We're better connected together

We want to develop a new transport plan that is inclusive and considerate of everyone's needs. To do this we will be using the intelligence we gather from the work we are undertaking now in the recovery from Covid-19 and engaging the local community, businesses, transport partners and professionals to shape a new future of transport in the West Midlands. This work will inform the creation of a new Local Transport Plan which will guide the delivery of projects and services over the next 10 years.

We will be undertaking a range of online engagement sessions over the Summer and Autumn to help shape this new vision and to understand what measures are needed to create a greener and fairer transport system that works for you.

If you want to take part and help us become better connected, sign up at: [#futuretransportwm#](https://twitter.com/futuretransportwm)



Transport for
West Midlands