Housing & Land Delivery Board

Date	23 January 2023
Report title	West Midlands Local Transport Plan: Update
Portfolio Lead	Housing and Land – Cllr Mike Bird
Accountable Employees	Gareth Bradford, Executive Director of Housing, Property & Regeneration (Accountable Director) Helen Davies, Principal Policy & Strategy Officer, Transport for West Midlands (Report Author)
Previous reports	- July 2022: Housing & Land Delivery Board - December 2022: Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Housing & Land Delivery Board is recommended to:

a) **Note** the update on progress in developing the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan '*Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands*' (LTP5) and **discuss** linkages and connections between the LTP and the work of the Housing and Land Portfolio;

b) **Note** that the LTP5 Core Strategy sets out the principles and overarching approach on how TfWM will approach transport strategy in the West Midlands; and

c) **Note** that in terms of next steps approval will be sought for final adoption of the Core Strategy, and approval to consult on the draft Big Moves documents and draft Area Strategy guidance, at the WMCA Board meeting on 10th February 2023.

1.0 Purpose

1.1 This report informs Housing & Land Delivery Board and provides a summary of the WMCA Board report which will: a) seek approval from the WMCA Board to adopt the final version of the West Midlands LTP5 '*Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands*' Core Strategy; and b) seek approval for undertaking engagement on the draft LTP5 Big Move documents which will form part of a suite of documents within the wider LTP framework.

1.2 This report and accompanying presentation highlight those aspects of the Big Move document most relevant to the activities of the Housing & Land Delivery Board. The

relevant Big Move is titled *Accessible and Inclusive Places* and the document aims to provide guidance on how to improve new development through planning, design and delivery (in a coordinated way alongside wider transport policy). This will help to minimise transport impacts and maximise the attractiveness and success of sustainable modes. The ambition of this Big Move document is to set out a comprehensive vision of what good accessibility should look like going forward.

2.0   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) and 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 for the WMCA, as well as local authorities in the region, who must then carry out their required functions and implement such policies. The LTP carries statutory weight in a range of decisions made by public authorities as they execute their functions under various statutory provisions and is a critical document for ensuring the regions public interests, with regards to transport and its impacts are delivered.

2.3   In July 2022, a report on the Draft LTP5 and introducing the Big Move document '*Accessible and Inclusive Places'* was presented to the Housing & Land Delivery Board. This Big Move document has now been developed and drafts have been shared with local authority officers. Subject to WMCA Board approval on 10th February 2023, the Big Moves document will go out for consultation in February 2023.

A 'different' West Midlands Local Transport Plan

2.4   Since Movement for Growth (the fourth West Midlands LTP) was published in 2016, there have been significant changes to the policy context including changes to the political, social, technological and economic landscapes which have implications for transport policy. These include the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenge of climate change with the need for rapid decarbonisation. By way of context, the UK has a legal target of being net zero by 2050 whilst WMCA has set a regional ambition to achieve this earlier, by 2041. The current cost of living crisis brings a further challenge to ensuring that people have reliable, affordable and safe options to access opportunities in light of a struggling public transport network and increased costs of operating our transport networks.

2.5   There is a limit, however, on the impact that regional and local action alone can have on achieving our outcomes, many of which require a behavioural shift to reduce car usage and dependence. Whilst WMCA and local authorities have some key powers and policy levers, transport behaviour is affected by a range of wider factors, beyond our direct control in the region. The approach, set out in LTP5, will help us to better understand what WMCA/TfWM can realistically do to address these issues.

2.6   This is especially important given that the Government is taking a renewed interest in Local Transport Plans and updating national guidance (the first since 2009 being published shortly). In particular, Government wishes local areas to lead the transport response to decarbonisation through local levers to reduce overall travel demand, with future funding allocations - such as the next rounds of City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) - being based on quantifiable carbon reductions and

transport improvements being witnessed at a local level.   Based on this, engagement on this LTP has been more extensive than ever before and will be on-going as the LTP is developed further and implemented, responding to residents and key partners.

3.0   West Midlands LTP5 suite of documents

3.1   In light of the challenges set out above, the approach for this new LTP5 is different. To reflect the need for change, TfWM has been developing the LTP in stages and working differently from previous plans. The first stage was the Core Strategy which was consulted on last year and, in February 2023, the WMCA Board will be asked to approve a final version for adoption. The second stage was the development of 6 Big Moves which set out the key policies to help the region plan and deliver the transport system. This stage of work also includes the preparation of guidance to help WMCA and local authorities develop a set of Area Strategies to help translate the Big Moves locally and build a better understanding of what measures work and have the greatest impact. The Board is therefore also being asked to approve the Big Move documents for public engagement.

LTP5 Core Strategy

3.2   The Core Strategy sets out the overarching approach and principles for the new LTP. It is 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. These are based on a 'decide and provide' approach which focuses on the end state it wants to achieve including a safe clean public highway within which it is comfortable to walk or cycle and where public transport is reliable efficient and affordable.

3.3   Such measures will further help enable the provision of viable and attractive choices for those without access to a car (equating to 25% of our regions population) and help boost demand for services such as public transport, enabling it to be more commercially viable. Yet without managing demand, the improvements we can make to enable improved access to places and opportunities for those without a car are fundamentally limited – ultimately limiting what can be achieved for wider policy aspirations and the LTP objectives.

Draft LTP5 Big Moves

3.4   The Core Strategy sets out outcomes to be achieved through more detailed policies set out within 6 Big Moves. These provide a framework for the actions we will take to improve accessibility and encourage behavioural changes and the principles for how the transport system should be developed and managed. Actions across the Big Moves should not be taken in isolation but considered as a range of complimentary policies, applied to deliver the most effective outcomes.

3.5   Local authorities have been engaged on all of these documents, with their feedback been incorporated into the final version.

3.6   The 6 Big Moves are:

- **Behaviour Change -** This Big Move focuses on how we will support behaviour change, through the promotion of effective policies, working with the public to understand the benefits of these policies and the consequences of not delivering on them. It also explores how we can deliver our plans with the public around a common understanding and consensus on local appetite for change.

- **Accessible & Inclusive Places -** This Big Move sets out how we will improve our understanding of accessibility and work with local planning authorities to change how we use land and deliver urban growth and new technology to improve sustainable transport outcomes and accessibility.

- **Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot -** This Big Move supports people to walk, wheel, cycle or scoot when, and where they want, safely and conveniently.

- **Public Transport and Shared Mobility -** This Big Move is about how we will develop, operate and promote public transport and shared mobility services (exclusively hired private vehicles) to support LTP outcomes.

- **Safe, Efficient & Reliable Transport -** This sets out how we will develop, manage and maintain the transport network to support LTP outcomes.

- **A Green Transport Revolution -** This Big Move deals with how we will make sure that we as make changes to the transport system to deliver behaviour change in the most effective and sustainable way.

3.7 These Big Moves have been developed as six separate substantive documents which provide more detail on key policies and principles which should be considered in developing and bringing forward transport (and land use and digital) strategy to deliver the LTPs objectives.

4.0. Big Move '*Accessible & Inclusive Places*'

4.1 The Big Move document on '*Accessible & Inclusive Places*' is most relevant to the work of the Housing & Land Delivery Board in that it sets out policies to improve how new development is planned, designed and delivered, in a coordinated way alongside wider transport policy to help minimise transport impacts and maximise the attractiveness and success of sustainable modes.

4.2 Taking the "*Triple Access System*" which is presented in the Core Strategy, this Big Move explains how accessibility depends on transport, land use and telecoms and presents policies for creating well-designed walkable and wheelable neighbourhoods with appropriate mixes of land uses, connected through high quality public transport, to deliver on more healthy, liveable and place-based communities. A framework for accessibility will be developed, providing a more comprehensive vision of the key elements which influence and often in inform of what good accessibility should look like.

4.3 The document further explores the potential for improved partnership working with our Local Planning Authorities to ensure synergies are made with land use planning and transport policy making, with local development plans complementing the policies and proposals set out in LTP 5. There is also a focus on the necessary strategic transport interventions and schemes being delivered in the right places and at the right time, to

support the delivery of major land use development proposals along with wider growth and investment.

4.4   Spatial planning policies are also captured in this Big Move, covering the importance of higher density development, promotion of mixed use development served by good transport infrastructure and services. The strategy also endorses WMCA's 'brownfield first' approach, exploiting the existing urban fabric close to existing transport links and services - reducing the need for additional travel and bolstering sustainable transport demand. The importance of good transport design policies which can support this are also captured.

4.5   Finally, policies on the importance of investment in digital infrastructure is covered, to help support wider digital connectivity across all communities and businesses and to reduce digital poverty. Policies in this document, therefore, cover the importance of securing digital infrastructure investment as part of wider transport funding opportunities; ensuring digital infrastructure is embedded into wider transport infrastructure; making available travel planning tools which improve customer information; and making travel information available in more places. TfWM will continue to enhance our transport information, services and levels of accessibility through rolling out well-designed digital platforms and publishing our transport datasets for other transport providers to use.

5.0   Next Steps

5.1   Subject to approval from WMCA Board, consultation will be undertaken for 8 weeks on the draft Big Moves documents from 20th February 2023. It is also proposed that TfWM and local authority transport officers will begin initial discussions on the development of the Area Strategy documents.

5.2   Following this, and subject to engagement, it is proposed that the final versions of the Big Moves be presented to the WMCA Board for approval in autumn 2023. These documents will also be presented to the Housing & Land Board, as progress updates, during this period. TfWM welcomes the opportunity to continue engaging with the Housing & Land Delivery Steering Group and the Housing & Land Delivery Board as the Local Transport Plan continues to develop and progress.

8.0   Financial Implications

8.1   There are no direct financial commitments as a result of approving the approach proposed and adoption of the Core Strategy. As a statutory duty, the development of the LTP is funded by transport levy and expenditure is within with the approved financial budget for 2022/23 and draft 2023/24 budget.

9.0   Legal Implications

9.1   In exercising its duties under the Transport Act 2000 (and amended by the Transport Act 2008), WMCA must have regard to national policy in line with the statutory guidance issued by Department for Transport on LTPs as well as on a number of other key legislation documents which have been passed. More details of this will be covered in the main WMCA Board Report in February 2023.

10.0   Equalities Implications

10.1 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) is being undertaken as part of the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal to challenge and support the development of the LTP.

10.2 The statutory engagement required on the draft LTP Core Strategy also requires an inclusive approach and TfWM will seek to reach a broad range of people and groups when conducting each stage of the public consultation.

11.0 Inclusive Growth Implications

11.1 Equity is at the heart of our motives for change and has been fully informed by the WMCA Inclusive Growth Framework. The LTP in particular makes positive reference to Connected Communities, Climate Resilience, Affordable and safe places, Health and wellbeing and delivering on an Inclusive economy – all of which are at the heart of the LTP vision.

11.2 Through the development of policy and strategy against the objectives set out in the LTP and Big Move Documents, including reducing the harmful impacts transport can bring, and how people with no or limited access to a car can fully participate in society and our economy is at its centre. It will therefore be important to ensure that these objectives hold firm and deliver on inclusive growth objectives.

12.0 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.