

## **Cabinet – 16 December 2009**

### **Red Routes Package 2 – A452 Chester Road, A461 Lichfield Road, A4041 Queslett Road, A4031 West Bromwich Road**

**Portfolio:** Councillor T Ansell, Transport

**Service:** Strategic Regeneration

**Wards:** Aldridge North & Walsall Wood, Brownhills, St Mathews, Rushall-Shelfield, Pheasey Park Farm, Streetly, Aldridge Central and South

**Key decision:** Yes

**Forward plan:** Yes

#### **1. Summary of report**

This report seeks the agreement of Cabinet to undertake the development of Red Routes along the A452 Chester Road, A461 Lichfield Road, A4041 Queslett Road and A4031 West Bromwich Road. These schemes are aimed at making a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan which intends to reduce congestion, improve public transport, improve road safety, air quality and encourage economic growth. Cabinet is asked to note that delivery of the A4041 Queslett Road scheme will be subject to agreement of both Birmingham City Council and Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approves the inclusion of the A452 Chester Road, A461 Lichfield Road, A4031 West Bromwich Road and A4041 Queslett Road, as part of the West Midlands Red Route Package 2 network that will be submitted to the Department for Transport (DfT) in early 2010.
- 2.2 A further report will be submitted to cabinet once the design options for the route(s) have been completed. As no design work has yet been undertaken on these schemes. Therefore until funding is received from the DfT and options are developed it is difficult to identify how local residents and their properties are likely to be affected.

### **3. Background information**

- 3.1 As part of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (2006-11), Walsall Council has been implementing a number of Red Routes along the borough's strategic network as part of West Midlands Red Routes Package 1. The package 1 network is currently being completed with work scheduled to start on the A34 North and A454 Wolverhampton Road in the New Year.
- 3.2 This scheme is aimed at making a significant contribution towards achieving the objectives of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan. Red Routes aim to reduce congestion, improve the free flow of traffic, improve public transport, improve road safety, air quality and encourage economic growth.

### **4. Resource considerations**

#### **4.1 Financial:**

- 4.1.1 The funding for this scheme is made up of DfT major scheme funding for the delivery of Red Routes Package 2 network in the West Midlands. The allocation is yet to be confirmed. At present the overall Package 2 network is currently being valued at £20m, of which £5m could be allocated to Walsall. The anticipated programme for delivery is proposed to be over 3 years, commencing in financial year 2011.
- 4.1.2 All projects are subject to consultation, detailed design and costing. The exact elements that will comprise the final schemes along the A452, A461, A4031 and A4041 Red Route schemes, will be a matter for Walsall Council Transportation Team, in consultation with local residents, ward members and neighbouring local authorities.

#### **4.2 Legal:**

- 4.2.1 Implementation of the proposals will require the advertisement of new Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) relating to the Red Route restrictions. Given the concept of Red Routes and the need to maximise flexibility, it is proposed that all Red Route TRO's will be implemented as experimental TRO's. This will allow the council to respond rapidly to modify these where operational experience reveals alterations are necessary in order to deliver a scheme of maximum benefit to road users and residents/businesses along the corridor(s) affected. Any responses or objections to the TRO's will be handled in accordance with the Council's constitution.

#### **4.3 Staffing:**

- 4.3.1 There are no direct staffing impacts as a result of this report.

## **5. Citizen impact**

Public consultation exercises will be undertaken at various stages during the scheme development to ensure that residents, local ward members and key stakeholders are involved with the proposed arrangements of the red route layouts with regard to parking/loading bays and off street car parking spaces.

## **6. Community safety**

### **6.1 The Red Route proposals will include**

- Improvements to key junctions at locations where there are known delays and traffic accident problems;
- The introduction of loading bays to be used by traders who are directly affected by the 'no stopping at any time' restrictions, where these are proposed.
- The introduction of designated parking bays located appropriately to replace spaces removed by the introduction of "no stopping at any time" restrictions proposed.
- The introduction and upgrades of safe crossing facilities at all junctions which currently do not include: blister surfaced paving to warn the visually impaired and dropped kerbing for disabled/pram access.
- Improved lining and signing along the route(s).

### **6.2 All proposals will continue to be subject to Safety Audits, in accordance with guidance set out by the Institute of Highways and Transportation.**

## **7. Environmental impact**

The A452, A461, A4041 and A4031 Red Route Schemes will include several junction improvements. These are likely to have only a marginal impact on the local environment. No property demolition is anticipated. Along with the implementation of the routes, there will be improved lining and signing, and the introduction of loading bays (as appropriate). The introduction of before and after traffic surveys will be conducted to ensure that the proposals do not encourage increased levels of inappropriate use of residential roads by through traffic. The intention of the development is to prepare schemes for the whole length of the routes.

## **8. Performance and risk management issues**

### **8.1 Risk:**

#### **8.1.1 Failure to deliver Walsall Package 1 Red Routes Network will put at risk Walsall's eligibility to be included in future funding submissions for Red Route funding from DfT.**

8.1.2 The scheme will be managed using the West Midlands Capital Programme Management System (IMPREST) and reported to both the West Midlands CEPOG Management Board to track progress and will also be reported on the Regeneration Directorate's project register.

8.1.3 The key risks associated with this project are: -

a) The performance of statutory undertakers in diverting equipment that is located in the highway to allow the Council's contractor to construct the civil engineering elements of the work.

b) The ongoing management and engagement of stakeholders affected by the scheme (residents, businesses, motorists, public transport users, cyclists and pedestrians) to ensure that they are all informed and aware of progress in developing and implementing the scheme. As with all schemes of this nature there will be a degree of disruption during the implementation stage, therefore continued communication through the project development and implementation stage will be used to manage any concerns raised by stakeholders.

## **8.2 Performance management:**

8.2.1 The delivery of the Red Route scheme will be a significant step in progress towards achieving the existing objectives and targets specified in the LTP. Future transport funding will be dependent on the level of progress towards achieving the targets which specifically include limiting the increase in congestion, improving public transport usage and reliability and improving accessibility to key West Midlands's town centres, including Walsall.

8.2.2 There is scope to link Red Routes Package 2 with the wider regeneration agenda and with initiatives which would involve working in collaboration with other sections of the Council, and development agencies such as Walsall Regeneration Company where this is necessary.

## **9. Equality implications**

Red Routes have been shown to deliver reductions in traffic congestion and road traffic accidents, improved pedestrian and cycling facilities, and improved bus running times. Improvements to the route(s) with the implementation of Red Route measures will provide benefits for all route users – motorists, pedestrians, local residents/business and freight. The proposals will be developed to minimise any negative impact to citizens along the route; this is in relation to changes to the highway, such as junction improvements and revisions to loading immediately outside a limited number of properties.

## **10. Consultation**

Full public consultation will be undertaken for each route, prior to any scheme being taken to detailed design stage. This is also the case with any businesses which may be affected by the scheme developments.

## 11. Background papers

Extract from Walsall Transport Strategy – Please see **APPENDIX A**

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24 November 2009



Councillor T Ansell  
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16 December 2009

## **APPENDIX A**

### **EXTRACT FROM THE WALSALL TRANSPORT STRATEGY**

#### **Red Routes**

Another key aspect of the network management strategy is the introduction of "red routes". It is proposed to develop red routes on the whole of the strategic highway network starting with the A34 route (see figure). The concept of red routes is principally one of greater enforcement of the urban clearway principle with a strict "no stopping" and "no driving in bus lanes" regime. It is designed to prevent driver behaviour that will significantly reduce the efficiency of the highway network and to improve journey time and reliability. Replacement parking facilities would be provided in order to reduce any potential adverse impact of red routes on frontage businesses and residents. In addition, junction improvements would be implemented to reduce congestion by better managing traffic entering and leaving the red route. Red routes were recommended in the WMAMMS as an 'early win', as they offer all road users significant improvements in efficiency on principal highway routes. The operation of the red route concept relies on a much higher level of enforcement than that provided by the police currently. The Council will therefore work to decriminalise parking enforcement in Walsall, in conjunction with similar moves in Wolverhampton and Dudley, to follow the approach already adopted in Sandwell. Eliminating stopping and illegal parking can increase the capacity of a road. The increase in capacity can be utilised in a number of ways such as assisting essential car movements, increasing the space available for bus priority, providing more cycling facilities and increasing priority for pedestrians.