

Cabinet – 1 March 2006

Regional prioritisation of transport major schemes

Portfolio	Councillor Adrian Andrew, Regeneration Councillor Marco Longhi, Environment and Transport
Service Areas	Regeneration and Built Environment
Wards	All
Forward Plan	Yes. This report was requested as an action at Cabinet on 30 November 2005

Summary of report

This report is to inform Cabinet of the work that has been undertaken in identifying the Regional Transport Major Scheme Priorities and the implications of the outcomes for Walsall. The aim of the process was to establish a firm programme of transport improvements for the Region up to the end of 2007/08, with an indicative programme up to 2015/16. It is intended that the process would be repeated at regular intervals to permit new schemes to be considered, or existing schemes that had previously not been prioritised. This review process would only impact on the indicative programme beyond 2008.

The Prioritisation of Transport Major Schemes follows a request from government in 2005 for all Regions to provide them with priorities for Housing, Economic Development and Transport. Government intends to use this to inform their decisions on the next round of regional funding allocations.

An outline of the work done and outcomes that were reported to government at the end of January 2006 is included in Appendix A. At the time of writing this report, no feedback had been received from government on the recommendations made.

Recommendations

- (1) That Cabinet note the information contained in this report and the provisional success that Walsall has achieved through direct involvement in the process
- (2) That Cabinet be aware that a future information paper will be provided when a formal response is received from government on the submission made at the end of January 2006.

Resource and legal considerations

Regional Prioritisation is directly linked with the West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 (WMLTP), a key framework document that must be submitted to government by the end of March 2006. Cabinet on 8 February recommended the Final WMLTP to Council for approval on 6 March 2006.

Any success that Walsall is able to achieve in gaining financial support for major transport schemes will require appropriate resources and effective project management to ensure satisfactory delivery to agreed timescales. Our ability or not to deliver will have implications for Walsall when decisions on future funding allocations are made.

Citizen impact

The outcomes of the Regional Prioritisation process and Walsall's success in getting funding support for Transport Major Schemes will have implications to all citizens who live and/or use the transport networks in the areas of the proposed schemes.

The schemes will help to reduce congestion and in certain situations provide improved access to key development sites, encouraging growth of the Borough's economy.

Community safety

Any success that Walsall is able to achieve through the Regional Prioritisation process will lead to the development of transport major schemes within the authority. These improvements will take into consideration safety and security issues, with the aim of making highway and transport networks safer to use.

Environmental impact

Traffic levels and congestion are major contributors to noise and air quality issues within the authority. The major schemes proposed through the Regional Prioritisation will be aimed at tackling congestion. Any outcomes that are successful in reducing levels of congestion in Walsall should have a positive impact in reducing vehicle noise and air pollutants within the borough.

Performance and risk management issues

The Regional Prioritisation of Transport Major Schemes is needed as there is insufficient funding available to deliver the future transport aspirations of authorities across the Region as a whole. It is possible that schemes currently identified in the LTP for Walsall may not come to fruition due to these funding restrictions. Walsall has performed well in getting general support in the fixed programme up to 2007/8 for Town Centre Transport Package (TCTP) and Darlaston SDA, with Brownhills supported in the provisional programme

beyond 2008. However, there is a risk that government may change the general funding levels for transport within the Region, which could alter the schemes currently prioritised. There is also the risk that Brownhills could slip from the Indicative programme beyond 2008, if other schemes enter the programme that may be more attractive in achieving Regional Objectives.

The level of success from the Regional Prioritisation process will have implications on the Metropolitan Area's ability to deliver the WMLTP. The success in delivering the LTP will have implications for CPA scores for individual authorities through the Environment Block, together with implications on future capital funding levels achieved through the LTP process.

Our performance in delivering any successes that Walsall achieves through this process will be a key consideration when decisions on future funding allocations are made. A failure to deliver to agreed costs and timescales could count against Walsall when applying for funding through future reviews of this process. Also, the annual spend profiles that are finally agreed through this process are fixed and cannot be carried forward beyond financial year-ends. Therefore, any delay in delivering schemes could require Walsall to cover any costs that may be carried forward into new financial years resulting from the delay. This emphasizes the importance of effective and timely delivery.

It should also be noted that the prioritisation methodology may be reviewed in future years, which could impact on the current standing of Walsall's schemes. Officers will ensure that the authority is involved in any review of the process to ascertain that any changes do not incur a significant detrimental impact to Walsall's key transport schemes. It is anticipated that competition for funding in future years of the process will increase significantly, which is likely to lead to some revision from 2008 onwards in the priorities recommended to government; this may have particular impact for future schemes the authority seeks to bring forward such as M6 Junction 10 and Bradford Place Bus Station.

Equality implications

Any outcomes from Regional Prioritisation will benefit all members of society and not discriminate against particular groups within Walsall.

Consultation

The development of the Regional Prioritisation process has involved communicating to authority officers and elected members through various groups and events throughout the WM Region. Walsall Council has taken these opportunities to provide input into the process, which has supported our successes outlined in Appendix A.

Vision 2008

The schemes being banded through the Regional Prioritisation process support the 2008 Vision of helping people to get around. The schemes also provide improved access to either existing employment sites or proposed regeneration areas under the WRC Framework, supporting the 2008 Vision of strengthening the local economy.

Background papers

1. West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2005/06 to 2010/11
(www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk)
2. Summary of process and outcomes to-date from the Regional Prioritisation process
(Appendix A)

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Date: 16.02.06

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Portfolio Holder: Councillor A Andrew
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Date: 16.02.06

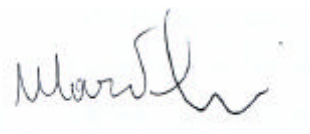
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Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Longhi
Built Environment

Date: 17.02.06

Background:

- The prioritisation of transport major schemes (costing >£5m) initially involved technical work to evaluate each scheme on an equal and independent basis, taking into consideration links to regional, sub-regional and local policies, value for money, environmental impacts and deliverability.
- The range of schemes banded were all those in excess of £5m referenced in current LTP's across the whole WM Region, including Shire Authorities.
- The technical work only informed the decision making process, which was done through various groups as outlined below.

1 December	Senior officers met to discuss findings from technical work and an outline transport programme (attended by Martin Yardley, Mark Clough and Stuart Freeman from Walsall)
13 December	Special meeting of Regional Transport Partnership, attended by all portfolio holders, to agree a draft transport programme (attended by Cllr O'Hare, Martin Yardley and Mark Clough from Walsall)
19 December & 16 January	Chairs and Chief Execs of WMRA, AWM and GOWM met to start the alignment between the Housing, Economic Development and Transport priorities
18 January 06	Assembly meeting to consider and approve the Regions Housing, Economic Development and Transport priorities <i>(attended by The Leader)</i>
23 January 06	Chairs and Chief Execs of WMRA, AWM and GOWM meet to sign-off priority proposals
31 January 06	Regional Assembly submits the Regions Housing, Economic Development and Transport priorities to government

Outcomes:

- The full table of the schemes recommended as priorities is attached to this note, with a summary of the agreed spend profiles for Walsall Schemes shown in the table below.

Scheme	2006/7	2007/08	2008/11	2011/14
Walsall TCTP (priority 1)	£11.61m	£5.83m	£0.06m	-
Darlaston SDA (priority 5)	-	£4.16m	£10.41m	-
Brownhills TP (priority 3)	-	-	£17.64m	£1.01m

- Walsall has done well getting 3 major schemes recommended as priorities (only Birmingham getting more with 4 in the whole WM Region, including all the

Shire Authorities). Bradford Place Bus Station and M6 Junction 10 have not been recognised as priorities at this stage, as they are currently not sufficiently advanced to permit a full technical review. However, it is proposed that the process will be repeated regularly, which will permit these or any new schemes that we develop to be reviewed.

- Metro was taken out of the process due to the large expense, but has been recognised as a regional priority. Funding will now be sought from government through other sources, such as Transport Innovation Fund (TIF).
- Other outcomes of interest to Walsall are:
 - WM UTC bid was recommended as a Regional Priority, which Walsall would benefit from in terms of the development and management of traffic signals within the authority.
 - WM Red Routes Package 2 was provisionally recognised as a Regional Priority, with the recommendation that further work be undertaken to firm up its position. Walsall would again benefit from this scheme, through improved traffic flow and reduced congestion along key strategic corridors.
- The process and the outcomes, particularly the decision to support Darlaston SDA, emphasise the importance of ensuring that transport ideas and priorities are established in partnership with other work programmes such as Housing renewal and Economic Regeneration.

Recommended Transport Priorities for the WM Region

Scheme name	Scheme Sponsor	2006/07	2007/08	2008/11	2011/14	2014/16
Midland Metro (TIF Bid)	Centro	0	0	0	0	0
Rugby Western Relief Road	Warwickshire CC	6	7.43	0	0	0
Tunstall Northern Bypass	Stoke CC	3.05	0.08	0	0	0
Selly Oak New Road	Birmingham CC	9.15	4.75	1.8	0.65	0
Owen Street Level Crossing Relief Road	Sandwell MBC	0	4	9.27	0	0
Walsall Town Centre Package	Walsall MBC	11.61	5.83	0.06	0	0
Brierley Hill Sustainable Access Network	Dudley MBC	8.5	8.43	0.35	0	0
Colehill Multi Modal Interchange	Warwickshire CC	4.54	0	0	0	0
Darlaston Strategic Development Area	Walsall MBC	0	4.16	10.41	0	0
Longbridge Link Road	Birmingham CC	0	0	7.39	1.34	0
Rotherwas Access Road	Herefordshire Council	4.85	1.74	0.07	0	0
Birmingham New Street Station (TIF Bid)	Birmingham CC	0	1.82	6.58	74.9	51.16
West Midlands UTC	CEPOG	3	5.12	20.74	0	0
Stourport Relief Road	Worcestershire CC	0	0	0	55.87	0
A41 Expressway/A4031 Junction	Sandwell MBC	0	0	20.1	0.29	0
Brownhills Transport Package	Walsall MBC	0	0	17.64	1.01	0
Chester Road Access Improvements	Birmingham CC	0	0	16.77	0	0
A4123/A461 Junction (Burnt Tree)	Dudley/Sandwell MBCs	0	0	10.2	0.1	0
Wolverhampton Rail Station	Wolverhampton CC	0	0	7.83	0	0

Scheme name	Scheme Sponsor	2006/07	2007/08	2008/11	2011/14	2014/16
SPARK (Leamington Spa/Warwick Public Transport)	Warwickshire CC	0	0	13.26	0	0
BIA/NEC Public Transport Access	Solihull MBC	1.42	7.22	1.99	0	0
Provisional Schemes						
West Midlands Red Route Package 2	CEPOG	0	0	28	1.7	
Coventry Rapid Transit	Coventry CC	0	0	10.97	48.74	
Brinsford Park and Ride	Staffordshire CC	0	0	27.97		
Wolverhampton I54 Access	Wolverhampton CC	0	0	7.44		
Coventry Station Interchange	Coventry CC	0	0	6.32	5	
Shrewsbury NW Relief Road (TIF Bid)	Shropshire CC	0	0	57.6	7	
Schemes already in progress or firmly planned		43.16	41.98	59.91	0	0
TOTAL ESTIMATED SPEND		95.29	92.56	342.67	195.59	51.16
REGIONAL ALLOCATION/PLANNING ASSUMPTION		90	92	285	302	210
Difference		-5.29	-0.56	-57.67	106.41	158.84

Notes:

1. Provisional Schemes are those that are identified as potential Regional Priorities. However, additional work is needed to develop the schemes to a suitable level before final recommendations on their status can be made.
2. Schemes **highlighted** are being project managed and promoted by Walsall Council.
3. Schemes in **bold** will provide transport improvements within Walsall Borough, in partnership with the other Metropolitan Authorities.