

Cabinet – 13 April 2011

Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14 and West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 Endorsements

Portfolio:	Councillor Tom Ansell Transport
Service:	Strategic Regeneration
Wards:	All Wards
Key decision:	Yes
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Summary of report

West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 (WMLTP3)

- 1.1 The West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 will be endorsed by Centro on the 28th March 2011.
- 1.2 Following the Local Transport Act 2008 Centro ITA is solely responsible for the development of WMLTP3. However whilst the Council is no longer signatory Centro ITA has requested the Councils approval of the Plan.
- 1.3 The Councils approval is important firstly because the Council will have to deliver large parts of the plan and secondly so that the WMLTP3 is seen as having the support of the region when it is used as supporting evidence for funding bids.

Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14

- 1.4 The Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14 will supersede the Walsall Transport Strategy 2003 as the document where residents, members, stakeholders and partners of Walsall Council can find out what is happening in transport in Walsall.
- 1.5 The schemes contained in the strategy are in conformity with the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (BCJCS) and West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WMLTP) 2 and WMLTP3.
- 1.6 The Walsall Transport Strategy will help to deliver these schemes by focusing public and private funding towards areas/schemes which need it most as identified in the BCJCS and WMLTP.
- 1.7 The strategy is designed to be a web based document which can also be printed. This is so that it can be dynamic and keep up to date with the currently fluctuating financial situation in the UK.

- 1.8 The Schemes in this strategy will both be developed and delivered during the Strategy period, or in the case of longer term aims will be promoted and developed.

2. Recommendations

WMLTP3

- 2.1 Cabinet recommends that Full Council endorses the adoption by Centro of the WMLTP3 as a key document for this Council as it informs the Council's own strategy for transportation and a number of other key policy and strategy documents.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommend that Full Council endorse the development of schemes included in LTP3 on the understanding that separate approval will be sought for schemes where necessary and appropriate.

Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14

- 2.3 That Cabinet endorse the vision and objectives for Walsall and the Strategy as a whole. **Appendix A**
- 2.4 That Cabinet endorse an approach that sees the Transport strategy as a living internet based document which can be modified regularly as circumstances change. These changes must be in conformity with the UDP and Core Strategy.
- 2.5 That Cabinet endorse the development of schemes included in the strategy, on the understanding that separate approval will be sought for schemes where necessary and appropriate.

3. Background information

WMLTP3

- 3.1 The current West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP2) is effective only until 31st March 2011. Under the Local Transport Act 2008 the preparation and management of the third Local Transport Plan (LTP3) became the responsibility of the Integrated Transport Authorities (ITA). For the West Midlands Metropolitan Area, Centro is the ITA. It is the duty of the ITA to ensure that LTP3 takes effect from 1 April 2011, (when LTP2 expires).
- 3.2 LTP3 has two key roles:
- To set out a long term strategy for the development of an integrated local transport network serving the ITA area for the period 2011 to 2026;
 - To provide an implementation plan that outlines how the transportation programmes can be delivered in accordance with the strategy and in the light of funding available during the period 2011/12 to 2015/16.

- 3.3 Under the new arrangements the Council is a statutory consultee for LTP3 and as such we need to have made a formal response on the document to Centro. The Plan is also a key framework document for the Council as it informs the Council's own strategy for transportation and a number of other key policy and strategy documents.
- 3.4 The LTP3 public consultation process began on Monday 29th November 2010 for a 9 week period ending on Monday 31st January 2011.

Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14

- 3.5 A review of Walsall Transport Strategy 2003 was started in 2009 by officers. However due to retirement the project lead changed and it was decided to take a different approach and publish a bespoke document which will stand out and show a step change from other council documents.
- 3.6 A draft document was taken to CMT and was given their full support. It was also presented at a portfolio briefing where the Portfolio Holder gave his support to a new style of document to engage the general public.
- 3.7 The Strategy is designed to be concise and engaging, whilst still informing residents, members and senior officers of how Walsall Council will deliver the wide ranging components of Transport in the Borough set out in LTP3, the Core Strategy and UDP.
- 3.8 All Council departments related to transport were consulted as well as other relevant departments and external organisations such as Centro. Their views were taken into account in producing the final document.
- 3.9 The document aims are based on a locally focused interpretation of the DASTS (Delivering a Sustainable Transport Strategy) objectives set out by the previous government. The New Coalition government has focused on two of these aims namely CO2 reduction and Economic efficiency/recovery. They are also in conformity with the Black Country Joint Core Strategy (BCJCS), West Midlands Local Transport Plan 2 (WMLTP) and soon to be adopted WMLTP3. It was felt that keeping with these aims, but making them focused on the needs of Walsall residents would keep the strategy in conformity with national, regional and local transport strategies
- 3.10 Schemes within the strategy are in conformity with those set out in the BCJCS and WMLTP. The Strategy focuses on those within Walsall and will help to focus public and private investment on the schemes which will benefit economic recovery in Walsall, the Black Country and the West Midlands
- 3.11 The Transport Strategy provides a programme and framework for Council activity on implementing transport initiatives and projects in the Core Strategy and LTP3, the framework for making decisions on new transport infrastructure and the location of new development is provided by the Walsall Local Development Framework, which currently comprises the Core Strategy and Walsall UDP "saved" policies. The Core Strategy provides a powerful and clear spatial strategy which seeks to steer new development towards the "growth network"

which is made up of centres linked by regeneration corridors, which are related to the Smart Routes proposed in the LTP3.

3.12 The Strategy focuses on what we will do and how we will do it rather than being a long document focusing on setting out policies. The Strategy emphasises the importance of working with our various partners to deliver schemes in the most cost effective way for Walsall Council tax payers.

3.13 The strategy is designed as a web based document, with links built into the design to take readers to related websites for further, more detailed information. However it is also print friendly and will be made available in other formats i.e.: Large print, if requested.

3.14 The vision for the strategy is:

‘To provide a transport system that focuses on delivering safer roads, with improved journey times, and encourages the use of sustainable travel, in order to improve the borough’s air quality and the health and well-being of our people.’

3.15 The Strategy focuses on partnerships to deliver area wide benefits; transport is a means to an end:

‘Transport projects of the future cannot be delivered in isolation from other areas of strategic importance to the Council.’

3.16 The strategy looks at areas which we can directly influence including Roads, Parking and Cycling. It also looks at those where we need to influence the policy of our partners such as Rail (Network Rail) and Buses (Bus Operators).

3.17 The strategy closes by looking at schemes which are programmed to be delivered or developed during the plan period, and our plans for the future which we need to keep on the local, regional and national agenda.

4. Resource considerations

4.1 Financial:

4.1.1 Funding is to be sourced from transport funding streams at DfT including Integrated Transport Block and Maintenance Block. Also from national funding streams such as the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and Regional Growth Fund and any other European, national, regional or local funding streams.

4.1.2 Funding sources have not changed however who controls budgets and the split of funding has changed following the coalition governments decision to give all funding in metropolitan areas to ITA’s.

4.1.3 Maintenance Block funding is to be transported direct and in full to the Councils when received by the ITA.

4.1.4 The ITA (Centro), through the LTP3 implementation plan have top sliced 20% of the IT block funding for Major schemes and major scheme development such as

Darlaston Strategic Development Area access scheme. Another top slice is to be retained by Centro for Staff and Scheme Costs and the remainder will be split between the Councils pro-rata. This has changed from the previous system where the IT block went straight to councils who then contributed an agreed amount to joint initiatives.

4.2 Legal:

4.2.1 Centro will adopt the WMLTP3 as the Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands and Cabinet is asked to endorse that adoption as the WMLTP3 informs the Council's own strategy for transportation Separate approvals will be sought for individual schemes where appropriate

4.2.2 Staffing:

4.2.3 Council Staff resources will be used to deliver the schemes within the Walsall Transport Strategy and WMLTP3. Resources will be required for sourcing funding, regional co-operation, project management and scheme design and delivery.

5. Citizen impact

5.1 The Strategies will impact positively on residents by improving transport systems in the borough and encouraging a healthier and more environmentally aware population.

6. Community safety

6.1 Improving the safety of the transport network and the security of people using the transport system are important considerations in the development and delivery of transport schemes and the forward capital programme.

7. Environmental impact

7.1 Traffic impacts upon air quality and noise and vulnerable travellers such as pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities, transport scheme construction can also impact on surface run off and therefore flood risk These factors are considered in the development and delivery of transport schemes and the forward capital programme in order to reduce adverse environmental impacts. Care will be taken in the detailed design of schemes to minimise direct impacts on the local environment.

7.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been screened for and the statutory Authorities agree with the Councils position that an SEA is not required for the Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14 as it is reflecting policies and proposals included in the BCJCS and WMLTP3 rather than setting out new policies and proposals or providing a framework for decision-making on new development and infrastructure projects. The decision-making framework is

provided by the BCJCS and Walsall UDP "saved" policies which together with the West Midlands RSS make up the statutory development plan for Walsall.

- 7.3 WMLTP3 has a full SEA. BCJCS also has a full SA which includes a SEA. Both BCJCS and LTP3 have also been subjected to "appropriate assessment" under the Habitats Directive which have concluded that they are unlikely to cause significant harm to the integrity of any European Sites.

8. Performance and risk management issues

- 8.1 **Risk:** Risk is accrued on schemes which have engineering solutions as anything constructed has maintenance responsibilities. As with any scheme, and especially in the current financial climate, funding is a risk until it is secured/has been spent.
- 8.2 There is a risk of challenge to the strategy if the SEA Directive requirements are not complied with. Because they have been, we have hopefully eliminated that risk.
- 8.3 **Performance management:** Transport in the West Midlands is monitored through the WMLTP on a region wide level and also through biennial borough specific cordon counts. Therefore performance will be measured against those targets set in WMLTP3 and also through the delivery of schemes in the Strategy.

9. Equality implications

- 9.1 Consideration is given to ensuring that the needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. The Strategy will in the main be provided over the internet. However hard copies will also be available and so will large print and brail copies on request.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment has also been completed.

10. Consultation

- 10.1 The Walsall Transport strategy document has been consulted extensively internally and has also been sent to main stakeholders such as Centro for consultation.
- 10.2 WMLTP3 has been through an extensive regional consultation process. The final consultation was preceded by a vision and options consultation from 25 September to 18 December 2009, members were briefed and their views sought and included in the council response to Centro
- 10.3 Once the draft documents had been formulated by Centro (with some input from council officers) another round of consultation was undertaken from Monday 29th November 2010 to Monday 31st January 2011. This included member and public consultations in Walsall Borough. A formal response was sent by Walsall Council

to Centro ITA which led to a meeting where changes were explained to officers and the final document presented.

Background papers

'Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-14'

Due to the size of the Final LTP3 documents they have not been included with this report, all can be provided electronically and in paper format on request. The consultation documents can be found on the following link:

http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/transport_and_streets/transport_strategies.htm

'Final West Midlands LTP 3 Strategy and Appendices'

'Final West Midlands LTP3 Implementation Plan'

Author

John Myatt

Senior Transport Planner

☎ 652542

✉ myattjohn@walsall.gov.uk



Tim Johnson
Executive Director
Regeneration

13 April 2011



Councillor Tom Ansell
Portfolio holder
Transport

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walsall transport strategy

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Version 1



Walsall Council

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The new Transport Strategy for Walsall

Walsall Transport Strategy 2010-2014 is designed to build on the last Walsall Transport Strategy which was published in 2003.

The previous Strategy set two main objectives: to improve the efficiency of main transport arteries, particularly the strategic highway network; and to enable the town to diversify and attract modern and dynamic new industries.

Secondly, it sought to reduce dependence on the car by developing and promoting effective alternatives such as high quality public transport. These objectives have been the focus for transport planning in Walsall over the last seven years. During this time the Town Centre Transport Package, Red Routes and bus route improvements have all been designed and implemented to improve traffic flows on the strategic highway network and to encourage all sections of society to use public transport.

Rail trips into Walsall have increased since 2003, even though we unfortunately lost the Walsall to Wolverhampton service in 2008. However, in general we have progressed our rail aspirations. The publication of the Walsall Rail Service and Facilities Improvement Plan in 2008 has put Walsall on the rail map and helped us to get our aspirations into local, regional and national documents which will assist us in bringing them to fruition.

This new Strategy will build on our current position, progressing schemes which are already funded and are being implemented. As the country moves out of the current recession, the strategy will follow the framework set by the Local Transport plan and Black Country Joint Core Strategy, by which we can move forward to formulate new schemes and projects, and source funding to deliver them. The projects will all have the same objective: to best serve the Regeneration and Economic prosperity of Walsall Borough and the region as a whole.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Ansell".

Councillor Tom Ansell
Portfolio Holder Transportation

Transport affects each and every one of us. It influences where we live, work, shop, enjoy leisure pursuits and where our children are educated. It also has a major impact on the environment and our health.

The Transport Strategy for Walsall provides a framework to address the future travel needs of people in Walsall in a safer and more sustainable way. It identifies proposals and programmes for transport over the period 2010 to 2014 and highlights our longer-term aspirations.

This Strategy sets out a clear, ambitious, and forward thinking vision for Walsall's transport network. Its guiding principles will co-ordinate the future development and transport policy decisions of the Council and guide the investment plans of the Authority, Local Enterprise Partnership local businesses, property developers and public transport operators. Through rigorous annual reviews, we will monitor the success in moving towards an improved, sustainable, and safer transport network for the entire borough.

The proposals and programmes identified in this document will improve and develop the transport network across Walsall, by:

- encouraging economic growth;
- stimulating regeneration;
- improving the borough's environment;
- making the borough a healthier and safer place to live;
- providing benefits to all sectors of the borough's diverse communities.

The growth in the amount of traffic has become a problem for everyone, we can all play our part in the solutions. We need to work together in partnerships to improve our transport network not just for ourselves but for future generations.

Throughout the life of this Strategy the Council will continue to monitor the mode of transport used for journeys to school. This is a key national indicator that has been adopted locally. The aim is to help the Authority monitor and manage road traffic associated with the school-run.

In developing this Strategy we have fully embraced our role within both the West Midlands region and the Black Country. Our Strategy complements and contributes to the relevant plans of our partners from both within and outside the borough. We are committed to working in dynamic and effective partnerships and this Strategy will bring greater alignment between communities, organisations and agencies, enabling us to move together in the same direction.

Transport is an enabler that allows other activities to be undertaken. However, despite the many benefits that are derived from transport, the way we travel is becoming increasingly detrimental to our health, damaging our environment, adversely affecting the economy, and even changing the climate of our planet.

For those without easy access to transport, the choices in the way they travel can be limited. This can cause major problems and limit the opportunities available to access education, health, employment and leisure activities. This can lead to social exclusion for some people from many activities and opportunities that most of us take for granted.

The Council's vision is for a public transport network which will enable residents without access to personal transport, to take a full and productive part in society.

Approximately 12% of the population has some form of disability and about half of disabled persons have to rely on public transport. Accessing conventional public transport can also be difficult as they have to negotiate the road network, so safe crossings points are provided at suitable locations to assist them.

More than one in three (34.8%) of Walsall residents commute to work in Birmingham and nearly one in eight workers employed in Walsall (12.1%) come from Birmingham.

One in five (20.2%) of all people who commute to work in Walsall originate from Wolverhampton and one in six (16.8%) are going the other way. With such a large movement of people, it's important that our transport network is capable of continuing to deliver the benefits that underpin our economic success.

A section of the M6 Motorway is located within the borough of Walsall which includes junctions 9 and 10; this motorway is of significant national importance, carrying more than 79,000 (2008 HA figures) vehicles each day. The presence of the motorway network helps to support the social and economic desires of local residents. It is important that the presence of sustained long distance travel through the borough and its associated environmental and health issues are considered, and appropriate actions taken to mitigate the impacts. The Council seeks to ensure that through traffic is carried on the main highway network and does not permeate out into the rest of the borough, causing congestion and safety risks for residents.

The car will continue to play a vitally important role in meeting local people's transport needs and will remain an important mode of transport in the area. Indeed, for many trips it is the only feasible option.

This Strategy takes account of the continuing need for car-based travel but will focus on reducing demand for car use and on providing realistic and attractive alternatives to the car.

It has considered other Council initiatives that are likely to be delivered between 2010 - 2014 and also Council wide strategies such as the Car Parking Strategy, Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement. These strategies emphasise making key services accessible to all residents.

This Strategy has been formulated in conformity with the West Midlands Local Transport Plan, Black Country Study, Regional Spatial Strategy and the Black Country Joint Core Strategy.

To provide a transport system that focuses on delivering safer roads, with improved journey times, and encourages the use of sustainable travel, in order to improve the borough's air quality and the health and well-being of our people.

To achieve our vision, Walsall Council has adopted five strategic objectives for the transport programme for the period 2010 - 2014.

Our transport programme will:

1. Create the conditions within Walsall where **public transport and general traffic** can flow as safely and effectively as possible, in order to meet the needs of our businesses, residents and visitors.
2. We will work **with our regional/sub-regional partners and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership** to create the effective flow of traffic across our borders. The aim of this will be to maximise the economic benefits that can be drawn from links between Walsall and the most economically beneficial strategic centres including the rest of the Black Country and Birmingham City Centre, by facilitating the smooth flow of people and goods between these centres.
3. Through working with our key partners we will link Walsall with the national rail, road and waterways networks, with the aims of **further developing connectivity** with the rest of the country, maximising the benefits which can be drawn from initiatives like High Speed Two and the Managed Motorway system on the M6.
4. We aim to be **in step with the national transport policy** requirements, promoting sustainable travel and encouraging walking and cycling for shorter journeys, and greater use of public transport.
5. **Improve quality of life** for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment whilst making positive contributions towards on-going reductions in carbon emissions.

partnerships



Transport projects of the future cannot be delivered in isolation from other areas of strategic importance to the Council.



Therefore, at the local level throughout the lifetime of this Strategy, transport projects will be delivered in collaboration with Walsall Partnership, Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership, Walsall College and The Chamber of Commerce. The Council will also continue to co-ordinate road safety matters through Walsall Road Safety Forum alongside our existing partners. Further partnerships will be explored with all other bodies who have a common interest and a desire for working together.



An innovative partnership was developed between the Council and Walsall Primary Care Trust which has enabled the purchase of specialised mapping software and the training of eight people, including data analysts from public health and Walsall Partnership together with officers from the Council.



The software, Accession, allows digital maps of the borough to be overlaid with bus networks, timetables, walking and cycling routes. This, in turn, can be overlaid with census and non-census data about origins (people); destinations (services); and journey (how to get to). This will enable the proposed location of services or developments to be subjected to an accessibility assessment.



Previously, Walsall Council School Travel Advisers and NHS Walsall worked together to target children in twelve schools taking part in a two year pilot scheme, called A*STARS (Active School Travel and Road Safety). This project has aimed at encouraging more walking and cycling to school and increasing physical activity throughout the school day.



At the regional level the delivery of transport projects will continue to be in conjunction with other neighbouring authorities, Centro, The Highways Agency, Network Rail, Neighbouring Local Enterprise Partnership and other public bodies.



who is responsible for what?

There are many elements of transport that are delivered by various organisations across the West Midlands. These impact on Walsall and are summarised below.



Centro is responsible for providing public transport information and integrated ticketing, co-ordinating improvements to public transport infrastructure and subsidising socially necessary bus services.



Bus companies such as National Express West Midlands, Diamond Bus, and Arriva are responsible for deciding which routes to cover, operating both commercially viable routes and socially necessary services.



Train operating companies like London Midland are responsible for operating services to desired standards by securing their franchises through the government bidding process.



Network Rail is responsible for maintenance of the rail network, strategic rail improvements to ensure the efficiency of the network and the day to day operation of major train stations.



The Highways Agency is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving the motorways and trunk roads network in England on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport.



British Waterways maintains and cares for the 2200 mile (3220 km) network of canals and rivers in England, Scotland and Wales. Walsall has 30.7 miles (49.5 km) of canals. During the life of this strategy it is likely that British Waterways will acquire charitable status.



West Midlands Police is responsible for the enforcement of traffic violations, reducing road freight crime, reducing crime on the bus network and other road policing responsibilities.



Walsall Council's responsibilities include the maintenance of the local road network, implementation of transport projects that involve changes to the highway network and providing cycle routes and facilities. It also makes improvements to pedestrian routes and public rights of way, identifies and addresses road safety concerns, and works with utility companies to minimise disruption to traffic flow due to renewals of apparatus.

accessibility

Accessibility is a major issue within Walsall. The Council has previously Addressed this through joint work with the local health service and investment in Accession software. This is being used to make sure health services are placed in the most accessible locations, and in the future the principle can be used with other public services such as education. There are also continuing improvements being made to footways and the cycling network to improve accessibility.

cycling

Walsall has 19km of cycle routes, and the level of cycling in our schools is monitored. The number of children cycling to school in the last three years is shown in the following data:

2007 - 217 | 2008 - 248 | 2009 - 275

[NI198 School Census Data [School with a Travel Plan Age 5-15]]

Walsall remains on-track to achieve the target set in the West Midlands Local Transport Plan.

walking

Walking is the purest and most healthy form of transport. It is used to access all other forms of transport to varying degrees. One way to encourage future generations to walk is to get children to walk on their daily journey to school. In Walsall in January 2009 52.7% of children walked to school and this is continuing to grow and is ahead of the national level which was recorded at 49.5% for the same period.

public transport

In 2009 the morning peak trips by public transport into Walsall represented a 33% share of all trips (bus 31.2% and rail 1.7%) with car representing the remaining 67% share. The share of public transport has decreased from 34.2% in 2007, even though there was also a fall in car trips. Bus passenger trips have decreased by 6.6% whilst rail passenger trips have increased by 0.1%.

roads and traffic

Walsall Council maintains 68.4km of A Roads, 40km of B Roads, 10.6km of C Roads and 726km of Unclassified Roads. The latest figures show that overall, morning peak trips into Walsall have decreased by 3.2%. Overall Car trips decreased by 1.4% but still remain the dominant mode with a 67% modal share.

road safety

The safety of residents and visitors on Walsall's roads is a priority for the Council whatever their mode of transport. Across the West Midlands Metropolitan Districts in 2009, Walsall had the third lowest level in road casualties with 8.6% (869). When measured against the national indicator for the number of people killed and seriously injured, Walsall is on a downward trend. In 2008 the figures showed a reduction in the number of fatalities (4) and serious casualties (91) down from the 2007 levels of 11 and 111 respectively.

parking

Walsall Council owns and operates a number of car parks across the borough. Within the town centre there are 512 short stay spaces, 906 long stay, 39 disabled spaces and 37 for carers and children. The number of vehicles using short stay car parks during the week varies. Midweek usage is 67%, Friday Market Day 68% and Saturday 46%.

walking

Walsall Council will encourage walking by improving facilities for all pedestrians including those with disabilities and wheelchair users.

Walsall has a network of public rights of way which play a vital role in supporting local neighbourhoods through the opportunities they provide for access to key local services, amenities and the countryside. With some improvement they can continue to provide for many more short distance trips in greater safety and with more enjoyment.

The Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan outlines the improvements required to meet present and future needs for all users.



Smarter Choices

The Council will:

- develop a new Active Travel Strategy;
- provide well designed, attractive and accessible pedestrian routes which enhance the character of the local townscape and landscape, and encourage people to visit places of interest;
- promote the benefits of walking particularly in the move towards a Low Carbon economy;
- enhance safety, security and maintenance on existing routes with improved surfacing, lighting and road crossings;
- create a well-signed urban cycle route network incorporating both on-road and off-road routes, which in the first instance will link centres with each other and then centres to residential, commercial and leisure activities;
- provide new routes, particularly where they close gaps in the existing network or link to key local destinations or public transport;
- promote safer routes to school and provide pedestrian training at schools and to Older Road Users;
- provide wheelchair-friendly routes, particularly in Walsall town centre in association with 'Shopmobility';
- deliver the actions of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

What are we going to monitor?

The condition of footways, bridleways, public rights of ways;

The number of children walking to school;

The number of road traffic collisions involving pedestrians.

Length of the available Rights of Way network.

'We need to get more people **walking** and cycling more often and more safely.'

Active Travel Strategy, DfT, 2010

cycling

Cycling for short journeys has benefits for individuals in terms of their health, with people more likely to achieve a healthy weight and to have better mental well-being. There are benefits for communities too with safer and more pleasant streets, better air quality, lower carbon emissions, and reduced congestion.

Facilities for cycling have, in the past, had a relatively low priority yet there is considerable potential to encourage cycle use, particularly for the many local journeys of five miles or less. In addition to a network of canal towpaths and local cycle routes, the National Cycle Route also crosses the borough.



Smarter Choices

The Council will:

- promote the health and environmental benefits of cycling and produce a new Active Travel Strategy;
- develop a journey planner to promote and identify cycling routes based on difficulty;
- promote cycling as a mode of travel in the borough and in support of community, health and tourism objectives;
- create a well-signed urban cycle route network incorporating both on-road and off-road routes, which in the first instance will link Districts and then Districts to residential, commercial and leisure activities;
- provide well designed, attractive and accessible cycle routes which enhance the character of the local townscape and landscape.
- improve safety for cyclists, particularly by providing new cycle crossings and measures to help cyclists through busy junctions;
- promote safer routes to school and ensure that routes are safe, attractive and well landscaped;
- seek to embed cycle training in schools and train additional support staff as part of Bikeability;
- update the Borough's Cycle Map;
- introduce safe and secure cycle parking and storage facilities in public places and encourage provision at schools and places of employment.

What are we going to monitor?

The level of cycling in the borough on our cycle routes;
The mode share of journeys to school;
The number of collisions involving cyclists;
School Census Data;
Our achievements against new targets introduced as part of Local Transport Plan 3.

'We need to get more people walking and cycling more often and more safely.'

Active Travel Strategy, DfT, 2010

smarter choices

Smarter Travel Choice measures can play an important part, within the wider transport strategy, in reducing congestion and the impact of transport on the environment. These aim to change individuals' travel behaviour in favour of the more sustainable modes but also seeks to question the need to travel in the first place. Initiatives include:

- Travel plans for workplaces, schools, community groups, residential developments, rail stations
- Promotion of walking and cycling
- Personalised travel plans
- Public awareness of travel choices
- Car sharing and car clubs
- Smarter working (teleworking/home working/ flexible working)



The Council will:

- lead by example and produce its own workplace travel plan;
- encourage local residents, businesses, schools and other organisations to seek consensus on local problems and;
- contribute to and comment on emerging proposals for transport and major development schemes in the Strategy;
- develop Occupational Road Risk scheme;
- Promote the use of sustainable forms of transport as part of the Walsall Council Climate Change
- actively encourage car-sharing as a means of achieving reductions in traffic levels.
- seek to secure funds for smarter choices from the newly created Local Sustainable Transport Fund .
- encourage new housing, employment and other developments to locate within the "growth network" identified in the Black Country Core Strategy.

What are we going to monitor?

The renewal of travel plans in schools;
The number of staff receiving occupational road risk training;
The number of trips undertaken on public transport (bus and rail).

'large-scale Smarter Choice Programmes therefore represent a viable tool for reducing carbon'

The Effects of Smarter Choice Programmes in the Sustainable Travel Towns, 2010

bus and taxis

Buses, taxis and community transport schemes will play a much greater role in providing for local journeys.

Public transport must continue to provide for community and socially necessary services as well as offering a truly attractive alternative to car journeys.

New initiatives will be developed with local bus operators to improve the image, reliability and overall attractiveness of services. Working in partnership with Centro and the local bus operators the Council will continue to seek improvements in the area of accessibility to bus services.



Smarter Choices

The Council will:

- deliver an integrated sustainable transport programme for Walsall, focused on a network of high quality public transport routes with bus priority measures to reduce journey times and improve reliability;
- conduct bus network reviews in partnership with Centro and the bus operators;
- improve the signing and use of bus lanes by appropriate Vehicles
- work in partnership to progress bus quality improvements, marketing initiatives and latest technologies, including a new smartcard, to improve customer perceptions of bus travel;
- work with Centro to ensure that subsidised local bus services, Concessionary fares and community transport are provided;
- ensure that taxi ranks are conveniently located and that local taxis are accessible to disabled people;
- work with the bus operators to promote safer travelling initiatives.
- ensure that infrastructure improvements to facilitate travel by bus and taxi are well designed, attractive and accessible to users, have a positive impact on the local environment, and minimise harmful environmental effects.

What are we going to monitor?

Bus patronage;
Satisfaction with local bus services;
Bus punctuality;
Personal security on public transport;
The number of casualties on bus journeys.

‘Modern and reliable services can offer a credible **alternative to the car** helping to reduce congestion.’

The Future of Urban Transport, DfT, 2009

rail and rapid transit

Establishing high quality rail links to London and other towns and cities is vital to Walsall's long-term prosperity and our ability to promote ourselves to the wider business, tourism and visitor markets.

The only rapid transit scheme currently operating in the West Midlands is Midland Metro Line One which runs between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. Other lines were planned to connect to this first line including Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and the 5W's route linking Wolverhampton to Walsall. It has now been recognised that whilst a region-wide tram system would be preferable, these transport corridors could be served by other, more deliverable forms of rapid transit modes such as tram train, heavy rail and bus rapid transit.



The Council will:

- Work with partners to introduce the proposed Birmingham Sprint Bus rapid transit between Walsall and Birmingham;
- work with Centro to ensure reinstatement of the Walsall to Wolverhampton passenger rail service;
- work with Centro and public transport operators to improve interchange between rail services, bus services and all other modes of transport;
- develop plans to build a new Walsall town centre interchange with high quality facilities;
- work with our partners to implement a rapid transit system to link Walsall and the rest of the region;
- where feasible continue providing secure cycle parking at railway stations, bus stations and selected bus stops.
- work with partners to ensure that infrastructure improvements to facilitate travel by rail and rapid transit are well designed, attractive and accessible, have a positive impact on the local environment, and minimise harmful environmental effects.

What are we going to monitor?

Rail patronage;
Number of train journeys;
Ticket sales;
Foot-fall at stations in Walsall;
Personal security on trains.

'We also need to develop **new and imaginative** public transport solutions, including modern rapid transport systems in our larger urban areas.'

Transport 2010 - Meeting the local transport challenge, DfT, 2010

road safety

Walsall has a good road safety record and the Council is continuing to work across various local communities to ensure that our record continues to show improvement.

Reducing casualties is a key aim of this Strategy, particularly for vulnerable road users. Inappropriate speed has been a prominent contributor to collisions in the Walsall area and measures will include promoting speed-awareness education and improved enforcement of speed limits.

The Council will adopt the national targets to reduce road deaths and serious injuries. Introduced as part of any new Road Safety Strategy.



The Council will:

- produce a new local Road Safety Strategy to support the Regional Road Safety Statement in the Local Transport Plan;
- undertake a speed limit review on A and B roads by 2011, and a review on all other roads by 2013;
- develop Route Management Strategies to address collision cluster sites;
- utilise education, training and publicity to develop all schemes with an integrated approach to road safety;
- work with Local Management Areas to promote road safety initiatives.
- seek to pilot new technologies to address inappropriate speed sites;
- develop a work programme targeting education to vulnerable road users;
- continue to chair the Walsall Road Safety Forum;
- support a review of collision and socio-demographic database for the West Midlands;
- work in collaboration with West Midlands Police to ensure that enforcement of the road safety issues in Walsall are being addressed.

What are we going to monitor?

The number of people killed and seriously injured;

The number of vulnerable road user casualties including - pedestrians, cyclists, children and young people and motorcyclists;

The number of education, training and publicity campaigns delivered;

Speed on our roads;

The number of casualties caused by drink and drugs.

'We are proposing a long-term vision of Making Britain's roads the safest in the world.'

A Safer Way: Consultation on Making Britain's Roads the Safest in the World, DfT, 2009

roads and traffic

Traffic congestion around Walsall town centre is a product of the capacity and radial nature of the highway network in the area and the demand for travel by car at peak times. Traffic congestion in and around the district centres is often related to key junctions and, in some cases, radial routes passing directly through main shopping streets and being impacted upon by heavily used pedestrian crossings and by on-street parking.

Under the Traffic Management Act 2004, Walsall Council has a duty to focus on more efficient use of the road network and to avoid, eliminate or reduce road congestion or other disruption to the movement of traffic on Walsall's road network.



'As well as transforming the types of road vehicles we use,

The Council will:

- work in partnership with Centro and neighbouring districts to develop 'Smarter Routes';
- make best use of the available road space, including reallocating it to other modes of transport, such as bus and cycle lanes;
- encourage the appropriate use of the road hierarchy to reduce traffic levels, rat-running, traffic speed and danger on local roads;
- Monitor developments in the vehicle manufacturing industry and government policy relating to electronic vehicles ;
- take account of all road users in the design of highway improvements;
- use new technology to provide better travel information for drivers;
- work with the Highways Agency to improve M6 Junction 10;
- encourage local people and organisations to reduce traffic demands, particularly at peak times, through car-sharing or changing their journey times;
- ensure that traffic issues are mitigated via highway development control advice.
- ensure that highway improvement projects in Walsall are designed to improve public transport linkages, incorporate provision for walking and cycling, and address potential harmful environmental effects.

What are we going to monitor?

Road congestion;
Changes in traffic flows;
Changes to road traffic mileage;
Air quality at some key junctions.

we will also need alternative fuels to replace diesel and petrol.'

The UK Low Carbon Transition Plan, Crown Copyright, 2009

parking

In Walsall town centre, the impact of commuter traffic places a significant demand on long stay parking provision.

However, there is a need to maintain an appropriate balance of long and short stay parking provision complimentary with the aims of congestion management whilst continuing to support the local economy.

Ultimately, some restraints on the supply and cost of parking will be needed if the alternative modes of transport are to be made relatively more attractive.



The Council will:

- ensure that the parking needs of disabled people and those with restricted mobility are met;
- introduce the enforcement of bus lanes;
- provide targeted parking enforcement campaigns to promote road safety in support of walking and cycling to school;
- effectively manage council car parks and on-street parking spaces through Civil Parking Enforcement;
- manage parking to maintain the economic competitiveness of the strategic centre;
- ensure that parking policies do not have an unacceptable impact on adjoining residential areas;
- reduce long-stay parking for commuters to encourage the use of alternative modes of travel;
- improve the quality of the public and private parking stock;
- at all local and district centres provide adequate on street motorcycle parking facilities;
- introduce variable message signs to reduce time spent seeking parking spaces.

What are we going to monitor?

The levels of car park usage in council owned car parks;

The continuing effects of Civil Parking Enforcement, introduced in April 2009;

The effects of introducing bus lane enforcement.

Walsall Council is providing for the enforcement of road traffic contraventions through the use of Civil Parking Enforcement Officers

air quality

As part of the Local Air Quality Management process, Walsall Council has identified areas in Walsall that exceeded or are likely to exceed the annual average and hourly national air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide. The major source for these exceedances is road traffic, with the M6 Which passes through the borough being out of the councils control and road freight expected to grow significantly by 2026.

Consequently the Council declared the whole of the borough an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) due to the high levels of nitrogen dioxide. Upon declaring the AQMA the Council has, as part of it's statutory duty, produced an Air Quality Action Plan. This sets out measures designed to work towards achieving national air quality objectives within the borough.



The Council will:

- investigate the potential for a Regional Low Emission Strategy including the potential to introduce Low Emission Zones and Freight Partnerships;
- promote and encourage modes of transport that generate lower carbon emissions through "Smarter Choices" – e.g. walking for local trips, cycling for trips up to 5 miles and more use of public transport;
- continue to assess air quality across the borough;
- work in partnership with Centro and public transport operators to improve public transport with the aim of reducing harmful emissions;
- conduct a feasibility study of road side emissions testing;
- encourage improvements to bus fleets across Walsall.

What are we going to monitor?

In August 2006 Walsall Council declared the borough as an Air Quality Management Area for nitrogen dioxide. Failing air quality in Walsall is primarily due to road traffic and the Council will continue to monitor traffic pollution at key locations throughout the borough. This will enable us to identify and work towards improving areas of poor air quality.

'Decarbonising transport is an essential part of building a low carbon future for Britain.'

Low Carbon Transport: A Greener Future, DfT, 2009

transport and health

The primary function of transport is the movement of people and goods between places, enabling access to work, social and leisure activities, and goods and services. However, the way we travel is continuing to damage our health and that of future generations.

The Walsall Health Atlas of 2007/08 showed that 20% of Year 6 pupils in Walsall were obese. The profile varies across the borough with Birchhills, Leamore, Bloxwich East and Willenhall South wards showing levels of more than 25%.

The childhood obesity problem in Walsall is a significant challenge, that can only be addressed through collaborative efforts of parents, along with health, education and transport professionals.



'NHS trusts and local transport authorities are to be encouraged to work together to achieve

The Council will continue to work in partnership with local health services to:

- ensure that health issues are considered when transport policies and schemes are formulated;
- consider how policies and transport projects can contribute to tackling the obesity problem by increasing opportunities for active and sustainable travel through "Smarter Choices" – e.g. walking for local trips, cycling for trips up to 5 miles and more;
- develop patient and staff travel plans;
- implement physical activity strategies in conjunction with cycling/walking strategies;
- assist with any implementation of transport initiatives as part of health treatments/schemes;
- contribute to local accessibility planning and improving transport access to NHS sites;
- build on the existing partnership in areas such as A*STARS and continue to target schools through joint initiatives;
- continue to provide education, training and promotions relating to transport and health;
- collaborate with Local health services to provide education and training about healthy lifestyles.

What are we going to monitor?

Access to health and leisure;
The number of schools with active travel plans;
The obesity levels in schools at various stages;
How transport is used as part of prescriptions.

significant improvements to access to health and social care.'

Providing Transport in Partnership A guide for health agencies and local authorities, DfT, 2010

accessibility

To improve accessibility, social inclusion, and reduce reliance on the private car, we need to provide for a compact borough of sustainable linked communities, which have a range of services and facilities and are well connected to major employment and service destinations.

However this aim is useless unless we create an environment which promotes enjoyment and healthy lifestyle choices. If the environment is adverse to people making healthier choices, we are fighting a losing battle by putting programmes and services in place in an environment in which people do not want to be active, and which provides no enjoyment.

Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) gives disabled people a

The Council will:

- ensure that accessibility planning plays a key role in identifying solutions;
- working in conjunction with the planning process, provide job opportunities and other key services within or close to areas of new housing development;
- integrate major new development in the Walsall area within locations where existing or improved public transport links can be used, or where new public transport, cycling or pedestrian links can be established;
- ensure that accessibility is considered in proposals for key services and new developments by conducting accessibility assessments using mapping software;
- ensure that accessibility is considered in proposals for key services and new developments by conducting accessibility assessments using mapping software, and by adopting the principles of good design as set out in the Designing Walsall SPD;
- require new transport facilities to link existing and proposed residential, retail, employment and leisure areas.

What are we going to monitor?

Access to employment;
Access to education;
Access to public transport.

‘The Government wants to improve access to opportunities, and to enable individuals and communities to realise their potential.’

DfT Accessibility planning guidance

making it happen

To help achieve the objectives, a rolling programme of transport schemes and initiatives will be identified each year. This will entail working to ensure that all individual Strategies are in alignment in order to improve delivery across all sectors.

The overall cost of implementing the transport schemes and initiatives contained within the strategy will be several million pounds over a period of years. Funding will need to come from local, public and private sector resources, alongside national investment.

Whilst sources of funding include the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, Maintenance Block, ITB, Regional Growth Fund, DfT Major Schemes, Highways Agency, rail franchises, Network Rail, the Local Transport Plan, NHS funding and SERCO, there is a need to boost the investment from these and other sources, and potential new avenues of funding will be explored. Key components of the Strategy such as sustainable travel to school are at risk if funding streams are not identified, to further progress the work that is currently being undertaken in our schools. It's vital that the benefits derived from these schemes are available to future generations.

We will ensure that land use and transport policy are complementary. All potential development sites will be assessed for their contribution to reducing the need to travel and improving transport choices. We will seek contributions from developers where these are considered necessary and appropriate.

Throughout the life of the Strategy all construction projects will be undertaken by the following contractors, who following a rigorous competitive tendering process, have been successfully appointed to deliver transportation and highway improvement projects within the borough.

Birse Civils
Fitzgerald Civil Engineering Contractors
G.F. Tomlinson
Jackson Civil Engineering
Tarmac



what we will deliver

The following is a list of projects that will be delivered within the Strategy period.

SMARTER CHOICES

Project: Walsall Council staff travel plan

Description: A new travel plan for the Council to embrace elements of smarter choices

When: by 2012

Where: Walsall Council

Project: Transport and Health Partnership

Description: Continuing to work with the local health services to develop a strong partnership that sees transport continue to play a key role in addressing the obesity problem within Walsall

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Borough-wide

Project: Safer journeys to school

Description: Develop training initiatives to encourage more sustainable ways of travelling to school

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Schools borough-wide

Project: Promoting the use of public transport

Description: Working with Centro to promote and increase and encourage the use of public transport

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Borough-wide

Project: Improving the Public Rights of Ways in Walsall

Description: Implementing the action plan for the Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Borough-wide

ROAD SAFETY

Project: Speed Management Review on A& B Roads

Description: A review of speeds on all A&B Roads

When: by 2011

Where: Borough-wide

Project: Speed Management Review of all other roads

Description: A review of speeds on all C and Unclassified roads

When: by 2013

Where: Borough-wide

Project: Encouraging more walking and cycling

Description: Working with all partners to encourage more walking and cycling in Walsall

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Borough-wide

Project: Black Country Route Keyway Improvement scheme

Description: To improve road safety and traffic movements at this location

When: 2011

Where: Willenhall

BUS AND TAXIS

Project: Walsall town centre interchange

Description: Developing a major scheme for improving public transport links in Walsall

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Walsall

Project: Coach stopping facilities

Description: Incorporating improvements for coaches as part of town centre interchange

When: 2010 - 2014

Where: Walsall

PARKING

Project: Variable message signs
Description: Introducing variable message signs to reduce time spent seeking parking spaces
When: by 2012
Where: Walsall

Project: Bus lane enforcement
Description: The use of enforcement powers to reduce bus lane infringements
When: by 2013
Where: Borough-wide

AIR QUALITY

Project: Freight Partnerships
Description: Engaging with freight companies regarding air quality issues pertaining to freight
When: 2010 - 2014
Where: Walsall town centre

Project: Encouraging the improvements to bus fleets
Description: Working with bus operators to improve their fleet in order to reduce emissions
When: 2010 - 2014
Where: Borough-wide

Project: Encouraging bus priority
Description: Working with Centro to promote and sustain the use of public transport
When: 2010 - 2014
Where: Borough-wide

ROAD AND TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENTS

Project: Darlaston Strategic Development Area
Description: Improving key conditions in the area to create receptive conditions for new investment in business and jobs
When: by 2014
Where: Darlaston and Pleck wards

Project: A454 Wolverhampton Road Red Route
Description: Improve the flow of traffic, improve road safety, reduce noise and journey times for buses and general traffic
When: 2011
Where: Wolverhampton Road, Walsall

Project: A34 North Red Route
Description: Improve traffic flow, bus journey times and address peak time congestion along Bloxwich High Street
When: 2011
Where: Walsall, Bloxwich

Project: A4148 Broadway Red Route
Description: Improve Journey times and road safety
When: 2011
Where: Walsall

Project: Highways and bridge maintenance
Description: Continuing programme of maintenance
When: 2010 - 2014
Where: Borough-wide

Project: A461 junction improvements
Description: Improve the flow of traffic along a key route into Walsall town centre
When: by 2013
Where: Main junctions along the A461

PROJECTS IMPACTING ON WALSALL

Project: Birmingham Box Managed Motorway

Partner: Highways Agency

Description: This project includes hard shoulder running and Automated Traffic Management on the region's motorways. It is intended to improve traffic flow at peak times, thereby reducing congestion.

Project: High Speed Two (HS2)

Partner: Central Government

Description: This project aims to project a high speed link from London to Birmingham cutting the journey time to 45 minutes. If HS2 is constructed it will be imperative for Walsall to have a fast, efficient link to one of the Birmingham HS2 stations. Therefore, during the strategy period 2010 - 2014, the Council will work with its partners to plan this.

Project: Walsall to Five Ways (via Birmingham) Sprint (Bus) Rapid Transit link

Partner: Birmingham City Council, Centro

Description: This project aims to introduce a high quality rapid transit link between Walsall and Birmingham along the A34 and then on to Five Ways. It would be a bus based system using current and new bus lanes to give a reliable service on high quality tram-like vehicles but at a lower cost.

Project: Stourbridge to Walsall freight line

Partner: Centro, Network Rail, Freight Operators, West Midlands Local Authorities

Description: The reinstatement of the Stourbridge to Walsall line for freight will free up space on the rest of the West Midlands rail network for more passenger trains. It is an important cross regional link which will also

allow freight trains to avoid the heavy climb of the Lickey incline where they can hold up Passenger trains as they climb the gradient. More free capacity on the local network will allow greater rail connectivity for Walsall station.

Project: Airport Runway Extension (and associated transport improvements)

Partner: BIA and all regional local authorities

Description: Scheme to expand capacity for long haul flights to land at Birmingham International airport. Works include rerouting the A14 to make room for the expansion and improved public transport links to the airport ie: Birmingham International Rail station improvements.

Project: Camp Hill Chords

Partner: Network Rail, Centro and Midlands Local Authorities's

Description: Installation of Chord line which will give greater flexibility as to where trains terminate in Birmingham. Currently some trains can only get to Snowhill/ Moor street and some to New Street. These chords will help to make it interchangeable and relieve some of the capacity constraints at New Street allowing at least 6 trains an hour to Walsall.

Project: New Street Gateway

Partner: Centro, Network Rail, Birmingham City Council

Description: Passenger capacity at New Street station in Birmingham is currently restrictive. At times it is way over capacity and can be a safety concern. When the capacity is increased trains can be lengthened and consequently more people can get into Birmingham by public transport and in a more comfortable environment than on the currently overcrowded trains.

future aspirations

In this Strategy we have set out the framework within which we will progress transport schemes over the period 2010-2014.

The emphasis will be on following the principles set out by Central Government which point towards using transport to support economic growth and regeneration within Walsall, whilst encouraging healthy, and safe lifestyles for the residents of the borough.

In the medium to long term (post 2014) Walsall will continue to maintain and improve its road network, and look to work with partners to improve local rail services. It will also work on schemes to strengthen its links with the surrounding boroughs, looking to progress high quality road, heavy rail and rapid transit links with Birmingham, the Black Country Boroughs and neighbouring towns in South Staffordshire such as Cannock and Lichfield. These links will encourage the regeneration of Walsall with improved access to new developments such as the Gigaport, Waterfront, Darlaston Strategic Regeneration Area, the new Manor Hospital and Walsall College.

These future transport schemes are set out in regional documents such as the Black Country Joint Core Strategy, and the West Midlands Rail Development Plan and will be funded through a variety of sources such as the WMLTP 2/3, as well as other innovative sources of funding as and when they become available from private investors or UK/EU funding streams.

The schemes in this document are not a definitive list and the Council will look to progress new projects where evidence shows that they will improve Walsall's transport system so that it is supporting and enhancing the regeneration of the Borough.

If you would like pass on any comments about Walsall Transport Strategy 2010 – 2014, be involved in future consultations or get more information about Transport in Walsall generally, then please contact the address below. We will be pleased to hear from you.

Strategic Transportation
Regeneration Directorate
Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall WS1 1DG

t. 01922 65 25 50
e. strategy1014@walsall.gov.uk