

Green highlighting = reference to a specific section or another document

Yellow highlighting = reminder, query or acknowledgment that text needs to be updated

Agenda item 6b

Cabinet – 10 February 2021

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme

Portfolio: Councillor Adrian Andrew, Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Highways and Transport

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

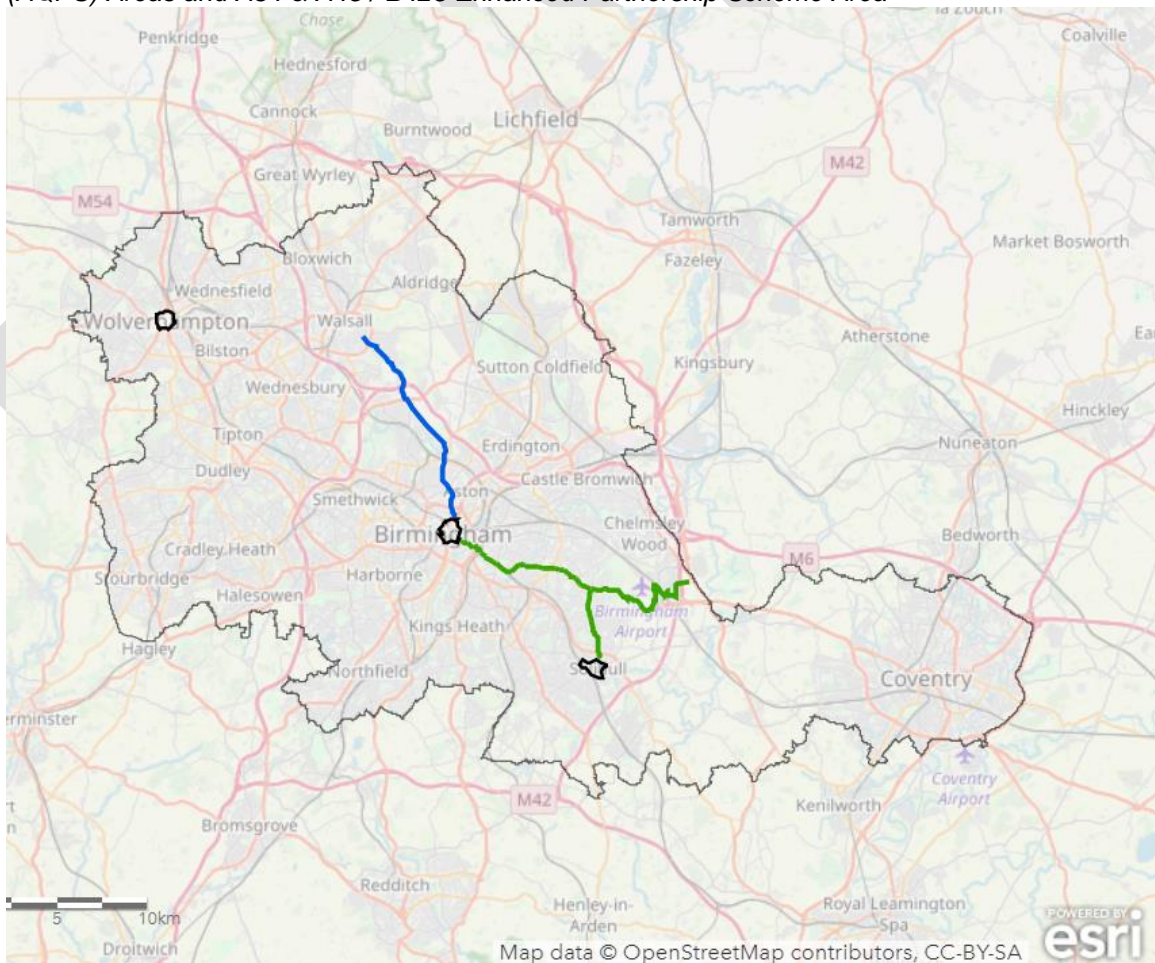
- 1.1 The improvement of bus services across the West Midlands through an improvement plan for the whole of the West Midlands Combined Authority area and a more-detailed improvement scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 that will allow the subsequent implementation of SPRINT (bus rapid transit) services standards, including along the A34 between Walsall town centre and Birmingham city centre.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Bus Services Act 2017 inserts new powers in the Transport Act 2000 (the “TA 2000”) to enable formal arrangements for partnership working between bus operators, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and local authorities in the West Midlands (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton) through an Enhanced Partnership (EP). An EP is a strategic document which sets out a clear vision of the envisaged improvements (known as an ‘Enhanced Partnership Plan’) and accompanying actions to achieve them (set out in one or more ‘Enhanced Partnership Schemes’). An EP Plan cannot exist without at least one EP Scheme and vice-versa. The delivery of the EP Plan and Schemes is based on the agreed ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’ published by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). TfWM will lead on the EP Plan and Schemes for the West Midlands on behalf of the seven constituent authorities and the WMCA.
- 2.2 The ‘Strategic Vision for Bus’ prepared by TfWM sets out the objective to achieve modal shift by providing exceptional service and reliability along with comfort and accessibility. It was adopted by the WMCA Board on the 9th November, 2018.

- 2.3 The EP will be used as a mechanism to deliver the 'Strategic Vision for Bus'; an EP Plan will cover the whole of the West Midlands and there will be a single EP Scheme for the initial SPRINT routes (A34 and A45 / B425), which will be operated as one single cross-conurbation service (Walsall – Birmingham – Solihull/Airport).
- 2.4 The introduction of these SPRINT Phase 1 corridors by 2022 provides a major opportunity for investment by the public and private sector to achieve a step-change in public transport that will set the foundations for benefits and improvements across the integrated transport system throughout the region.
- 2.5 Two SPRINT routes (A34 and A45) have been identified by TfWM as a priority to facilitate the transport element of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. Delivering Phase 1 of these routes in time for the Commonwealth Games is a commitment that has been made to the Commonwealth Games Federation, and the EP Plan and Scheme is the chosen mechanism to deliver this.
- 2.6 WMCA approved a revised phasing plan (over two phases) for the A34 and A45 SPRINT routes at the WMCA Board meeting on 14 February 2020, and approved the funding for A34 Phase 1 (£32.4m) and A45 Phase 1 (£55.4m). Phase 1 works are to be delivered by June 2022, and Phase 2 works by December 2024, with the latter phase subject to a separate funding approval (and any associated highway approvals).

Figure 1: West Midlands Enhanced Partnership Plan Area, Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS) Areas and A34 & A45 / B425 Enhanced Partnership Scheme Area



- 2.7 TfWM undertook a review of the new statutory powers and opportunities set out in the TA 2000 in order to assess the most appropriate mechanism to ensure the timely delivery of the first two SPRINT schemes ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games, whilst protecting the significant investment levels being made by the authorities and potential operator(s).
- 2.8 The TA 2000 provides local transport authorities, local authorities and bus operators with new powers to enable improvements to be made to services in their area. The new arrangements as set out in the TA 2000 (as amended by the Bus Services Act 2017) which are Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes, Enhanced Partnership and Franchising. The details of each arrangement and their differences are summarised below as follows: -
- 2.9 Advance Quality Partnership Scheme (AQPS)
- An area-based statutory partnership replacing Quality Partnerships
 - Minimum five-year duration
 - The Local Transport Authority commits to bus facilities and measures
 - The Local Transport Authority can prescribe vehicle standards, payment methods, information and publicity requirements
 - The Local Transport Authority can additionally prescribe maximum fares and service frequency/timing, but only if there are no 'admissible objections' from relevant operators
- 2.10 Subject to consultation, AQPS will be available where the local transport authority is satisfied they will: -
- Contribute to implementing local transport policies; and
 - Improve service quality; or
 - Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution; or
 - Increase, or prevent decline in, patronage.
- 2.11 Enhanced Partnership (EP)
- An EP is a new statutory-based partnership to facilitate the Local Transport Authority, local authorities and the majority of their bus operators to work together to improve local bus services;
 - It includes a clear vision of improvements that the EP is aiming for which is set out in the EP Plan and accompanying actions to achieve them;
 - The EP Plan cannot exist on its own and must be accompanied by one or more EP Schemes;
 - Can be indefinite, varied and/or revocable;
 - There is no mandatory requirement for the Local Transport Authority to commit bus facilities or measures. The Local Transport Authority can prescribe not only the same characteristics as an Advanced Quality Partnership Scheme but also entitlement passes, on-bus information equipment, vehicle and ticket appearance, ticketing arrangements (including multi-operator ticket prices, timetable change windows and other scheme facilitating arrangements);
 - Plans and schemes cannot be made where a 'sufficient number' of 'operators of qualifying local services' object.

- 2.12 Subject to consultation, EP Plans will be available where the local transport authority is satisfied they will: -
- Improve service quality or effectiveness; or
 - Reduce/limit congestion, noise or air pollution.
- 2.13 An EP places a legal duty on all members of the partnership including the Local Authority to deliver against commitments made to facilities, measures and performance standards.
- 2.14 Franchising
- Replaces Quality Contracts;
 - Initially available only to Mayoral Combined Authorities;
 - Enables granting of an exclusive right to operate specified local services on specified terms (including frequency, fares and standards) and which may include public authority payments;
 - Service permits may be granted to others to operate in a franchise area if it benefits local service users in the area and 'will not have an adverse effect' on franchised services.
- 2.15 Subject to consultation, Franchising will be available where a Mayoral Combined Authority has: -
- Compared a franchising proposal to 'one or more other courses of action';
 - Assessed the proposal following a 'consideration' of a five-case business case covering strategic fit, value for money, feasibility, affordability, and deliverability;
 - Obtained an independent audit of the quality of its assessment (information and analysis) and compliance with guidance.
- 2.16 The case for Franchising, an AQPS and an EP has been considered and assessed by TfWM and their conclusion was presented at WMCA Board on 28th June 2019. The assessment concluded that AQPS legislation does not provide the level of protection for local authorities and bus operators when considering the value and scale of investment. In addition, franchising was not considered suitable based on the ability to deliver it within the required timescale, but it should also be noted that franchising would also likely not have been recommended or suitable for such a small geographical area e.g. a corridor route. Based on this assessment, TfWM have concluded that the most suitable mechanism for delivering and managing SPRINT ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games is through an EP.
- 2.17 The creation of the EP Plan requires approval from all the local authorities within the West Midlands Combined Authority area.
- 2.18 The EP Scheme requires approval from the local authorities through which the qualifying bus services operate.
- 2.19 In light of the recommendation below, Cabinet is asked to note the Transport for West Midlands intention to make an Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme in order to deliver improvements to bus travel as outlined in 'Strategic Vision for Bus'

and deliver SPRINT in the A34 and A45 corridors in advance of the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

- 2.20 Cabinet is asked to note that elsewhere on the agenda it has been asked to approve A34 SPRINT Phase 1 infrastructure works, which will implement the first phase of facilities and measures set out in the EP Scheme for the A34 corridor within Walsall. The SPRINT Phase 1 capital investment will provide the initial facilities and measures that Walsall Council is obligated to deliver by the EP Scheme for the A34 corridor.
- 2.21 The making of the EP Plan and EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425, together with the A34 SPRINT Phase 1 investment, will provide the confidence to bus operating companies to invest in the necessary vehicles for the relevant commercially operated bus routes as required by the EP.

3 Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Cabinet: -

- 3.1.1 Agree to make the Enhanced Partnership Plan annexed as **Appendix A**, which has been successfully tested by an operator objection process and public consultation exercise concluding in November 2020.
- 3.1.2 Agree to make the Enhanced Partnership Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 annexed as **Appendix B**, which has been successfully tested by an operator objection process and public consultation exercise concluding in December 2020.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1 As stated above, the case for franchising, AQPS and EP has been considered by TfWM and Walsall officers.
- 4.2 Officers from both TfWM and Walsall have concluded that there are several compelling reasons why an EP compared to franchising and an AQPS is the preferable mechanism to deliver SPRINT for the following reasons: -
- The ability to manage access to infrastructure by SPRINT and other services as the council is able to make commitments under the EP scheme by the provision of facilities and measures;
 - The powers to set maximum frequencies or restrict access to only SPRINT vehicles on individual route sections (which cannot be achieved with an AQPS);
 - The flexibility to trigger a review of the EP at certain points of the EP lifetime (whereas an AQPS has a minimum five-year lifespan);
 - The ability to develop additional EP Schemes at a later date in the region if they are deemed an appropriate mechanism without having to create a new EP Plan;

- Supports the timescales for the operating model where commercial operators are required to procure the vehicles for use on the service;
 - Provides clear accountability for all partners including bus operators; and
 - An EP scheme can be implemented for a specific route, rather than a geographic area.
- 4.3 TfWM have prepared an EP Plan that covers the whole of the West Midlands Combined Authority¹ area excluding the three existing AQPS areas (Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres and Solihull town centre). An EP and AQPS cannot operate alongside each other in the same geographical area. The guidance '*The Bus Services Act 2017 New powers and opportunities*' prepared by the Department of Transport on the 2017 Act states that if an authority is unsure of the geographical area to include at this stage, it recommends including the entirety of the authority's area – as this links to the powers to request information from operators set out in the TA 2000.
- 4.4 On 17th July 2019, TfWM issued a notice of intention to prepare an EP. From this time, formal discussions have taken place with both local authorities and local bus operators. No significant objections were received during the notice period.
- 4.5 On 4th November 2019 TfWM sought approval to consult on the EP Plan from the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee. This then allowed TfWM to issue a notice that an EP Plan and EP Scheme have been prepared. The Local Bus Operation Objection Mechanism Period for both the Plan and Scheme were successfully completed in 2020.
- 4.6 Following the Local Bus Operation Objection Mechanism Periods, a formal public consultation commenced on 6 July 2020 and closed on 13 September 2020. The EP Plan was unaltered following this consultation. The EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 was modified in line with the consultation feedback.
- 4.7 Transport Delivery Committee (which is a WMCA sub-committee) reviewed the consultation outcomes and give approval to 'make' the EP Plan and a modified EP Scheme. A further operator objection process was then undertaken for the modified EP Scheme and this successfully concluded in December 2020.
- 4.8 The EP Plan provides the framework to contribute towards meeting the nine objectives set out in the '*Strategic Vision for Bus*': -
- UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
 - Fully integrated bus network, including demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting interchange with rail, coach and Metro to form one network.
 - Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
 - Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.

¹ As defined in the West Midlands Combined Authority Constitution

- Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long-held barriers and perceptions.
- Accountable network performance management, tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
- World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
- All young people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
- Evolve a network to support a 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.

4.9 The Plan provides the backdrop for specific EP Schemes that will detail actions and developments to be taken jointly by partners to deliver a marked improvement in bus services on certain corridors or in defined areas that will help meet the above objectives, particularly by speeding-up bus journey times and improving journey time reliability. Such schemes may be suggested and promoted by TfWM, constituent local authorities or bus operators.

4.10 The actions, requirements and commitments to achieve improvements within the Plan are then set out in one or more accompanying EP Schemes. For the first two SPRINT routes, it is proposed that there is a single EP Scheme. The fact that an EP Plan is made for the region allows for the exact geography of the EP Scheme and the corridor to be agreed and determined through the preparation of the EP. This will be particularly helpful when looking at boundaries around connecting bus services and adjacent routes, as well as the Plan itself.

4.11 Within each EP Scheme the details of the infrastructure commitments, service specification and standards, customer standards, performance requirements and maintenance are agreed between partners – the EP Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 is annexed as **Appendix B**. Further explanation of the EP Plan and Schemes can be found in the Public Consultation booklet at **Appendix C**. The local authority will commit to provide and maintain facilities and measures – please refer to **Appendix B** for details.

4.12 TfWM have been the lead organisation on discussions with operators and preparing the EP. Once the EP Scheme is made, Walsall Council will be under a legal obligation to provide and maintain facilities and measures as set out in the EP Scheme's schedules – please refer to **Appendix B, Section 3 for an overview and Appendix B, Schedule B for details**. The facilities and measures to be provided by the Council under the Scheme are as follows: -

- New and existing bus lanes
- Bus gates
- Pedestrian crossing upgrades
- Traffic signal upgrades.

- 4.13 The commitment made by the Council to provide the facilities and measures set out in the EP scheme is a legal obligation which will remain binding on the Council for the duration of the scheme, until such time it is varied to remove the obligation.

Council Corporate Plan priorities

- 4.14 The EP Plan and Scheme support the Council's vision that '*Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised*' as set out in the Corporate Plan 2018-2021. The EP Plan and Scheme will facilitate better public transport services on the A34, which will help delivery against the Council's priorities, including: -

- Economic growth for all people, communities and businesses;
- People have increased independence, improved health, and can positively contribute to their communities;
- Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.

Risk management

- 4.15 Failure to secure approval would have an impact on the deliverability of the Sprint schemes either in achieving the timescales set out or in achieving the standards and levels of protection for the investment.

Financial implications

- 4.16 The costs for preparing, consulting and making of the EP for Walsall Council will be met by the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 4.17 The capital costs of delivering the SPRINT schemes will be met by West Midlands Combined Authority. The total estimated cost of A34 Phase 1 is £32.4m, with £22.1m from WMCA funding and £10.3m from other central government contributions. (A45 Phase 1 has a cost of £55.4m with £20.2m of WMCA funding and £35.2m of other central government funding.) Phase 2 costs for the combined (A34 and A45) scheme are estimated at £50.3m. Phase 1 is fully funded. Phase 2 is subject to further funding being approved by WMCA.
- 4.18 Costs associated with the EP Schemes are agreed through the development and finalisation of those projects. For equipment assets delivered as part of the Sprint scheme (e.g. bus lane enforcement cameras, traffic signal equipment), equipment is being purchased with a maintenance package for the upkeep of such assets for a period aligned to the Enhanced Partnership Scheme.
- 4.19 Obligations on Walsall Council regarding the EP Scheme will be as follows: -
- Maintenance of highways will be in line with the Council's current reactive and planning maintenance procedures and will be managed within existing budgets;
 - Maintenance of bus lane enforcement cameras post the initial maintenance period will be between £2,500 and £3,500 per year per site for four sites, which has no committed budget at present;

- Maintenance cost of bus priority equipment at traffic signals post the initial maintenance period will be up to £750 per year per site for seven sites, which has no committed budget at present.

4.20 Any rapid electric vehicle re-charging infrastructure subsequently installed as part of the SPRINT scheme will be owned and maintained by WMCA/TfWM, at nil cost (both capital and revenue) to the Council.

Legal implications

4.21 The Bus Services Act 2017 (the “2017 Act”) amends the TA 2000 by inserting the new provision.

4.22 The TA 2000 provides Local Transport Authorities with a new wide range of powers to improve the local bus market, which includes franchising and two forms of partnership working.

4.23 Sections 113C – 113O of the TA 2000 now creates AQPS, which is a new mechanism based around the existing Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS) set out in s114 of the TA 2000.

4.24 Under the Quality Partnership Model a local transport authority (‘LTA’) (or two LTA’s acting jointly agrees to invest in facilities at specific locations along bus routes (e.g. bus stops or bus lanes) and the operator who wished to use those facilities undertake to provide a service of a particular standard (e.g. new buses or driver training standards). Only those operators prepared to provide the facilities to the standard specified in the Scheme are permitted to use the facilities.

4.25 The new AQPS model is more flexible than a QPS. Under AQPS, schemes can continue to be route- or corridor-specific, cover a larger network of routes, or even a geographical area. AQPS allows an LTA to specify requirements as to ticketing arrangements, information provided to passengers, and provisions about how bus services are marketed and publicised. It also removes the requirement that local authorities should always provide facilities and introduces the new concept of local authority ‘measures’ that can be taken to directly or indirectly encourage bus use.

4.26 In a franchising scheme, LTAs will determine the details of the services to be provided, where they run and the standard of the service. Typically, bus operators provide their services under contract to the LTA. No other services can operate in franchised areas without the agreement of the franchising Authority.

4.27 The EP powers are contained in Sections 138A-138S of the TA 2000. An EP is an agreement between a LTA and local bus operator to work together to improve bus services. It includes a clear vision of the improvements that the EP is aiming for (known as the EP Plan) and accompanying actions to achieve them (the EP Scheme).

4.28 In meeting, the statutory requirements an EP Plan should include at least include: -

- A map of the geographical area it covers;

- All the relevant factors that the parties consider will affect, or have the potential to affect, the local bus market over the life of the plan;
- A summary of any available information on passengers' experiences of using bus services in the area and the priorities of users and non-users for improving them;
- A summary of any available data on trends in bus journey speeds and the impact of congestion on local bus services;
- What outcomes need to be delivered to improve local bus services in the plan area; and
- What overall interventions the partnership believes need to be taken to deliver those outcomes.

4.29 Section 138 A and 138 H the TA 2000 impose legal requirements in relation to EP Schemes and the Scheme must state: -

- The area to which it relates;
- The requirements imposed on local bus services under it;
- Whether the operation of the scheme is to be reviewed and, if so, how and by which dates;
- The date on which it is to come into operation; and
- The period for which it is to remain in operation.

4.30 Section 138 of the TA 2000 also provides that the scheme must: -

- Specify the 'facilities' (if any) that are to be provided by the authority (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the scheme comes into operation);
- Specify the 'measures' (if any) that are to be taken by the authority (and the date from which they are to be provided if it is not the date when the scheme comes into operation); and
- Include provision (if any) about its variation or revocation (including any dates on which they come into force or cease to apply).

4.31 The LTA must comply with the notice requirements set out in S138 F and S138 G, which relate to the intention to make and prepare EP Plans and Schemes.

Under Section 138 A (10) of the TA 2000, an EP Plan may not be made unless the authority or authorities are satisfied that the scheme will contribute to the implementation of: -

- (a) The Policies set out in the related EP Plan, and
- (b) The Local Transport Policies.

4.32 In addition, an EP Scheme may not be made unless the authority or authorities are satisfied that the scheme will: -

- (a) Bring benefits to persons using the Local services in the whole or any part of the area to which the scheme relates by improving the quality or effectiveness of those services; or
- (b) Reduce or limit congestion, noise or air pollution.

4.33 The commitments made by the by the authority or by a bus operator once a formal EP is made are legally binding. An authority that does not fulfil its obligations can face legal action by the bus operators in the Courts. Likewise, an operator not meeting its service standards could be in breach of its bus service registration and face its bus registration being cancelled by a traffic commissioner.

4.34 Under Section 138(11) of the TA 2000, an EP Plan or EP Scheme may not be made unless the authority or authorities have complied with the requirements in:

- (a) Section 138F (preparation, notice and consultation), and
- (b) Section 138 G (1) to (4) (making of plan and scheme).

4.35 Further under s138 (12) an EP Plan may not be made without also making an EP Scheme.

4.36 If a Local Authority includes any facilities or measures under a scheme they have a legal obligation in accordance with s138 J of the TA 2000: -

- Provide the facilities and take the measures not later than the date(s) specified in the Scheme; and
- Continue to provide those facilities and take those measures throughout the lifetime of the scheme or until a scheme is varied to remove the obligation to do so.

The only exception to this rule is if: -

- The scheme is formally postponed ; or
- If the local authority is temporarily unable to provide a facility or take a measure due to circumstances beyond their control.

4.37 The LTA has formal responsibility for making the Scheme, but at set points in the process they can only proceed with the proposals if they have the support of a defined number of bus operators on the expiry of the objection periods.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

4.38 There are no procurement implications.

Property implications

4.39 There are no property implications.

Health and wellbeing implications

4.40 The EP Plan has been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-

- Giving every child the best start in life – *the EP will see bus-based schemes deliver measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes. Schemes will also positively improve air quality throughout the borough.*
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *the EP goal is to deliver bus-based sustainable travel which help promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
- Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved public transport networks help people access employment and training opportunities;*
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all – *access to paid employment is facilitated by improved public transport networks;*
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *schemes delivered through the EP all promote and assist with active travel and travel by public transport, which support sustainable places and communities;*
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling to and from bus based public transport routes, can help prevent ill health, as well as positively impacting on improving air quality.*

Staffing implications

4.41 There are no staffing implications.

Reducing Inequalities

4.42 WMCA have undertaken a Stage 1 initial analysis of the equalities implications and there are no concerns that the proposal affects or could affect people differently or that the needs of certain groups would not be met. This has been reviewed by Walsall Council officers who are satisfied with the assessment. The Equality Impact Assessment is available at **Appendix D**.

Consultation

4.43 The WMCA Board gave approval for TfWM to give notice of its intention to prepare an EP Plan for the area of the West Midlands Combined Authority and an EP Scheme for the initial SPRINT routes (A34(N) and A45 / B425), on behalf of its constituent authorities, on the 28th June, 2019.

4.44 It was a legal requirement that formal consultation took place on the Plan and Scheme with at the least the following statutory consultees: -

- All local bus operators
- Passenger Organisations
- Other Local Authorities affected by the proposals
- Traffic Commissioners
- Chief of Police for the West Midlands
- Transport Focus
- Competition and Markets Authority
- Any other person as WMCA sees fit

- 4.45 TfWM issued the notice of intent to prepare an EP Plan for the area of the West Midlands Combined Authority and an EP Scheme for the first SPRINT routes (A45 and A34) on 17th July, 2019.
- 4.46 Following the preparation of the EP and operator objection periods, formal consultations on the prepared EP Plan and EP Scheme for A34(N) and A45 / B425 were undertaken and led by TfWM, on behalf of the WMCA's constituent authorities, and this process concluded in November 2020 for the EP Plan and December 2020 for the modified EP Scheme.

5. Decide

- 5.1 As discussed in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2, options for the best mechanism to deliver the first two SPRINT schemes ahead of the 2022 Commonwealth Games have been fully explored.
- 5.2 Cabinet is asked to agree to make the EP Plan and EP Scheme, as both the resolution of objections and the consultation process have now successfully concluded for the EP Plan and the EP Scheme.
- 5.3 Granting this authority will not in itself give the Council authority to proceed with SPRINT, but to prepare and ultimately deliver the legislative framework under which the SPRINT scheme will be delivered and subsequently managed.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Following the formal discussions stage and the preparation of a Plan, it is for operators of qualifying services within the EP area to determine whether the next stage of the process can go ahead – in this case to a formal consultation exercise. The legislation requires that any objection should be made within the deadline set by the authority – but this deadline cannot be less than 28 days after the date on which the notification was sent.
- 6.2 Assuming that the operator objection stage does not raise sufficient objections to meet either of the two criteria outlined in the legislation, the next stage is a formal consultation exercise. Consultation is an important element in the delivery process and TfWM prepared a consultation strategy, which was agreed by the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee. Following the objection stage, consultation must be undertaken for a minimum eight-week period, consulting the statutory consultees and the wider public and bus passengers.
- 6.3 Once the consultation exercise has completed and the responses have been properly analysed, and the necessary changes made, the authority must decide whether to 'make' the Plan and Scheme ('make' being the legal term for finalising the content of both and then implementing the requirements of the scheme 'on the ground').
- 6.4 This can be on the basis of the plan to be put to consultation, or a modified version of either that takes into account the responses to consultation. If a modified version is to be made, the authority must inform all operators of qualifying local

bus services of the intention to proceed with a modified version and that will be subject to a further operator objection period.

- 6.5 Once the objection process has been completed and if there are not sufficient objections to prevent the Plan being made, the authority can then make the Plan. The date that the Plan are made are for the authority to determine.
- 6.6 The same process to that described above will also be undertaken for the EP Scheme. This process for both the Plan and Scheme could be undertaken concurrently, which is what is now proposed.

7. Review

- 7.1 As part of developing the EP Plan and subsequent Scheme, how the Scheme is to be monitored, managed and what the triggers are for variation and revocation have been agreed.

Appendices

Appendix A – Enhanced Partnership Plan (TfWM)

Appendix B – Enhanced Partnership Scheme for the A34(N) and A45 / B425 (TfWM)

Appendix C – Enhanced Partnership Public Consultation Booklet (TfWM)

Appendix D – Enhanced Partnership Equality Impact Assessment (TfWM)

Background papers

WMCA Board Paper 'Vision for Bus Next Steps – Part B. Enhanced Partnership for Sprint', 28th June 2019.

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