

Cabinet – 20 March 2024

West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew, Deputy Leader & Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Place & Environment (Highways, Transport & Operations)

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1. The delivery of a programme of transport capital projects in 2024/25 that supports the implementation of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP), City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), and Active Travel Fund (ATF) objectives in various locations across Walsall.

2. Summary

2.1. The Department for Transport (DfT) awards transport capital grant funding to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to help deliver regional transport objectives. The WMCA then distributes this grant funding to the component metropolitan districts to be used to implement the LTP and CRSTS in their area.

2.2. Walsall Council utilises the grant funding it receives to deliver the highway maintenance programme and the Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP) programme comprising three main sub-programmes: major scheme development; strategic transportation; and road safety and active travel. WMCA holds Walsall Council to account for how this funding is utilised.

2.3. This report sets out the proposed LNIP capital programme for 2024/25 based on a Cabinet approved (12 December 2012) prioritisation process.

2.4. Highway maintenance funding is used in accordance with the council's highway asset management framework. The programme aims to use a combination of preventative maintenance and structural repairs to maximise the lifespan of the highway network. The highway maintenance programme is determined on an annual basis using a Cabinet approved (18 March 2015) scheme prioritisation

matrix. The 2024/25 highway maintenance programme will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration in March 2024, based on advice from the Director – Place & Environment.

- 2.5. In view of the recommendations below, Cabinet is asked to note the West Midlands 2024/25 capital grant allocations for highway maintenance and LNIP programmes as set out at Table 1 in Section 4 of this report and the grant funding awards for the development of CRSTS and ATF projects as also set out at Section 4. Further, Cabinet is asked to note that the £120k Promotion of Community Health and Safety council-funded budget is part of the capital programme for 2024-25 to 2027-28 approved at a meeting of Full Council on 24 February 2024, and that these funds are allocated to individual highway schemes within the transport capital programme as set out in this report.
- 2.6. As the transport capital programme for 2024/25 will have a significant impact on two or more wards within the borough, the recommendations below constitute a key decision.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approves the Walsall Council Transport Capital Programme 2024/25 funding of £5.635m as set out at Table 2 in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approves the utilisation of the Local Network Improvement Plan element of the grant funding for 2024/25 (£1.563m) as described in paragraphs 4.45 and 4.46 of this report and **Appendices A to F**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2023/24 to the 2024/25 programme.
- 3.3. That Cabinet approves the utilisation of the Promotion of Community Health and Safety – council capital funding for 2024/25 (£0.12m) as set out in **Appendix A**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2023/24 to the 2024/25 programme.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to manage any required changes to the 2024/25 Local Network Improvement Plan and Promotion of Community Health and Safety capital programme, including amending individual scheme budgets (within the overall programme budget); adding new projects (to replace or part-replace other projects that can no longer be delivered); and managing carry forward, to maximise the use of the grant.
- 3.5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to negotiate on its behalf with the West Midlands Combined Authority and government departments to maximise the values of future financial resources allocated to the council in pursuit of its transport priorities, including signing relevant agreements and contracts for schemes which are approved within the Walsall LNIP transport capital programme 2024/25.

- 3.6. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of grant agreements relating to the development of City Region Sustainable Transport fund projects, including the A41/A4038 Moxley to Walsall Town Centre Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor project.
- 3.7. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of grant agreements relating to the development and delivery of Active Travel Fund projects, including the Willenhall Pinson Road to Rose Hill Cycle Scheme.
- 3.8. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to approve the final highway designs to be implemented for the Willenhall Pinson Road to Rose Hill Cycle Scheme.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. The West Midlands LTP sets out the transport strategy for the metropolitan area. The LTP is currently being refreshed by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). The core strategy was approved at WMCA Board in February 2023; six ‘big moves’ were approved for public engagement at the same time; and area strategies (including a Black Country area strategy) are currently being developed and are expected to be finalised later in 2024.
- 4.2. The Walsall Transport Strategy ‘*Transport in Walsall*’ was approved by Cabinet in September 2017 and will help to deliver the LTP by focusing public and private funding towards areas/schemes which require it most. This local strategy will be updated to reflect the LTP area strategy for the Black Country once that document has been developed and approved later in 2024.
- 4.3. Combined authorities are designated as the ‘accountable bodies’ for local transport plans and the government funding allocated to deliver them. The DfT allocates transport capital grant funding to implement the LTP. Since April 2022 this has been through a five-year capital settlement to March 2027 (CRSTS) aimed at supporting the region in delivering a sustainable transport investment programme. The fund is overseen by DfT and provides an opportunity to plan transport investment over a longer time horizon than has previously been possible.
- 4.4. Funding of £1.050billion was confirmed in April 2022 and a five-year programme (2022-27) was subsequently approved in July 2022. In 2023 the DfT gave all mayoral combined authorities receiving CRSTS funding the opportunity to make changes to their approved CRSTS capital programme, in recognition of the effects of high levels of inflation in recent years. Amendments to the CRSTS

programme were approved by WMCA Board in September 2023 and (at the time of writing) DfT approval is still awaited.

- 4.5. The re-baselined CRSTS programme extends the original £1.05billion programme to a £1.21billion programme, because DfT have allowed overprogramming to be included to cover the risk of some projects failing to draw down all allocated CRSTS funding by the end of the 2022-27 settlement period.
- 4.6. CRSTS is the only significant source of capital transport funding for the region until March 2027. Each named scheme that is brought forward through the CRSTS programme must demonstrate as appropriate: -
 - Alignment with the LTP and national CRSTS funding objectives
 - Direct benefits to cycling and active travel (including consideration of Local Transport Note 1/20)
 - Direct benefit to public transport and in particular bus travel
 - Support measures for behaviour change, road safety and network resilience
- 4.7. The CRSTS fund is operated through, and fully compliant with, the WMCA Single Assurance Framework (SAF). However, WMCA have implemented a simplified approval process for highway maintenance and Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP) funding.
- 4.8. Highway maintenance capital grant is a five-year funding component of CRSTS, which is delivered by the local highway authorities (LHAs). An annual allocation is confirmed by the WMCA Board in-line with the overall five-year programme allocation.
- 4.9. LNIP transport capital grant funding is used to develop and implement a variety of transport schemes by LHAs. Delivery must align to the LTP and CRSTS objectives. An annual allocation is confirmed by the WMCA Board in-line with the overall five year programme allocation.
- 4.10. The WMCA monitors each district's transport capital programme to ensure that they are using funds to deliver the aims and objectives of the West Midlands LTP and CRSTS, and that funding is used in line with government grant conditions. In response to this, the council has prioritised its proposed 2024/25 LNIP programme against LTP objectives in line with its adopted appraisal and prioritisation process.
- 4.11. In addition to DfT funding, the council directly fund a further £2.8million of council capital in highway maintenance. Investment is prioritised in accordance with the council's highway asset management framework, which is reviewed on an annual basis and due to be refreshed in 2024/25. Further ad hoc highways and transport investment is secured through the following mechanisms: -
 - Section 278 agreements, which allow third parties to fund works to the existing public highway, usually as part of a new development.

- Section 38 agreements, which have been used more recently to secure funding from developers to complete outstanding highway works on unfinished developments.
 - Section 106 agreements, which can be used to secure developer contributions to improve highways and transport infrastructure.
 - Successful Strategic Investment Board bid for £700k to support highway maintenance in 2023/24.
- 4.12. Although rare, the council also considers offers from third parties to fund or jointly fund highway improvements. These are assessed on case-by-case basis to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the road network and that the council is not impacted financially or otherwise, such as costly maintenance liabilities.
- 4.13. Key achievements delivered through, or supported by, the LNIP and highway maintenance capital programme in 2023/24, include: -
- Substantial completion of a congestion-busting scheme at M6 junction 10, with scheme delivery undertaken by a contractor employed by National Highways (the council's project partner).
 - Further progress relating to the re-opening of the Walsall to Wolverhampton rail line, which includes two new stations at Darlaston (James Bridge) and Willenhall. Also, development of projects to support local highway access to these new station sites, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and bus users.
 - Continued engagement with the West Midlands Rail Executive relating to the re-opening of the Walsall – Aldridge rail line, including work to prepare an outline business case.
 - Walsall's CRSTS highway maintenance grant allocation, together with additional DfT pothole funding and the council capital budget for highways maintenance, supported with funding through the Strategic Investment Board has been used to deliver 11,200m² of footway resurfacing and reconstruct 71,100m² of carriageway, including B4210 Bloxwich Lane, B4590 Bilston Lane, Ashmore Lake Way and Western Way. In addition to this, the council will have delivered 19,100m² of micro-surfacing on footways and 59,500m² of preventative maintenance on carriageways, including works on A461 Lichfield Road and B4210 Broad Lane.
- 4.14. Highway projects that are currently being developed by Walsall Council for anticipated future delivery with CRSTS funds include (all projects are subject to business case and other approvals): -
- A41/A4038 Moxley to Walsall Town Centre Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
 - A454 Walsall to Wolverhampton Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
 - Bus, Cycle and Walk Access: Darlaston and Willenhall Train Stations

- Bus, Cycle and Walk Access: Walsall Town Centre Interchange (initial scheme development only during the 2022-27 programme)
- 4.15. Other projects led by TfWM include new train stations at Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge, and A34 SPRINT Phase 2. There are also area-wide schemes being developed and delivered in conjunction with TfWM and neighbouring councils, including the Black Country walking and cycling programme (a longer term plan for a fully connected walking and network, which aligns with the We are 2040 outcome of 'by 2040 Walsall will be a cycling borough with a network of cycling routes') and a regional programme of electric vehicle charging.
- 4.16. The A41/A4038 Moxley to Walsall Town Centre Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor scheme has been developed to the strategic outline case (SOC) stage using capital grant funding from LNIP and Transforming Cities Fund (TCF). The SOC was approved by WMCA in December 2023 and the scheme has been awarded CRSTS grant funding of £450k for the development of an outline business case (OBC) in 2024.
- 4.17. The government is also boosting funding for active travel schemes across the UK and there is a nationwide ambition to promote more sustainable forms of transport, such as walking and cycling. To take full advantage of this government funding for active travel schemes, Walsall Council and City of Wolverhampton Council are working in partnership to provide a safe connection for pedestrians and cyclists between Wolverhampton and Walsall.
- 4.18. On 24 March 2023 the government announced that Walsall Council had been awarded £2.85million of Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4) for a new cycle route and pedestrian/public realm improvement scheme to comprise of a segregated and shared use cycleway between Pinson Road and the Rose Hill/Bilston Lane junction as well as improvements to the pedestrian infrastructure.
- 4.19. The cycle route will link in with a wider plan to make a dedicated cycle route between Wolverhampton and Walsall. The route will complement other transport investment including the new Willenhall Rail Station, the Noose Lane to Pinson Road cycle scheme (cross-boundary scheme included within the ATF3 programme) and the Rose Hill/Bilston Lane junction improvements (included within the Levelling Up Fund Tranche 2 – Willenhall City Garden programme).
- 4.20. The scheme has been designed in line with national guidance to make cycling more direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive for both new and experienced cyclists. The scheme proposals include: -
- New segregated cycle route – where possible the cycle route will include a 2m wide cycleway providing two-way movement (the maximum width that can be accommodated at this location within the highway boundary), separate from motorised vehicles and pedestrians.
 - New shared cycle route – where highway space is limited a new shared use facility for pedestrians and cyclists will be provided.

- New cycle and pedestrian crossing facilities – two new signalised crossings on Rose Hill are proposed, one adjacent to the new Willenhall Rail Station and one south of Tyler Street.
- Improved bus stop/bus lane – the bus stop and short priority bus lane on the southwest side of Dale Island will be improved with the existing bus shelter relocated and upgraded.

4.21. The proposed route is shown in **Appendix G**.

4.22. The ATF4 funding is to be committed by March 2024, with construction to be complete by March 2025. Officers are now working closely with external consultants to produce designs for the scheme. Once design development is complete, the designs will be shared with all stakeholders and public consultation will be undertaken. The scheme designs will then be amended in line with the consultation outcome and the scheme will be constructed in the period to March 2025.

Delivering a 2024/25 Local Network Improvement Plan programme

4.23. Table 1 in Section 4 of the report sets out the budget allocations for transport capital funding available to the West Midlands metropolitan districts and TfWM in 2024/25.

4.24. Table 2 in Section 4 of the report sets out the budget allocations for transport capital funding available to the council in 2024/25.

4.25. The proposed split of funding as per Table 3 in Section 4 of the report will allow the council to support the development of future major scheme business cases to give the council the best opportunity to attract implementation (delivery) resources; and allow the council to continue to deliver a robust road safety and sustainable travel programme that addresses local transport needs and concerns.

4.26. The Strategic Transportation Team utilise their proportion of LNIP transport capital funding to develop and deliver ‘major’ and ‘strategic’¹ schemes which meet the aims and objectives of the LTP and bring benefit to transport networks in Walsall.

4.27. Determining which strategic schemes are selected for development and delivery in Walsall is based on the output of a spreadsheet-based tool which scores potential schemes against the LTP aims and objectives, therefore making the selection non-subjective. This method of prioritisation was approved at Cabinet in December 2012.

4.28. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed LNIP transport capital programme for 2024/25, together with any confirmed complementary transport capital funding.

¹ ‘Major schemes’ have traditionally been defined as those schemes over £5m in value (although post-2015 this threshold was removed). In this context, ‘strategic schemes’ are significant schemes, but below the £5m threshold e.g. large junction improvement schemes.

Appendix B sets out the appraisal results for the strategic schemes proposed for inclusion in this programme.

- 4.29. The Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team use an agreed appraisal methodology to rank and determine which schemes are delivered from their allocation of LNIP funds. This methodology relies upon the use of collision data records provided by West Midlands Police. This is supplemented with a range of additional locally determined data (e.g. road speeds) providing the council with a strong basis to rationalise their decision-making and provide confidence to the WMCA and DfT that the capital funding resources are being used appropriately.
- 4.30. Funding for local safety schemes and sustainable travel schemes will be awarded on a priority basis as set out in **appendices C to F**. It will not be possible to fund all the schemes detailed during 2024/25. Schemes have been prioritised and the identified reserve schemes will be considered for any funding which becomes available during the year.

Essential specialist services

- 4.31. As part of the development of major and strategic transport schemes, it has been identified that essential specialist services such as structural engineering, land acquisition, environmental impact assessment or traffic modelling services may be required, where there is no current availability in-house or via existing shared services with other local authorities.
- 4.32. At times it may be necessary to utilise appropriate authorised frameworks in line with the council's contract rules. It is proposed that use of these framework contracts is an efficient way of procuring the necessary specialist support services to help the delivery of future major transport schemes.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.33. LNIP transport capital grant funding is allocated to the council to deliver the LTP, which supports the council's priority to 'reduce inequalities and make the most of potential' as set out in the Council Plan 2022/25. Further, it underpins delivery against the council's priorities, including: -
- **Economic** – to enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.
 - **People** – to encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.
 - **Communities** – to empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.
- 4.34. Improving the safety of the transport network and the security of people using the network are important considerations in the development and delivery of transport schemes and the overall composition of the capital programme. To

date the council has performed well, when compared to others nationally, in reducing the numbers and severity of accidents on the borough's roads.

- 4.35. Environmental and safety factors are considered in the development and delivery of transport schemes. Care will be taken in the detailed design of schemes to minimise direct impacts on the local environment; where appropriate schemes will be subject to an environmental impact assessment. The LTP has been subject to a strategic environmental assessment.
- 4.36. As future schemes are progressed, the council will be identifying good practice for adapting to, and mitigating the effects of, climate change and promoting environmental and economic sustainability.

Risk management

- 4.37. The principal risk to council is that if the LNIP transport capital grant funding allocated from WMCA is not spent or committed within the financial year there is a risk that any under spend may be 'clawed back' or future year allocations reduced. Utilising the Cabinet-approved prioritisation process allows better management of the programme and provides accountability at a regional level for those schemes selected for development and delivery.
- 4.38. There is a risk that if future grant funding is significantly reduced or removed altogether, it will be necessary to undertake a review of the Highways, Transport & Operations service. Continued evidence of delivery of the transport capital programme helps to mitigate against this risk, as does the greater certainty brought about through the multi-year CRSTS award.
- 4.39. A further risk is that of the continued failure to increase revenue funding to support the maintenance and operating costs of capital investment. This has been a concern raised by the DfT in previous years and has not been addressed due to the severe financial pressures on council revenue budgets. It is possible that DfT may reduce future capital settlements if it cannot be demonstrated that the council has appropriate procedures and resources for future maintenance of transport assets.
- 4.40. There is a risk that if any spend on the projects within the proposed Walsall LNIP transport capital programme 2024/25 become abortive and do not meet the criteria for capitalising spend, then that element of cost may have to be repaid to the programme by the council from revenue funding, for which there is no existing budget. This is a risk associated with all multi-year capital funding programmes, but without taking such a risk there would be no ability to develop the necessary programme of transport projects. This risk is mitigated by the fact all schemes in the plan are aligned to the LTP and have been assessed as having a remote risk of becoming abortive, although Cabinet should note that this risk cannot be removed completely.
- 4.41. The way CRSTS and other transport funding is allocated by government and WMCA impacts on the council's ability to deliver the priorities set by Cabinet. The council risks losing out on resource allocations if it is not successful in

lobbying and negotiating a favourable position. Officers of the council will seek to secure the position of our agreed transport priorities within both the government's and the WMCA's programmes, together with the appropriate funding.

Financial implications

- 4.42. It is expected that the LNIP transport capital grant funding and highway maintenance grant funding is received in advance from WMCA i.e. annual payment to be made each April. This is a capital grant and all spend incurred must meet the eligibility criteria for capital accounting.
- 4.43. The capital grant funding settlement is a final determination confirmed by the DfT and WMCA Board acceptance and approval. This is shown in Table 1.

Table 1 – West Midlands LNIP and Highways Maintenance Allocations 2023/24 and 2024/25

Block	Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s)	Budget allocation 2024/25 (£000s)
Local Network Improvement Plan transport capital grant	21,500	21,500
Highway maintenance capital grant	30,283	26,666

- 4.44. Further to this, the WMCA confirmed the allocation per metropolitan district after 'top-slicing' for West Midlands joint initiatives. The council's 2024/25 transport capital programme is set out at Table 2.

Table 2 – Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 and 2024/25

Project/Programme	Carry forward from 2022/23 (£000s)	Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s)	Total budget 2023/24 (£000s)	Spend to date 2023/24 (£000s)	Forecast carry forward* (£000s)	Budget allocation 2024/25 (£000s)
Local Network Improvement Plan capital grant	971	1,563	2,534	1,444	402	1,563
Promotion of Community Health and Safety - council capital funding	116	120	236	43	115	120
Bridge strengthening capital grant	0	239	239	116	0	239
Highways maintenance capital grant	0	1,732	1,732	1,587	0	1,732

Project/Programme	Carry forward from 2022/23 (£000s)	Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s)	Total budget 2023/24 (£000s)	Spend to date 2023/24 (£000s)	Forecast carry forward* (£000s)	Budget allocation 2024/25 (£000s)
Pothole capital grant	0	1,598	1,598	1,413	0	1,598
Pothole Action Fund	0	536	536	0	0	0
Highways maintenance capital grant: Network North**	0	383	383	0	0	383
Total	1,087	6,171	7,258	4,603	517	5,635

*Final carry forward will not be confirmed until early in the 2024/25 financial year. Carry forward from 2023/24 is required to support the ongoing delivery and management of risks for multi-year, multi-funded schemes (e.g. York's Bridge).

**awarded for the first time in 2023/24 (in-year) following the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2.

Allocation of transport capital grant funding

4.45. Walsall's LNIP transport capital grant funding is split between three headline programmes: -

- Major scheme development and delivery programme (managed by the Strategic Transport Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)
- Strategic transportation programme (managed by the Strategic Transport Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)
- Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Programme (managed by the Road Safety Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)

Table 3 – Current and proposed capital allocations by sub-programme (excluding carry forward)

	2023/24 (£000s)	2024/25 (£000s)
Major Scheme Development & Delivery Programme	235	235
Strategic Transportation Programme	528	528
Road Safety & Sustainable Travel Programme	800	800
Total	1,563	1,563

4.46. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed overall LNIP transport capital programme for 2024/25, together with any confirmed complementary transport capital funding. **Appendix B** sets out the appraisal results for the strategic schemes proposed for inclusion in this programme. **Appendices C to F** provide detail of how the component local safety schemes and active travel schemes have been appraised and prioritised for development and delivery within this programme.

West Midlands and Black Country transport programme

- 4.47. Whilst it is anticipated that LNIP transport capital funding resources will be available to develop and implement capital transport schemes until 2026/27 (grant determination confirmed) and beyond, there is always a small risk that these resources will not be available e.g. should a government emergency budget rescind these commitments. This would impact on staff in the Strategic Transport Team; Road Safety Team; and Major Projects & Minor Improvements (all Economy, Environment & Communities Directorate), some of whose activities in developing and implementing projects is legitimately capitalised through engineer assistants' time (EAT). If sufficient grant funding were not made available to the council by the DfT and WMCA, relevant council services would need to be reorganised with the risk that a small number of redundancies may be necessary. This would require the council to consider how it would deliver its statutory duties in the absence of this funding.
- 4.48. If government and/or WMCA increases or reduces future LNIP transport capital funding allocations beyond 2026/27 for the council, the allocation of resources to programmes and projects will be reviewed accordingly. Financing major scheme implementation costs in line with agreed funding profiles will have priority.

Legal implications

- 4.49. The council has various options by which to procure services, including calling off civil engineering frameworks, using the highways maintenance term contract or a council-run procurement exercise to engage contractors to carry out work required in the implementation of the capital programme. All works will be evidenced by a written contract in a form approved by the Director of Governance or by a call-off from a suitable framework and shall be made and executed in accordance with the council's contract rules. This may require the council to engage external legal support. Should any legal implications arise during any procurement process, they will be considered and reported to the Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board and managed in accordance with the agreed delegations to officers.
- 4.50. In its role as highway authority, the council has a statutory duty to identify and implement measures to address congestion and road safety concerns on the local highway network and to maintain the network in a safe condition. LNIP and highways maintenance grant funding is used in part to address these obligations.
- 4.51. Where any specific project requires the acquisition of land (by agreement or compulsorily) the council's Legal Services Team will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers and there may be a need to engage external legal support if compulsory acquisition of land is necessary.

Procurement implications/social value

- 4.52. Any contractual arrangements must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (if applicable) and the council's contract rules. The council's Procurement and Legal Services Teams will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers to ensure that mini tenders and call-offs from any frameworks are conducted in compliant ways and that all contracts for schemes procured under this capital programme will be validly entered into before any services are provided to the council.

Property implications

- 4.53. All projects contained within the programme will either be delivered on land and assets already owned and managed by the council, or on land acquired (by agreement or compulsorily) for the purpose of project delivery. Where necessary, agreements will be in place for the use or enhancement of third party land.
- 4.54. Each project will assess the implications on land and assets and a view will be taken by either the highways authority or the asset management function of the council as to how any proposed enhancements or scheme designs impact on the council's land portfolio, and how any impacts can be mitigated or managed.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.55. The programme aims to make sustainable travel – cycling, walking and public transport – available to all residents and stakeholders, and ultimately seeks to align with the Walsall Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 to 2025) and objectives. For example, a transport system that is accessible, reliable and affordable contributes to mental wellbeing. It provides access to work, friends and family, as well as health-promoting facilities such as schools, parks and greenspaces, libraries and health centres.
- 4.56. The programme also aligns with the aspirations of the town centre master plan to promote the town centre as a healthy location that can be enjoyed by all people across Walsall.

Reducing inequalities

- 4.57. As part of the delivery of the LTP consideration has been given to ensuring that the needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. Further, the LTP was subject to an equalities impact assessment, which informed the final published core strategy document.
- 4.58. The transport capital programme will assist in improving facilities for all modes of transport; plans will focus on improving access to key services and facilities such as education, job opportunities and health care facilities.

Staffing implications

- 4.59. There are no intended implications on staffing by prioritising projects in the manner described in this report. However, it should be noted that LNIP transport capital funding helps support existing posts in the Highways, Transport & Operations service because work programmes are managed by the Strategic Transportation Team and Road Safety Team. A significant proportion of legitimate scheme development (e.g. design and business case work) and supervision costs (i.e. managing contractors delivering improvements on behalf of the council) are also incurred by transport planners and engineers via a timesheet management system.
- 4.60. As set out above, if future grant funding is significantly reduced or removed altogether, it will be necessary to undertake a review of the Highways, Transport & Operations service. This could result in a small number of staff that currently deliver statutory duties being potentially 'at risk' of redundancy. Delivery of statutory duties by the council are prescribed by legislation and must be delivered irrespective of any budgetary constraints.

Climate impact

- 4.61. Tackling and responding to climate change are at the heart of the LTP. To address the big social, economic and environmental issues we face, the objectives in the LTP core strategy are framed around five 'motives for change' where changing transport could help better support inclusive growth by providing a transport system that is fair to everyone and minimises the impacts on the environment.
- **Sustaining economic success:** Support the building of an inclusive and green West Midlands economy, through better use of existing infrastructure, land, technology and sustainable transport options.
 - **Tackling the climate emergency:** Changes to where people travel to / from, reducing the frequency of travel and changing the vehicles we use to travel.
 - **Creating a fairer society:** How land is used, the availability and affordability of transport and the experience and usability of transport.
 - **Supporting local places and communities:** Re-imagining local neighbourhoods, reducing dominance of transport and providing quick and easy access to key local services.
 - **Becoming more active:** Enable safe, convenient and accessible walking and cycling opportunities and increase active travel for journeys.
- 4.62. The LTP consequently states that there are three key changes needed in our transport system: -
- **Improve accessibility**, particularly for those without access to a car.
 - **Reduce traffic** thereby supporting economic and environmental objectives.
 - **Electrify the transport system** and enable the utilisation of less polluting vehicle technologies.
- 4.63. Six 'big moves' are the basis for realising these changes: -

- **Behaviour change for the better** e.g. improving pedestrian and cycling infrastructure that will encourage people to undertake short journeys by active modes.
- **Growth that helps everyone** e.g. ensuring the highway network maintains access for all road users thereby helping to promote and sustain economic growth.
- **Safer streets to walk and wheel** e.g. improving footways, cycle routes and street lighting promotes road user safety.
- **Public transport that connects people and places** e.g. reliable and frequent bus and train services to connect people to jobs, healthcare, shops, leisure and other opportunities across Walsall and the wider West Midlands.
- **A resilient transport network** e.g. the maintenance and safe operation of highway assets that enables resilience in the transport network for all road users.
- **Delivering a green revolution** e.g. delivering transport infrastructure and services that help promote more sustainable opportunities for travel and support the local green economy.

- 4.64. To complement capital investment, it is acknowledged that there needs to be alignment of revenue funding for activation of new assets i.e. cycling and walking infrastructure, and to enable and influence people to use this infrastructure. Developing active travel infrastructure must therefore be alongside targeted support, promotion, and changes in policy to ensure it is used by those that partners want to reach e.g. those who are inactive.
- 4.65. Efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions include encouraging the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles through the provision of charging infrastructure (charge points and transit stations) and promoting sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport) with appropriate infrastructure, services and promotional activity.
- 4.66. The five-year capital settlement (CRSTS) from the DfT further incentivises local authorities to actively promote sustainable modes by only funding capital schemes that can demonstrate that they are placing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and bus users ahead of other road users. Guidance to local authorities published in July 2021 highlights the importance of carbon reduction, the need to develop schemes in accord with Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design, and the importance of helping deliver against the objectives set out in the National Bus Strategy ('Bus Back Better').

Consultation

- 4.67. The LTP has been the subject of wide consultation with partners and stakeholders. A consultation paper ('green paper') was published in summer 2021; the core strategy was consulted on in 2022; the six 'big moves' were consulted on in 2023; and area based strategies are now being prepared. Partners and stakeholders are consulted with respect to individual transport projects.

- 4.68. The West Midlands authorities have been commended for the comprehensive nature of involvement in developing previous LTP strategies and when consulting on transport schemes.
- 4.69. Local consultation always takes place as part of individual scheme development.

5. Decide

- 5.1. The options for the make-up of the LNIP transport capital programme have been considered as part of the assessment of potential projects/programmes as set out in Section 4 above. The output of the appraisal of the various project ideas and suggestions is reported in **Appendices B to F**. The projects that are selected are those that have the best alignment with the LTP objectives and emerging area strategy for the Black Country; are supported locally; are affordable (or have the potential to lever-in other implementation funding, such as government grants); and are deliverable.
- 5.2. The appraisal processes utilised in the development of the programme ensure that it is compiled objectively and maximises the impact of limited transport capital funding by seeking to attract implementation funding from various other sources.
- 5.3. The proposed programme has been consulted upon amongst council officers who are responsible for various technical disciplines and has been developed in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

6. Respond

- 6.1. The delivery of the agreed programme will be taken forward by project and programme managers within the council's Highways, Transport & Operations service in the Economy, Environment & Communities Directorate.
- 6.2. The LNIP transport capital programme is a rolling programme of activity that supports the delivery of the LTP within the borough of Walsall, and many projects and programmes operate across several financial years and have multiple funding arrangements. Some key projects span different local authority boundaries e.g. corridor-based programmes and are delivered in partnership with relevant stakeholders e.g. Transport for West Midlands, Network Rail, West Midlands Rail Executive, National Highways, Canal & River Trust, West Midlands Trains, bus operating companies, and neighbouring local authorities.
- 6.3. Officers of the council attend various regional meetings and technical groups to ensure that projects are delivered in a coherent and consistent manner across the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.

7. Review

- 7.1. The LNIP transport capital programme is monitored by a group of council officers that meet at least every two months to review progress and consider any recommendations to be put forward to the Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board, which is made up of senior officers and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.
- 7.2. The Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board meets at least every two months (aligned to the officer meetings) and considers performance against intended progress at regular intervals throughout the financial year. The board can make decisions about remedial action; budget virements; and project full or partial completion.
- 7.3. The effectiveness of projects and programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis and is reflected in key data e.g. traffic counts; public transport patronage figures; air quality monitoring. The council's monitoring activity is also supported by regional monitoring and reporting undertaken by the WMCA.

Appendices

Appendix A – Walsall Council Local Network Improvement Plan Transport Capital Programme 2024/25

Appendix B – Strategic Scheme Appraisal Results 2024/25

Appendix C – Local Safety Scheme Ranking 2024/25

Appendix D – Promotion of Community Health and Safety 2024/25

Appendix E – Safer Routes to School Scheme Ranking 2024/25

Appendix F – Measures to Encourage Walking 2024/25

Appendix G – Willenhall Pinson Road to Rose Hill Cycle Scheme route

Background papers

- Walsall Transport Strategy 'Transport in Walsall' 2017
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Submission, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 14 January 2022
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 18 March 2022
- West Midlands Local Transport Plan 'Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands' – Final Core Strategy and draft Big Moves and draft Area Strategy Guidance, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 10 February 2023
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement re-base proposal, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 15 September 2023

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8 March 2024



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Deputy Leader & Portfolio Holder
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8 March 2024