

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24

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 2023/24 that supports the implementation of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) 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 the objectives of the LTP and the WMCA City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). 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 highways 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. The WMCA holds Walsall Council to account for how this funding is utilised.
- 2.3. This report sets out the proposed LNIP capital programme for 2023/24 based on a Cabinet approved (12 December 2012) prioritisation process.
- 2.4. The highway maintenance programme is determined on an annual basis using a Cabinet approved (18 March 2015) scheme prioritisation matrix.

- 2.5. In accordance with the Council's approach to 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 2023/24 structural highway maintenance programme will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration in March 2023, based on advice from the Head of Highways, Transport & Operations.
- 2.6. In view of the recommendations below, Cabinet is asked to note the West Midlands 2023/24 capital grant allocations for highways maintenance and LNIP programmes as set out at Table 1 in Section 4 of this report. Further, that the £120k Promotion of Community Health and Safety council-funded budget is part of the capital programme approved at a meeting of Full Council on 23 February 2023.
- 2.7. As the LNIP capital programme for 2023/24 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 2023/24 funding of £5.252m 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 2023/24 (£1.563m) as described in paragraphs 4.40 and 4.41 of this report and **appendices A to G**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2022/23 to the 2023/24 programme.
- 3.3. That Cabinet approves the utilisation of the Promotion of Community Health and Safety – Council capital funding for 2023/24 (£0.12m) as set out in **Appendix A**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2022/23 to the 2023/24 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 2023/24 Local Network Improvement Plan 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 Transport Capital Programme 2023/24.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. The West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for the metropolitan area, together with an implementation plan. The exiting plan – known as ‘Movement for Growth’ – was approved by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) in December 2015 and was subsequently adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in 2016. The LTP is currently being refreshed by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the various components of the new plan (a core strategy, six ‘big moves’, area strategies and guidance) are all expected to be approved by WMCA Board in 2023.
- 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-based strategy for the Black Country once that document has been developed and approved later in 2023.
- 4.3. Combined authorities are designated as the ‘accountable bodies’ for local transport plans and the government funding allocated to deliver them.
- 4.4. For several years the Department for Transport (DfT) has awarded Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) capital grant funding to the WMCA to help deliver against the LTP objectives. The WMCA then distributed this grant funding to the component metropolitan districts to be used to implement the LTP in their area. From 2015 an element of ITB was top-sliced nationally and pooled in the Local Growth Fund. In the Black Country, this pooled funding was administered by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership from 2015 to 2023.
- 4.5. Further, in 2016 it was agreed at the WMCA Board that a 15% ‘ring fence’ of the ITB funding would establish development funding for local authorities to take forward key named schemes. Since that time this development funding has been allocated to support the delivery of major schemes in Walsall such as the M6 Junction 10 highway improvements scheme.
- 4.6. This process of allocating transport capital grant funding changed with the introduction of City Region Sustainable Transport Fund (CRSTS) funding from April 2022. CRSTS is a five-year capital settlement to March 2027 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.
- 4.7. The headline allocation advised to WMCA in autumn 2021 was £1.050bn, resulting in £788m new money to the region. DfT confirmed this award in April 2022 and a five-year programme (2022-27) was subsequently confirmed in July 2022.

- 4.8. DfT have stated that CRSTS will be 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 (current and emerging) 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
- 4.9. The CRSTS fund is operated through, and fully compliant with, the WMCA Single Assurance Framework (SAF). However, WMCA have also implemented a simplified en bloc approval process for HMB and LNIP funding.
- Highways maintenance block is a £120.4m (5-year) funding component of CRSTS, which will be delivered through the local highway authorities (LHAs). Each LHA will lead on any procurement in line with public sector procurement guidelines. An annual monitoring report will be required (as per DfT guidance) from each LHA setting out how the funding has been spent and how the condition of the network has improved. These will be compiled to form a regional view as part of the overall CRSTS monitoring and reporting. An annual allocation is confirmed by the WMCA Board in-line with the overall five-year programme allocation.
 - Local network improvement plan capital funding is used to develop and implement a variety of transport schemes by LHAs. WMCA monitoring reflects the typically low complexity/low risk projects and often reactive nature of the works undertaken with this funding. A single WMCA SAF application was processed by TfWM for the full £107.5m 5-year allocation, allowing it to be released in annual grants to each constituent LHA. A signed declaration is required by each local authority section 151 officer with a funding agreement setting out delivery reporting requirements. This includes basic quarterly financial returns and a short annual monitoring report against a standardised format. This sets out what has been delivered across the West Midlands, supported by a small number of case studies showing how delivery aligns to LTP and CRSTS funding objectives, as well as proposed delivery for the next period. These are compiled to form a regional view as part of the overall CRSTS monitoring and reporting. 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. (Previously the BCLEP also monitored the programme to ensure alignment with the Black Country Growth Deal.) In response to this, the Council has prioritised its proposed 2023/24 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 £2.8m 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 2023/24. 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.
 - One-off bids for grant funding such as the £3.2m secured from the DfT Challenge Fund in 2020/21.
- 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 the current year's (2022/23) LNIP and highways maintenance capital programme, include: -
- Ongoing delivery of a congestion-busting scheme at M6 junction 10, including the construction of new bridges and retaining walls.
 - 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, with land acquisition and site clearance now evident.
 - Continued engagement with the West Midlands Rail Executive relating to the re-opening of the Walsall – Aldridge rail line, including the preparation of an updated strategic outline business case.
 - Walsall's HMB allocation, together with the DfT Incentive Fund and Council capital budget for highways maintenance has been used to deliver 4,500m² of footway resurfacing and reconstruct 68,700m² of carriageway, including Reedswood Way, Wolverhampton Road West and Stubbers Green Road. In addition to this, the Council will have delivered 7,800m² of micro-surfacing on footways and 71,500m² of preventative maintenance on carriageways, including works on A452 Chester Road and Livingstone Road.

Delivering a 2023/24 local network improvement plan programme

- 4.14. 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 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) in 2023/24.
- 4.15. Table 2 in Section 4 of the report sets out the budget allocations for transport capital funding available to the Council in 2023/24.
- 4.16. 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.
- 4.17. 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 the Walsall transportation system.
- 4.18. 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.
- 4.19. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed LNIP transport capital programme for 2023/24, 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.
- 4.20. 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.
- 4.21. Funding for local safety schemes and sustainable travel schemes will be awarded on a priority basis as set out in **appendices C to G**. It will not be possible to fund all the schemes detailed during 2023/24. Schemes have been prioritised and the identified reserve schemes will be considered for any funding which becomes available during the year.

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.

- 4.22. The Council is progressing a major transport scheme at York's Bridge to construct a new single span concrete bridge and road alignment to be constructed immediately to the east of the existing bridge. Norton Road is classified as a district distributor road and the Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to ensure it is accessible for local, commuter and commercial traffic. This means the road needs to be able to cater for traffic up to the national weight limit of 44 tonnes.
- 4.23. The proposed bridge to be constructed is 40m long and will carry two-way traffic on a 7.3m wide carriageway with a 2m wide footway on the west side. There will be 2m minimum headroom between the bridge and towpath and 3.1m minimum between the bridge and canal. (The existing bridge will be retained as an access route to the cottages on Pelsall Common Local Nature Reserve and the Fingerpost Public House.)
- 4.24. The scheme cost estimate is £4.7m but the actual cost will be subject to a framework contract mini-tendering process. To help meet the cost of the scheme, released funding of £500k that had been reserved for M6 junction 10 major transport scheme risk and contingency is proposed to be allocated to this bridge scheme and fully utilised in 2023/24.
- 4.25. Work is currently taking place for the preparation of the tender documents. It is envisaged that a mini tender will be undertaken through the Black Country Framework with the contractors on lot 3. Key programme dates are set out below.
- Publish mini tender on Intend: early-March 2023
 - Tender evaluations: mid-April 2023
 - Award contract: late-July 2023
 - Works commencement: late-August 2023
 - Project completion: late-spring 2025

Essential specialist services

- 4.26. 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.
- 4.27. 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

- 4.28. LNIP transport capital grant funding is allocated to the Council to deliver the LTP, which supports the Council's priority to 'minimise inequality and maximise potential for all' 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.
- 4.29. 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.
- 4.30. 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.
- 4.31. 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

- 4.32. 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.
- 4.33. Paragraph 4.44 sets out the risk on staffing if grant is significantly reduced or removed in future years.
- 4.34. 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.

- 4.35. There is a risk that if any spend on the projects within the proposed Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 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.
- 4.36. 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

- 4.37. It is expected that the LNIP transport capital grant funding and highways 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.
- 4.38. 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 2022/23 and 2022/24

| Block | Budget allocation 2022/23 (£000s) | Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s) |
|--|--|--|
| Local Network Improvement Plan transport capital grant | 21,500 | 21,500 |
| Highways maintenance capital grant | 24,080 | 24,080 |

- 4.39. Further to this, the WMCA confirmed the allocation per metropolitan district after 'top-slicing' for West Midlands joint initiatives. The Council's 2023/24 transport capital programme is set out at Table 2.

Table 2 – Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2022/23 and 2023/24

| Project/Programme | Carry forward 2021-22 (£000s) | Budget allocation 2022/23 (£000s) | Total budget 2022/23 (£000s) | Spend to date 2022/23 (£000s) | Forecast carry forward* (£000s) | Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s) |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Integrated Transport Block | 1,333 | n/a | 1,333 | 1,270 | 0 | 0 |
| Local Network Improvement Plan transport capital grant | 0 | 1,563 | 1,563 | 0 | 986 | 1,563 |
| Promotion of Community Health and Safety - Council Capital Funding | 11 | 120 | 131 | 6 | 55 | 120 |
| Bridge strengthening | 154 | 239 | 393 | 293 | 0 | 239 |
| Highways maintenance | 0 | 1,732 | 1,732 | 1,195 | 0 | 1,732 |
| Pothole Action Fund | 0 | 1,598 | 1,598 | 1,481 | 0 | 1,598 |
| Total | 1,498 | 5,252 | 6,750 | 4,245 | 1,041 | 5,252 |

*Final carry forward will not be confirmed until early in the 2023/24 financial year. Carry forward from 2022/23 is required to support the ongoing delivery and management of risks for multi-year, multi-funded schemes (e.g. York's Bridge).

Allocation of transport capital grant funding

4.40. Walsall's 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 programme (excluding carry forward)

| | 2021/22 (£000s) | 2022/23 (£000s) | 2023/24 (£000s) |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Major Scheme Development & Delivery Programme | 206 | 235 | 235 |
| Strategic Transportation Programme | 525 | 528 | 528 |
| Road Safety & Sustainable Travel Programme | 560 | 800 | 800 |
| Total | 1,291 | 1,563 | 1,563 |

- 4.41. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed overall LNIP transport capital programme for 2023/24, 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 G** provide detail of how the component local safety schemes and sustainable travel schemes have been appraised and prioritised for development and delivery within this programme.

West Midlands and Black Country transport programme

- 4.42. Since April 2015, government funding for major transport schemes and a proportion of other transport capital funding has been pooled in the Local Growth Fund, which in the Black Country is controlled by the BCLEP. This Local Growth Fund programme has elements that will continue to be delivered in 2023/24.
- 4.43. The Black Country Local Growth Fund programme includes an allocation of £37.79m (over a multi-year period, which is soon coming to an end) towards the £78.0m cost of scheme implementation at M6 J10, which is currently at its final stages of being delivered and due to complete in spring 2023 (local roads) and summer 2023 (motorway).
- 4.44. Whilst it is anticipated that LNIP transport capital funding resources and additional Local Growth Fund 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.
- 4.45. 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

- 4.46. 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.

- 4.47. 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 HMB grant funding is used in part to address these obligations.
- 4.48. 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

- 4.49. 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

- 4.50. 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.
- 4.51. 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

- 4.52. 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.

- 4.53. 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.
- 4.54. The Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 has also been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-
- Giving every child the best start in life – *the programme includes measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes, which is part of a rolling programme across the Borough;*
 - Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *measures to promote sustainable modes help promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
 - Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved 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 transport networks;*
 - Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *the programme includes active travel, public transport and road safety measures, which all support sustainable places and communities;*
 - Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling, can help prevent ill health.*

Reducing inequalities

- 4.55. 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 document.
- 4.56. 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

- 4.57. 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.
- 4.58. As set out in paragraph 4.44, if future grant funding is significantly reduced or removed altogether, it will be necessary to undertake a review of the 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

- 4.59. 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 new 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.
- 4.60. The LTP states that there are three key changes needed in our transport system to make this happen: -
- Improve accessibility (particularly for those without access to a car)
 - Reduce traffic
 - Electrify the transport system
- 4.61. Efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions include encouraging the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles through the provision of charging infrastructure (chargepoints and transit stations) and promoting sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport) with appropriate infrastructure, services and promotional activity.
- 4.62. The 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

- 4.63. The LTP has been the subject of wide consultation with partners and stakeholders. Major public consultation was undertaken in summer 2015 on the existing strategy documents, further consultation was undertaken in 2022 on the new LTP core strategy, and consultation is also now underway on the LTP 'big moves' and the guidance for area based strategies. Partners and stakeholders are consulted with respect to individual transport projects.
- 4.64. The West Midlands authorities have been commended for the comprehensive nature of involvement in developing previous LTP strategies and when consulting on transport schemes.
- 4.65. 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 paragraphs 4.16 to 4.21 above. The output of the appraisal of the various project ideas and suggestions is reported in **appendices B to G**. The projects that are selected are those that have the best alignment with the (current and emerging) LTP objectives; 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 2023/24
- Appendix B** – Strategic Scheme Appraisal Results 2023/24
- Appendix C** – Local Safety Scheme Ranking 2023/24
- Appendix D** – 20mph Zones & Scheme Monitoring 2023/24
- Appendix E** – Promotion of Community Health and Safety 2023/24
- Appendix F** – Safer Routes to School Scheme Ranking 2023/24
- Appendix G** – Measures to Encourage Walking 2023/24

Background papers

- West Midlands Local Transport Plan 'Movement for Growth' 2015
- Walsall Transport Strategy 'Transport in Walsall' 2017
- 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

Author

Matt Crowton
Group Manager – Transportation & Strategy
✉ matt.crowton@walsall.gov.uk
☎ 01922 654 358



Simon Neilson
Executive Director

10 March 2023



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio holder

10 March 2023