



**REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT,
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL**

**Agenda Item
No.**

26 April 2005

2005 WEST MIDLANDS LTP SUBMISSION –

ISSUES FOR REGENERATION, ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY
SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL.

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr M Longhi – Transport and the Environment

Summary of Report

- We are submitting a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan (WMLTP) in July this year. Draft available at: <http://intranet/ltp/ltp.pdf>. The final Guidance for this was only published in December 2004. This Guidance introduced a two stage approach. A full, provisional document needs to be submitted in July 2005, with a final document taking into account issues such as the output from detailed accessibility planning and proposed funding levels to be submitted by March 2006.
- Previously it has been agreed that this LTP should essentially be a roll forward of the 2003 document, reflecting the WMAMMS response of the Secretary of State in which he committed up to £1 billion for Major Schemes subject to us putting in place a robust transport strategy.
- This report outlines the key issues and proposed approach in respect of the 2005 Local Transport Plan and relates this to the Walsall situation. Members' views are requested on the approach to the 2005 WMLTP.

Background Papers

1. 2003 WMLTP
2. Midlands Local Transport Plans Bus Strategy 2003–2011 – Post-consultative Draft for Adoption
3. LTP Guidance December 2004
4. Walsall Transport Strategy (approved by Cabinet in 2003)
5. Report to West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub-Committee 15/4/2005.

Reason for Scrutiny

- The 2005 WMLTP sets out a policy framework for the development of transport and management of travel demand in the WM conurbation. It links to the wider agendas for economic development and regeneration, housing, environment, social inclusion, health, safety and security.
- The WMLTP identifies the major schemes which we wish to progress up to 2011 and outlines a programme for minor schemes forming the Integrated Transport Block (IT Block). It also sets out a programme for highway maintenance and bridge strengthening.
- The WMLTP is currently being prepared by the 7 WM Met Districts and Centro working in partnership. The LTP is defined as a 'key framework' document within the Constitution of each Authority and needs to be adopted by each full Council. It is anticipated that the document will be submitted to Council in June. There are a number of issues in relation to the preparation of the draft 2005 WMLTP that the Panel should be aware of and may wish to comment on.

Resource and Legal Considerations

- The LTP is no longer a bidding document. The programme has to be prepared in line with the spending guidelines set out by DfT. Currently we have provisional guidance for the levels of Integrated Transport Block. This will be firmed up in time for the March 2006 submission. In future, both Integrated Transport Block and Maintenance figures will be derived formulaically. For major Schemes we need to work within the £1billion constraint (no other authorities have this Major Scheme funding level indication). The WMLTP is, therefore, primarily required to support the case for capital funding from the Department for Transport to enable to implementation of improvements to the transport systems in the West Midlands.
- The DfT has acknowledged that many local transport authorities would prefer LTP allocations to include an element of revenue funding, However, it has indicated that it does not intend to provide LTP linked revenue allocations as part of the second round of LTPs but expects them to indicate how related revenue funded programmes will be funded.
- The Transport Act 2000 has bestowed statutory document status on the Plan which needs to be approved by each individual Council. Hence the LTP is defined as a 'key framework' document within the Constitution of each Authority and needs to be adopted by each full Council.

Citizen impact:

- Investment in new transport facilities and the improvement of the existing network and the management of traffic has a bearing on the well being and satisfaction of all citizens in the Borough.

Environmental impact:

- Traffic impacts upon air quality and noise and vulnerable travellers such as pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities. These factors are considered in the development of transport strategy and programmes, in order to reduce adverse environmental impacts.

Performance Management:

- Securing government funding for transport and delivery of the WMLTP programmes will directly support progress towards achieving transport targets and Best Value Performance targets.

Equality Implications

- Many of the initiatives in the LTP are intended to improve social inclusion and equality of physical access to jobs and services, particularly between car users and those who do not have access to cars on a regular basis.

Consultation

Consultation for the 2005 WMLTP has been managed centrally on behalf of all the WM Met Districts and Centro. The consultation process has sought comments from key stakeholders and the general public, as well as adjacent local authorities, the Highways Agency and other public agencies.

Vision 2008

- The WMLTP directly links to the Council's Vision 2008 priority 'Making it easier to get around', and supports a number of other corporate priorities.

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1. 2005 WEST MIDLANDS LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 2006-2011

1.1 APPROACH TO THE PREPARATION OF THE 2005 WMLTP

1.1.1 The West Midlands Met Districts and Centro submitted a new WMLTP to government in 2003. We were the only area to do this and did so in response to the conclusions of the West Midlands Area Multi Modal Study (WAMMMS). It was previously our approach that the 2005 LTP should essentially be a roll forward of the 2003 document, reflecting the WAMMMS response of the Secretary of State in which he committed up to £1 billion for Major Schemes, subject to us putting in place a robust transport strategy.

1.1.2 Following the engagement process with the DfT, led by Robert Devereux, (Director General of Road Regional and Local Transport Group at the Department of Transport) the Metropolitan Authority leaders agreed a high level policy framework of:

- **A bus strategy based on:**

- Driving up quality
- Improving reliability & journey times particularly through Red Routes and UTC
- Improving information by building on MATTISSE
- Ensuring the efficient use of bus lanes (HOV trials etc.)
- Enhanced area wide initiatives

- **“Headline” outcomes of:**

- No increase in congestion
- An efficient Road network
- Encouraging extra trips by public transport and walking / cycling.

- **A Demand management approach based on:** *“Discussions with the DfT be initiated to determine ways in which innovative approaches to demand management, that reflect the particular circumstances of the West Midlands, can be advanced. These will pave the way for further work, utilizing funding available from the Transport innovation Fund, to determine the applicability of different approaches to the West Midlands”.*

- **That work should continue on all proposed major schemes (including reserve schemes).**

- **That the approach of top-slicing the LTP to support promotion and more efficient use of the network continues.**

1.1.3 The new LTP Guidance has also introduced a number of changes to the way LTPs are prepared and assessed. The 2005 WMLTP submission needs to properly respond to this guidance or we may be penalised in terms of the eventual share out of national resources. The key aspects of the guidance are as follows:

1.1.4 **Funding** – The LTP is no longer a bidding document. The programme has to be prepared in line with the spending guidelines set out by DfT. Currently we have provisional guidance for the levels of IT Block. This will be firmed up in time for the March 2006 submission. In future, both IT and Maintenance figures will be derived formulaically. For major Schemes we need to work within the £1 billion constraint (no other authorities have this Major Scheme funding level indication).

- 1.1.5 **Focus** - The Local Transport Plans has to focus on delivery of the Transport Shared Priority (TSP) and the four themes of congestion, accessibility, air quality and road safety. Our additional objective of supporting regeneration is not covered by the TSP.
- 1.1.6 **Evidence** - Evidence to support assertions, policy approaches, etc., must be provided.
- 1.1.7 **“Corporateness/Compatibility”** – The need to demonstrate that the LTP is a corporate document and is compatible with and supportive of other key strategies within authorities and at local, sub regional, regional and national levels is strongly emphasised.
- 1.1.8 **Targets** – A large number of mandatory target areas are established and in order to obtain a good assessment we need to set “ stretching” targets and at the minimum satisfactory levels of achievement. Targets cannot take account of the contribution of proposed future Major Schemes but must be related to delivery of approved major schemes and programmes in the IT Block.
- 1.1.9 **Accessibility Planning** – This is a new area of work that has to be completed for the March 2006 submission following a much delayed release of the recommended software.
- 1.1.10 The level of detail required to satisfy the guidance is immense and detracts from the ability to produce a concise, readable document that we would all wish to have. In the light of this, members are invited to focus on the key ingredients of the LTP – Strategy, Programme and Targets, which are discussed below.
- 1.1.11 **The Strategy** – it is essential that Members are comfortable with the way the Strategy is expressed and the demonstration of how we can achieve our headline aim of no increase in congestion. The Strategy has three principal elements:
- (a) To make the best use of the existing transport network.
 - (b) To enhance the quality of the public transport offer.
 - (c) To target investment in infrastructure to support regeneration.
- 1.1.12 The above elements will be achieved by a more focused emphasis on:
- Creating an efficient road network using new technology and better enforcement that will increase capacity of the network for all modes.
 - Accommodating the forecast 83 million extra trips per annum (which is an increase of 4.6% during the period 2005-11) in the area through better public transport services, cycling and walking as well as through increased network efficiency. However, emerging results from three sub-regional studies and detailed modelling indicate that these forecasts are likely to be exceeded.
- 1.1.13 Within each of these elements there are a number of supporting strategies that complement each other to set the context for project and programme development and scheme delivery. The strategy is consistent with the Walsall Transport Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2003.

1.1.14 **The Programme** – the proposed major scheme programme is still to be finalised by West Midlands Planning and Transportation Sub Committee and individual schemes will require to be prioritised. Within Walsall, the major scheme programme will include Walsall Town Centre Transport Package and Darlaston Strategic Development Area Access Project which have already been provisionally accepted by the DfT. The proposed programme (shown in Table 1) also includes three other major projects:

- Brownhills Transport Package
- Bradford Place bus station (promoted in association with Centro)
- M6 Junction 10 Improvement (promoted in association with the Highways Agency)

1.1.15 The total value of these major projects amounts to some £70m. gross. Other major projects also proposed for inclusion in the major scheme programme are shown below. These projects represent a further investment in transport infrastructure within the Walsall area in excess of £200m.

- Midland Metro Phase 2 (including the 5Ws route)
- Red Route Phase 1 and anticipated additional phases
- Urban Traffic Control Project.
- Walsall – Brownhills bus rapid transport project
- Bus Showcase (additional routes such as route 51) – (programme funded from top-slicing of IT Block)

1.1.16 These projects (with the exception of the M6 J10 improvement and the West Midlands UTC project are included in the Walsall Transport Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2003. The Council's involvement in the West Midlands UTC project is subject to the outcome of the Walsall Integrated Transport PFI Project. This project is currently being re-assessed by DfT in the light of the requirement for additional funding to address the affordability gap that has become evident following submission of preferred bids.

1.1.17 A proposed major scheme programme in excess of £270m for the Walsall area is substantial and unprecedented. The development of projects on this scale is a major undertaking and it is already apparent that it will not be possible to complete the metro element of the programme until around 2014. Some of the projects are also currently only at the feasibility stage and when more cost/benefit information becomes available, they may be reviewed and alternative schemes considered. In addition, there is also uncertainty over government support for the projects which will each be subject to individual assessment in terms of contribution to the transport strategy, value for money and deliverability.

1.1.18 As referred to above, in future, both IT and Maintenance allocations will be derived formulaically. We already have an indication of what these allocations will be we will develop maintenance and minor scheme programmes to support the LTP targets. The proposed Walsall LTP programme is shown on Table 1.

1.1.19 This programme only relates to capital projects. The delivery of the WMLTP also requires a supporting programme of revenue expenditure. This relates to such areas as:

- Concessionary fares
- Subsidies to bus services (mainly evenings and weekends)

- Support for demand responsive bus services
- School Crossing Patrols
- Road safety education
- Cycle Training
- Travel Planning
- Accessibility Planning

1.1.20 The largest areas of expenditure relate to the first four items above (with the majority of revenue funding being used to support concessionary fares. Revenue budgets for the last four items above are relatively small although these aspects can contribute significantly to the delivery transport targets in relation to safety and congestion.

1.1.21 Considerable revenue funding is also expended on highway maintenance, including maintenance of Urban Traffic Control equipment and systems, and signage. Within the West Midlands as a whole and particularly within Walsall it is recognised that there is a significant backlog of highway maintenance work required to bring the network up to a desirable standard of maintenance. We are starting to address this in Walsall through prudential borrowing.

1.2. **ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

1.2.1 **Transport Strategy** – The transport strategy reflects the government’s own transport agenda and the transport aspects of each Authority’s vision for its area. The three principal elements of the strategy and the sub strategies within them combine to form a comprehensive framework for transport investment. However, the strategy will not be able to address the effects of decades of underinvestment in transport unless the necessary supporting capital and revenue programmes are funded. This will require support of DfT and at West Midlands regional level, as well as the support of individual Authorities in terms of the provision of additional revenue funding. ***Members are invited to endorse the LTP strategy.***

1.2.2 **Targets** - We have difficulty in predicting the overall impacts of our limited number of approved major schemes, the IT Block programmes and Maintenance programme. Many of the transport issues covered by the mandatory targets set by the DfT are impacted by a number of factors and causations that are beyond our ability to control or significantly influence. Indeed, we lack a full understanding of these mechanisms and there are risks for us in setting “stretching” targets as opposed to falling back on “satisfactory” targets. However, we are expected to demonstrate that our programme will deliver significant improvements. In setting targets, judgements have been made as to how “stretching” we should be. If we set stretching targets we score better. If, in future years we fail to achieve them we will potentially be marked down in our Annual Progress Reports.

1.2.3 It is essential to set targets in relation to outcomes of investment programmes and to monitor outputs and outcomes. However, there is concern that the government are placing too much emphasis on targets. Given the position, there is a need to be realistic in our setting of targets and to press for more research to be undertaken on the impacts of our programmes. ***Members may wish to take a view on the approach to target setting.***

- 1.2.4 **The Proposed Programme** - The proposed WM major scheme programme includes a number of projects that are currently at the feasibility stage. There is therefore some uncertainty over whether all these projects will meet the criteria for progression to formal bid stage. In addition, the uncertainty and long lead in time for Metro means that the proposed programme will extend into the LTP3 (the third Local Transport Plan) period beyond 2011. The proposed major schemes in Walsall, with the exception of the M6 J10 improvement, have previously been included in the Walsall Transport Strategy approved by Cabinet in 2003. The M6 J10 scheme is intended to address a key congestion point in the network which acts as a gateway for the Walsall and wider Black Country area. ***Members are invited to endorse the proposed major schemes for implementation in the plan period and to encourage key partners to work with Walsall to ensure their efficient delivery.***
- 1.2.5 The programme for the IT Block contains a number of on-going programmes that support the delivery of LTP targets. It also includes a proposed link between Green Lane and Bloxwich Road following the alignment of Cable Drive. This is proposed to improve accessibility to the developing Leamore and Reedswood employment areas. This scheme is at the feasibility stage. Other investigations need to be carried out into other prospective schemes that may be candidates for inclusion in programme the latter part of the plan period as alternatives to the proposed programme. However, any modifications to the programme will need to demonstrate delivery of LTP outputs consistent with the currently proposed programme as a whole. ***Members may wish to include in an on-going programme of work, involvement in future investigations to ensure that the best programme of schemes is brought forward to address issues in relation to congestion, regeneration and accessibility.***
- 1.2.6 The Black Country Study is currently investigating potential spatial strategies for the area for the period up to 2030. This will include consideration of a supporting transport strategy that will establish the context for development of major transport proposals in the post 2011 period. ***Members may wish to consider the outputs from this study as part of an ongoing programme of work.***
- 1.2.7 **Revenue Issues** – Delivery of LTP targets requires programmes of activity and provision of services that will require future increases in revenue funding. The development of accessibility planning and addressing issues arising is a case in point. In addition, proposed capital schemes will have certain revenue implication (for example maintenance of new traffic signal sites etc) that will also require funding. There is uncertainty over the ability of the Council to identify the necessary revenue resources to support LTP policies and programmes. ***Members may wish to explore this issue further as part of an ongoing programme of work.***

TABLE 1

WALSALL SCHEMES/PROGRAMMES	Gross	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	NET TOTAL
	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)	£(000)
Maintenance of Highways and Bridges								
Primary/Principal Route Maintenance		194	201					
Non-Principal Route Maintenance		1,538	1,605					
Bridge Strengthening and Assessments		630	663					
Subtotal		2,362	2,469	2,518	2,644	2,776	2,915	18,797
Major Projects (>£5 million)								
Town Centre Transport Package *	13,000	6,900	4,700	500				12,100
Brownhills Transport Package*	13,100	100	100	200	3,500	7,000	1,600	12,100
M6 Junction 10*	22,000	20	50	100	2,300	5,000	200	7,500
Darlaston SDA Access Project*	13,500	400	200	3,000	6,300	2,600	200	12,100
Bradford Place Bus station*	8,500	30	50	100	200	5,000	3,000	8,500
West Midland Wide Projects and Centro Projects affecting Walsall								
Red Routes								18,000+
Metro 5Ws Route								Design
Bus Showcase Routes								5,000+
Urban Traffic Control Project								3,000+
Walsall-Brownhills Corridor PT Scheme*								15,000+
Other WM Joint Initiatives								500+
Integrated Transport Block Grant - Projects under £5m and Rolling Programmes								
Possible Bridge Strengthening Contribution								
Blakenall New Deal Area		50						50
North Walsall Regeneration Project		0	30	50	80	350	500	1010
Town and District Centre Regeneration		50	50	70	100	50	50	370
Local Safety Schemes		300	340	350	380	380	360	2110
Pedestrian Facilities		300	300	320	350	350	350	1970
Cycle Routes/Facilities and Motor Cycle Parking		180	220	220	230	230	230	1310
Safer Routes to School		350	400	420	450	440	440	2500
Facilities for the Disabled		20	20	30	30	30	30	160
Public Transport		130	100	100	100	100	100	630
Regeneration and Integration (incl design in advance)		550	450	350	300	300	300	2250
Safe and Healthy Communities		150	150	150	150	150	150	900
Highway Efficiency Measures		300	300	300	300	300	300	1800
Subtotal – Planned Schedule of Works		2380	2360	2360	2470	2680	2810	15,060
Provisional Allocation (Planning Guidelines)		2,376	2,356	2,356	2,475	2,679	2,814	15,056

* Expenditure Pre Final Acceptance (shown in italics) – required to be funded from IT Block (Regeneration & Integration or Public Transport)

+ Estimated expenditure related to Walsall