16th SEPTEMBER, 2021

WEST MIDLANDS LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN GREEN PAPER

Ward(s):   **ALL**

Portfolios: Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader of the Council and

Regeneration

1.   Aim

1.1   To support the development of a new West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP), Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has published a 'Green Paper' consultation document. The purpose of the Transport Green Paper is to start a conversation about how and why we should start thinking differently about how we plan, deliver, manage and ultimately use our transport system. The need to decarbonise transport rapidly will be a critical objective in the new LTP. However, there are other systemic challenges with the transport system which also stand in the way of the region's ambitions for inclusive growth.

2.   Recommendations

It is recommended that:-

2.1   The progress on development of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan and the publication of the Transport Green Paper is noted and Elected Members' views are sought on the key issues raised in the document.

2.2   Elected Members suggest how they would like to continue to be engaged on the development of the new Local Transport Plan.

3.   Report detail – know

3.1   Developing and managing a LTP is one of West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA's) key statutory functions. The current LTP, Movement for Growth, was adopted in 2016 but significant developments and changes have taken place in the last 5 years including increasing concerns regarding the climate emergency and the current Covid-19 global pandemic.

3.2   Well evidenced and robust transport strategy will be an essential part of our economic recovery, delivering inclusive growth and taking action to address carbon emissions in line with the commitments set out in the WM2041 plan. The new LTP will set out the longer-term vision for transport in the region and set out a policy framework within which the programmes brought forward in the

Implementation Plan funded through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS – a five year funding settlement for the WMCA area to deliver transport infrastructure and service improvements) and other capital and revenue funding streams will need to align.

3.3 Whilst WMCA is formally the local transport authority, the combined authority is a partnership and the LTP is developed collaboratively with the constituent authorities (Walsall Council being one of these constituent authorities along with the other Metropolitan Districts). The WMCA's Strategic Transport Board provides the Elected Member direction for this work, however, changes to the LTP must be approved by WMCA Board and (as a minimum) meet specific statutory requirements on consultation on LTPs.

West Midlands Transport Green Paper

3.4 The Green Paper was published on 6th July 2021 and engagement has now begun with the full document and summary document together with links to the consultation now available on the TfWM website. The engagement period will run until the end of September 2021 and TfWM are seeking to engage widely across a broad range of stakeholders and with the public. A multi-channel approach is being used and will include deliberative engagement using the 'Keep West Midlands Moving! Online Community platform'.

3.5 The Green Paper sets out five 'Motives for Change' for transport:

- **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.

3.6 None of the motives are necessarily a greater priority, and all could justify significant change to the transport system. However, tackling the climate emergency is unique in the explicit and significant pace and scale of desired carbon reductions that have been set out at the local and national level, and the global consequences that are faced.

3.7 The Green Paper does not set out what specific policy responses are required but provides an overview of the sorts of changes and measures which could be made to the transport system to tackle climate change and meeting the ambitious target set by WMCA to be carbon neutral by 2041, whilst making positive progress against the other four motives for change. It also highlights where other policy areas, including land use and digital connectivity could play a stronger role in helping to reduce the overall demand for travel.

3.8   A broad range of stakeholders as well as the general public are being encouraged to engage and respond through a range of communication channels. Significant effort will be made throughout the process to proactively seek input from a demographically and geographically representative range of West Midlands citizens. This includes more traditional approaches such as online surveys but once again we are using the online TfWM market research community to enable deliberative engagement on the key issues to provide a valuable deeper understanding of people's feelings and views. In addition, local engagement will take place with constituent local authorities separately (e.g. cabinet, scrutiny) and arrangements are being made with officers.

- Deliberative engagement with the general public via the Keep West Midlands Moving! Online Community platform,
- Focussed events with representative bodies of private and third sector organisations,
- Online questionnaire style consultation with general public and wider stakeholders,
- Press activity fronted by the WMCA Mayor,
- Engagement with constituent local authorities,
- Ongoing conversation with local authority partners as LTP options are developed and assessed.

Developing the new West Midlands Local Transport Plan

3.9   Although the Green Paper starts to explore the potential role of new policy pathways for the region, further work is required to develop these further with more detail to inform the approach for a new West Midlands LTP.

3.10 Of specific importance will be the approach the West Midlands chooses to take in decarbonising the local transport system. The Government has now published its Transport Decarbonisation Plan which places responsibility for much of the behaviour change (which it acknowledges is needed) on local authorities, with reaffirmation of capital funds, signposting to existing design and best-practice guidance, promises for further guidance, and a requirement for Local Transport Plans to '*set out how local areas will deliver ambitious quantifiable carbon reductions in transport'*. Emphasis is also placed on the scope for potential behaviour change in urban areas.

3.11 To aid discussion with Elected Members around some very complex issues for the new LTP to consider, TfWM is developing work around three hypothetical policy futures which will help to illustrate the sorts of policy choices and their implications. These are options which could be considered as part of the development of the new LTP to help address the key challenges as described in the motives for change.

3.12 This stage of work requires a structured approach to developing policy options and officers have developed a framework of 'conventional', 'compliant' and 'transformational' policy scenarios within which to explore choices. In essence these policy scenarios help to consider the scale and pace of change required to achieve carbon emissions against different timescales for achieving zero carbon. The scenarios also help us to understand and illustrate how change could also impact positively or negatively on the other motives for change and delivering real inclusive growth. In simple terms it will provide evidence on what works and what

measures are only likely to provide marginal/negligible impacts and present a way to build consensus on how we get to more sustainable lifestyles in the future. TfWM has been working closely with local authority officers to develop thinking around the scenarios.

- **Conventional**: what the world might look like with continuation of 'Business as Usual' strategy
- **Compliant**: achieving Net Zero by 2050 (UK government target).
- **Transformational**: providing a transformational change for the region, delivering against WM Net Zero Target of 2041 and creating a more equitable, accessible, sustainable region.

3.13   Whilst addressing de-carbonisation is one of the massive strategic priorities, clearly the region is also facing one of the largest economic challenges it has seen in decades as it recovers from Covid-19. The longer-term strategic scenario for transport will likely be a blend of the three policy scenarios above and will need to balance between what will sometimes be potentially conflicting impacts of different approaches. Decreasing congestion and increasing accessibility is traditionally accepted as an outcome which should be targeted to aid the economy; but hyper accessibility and long distance travel in a de-carbonisation context is tackled by prioritizing non-car based modes and local living. Whilst these are not mutually exclusive, there are some clear tensions between the measures and incentives which could be used to tackle an eventually selected strategic mix.

3.14   The outputs of this work will be used, together with the responses to the Green Paper engagement, to inform and shape discussion with Elected Members on how we could successfully start to successfully affect change in travel and wider behaviours to achieve strategic outcomes.

3.15   A 'summit' with West Midlands Leaders is being held in late-September to work though some of the key messages and confirm the scope of ambition and approach for the new West Midlands LTP.

3.16   Following the steer provided by the summit, TfWM will continue to develop the LTP strategy during the second half of 2021 working closely with local authorities. The work on the new LTP will also seek to consider the transport challenges presented in the review of the Black Country Plan (currently underway).

3.17   It is anticipated that a draft West Midlands LTP will be presented to WMCA Board in January 2022 where approval to undertake the statutory consultation on the document will be sought. Further to the consultation and subsequent review in light of responses it is anticipated that the LTP will be sent to WMCA Board for formal approval in summer 2022.

26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP 26) November 2021

3.18   The scenarios work and outcomes of the Leaders' summit in September will also be used to develop a short LTP 'prospectus' to be published in late-October. This will tie-in with the UK hosting COP26 in Glasgow in November this year. The prospectus is proposed to be a short high-level document which will affirm the West Midlands' commitments to working towards achieving a net zero transport system in the shortest possible time. The document will provide high-level messages around the emerging ambition for the new LTP.

LTP Framework

3.19   The new LTP will comprise of a framework of documents which will provide a comprehensive set of policy and strategy for transport in the region. It is proposed that this framework will consist of the following:

Core LTP strategy: this will provide the overarching context which sets out our challenges, the outcomes we are trying to achieve and the kinds of actions that will get us there. The strategy will consider transport issues at a number of spatial tiers i.e. local, regional, national and international levels of the transport system.

Implementation / Delivery Plan: this document will provide a consolidated view of schemes/actions that need to be delivered over the life of the plan. It is considered that this will exist as more as a live document as the degree of development and resources secured against projects evolves and as and gap analysis between committed activity and core strategy continues to be monitored and evaluated in turn informing priorities for future activity.

The implementation plan will provide detail on the West Midlands' transport programme, which details what the region wants to achieve in the next five years and over the longer plan period. This will set out how both capital and revenue activity will be progressed. This will set out a comprehensive programme which shows how national (e.g. including City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS), Levelling Up Fund, National Bus Strategy/Bus Service Improvement Plan etc.) capital funds will be used alongside revenue funding including local raised e.g. (public transport fare subsidies) in a complementary and cohesive way.

Local Transport Plan Area Strategies: to complement the core West Midlands Local Transport Plan, a set of four supporting strategies will be developed for Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry and Solihull. These strategies will complement local authorities wider transport strategy documents and provide supplementary detail on current and planned transport schemes (including schemes highlighted in main LTP implementation plan). The area strategies will largely focus on local and neighbourhood level issues, priorities and interventions required within the initial five year delivery plan period as well as set out the local measures to be developed and delivered over the wider plan period. Funding will be made available through the CRSTS preparatory fund to support the development of these documents.

Supplementary LTP policy and guidance: these documents will provide more detailed proposals for parts of the transport system e.g. this could include Supported Travel / Inclusive Transport policies, Vision for Bus, Regional Road Safety Strategy, New Development Planning Design Guidance, West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance. These documents will be developed and / or updated following the development of the core LTP strategy.

LTP Development Programme

3.20   The high-level programme for developing the new LTP is as follows:

- **March-September 2021** – Technical work underway developing and assessing LTP policy scenarios in co-development with local authorities.
- **June 2021** – Green Paper published and engagement runs until end of September 2021.
- **September 2021** – Leaders' summit.
- **November 2021** - COP 26.
- **Autumn - Winter 2021** - LTP Strategy development.
- **January 2022 - WMCA Board** – approval to undertake statutory consultation.
- **January to April 2022** - LTP Statutory consultation
- **Summer 2022 – WMCA Board** – formal adoption of new LTP.

4. *Financial information*

4.1   There are no financial implications for Walsall Council as a result of this report.

5. *Reducing Inequalities*

5.1   Covid-19 has exacerbated many already underlying inequalities – be it socioeconomic or health. As more evidence comes to light, it demonstrates how vulnerable groups are suffering more – the impacts of which are then further exacerbated as we move into recovery and as we then seek to tackle climate change. This will present a significant challenge for delivering Inclusive Growth.

5.2   The Green Paper presents Creating a Fairer Society as one of the five motives for change and describes the need to address inequity of access and of transports impacts. The Green Paper takes account of the principles of WMCA's inclusive growth framework and these will need to be considered through the development of the new LTP, to ensure all WMCA activity drives more inclusive and sustainable growth. The aforementioned Integrated Sustainability Assessment will provide a framework to ensure that strategy development is challenged.

5.3   The new LTP will be developed in line with the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are: -

- Giving every child the best start in life – programmes include measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes, which is part of a rolling programme across the Borough; increasing levels of walking and cycling; tackling road safety issues; and improving air quality;
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – measures to promote sustainable transport 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 – programmes include 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.

6. Decide

6.1   The development of the new LTP will be an iterative process. Following discussion with Leaders later in September further engagement will take place as the strategy develops with Elected Members and potentially with the public, e.g. through the TfWM online community. As noted earlier, a further, statutory stage of engagement will take place on the draft LTP in early 2022.

7. Respond

7.1   In terms of views and feedback, officers would be happy to continue to engage with the committee as the development of the new LTP progresses.

8. Review

8.1   As noted the development of the LTP will continue to seek Elected Member input as it progress with further stages of engagement planned. It is proposed that the new LTP will include a set of targets against which progress and success can be measured. These are yet to be determined and agreed but it is likely that these will include a range of measures including carbon emissions, road safety and measures of accessibility.

Background papers

'A Transport System Fit to Tackle Climate Change? - Reviewing the West Midlands Local Transport Plan to support a Greener, Fairer, Healthier Recovery', WMCA Board Report, 24th July, 2020.
https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s4451/WMLTP%20Review.pdf

'Reimaging Transport in the West Midlands – A Conversation About Change', Local Transport Plan Green Paper, July 2021
https://www.tfwm.org.uk/who-we-are/our-strategy/green-paper-2021/

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