


REPORT TO CABINET

17 October 2018

Subject:	Cycle Infrastructure Programme 2018/19 and 2019/20
Presenting Cabinet Member:	Councillor Paul Moore – Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Investment Councillor David Hosell – Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment
Director:	Director – Regeneration and Growth – Amy Harhoff
Contribution towards Vision 2030:	
Key Decision:	Yes
Forward Plan (28 day notice) Reference:	SMBC16/06/2018
Cabinet Member Approval and Date:	Councillor Paul Moore Councillor David Hosell
Director Approval:	Amy Harhoff
Reason for Urgency:	Urgency provisions do not apply
Exempt Information Ref:	Exemption provisions do not apply
Ward Councillor (s) Consulted (if applicable):	Ward councillors have not been consulted
Scrutiny Consultation Considered?	Economy, Skill, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board considered the report on 27 September 2018
Contact Officer(s):	Andy Miller – Strategic Planning & Transportation Manager andy_miller@sandwell.gov.uk

DECISION RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made on delivering cycle infrastructure to support the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan-Movement for Growth during 2017/18.
2. Approve the programme of cycle infrastructure works for 2018/19 subject to consultation and to the approval of detailed proposals by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The report seeks;

- To update the Cabinet on the progress made on delivering cycle infrastructure to support the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan-Movement for Growth during 2017/18.
- Approval to the 2018/19 and provisional 2019/20 Cycle Infrastructure programme.
- As per the consultation protocol agreed at Cabinet on 18th October 2017 each scheme will be subject to a future report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment to agree the detailed design.

1.2 This report was referred to the Economy Skills Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board on 27 September 2018. The Board considered the report and endorsed the recommendations in 1.1 above. The Board also requested pre-decision scrutiny of the draft Sandwell Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), as set out in para 3.2 below, in March 2019.

2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S VISION

- 2.1 The provision of a safe and convenient network of cycle routes will help address the health impacts of inactivity and assist in reducing poor air quality thus contributing to Vision 2030 Ambition 2.
- 2.2 All three tiers of the cycling network; National, Metropolitan and Local, contribute to the provision of a high quality transport system linking homes and communities to jobs and facilities (Vision 2030 Ambitions 6, 7 and 8).

3 BACKGROUND AND MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

Overall Strategy

- 3.1 The Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy was published in April 2017 with the aim of making cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journey (www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-investment-strategy). The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (2017) requires Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) to be developed as the new, strategic approach, to identifying the local improvements needed to increase the number of trips by cycling and walking.
- 3.2 The West Midlands Combined Authority has appointed consultants to develop a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). This will ensure the WMCA are in a position to secure funding for cycling and will set out the strategic plan for cycling and walking networks throughout the West Midlands up to 2028.
- 3.3 To complement the WMCA LCWIP Sandwell MBC will shortly commission work to develop a Sandwell LCWIP that will identify and enable a plan to develop local cycling and walking networks throughout the borough till 2029. It is intended that this will replace the Sandwell Cycling Strategy which was published in 1999. The Sandwell LCWIP will be subject to consultation and a future report to Cabinet will be necessary to adopt the document as Council policy.
- 3.4 The Cycle Network consists of three tiers; the National Cycle Network (NCN), the Metropolitan Cycle Network, and a local Sandwell Network identified in the Sandwell Cycling Strategy. The existing cycle network, and proposed cycle routes, within Sandwell is shown on the plan at Appendix A.

Cycle Improvements Completed in 2017/ 18

- 3.5 Connectivity between Rowley Regis Railway Station to Blackheath Town Centre - during 2017/18 the route that runs along Oldbury Ring Way A457 between Dudley Road/Freeth Street Island and Church Street/Bromford Road Island, including a short segregated cycle link from Bromford Road to Church Street to bypass the roundabout, was completed. The route from Rowley Regis Railway Station to Blackheath Town Centre was also implemented along with the upgrade of the pedestrian crossings on Henderson Way and Long Lane to Toucan Crossings.

- 3.6 Connectivity between Stone Cross and West Bromwich - the works on All Saints Way begun in 2016/17 that form part of the West Bromwich to Stone Cross route were completed.
- 3.7 The plan at Appendix A shows the locations of these projects and illustrates how they contribute to the delivery of the overall planned network.

Proposed Cycle Improvements for 2018/ 19

Improving Cycling Access to Railway Stations - As part of the Managing Short Trips (MST) programme, towpath resurfacing works have been carried out on the Birmingham Canal between Smethwick Galton and West Bromwich Street, Oldbury . It is proposed to continue these towpath works during 2018/19 and 2019/20 up to the borough boundary with Dudley. It is also intended to improve pedestrian and cycle access to Sandwell & Dudley railway station via Bromford Lane to complement the MST towpath improvements. This will improve cycle and pedestrian access to Dudley Port railway station. .

The towpath on Tame Valley Canal between Rushall Junction and Hill Farm Bridge was also resurfaced during 2017/18. It is proposed to continue these works in the direction of Tipton during 2018/19 up to Navigation Lane and 2019/20 to the Walsall Canal. This will improve cycle and pedestrian access to Tame Bridge railway station and to the Walsall/ Birmingham Canal. To complement the MST towpath improvements works it is also proposed to create a segregated pedestrian and cycle route from the canal access point on Navigation Lane to Tame Bridge railway station via Walsall Road.

Improved cycle access to Metro Stations - it is proposed to improve the existing cycle route along the West Midland Metro Line 1 from Black Lake to The Hawthorns at Bilhay Lane (The Parkway cycle route) by providing Toucan upgrades to the three pedestrian crossing facilities on the A41 Black Country New Road and Dudley Street in the Greets Green area of West Bromwich. Whilst the Parkway route itself is existing these improvements will allow greater access from adjacent residential areas on to the cycle route.

- 3.8 Identified funding sources, wards affected and intended consultees, is provided at Appendix B. Approval of detailed scheme design, on a project by project basis, will be subject to future reports to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

Proposed Cycle Improvements for 2019/ 20

- 3.9 Cycle access between north Wednesbury and Wednesbury Town Centre is severed by High Bullen where traffic is heavy and there are no cycle crossing facilities. The provisional 2019/20 programme includes proposals to form a segregated pedestrian and cycle route and Toucan upgrades in this area.
- 3.10 It is also proposed to carry out a programme of improved signage and access on to the canal network during 2019/20 to complement the MST towpath resurfacing works on Birmingham and Tame Valley canals carried out during 2018/19.
- 3.11 Estimated costs and wards affected are set out in Appendix B. Detailed scheme design will be subject to a further report to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

4 THE CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan – Movement for Growth includes a proposed Strategic Cycle Route network. The plan illustrates an indicative network linking locations rather than identifying actual routes. The routes wholly or partially within Sandwell are;
- Walsall to West Bromwich
 - Walsall to Birmingham via Great Barr
 - West Bromwich to Halesowen via Oldbury
 - Wednesbury to Dudley
 - Wolverhampton to Birmingham via West Bromwich
 - Dudley to Birmingham via Smethwick
 - Halesowen to Birmingham via Warley
- 4.2 It is intended that the canal network will play a significant role in providing safe, off-road links as part of the Strategic Cycle Network and this is reflected in the significant investment by the WMCA and Black Country LEP through its Managing Short Trips programme, particularly on the Birmingham and Tame Valley canals which link large areas of Sandwell with Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres (see Appendix A).
- 4.3 The Sandwell local cycle network was originally identified as part of the Cycling in Sandwell strategy at the end of the 1990s. It has subsequently been incorporated into the Council's Local Plan through the Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (2012) and West Bromwich Area Action Plan (2012). Many of the local links also form part of the intended Strategic Network and as such serve a dual purpose.

Wherever possible routes are either segregated or follow quieter streets with low speed limits. However there are occasions where space precludes segregation and no parallel route is available, when cycle lanes need to be provided on carriageway along principal roads or as shared pedestrian/cycle footways.

- 4.4 The Measures to Encourage Cycling budget and other cycle-specific budgets are also used to fund the provision of cycle parking at public facilities, shopping centres, public transport nodes etc. The locations of existing facilities are shown on the plan at Appendix A.
- 4.5 Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), as set out in the Government's 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, are a new, strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks, ideally over a 10 year period, and form a vital part of the Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.
- 4.6 The WMCA is committed to supporting and developing walking and cycling as attractive and practical options for getting around the West Midlands. Their aim is to make cycling part of everyday life in the West Midlands, as evidenced in the WMCA Cycling Charter. This Charter sets out the agreed actions by the seven West Midland's constituent authorities (Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton) and regional partners (Canal and River Trust, CyclingUK, Highways England and Sustrans). The overall aim of the Cycling Charter is to increase the proportion of all trips made by cycling from the current 1% to 5%, by 2023.
- 4.7 In March 2017 the WMCA announced that Nextbike had been chosen to operate a bike share scheme across the West Midlands. Docking stations will be located around key sites in the towns and cities involved, with bikes available 24 hours a day. Whilst the bike share scheme does not include the provision of cycle route infrastructure, the docking stations will need to be accessible from the cycle route network and will thus be taken into consideration as part of the ongoing development of the network.

5 CONSULTATION (CUSTOMERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS)

- 5.1 The projects that make up the 2018/19 and 2019/20 programme will be subject of individual consultations in line with the process approved by Cabinet at its meeting of 18th October 2017.

- 5.2 Both the West Midlands and Sandwell LCWIPs will be subject of consultation including reporting to the Economy, Skills, Transport and Environment Scrutiny Board.

6 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 Consideration of options for each project in the programme forms part of the process approved by Cabinet in October 2017. For each scheme, the options considered and the reasons for the recommended option will be set out in the individual approval reports as they are submitted to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment.

7 STRATEGIC RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The majority of funding for 'stand-alone' cycle infrastructure projects comes from Sandwell's allocation from the Integrated Transport Block (ITB). ITB is allocated annually by Central Government to Local Transport Authorities, such as the West Midlands Combined Authority. In the West Midlands the WMCA then re-allocates this funding to the districts on a 'per-capita' basis.
- 7.2 £125k of ITB is allocated to the 'Measures to Encourage Cycling' category in 2018/19. In addition some of the projects to be funded from other categories such the 'Measures to Encourage Walking' and the various safety-related categories include a cycling element.
- 7.3 As well as the ITB, cycle infrastructure is also funded through regional/sub-regional initiatives such as Managing Short Trips (MST), the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund and similar funding streams.
- 7.4 Major schemes such as the proposals for Birchley Island also include facilities for cyclists. However as these are an integral part of the project and not separately funded, they are not included in this report.
- 7.5 The table contained at Appendix B identifies from which source(s) each project is funded.

8 LEGAL AND GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Under section 65 (1) of the Highways Act 1980, a highway authority may, in or by the side of a highway maintainable at the public expense by them which consists of or comprises a made-up carriageway, construct a cycle track as part of the highway; and they may light any cycle track constructed by them under this section.

- 8.2 To convert all or part of a footway to a shared pedestrian and cycle route, a cycle track must be 'constructed' under section 65 (1) of the act. No physical construction is necessary but there needs to be clear evidence that the local highway authority has exercised these powers. This can be provided by a resolution of the appropriate committee or cabinet member.
- 8.3 Improving the usage of cycle route and encouraging walking will contribute towards improved air quality. Actions to improve air quality are required by EU Legislation via the 2008 ambient air quality directive.

9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 The Sandwell Cycle Strategy and the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan-Movement for Growth were both the subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their approval processes. Individual projects will be subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their formulation and the results reported to the Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment.

10 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 10.1 The recommendations in this report do not result in the collection or retention of personal data.

11 CRIME AND DISORDER AND RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 There are no Crime and Disorder issues arising from the recommendations set out in this report. Individual projects require Cabinet Member approval and will be subject of risk assessments as part of the approval process. Any resultant implications for crime and disorder will be included in the report.

12 SUSTAINABILITY OF PROPOSALS

- 12.1 All 'on-road' cycle infrastructure and those 'off road' routes that are parts of the public rights of way network form part of the Borough's highway network and the cost of their maintenance is covered by the overall highways maintenance budget. The canal-based routes remain the responsibility of the Canal & River Trust.

13 HEALTH AND WELLBEING IMPLICATIONS (INCLUDING SOCIAL VALUE)

13.1 Encouraging residents and commuters to cycle and walk through improvements to the network assists with increasing levels of physical activity (29% of the West Midlands population do less than 30 minutes activity a week), supports the reduction of obesity (25.4% of adults in Sandwell are obese), and improves life expectancy. Providing improved travel choices improves social mobility by improving access to employment, education and services.

14 IMPACT ON ANY COUNCIL MANAGED PROPERTY OR LAND

14.1 There are no direct implications for Council managed property or land arising directly from this report. Cycle routes on the highway network form part of the highways asset and are managed as such.

15 CONCLUSIONS AND SUMMARY OF REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS

15.1 The provision of dedicated infrastructure for cyclists is an important element in making cycling a genuine mode choice, especially for short journeys. The investment in cycle infrastructure within Sandwell is targeted at delivering the routes across all three tiers; the National Cycle Network, the Metropolitan Cycle Network as identified in Movement for Growth, and a local Sandwell Network identified in the Sandwell Cycling Strategy.

15.2 Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve the 2018/19 programme of infrastructure schemes contained at Appendix B subject to consultation as per the protocol agreed by Cabinet on 18th October 2017 and to approval of the detailed design by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Environment.

16 BACKGROUND PAPERS

16.1 Report to Cabinet; Cycle Infrastructure projects Programme 2017/18 & 2018/19 – 18:10:17

16.2 Report to Cabinet; Local Transport Settlement 2018/19 – 06:06:17

16.3 West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement for Growth (June 2016)

16.4 Cycling in Sandwell: The Strategy (1999)

16.5 Black Country Core Strategy (2011)

16.6 Sandwell Site Allocations & Delivery Plan (2012)

16.7 West Bromwich Area Action Plan (2012)

16.8 Public Health England - Sandwell Health Profile (2015)

16.9 Sandwell Trends

16.10 Department for Transport - National Travel Survey: England 2015

European Commission: Science for Environment Policy - Cycling infrastructure: financial returns can be over 20 times the initial investment

APPENDICES:

Appendix A - Cycle Network Map

Appendix B - Cycle Infrastructure projects Programme 2018/19 & 2019/20

Amy Harhoff

Director – Regeneration and Growth