
To: Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)

8th September 2021

Subject: Coventry Transport Strategy

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To brief the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) on the draft Coventry Transport Strategy, the review of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan, and the emerging West Midlands submission to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. The briefing will also cover the current work on Coventry's Transport Innovation programme, as illustrated at the Our Future Moves exhibition hosted at the Coventry Transport Museum.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is requested to:
Review the draft Coventry Transport Strategy and identify any specific recommendations that they wish to make to Cabinet when they consider the draft strategy in October 2021.

3 Information/Background

Coventry Transport Strategy

- 3.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is the statutory transport authority for the West Midlands area, including Coventry. The WMCA has a duty to prepare and implement a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the West Midlands area. The current LTP, Movement for Growth, is currently being reviewed to reflect recent national and regional policy changes, notably in relation to climate change, and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), the transport delivery body for the WMCA, has published a Green Transport Paper (GTP) to start this process. The GTP is appended to this report for reference (Appendix One).
- 3.2 As a constituent authority of the WMCA, Coventry City Council is closely engaged with the LTP Review. Through this engagement, it has been agreed that the WMCA's LTP will be integrated with Local Transport Strategies covering each of the individual constituent authorities, although the four Black Country authorities are working together on a joint strategy for the Black Country. Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull are all producing individual transport strategies for their area.
- 3.3 Work has commenced on the preparation of the Coventry Transport Strategy, with an early engagement with the public through a Let's Talk consultation in March 2021 (a summary of these responses is included as Appendix Three) and workshops being held with key stakeholders including bus and rail companies, neighbouring local authorities, TfWM, Midlands Connect, Highways England, Network Rail and other specific interest groups representing cyclists, businesses and other interests.

- 3.4 This engagement has resulted in the identification of core objectives relating to the future management of Coventry's transport network, and in the preparation of a draft Coventry Transport Strategy. This has been appended to the report (Appendix Two), and comments from Scrutiny Board 3 Members on the current draft will be welcomed. The draft strategy will be considered by Cabinet in October 2021.
- 3.5 The objectives identified in the core strategy are:
- Supporting the city's economic recovery and enabling long-term growth
 - Delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system
 - Ensuring equality of opportunity
 - Maximising health and wellbeing
- 3.6 It is important to note that the current draft strategy provides the policy framework, but that an implementation plan setting out a five-year investment programme in Coventry's transport network will be added before the strategy is brought back to Cabinet for approval in early 2022. The implementation plan cannot be finalised until the outcome of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) process is known, details of which are given later in this report.
- 3.7 Subject to Cabinet approval in October, the draft strategy will be published for consultation later in 2021. Once consultation feedback has been reviewed, and the outcome of the CRSTS process is known, the strategy will be finalised, complete with implementation plan, and presented to Cabinet for approval in early 2022.

West Midlands Local Transport Plan

- 3.8 As noted above, work has commenced on the review of the West Midlands LTP with the publication of the Green Transport Paper. This is currently out to consultation. The GTP identifies tackling the climate emergency, reducing transport inequality, reducing physical inactivity, enhancing local communities and places, and building a strong, inclusive, economy as the priorities for the new LTP. These priorities align well with the core objectives identified for Coventry's draft Transport Strategy.
- 3.9 TfWM are looking to prepare the draft LTP for review by the WMCA Board in early 2022, a timescale that broadly mirrors that proposed for the Coventry Transport Strategy. Therefore, by mid-2022 the transport policy framework for Coventry will consist of an updated West Midlands Local Transport Plan setting the regional policy framework, and a Coventry Transport Strategy providing the more detailed local framework including a five-year implementation plan.

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

- 3.10 That five-year implementation plan will be based upon the outcome of the City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement process which is currently underway. Essentially, the CRSTS will give the WMCA, and its constituent authorities, a five-year capital funding settlement for transport covering 2022 to 2027.
- 3.11 The CRSTS comprises £4.2 billion which will be allocated across the eight Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) established within England. A semi-competitive process is underway, with each MCA being required to submit a bid to Government setting out its funding ask for the 2022-27 period, and explain what schemes will be delivered and what outcomes will be achieved. The initial submission will be approved by the WMCA Board in September. Full guidance on the process was only issued by the Department for Transport in July, so a rapid turn-around has been required.

- 3.12 For the WMCA, the DfT specified a funding range of £780 million to £1.28 billion, meaning that the West Midlands submission should expect a funding settlement within this range. Additional funding will be allocated separately for core Integrated Transport and Highway Maintenance programmes, whilst the WMCA and constituent authorities will also have access to funding streams associated with Active Travel and Bus Service Improvement Plans.
- 3.13 Coventry is closely and proactively engaged with the CRSTS process with the aim of securing a funding package that will enable the Council to deliver a programme of transport schemes that will support the objectives set out within the draft transport strategy. Specific priorities include the Very Light Rail programme, continued development of the segregated cycle route network, and highway corridor improvements that will benefit all road users, including pedestrians and bus users

Transport Innovation Programme

- 3.14 The programme will include innovative transport projects such as Very Light Rail and measures to support the further roll-out of zero emission vehicles. The Our Future Moves exhibition currently on show at the Transport Museum showcases the wide range of transport technology projects being led by Coventry's business and academic communities, many of which have direct or indirect support from the City Council. Whilst Very Light Rail is the highest profile of these projects, especially in terms of Council involvement, the exhibition demonstrates that local research and development activity is taking place across the full spectrum of transport, from technology that will help visually impaired pedestrians to moves to de-carbonise the marine and aviation sectors.
- 3.15 The aim is to build upon the Our Future Moves exhibition to develop a digital archive that can be used to promote Coventry and the surrounding area as a place in which transport innovators can do business, using the city as a "living lab" building upon projects such as the Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Testbed. An associated events programme is being developed with the further aim of promoting the city, and projects such as VLR, to a wider audience, especially whilst the spotlight is on the city during City of Culture, and with opportunities existing to link with COP26.

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