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Cabinet  
Council

15 November 2022  
6 December 2022

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change - Councillor J O'Boyle

**Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Director of Transportation and Highways

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

**Title:**

**Coventry Transport Strategy**

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**Is this a key decision?**

Yes - the proposals involve financial implications in excess of £1m per annum and are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses two or more electoral wards in the City.

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**Executive Summary:**

Coventry City Council has developed a new Coventry Transport Strategy. It sets out a long-term (15 year) vision for the way that people and goods will travel to, from and around the city in the future. It aims to bring about a fundamental change by creating a city where it is easy, convenient and safe to walk, cycle and travel on public transport and where most people do not need to use a car to access the services that they need for day-to-day life.

This change will directly support many of the Council's wider objectives, as set out in the emerging One Coventry Plan. These include increasing economic prosperity, improving outcomes and tackling inequalities, reducing adverse impacts upon the environment, health and wellbeing and tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

The Strategy has also been developed alongside the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the region, which is expected to be adopted in early 2023. The Coventry Transport Strategy therefore aims to deliver Coventry's local priorities, while also meeting the ambitions of the wider region, for example in relation to economic growth and tackling climate change.

Cabinet has previously (October 2021) considered this Strategy in draft form. Since then, the Council has carried out a public consultation and has engaged further with key stakeholders (including WMCA). The results of the consultation were largely positive, with stakeholders and the majority of residents supporting both the Strategy's overall vision and most of the individual measures included in it. However, while most of the Strategy is unchanged from the previous draft, some amendments have been made in response to residents and stakeholders feedback.

The Strategy is supported by an accompanying Implementation Plan, which provides details of the specific transport improvements that we, and our partners, will deliver to implement the Strategy. The Implementation Plan is focused primarily on the first five years of the Strategy (2022/23 – 2026/27). This is the period covered by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), through which £80 million has been allocated to transport schemes in Coventry.

Cabinet previously received a more detailed report on the CRSTS programme in August 2022. The Implementation Plan incorporates these schemes alongside others that are expected to be funded via other sources.

### **Recommendations:**

The Cabinet is requested to recommend that Council:

1. Approves the Coventry Transport Strategy as appended to this report and that the Strategy is adopted as part of the Council's formal policy framework.
2. Delegates authority to the Director of Transportation and Highways, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, and the Cabinet Member for City Services (and in respect of the implementation and scope of individual projects, the relevant Ward Councillors), to take the necessary measures to deliver the Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan, as appended to this report.

Council is recommended to:

1. Approve the Coventry Transport Strategy as appended to this report and that the Strategy is adopted as part of the Council's formal policy framework.
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Transportation and Highways, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, and the Cabinet Member for City Services (and in respect of the implementation and scope of individual projects, the relevant Ward Councillors), to take the necessary measures to deliver the Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan, as appended to this report.

### **List of Appendices included:**

- Appendix 1: Coventry Transport Strategy
- Appendix 2: Coventry Transport Strategy – Summary document
- Appendix 3: Implementation Plan
- Appendix 4: Transport Strategy Summary of Let's Talk Survey Results
- Appendix 5: Equality Impact Assessment

### **Background papers:**

None

## **Other useful documents**

The Strategy makes reference to a number of recently published Government strategy documents, including:

- [Decarbonising Transport: A Better, Greener Britain](#)
- [Great British Railways: The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#)
- [Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands](#)
- [Bus Back Better: A National Strategy for England](#)
- [Gear Change: A Bold Vision for Cycling and Walking](#)
- [Taking Charge: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy](#)
- [Future of Freight: A Long-Term Plan](#)

The Strategy is also closely aligned with the WMCA's LTP. While a final version of this has yet to be published, the WMCA have previously published a Green Paper, entitled [Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands](#), which sets out the issues that the LTP is intended to address and the likely approach to this.

## **Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**

Yes – a draft version of the Coventry Transport Strategy was originally considered by the Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2021. A subsequent update on progress was then provided to the Scrutiny Board on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

## **Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**

No – however, a presentation on the draft Strategy was considered by the Disability Equality Action Partnership on 12<sup>th</sup> August 2021

## **Will this report go to Council?**

Yes – 6 December, 2022

**Report title: Coventry Transport Strategy**

**1. Context**

- 1.1 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).
- 1.2 The current LTP, Movement for Growth, is being reviewed to reflect recent national and regional policy changes, notably in relation to climate change. Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), the transport delivery body for the WMCA, has published and consulted on a Green Paper setting out the expected direction of the new LTP and a final version is expected to be adopted by WMCA early in 2023. Coventry City Council is closely engaged with this review.
- 1.3 Coventry's Transport Strategy is closely aligned with the LTP and with our own emerging One Coventry Plan. It is built around four objectives (see section 2.3), which directly support many of the Council's wider objectives, including increasing economic prosperity, improving outcomes, tackling inequalities and tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.
- 1.4 While it is not a statutory requirement for the Council to publish a local Transport Strategy in addition to the LTP, it is expected that this will support the Council's attempts to secure further grant funding for key transport schemes, such as Coventry Very Light Rail (CVLR), and will provide a key component of the Council's policy framework.
- 1.5 The Transport Strategy is also a significant contributor to the Council's commitment to delivering a sustainable future and tackling climate change, with actions that address the five International Council for Local Environment Initiative's (I.C.L.E.I) pathways:
  - Low emissions
  - Circular Economy
  - Nature Based
  - Adaptation & Resilience
  - Equitable Person centred.
- 1.6 Cabinet previously considered a draft of the Coventry Transport Strategy for Coventry in October 2021. Since then, the Council has carried out a public consultation on the Transport Strategy and has engaged further with key stakeholders (including WMCA). Further information on the results of this consultation is provided in section 3 of this report.
- 1.7 Cabinet approval is sought for the final version of the Transport Strategy (Appendix 1) and the associated Implementation Plan (Appendix 3). Some amendments have been made to the draft Strategy to reflect feedback received from residents and stakeholders.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 As noted above, the draft Transport Strategy has been developed in conjunction with TfWM's ongoing LTP review.
- 2.2 In addition to this, it has also been informed by:
  - A desktop review of other existing policy commitments and strategies
  - A further review of evidence relating to how the city's transport network currently operates
  - Both formal and informal consultation with residents and stakeholders.

- 2.3 Based on all the above, a set of four core objectives have been identified and the Strategy has been constructed around these. They 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 and reducing health inequalities.
- 2.4 To achieve these objectives, a fundamental change is needed in the way in which both people and goods travel to, from and around Coventry. In particular current levels of car travel will simply not be sustainable in the future. The Coventry Transport Strategy therefore sets out plans to create a city where it is easy, convenient and safe to walk, cycle and travel on public transport, and where most people do not need to use a car to access the services that they need for day-to-day life.
- 2.5 In order to achieve this change, the Council will need to embrace new technology and new forms of transport. The Strategy therefore includes a commitment to maintain and build on Coventry's existing reputation as a city at the forefront of transport innovation.
- 2.6 Specific measures included in the Strategy include, for example:
- Making substantial improvements to the city's public transport network, including establishing a CVLR system and making improvements to existing rail and bus services
  - Creating a better, safer environment for pedestrians and cyclists, including building a network of segregated cycleways and further pedestrianisation of the city centre and other local centres
  - Accelerating the shift towards zero emission vehicles, including establishing a fully electric public transport system and further expanding the existing public network of charge points for electric vehicles
  - Delivering targeted improvements to the city's road network to meet travel demand associated with new development and to address current 'hot spots' for congestion and air pollution
  - Exploring the potential for drones to be used to transport either people or goods in the future
  - Promoting behaviour change through engagement with local schools and businesses and through schemes that incentivise sustainable travel choices.
- 2.7 The details of the specific transport improvements that will be delivered to achieve the change described in the Strategy are set out in greater detail in an Implementation Plan, which accompanies it. This focuses primarily on schemes which will be delivered over the next five years.
- 2.8 While the Strategy and Implementation Plan accurately reflect current plans, it will be important to remain flexible in our approach and to add to or adjust these to respond to changing circumstances arising from factors such as national, regional or local policy decisions or new funding opportunities. To do this we will keep both documents under regular review.
- 2.9 By publishing an Annual Progress Report, we will both outline our progress in implementing the Strategy and report any changes which we are making to our plans. This will be submitted to Cabinet each year.
- 2.10 The options available to the Council are therefore:

- Option 1: Not to adopt the Transport Strategy. While it is not a statutory requirement that the Council adopts a Transport Strategy, doing so provides an important framework for helping to deliver the Council's statutory obligations and will help drive forward the One Coventry Plan 2022-2030. It is also expected that adopting the Transport Strategy will support attempts to secure further funding for the various transport schemes that are included in it, such as CVLR.
- Option 2: To adopt the Transport Strategy, as recommended.

### **3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 The draft Strategy previously considered by Cabinet in October 2021 had already been developed with input from internal and external stakeholders. It also incorporated views expressed by residents during an initial, informal engagement exercise. This had been carried out via Let's Talk, with a total of 262 residents participating.
- 3.2 A further, formal consultation has now been undertaken. This primarily consisted of a further Let's Talk survey, carried out between February and April 2022. A further 129 residents participated in this survey.
- 3.3 A more detailed breakdown of the results of this survey has been provided in Appendix 4. In summary, most respondents agreed with the overall vision for the strategy and with most of the specific measures proposed to achieve it. Of the 25 measures included in the survey, more than 60% of respondents said that they agreed (somewhat agreed or definitely agreed) with 20 of them.
- 3.4 However, some specific changes have been made to the Strategy in response to feedback from residents. In particular, the section on e-scooters has been substantially amended. This now makes clear that any decision to legalise e-scooters will be made by DfT, and not by Coventry City Council. It also now includes a specific commitment that, in the event of legalisation, we will develop a dedicated e-scooter policy. This would focus on integrating e-scooters into our transport system safely, for example by influencing where they are to be used by expanding the current e-scooter hire scheme in a controlled way.
- 3.5 Similarly, the section on making greater use of bus priority measures, such as bus gates, has also been amended. This now makes clear that these will be used in a very targeted way to address particular 'pinch points', where delays are common and adversely impact upon bus service reliability, and where they can contribute to the Council's wider objectives. This could include, for example, locations such as the city centre and other local centres, where measures could be used both to prioritise bus travel and to create more pedestrian-friendly environments by reducing traffic levels.
- 3.6 In addition to the survey, we also engaged with various stakeholder/resident groups via online and in person meetings, took part in a drop-in style consultation event at the Council House in July 2022 and received a number of written comments on the draft Strategy by post/email.
- 3.7 In summary, stakeholders were also broadly supportive of the Strategy. No stakeholders expressed concerns about the overall vision, or to the general approach set out in the Strategy. Various individual stakeholders also welcomed many of the specific improvements proposed in the Strategy including, for example, our plans for CVLR, improved rail connectivity and dedicated cycling facilities.
- 3.8 Some stakeholders made specific suggestions to improve the Strategy, many of which have been incorporated into the proposed final version. They included, for example,

including further detail on our plans to expand the provision of 'car clubs'/car sharing services and to carry out a review of our Parking Strategy.

#### **4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 If approved by Cabinet and Council, work to implement the Transport Strategy will begin immediately.
- 4.2 As noted above, to ensure successful delivery of the Strategy and to allow us to respond to any changes in circumstances, it is also proposed that the Transport and Innovation Team prepare an Annual Progress Report. This will be submitted to Cabinet each year following approval of the Strategy.

#### **5. Comments from the Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Governance**

##### **5.1 Financial implications**

The production of the Coventry Transport Strategy does not, in itself, have any direct financial implications for the City Council. It does, though, provide the strategic policy framework for future bids for funding for transport schemes that the Council intends to bring forward, and will therefore strengthen the business cases that are submitted to funding bodies such as the DfT or the WMCA.

The Implementation Plan which sits alongside the draft Strategy lists the transport schemes and programmes that are identified as being necessary to support the successful delivery of the transport strategy objectives. It provides an indication of the scale of the funding required for these and, where possible, the confirmed/likely funding sources for these.

These funding sources have been considered in reports presented to Cabinet in March 2022 and August 2022 and include the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), the Active Travel Fund, the Air Quality Implementation Fund, and developer funding secured through Section 106 Agreements.

Precise cost estimates have not been included because individual schemes are at different stages of development, and therefore have varying levels of cost certainty. It should also be noted that there is also a risk of costs rising due to inflation. The appropriate governance reports will be brought to members as schemes move through the various stages of development and business cases to a point when funding bids are proposed to be submitted or funding is actually secured.

##### **5.2 Legal implications**

The statutory requirement to produce a LTP sits with the WMCA rather than the City Council. There is no legal obligation on the City Council to produce a Transport Strategy.

Whilst there is no statutory duty to produce a Transport Strategy, doing so provides an important framework for helping to deliver the Council's statutory obligations and will help drive forward the One Coventry Plan 2022-2030. The Transport Strategy will sit alongside other Council policies and strategies and will provide a clear and achievable economic vision therefore underpinning and reinforcing the Council's aims and objective for the City. Furthermore, it is considered that having a Coventry Transport Strategy in place will strengthen the Council's position when it comes to securing funding for transport schemes, negotiating with third parties such as land use developers, and in working with

transport bodies to secure improvements to the transport network and services within Coventry.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. The Council must further take into account its wider Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) under s. 149 of the Equality Act 2010 when making its decisions. The public sector equality duty (s.49, Equality Act 2010) requires the Council when exercising its functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between those who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not share the protected characteristic and foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it (this involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to (a) tackle prejudice and (b) promote understanding). As such, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion has been identified as a crosscutting theme within the strategy.

The Council will consider the impact of any projects or changes to service delivery that might arise as a result of implementing work coming out of this strategy on those protected equality characteristics. Individual proposals will be subject to an Equality Impact Assessment wherever relevant prior to any decision taken to proceed, including the identification of mitigating action, where possible

## **6. Other implications**

### **6.1 How will this contribute to the Council Plan ([www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/))?**

The Transport Strategy is closely aligned with the emerging One Coventry Plan.

In particular, the four objectives which the Strategy is built around (set out in section 2.3) are very closely aligned with those that are described in the draft One Coventry Plan which the Council has recently consulted on:

- Increasing the economic prosperity of the city and region
- Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities
- Tackling the causes and consequences of climate change.

Achieving all these objectives requires a change in the way in which people travel to, from and around Coventry. The successful implementation of the Transport Strategy is intended to bring about this change.

The Strategy is also closely aligned with the Council's emerging Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy and includes actions which will directly contribute to Coventry achieving its targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

The Implementation Plan sets out details of a pipeline of transport schemes which will be delivered over the lifetime of the strategy, together with the timescales within which it is currently expected that these will be delivered. However, there are risks associated with the delivery of any infrastructure scheme and, in practice, it is highly likely that over time there will need to be changes to the detail of the Implementation Plan.

This could be, for example, as a result of rising costs or difficulty securing scheme funding, some schemes being deemed unviable or more suitable alternatives being identified and feedback from public consultations. The long-term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on

residents' travel habits, which are not yet fully understood, also adds a further element of uncertainty to this, and could affect the business case for some individual schemes. To manage this, it is proposed to take a flexible approach to delivering the Implementation Plan and to keep it under regular review.

An Annual Progress Report will therefore be prepared to outline progress in implementing the Coventry Transport Strategy, and to report any changes to the Implementation Plan.

Individual schemes will also be subject to the Council's usual governance and risk management arrangements. This will be proportionate to the stage of scheme development/delivery which they are at and the level of spend associated with them. For example, at an officer level, the recently established Transport Capital Programme Board will maintain oversight of all capital schemes that are delivered directly by the Council.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

None

### **6.4 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

An EIA has been undertaken for the Coventry Transport Strategy as further detailed in Appendix 5.

It is expected that by reducing the city's reliance on car travel, and by significantly improving conditions for walking, cycling and travel via public transport the Strategy will have a positive impact on several groups such as both younger people and older people, who are less likely to be able to drive.

The Strategy is also expected to benefit disabled people, who often currently face barriers to travelling, particularly by public transport. The Strategy reaffirms the Council's plans to developing a more inclusive transport system by delivering the commitments set out in its Transport Charter for Disabilities. This includes, for example, increasing the number of spaces available for wheelchair users/passengers with prams or pushchairs on all buses.

Furthermore, by reducing overall traffic volumes and therefore current concentrations of air pollution, the Strategy is also expected to bring significant public health benefits. This will particularly benefit those who are more vulnerable to the health impacts of air pollution, including children, older people and those with some types of disability.

In addition to the above, individual schemes within the draft Implementation Plan are all subject to the EIA process as part of their project and programme management process.

### **6.5 Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment**

The decarbonisation of the transport system is at the heart of the Coventry Transport Strategy, with delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system being one of its four core objectives. This approach is critical to enable Coventry City Council to achieve its carbon emissions reduction targets, and the emerging objectives of the Climate Change Strategy, which is currently undergoing review.

Transport is currently the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions, both nationally and in the West Midlands. The Coventry Transport Strategy sets out plans to address this by bringing about a significant change in the way in which we travel over the next 15 years, with the goal of delivering a sustainable, integrated, low carbon transport system through the delivery of projects such as the CVLR network, a network of fully

segregated cycle routes and increased charging infrastructure to support the increased take-up of zero emission vehicles by residents and businesses.

## **6.6 Implications for partner organisations?**

Delivering a change in the way in which we travel will have significant, and mainly positive, implications for local communities. These will include, for example, reduced air pollution, fewer road traffic accidents and improved levels of physical activity among local residents.

In addition, delivery of the Coventry Transport Strategy will also have impacts on other partner organisations, including neighbouring local authorities, private sector public transport operators and local employers. Many of these partners have been directly engaged in the development of the strategy.

The Coventry Transport Strategy complements the emerging LTPs currently being reviewed by the WMCA and by Warwickshire County Council, as well as regional strategies being developed by Midlands Connect, strategies developed by delivery agencies such as National Highways and Network Rail, and operational strategies of transport operators, notably bus and rail companies.

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