

Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3)
Cabinet
Council

26 September 2024
1 October 2024
15 October 2024

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change – Councillor J O’Boyle

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of City Services and Commercial

Ward(s) affected:

All wards

Title:

Coventry Transport Strategy Update

Is this a key decision?

No - although the proposals affect more than two electoral wards, the impact is not expected to be significant.

Executive summary:

The Coventry Transport Strategy was approved by Council in December 2022. It is a 15-year strategy which sets out plans to fundamentally change the city’s transport system, including by investing in significant improvements to public transport, walking and cycling and by accelerating the transition to zero emission vehicles.

This report provides an update on progress achieved since the Coventry Transport Strategy was adopted, including the latest available performance information, and **seeks approval to update the Implementation Plan which accompanies the Strategy** to reflect the Council’s latest plans.

The Implementation Plan sets out the ‘pipeline’ of specific improvements that the Council intends to deliver over the lifetime of the Strategy. The proposed changes to this include updating the expected timescales for the delivery of various schemes and the addition of a small number of new actions. These additions include reform of the region’s bus services and several additional walking and cycling schemes, for which funding has now been secured. The specific changes which Council is being asked to approve are detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.

Recommendations:

Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) is recommended to:

- 1) Review the report and make any recommendations to Cabinet that it deems appropriate.

Cabinet is requested to recommend that Council:

- 1) Approve the updated and amended Implementation Plan (set out in Appendix 2 to the report) which was previously approved by Council on 6th December 2022, and which accompanies the Coventry Transport Strategy; and
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of City Services and the Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, and the Cabinet Member for City Services, to make variations from time to time to the Coventry Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan.

Council is requested to:

- 1) Approve the updated and amended Implementation Plan (set out in Appendix 2 to the report) which was previously approved by Council on 6th December 2022, and which accompanies the Coventry Transport Strategy; and
- 2) Delegates authority to the Director of City Services and Director of Finance and Resources, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Regeneration and Climate Change, and the Cabinet Member for City Services, to make variations from time to time to the Coventry Transport Strategy and Implementation Plan.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Coventry Transport Strategy Key Performance Indicators Progress Report
- Appendix 2 - Coventry Transport Strategy Implementation Plan Update

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents:

The Coventry Transport Strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan, as approved in December 2022, are published on the Council's website at <https://www.coventry.gov.uk/transport-strategy-2>

Has it or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

Yes - Business, Economy and Enterprise Scrutiny Board (3) on 26 September 2024

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

Yes. At an officer level, updates on the Coventry Transport Strategy have been/will be given to the Future Cities Board on 9 July 2024 and Leadership Board on 24 September 2024.

Will this report go to Council?

Yes, it will be considered by Council on 15 October 2024

Report title: Coventry Transport Strategy Update

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. The Coventry Transport Strategy was approved by Council in December 2022. It is a 15-year strategy which sets out plans to fundamentally change the city's transport system, including by investing in significant improvements to public transport, walking and cycling and by accelerating the transition to zero emission vehicles. It aims to significantly reduce current levels of car travel, and to ensure that in the future those journeys which do still need to be made by car are made using zero emission vehicles.
- 1.2. The Strategy includes a series of Key Performance Indicators, which the Council committed to monitoring over the lifetime of the Strategy.
- 1.3. It is also accompanied by a more detailed Implementation Plan, which was approved by Members at the same time. This sets out the 'pipeline' of specific improvements that the Council intends to deliver over the lifetime of the Strategy, with a particular emphasis on years 1-5.

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

Progress update

- 2.1. Information on the latest progress is provided to Members for information and discussion and does not require a specific decision. In summary, the following milestones have been achieved since the adoption of the Coventry Transport Strategy in 2022:
 - Significant progress in the rollout of electric buses, with approximately 140 now in operation
 - The introduction of a citywide 'demand responsive' bus service (West Midlands on Demand), which now incorporates the former 'Ring and Ride' service
 - Construction of most sections of the Binley Cycleway
 - Implementation of the city's first 'Liveable Neighbourhood' in Earlsdon and the first trials of 'School Streets'
 - Delivery of highway improvements at Spon End and the new Ring Road Junction 7, as part of the Council's Local Air Quality Action Plan
 - Construction of a new junction on the A45 to serve the planned Eastern Green Sustainable Urban Extension.
- 2.2. As noted above, the Strategy also sets out a series of Key Performance Indicators which will be used to monitor progress against the Strategy's objectives. It should be noted that these are long-term objectives, which are intended to be achieved over the lifetime of a 15-year strategy. Some data is also not collected every year, or in some cases there is lag before data becomes available. However, the latest performance information that is currently available is set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

- 2.3. In summary, at this stage that document primarily sets out the baseline and the desired direction of travel for each KPI, with baseline data being collected in 2022 in most cases. 2023 data has also been included, where this is already available, however it is likely that several years' worth of data will need to be collected before the strategy's impact can be properly evaluated.
- 2.4. For those indicators where both 2022 and 2023 data is available, a summary of the key changes is provided below:
- There was an increase in the number electric vehicles registered to addresses in the city, with an additional 539 of these being registered in the last year, and an increase in the use of public electric vehicle charge points (rapid and residential), with more than 10,000 additional kWhs of charge being dispensed in September 2023, compared to September 2022. This continues a long-term trend which is seeing electric vehicle take-up increase rapidly
 - There was a significant increase in city centre footfall, with the average number of daily visitors to the city centre increasing by 28% to approximately 64,000 people in 2023
 - There was also an increase in the proportion of all trips into central Coventry which are made by bus, rail and bike. This rose from 18% in 2021 to 20.5% in 2023. However, this remains largely in line with the longer-term historical trend with the increase appearing to be driven largely by the recovery in levels of public transport use, which reduced substantially in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic
 - There was a reduction in the number of locations where the annual average concentration of NO₂ (a form of air pollution associated with car traffic) exceeds 30 µg/m³, from 13 to 9, although there is still one location where this marginally exceeds the current legal limit of 40 µg/m³
 - There was also a small reduction in the total number of injuries from road traffic accidents, from 533 to 491. Although the number of fatalities and serious injuries increased slightly from 90 to 96.

Implementation Plan updates

- 2.5. Appendix 2 to the report is an updated version of the Implementation Plan which was previously approved in December 2022. This has been reviewed and updated to ensure that it accurately reflects the Council's latest plans, and **approval is being sought to make these changes to the published document.**
- 2.6. In summary, most of the proposed changes relate to the expected timescales for individual schemes to be delivered, with these having been updated to reflect each scheme's current status.
- 2.7. However, a small number of actions have been updated more substantially and a small number of additional actions have also been added to the Implementation Plan. These changes include:
- Reform of regional bus services – the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is now exploring the options to reform bus provision across the region, including

the option to introduce Bus Franchising. WMCA is expected to make a formal decision on their preferred option early in 2025, with implementation of that option to follow shortly afterwards. An additional action has therefore been added to the Implementation Plan reflecting these plans

- City Centre Cycleway, an extension of the existing Coundon Cycleway towards Keresley and initial trials of 'School Streets' – funding has been secured for these additional walking and cycling schemes since the Coventry Transport Strategy was approved. They have therefore been added to the Implementation Plan
- Coventry South Sustainable Transport Package – previously focused specifically on London Road, this scheme is now expected to be expanded to include a wider package of planned improvements to London Road, Humber Road and the A444. This change reflects additional funding which has now been made available for the scheme through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS)
- Solihull & Coventry Automated Links Evolution (SCALE) project – funding has now been secured from the Department for Transport for this project which see the use of autonomous vehicles to provide shuttle services being piloted in Solihull and Coventry. These pilots have therefore also been added to the Implementation Plan.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1. A public consultation was carried out prior to the Coventry Transport Strategy being adopted in 2022. While approval is being sought to update the accompanying Implementation Plan, no changes are proposed to the Strategy itself. Therefore, a further consultation has not been carried out.
- 3.2. Separate consultations have also been/will also be carried out on the individual schemes contained in the Implementation Plan, prior to their implementation.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1. The Coventry Transport Strategy covers a 15-year period. The latest expected timescales for implementing the various individual schemes that contribute to the Strategy are set out in the updated Implementation Plan (Appendix 2 to the report).
- 4.2. If the proposed updates to the Implementation Plan are approved the published document, which is available on the Council's website, will be updated immediately.

5. Comments from Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Law and Governance

5.1. Financial Implications

Updating the Coventry Transport Strategy does not, in itself, have any direct financial implications for the City Council.

However, it should be noted that the Strategy provides the strategic framework used when bidding for funding to deliver the various transport schemes that the Council intends to bring forward. The Implementation Plan which accompanies the Strategy lists these schemes and provides an indication of both the approximate scale of the funding required and, where possible, the confirmed or likely source of this funding.

Infrastructure improvements in particular are funded via grants secured from various sources, such as the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), the Active Travel Fund (ATF) and the Air Quality Implementation Fund, and/or Section 106 contributions secured from developers. All the infrastructure schemes delivered in the first few years of the Strategy have been funded in this way and successful delivery of the remaining schemes will be dependent on the necessary funding being secured.

Individual schemes will not be delivered until both the necessary funding and the necessary political approvals have been secured, in accordance with the Council's normal governance arrangements.

5.2. Legal Implications

The Coventry Transport Strategy is not a statutory document, as the statutory responsibility for producing a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the region sits with the West Midlands Combined Authority. The Strategy is however closely aligned with the LTP for the West Midlands and is intended to support successful delivery of it as well as other key Council strategies, such as the One Coventry Plan.

While the pipeline of schemes set out in the Implementation Plan represents the Council's current intentions, this is subject to change and each individual scheme will still be subject to public consultation and political approval, in accordance with the Council's normal governance arrangements.

The Equality Act 2010 requires public authorities to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out prior to the Strategy being approved in December 2022, while separate EIAs have also been/will also been produced for individual schemes prior to delivery.

6. Other implications

6.1. How will this contribute to the One Coventry Plan?

<https://www.coventry.gov.uk/strategies-plans-policies/one-coventry-plan>)

The Coventry Transport Strategy is closely aligned with the One Coventry Plan. In particular, the four objectives which the Strategy is built around are very closely aligned with those that are described in the One Coventry Plan.

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

6.2. How is risk being managed?

Individual schemes are subject to the Council's usual governance and risk management arrangements. This is 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 Transport Capital Programme Board maintains oversight of all capital schemes that are delivered directly by the Council.

Regular progress reports and updates to the Implementation Plan, such as this one, also provide Members with oversight of the Strategy.

6.3. What is the impact on the organisation?

None

6.4. Equalities / EIA?

An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) was carried out prior to the Coventry Transport Strategy being adopted in 2022. While approval is being sought to update accompanying Implementation Plan, no changes are proposed to the Strategy itself. Therefore, this EIA remains accurate.

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 objectives of the emerging Climate Change Strategy and One Coventry Plan.

6.6. Implications for partner organisations?

Many of the schemes listed in the Implementation Plan are being delivered by, or in partnership with, partner organisations including other public bodies, such as WMCA, Transport for West Midlands, National Highways, Active Travel England and neighbouring local authorities, and private sector partners, such as public transport and charge point operators.

These partnerships are highlighted in the updated Implementation Plan, which is provided as Appendix 2 to this report.

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