

Cabinet

Report Title	Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan 2020-30 - Five Year Review
Date of Meeting	Wednesday, 30 July 2025
Report Author	Wayne Moore – Senior Transport Planner
Lead Officer	Alan Lunt: Executive Director - Place
Lead Cabinet Member(s)	Councillor Keith Allcock: Cabinet Member for Environment & Highways and Councillor Peter Hughes: Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Infrastructure
Why is this a key decision?	To be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards of the Borough.
Wards Affected	(All Wards);
Identify exempt information and exemption category	Open
Is the report urgent?	No
Reasons for urgency (only where applicable)	
Appendices (if any)	1. Sandwell Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan 2020

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to carry out a midway five-year review of the Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (SCWIP) for the period 2025 to 2030, adopted by the council in January 2020. Many of the proposals within the plan have either been delivered or are in development. In addition, the Council has applied for £150,000 development funding from West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to undertake a Cycling and Walking Infrastructure review to identify a package of measures to improve active travel throughout Sandwell which supports the objectives of this Plan.

2. Recommendations

The Cabinet is recommended to:-

- 2.1 Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place to undertake a review of the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan to identify a package of measures to improve active travel throughout Sandwell, the commencement of the review being subject to approval and grant award of £150,000 being allocated from the Integrated Settlement Funding of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

3. Proposals – Reasons for the recommendations

- 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. The strategy seeks to double the 2013 number of journeys, or part journeys, made by cycle by 2025. It recognises that achieving this will require a sustained investment in cycling infrastructure by Central Government, Local Transport Authorities and third parties. The Government anticipates that Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs) will be the principal vehicle for targeting this investment.
- 3.2 The WMCA has developed an LCWIP that identifies and enables a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout the West Midlands up to 2028. Subsequently Sandwell developed Sandwell Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan i.e. an LCWIP that identified and enabled a plan to develop strategic cycling and walking networks throughout Sandwell up to 2030, which included a provision to carry out a mid-term review.
- 3.3 To complement the WMCA and Sandwell LCWIP's Black Country Transport commissioned work to develop a BCWWCP that identified and enabled a plan to develop local cycling and walking networks throughout the Black Country till 2032. The BCWWCP has been approved by the council in April 2025 and was due to be published in May 2025.
- 3.4 Sandwell has bid for £150,000 funding from The Integrated Settlement, which runs from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, and delivers a range of services and infrastructure projects.
- 3.5 Consultants will be appointed by Sandwell Transport Planning Team to prepare the SCWIP review to support mode shift to active modes throughout Sandwell. The process undertaken will conform to the Department for Transport (DfT)'s defined six-stage LCWIP process. The geographical scope is the whole of the area within Sandwell's boundary.
- 3.6 A policy and data led analysis will be carried out to establish areas of highest cycle and walking demand. The areas within Sandwell will then be reviewed by Sandwell's Transportation team to select those which aligned with Sandwell's policy objectives. These included: air quality improvement areas, regeneration corridors, proximity to secondary schools, proximity to transport hubs, current and planned 20mph zones, areas of high congestion and areas of deprivation.

- 3.7 The West Midlands has secured £1.05bn funding to expand the region's tram, train, bus, walking and cycle networks and drive a green transport revolution. The funding comes from the government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), which has kickstarted a wide range of projects including walking and cycling Infrastructure in a move to decarbonise the region's transport system, create new jobs and opportunities for local people and bolster the fight against climate change and improve public health.
- 3.8 The SCWIP review will also seek to provide routes along canal towpaths and through parks and green spaces as a further adjunct to the utility route network that also make a contribution to opportunities for physical activity for leisure, health and wellbeing purposes. A review of the SCWIP will commence later in the year and the details will be reported to Cabinet in due course. The SCWIP provides the framework against which bids can be prepared for funds from bodies such as Sport England that aim to promote cycling and walking as activities in general, not just as modes of transport.

4 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 An alternative option is that the council continues to deliver the outstanding proposals in the adopted SCWIP and not carry out the review. However once these proposals are delivered Sandwell will no longer have an LCWIP and will no longer be eligible to bid for CRSTS funding for walking and cycling schemes, which will impact on other council Objectives.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The following programme of consultation is proposed:
- SCWIP Review Workshop.
 - All Members that have proposed routes within their wards being briefed.
 - The SCWIP Review being posted on Commonplace consultation platform.
 - Social Media Posts during the consultation.
 - Two public Exhibitions.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 The council has placed a bid to WMCA for £150,000 Capital funding from The Integrated Settlement. The settlement brings together funding from the Government that relates to five functional responsibilities (Adult Skills and Employment, Housing and Regeneration, Net Zero (Buildings Retrofit), Transport and Local Growth and Place) into a single funding pot. The first Integrated Settlement runs from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026, and delivers a range of services and infrastructure projects.
- 6.2 If successful, the Capital funding will be used to appoint consultants to carry out the SCWIP review and to fund council officer time allocated during the review.

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7. Legal and Governance Implications

- 7.1 Under s.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.
- 7.2 To convert all or part of a footway to a shared pedestrian and cycle route, all or the appropriate part of the footway must be removed under s.66(4) of the Highways Act 1980, and a cycle track 'constructed' under s.65(1) of the act. No physical construction is necessary for the proposals set out in this plan 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.
- 7.3 The whole borough was declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in 2005. The council has had an Air Quality Action Plan (2005) for a number of years which has a range of measures to improve air quality in the borough including "implementing a range of measures to promote alternative and sustainable travel" and "encouraging walking, cycling and take up of public transport". Despite progress with the council's Air Quality Action Plan, measured NOx concentrations in the borough are not declining as expected. A review of the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is therefore required to ensure the council can make necessary arrangements to comply with current and future legislation and regulation on air quality.

8. Risks

- 8.1 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.

9. Equality and Diversity Implications (including the public sector equality duty)

- 9.1 Walking and cycling are among the cheapest modes of transport and so help build equality throughout Sandwell as it offers affordable options of travel to employment and higher education which in turn will encourage economic growth of the borough. The routes and zones will be spread across the entire borough to benefit as many communities as possible.
- 9.2 Where cycle interventions are identified, the preferred (and costed) options will be segregated provision. Safety and not wanting to mix with traffic is the main barrier given for why people don't cycle. This is especially true for women who make up only 25% of those cycling (Sustrans). Women are also more likely to make 'escort' trips with children (National Travel Survey). Good quality cycle infrastructure is designed to be suitable for a child who has completed their level 2 Bikeability (previously known as Cycling Proficiency). Cycle facilities to schools and colleges provides greater freedom for children, and the ability for families to travel in an active way.

- 9.3 Cycle infrastructure and good walking environments also gives older people, and those with physical disabilities more transport options and greater independence. Cycles are available for almost every type of disability and can act as a mobility aid for those who find walking difficult. Evidence where high-quality cycle infrastructure has been built has shown it is often shared with wheelchairs, mobility scooters and other assistive modes of transport.
- 9.4 When considering the recommended interventions for walking and cycling, the user hierarchy, as set out in 'Manual for Streets 2' (2010) will be followed. This considers the most vulnerable user's needs, pedestrians, first, followed by cyclists and then users in motorised forms of transport.
- 9.5 As individual schemes from the SCWIP are developed they will be subject of Equality Impact Assessments as part of their formulation and the results reported to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways to further ensure an inclusive approach, so all groups are considered.

10. Other Relevant Implications

- 10.1 **Procurement implications** – All procurement decisions will have input from Procurement Services and Legal Services using consultants listed on a pre-approved framework.
- 10.2 **Climate change** – In the UK some 25% of all car trips are under 1 mile, and 71% are under 5 miles, so there are opportunities for mode shift to Walking and Cycling, which are zero emissions activities. This will contribute to Sandwell Climate Change Strategy 2020-2041.
- 10.3 **Corporate parenting** – There are no Implications for Corporate Parenting responsibilities arising from this report.
- 10.4 **Social Value** – The proposed walking and cycling infrastructure Improvements will give communities more travel choice to access employment, education and services
- 10.5 **Health and Wellbeing** – Nationally Sandwell is the 12th most deprived local authority out of a total of 326, with unemployment rates at 7.2%, which is higher than both the West Midlands 5.3% and the national average of 3.8%. In Sandwell 34% of households do not have access to a car or van, compared with 25.6% in England and Wales. Limited travel choices and high costs of public transport can limit social mobility by restricting residents from accessing employment, education and services. Sandwell residents who have limited travel choices and sparse resources can be disadvantaged in their aspirations. This has implications for council budgets in terms of benefits, housing, health, social care, and council tax revenue.

In 2020 43.1% of Year 6 children and 77.7% of adults in Sandwell were classified as overweight or obese compared with England averages of 35.2% and 62.8% respectively; levels physical activity and life expectancy were worse than the England average. Obesity and lack of exercise costs the Black Country £37 million a year and data published in 2018 showed Sandwell was the sixth worst area for obese children in the country. The West Midlands on the Move 2017-30 Physical Activity Strategy identifies that nearly two million adults or 29% of the West Midlands population are doing less than 30 minutes

of activity a week. Inactivity is holding back economic growth and the better life chances, raised aspirations and better quality of life and leads to:

- Poorer health
- Less productivity at work
- More isolated society
- Reduced educational attainment

To mitigate the health impacts of inactivity in the West Midlands, the LCWIP's aim to provide a working partnership with local authorities and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) "to create an extensive, safe and coherent network of well-designed off and on-road links connecting key destinations irrespective of administration boundaries to promote walking, cycling and running".

11. Background Documents

- [Government Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy \(CWIS2\)](#)
- [West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Sandwell Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan](#)
- [Sandwell Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan](#)

12. How does this deliver the objectives of the Strategic Themes?

This report will support the delivery of the following Strategic Themes:-

- **Growing up in Sandwell** - Children and young people are supported to lead happy and healthy lives with access to a range of opportunities for positive activities, play and having fun.
- **Living in Sandwell** - Implement our new neighbourhoods' model of working, making it easier for our residents to access services and improving the service they receive.
- **Healthy in Sandwell** - Contribute to improve air quality and climate change through raising public awareness, increasing active travel and supporting organisations to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Thriving Economy in Sandwell** - Residents and businesses are well connected and have a good travel experience in the borough.

Relevance Check**Budget Reduction/Service Area:****Service Lead****Date:**

In what ways does this Budget reduction have an impact on an outward facing service? How will the service feel different to your customers or potential customers?

N/A

If not, how does it impact on staff e.g. redundancies, pay grades, working conditions? Why are you confident that these staff changes will not affect the service that you provide?

N/A

Is a Customer Impact Assessment needed? No