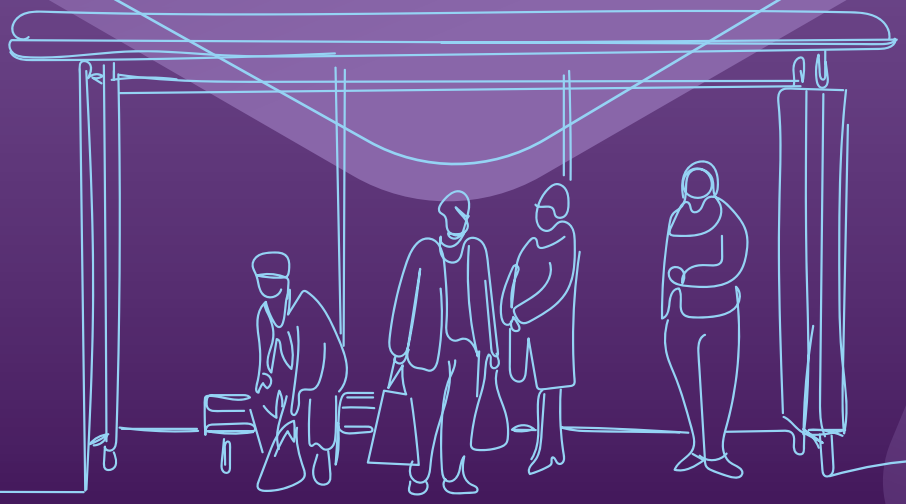
Mayor of the
West Midlands

Local Transport Plan

Our 6 Big Moves

Journeys for Everyone



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Transport for
West Midlands

Contents

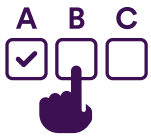
Executive Summary - Our 6 Big Moves

To deliver on the vision as set out in our Core Strategy we are building our policy and delivery programmes based on six 'Big Moves'. These create a framework within which the region can develop transport priorities and deliver the West Midland's Local Transport Plan's (WMLTP5) outcomes and support the West Midlands Growth Plan.

The Big Moves consider the various essential components of the transport system and provide a range of policies that can be used together and in different ways to help achieve our outcomes. The decisions made about how to prioritise and apply them will vary from place to place. These decisions will reflect the needs of the people and communities and the ambitions of different areas and will shape the development of the Area Based Implementation Plans.

This document sets out the detail of our policies under each of the Big Moves, an overview of which is summarised below.

6 Big Moves



Behaviour change

Accessible and inclusive places

Safe, efficient and reliable network

Walk, wheel, cycle and scoot

Public transport and shared mobility

Green transport revolution

Avoid

Shift

Improve

Behaviour change

This Big Move is fundamental to both the overall Core Strategy, but also to the other 5 Big Moves. To enable the region to be more prosperous, inclusive and sustainable, we need to support people to think differently about travel. This requires system change (changing the options available to people) and behaviour change If we cannot support more people to travel more sustainably and provide access to the services people need locally then we will be in danger of not meeting the core goals of the Local Transport Plan.

This Big Move requires us to have conversations with businesses and communities about how they travel. WMCA, local authorities and their partners will need have a deeper understanding of people's travel needs and the challenges they face in accessing opportunities. This Big Move sets out the need to think differently about how we govern the transport system, how we change people's experience of the transport system, and ultimately how people choose to travel.

This Big Move is all about:

- How the public sector can take a leadership role to change behaviours in the region, both in terms of how we make decisions and how our residents and businesses make travel choices.
- How we will focus our work towards policies and decisions which understand the users of our networks, their needs, the barriers they face and how they make choices.
- How we can manage the demand for transport in our region to help us meet the objectives of the WMLTP5 Core Strategy.
- How we will engage with the public to help them to understand the problems and issues we're facing, how they can change behaviours to help and importantly how they will be part of the decision making process.

Public Transport and Shared Mobility

Different journeys need different public and shared transport solutions. WMCA and its partners will need a deep understanding of the varied transport needs of individuals and businesses across the region to ensure people have the options they need. There are three key focus areas that will play a part in helping WMCA deliver it's vision for travel .

- **A fully integrated public and shared transport system** which provides excellent international, national, regional and local connectivity.
- **Accessible and safe passenger facilities** which deliver a seamless and high quality customer experience.
- **Integrated fares, ticketing and information** which make public and shared transport easy and attractive to use.

This Big Move is all about:

- How we will plan for and create a truly integrated transport system, not just between different public transport modes but also across all methods of travel. This is about providing real choice to people as to how they can make any journey.
- Models of shared ownership or shared access to vehicles have a strong role to play to reducing traffic (by enabling people to live in our region without feeling that they must own a car) and reducing the impacts of parking, releasing our streets back to people not vehicles.
- How, as part of the integrated system, we will plan for and deliver well designed interchanges which provide connections between services and are gateways to/ from places.
- How we will manage the overall system and make it as simple and easy as possible to use. This includes common branding, ticketing, information and promotion, with accessible design deployed throughout all elements of the system.

Walk, wheel, cycle and scoot

This Big Move is needed to support people to walk, wheel, cycle or scoot when and where they want, safely and conveniently. We believe strongly that everyone in the West Midlands should be enabled to safely access a range of local destinations on foot, in a wheelchair or on a bike or scooter; with the aim of at least half of all trips in our area to be made by active modes by 2030.

The two focus areas include:

- **Walking and Wheeling -** travelling on foot or in a wheelchair are everyone's fundamental modes of travel; every journey at least starts and ends by walking or wheeling. In our vision, they underpin our connected communities as these modes are essential for navigating all places such as residential estates, town centres, retail parks or villages, and for citizens to access local amenities and services.
- **Cycling and Scooting -** bikes and scooters are light personal vehicles, powered or unpowered, that help people access what they need without needing a car and without being constrained by the timetables, fares/ticketing and coverage of public transport modes. They can help people navigate local places quicker than walking and wheeling or perhaps where distances to local services/amenities are beyond a comfortable walking or wheeling range, but also -depending on the individual and the reasons for travel - they can help people make longer journeys between neighbourhoods and centres.

This Big Move is all about:

- How important leadership will be in making bold decisions to create the best possible walk, wheel, cycle and scoot facilities for our residents and visitors.
- How we will plan and deliver infrastructure and networks which are compliant with the government's highest design standards (LTN1/20).
- How we can support more people to get access to vehicles (e.g. powered scooters/ hire bikes etc) to give them real choice for their journeys and how we can integrate these with the wider public transport network.
- How we can raise the awareness, skills and knowledge of the options and opportunities available to people to help them travel confidently and safely.

Safe, efficient and reliable network

This Big Move sets out the need to develop and manage the West Midlands highway network in a way that improves its reliability and resilience and better supports travel by more sustainable modes of transport.

We need a network that adopts a shared approach to safer streets, one that responds to the needs and wants of existing and new users and provides short- and long-term benefits to the users.

This Big Move is all about:

- Supporting the transition to a zero emission vehicle fleet in the West Midlands to radically reduce transport emissions. This requires the right recharging and refuelling network to support an accelerated shift away from internal combustion engines; and requires investment to support rapid transition of the public transport and shared transport fleet to zero emission vehicles.
- How we will ensure that all decisions we make will consider the impacts on and seek to improve the quality of built and natural environments.
- How we will embed innovation into our way of working through partnerships, both within the public sector and with the private sector. We are seeking to maximise the opportunities of the assets we hold, the expertise in our teams and the data we collect.

Accessible and inclusive places

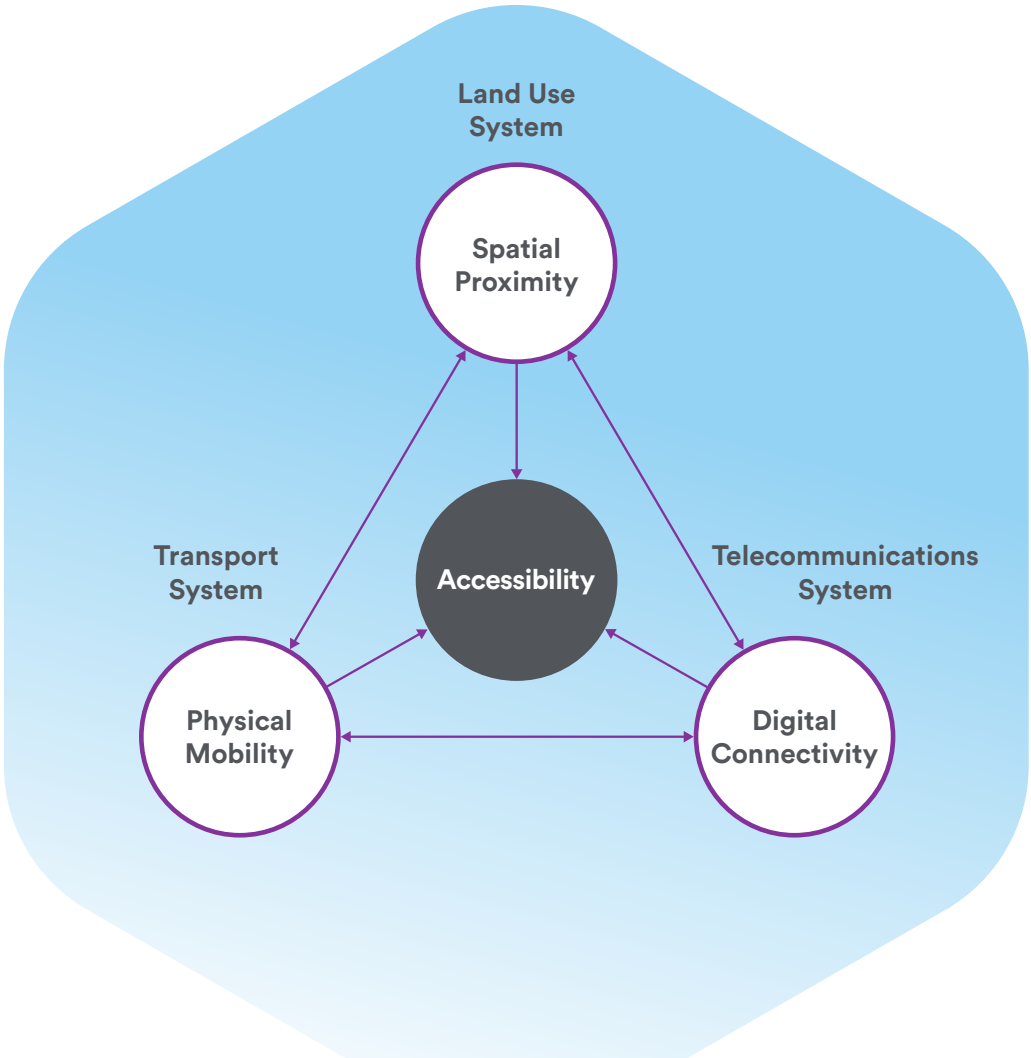
This Big Move is all about how we can shape and use transport's role to help create places where people can choose to travel in a way that is safe and is better for their health whilst helping to create a transport network that supports the economy

This entails more careful planning of places with accessibility in mind, as well as improving sustainable transport and digital connectivity to allow people to access opportunities without needing a car.

The "Triple Access System" shows how accessibility is determined not only by transport infrastructure and services, but also physical proximity and digital access to every day services and opportunities. It's therefore crucial that we plan transport, land use and digital connectivity in a co-ordinated way.

This Big Move is all about:

- How we will define and measure accessibility for future decision making. We need a more nuanced approach to accessibility that better accounts for the quantity, diversity and quality of options available, who they're available for, what they need, and how the options change over time.
- How we need to think differently about our plans for changes in land use across the region, for both new developments and how our urban and rural areas evolve over time.



Green transport revolution

Improving how we travel is not enough to respond to the climate emergency that the region face today; we need to make sure that the whole transport system (including its physical infrastructure) has a significantly reduced impact on the environment. The land, water and air that we depend on is being damaged at a rate that is unsustainable. We need to reduce our impacts by pursuing the appropriate policies in an appropriate way to help us minimise and where possible turn back damage to our environment.

Delivering a green revolution through our WMLTP5 means partnership working between the public and private sector to rapidly decarbonise the transport system and to enhance our built and natural environment.

This Big Move is all about:

- Supporting the transition to a zero-emission vehicle fleet in the West Midlands to radically reduce transport emissions. This requires the right recharging and refueling network to support an accelerated shift away from internal combustion engines; and requires investment to support rapid transition of the public transport and shared transport fleet to zero emission vehicles.
- How we will ensure that all decisions we make will consider the impacts on and seek to improve the quality of built and natural environments.
- Ensure that the challenges of climate adaptation are considered as part of planning, building and operating the transport system.

The background data and evidence supporting the policies presented in this document is provided in the accompanying ‘Big Moves - Evidence Base’ document.


Birmingham
West Midlands Metro
17

Big Move 1: Behaviour change

In this chapter we set out clearly the importance and role that behaviour change needs to play if we're to achieve our vision for transport. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them in our Local Transport Plan.

Where we are now:

For most of our residents and businesses, travelling or moving goods using a petrol or diesel engine motor vehicle feels like the only choice available, even if they do not want or cannot afford to own one. Those who do not own a vehicle are excluded from many activities and opportunities.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

The lifestyles of many of our residents have changed, they do not need to travel as often because more of their daily activities can be done from home or close to where they live, and more goods/services arrive to them. And it's not just that more of what people need is closer by, it's also that travelling around their local area is more rewarding because we've created an environment where walking, wheeling, cycling or scooting is safe, prioritized and convenient.

But it's not just about local living, people find that more is accessible by reliable public transport, with more opportunities found close to centres and along key transit corridors, and it is accessible by reliable and available public transport. Cars still provide the most flexible way to travel but they are needed less often. It might feel less convenient than before to jump in the car for a trip around the corner but that's because of the trade-offs we've all chosen to make to reshape our streets to support other forms of transport. And with car clubs available fewer households will need to own a car. Businesses make fewer journeys when delivering their goods and services because AI technology is creating the most optimal routes, and all their vehicles are now zero emissions. Business travel is reduced overall because more work and meetings can be done remotely.

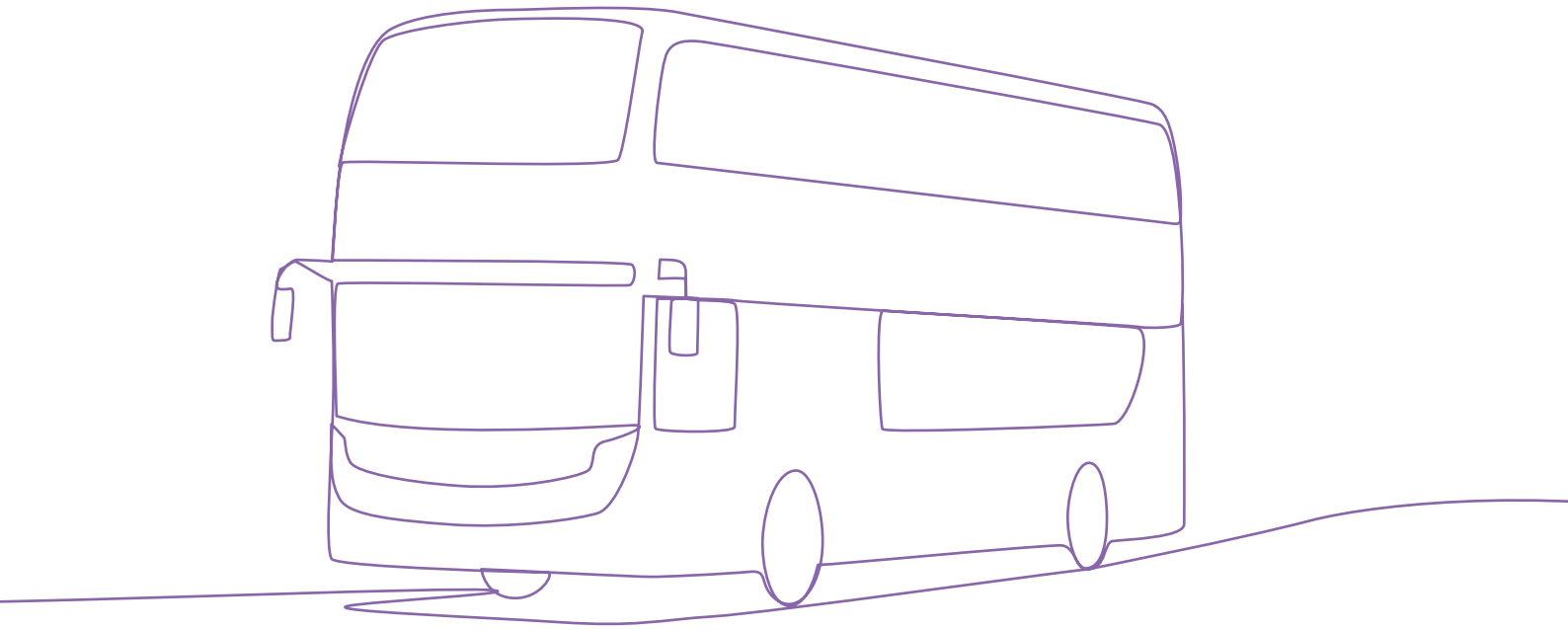
Part 1: Strategic Context

The Core Strategy sets out the vital role behaviour change needs to play if we're to achieve sustainable travel patterns. In that document we show the link between the policies/ interventions we deliver and the perceptions and experiences people have of travel in the region, which in turn shapes their behaviour. This link between our policy proposals and behaviours is critical for delivering the WMLTP5's aims.

The Core Strategy is also clear that to achieve our aims and vision - to change behaviours without compromising what people can access - simultaneous measures would be required to:

- Enable people to travel more by sustainable options by **investing in measures that support better access** to what people need to choose these alternatives; and
- **Finding ways to influence behaviours** by making changes to the transport network which can help to improve walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting or public transport better for some journeys e.g. by allocating more space them, and / or through measures which influence the cost of travel by particular a means e.g. parking restrictions or charges and by measures which restrict access to particular roads.

In the table below we set out how the principles of this Big Move align with the WMLTP5 Primary Transport Outcomes: improve accessibility, reduce traffic and electrify transport. These are described in detail in our Core Strategy.



Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Improve Accessibility	Over the coming years TfWM will need to reshape our streets to help us make the shifts in travel behaviours we all agree we need to make. In our Core Strategy, we acknowledge that this can't all be through measures that feel like they improve the alternatives to car use without any change that feels like it's making car use less convenient. And measures often can't simply do one or the other they often do both at the same time. If we do this, we will see behavioural shifts that reduce the amount of vehicular traffic on our streets whilst still allowing us to access what we need.
Reduce Traffic	There are things we can do to improve accessibility to help change behaviours, but vice versa, shifting behaviour will actually enable us to improve accessibility. As we see less vehicular traffic, this will make our streets feel much safer to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot and it will help us make the network more reliable for public transport, emergency services and important goods movements. And as people shift from car use to public transport and shared services, the increased demand for these services will help operators provide more services, helping to increase service coverage, connectivity, hours of operation and frequency helping to create a virtuous circle of improvement.. We must be honest with our residents and businesses; whilst we all know we need to improve accessibility to change behaviours, we also need to remember that the inverse is true. This is one of the reasons why in our core strategy we acknowledge that to deliver our aims we need to invest in alternatives to improve accessibility at the same time as managing demand.
Electrify Transport	Whilst this Big Move is not explicitly about electrifying transport, we will be developing ways to communicate the benefits of switching to both electric vehicles and exploring the opportunities from other alternative fuels (e.g. hydrogen). In particular this Move is about listening to the needs, choices and barriers to change of our residents and businesses; including what can be done to encourage a faster take up of these alternative fuels. The information we gather from this exercise will cascade down into our plans and policies to breakdown those barriers and support new choices.

Key Issues

Through our evidence base and focused consultation with communities and businesses we have built up a keen understanding of the issues facing travellers which is either a barrier or opportunity to changing people's perceptions, and eventually their choices for transport.

Key issues facing transport users:

- Swimming against the tide - individuals who are motivated to shift to more sustainable behaviours often must choose to travel in a way that is less rewarding and convenient for them; this discourages them from trying.
- Individual vs collective choices - an individual can in theory chose to travel in a different way, but they are limited in how much easier/rewarding they can make it to take this choice. An individual's choices will not necessarily be enough to make them feel safe to cycle for example. Making the choices we want to make rewarding requires people to make collective choices about how we govern transport.
- Trade-offs - The collective choices we can make to support us to make the behavioural shifts we desire, often involve an element of sacrifice. For example, being prepared to accept slower journey times by car as we reallocate space to make it quicker, safer and more reliable to travel by other options in the WMLTP5 Vision for Travel.

Key issues facing WMCA and partners:

- Working effectively with the public - some of the most impactful ways in which we can change how we govern transport to achieve our aims are also the most divisive; it is critical for us to work with the public to consider and shape these decisions. We can promote change, but delivering change must have buy-in. However, the public often does not have a unanimous view on issues, and we must try to make the best decision given this context.
- Finding an equitable way forward - Sometimes, communities that might stand to receive the greatest benefits from policy change can also face the biggest barriers in adapting to it. The core strategy sets out an approach to gain awareness and to ensure a just transition. But this will be no simple task; it's vital that we understand how we can help those who need it and support them through change.
- Accounting for uncertainty and other stakeholders - Local government has substantial direct influence over transport behaviours through its powers in both transport and planning. However, we aren't the only public authorities with direct influence affecting transport in our area. When thinking about what "policy levers" we can pull to influence behaviours, we need to think carefully about what our partners are doing. Policies can result in unintended consequences so it's always important to think about whether an action is likely to be successful given wider context.

Part 2: Policies

Leadership and collaboration

Delivery of our WMLTP5 requires elected members, public sector employees involved in the planning, delivery and operation of the transport system as well stakeholders and citizens to work together effectively to improve our region. Due to the fragmented nature of the transport system, behaviour change is something that requires action across a range of different organisations, collaboration and partnership working is critical.

In our role as the Local Transport Authority for the region we are legally required to develop and oversee the Local Transport Plan (LTP) which sets out our priorities for how we will improve the transport network over the next ten years and beyond, supporting the ambitions of the WM Growth Plan.

Councils are statutory partners in delivering the LTP and lead on many aspects of determining, developing and implementing measures that will be needed. Local authorities manage local highways and undertake traffic management under the Traffic Management Act and share responsibility with WMCA for the Key Route Network. They are responsible local road maintenance and approving highway works and for developing and maintaining local planning policies.

Transport services are run between a mix of private sector operators. Buses in the West Midlands are currently run by commercial operators in a deregulated market, but from 2027 franchised services will be introduced. Rail services are currently the responsibility of DfT with some coordination of the current West Midlands Trains franchise via the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE), jointly managed by WMCA and local authorities.

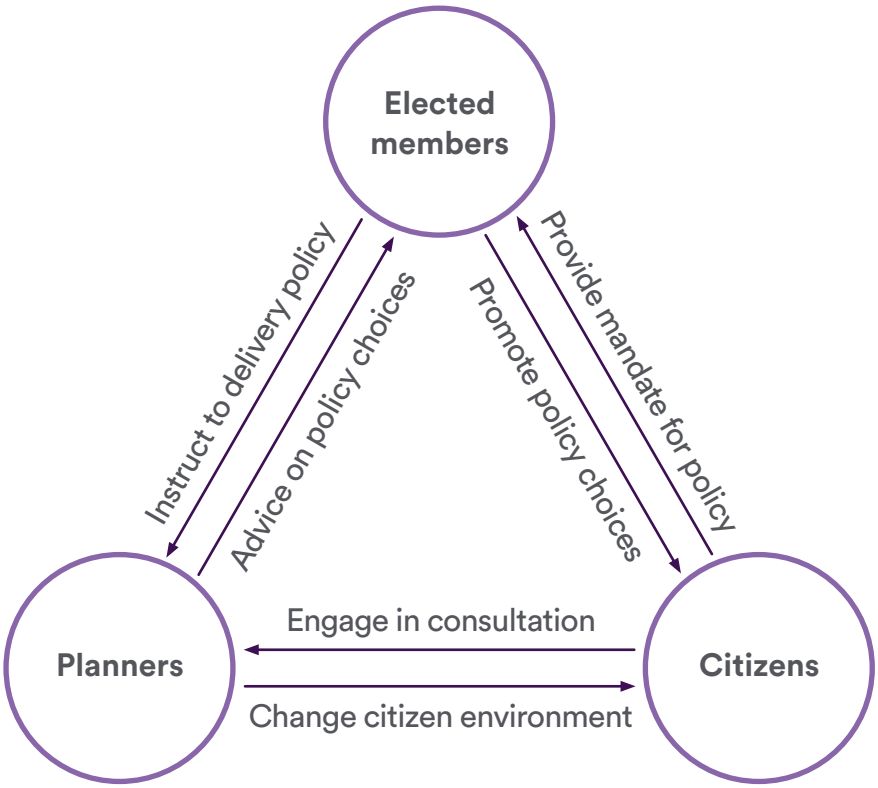
Finally, a good partnership and leadership from Government at a national level will also be critical. We will need to continue to work with Government to make the case for intervention either at a national level or where powers and funding can be devolved to allow the region take the right action locally. The Government is anticipated to publish an Integrated National Transport Strategy for England shortly.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will work collaboratively with partners and communities to ensure that all activity to enhance our transport system aligns with the ambitions of the WMLTP5 and Local Growth and emerging Spatial Development Strategy. Progress towards our objectives and targets will be regularly monitored and reported on to ensure we're achieving our ambitions.

- We commit to engaging with communities through a range of mechanisms, including those with protected characteristics to ensure we acknowledge and attempt to tackle barriers such groups face.
- We commit to working collaboratively with partners in the region to ensure that we shape transport to deliver inclusive growth according to the WMLTP5s policies.
- We commit to ensuring transport issues are communicated and tackled consistently, drawing on our WMLTP5 policy framework.
- WMCA will engage with policy stakeholders to raise awareness of and enrich our knowledge of our transport issues and the options for solving them.
- We will develop an WMLTP5 monitoring and evaluation plan, with key impact, outcome, and delivery targets relating to the LTP's aims, strategy and proposals.
- We will continue to liaise and lobby the government to take decisive action at a national level to support our efforts.

The relationship between members, planners and citizens



An evidenced, vision-led approach

We have pulled together a strong evidence base which sits behind this LTP. This has helped inform the principles and policies set out in the Core Strategy and across the Big Moves that will help to inform and shape how we plan, build and operate the West Midland's transport system.

The Core Strategy sets out the Vision for Travel. based on Vision-led planning, as promoted by the Department for Transport (DfT), is a new approach to planning that focuses on creating desirable and achievable outcomes rather than predicting and accommodating future traffic growth. This approach shifts the focus from car-centric development to creating thriving, sustainable, and healthy communities.

The key elements to a vision-led approach are:

A Focus on Outcomes: Instead of starting with traffic forecasts, this approach begins with a clear vision of what the community wants to achieve in terms of place-making, quality of life, and sustainability.

Prioritising People and Everyday Trips: It emphasizes the needs of people and their daily journeys, promoting walking, cycling, and public transport as alternatives to car travel.

Holistic Approach: Vision-led planning considers the integration of transport, land use, digitcal connectivity and the environment, ensuring a more integrated and sustainable approach.

Embracing Uncertainty: It recognizes the challenges of predicting the future and encourages flexibility and adaptability in planning, using scenario testing and iterative processes.

Stakeholder Engagement: It involves a wide range of stakeholders, including non-highway engineers, urban designers, planners, and community members, to ensure that the vision reflects the needs and aspirations of the community.

A move away from 'predict and provide' to 'decide and provide':

- Predict and provide - react to a single forecast of a "most likely" mobility future and provide a means to accommodate projected demand.
- Decide and provide - decide on a preferred accessibility future and provide a means to move towards it in a way that accommodates the deep uncertainty ahead.

Developing our vision from a ‘theory of change’ approach

As set out in the Core Strategy, the WMLTP5 uses a theory of change approach. This considers the logic-steps needed to move from where we are now to where we want to be. The logic chain sets out that the actions we take across the 6 Big Moves, will help to change people’s perceptions and experiences of the transport system and the choices they make. This is shown in the diagram below.

We have used this logic mapping approach as a powerful tool to help us think through and present the steps we need to take that will help WMCA leverage enhanced transport policy towards the wider regional aspirations of the Growth Plan.

Policy:

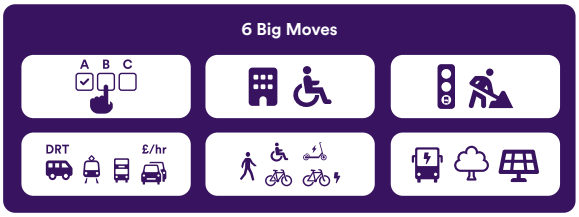
WMCA and local authorities will approach developing proposals to improve the transport system that focus on creating desirable and achievable outcomes rather than predicting and accommodating future traffic growth.

We will adopt a decide and provide approach to developing and managing the capacity available for transport users based on a plausible vision for future demand and how we think capacity could be used in future to achieve this.

To help develop a strong case for change, Theory of Change and logic maps together with a range of analytical will be used to help embed the “decide and provide” approach in policy, programme, project and activity development and delivery.

Theory of change

Our actions



Perceptions and experiences

Behaviour change

Avoid — **Avoiding travel** - for example by accessing services online and consolidating trips we make;

Shift — **Shifting travel** - to places that are more accessible by sustainable modes of transport, such as cycling, walking or public transport and travelling by those modes; and

Improve — **Improve travel** - by designing out emissions and other impacts from the vehicles we use and tailoring their use, for example by adopting zero emission vehicles (such as electric/hydrogen vehicles).

Transport system change

1. Improve accessibility
2. Reduce Traffic
3. Electrify transport

Inclusive growth impacts

Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy

A transport user hierarchy is a useful guide to test whether our plans are prioritising the kinds of behaviours and movements that best support our aims.

Hierarchies like the one we have created for our WMLTP5, are not meant to be rigidly applied - in some places some levels of the hierarchy may be more or less relevant. However, it helps to methodically consider, from our highest priority users to our lowest, whether the focus of our programmes and the design of our schemes is conducive to the behaviours we want to increase and decrease to meet our aims.

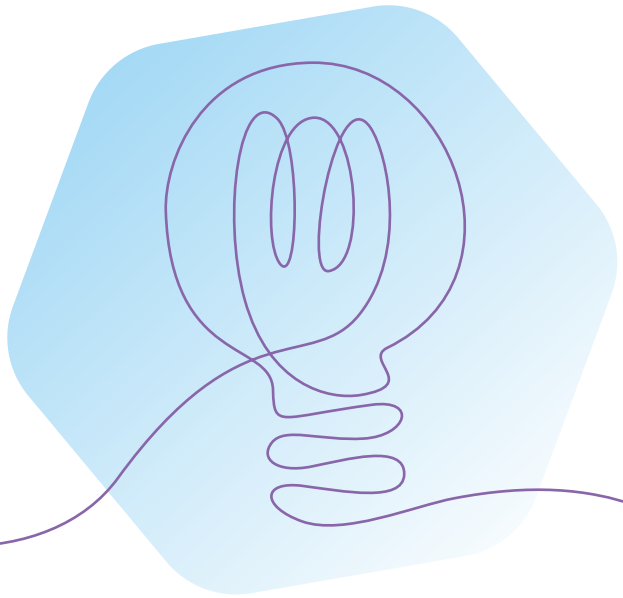
Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will embed the Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy scheme as part of the approach to implementing the Theory of Change and Logic Maps approach in policy and programme development.

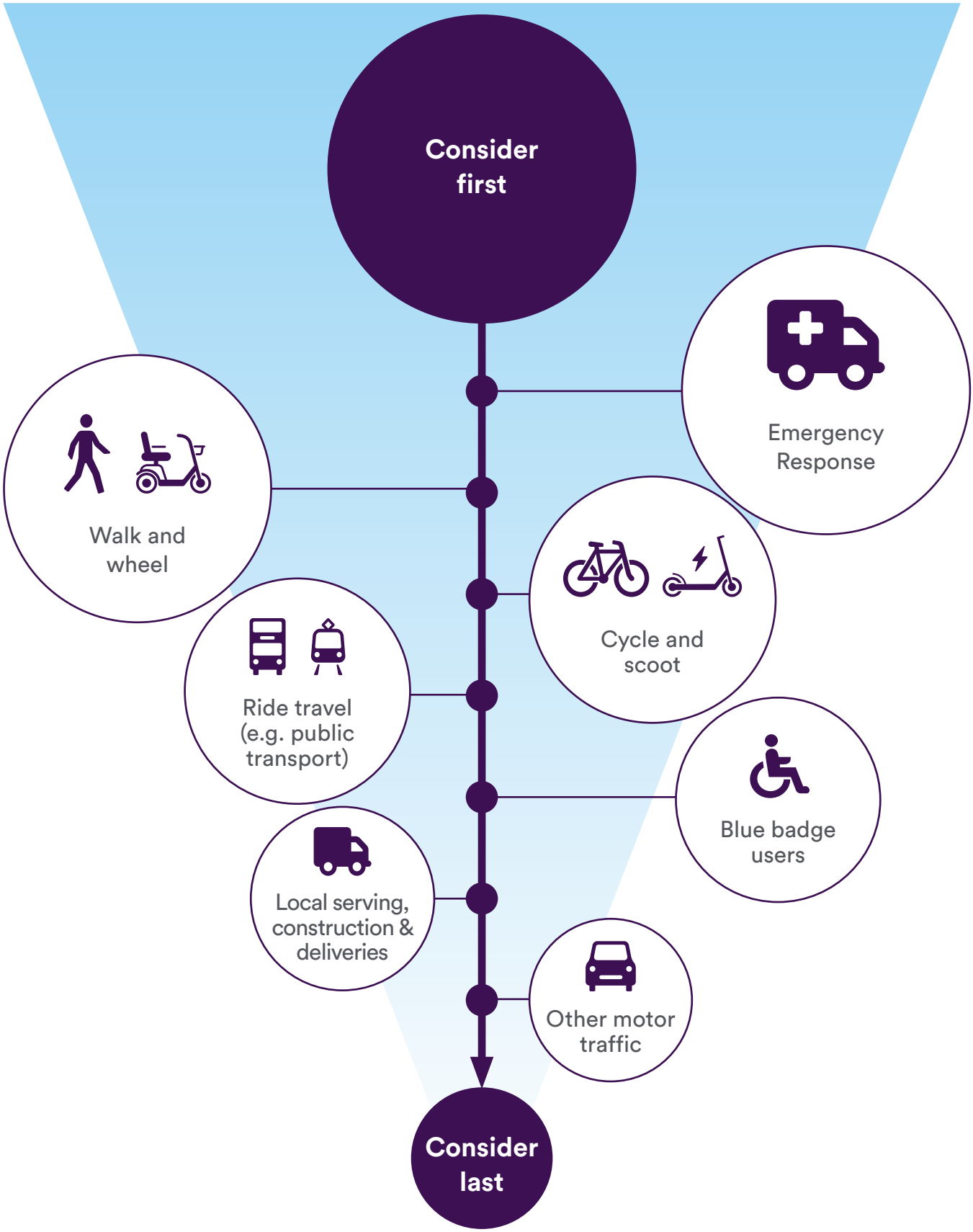
We will use our Sustainable Travel Hierarchy as a framework for guiding and assessing policy
development and delivery. It will be considered alongside national guidance and design standards.

It will be used to consider whether adequate resources is being spent on policy development anddelivery for those who should be considered first over those who should be considered last.

It will be used to consider whether the design of policy implementation proposals and wider infrastructure development relating to developments is giving the right level of priority and focus for those who should be considered first over those who should be considered last. This will ensure everyone benefits from inclusive growth.



Transport for West Midlands Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy



User-centred policy

Understanding people

The better we can understand the people of the West Midlands - their motivations, aspirations, values, needs and capabilities - the better we can develop, design and deliver policies to support them and target information to help them.

This is especially relevant to those with protected characteristics, who may face greater travel barriers. TfWM is already employing techniques from the private sector to understand consumers and our traveller segmentation is one example of how we are doing this.

User Experience

Providing a positive user experience is essential to achieving our vision for travel. A user's travel experience includes all parts of their journeys, from pre-planning to making the journey itself. Across all modes, what travellers value the most is service providers getting the basics right. This means reliable journeys that get people to their destination safely and on time.

By understanding who we are trying to influence and what their barriers & drivers are, we can use targeted interventions to make people more aware of the sustainable travel options available to them, based on models, and methodologies that have been tested via our "Influencing Transport Lab". The principles of user experience we will follow are shown in the diagram below.

Policy:

WMCA will work seek to embed these customer experience principles to help better understand and respond to customer needs for the transport system to improve and promote alternatives and enable more sustainable travel behaviours.

- WMCA will continue to develop human intelligence to better understand citizens and use this information to design policy and target interventions and communications.
- We will monitor satisfaction in transport services and engage with customers regularly on key issues.
- We will work with our partners to ensure customers have convenient methods to provide us feedback on service provision and to share best practice.
- We will develop customer service standards with partners for our own and other's services and we will encourage customer-focussed training for front line staff.
- We will develop a customer experience strategy to set out in detail how we will embed our customer experience principles.

1. Dependable

Available when customers want them. Consistently accurate and reliable. Prevent things going wrong. If they do, make things right by the customer.

2. Safe & Secure

Customers feel able to travel without concern. Customers feel their personal information is secure.

3. Easy to use

Low effort for the customer. Products and services are simple, easy to understand and work for everyone, whatever their needs.

4. Fair

Equitable products and services that are designed and delivered with a deep understanding of the differing needs of communities.

5. Inviting

Delivering digital environments customers choose to use. Delivering confortable physical environment customers choose to be in.

Inclusive Transport

We need a transport system that delivers Journeys for Everyone. To help create journey experiences people want to repeat we need to design the transport system in a way that is inclusive for everyone. The way we design the infrastructure and services also needs to be complemented by the way we design places (as set out later in the Accessible and Inclusive Big Move).

Groups which face barriers or inequalities which then excludes them from making full use of our transport networks include:

- People with physical and/or mental impairments or poor health
- Children and young people
- Women and girls
- People with family or other caring responsibilities
- People with more limited disposable income
- People from particular ethnic minority backgrounds
- People who have undergone or are undertaking gender reassignment
- People of differing sexual orientation
- Older people
- Other marginalised cohorts who experience health or socioeconomic inequalities (care leavers, those who are homeless or prison leavers as just some examples).

There are a number of key issues to consider that affect groups differently. For example:

- Ability to drive
- Reduced unaided mobility
- Difficulties understanding travel information and navigating transport services (including language barriers)
- Vulnerability to crime
- Vulnerability to road safety
- The need to travel with dependents
- More complex travel patterns (e.g. the need to make linked trips/change travel plans)
- Affordability of travel
- Ability to use cashless payments and smart devices
- Confidence levels and travel horizons

The impact of these issues varies, depending on location and how well local transport provisions address barriers. In rural areas, limited public transport and narrow pavements often exacerbates barriers. In urban areas, pavement parking can be a major obstacle, especially for pedestrians and people with disabilities.

User Profiles

User profiles and groups with protected characteristics are central to Health and Equity Impact Assessments (HEIAs) because they highlight how different people may be affected in unequal ways by our transport system. Considering those protected characteristics ensures that our assessments do not assume a "one-size-fits-all". Instead, they identify specific risks, barriers, or benefits experienced by different groups. Some of these characteristics include:

Disability - This group often face barriers from poorly adapted transport, lack of travel assistance they require, face higher travel costs, anti-social behaviour, and suffer the most from fragmented services. Those with hidden disabilities are also often overlooked due to limited quiet spaces and the lack of audio-visual alerts, and real-time travel information which are required when sudden changes to the network may occur. They may also face higher levels of discrimination from other passengers.

Age - Younger people may struggle when transitioning from education to work due to the loss of discounted transport and have limited private options. Older people may face higher levels of isolation and are not adequately provided for in terms of infrastructure such as resting facilities and seating areas.

Parents and those with caring responsibility - Travelling with small children or pushchairs can present similar challenges to wheelchair users. Caring responsibilities are worsened by unreliable and fragmented transport, often forcing them into car usage, which then adds a financial strain on many families. Poor active travel conditions further impact those accompanying children or using mobility-aids.

Gender - Women are often more reliant on public transport - making more journeys than men overall, and at more unsociable times including in the evenings, be on lower incomes, and responsible for caring duties, including travelling with children. They may need facilities such as baby changing and breastfeeding areas and more likely to face harassment and discrimination, which then limits how, where, and when they travel.

Race - This group can often face higher risks of harassment, discrimination, and road injuries, with these experiences then restricting their travel and access to opportunities. Lower average incomes can further limit transport options and access for this group.

Religion and faith - This group are more likely to experience hate crimes and harassment, and greater barriers to using active travel. Some have also not seen relevant adjustments been made, to assist them in their travel.

Sexuality and gender identity - This group are more likely to experience harassment and discrimination on transport, which can restrict their travel and access to opportunities.

Low-incomes - Those on lower incomes, often in shift work or casual jobs, may live in more deprived areas of the region, have less access to cars, and face lower levels of public transport accessibility. This then constrains the journeys they can take, and their ability to adapt to disruption which can directly affect their pay or employment.

Other vulnerable groups who may experience inequality including prison leavers, care leavers and people experiencing homelessness should also be considered.

Accessible infrastructure & services

Good accessible transport means everyone can use our services and infrastructure, regardless of age, disability, gender, or background. With 780,000 disabled people in the region and a growing older population, inclusivity and good accessibility becomes essential for these groups. Yet many others with protected characteristics—such as young people, women, low-income households, and ethnic minorities—are also less likely to own a car, so an accessible and inclusive transport network is vital to ensuring equal access to opportunities.

WMCA will work with partners to ensure that accessible design & services are deployed throughout all elements of the integrated public transport system and that we undertake the right processes and governance to deliver on this.

This covers the design of our infrastructure, services, products and information provision, and be in accord with latest national guidance and standards. Franchising will provide a significant opportunity to deliver improvements to the transport system in the region by allowing a more consistent approach to designs and standards and enable better integration. We also aim to achieve full step-free access across all WMCA Rail Stations in the coming years, with 87% already being step-free.

An Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) is required for our WMLTP5 and has helped to inform its development. As part of the development of policies, programmes and activities a Health and Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) will be undertaken to further inform their development.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities are committed to creating an inclusive, accessible, and equitable transport system by reducing car dependency and addressing the diverse needs of marginalised communities. This will be achieved through co-designed infrastructure, inclusive workforce development, targeted support for vulnerable groups, and evidence-based decision-making that prioritises health, equity, and lived experience.

We will ensure that accessible design is deployed throughout all elements of the integrated public transport system by applying design standards and processes based on the Equality Act 2010. We will:

Use the Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) to inform development of the WMLTP5 as part of the development of policies, programmes and activities. A Health and Equity Impact Assessment (HEIA) (or equivalent) will be undertaken to further inform their development.

Design for Everyone

- We will create an inclusive transport system that meets the diverse physical, sensory, cognitive, and cultural needs of all users—making walking, wheeling, cycling, and public transport safe, intuitive, and accessible.

Embed Equity in Decision-Making

- We will use tools like Health and Equity Impact Assessments and lived experience insights to ensure our policies, products and infrastructure reflect the needs of marginalised groups and those with protected characteristics.

Collaborate for Inclusive Change

- We will co-design solutions with underrepresented communities, integrating their voices into planning, consultation, and service delivery to ensure our transport system delivers Journeys for Everyone.

Our approach will also reflect on the WMCAs adopted Making the West Midlands an Exemplary Region for Disabled People strategy and Social Model of Disability through ensuring disabled people's priorities are at the heart of all policies and practices, helping to overcome any environmental, physical or attitudinal barriers they may face. This will include the co-production of all groups who use transport services, through ensuring they are consulted upon and are involved from the start to the end of any intervention or policy which may affect them.

Managing demand

A key focus of the WMLTP5 is supporting sustainable travel behaviour by providing choice and new and better options to help people make their journeys through better public transport and creating better conditions for people to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot. However, in some cases it will be necessary to consider some difficult trade-offs. It is not always possible to improve one mode without making some decisions about making other modes less attractive in some circumstances. For example, where key centres and major destinations have good access by public transport it is often essential to manage the availability and price of car parking. On some key corridors it will also be necessary to reallocate space to more space efficient forms of transport. The Core Strategy set out how important managing travel demand is likely to be for being successfully in achieving our aims.

Through its powers relating to land use and transport policy, local Government has powerful levers that it can use to manage demand to deliver behaviour change. These levers can substantially change the perception and experience of travel options in the area. However, their use needs careful planning and it is important to ensure that the public is consulted and engaged to help raise awareness of and consensus of the need for these types of measures.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will consider the role of demand management as part of the development of transport policies and strategies. Ongoing engagement with communities and residents about how we manage the transport system to try and deliver a safer, more efficient and more reliable journeys will continue to be a key part of this process.

The tools that can be considered include spatial planning policies aimed at managing levels of car parking in new developments; managing the highway and kerbspace with parking restrictions, exploring other pricing mechanisms, such as road user charging, workplace parking levies; reallocation of road space to give more priority to sustainable road users; and better enforcement of parking and moving traffic offences. Careful consideration will be given to socio-economic impacts of any such policies to ensure they are fair.

Land use

Land use and transport policies should aim to regulate the urban environment, to promote investment and use of land that reduces the distances that people and businesses have to travel to find opportunity, and to promote travel by sustainable means. In particular, this means promoting the development and repurposing of land to encourage higher land use densities and mixed-use land patterns with permeable streets for walk, wheel, cycle, scoot and ride modes through land use plans.

Pricing

Through control of parking and powers to introduce road user charges and workplace parking levies, local authorities should use pricing to manage demand. Pricing of this nature is best targeted at places that are more accessible by walk, wheel, cycle, scoot and ride modes. Where accessibility by sustainable means is poor, pricing has the potential to unfairly disadvantage those who are less wealthy. Local Government can use pricing to directly influence very local behaviours, however, equitably influencing behaviours using pricing beyond local areas without unintended detrimental distributive impacts would require Government to act.

Control over use of space

The powers that local authorities have to directly control how space is used for transport are the most important for equitable achievement of our aims. By designing and re-designing the physical layout and regulatory controls of space for travel, we will prioritise and enhance accessibility via walk, wheel, cycle, scoot and ride modes and manage demand from the lowest priority transport users in the Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy. This can be achieved through reallocation of lane space, controls on access, speed reduction measures, and giving greater priority at intersections to priority Sustainable Transport Users.

Parking and kerbside controls

Relating to land use, pricing and control over use of space, local authorities have substantial control over parking and kerbside restrictions. Where key destinations have better access via walk, wheel, cycle, scoot and ride modes, parking and kerbside provision should focus on short-term parking, provision for Blue Badge holders, and overall provision can be constrained. On-street parking and kerbside restrictions should be bought in as part of wider efforts to control the use of space to reallocate priority and access to priority users in the Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy. On-street parking should be actively managed where parking is detrimentally impacting sustainable access and reduced where adequate off-street supply exists.

Enforcement

Effective enforcement is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of measures to manage demand and prioritise access for higher priority Sustainable Transport Users. Local enforcement authorities should work together to ensure that regulation and design of transport is upheld through effective enforcement.

Public Engagement and communications

As we have explained, achieving our outcomes will depend on a good understanding of what users want and need from the transport system. Public consultation and engagement is critical for successful development and delivery of the implementation proposals that will cause the behaviour change needed to deliver the WMLTP5 aims. There are a number of aims for public engagement in policy development and delivery.

Aim of pulic engagement	Description
To inform	To help build awareness of issues and options
To intervene	To encourage individuals to change their behaviours
To collaborate	To include people into the policy making process to shape plans and initiatives

Encouraging Behaviour Change

Our engagement with the public is key to how we influence their perceptions of travel choices, leading to behaviour change. For example we already do this in the lead up to major events or planned disruptions, and where we launch new schemes or initiatives. However, encouraging behaviour change purely through communication has its limits. Highlighting the options available to people won't change how well options meet citizens' needs. Engagement must go hand in hand with actions we take to materially change citizens' choice environment.

Policy:

We will develop public engagement approaches that focuses on developing methods of communication, key messages and principles to better communicate the aims and vision of WMLTP5.

- We will continue to deliver communications to encourage behaviour change comprised of:
  - Offering advice on alternative travel options by providing effective communications that are up to date and manage customer expectations
  - Targeting travel information so that it is tailored to the options available to people
  - Providing multi-modal journey-planning advice and communication alongside targeted marketing campaigns
  - Aligning targeted communications to wider programmes of interventions to improve citizens' choices and capabilities.
- We will continue to deploy communications to encourage citizens to re-mode, re-route, re-time or remove journeys in preparation for or response to planned and unplanned network disruption.
- We will work with partners to provide training and guidance to help citizens travel via sustainable modes.

Collaborative Public Engagement

Where collaborative engagement is done well it involves planners and policy makers engaging with citizens, enabling them to participate in discussion about local issues and options, and helping them make decisions on the right course of action. This engagement provides input into policy and proposal development that is as critical as the technical development of a scheme. Engagement with local citizens and businesses works best where they can see the bigger picture of all proposed changes across their area rather than engaging on many different proposals separately. An approach where planners come together around holistic place-based plans rather than siloed working on individual projects, supports better collaborative public engagement and planning.

Policy:

WMCA will develop approaches to engagement and consultation on the WMLTP5 which will ensure that our residents understand, engage with and shape our key messages, principles and proposals.

- We will ensure that policy and proposal development is informed by ongoing, inclusive and collaborative public engagement.
- Timescales, budget and resources will meet the needs of our engagement and consultation approach.
- We will approach collaborative public engagement by applying the following principles, to all activity and our overarching engagement strategy:
  - **Inclusive:** All voices are heard that are impacted by proposals, ensuring those who face the greatest barriers are heard.
  - **Empowering:** Citizens are engaged to shape and make decisions on proposal that impact them, particularly those in their local community.
  - **Deliberative:** Deliberative techniques, such as co-design, will be used where citizens will work together and with planners to find recommendations and solutions. Sharing knowledge and power to build trust and find collective consensus on the trade-offs that need to be made.
- We will plan public engagement on policies and proposals with our partners, seeking to combine engagement on related proposals; particularly where proposals are tackling issues in a specific neighbourhood/area/community to enable holistic planning.
- We will continue to develop public forums, such as our Market Research Online community, to engage with citizens. Working collaboratively to ensure these forums are reflective of our diverse communities and enable meaningful participation.


West Midlands Cycle Hire


West
Midlands
Railway

Big Move 2: Public transport and shared mobility

In this Big Move we set out the importance and role that public transport and shared mobility needs to play if we're to achieve our vision for transport. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them WMLTP5. Improving accessibility through better public transport and enabling access to shared mobility services will play a key part in realising the region's growth ambitions. Transport investment including the development of our mass transit network will help to unlock development supporting new jobs and new homes.

Where we are now:

For many people and businesses, there isn't a reliable public transport network that gets people where they need to go, at the time they need to go. The lack of integration between different services and operators makes the system difficult and expensive to use. For some there is a lack of understanding of how to get the best out of the transport system.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

The West Midlands has a public transport system that fulfils our goal of being a 45-minute region and connected 15-minute neighbourhoods. All residents can live good lives without needing to own a car. The series of networks, integrated as one overall system, will be easy to understand, reliable, ticketing is easy and the services are efficient, accessible and comfortable. Shared services (such as car clubs, bike hire, rideshares etc.) are incorporated into the overall system so are seen as complementary to public transport. This enables a 'go anywhere' integrated system to function as one entity for users.

Part 1: Strategic Context

WMCA has developed the Local Transport Plan (WMLTP5) Core Strategy. This proposes a new vision for travel in the West Midlands where people can thrive without having to drive or own a car.

The Core Strategy sets out our vision for travel and our ambition for a 45 minute region of Connected Communities. This network and services are a key element of ensuring we better connect the region's boroughs to its cities and its cities to each other by public transport and to improve access to jobs enhancing workforce mobility and supports shared services for Small and Medium Enterprises, as well as access to education and services.

The region's mass transit network will be a key part of unlocking regeneration and growth corridors and supporting accessible development including housing near transport hubs.

The LTP, supported by the emerging Spatial Development Strategy, will fulfil the aims of the West Midlands Growth Plan by harnessing the different and complementary roles of different places in the regional economy, playing to the strengths of the West Midlands' polycentric geography.

It sets out key roles for:

- **Public transport:** traditional public transport and on-demand passenger services that are critical for connecting neighborhoods so citizens can access opportunities across the region;
- **Fixed public transport:** Fixed public transport includes public transport services that run to a fixed timetable, routes and stops. They include services like buses and bus rapid transit, trains and trams.
- **On-demand services:** On-demand services include a range of driven services available to the public which can be requested on-demand and are not constrained by timetables, specific routes and stops. They include services like taxis, community transport, West Midlands Bus On Demand, and liftsharing.
- **Shared mobility:** transport services that help people access publicly available personal vehicles;

This Big Move is all about how we will seek to deliver the key parts of our vision for travel and identifies the key issues and challenges which need to be understood and addressed in a way that work for the different places and people of the region.

What do we mean by...

Shared services

Shared services are services that provide the public access to personal vehicles that they can drive themselves. They include services like car clubs and cycle/scooter hire.

Interchanges

Interchanges are places where people can access between public transport, on-demand, and/or shared transport services. They include places like bus stops/stations, rail stations, or neighbourhood mobility hubs.

Our Ambition

Our ambition is to create a high quality and affordable public transport system of integrated networks (including fixed public transport services and demand responsive and shared services) linked by accessible and secure interchanges and promoted and branded as a single system.

Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Improve Accessibility	The core aim of this Big Move will be to improve the public transport 'reach' for the region. Particularly for those medium to longer distance journeys which are more difficult to walk or wheel. This Move needs to work closely with the 'Growth that helps everyone' to support our region to enable jobs and leisure activities to be within 45 mins by public transport for all communities. Accessibility here means a lot more than simply being close to a bus or tram stop, it is also about the safety, affordability, clarity and physical accessibility of the entire network. Our plans and policies for this Move (described overleaf) reflect this wider definition.
Reduce Traffic	We also want to create an attractive public transport experience which enables people to choose to leave their car at home or to decide to reduce the number of cars they own. This requires a public transport network which is reliable and with many journey times that are competitive with the car. As there is a finite amount of space for transport infrastructure in our region, and building new roads is expensive and environmentally damaging, we will need to dedicate more of our existing road space to sustainable modes, including public transport. If we do not do this then it will be difficult to achieve the public transport system we know our residents want to see, and this in turn will help to reduce traffic overtime as more people choose to use their cars less.
Electrify Transport	Public transport is one of the easier aspects of our system to move to electric or other zero or ultra-low emission propulsion. There are vehicles already available and some in use in our region now. However, it will take significant public and private investment to transition the whole fleet to zero emission vehicles. It may be possible to incentivise private operators to switch more quickly, by partnership arrangements or restricting access to certain areas for more polluting vehicle types. It will be easier to make the case for investment in zero emission vehicles if we can reverse the long-term decline in public transport patronage, which is what this Big Move is all about.

Key Issues

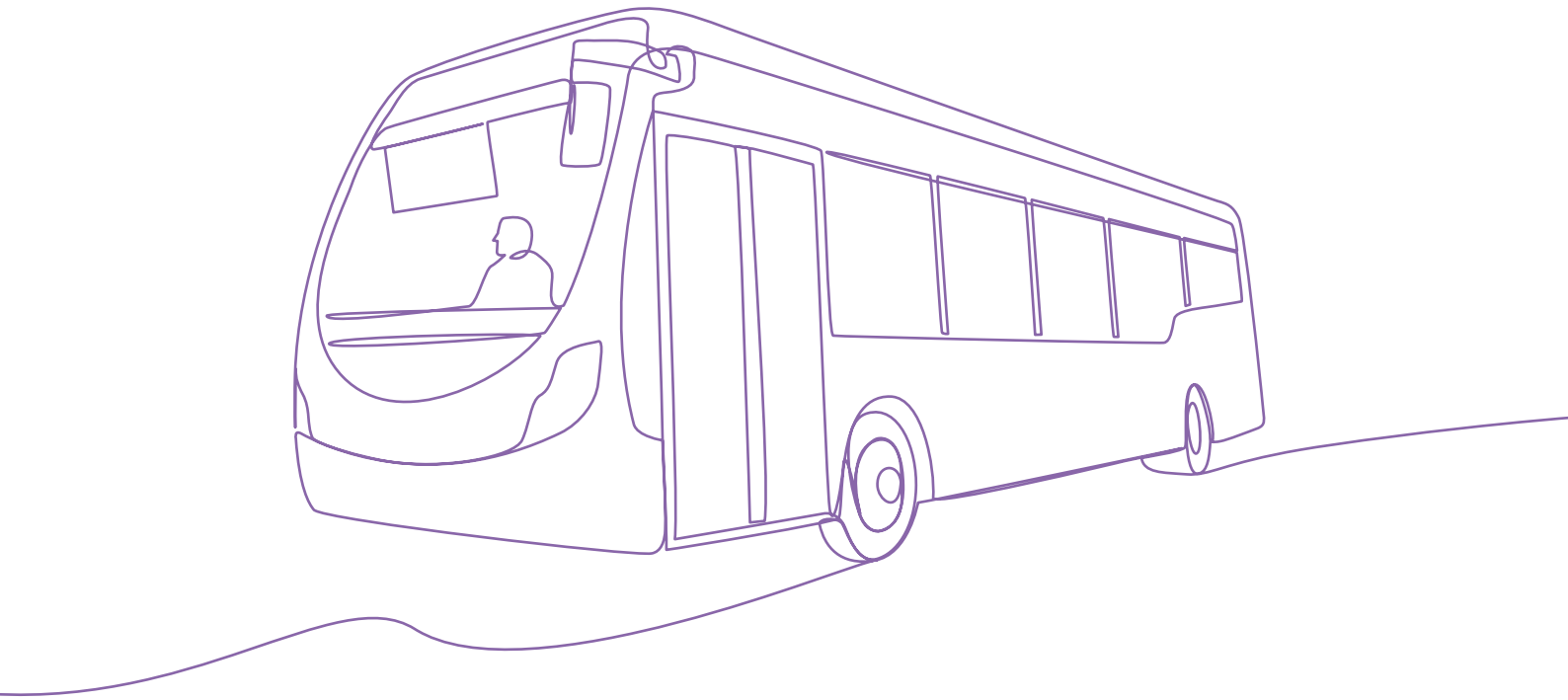
Through our evidence base and focused consultation with communities and businesses we have built up a keen understanding of the issues facing people when deciding whether use public transport for any individual journey.

Key issues facing people and businesses

- Average am peak bus service speeds of 17 km per hour and limited rail and rapid transit network coverage in some areas mean that many trips are quicker by car. In many areas access to and via public transport (or shared transport) is poor so it is not considered a viable option. This is a key barrier to creating a more inclusive West Midlands and without intervention we will lock in car dependency and the challenges that come with it and more people will continue to be excluded.

- Understanding and getting the best out of the transport system- Working out the best options and best value for public transport and shared mobility is difficult. Historically there has been significant fragmentation of ticketing and payments. The cost of public transport in general and particularly “anywhere to anywhere” trips across the West Midlands using different combinations of rail, metro and bus presents a real challenge for creating options which start to give affordable and understandable options for people to make informed decisions on how and when to travel.

- People don’t want to use something they think is poor- There is a common perception that public transport in the West Midlands is poor because of experiences of unreliability, safety issues, high cost, etc. Comparatively cars are seen as an easier, more convenient and lower cost option, which is an issue. Issues of safety, reliability and ease of use need to be addressed in order to encourage greater use of public transport.



Key issues facing WMCA and partners

- Supporting inclusivity - A lack of access to cars for many is a limit on full inclusivity to opportunity. The need for increased public transport use to support people to access all the opportunities our region offers is a key tenet of WMLTP5.
- Lack of an integrated transport network - The fragmented nature of responsibility for transport in the West Midlands (and the UK) presents a significant challenge for WMCA and partners in delivering a truly integrated transport network. The ability to plan, manage and operate a coherent network is currently difficult and this results in shortcomings in how easy and accessible the network is and undermines the overall customer experience. Bus franchising will provide WMCA with many of the powers and levers we need to make policy-led, not just financial, decisions.
- Commercial viability - The pandemic has had a devastating effect on the commercial viability of our bus network. Albeit, as of early 2025, the West Midlands has had the most successful metropolitan recovery with nearly 96% of pre-Covid levels (>100% commercial passengers and 71% for concessionary passengers) with just 85% of the pre-covid network. Despite this the impacts of cost increases, patronage not fully recovering and longer journey times due to road congestion, by November 2023 only around 50% of pre-Covid-19 bus kilometrage in the West Midlands Bus Network was commercially sustainable. This increased the need for additional levels of public subsidy to protect the network. The average bus in the region requires double the number of passengers than pre-covid to be commercial in the region.
- Funding - The availability of funding to operate services, maintain and ultimately develop the network is a huge area of challenge. There is uncertainty about the levels of that might be available in the future to allow us to support and improve services.

How well do we compare to European neighbours?

Comparisons are often made between U.K. cities and European cities in terms of their public transport networks and European examples are often held as the gold standard of urban public transport systems which U.K. cities should aim to emulate. Research for TfWM as part of Project Fuse has compared public transport in the West Midlands to European integrated public transport best practice. This is summarised for key aspects, in the figure below.

Broadly, public transport in the West Midlands performs well against benchmarking for accessible design of infrastructure and services, but underperforms against ten other key themes of integration. These cover areas such as network planning with simple networks of joined up high frequency lines, ticketing provided from one organisation only, umbrella branding and clear branding of different tiers of the system and high quality on-street interchanges. This is alongside more general features such as good personal security, reliability, speed and regular network reviews.

Current situation assessment against Success Factors

The operation of the public transport service in the West Midlands city region can be compared against the best practice Success Factors - see assessment diagram below. The assessment mechanism is indicative and high level, and is shown on a Red (R) - Amber (A) - Green (G) scale to indicate whether the current situation is below, or in alignment with, best practice.

Current Situation Assessment
• Service lines are not designed within a coordinated network approach • Services are not designed to maximise transfer opportunities and multi-leg journeys
• There is a multiplicity of ticket offers (although Swift is a high quality products) which is confusing and creates a barner to new public transport users • There is no system for redistribution of revenue for mui-leg journeys
• An easy-to-understand network is not presented to the public • Service line numbering is not intuitive or easy to understand and remember
• High qualty interchange locations are not provided • Public transport services are not co-ordinated to create transfer opportunties • Missed connections not addressed in customer care
• Branding is related to individual operators and routes, and inconsistent, and not network-wide • There is no overarching regional
• Access onto buses is via a single door which negatively affects speed • Bus priority measures are fragmented
• Buses have level boarding but access for disabled is poor - via a single door and constrained manoeuvring, and passengers having to walk the whole aisle length
• Stations and stops are well laid out with level boarding and access for mobility impaired? • In-vehicle comfort, well equipped and with capacity to limit peak period crowding
• Inefficiencies in service de sign with overlap of different services • Some low emission buses - with low fuel costs.
• There is a limited ability for the public to influence service and network operations • Transfer between services is not well catered for
• Individual operators customer care, limited security and enforcement patrols, some CCTV • Some low emission buses to limit roadside emissions and decarbonisation

Part 2: Policies and Proposals

Ambition and Approach

An integrated system

Our integrated transport network will be one system with a number of tiers which help us to deliver the accessibility we need. Following the findings from Project Fuse, which sought to identify best practice and solutions to support integration across our entire transport system, we will use the concepts of network design found in European best practice as our inspiration.

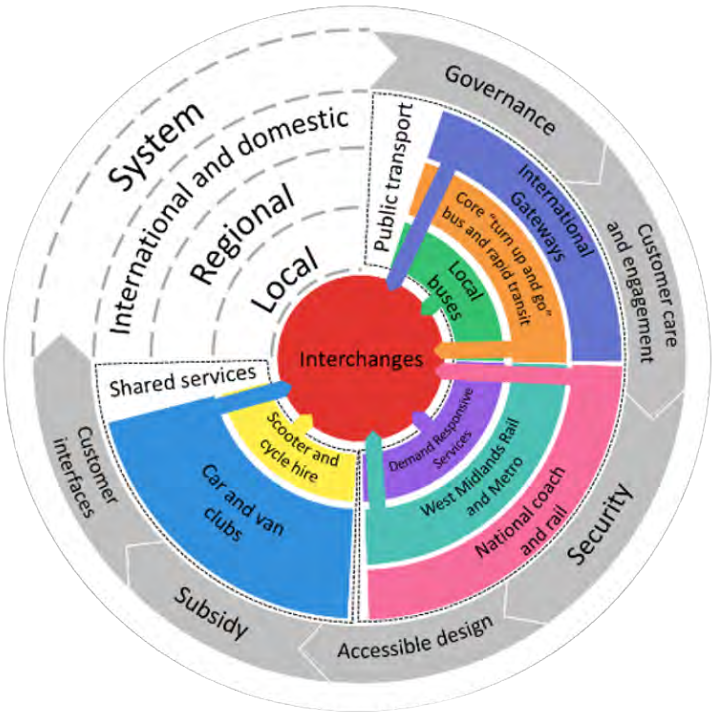
Based on these concepts, the West Midland's integrated public transport network have:

- A Regional Rail and Metro network (with all 10 West Midlands strategic centres served).
- A Core network (mostly core "turn up and go" frequency bus i.e. a service every 15 minutes or less, with rapid transit lines for high volume corridors / major development corridors).
- A Secondary bus network (lower frequency bus and Demand Responsive Transport, providing comprehensive network coverage).

These networks will all be complemented by shared mobility services and good quality local access to and from bus stops, stations and interchanges. It will also be underpinned by common and integrated branding, ticketing, promotion, passenger information and high-quality interchanges.

Policy:

The West Midlands will create a high quality, safe and seamless West Midlands Public Transport System comprised of integrated set of networks (including fixed public transport services and demand responsive services, and shared services) linked by interchanges and managed as one system.



Success factors

The characteristics of this system achieve high performance against the success factors used to compare current performance against European best practice. So the West Midlands seeks to achieve the following:

Integrated network planning, all local destinations reachable

Many local and regional destinations are reachable in 45 minutes on high frequency services during the daytime (with transfers if necessary), and at off-peak times (including evenings and weekends) are reachable by good co-ordination of timings for lower frequency services.

One source of ticketing

A single ticket system for boarding all public transport vehicles (including Demand Responsive Transport and new mobility solutions). Ticket enforcement should allow for passengers to board quickly without needing to show tickets to the driver.

Easy to understand network

A public transport network that is inherently easy to understand and use; that is, passengers can negotiate the network easily to reach different destinations.

One brand

A public transport brand that is present on all vehicles, stops and stations, information sources, and ticketing.

Easy and reliable transfer

High quality transfer conditions and arrangements (ticketing, timetables, connection guarantee) that allows passengers to have confidence to rely on transferring to other services to make their journeys.

Reliable travel times

Journeys by public transport have reasonable speeds, and are reliable and consistent at all times of day.

Easy to access vehicles

Public transport vehicles are easy to board by all passengers, including mobility impaired passengers, with immediate entry without a need to queue, and passengers can carry baggage easily on and off and within the vehicle.

Accessible and comfortable

Stations and stops are easy to reach, are comfortable with good information, and provide all passengers with easy boarding and alighting of services. Vehicles are comfortable, well equipped (Wi-Fi, real time information and air conditioning) and there are low crowding levels.

Network efficiency

Service lines are optimised to limit inefficient overlap of services to maximise overall viability, and application of technology to maximise overall affordability.

Regular public feedback and customer care

Members of the public are given regular opportunities to provide feedback and participate in network evolution.

High levels of passenger safety and security

Passenger safety and security is inherent in all aspects of people's experience of public transport.

Regional public transport

The West Midlands rail and metro network provides fast, high-capacity links between strategic centres, enabling public trips to be made across the conurbation. It also provides links between strategic centres and their inner and outer suburbs and the wider journey to work area.

Bringing together WMRE's plans for new stations, services and rail infrastructure, and WMCA plans for future Metro investment, will develop this network as the "backbone" of the West Midlands integrated public transport system.

Development of the Regional Rail and Metro Network will be compatible with the statutory land use plans (Local Plans) of the West Midlands and this Local Transport Plan will help to finalise forthcoming revised Local Plans in the West Midlands.

Regional Rail

The rail network plays a key part in providing connectivity across our polycentric region. As part of the integrated transport network, regional rail provides links between most of our strategic centres and their inner and outer suburbs and the wider journey to work area and is particularly important for access to central Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. Within the metropolitan area, rail also provides good links to Birmingham Airport. As well as local services within the WMCA area, the rail network also provides important connectivity with centres across the wider West Midlands and beyond.

A number of key improvements have been delivered in recent years including upgrades to Birmingham New Street, Coventry, Wolverhampton, University and Perry Barr stations. New stations and services will be provided in south Birmingham (Moseley, Kings Heath, Pineapple Road) and in the Black Country in the Wolverhampton to Walsall Growth Cluster corridor (Darlaston and Willenhall). New trains have also been introduced on the Cross City Line and other services e.g. Birmingham to Shrewsbury.

West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) published it's West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy (RIS) in 2022. This sets out a thirty-year approach for rail services and infrastructure and how the region will work with rail partners through WMRE to deliver new suburban rail stations in suitable locations. It also sets out the challenges around balancing regional rail with longer distance services in a congested network.

HS2 and the delivery of the Midlands Rail Hub are opportunities that will help to provide a better balance between rail capacity. The development of the region's Spatial Development Strategy will likely require a further review of the region's strategic infrastructure including rail infrastructure.

Wider accessibility improvements through the Access for All Programme will also continue to improve accessibility at regional railway stations to ensure there are accessible routes from station entrances to and between platforms. 87% of our stations are already step-free but through this programme, we will aim to make all stations fully accessible. This will typically involve the installation of lifts or ramps, along with associated works, to help disabled passengers and those with mobility restrictions navigate our stations.

Delivering on all these rail enhancements will need to be done through collaborative working and the West Midlands will work with rail partners through WMRE to lobby for and deliver improvements. Changes to rail governance, with the creation of Great British Railways (GBR) presents opportunities for the West Midlands to increase its influence on local rail services. The region will explore opportunities through devolution and rail reform to secure commitments on the role of WMRE in relation to GBR.

West Midlands Metro

The West Midlands currently has one light rail line between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. This originally opened in 1999 and has seen steady patronage growth over the last 26 years. The region has been investing in improvements to the network and vehicles with extensions in Birmingham City Centre to Edgbaston Village, and through to Wolverhampton railway station opened in 2023. New lines are currently being constructed in Birmingham city centre, providing a new link to Digbeth via HS2 Curzon Street, and in the Black Country, with work in progress on Phase One of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill (WBHE) extension from Wednesbury to Dudley. Phase Two has also started which will construct the line further to Merry Hill.

A further link is proposed for this regional network, to link the strategic centres of Walsall, Dudley and Brierley Hill and the rail network at Stourbridge. The potential for tram-train on this link will be explored further, alongside consideration of other modes for suitable, fast, high capacity provision.

To support and unlock development and regeneration in the Birmingham and North Solihull Gateway corridor a further extension of the Metro is being planned from Digbeth to the proposed Birmingham Sports Quarter development.

Metro tramway extensions for the core turn up and go network's high volume, rapid transit corridors are considered in the section below. These include a Metro extension to the new Sports Quarter in East Birmingham provide significant regeneration of the area providing an opportunity to expand the city's cultural and sports assets in a nationally significant way.

Policy:

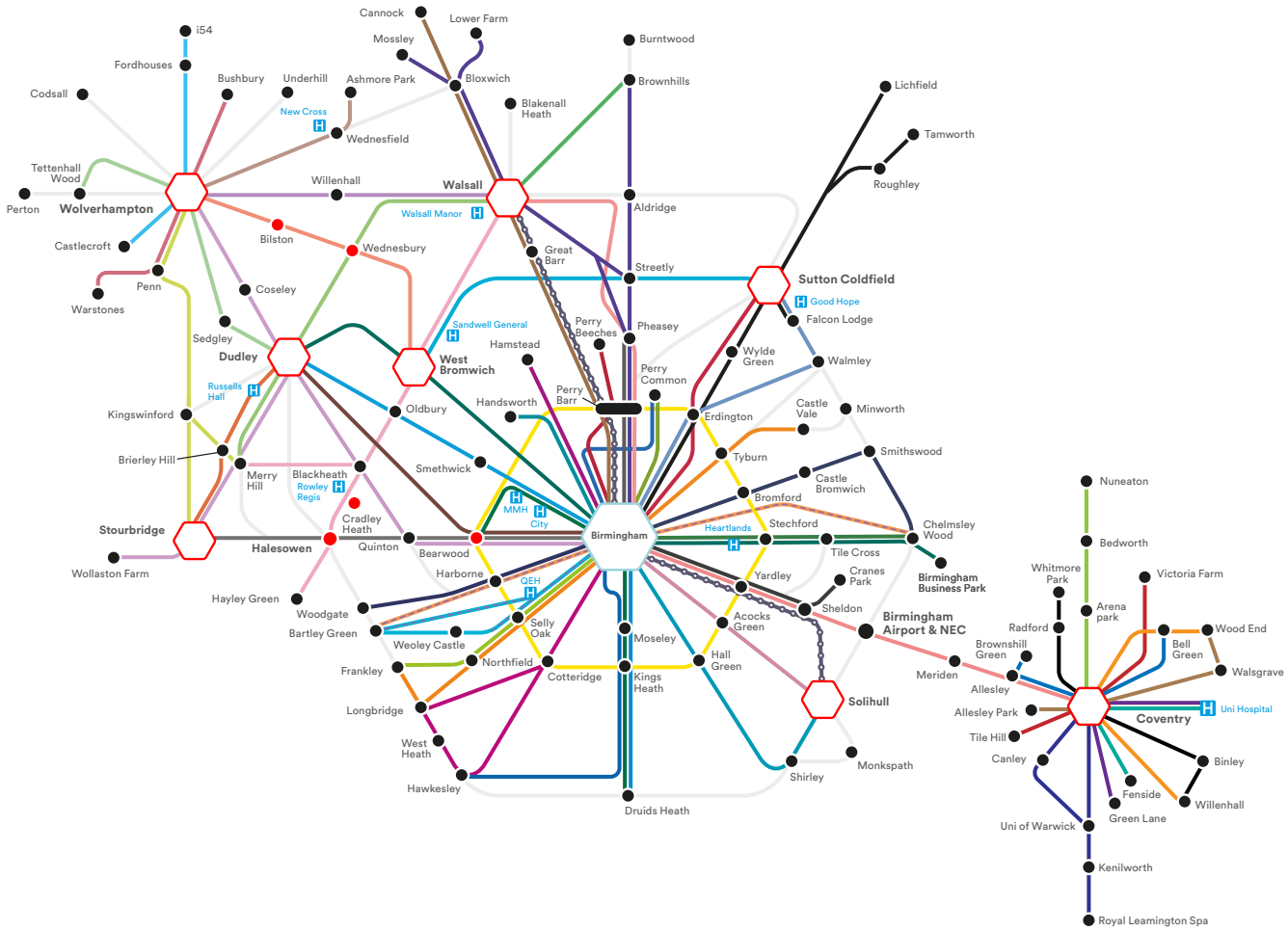
- WMCA and local authorities will work with partners to ensure that rail-based modes play their full part in the West Midlands integrated public transport system and to support the region's growth ambitions, as set out in our Rapid Transit Priorities and the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy, including enhancements to capacity and service quality on the regional rail and Metro network, and exploration of new services links where this supports delivery of the West Midland's Growth Plan and the WMLTP5 and there is a strong business case. This includes delivery of the full Midlands Rail Hub scheme.
- WMCA and its partners will aim to achieve full step-free access across all of our regions rail stations in the coming years, where this is feasibly possible.
- As part of the West Midlands Devolution Deal, WMCA will seek Government support for a new rail partnership with Great British Railways, to give greater consideration to the region's priorities in future decisions on the local network.

Core “Turn up and Go” Network

Our core “turn up and go” network is comprised of public transport services that, serve our main urban flows, largely connecting our towns and cities with their surrounding suburbs. It is shown on the network plan below.

Compared to West Midlands Rail and Metro, these services stop more frequently to allow people on and off (meaning it takes a little longer to travel further), use lower capacity vehicles, but offer very high frequencies allowing people to “turn up and go” (ie. arrive at stops without having to plan for a significant wait for the next service).

Often, corridors which form this network offer higher frequency where several different services converge serving similar destinations. Many links which make up this network benefit greatly from having priority measures and segregation from other traffic to ensure there is sufficient capacity to meet the high frequency and to ensure that service can be reliable and expedient. Reliability is a top customer priority so bus priority measures are critical to customer satisfaction by providing more reliable, dependable, services with higher bus speeds.



Rapid Transit Priorities - the backbone of our Core "Turn up and Go" Network

Most of the West Midlands core turn up and go network is served by bus, and this will remain the case in the future. There are some high volume corridors where rapid transit provision, over and above bus, will help the West Midlands meet its five key WMLTP5 aims. Rapid transit is fast, high capacity "fixed link" provision. In the West Midlands types of rapid transit identified as being suitable for the flows and conditions core network are tram (West Midlands Metro), Sprint Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the emerging technology of Very Light Rail (VLR). The rapid transit priority corridors are shown in figure on the next page. This map gives an overview of rail , metro and rapid transit in the West Midlands metropolitan area. New rail stations proposed up to 2031 in the WMRE Rail Investment Strategy are shown on the map to show their relationship to new rapid transit corridors.

The priority rapid transit corridors are:

- Birmingham - Heartlands Hospital - East Birmingham - Solihull - Birmingham Airport (Birmingham and North Solihull Gateway)
- Walsall - Brierley Hill - Stourbridge, (incorporating Dudley - Brierley Hill) (Black Country Growth Corridor)
- Wolverhampton - i54 (Wolverhampton - Walsall Growth Cluster)
- Wolverhampton - New Cross Hospital (Wolverhampton - Walsall Growth Cluster)
- A38 Birmingham - Sutton Coldfield
- Birmingham - Bearwood - Hagley Road - Halesowen
- Birmingham - Longbridge - Rubery (incorporating a potential Birmingham - Smithfield phase)
- Coventry - Foleshill Corridor
- Hall Green - Solihull - UKC Hub
- Coventry - Gigafactory Corridor (Coventry Growth Arc)

Longer term proposals are:

- Hagley Road - Dudley (A4123 corridor)
- Birmingham - Hall Green
- Coventry - Binley (Coventry Growth Arc)
- Coventry - Eastern Green - Tile Hill
- Coventry - University of Warwick (Coventry Growth Arc)

It must be stressed that other longer-term proposals can emerge, so it this set of priorities will continue to be reviewed as part of regular WMLTP5 reviews over the next decade.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will deliver a new network of priority Rapid Transit Lines aligned to priorities for investment as set out in the WM Growth Plan and the emerging Spatial Development Strategy. Further rapid transit projects for longer term delivery will be developed where there is a clear business case. They will be prioritised and selected on the based on the following criteria:

- Improvements to rapid transit support LTP outcomes
- Support delivery of WM Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy outcomes
- Feasibility and Impacts (deliverability, affordability and acceptability)

West Midlands Priority Rapid Transit Corridors

Sprint Bus Rapid Transit

Sprint is the West Midlands Bus Rapid Transit service. The first route began operating in 2022, as a cross-city route. Phase 2 will complete this route between Walsall - Birmingham and Solihull and Birmingham Airport. Phase One has delivered 22% journey time improvements and evening peak improvement of variability (reliability) of 31% on the northern arm (Walsall Road) and 35% on the eastern arm (Coventry Road).

Sprint service standards for vehicles, bus priority, and stops and shelters have been developed with operators and local authorities through an Enhanced Partnership scheme.

Sprint BRT services are seen as being key in particular for intermediate flows where local bus struggles to accommodate passenger flows but where flows are not of a sufficiently high scale to justify investment in tramways.

Very Light Rail (VLR)

Coventry City Council and Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council are in collaboration with regional partners in the development and deployment of VLR technology.

The VLR Programme is delivering an innovative very light weight mass transport rail solution comprising a state-of-the-art vehicle and innovative track system that is relatively simple and cost-effective to construct. The integrated system is being tested at a new national innovation centre built in Dudley and once proof of concept is achieved, the first route is planned for Coventry, linking Coventry rail station with Pool Meadow Bus Station, and then beyond to University Hospital.

The VLR Programme is delivering an innovative very light weight mass transport rail solution comprising a state-of-the-art vehicle and innovative track system that is relatively simple and cost-effective to construct. The integrated system was tested initially at the national innovation centre in Dudley, before its closure. Once proof of concept is achieved, a Coventry city centre link is programmed as the first element of a line to University Hospital. This is the initial line of an overall network for Coventry. Current work is progressing the development of future routes for this network further and will be linked to the wider Coventry Growth Arc Corridor.

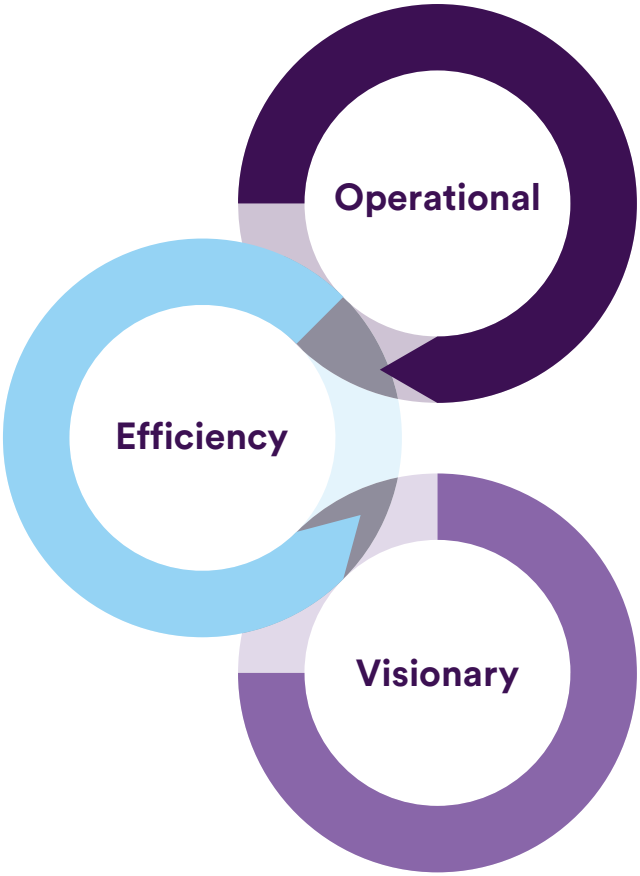
The West Midland's bus network

The WMCA area bus network has an indisputable role in our integrated transport system but a role that is often undervalued. It reaches every corner of our region, providing an essential mobility service to access employment, education, leisure and other key facilities as well as providing integration with other transport. For us buses are a vital enabler of inclusive growth, ensuring access to jobs, education, healthcare, and leisure for all—especially those without private vehicles. 80% of public transport journeys in the region are made by bus (4.6m trips per week), and a WMCA study in 2024 estimated that it contributes up to £8bn annually to our local economy.

Our transport vision will need a bus network that offers more reliable and convenient services, better value for money, better integration with other services, safer routes and cleaner buses for passengers and local communities. By making the bus the first choice for more journeys, we will support our long-term Local Transport Plan to deliver connected neighbourhoods within a 45-minute region and improve accessibility to opportunities for everyone. Bus will play a key role in supporting access to jobs, promoting inclusive economic growth and levelling up the region.

The Better Bus Strategy published in 2021 saw WMCA work with bus operators through the Enhanced Partnership Scheme to facilitate the achievement of the ambitions of the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). WMCA worked closely with operators and local authorities to create the 2nd Enhanced Partnership (EP) in the country.

Nonetheless, challenges remain and the current profound issues around bus funding and the impact on networks have required further intervention by WMCA and local authorities. In May 2025, the Mayor decided to proceed with bus franchising in the West Midlands, following an assessment of bus delivery options and extensive public consultation. Bus franchising is seen as being the best delivery approach for bus services in the West Midlands to meet the following agreed objectives of WMCA:



Operational

- **Objective 1**: Network: Ensure public transport is inclusive and meets the changing needs of diverse West Midlands communities, by all modes working together
- **Objective 2**: Customer Experience: Improve customer experience when planning and making journeys
- **Objective 3**: Fares and Ticketing: Increase traveller understanding and confidence through simple, and affordable, fares
- **Objective 4**: Environment: Reduce the climate, air quality, and other environmental impacts of the bus fleet

Efficiency

- **Objective 5**: Stability: Ensure that on a long-term basis, West Midlands services are financially stable and affordable

Visionary

- **Objective 6**: Transformation and Change: Enable WMCA to secure ambitious, transformational public transport improvements to deliver wider policy goals

Franchising presents the biggest step change for how bus services are run in over 40 years. Having local control of bus services will deliver better buses in the West Midlands and put local communities and passengers at the heart of services and networks. It will allow us to better plan public transport through improved integration of all public transport modes. We will be able to develop a bus network in line with our wider ambitions for reimagining transport in the West Midlands. The exact balance of how the West Midlands bus fleet of around 2000 buses is best deployed will be determined by WMCA, following more detailed network review work and engagement with stakeholders and the people of the West Midlands.

Whilst the full benefits of franchising is still a number of years away there are a range of measures in the short, medium and longer term that will be taken considered further to help support better bus services.

Transitioning to franchising will slow the pace of decline, but additional funding and policy interventions will be required to increase demand, improve efficiency, and secure long-term viability. WMCA remains committed to lobbying for sustainable government support, optimising its transport strategy, and ensuring that bus services remain a critical pillar of regional connectivity.

To improve bus services WMCA and partners will need to deliver a combination of measures which are specifically related to how the bus network is funded and operated alongside how WMCA will make improvements to reduce the call on the Levy and / or explore opportunities around raising more revenue locally. A key area of focus is how we can manage the bus network going forward both through bus network and operational planning but also managing

WMCA is currently working with operators to define the January 2025 bus network, setting out both the form of the core and secondary bus network. Reliable operations are critical for the core bus network and for the secondary bus network where customers use “need to know the timetable” lower frequency services. As part of our review of accessibility and access standards for tendered bus services we will need to develop with bus operators the network design of secondary local bus networks which can effectively complement the core ‘turn up and go’ bus network.

Policy:

The bus network is the backbone of the West Midlands integrated transport network. We want to deliver a high quality, reliable, zero emission bus network as part of our integrated transport system providing inclusive travel and journeys for everyone in the West Midlands. With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options. Customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse economy, helping to reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys where bus can provide a better option.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) recognises that the current financial model for the bus network is unsustainable. To secure long-term viability, a mix of short-, medium-, and long-term measures is being proposed to optimise services, reduce costs, and enhance revenue streams, while preparing for the transition to bus franchising.

WMCA will start to introduce deliver a franchised bus network starting with tranche 1 currently planned to be implemented towards the end of 2027.

We will develop a new West Midlands bus strategy which will set out how the region will use franchising to improve the West Midlands bus network.

This will set out how:

- The West Midlands will implement transformational changes to its bus network through franchising and reforms, reversing the long-term decline in bus use and supporting wider economic, social, and environmental goals. We will ensure that profit will no longer be the main focus but we will need a network which generates income to maintain and develop the network. We will design our network so that services are on time, reliable, direct, provide the right connections and offer the best value for money. We will ensure that the region's bus services are financially stable, affordable, and sustainably funded in the long term. This includes transitioning to a franchising model to stabilize the market, improve value for money, and address ongoing challenges such as declining patronage and short-term funding arrangements.
- We can meet our aspirations around a comprehensive network to support our aims around accessibility. The bus network as part of the West Midland's Integrated Transport Network will aim to bring as many residents as possible within 45 minutes travel time of as many opportunities as possible across the region.
- We can provide a complementary local bus network which supports comprehensive coverage and supports our aims and targets around improving accessibility. Where this is not possible, we will explore other options to provide connectivity as part of the integrated transport network e.g. demand responsive transport.
- How bus network Improvement measures will be developed to enhance bus priority corridors.
- We will enhance customer experience by ensuring services are inclusive, reliable, and responsive to community needs. The network is committed to making public transport a comfortable, safe, and attractive option for current and potential users, supporting the region's broader transport ambitions.
- We will simplify fares and ticketing across the public transport system, as part of a wider fares and payments strategy, to increase understanding, confidence, and affordability for users, particularly younger people and lower-income groups. This approach focuses on delivering value for money, supporting inclusivity, and encouraging behaviour changes to promote public transport.

Interchanges

Interchanges are places where people can access transport services and transfer from one mode to another; they are acritical component of our integrated transport system providing connections between services and are gateways to/from places. From a simple bus stop, through to a major public transport hub like Wolverhampton rail station, interchanges offer access and connections to and between different kinds of service.

Whilst some interchanges may be more discrete, such as a bus station, others may be more “zonal” and cover a wider area; for example there is a wide area within central Birmingham where interchange takes place between rail stations, tram and many streets with key bus stops. In effect the whole city centre is an interchange.

When we plan our transport system and when we think about how we want to use land, it’s vital to think about the opportunities that interchanges can bring. Networks of services offer more to travellers when there are more opportunities to make connections between them, linking services can boost overall demand for them helping is deliver better levels of service, and we can create better access to economic and social opportunities by intensifying development around interchanges and using the land for a mix of purposes.

The types of transport services and amenities available at interchanges is an important part of what defines their value to citizens. However, there are other critical design factors and features to also consider.

- Interchanges need to be **easy for all to navigate** through design of the infrastructure and information that helps people navigate them.
- They need to be **comfortable and safe** places to spend time as citizens navigate them and wait for services.
- As well as accessing public transport and shared services, people might need **infrastructure and amenities to support other forms of travel** such as storage for personal vehicles.
- They can offer **conveniences** such as parcel pick-up/drop-off, shops, and places to eat/drink to help make citizens lives easier.
- And interchanges need to be **well connected into the places they are serving** by infrastructure and information to help them connect into their surrounds, not just to facilitate connections between services.

It is important that as well as making the most of opportunities at major interchanges, we also deliver standards at minor interchanges. This includes the many places across the West Midlands where citizens make connections between different bus stops at street level and where it should be safe and easy to do so.

As we move towards our Vision for Travel, the variety of transport services and amenities available to people indifferent places will change. Most interchanges in neighbourhoods are currently limited to basic bus stops and information, however, there may be more services such as shared services, demand responsive services and public EV charging that we could consolidate in neighbourhood mobility hubs. New services like these may also be integrated into existing key interchanges in towns and cities across the region. It's important to review provision at interchanges as services change.

Policy:

WMCA will develop a programme of interchange improvements and develop new mobility hubs (Local Travel Points) based on a thorough audit of existing facilities against new interchange design, amenity and accessibility standards, to ensure a consistent, high quality and safe customer experience at passenger facilities across the region.

We will develop a strategy for the improvement of public transport interchanges, this will include common design standards for all interchanges and guidance for what design features, services and amenities are suitable for different types of interchange.

We will develop a programme of interchange improvements based on a gap analysis of known interchanges to bring them up to standard.

We will explore the case for and design of mobility hubs that co-locate a range of transport services.We will work with transport operators and land use planners to make the most of interchange opportunities through service and land use planning.

Mobility hubs are compact public spaces that bring together shared transport services, active travel facilities like secure bike storage, travel information, and public realm enhancements.

Mobility hubs have an important relationship with the integrated public transport system, bringing conventional public transport together with micromobility and community services to create transport interchanges with greater amenity.

In the West Midlands, mobility hubs have been called “Local Travel Points” to reflect their core role in providing easy ways for customers to make local ‘last mile’ trips to their final destinations. Hubs can also provide alternatives when other forms of public transport aren’t available (e.g. late at night), or when customers would prefer to travel actively.

A number of services will be provided at mobility hubs including car club provision, West Midlands Cycle Hire, e-scooter hire, secure cycle storage, EV charging, and parcel lockers. Additional services, like eBike charging, will be tested according to local demand.

Mobility hub development in the West Midlands is based on an initial pilot in the Halesowen area of Dudley Borough. A further 16 mobility hubs will be delivered up to March 2027 in two WMCA inclusive growth corridors: the Black Country Growth Corridor and the Birmingham and North Solihull Gateway Corridor.

A ‘network’ model will be implemented, with larger hubs at interchanges and local centres, and smaller satellite hubs across neighbourhoods, employment centres, and other trip attractors.

A ‘network’ model will be implemented, with larger hubs at interchanges and local centres, and smaller satellite hubs across neighbourhoods, employment centres, and other trip attractors.

Interchange hubs are the key interfaces with the regional rail and metro network and the core turn-up-and-go network. These will provide focus points where several alternatives to private car use are on offer in one sensible location. They are therefore an important component in the development of an integrated public transport system for the West Midlands.

The connection between mobility hubs and cycling and scooting is explored further in the Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot Big Move.

Mobility hub clusters

The following diagram, based on the area around Small Heath station in Birmingham, illustrates how a small cluster of hubs can ease both short-distance trips within neighbourhoods and public transport connections.

Neighbourhood hubs

- Increase 15 minute accessibility
- Active & share mobility gateways
- Focus on social inclusion

Interchange hubs

- Local transport network gateways
- Facilitators of multimodal trips
- Near existing bus & tram services

Central hubs

- Located in city centre areas
- Intercity network gateways
- High choice for visitors & residents

Park and ride

Park and ride facilities allow people to access rail and rapid transit by car by providing parking at stations and stops. There are around 13,000 car parking spaces provided across the area at dedicated park and ride facilities. TfWM provides approximately 9,500 of these spaces with most spaces currently being provided at no cost to users. A 2023 travel survey showed that 1/3 of Park & Ride users were driving from within a mile of the station. Whilst many of these trips will be for legitimate reasons, this data does suggest that free Park & Ride can act in opposition to the objective of encouraging more sustainable travel, at least at a local level. Most people using P&R facilities now travel less than five days per week. It is estimated that Mondays are occupied to c. 72% of midweek days, and Friday occupancy is c. 66% of midweek days. Thinking about how this underutilised space could be used differently to provide new facilities or services is now a possibility. These factors, along with greater control of the local transport system (bus franchising and public ownership of the tram network) present some opportunities to think differently about we promote fair and equitable access to these locations.

Moving from P&R to community mobility hubs

The overarching aims, policies and principles for park and ride were agreed by WMCA in 2019 and these remain valid. Ultimately, as the coverage of rail and rapid transit services improves in the West Midlands and as cycling and scooting facilities improve, fewer residents will need to drive to their nearest station/stop as they will be easier to access by other means. However, in the interim there is a role for targeted park and ride to play in helping residents access rail stations and rapid transit stops as part of an integrated transport system. Even with a fully developed regional rail and metro network and core network rapid transit lines, there will be an on-going role for park and ride near the edge of the built-up area to intercept inbound travellers. Parking at stations still has an important role to play for those with mobility issues and those that live in areas that are poorly connected to the existing rail and metro network. This will continue but will require some of the costs associated with this activity to be more fairly covered by users, as it is at many stations outside the West Midlands. In return these users will see, where deliverable:

- Investment in the car parking facilities, including new services such as the “save a space scheme”, EV charging points and CCTV.
- Improvements to sustainable alternatives to access the station such as new crossing facilities on busy roads, improved street lighting and cycling infrastructure.

The exploration of other community supported uses e.g. Local Travel Points (for bike and e-scooter hire), retail opportunities, space for mobile services e.g. libraries, health check-ups, recycling etc.

Local residents will also benefit from these improvements as well as from the potential reduction on local traffic to/from these station sites at busy peak times. This will help to improve local air quality and road safety.

Policy:

WMCA will continue to provide and improve park and ride provision at priority locations. We will continue to govern park and ride according to the approach outlined in Park & Ride Policies and Principles - Towards a Strategy

WMCA will also explore how the transformation of Park and Ride sites to Community Mobility Hubs will support fair and equitable access to our rail and metro network and the wide-ranging employment, leisure and training opportunities this provides. This will be delivered through improved integration with other public transport services and enhanced local accessibility by walking, wheeling and cycling.

Policies for funding, managing and developing park and ride

The policies below are taken from WMCA's Park & Ride Policies and Principles - Towards a Strategy, which contains additional guidance on developing park and ride and applying charging and booking at sites. Park and ride policy will be regularly reviewed to take into account the increasing importance of accessing stations and rapid transit stops by bus, cycling, walking and wheeling.

Funding park and ride

Any proposals for new or expanded park and ride schemes would generally be expected to be financially self-sustaining beyond the initial construction costs including measures required beyond the boundary of the site such as on-street controls).

Decommissioning of park and ride sites will be considered where rail and rapid transit network coverage provides residents in the area with viable and realistic alternatives to accessing the public transport network by non-car means; and there is no significant strategic transport access value provided by the site.

Park and ride assets owned or operated by WMCA will be supported by commercial strategies which seek to:

- Reduce the cost of park and ride;
- Raise revenue to cover the cost of park and ride, including by means of charging; and
- Enable services supported by the WMCA Transport Levy to be as financially self-sustaining as possible.

Unless there are compelling wider benefits or commensurate savings the proportion of the WMCA Transport Levy budget allocated to the operation of park and ride will not be increased.

Managing park and ride

Wherever practicable at park and ride assets owned or operated by WMCA, measures will be introduced that aim to:

- Reduce the proportion of users that drive short distances to use park and ride;
- Increase occupancy of cars travelling to park and ride.
- Reduce the need for users to arrive very early in order to secure a space;
- Manage any directly associated surrounding on-street parking that has a significant adverse traffic management or community impact;
- Reduce adverse travel market distortions such as rail-heading at park and ride sites where it abstracts demand from better placed transport interchange nodes.

Where practicable, charging and booking measures will be considered as a high priority to achieve the above aims.

Developing park and ride

Where the private sector is unlikely to invest, WMCA will pro-actively promote park and ride sites with viable business cases in the metropolitan area that:

- Provides access to metropolitan/ regional services to the West Midlands' well-connected strategic urban centres and/or intercity services to other key UK cities; and
- Intercept longer distance traffic in-bound into the the metropolitan area and/or serve local catchments.

Development of additional park and ride capacity will be favoured in locations where it offers the earliest feasible opportunity to beneficially abstract car trips from the urban road network.

Unless there is compelling strategic reason which supports the better operation of the transport system, developing park and ride will not generally be supported:

- In congested urban centres.
- Within 3 miles of Birmingham City Centre.

There will be a general presumption against the development of park and ride that precludes alternative land uses in the long term and where there is a clear local ambition to use the land for more productive purposes.

Domestic and international connectivity

National rail

The National Rail network in the West Midlands supports economic growth in the region. It provides quick access into Birmingham and most of the region's strategic centres. Importantly it links the region to the rest of the UK and other major cities. Local rail services in the metropolitan and wider travel to work areas are an important part of the West Midland's structural, strategic public transport network.

The West Midlands is also at the heart of the national rail network and is served by an extensive network of inter-urban services - these meet demand for regional trips to nearby cities and areas and long-distance services to destinations such as London, Bristol and the South West, Wales, Nottingham, Derby and the East Midlands, Greater Manchester and the North West, Newcastle and the North East and Scotland including Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Our existing priorities for future improved rail us are:

- **HS2** is the most critical part of new rail infrastructure in the West Midlands and Great Britain. The new high-speed line will connect two new West Midlands stations with London and support connectivity to North West England and Scotland through connections with the existing network. We will continue to work with Greater Manchester to develop options for a higher capacity and faster services connecting the two city regions.
- **Midlands Rail Hub (MRH)** is a critical and transformational project that is essential to the region. It unlocks the national rail network's capacity bottleneck in central Birmingham, improves access to HS2 and delivers faster and more frequent connections across the West Midlands and beyond. Delivery of MRH, in full, is critical to achieving key national and regional outcomes including much-improved connectivity between Birmingham and South Wales, the South West, Worcestershire, Herefordshire and the East Midlands.

Policy:

Working collaboratively with WMRE, Midlands Connect, Network Rail, DfT / Great British Railways and other partners WMCA will develop national rail network connectivity with the capacity, reliability, speed, resilience and quality to support growth in the region including delivery of the Midlands Rail Hub scheme in full.

WMCA and its partners will work with DfT and HS2 to ensure the aspirations of the West Midlands HS2 Growth Strategy are realised, that the national connectivity benefits to the West Midlands are maximized and ensure that the region is plugged into HS2 by delivering the HS2 connectivity package.

Coaches

Coaches have an important national role for the West Midlands. The region is served by a network of scheduled coach services which serve a range of destinations across the UK. National Express operate out of Digbeth Coach station in Birmingham but also provide connections to and from Bearwood, Coventry, Dudley, Birmingham Airport, Walsall and Wolverhampton. Megabus and Flixbus also provide serves Birmingham, Birmingham Airport and Coventry. Coaches are particularly important for domestic travel for those without a car covering places rail doesn't go and at a price that's more affordable.

Coaches are also important for the region's tourism industry, with around 2% of the regions visitors arriving by coach at our key attractions including, leisure and cultural attractions, shopping centres and to attend events. Visitor numbers are growing with visits by coach playing their part in this growth.

Coach set down, pick up and longer-term parking is a serious issue for the coach industry. It is a significant issue in centres where demand for kerb side space is at a premium around key destinations and attractions. WMCA and local authorities will continue to work with operators to ensure that coaches can set down and pick up close to their destinations and that accessible coach parking locations, with appropriate facilities and hours of operation, are provided and well signed.

Policy:

Local Authorities and WMCA will enable coaches to play their full part in the integrated public transport system by ensuring accessible and high-quality coach parking and pick-up/set-down points are available at key destinations.

Where coach facilities are provided, they should:

- Be within easy access for passengers to primary destinations
- Be welcoming for passengers
- Have safe and sheltered waiting facilities
- Have adequate information
- Have excellent connections with other public transport
- Be close to short stay parking
- Have convenient access to the primary road network
- Be safe and secure for passengers
- Have driver rest facilities (where appropriate)

International Gateways

Maintaining and improving links to the UK's ports and airports is vital for the economic success of the West Midlands as the UK's third highest value exporter by region. Birmingham Airport is the preferred airport for domestic and international flights to/from the entire Midlands region.

Owing to the level of demand it serves, its extensive air connectivity across the world, its room for growth, and its position at the centre of the UK's surface transport network, Birmingham Airport is a transport asset of enhanced national interest.

In addition, connectivity for passengers via Manchester and Heathrow Airports (the two best airports in the UK for international connectivity) is also important for our region.

East Midlands Airport is the UK's busiest airport for dedicated air freight and transports the largest volume of goods between the UK and the EU. Its proximity (generally accessible in under 2hrs from the whole West Midlands metropolitan area by road) is a key asset for West Midlands businesses trading high value goods.

Policy:

WMCA will support Birmingham Airport's role as a key international gateway to the region by improving and promoting sustainable surface access to the Airport through proposals outlined in the Local Transport Plan and the Birmingham Airport Surface Access Strategy 2023.

WMCA will support Birmingham Airport to improve air connections available from the Airport and supports its role as a nationally important international gateway.

WMCA will ensure that the region has excellent national and international connectivity for people and goods by working with Midlands Connect and other partners to improve links (particularly by sustainable modes) from the region to major ports and airports.

Demand responsive services

Demand responsive, community-led and accessible transport

Where a regular bus serves a fixed route on a fixed timetable and only stops at fixed stops, Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) can be more flexible. Various forms of DRT represent a distinct market of transport services serving different communities and with different models (albeit with overlapping/common features). They tend to serve communities or groups whose needs are not adequately met by mainstream services due to their bespoke needs or there is limited commercial demand. They also connect communities directly with the services they require and provide essential connections to the wider public transport network.

Often these services involve a smaller vehicle like a minibus that users can hail using an app or by phoning in advance. There are lots of variations on DRT, some follow a routes that are part like a traditional bus route but can change as people place bookings and some might have fixed drop-off and pick-up points. Unlike a taxi/PHV, you can't exclusively book a DRT service for yourself, and you may share your journey with other people in the vehicle (like a bus).

DRT services under the branding West Midlands Bus On-Demand (WMBoD) operate throughout the region to supporting vulnerable people, including disabled and the elderly who have difficulties using fixed route public transport. However, DRTs flexible nature and TfWM's ambition to modernise within this space has allowed this type of service to be trialled across other communities and places.

Improvement and modernisation of WMBoD will ensure the service continues to provide value for money, efficiencies, social value and delivers on innovation and good accessibility to ensure users meet their day-to-day needs and be included in life in the West Midlands.

Operators of Community Transport (a form of DRT) services are often third sector organisations that help provide transport to support the accessibility of other groups that are otherwise unmet. A particular key role that these community run services can play is supporting group travel and activities for organisations such as community centres. They also connect isolated communities with local services and amenities ensuring that community support services are at the heart of isolated areas.

TfWM continue to support the Community Transport sector through the regions Community Transport Forum (which is represented in our wider Bus Alliance) and helping operators secure new funding streams to maintain their services. We also provide subsidy for "Accessible Transport" which mainly supports our commissioned West Midlands Bus On-Demand service but also supports wider Community Transport measures such as local shopper services.

Policy:

TfWM will undertake regular reviews of “Accessible Transport” services to ensure that they meet the needs of communities, continue to modernize whilst also ensuring value for money. We will continue to seek additional funding to support such services and trial new approaches and ways to integrate more flexible services into the mainstream public transport network. Such reviews will also consider social care transport and home to school transport as appropriate.

WMCA will:

- Continue to provide subsidies to support “Accessible Transport” services including for the new West Midlands Bus On-Demand service and Community Transport operators. We will also continue to review these subsidies and conditions from time to time, to ensure they best meet our communities needs; are modernizing and provide value for money.
- Continue to roll out measures to help transform and improve our DRT services including in areas of efficiency, customer service, innovation, fares and ticketing, technology and other relevant areas.
- Continue to work with the Community Transport sector and their users of group travel to provide ongoing support through TfWM’s Community Transport Forum. This will support the securing of funds from third party sources and ensure the needs of this sector, and its users are accounted for in wider service and infrastructure planning.
- Continue to trial new and innovative forms of Demand Responsive and Accessible Transport services, to understand how they can best meet community needs and how they can best make ongoing efficiencies and integrate* into the wider system of public transport and shared services.
- We will continue to work with local authorities and health partners on improving provision for bespoke social needs (such as social care transport and home to school transport) through exploration of dedicated and integrated* DRT models and other interventions (such as travel budgets and travel training).

*The current Ring and Ride service will become West Midlands Bus On-Demand from December 2025. This service will continue to prioritise all existing customers while expanding over time to support more people facing wider ranging accessibility barriers, making the service more efficient and sustainable in the longer term.

Taxis & Private Hire Vehicles

Taxis (Hackney Carriages) and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) can provide an effective means of travel particularly helping:

- Those travelling with luggage
- Those travelling in groups
- Those travelling to/from areas of poor public transport connectivity
- Securely helping vulnerable members of the public
- Support those with particular mobility impairments alongside Accessible Transport

Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles is administered by lower tier local authorities across England, including the metropolitan district authorities in the West Midlands. Licensing helps to ensure vehicles and drivers meet standards to ensure consumers receive good service, to keep the public safe and to protect the environment.

Concerns have grown in recent years about how taxi and PHV licencing works on in England and in particular with 'out-of-area' licensing and challenges that presents to licencing authorities across the country to ensure that safety and standards are in place and appropriately enforced. WMCA currently has no licensing duties/powers for Taxis and PHVs and the responsibility and role of licensing authorities sits at the local authority level.

Linked to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, the Government is proposing to review how taxi and PHV licensing works in England. This would and seeking to reduce the number of licensing authorities by potentially moving powers to Mayoral Strategic Authorities such as WMCA. WMCA believe that setting stronger national legislation and guidance is needed and that his should include a more comprehensive set of standards for PHVs across all licensing authorities, which would offer a more effective long-term solution, enable closer cooperation and improve local accountability and enforcement.

Policy:

WMCA, licensing authorities and taxi and PHV operators will collaborate to ensure taxis and PHVs are better integrated into the wider public transport network, providing appropriate drop-off/pick-up facilities at interchanges, considering options for taxi-cards and more consistent licensing and access standards. Partners will need to have clear plans to deliver a shift to zero emission vehicle taxis and PHVs.

- Local partners will collaborate to promote Licensing best practice.
- WMCA will consider the role of Taxis & PHVs in the provision of Accessible Transport in the West Midlands, including considering options for taxicards.
- Local partners will ensure transport interchanges and key destinations have appropriate facilities for stands and drop-off/pick-up points for the public.
- Local partners will work together to apply consistent principles for providing access to taxis and PHVs on restricted roads, junctions and lanes (including bus lanes).
- We will work with Government and local authorities to inform and deliver any changes to the taxi and PHV licensing framework in England.

Liftsharing

Liftsharing encompasses car sharing, carpooling and ride sharing. These are forms of coordination between drivers and passengers who share common or similar routes. This can be facilitated by either the people themselves or through a third-party company. Such services can contribute to decarbonisation of transport as it increases vehicle occupancy and reduces overall journeys made. It is also an important form of transport for people in isolated areas or who need public transport outside of its normal operating hours.

There is opportunity for TfWM to coordinate with liftsharing platforms through our digital mobility services. However, there are security risks associated with liftsharing such as data protection and personal safety. These must be managed before fully integrating liftsharing with TfWM's digital mobility platforms.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will support and promote liftsharing where appropriate to increase vehicle occupancy and improve accessibility to opportunities in the West Midlands.

WMCA will consider the role of liftsharing when producing travel plans for our partner communities and businesses.

Shared mobility services

Shared services allow people to access vehicles to drive without having to own one. This is useful to citizens of the West Midlands because:

- It offers a more affordable alternative to owning a particular vehicle (or another vehicle), and particularly may be a more affordable alternative for many to buying a Zero Emission Vehicle as and when they consider upgrading;
- It is impractical to own a vehicle (or another vehicle) for example because of a lack of personal space to store/park/charge a vehicle;
- They might need to access a vehicle away from home (for example where someone has travelled somewhere by public transport and needs to access another vehicle for onward travel); and
- They may be able to access a greater diversity of vehicles to access the right vehicle to meet their needs at the right time.

Examples of shared services in the West Midlands of interest include:

- Car/van clubs - a number of private schemes with bays are available on a mix of private and public land; and
- Cycle/scooter hire - TfWM's West Midlands Cycle Hire offers docked bikes and ebikes for hire and e-scooter hire is also available in parts of the region.

These services complement the other options in our Vision for Travel, including fixed and dynamic public transport services and personal cycle/scoot vehicles and contribute to improving accessibility without the need to own a car helping to maintain accessibility whilst reducing the impacts of traffic and parking.

Shared services are greatly enhanced through digital platforms which can help users find, access and pay for the use of vehicles they need. Shared services can also be designed to integrate well with public transport and interchanges; where interchanges and/or mobility hubs can offer accessible and useful locations for shared vehicles to be picked up and dropped off.

Whilst users pay to use shared services, services are not always commercially sustainable to run, particularly in areas in low demand and where car ownership and use is currently high. Shared services would need subsidy to provide coverage in areas of low commercial demand, however, the case for this needs to be considered carefully as the availability of subsidies are limited and there are many services that require funding.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will support the development and provision of shared services, specifically including cycle and scooter hire, and car/van clubs, creating a more accessible and inclusive offer. This includes as part of new developments.

Shared services principles:

1. We will seek to enable access to a diverse range of vehicles targeted to the right places and people to improve accessibility.
2. We will ensure that schemes are planned to ensure subsidy requirements are limited and sustainable, provision is more inclusive and this will be achieved by scaling service with demand and securing third party funding to support market growth.
3. Cycle and scoot hire should be planned and commissioned as one West Midlands service, even if there are multiple operators involved.
4. Any publicly accessible car/van clubs should be planned and commissioned as one West Midlands service, even if there are multiple operators involved.
5. We will seek to integrate shared services into our digital mobility platforms / mobility as a service and seek to embed them in the design of wider multi-modal payments/fares/ticketing products.
6. We will seek to integrate the design of shared services into local neighbourhood and regional networks and wider public transport networks, interchanges and mobility hubs.
7. We will ensure clear rules and accountability for citizen safety, and the fair and nuisance free use of public infrastructure.
8. Shared service vehicles will be zero emission vehicles.

Cycle and scooter hire

The WMCA has offered a cycle hire scheme since March 2021 and an e scooter hire scheme since September 2020. E bikes were also introduced to the cycle hire scheme in December 2021. These schemes have been very successful in providing residents with a variety of mobility options and improving connectivity across the local authorities and providing last mile connections with public transport services.

Cycle and scooter hire schemes greatly benefit lower income groups, as they increase accessibility to active travel and micromobility vehicles. These lower-income households are also more likely to be in areas with limited public transport access and higher levels of air pollution. Public hire schemes offer greater choice in transport for everyone, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Benefits of Public Hire Schemes:	Challenges:
Promotes active travel	Docking stations and vehicles may contribute to street and pavement clutter
Contributes to modal shift	Can require high levels of public subsidy to make them affordable for users
Reduces transport emissions and congestion	High levels of vandalism of cycles have been reported
E-bikes and scooters can be more inclusive for users	Risk of collisions with e-scooters is higher due to increased speeds. Also, a lack of clear national regulations and enforcement to reduce current conflicts between these modes, especially those who are pedestrians
Gives more people access to cycle and scoot vehicles	Associated cycle and scooting infrastructure, mainly cycle lanes, is required to encourage use and for such infrastructure to be inclusive and designed for a range of adapted cycles and mobility aids
Opportunities to integrate last mile travel with public transport	Needs a wide geographic distribution to benefit most people.
Contributes to improving health	New vehicle designs (such as adapted cycles and mobility aids) need to be considered to enable our schemes and infrastructure to be more inclusive and accessible.

Car and van clubs

Can and van clubs also allow users to access a vehicle without owning one. Vehicles are for short term hire on a pay per trip basis, supporting certain journeys that still require a car. Vans clubs cater more for hire by freight and logistics companies. These schemes are more flexible and more affordable than traditional car ownership or leasing schemes. They can also deliver emissions reductions as vehicles are often newer and compliant with low-emissions standards. Users also tend to drive fewer miles on their journeys. Much like cycle and scooter hire schemes, this benefits lower income groups and expands their transport choices.

Car and van clubs also support road space reallocation by reducing the dominance of private vehicles on roads and at parking sites. Space is re-provided for walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting, further encouraging modal shift.

Types of Schemes:

- **Back to Base -** vehicle has a designated pick-up and drop-off location
- **Single point to point -** available cars are dispersed and not required to return to a designated location
- **Peer to peer -** privately owned vehicles can be hired out to the public

Opportunity for the public sector to influence:

- **Infrastructure -** Birmingham City Council has introduced dedicated parking bays for car club vehicles. This reallocates parking space for shared services.
- **Low carbon agenda -** the CA can promote low or zero emission vehicles in car club schemes supported by council funding. Car clubs can also promote behaviour change and modal shift.
- **Integration -** Car clubs can be integrated physically at PT interchanges, with the Swift smart-ticketing interface, and with route planners to suggest a combination of modes for journeys.
- **Chargepoints -** Public charging infrastructure can also be shared with car club vehicles.
- **Travel planning -** local authorities can help and encourage closed car-clubs to be set up to help particular businesses/ organisations manage their fleet requirements

Co-ordinating and managing the public transport network

Valuing our customers

The Combined Authority's statutory duty to provide public services translates into customer care. Transport users should feel valued and given a high standard of service. Overall customer satisfaction with public transport users in the West Midlands is 82% but we know that certain aspects which influence the customer experience vary - reliability is a key area of improvement.

- The needs of existing and potential bus users vary. These factors include :
    - how reliable or frequent the services are
    - how easy it is to access the network and reach a range of destinations,
    - how direct or quick the route is or how good interchange and integration is,
    - safety, security and accessibility,
    - the overall price of the journey(s)

TfWM commits to providing high quality customer service for those who interact with the transport authority. This will be done through improved training for public-facing staff, improving affordability, enhancing safety and providing accessible services. Gaining disaggregated data for understanding intersectional issues in transport, and ways different groups, including those with protected characteristics will experience the network in diverse ways is also important. By breaking down data, we can be clearer on where barriers exist and how policies can be tailored to ensure more inclusive and equitable access.

We know that the 'whole journey' experience is critical this includes not just the bus journey itself but including information on and off the bus, customer care, ticket integration with other public transport modes, safety concerns and better waiting environments. It also needs to consider the first and last mile elements too. The Customer Experience Principles diagram is available on Page 27 of this document.

Ensuring a customer experience people want to use and want to repeat:

- Accurate service information, easy-to-use ticketing methods, as well as clean, well-maintained, safe bus stations and vehicles are key to the experience of public transport.
- Providing comprehensive training for staff, including bus drivers on a range of topics including disability awareness and reducing violence against women and girls.
- Committing to a consistent level of service across the transport system.
- Exploring new technologies and platforms that can improve customer service, transport services and capture customer feedback. World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
- Ensuring that our buses are even safer, secure and accessible for all to help us build trust and confidence and tackle perceptions to transform the travel behaviours of those who currently choose not to use the bus.
- There is a clear opportunity here to streamline the branding and communication across the West Midlands bus network, as part of the branding of the whole West Midlands integrated public transport system. This will considerably increase the clarity and quality of information to the customer and improving perception of the bus network as part of one, integrated West Midlands transport system.
- As discussed in the Behaviour Change Big Move, TfWM's customer experience principles will be a key part of helping us ensure these issues are properly considered.

Policy:

TfWM will work with operators to establish more consistent and high-quality customer experience standards, for all parts of the journey, including travel information and payment, first mile/last mile, waiting facilities, and customer service from staff. Regular customer feedback and continued data insight and analysis will be used to identify customer painpoints and potential improvements. Customer service will be improved across the West Midlands transport system by:

- Considering TfWM's customer experience principles to help guide decisions which influence the customer experience.
- Committing to a high standard of customer service.
- Providing training for staff, including bus drivers on a range of topic areas.
- Committing to a consistent level of service across the transport system. Transport operators will be engaged to develop this level of service.
- Exploring new technologies and platforms that can improve customer service, transport services and capture customer feedback.
- Engaging with users to gather feedback and understand shortcomings to help improve our approaches.

Safety and Security

Feeling and being safe on sustainable transport is essential and a key component of good accessibility and delivering on equitable transport. Yet some groups feel disproportionately unsafe, and improvements are therefore needed to walking routes to our stops and stations, the look and feel of our older stops and shelters, the availability of real-time information, conditions inside our vehicles, delivering on safe spaces and changing passenger behaviours, with perceptions of safety often varying by group and at differing times of day.

Improvements in vehicle design will also help improve personal security together with ensuring all transport staff have the right training and support platforms available, with these areas being explored with operators. Public awareness and education are also key measures to improving safety. Campaigns should not only focus on personal awareness of surroundings and reporting incidents but also on promoting positive perceptions of safety on public transport and ways to challenge certain behaviours seen by passengers, which are not acceptable. Through devolution the region is asking for more powers to enforce bus byelaws. Currently Transport Safety Officers and the Safer Travel Team of WM police can issue fixed penalty notices, obtain personal details and proactively deal with nuisance behaviour that occurs on public transport property, but not on bus vehicles. There are still significant safety issues and perceptions on buses themselves, so it's important to allow for wider enforcement of byelaws.

Public Transport can also be planned in a way that decreases wait time at stations and provides users with more accurate service information, contributing to a more positive perception of it. New development and regeneration can also help to create safer, more secure places with improved lighting, installation of CCTV and by creating natural surveillance. This will be picked up in the Transport in new developments guidance and within our Infrastructure Design Guidance notes. Other important initiatives include:

- Security also contributes to public transport's integration with active travel and micromobility. Cyclists and scooter users require secure parking facilities, so that these vehicles can be confidently used for last mile connections and interchanges.
- A **new Safer Travel Strategy 2025-2028** has been developed, setting out how police and transport organisations will work together to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport. The new strategy focuses on four themes: Feel Safer, Be Safer, Stay Safer, and Connected Network.
- WMCA, with DfT and partners, have produced recommendations and national guidance on tackling violence against women and girls, forming the basis of many of our own safety and security policies.
- New **Infrastructure Design Guidance** is also being created to embed safety into all our schemes and products. The first guidance, focused on making women and girls feel safer, will be published in late 2025, with other topics published later.
- To further strengthen design quality, a **Design Excellence Panel**, made up of industry experts is being established to review WMCA and partner-funded schemes, with a focus on key areas including safety and accessibility.

Policy:

WMCA, local authorities and partners will improve the actual and perceived personal security of public transport use, making improvements to the walking, waiting, interchange, and in-vehicle elements of public transport trips. This will then support enhanced accessibility and help deliver more equitable and inclusive transport.

WMCA will work with local law enforcement, transport operators, industry experts on safety, local authorities' other key bodies to improve safety and security through crime prevention measures, such as:

- Greater CCTV coverage of stations and stops
- Improved lighting at stops, stations and along nearby paths
- Secure scooter and cycle parking facilities
- Timetabling measures and real time information to reduce the wait times at stops and stations
- More safe spaces across our transport networks and specialist support services
- Improve education at all levels and through different creative means
- Gain a greater insight and understanding of intersectional issues, where certain groups may face being disproportionately targeted

Ticketing and fares

Ticketing is one of the biggest barriers to an integrated transport network and a key issue in people's decisions around how to travel. Getting fares and ticketing right is key to ensuring people can travel seamlessly in an integrated transport network and get best value.TfWM research has shown that confusing ticket structures, a lack of integration and complicated purchase processes are among some of the biggest pain points for users.

nBus and nNetwork fare schemes, the Swift smartcard ticketing system, fare capping on bus and tram, via Swift Go are all multi-operator, multi-modal fare and ticketing initiatives that have helped reduced barriers and help customers get best value. We are continuing to invest in more convenient ticketing technologies like cEMV and mticketing and it is our ambition to make these integrated across modes services to further complement access to transport in our area. With around 2 million regular users, Swift is the largest smart payments operation in the UK outside of London.

For the current network to deliver a truly integrated transport system the payment process needs to be optimised, fares need to be affordable and ticketing improvements need to be joined up with those new schemes we deliver upon.

This will ensure that the region achieves the maximum possible benefits from investment in the transport network and linking transport modes together to make access quicker and easier. Efforts to make ticketing simpler, including a complete overhaul of the regional rail fare structure need to continue.

As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership, TfWM have put in place a number of requirements for operators and are taking forward actions which have replaced thousands of ticket options with a streamlined and cheaper set of just 6 ticket types that are accepted on all operators' services with aligned pricing. This will include single, day and season tickets making it much easier for customers to understand which ticket offers them best value. TfWM will also deliver a contactless solution so that customers can achieve a best value cap when using their bank card across operators' services. TfWM is also developing best value fare caping on rail with Swift Smartcard, adding to use on buses and West Midlands Metro trams.

There are still, however, segmented ticketing processes between and within transport modes, which can exclude or discourage users. Reflecting our customer experience principles and the opportunities of bus franchising, a new **Fares and Payment Strategy** will outline improvements to the ticketing and fares system including:

- Continuation of our stable simple, low price, multi-modal/multi-operator fares and concessions
- TfWM will have greater control over how we choose to fund and prioritise concessionary fares - may present new concessionary opportunities to better address affordability challenges - e.g. Mayor's priority, young people.
- We will establish new fares, concessions and ticketing schemes - e.g. an opportunity to introduce Mayor's priority hopper fare.
- Fare capping delivered across more of the network - unlocks the ability to reintroduce a more diverse range of capped fares bringing better value
- We will consolidate and unify the customer environment, providing a better value, accountable and more joined up experience - no one left behind, no one held back
- A product development, marketing and retail approach better informed by customer insight
- An evolving technology platform for tokens/tickets; short term blend of ITSO, cEMV, QR code moving toa consolidated platform as regulatory requirements, legislative and industry driven standardisation, cost and technology availability clarifies.

TfWM has also been exploring the role of Mobility as a Service to consolidate and unify the customer environment, which will involve integrating of ticketing access into broader transport customer tools and interfaces.

The reform of fares over time will help to provide greater integration (integrated fare sets, integrated planning of and setting of fare prices) alongside changes to how local transport services are manged, increasing the ability of the WMCA to specify the approach.

Policy:

TfWM will develop a West Midlands Fares and Payments Strategy to set out how the region can provide a simple range of multi-modal, multi-operator, affordable fares for the public transport system, supported by smart ticketing and payment solutions and digital journey planning tools.

The West Midlands will continue to make the most of digital mobility platforms to better integrate information, payments, and tools for planning for citizens.

Digital mobility platforms

Digital mobility platforms integrate the services and information provided by different partners to enable citizens to plan and undertake travel and pay for the services they use.

Digital mobility platforms can have front-end interfaces that citizens directly engage with as well as back-ends for operators and system management.

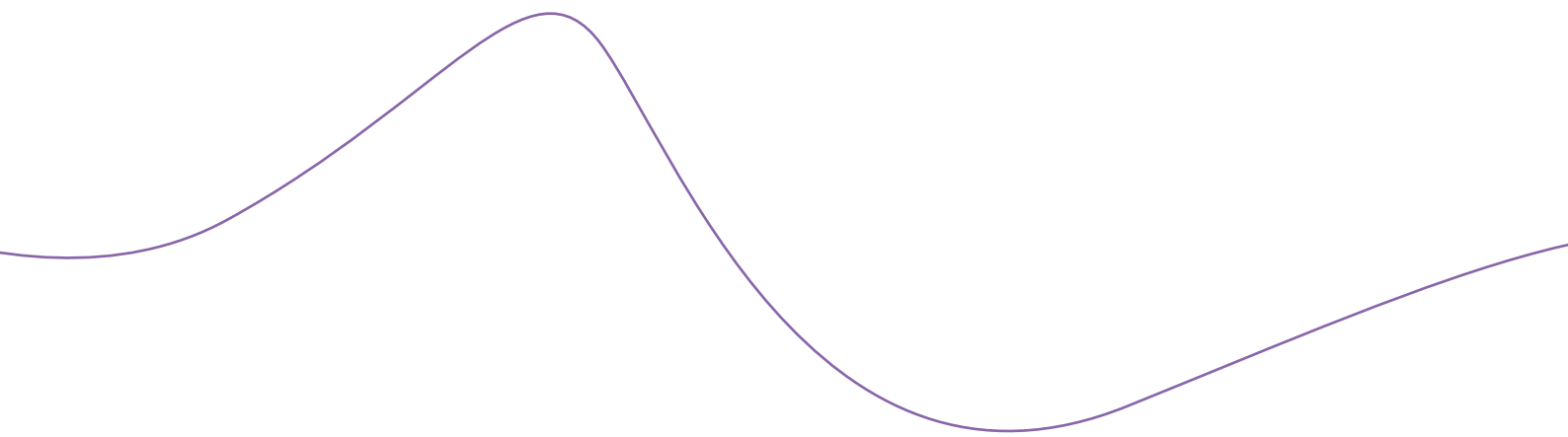
Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is a concept for changing the way we consume transport by providing citizens with web-based platforms for planning for, booking and paying for a wide range of services (from buses, through to private hire vehicles and bike hire). Through these apps or websites, citizens can also receive tailored information to help them choose options for travelling that best meet their priorities (for example whether their priority is to arrive quicker or to pay less). This can have a significant contribution in making public transport more inclusive and accessible. TfWM has been working with partners to develop, trial and deliver Mobility as a Service in the West Midlands. However, MaaS has to date been challenging to implement particularly as a result of the fragmented state of the different aspects of the transport system.

As well as providing citizens with the best information to meet their needs, the information operators and partners receive through the digital platform underpinning MaaS can help planners better plan services and manage the demand for services (for example by warning citizens when overcrowding might be higher in the day).

Policy:

The West Midlands will continue to make the most of digital mobility platforms to better integrate information, payments, and tools for planning for citizens.

The West Midlands will continue to explore with partners how opportunities such as the deployment of Mobility as a Service type schemes could be implemented in the region (and to support Mobility as a Service beyond our borders).



Customer interfaces

Branding

In the West Midlands there is a variety of transport modes with multiple transport operators within the system. This fragmentation of modes has resulted in a proliferation of both operator-specific journey planners and apps, as well as multi-modal apps. This creates confusion for users and makes understanding routes, timetables and interchanges more difficult. Users are missing the whole picture and preferences based on their needs i.e. fastest, cheapest. This can be resolved through simplified fares, ticketing platforms and branding.

TfWM is the overarching brand for public transport in the area encompassing the bus, tram, rail networks and shared mobility services. In addition, SWIFT has its own recognizable brand. The TfWM branding ensures consistent messaging across the different modes of transport and improves customer experience by providing unmistakable, simple signage and creating smoother journeys. The TfWM brand was developed to promote a single integrated transport system.

Branding provides a clear opportunity to remove confusion and build on a 'one network' vision which supports Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares across an integrated transport system. The Enhanced Partnership requires operators to ensure that vehicles are in an appropriate finished livery, which clearly identifies either the bus operator or brand route.

Policy:

West Midland partners will work collaboratively to develop and apply common branding across services, infrastructure and travel information to help the public recognise and navigate the public transport and shared mobility network.

Travel information and journey planning

Information and tools to help citizens navigate transport services is a critical component of system management. Travel Information can and should be provided across a range of channels.

TfWM provide a range of printed and digital information on leaflets, at stops/ interchanges (including Wolverhampton Travel Centre), and via websites and apps. Other organisations also provide information, including operators themselves and third parties (including mapping and travel apps).

Customers can be confused and overwhelmed with poorly communicated and conflicting information. We have found from customer surveys that they can find it difficult to navigate the information provided at bus stations. Whilst some good improvements are underway, delivering Better Journeys requires further change in the ease, access and simplicity of with which customers can access the right information, at the right time

Our £2m Transforming RTI project is delivering a new “back office” functionality, via the integration of real time data feeds direct from bus operators and from the DfT Bus Open Data Service. This will create a platform on which we will be able to monitor the performance of buses in real time (supporting the operation of the RTCC), as well as using historic data to plan for the future and provide significantly improved information to customers.

Policy:

We will continue to provide and develop simple, clear and up to date information and tools for citizens in a range of formats to meet their needs in navigating services and planning journeys.

We will work with partners in order to ensure we communicate a single version of the truth to avoid conflicting information.

We will ensure that people who are digitally excluded can still access and use the network. This could mean maintaining options for clear, accessible journey information in physical formats—such as printed timetables, on-street signage, and staffed help points (where this is feasible) and ensuring those without bank accounts, smartphones, or internet access are not excluded from travel.

We will ensure our information and tools are available in different formats from easy read to different languages.

Subsidy

Services

Subsidies can be and are used to directly support the operational costs of transport services in the West Midlands. Public funds can be used to subsidise services, but third-party funds may also be secured to do the same, for example through securing contributions from land developers as new developments are bought forward. There are several significant subsidised services currently operating in the West Midlands. Significant financial pressures threaten service sustainability and there remains ongoing uncertainty around long term funding for the bus network. Yet reduced connectivity would force residents toward private vehicle use, worsening congestion and affordability challenges. If services are reduced, local councils could face over £200m annually in additional costs for school transport, absenteeism management, and social support.

The impacts of cost increases, patronage not fully recovering, pandemic impacts, and longer journey times by November 2023 meant that only around 50% of pre-Covid-19 bus kilometrage in the West Midlands Bus Network was commercially sustainable. This increased the need for additional levels of public subsidy to protect the network. The average bus in the region was requiring double the number of passengers than pre-covid to be commercially viable in the region. We have statutory duties to provide 'socially necessary' subsidised bus services, under the 1985 Transport Act. This means we use available local subsidies to fund bus services that provide a vital public service, but would not be commercially viable otherwise. Funds are used to extend routes to places that would not otherwise be served, boost frequencies in areas of very infrequent service, and to extend operating hours of services in the morning and evening. We often work with neighbouring authorities to coordinate subsidy on cross-boundary services.

Franchising will enable WMCA to deliver and plan the bus network differently. We will cross subsidise the commercial and non-commercial parts of the bus network to deliver better value for money. We will proactively design and control the West Midlands Bus Network to devise long-term sustainable policies and strategies to offset the declining patronage levels throughout the West Midlands Bus Network. In addition to subsidies to run the bus network, WMCA also provides subsidy to support operations of the West Midlands Metro and to demand responsive and accessible transport services, including the West Midlands On-Demand service (superseding Ring and Ride from December 2025) and some services provided by Community Transport operators. These subsidies can provide services in places where a fixed bus service would represent poor value for money, and to provide services for people who might find it difficult to use conventional public transport. Partners in the West Midlands also fund services through social care and education budgets, for example funding home to school transport for those with special educational needs and disabled people.

Finally, we subsidise shared services including providing a contribution towards the operation of the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme which provides bikes and e-bikes for hire. Scooter and cycle hire schemes often require support to be financially viable, especially to extend services into areas of lower demand to grow the market.

Policy:

WMCA will work with Government, local authorities, operators and developers to maximise funding available to deliver public transport services and concessions. We will maintain local access standards and guidance to ensure concession and service subsidies are well targeted to best support citizens and communities and deliver value for money.

We will also seek to use devolution to work with Government to inform how national legislation on and approaches to local government funding can evolve to better support the West Midlands subsidy needs.

As we transition to a franchised bus network, we will continue to subsidise services by using farebox revenue alongside public subsidy to ensure that transport supports our communities and connects them to economic and social opportunities and key services and amenities.

Concessions

Concessionary fares and tickets are discounted from standard rates to support particular groups with the affordability of travel. They can help vulnerable people within our region have access to transport services for health, retail, leisure, education and employment, but also access to community facilities where they can engage with others. They are particularly helpful for those who struggle to stretch their disposable income to meet all their daily needs. These concessions can be funded through public funds or by working with operators who may voluntarily offer specific groups discounted rates.

WMCA have statutory obligations to provide concessionary bus fares for older and disabled residents as part of the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS). Funding from ENCTS represents a significant proportion of the overall funding available for bus operators to run services. We also provide a number of local discretionary concessions in our area with local funds and by working with our operators. This includes:

- Extensions to ENCTS to cover West Midlands Metro and Rail services within the metropolitan area, and allowing people to travel after 11pm on a weekday for ENCTS pass holders
- Our Workwise scheme offering free travel to work (inc apprenticeships) for qualifying low income jobseekers
- Discounted travel targeted at children and young people 18 and under
- Discounted travel for students
- Discounted travel for family of nNetwork season pass holders

Finally, as part of the Governments National Bus Strategy, a Bus Service Improvement Plan has been produced for the region where a range of short term bus incentives including a passenger incentive programme of discounted and free travel offers will be provided to vulnerable and excluded groups. This scheme launched in January 2024.

Policy:

We will continue to deliver national statutory obligations to fund concessionary fares. We will also use local public funds and collaborate with operators and local authorities to provide discretionary concessionary travel fares and tickets targeted at people in the West Midlands who face the greatest affordability challenges with travel.

We will consider concessions across all forms of fixed and dynamic public transport as well as access to shared services such as cycle and scoot hire. We will ensure concessionary schemes are well promoted to target users and we will ensure that related application processes and customer services are well designed so as to ensure eligible citizens are able to access the concessions. Through franchising we will explore how to build on existing opportunities to support particular cohorts with concessionary fares.

Governance

Across the UK, the responsibilities for transport are highly complex. There are different powers and responsibilities awarded between national, regional and local bodies, including public authorities and private agencies. Planning, managing and operating a coherent transport network is challenging in this environment; it can be difficult to maximise the benefits from coordinating services which are designed and delivered in a way that meets our communities' best interests. Running a complex transport system is always going to require collaboration with partners and this is something we remain committed to. However, we will strive to ensure that the way transport is governed in our area delivers better outcomes for the public. The Government has acknowledged, through the English Devolution White Paper and English Devolution and Community Action Bill, that Mayor's and Strategic Authorities will take on greater powers and responsibilities to plan their transport systems more effectively.

An overview of the state of play for governance

WMCA are seeking additional devolved transport responsibilities for Mayor/WMCA and constituent authorities to deliver an integrated public transport system. There will still be a need for effective partnership working and influence over:

- **Bus and rapid transit services:** There has been success through partnerships through the West Midlands Bus Alliance, and an adopted Enhanced Bus Partnership between TfWM, operators and constituent authorities. A Full Franchising Assessment set out the failures of a deregulated WM bus market. Mayor and WMCA leaders, decided to proceed with franchising in May 2025. Under franchising, TfWM will set the fares, timetables and routes of bus services and award a series of contracts to private bus operators to run them.

- **Rail services in the West Midlands:** the procurement, specification and funding of train services is currently governed by DfT and delivered by private sector operators. The region, through the devolved functions of WMRE and its Collaboration Agreement with DfT, is able to influence the planning, specification and performance of local services and stations within the West Midlands rail contract. Government plans to reform the railway will see infrastructure and train operations, including DfT's specification role, all taken into a new public sector organisation called Great British Railways (GBR). The first phase of this in the region is a planned nationalisation of the WM rail contract in February 2026. WMRE, whose board membership also includes shire and unitary authorities, is seeking to consolidate and expand its Develop and deploy Mobility as a Service.

- The wider regional rail network through a partnership with the new GBR organisation. Rail plays a key role in the West Midlands transport network providing connectivity from across the region and beyond to and from the main strategic centres of Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton. It will therefore be critical to ensure that rail reform affords the West Midlands the appropriate powers to ensure rail can help to deliver the aims of WMLTP5 and the West Midlands Growth Plan.

- **West Midland Metro services**: Midlands Metro Limited, as wholly owned company of the WMCA, running services via a Public Services Contract. The WMCA has greater say on fares, services and its wider integration with other service modes.

There are many models for distributing the responsibilities of governing transport services, all with pros and cons. However, as we work to refine governance locally, we will aim to achieve the following common aims:

- Improving service quality and network performance, with the passenger/customer at the heart of the system.
- Encourage continued in investment in services, information and infrastructure by public authorities and the private sector.
- Enabling innovation to support improvement in services
- Achieving a balance between commercial outcomes vs public policy outcomes.
- Ensuring that expertise is deployed in the right places.
- Bring greater accountability to service development, performance and delivery.
- Providing stability and continuity in service through financial sustainability.

Policy:

WMCA and the Mayor will continue to work with Government and local partners to explore and pursue opportunities to reform the way that public transport services are governed, funded and delivered that would allow delivery of the outcomes set out in the WMLTP5 Core Strategy.

WMCA will continue to influence and co-develop the key additional legislative requirements and flexibilities that GBR will be given with respect to MSAs to ensure that their role in the governance, management, planning, and development of the rail network supports delivery of Local Transport Plan outcomes.


West Midlands Cycle Hire

Big Move 3: Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot

In this chapter we set what we believe is needed to support people to walk, wheel, cycle or scoot when and where they want, safely and conveniently. Everyone in the West Midlands should be enabled to safely access a range of local destinations on foot, in a wheelchair or on a bike or scooter; with the aim of at least half of all trips in our area to be made by active modes by 2030. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them in our Local Transport Plan.

Where we are now:

Many of our existing streets have been designed around motor vehicles; creating environments that are not welcoming for people to spend time in and do not support more sustainable travel modes. In many parts of the region, people do not feel safe walking, wheeling, cycling or scooting which acts as a barrier to being more active and travelling by these modes.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

People of all ages and from all walks of life can walk, wheel, cycle and scoot easily and safely around our neighbourhoods and local centres, as well as making some longer hops from one neighbourhood to another. As we step out of our homes onto our streets, we're greeted by a safe and welcoming environment. Our pavements are decluttered and well-maintained, our local streets are quiet and feel safe to cycle/scoot and as we head toward main roads, we find segregated lanes/paths for cycling and scooting and safe crossing points. And when we arrive at our high streets and local centres, we find that these are environments where the congested high streets have given way to walking and wheeling friendly environments. As a result, these places are more pleasant to spend time in and people are healthier and happier because they are more physically activity in their everyday lives.

Part 1: Strategic Context

Creating the right conditions to help people choose more active travel options is really important for achieving the WMLTP5 aims and objectives. Currently walking and cycling only accounts for just over 22% of all trips. Around 60% of all trips made in the region are less than 2 miles. At the same time it is over 65% of the WM population is overweight / obese with the levels getting higher amongst children.

As part of our vision for travel we need to see more short trips made by active travel modes to help us reach our target of 50% of all journeys made by sustainable modes by 2035. More active travel as part of our 45 minute region of connected communities will enable access to opportunity without car and promote active lifestyles, improving health outcomes - less pressure on public services in health, social care, housing, and welfare that pick up the cost of poverty and disadvantage—the cost of poor mental health alone is estimated at over £1.5 billion per year in the West Midlands economy.

There is significant scope for change but we need to continue to create the conditions that make walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting more obvious choices for many journeys or as part of journeys e.g. to and from a bus stop or a railway station. This will play a key part in delivering our overall target of 50% all trips by sustainable modes by 2035. Boosting walking and cycling will not be simply about investment in dedicated infrastructure but also about how we manage the transport system to make our streets quieter and safer and to improve public transport.

What do we mean by...

Walk and wheel

These are everyone's fundamental modes of travel; every journey at least starts and ends by walking or wheeling. In our vision, they underpin connected communities as these modes are essential for navigating all places such as residential estates, town centres, retail parks or villages, and for citizens to access local amenities and services.

Walking and wheeling includes pedestrians, but it also includes people who use mobility aids such as powered/unpowered wheelchairs.

The use of prams and trolleys by those travelling such as on public transport also needs to be considered as well as other mobility aids such as guide dogs, sticks and canes.

Cycle and scoot

These are light, low speed personal vehicle, powered or unpowered, shared or personal, for passengers and/or cargo, that help people access and transport what they need without needing a car and without being constrained by the timetables, fares/ticketing or routes. They can help people travel further and quicker, connecting them to a wider range of local services neighbourhoods and centres.

In addition to power assisted cycles, there is a role for motorcycles, scooter and mopeds as part of the wider choices available to people.

Cycling and scooting includes a range of pedal powered, electrically powered, and pedal assisted personal vehicles. It includes vehicles that can currently legally be used on public highways and cycleways, as well as new devices that Government is trialling and proposing to legislate for.

It includes familiar vehicles such as bicycles, ebikes and escooters, as well as novel designs. There are and can be a range of designs of these vehicles to meet different users' needs including adapted bikes and tricycles for disabled people and children, or designs that enable the carriage of goods.

Whilst a strict definition does not exist, these vehicles are low speed (comparable to a pedal bicycle) and light (many times lighter than a car).

What about powered mobility aids?

Mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs are already legislated for and can be used by eligible users. However, some of these devices span our concepts of walking and wheeling, cycling and scooting. Some mobility scooters in particular being permitted for use in environments for walking and wheeling (at lower speeds), and main carriageways (at higher speeds) but not cycleways and paths.

Promoting an inclusive agenda for walking and wheeling, and cycling and scooting is a critical part of our WMLTP5 and we want to ensure that opportunities are maximised to enhance and protect mobility and accessibility for disabled citizens.

Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Improve Accessibility	We need a fit for purpose network of routes for walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting that connect people with their neighbourhoods and the region beyond. Every journey starts with walking or wheeling. It's not only critical for accessing connected communities, linking people to their local amenities and neighbours; it's also a key part of every journey. Our envisaged walk and wheel networks will support a huge shift in how accessible our region is. But our every-day lives regularly take us beyond our connected communities. This is where cycling and scooting can help. It doesn't just help us travel around our local neighbourhoods more quickly, it can help us travel from one neighbourhood to the next and into nearby centres. Cargo bikes can also help people to forgo the car for journeys which involve transporting children or heavier loads. Because cycling and scooting is so good at permeating the streets of our urban environment it will help to match the go anywhere, anytime features of car travel, helping us to access more.
Reduce Traffic	In this Big Move we put forward a comprehensive set of policies and strategies which will provide the networks, safe environments and access to the vehicles to support people to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot for their everyday journeys. If we are successful with this then one of the benefits could be to reduce traffic on our roads; which, will in helps contribute to a virtuous circle needed to deliver Inclusive Growth across our region. Policies that help us reduce traffic will also support this Big Move as quieter streets give us greater confidence to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot.
Electrify Transport	New mobility solutions, such as electric scooters, bikes and cargo-bikes have a huge role to play to offer far more choice to people for real alternatives to driving. Electric bikes and scooters increase both the range people are willing to ride, but importantly also the effort required. You do not need to be a super-fit cyclist to get about on an electric bike or scooter. They have the opportunity to liberate far more people to be fit and healthy and to leave cars at home. This Big Move will support the transition to these new ways of travelling by providing the kinds of streets and roads needed to enable people to use them safely, and access to the vehicles themselves to give people greater choice.

Key Issues

Through our evidence base and focused consultation with communities and businesses we have built up a keen understanding of the issues facing people when deciding whether to choose a walk/wheel, cycle/scoot mode for any individual journey.

Key issues facing transport users:

- Road safety - concerns over the risks of being injured in a collision is a key deterrent.
- Physical condition and impairments - in addition to the barriers that people with health conditions and other impairments can face, physical inactivity and poor fitness across the general populace is also a barrier to travelling more by active modes
- Personal & community safety - people feel vulnerable to anti-social and crime in many urban places and this discourages travel
- A lack of direct and convenient routes and facilities - over time the way we have laid out streets has made it more difficult to access what we need by walking and wheeling, and there is a lack of safe routes for cycling and scooting
- Limited legal options - despite much innovation in powered cycles and scooters, legal barriers remain preventing these vehicles better supporting mobility and accessibility for more people
- Access to cycles and scooters - not everyone has the personal skills or equipment (including vehicles) needed to cycle and scoot

Key issues facing WMCA and partners:

- Scale of improvement required - the barriers to walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting are deep and they are spread across the region. Addressing these barriers would require substantial scale of intervention to reach the many streets across the West Midlands.
- Constrained space - spaces in urban areas can be constrained meaning that trade-offs often have to be made between how different road users are accommodated.
- Opportunities and threats of powered cycle and scoot modes - whilst powered cycle and scoot modes represent substantial opportunities for improving access to opportunity, they also present threats including road safety and nuisance. A careful balance is needed to maximising the opportunities and minimising the threats.

Part 2: Policies

Ambition and approach

In the third Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, the government wants walking, wheeling and cycling to be a safe, easy and accessible option for everyone by 2035 - allowing people to embed the economic, health and environmental benefits of active travel into their daily life if they choose. This aligns with WMLTP5s wider target for increasing the share of trips made by sustainable modes to 50% by 2035. In addition, Government's Future of Urban Mobility Strategy outlines that it is essential that people have the chance to make the most of the opportunities from powered cycle and scoot, in a way that is safe for both the users of these new vehicles and road users more generally. The Government is saying that walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting should be the "natural first choice for many journeys". These modes of travel will play a critical role in delivering our vision for travel and in particular meeting our target to have 50% of all trips in the region undertaken by sustainable modes.

Our policies and principles are focused across the following themes:

- Strong collaborative **leadership** to ensure we are meeting the region's needs for walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting
- A **network** comprised of routes that enable convenient, attractive, safe and direct travel by these modes across the West Midlands
- Convenient, safe and secure **ancillary facilities** to help people with their cycles and scooters and powered two-wheel vehicles
- Improving access to **cycle and scoot** vehicles
- **Integrating** walk, wheel, cycle and scoot with ride modes
- **Education, promotion and awareness raising** so all road users understand how to make the most of walk, wheel, cycle and scoot options and how to keep each other safe.

Leadership

As noted in the Behaviour Change Big Move, it is not just what we do, it is how we do it that will help us best achieve our goals. Local elected leaders, local authorities and organisations need to champion walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting in the region to achieve WMLTP5 objectives and deliver WMCA's aims. This will be done through harnessing:

- **Financial capital -** boosting levels of investment behaviour change including into infrastructure & activation
- **Political capital -** building local and political support for changes to the transport network, based in Active Travel England principles and objectives
- **Human capital -** fostering greater resources and expertise for design and delivery of active modes

The WM aims to be a **Centre of Excellence for Active Travel** in order to develop training with our partners for:

- WMCA staff to promote cycling internally and externally
- Staff to better understand best practice and LTN 1/20 design guidance
- Local elected officials to champion cycling in their constituencies
- Test and learn approaches to deliver change
- Embedding a community of learning and practice network which informs practice and policy
- Advocating for walking and cycling in all WMCA policies

Policy:

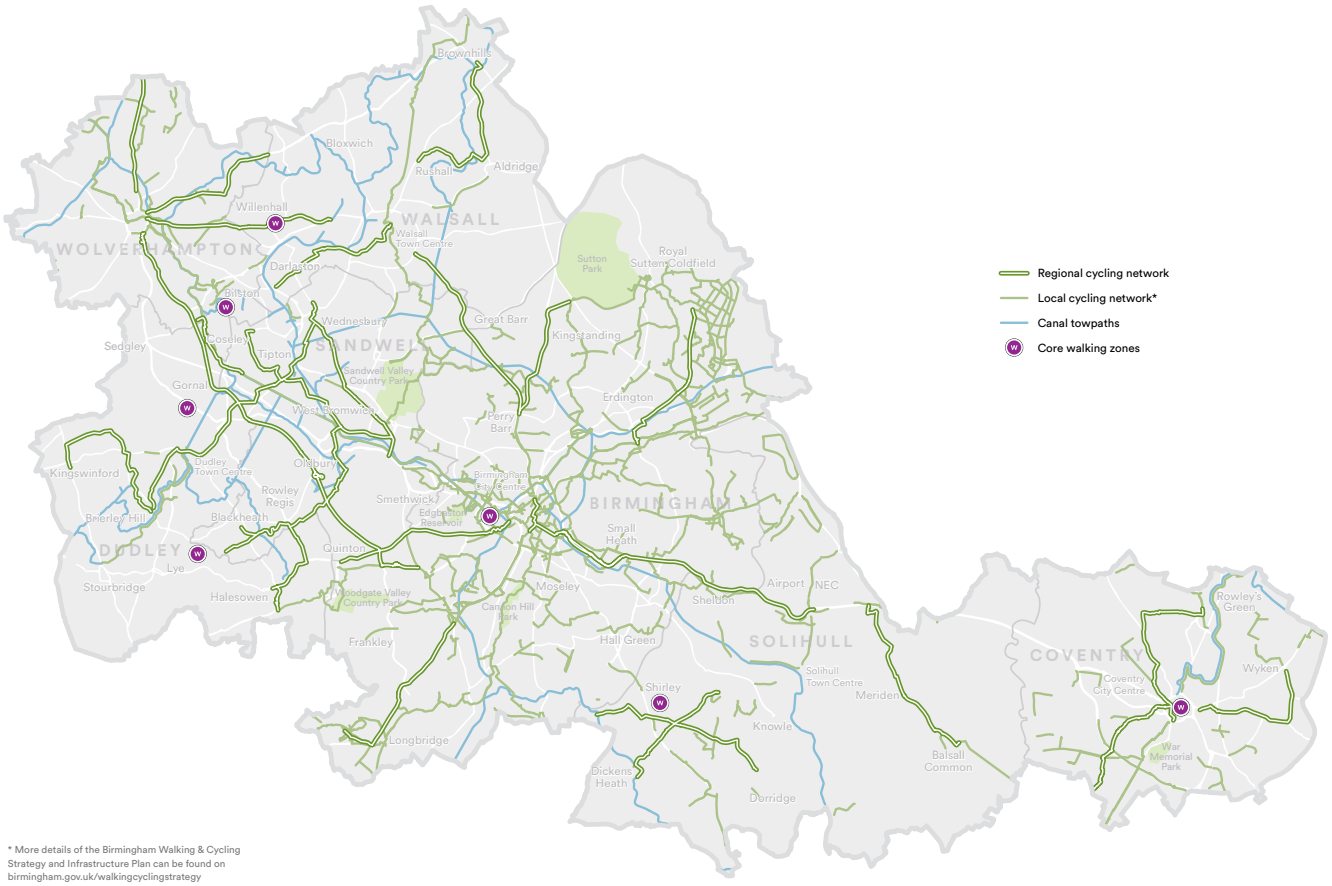
WMCA commits to:

- Increase the proportion of total transport investment that is spent on active travel provision and leverage developer and other third-party funding wherever possible.
- Increase resourcing and expertise in local government to develop and deliver active travel schemes, including the development of a Centre of Excellence for Active Travel and infrastructure design.
- Ensure that active travel policies and interventions are integrated into all relevant strategic plans in the West Midlands.
- Strengthen the importance of economic, social, environmental and health benefits in active travel business cases and appraisal.
- Work with community groups and active travel advocacy groups to foster grassroots support for active travel investment and uptake.
- Work with other transport sector partners such as Active Travel England to improve design of plans and proposals

Network

We need a fit-for-purpose network comprised of routes that enable inclusive, convenient, attractive, safe and direct travel by walk, wheel, cycle and scoot across the West Midlands. Our current network is show below:

West Midlands Strategic Cycle & Walk Network



* More details of the Birmingham Walking & Cycling Strategy and Infrastructure Plan can be found on birmingham.gov.uk/walkingcyclingstrategy

Government has set out guidance on how networks should be developed, this includes guidance for producing Local Cycling, Walking and Improvement Plans (LCWIPs which helps authorities to plan and prioritise network improvements) and LTN 1/20 design guidance (which helps authorities design high quality infrastructure). Active Travel England will promote and uphold Government standards and guidance.

The West Midlands Combined Authority published the last version of the LCWIP for regional routes in 2021 (currently being updated), and all our local authorities have also published LCWIPs for local networks. We also maintain West Midlands design guidance for active travel.

However, the level of behaviour change required to support the aims of our WMLTP5, and the Government's own commitments to increase active travel and enable powered cycle and scoot modes all suggest that we will need to plan infrastructure for higher levels of demand than our previous assumptions and we will need to account for new vehicle designs. This has implications for the overall level of investment required, route selection and infrastructure design. Planning of the network should take into consideration issues such as:

- **Road space reallocation -** Transport infrastructure currently prioritises space for motorised vehicles, but there is an opportunity to encourage uptake walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting by reallocating road space for these users.
- **Scale of improvement required -** There is much work to be done on the current infrastructure to remove barriers to walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting, as well as a significant amount of new infrastructure that's needed for increased accessibility.
- **Citizen consultation and activation -** Involving people in the development of the network will help better account for their travel needs and perceptions. "Activation measures" such as cycle training can be implemented alongside network development to further encourage use of improved routes.
- **Inclusive and future-proof design -** Demands on the network may change in the future as the number of users and vehicles/mobility aids change.

Residents are split fairly evenly between those who feel completely safe on their local streets, and those who have some anxieties (especially after dark).

Having more well-lit streets, a stronger police presence and surveillance such as speed cameras and CCTV would help alleviate these anxieties. WMCA and local authorities will work together to maintain, a regional LCWIP focussed on longer distance connectivity on corridors between key centres and across the region, and local LCWIPs, focussed on infrastructure connecting local communities with their neighbourhoods including key amenities and public transport links.We will apply the following principles when developing our networks to support people to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot:

- We will apply a decide and provide approach to develop, design and deliver infrastructure to accommodate our aspirations for more walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting.
- New active travel infrastructure designs will be designed to align LTN 1/20 principles (focus on designing coherent, direct, safe, comfortable and attractive routes).
- Inclusive design and accessibility should be embedded in the design of our network, ensuring that it caters for the diverse needs of users (and their vehicles/aids)
- Local regulation and enforcement should complement excellent infrastructure design.
- Ensure that all new active travel infrastructure is kept clean, well-maintained and free from obstruction (including parked vehicles, street furniture and signage)
- As part of our behaviour change approach, we will work with communities to co-design how we can "activate" planned provision.

We will work with Government to understand the impact of policy on required and expected demands by walk, wheel, cycle and scoot modes, and to review and refine design guidance and network plans accordingly.

Our programmes to develop network infrastructure will be comprised of a number of key elements:

- **Segregated routes**, where we deliver physical separation of transport users through dedicated cycle lanes, as well as through contraflow lanes.
- **Low traffic streets**, where we regulate traffic to reduce the risk to vulnerable road users particularly where there is a lack of physical separation;
- **Pedestrian zones**, particularly in busy local, town and city centres where high volumes of pedestrians are circulating;
- **Connecting to Public Transport** interchanges, improving access to the public transport network;
- **Green and blue routes**, which run through green spaces such as parks and woodlands, or follow waterways like rivers and canals, support a range of walking and cycling trips. These routes could play a greater role in everyday travel if challenges around security and natural surveillance are addressed; and
- **Tactical improvement of crossing points**, such as dropped kerbs, pedestrian safety features and crossing infrastructure.

As well as delivering new infrastructure, existing infrastructure will need to be updated to meet evolving needs.

WMCA and local authorities will work with developers to ensure all new developments make excellent provision for walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting (including cycle storage and other ancillary facilities) and that walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting routes into and through developments are fully integrated into the wider network.

We will ensure that large corridor schemes deliver measures that improve infrastructure for walking, wheeling, cycling and scooting along the corridor as a priority and where this is not possible, that equivalent alternate provision is provided along an adjacent parallel corridor with links to the main desire line to destinations is maintained.

Ancillary cycling and scooting facilities

A further fundamental requirement is to provide facilities around the network which support all forms of active transport to be considered safe, secure and convenient. This includes aspects such as secure places to store cycles and scooters, showers/changing facilities, lockers, charging for powered cycles and scooters, and cycle/scooter maintenance facilities etc.

Features of facilities

Cycle and scoot storage and servicing facilities should be:

- set in a suitable location for access (destination and potentially origin locations and close to cycling infrastructure),
- weather-proof,
- well-lit, safe, and secure
- able to meet current and projected demand
- Inclusive for a variety of users and a variety of vehicle types

Policy:

WMCA will work with local authorities to explore where housing could be supported by public residential cycle/scooter storage and where planning policies may better support the construction of private cycle/scooter storage in front of properties.

WMCA will work with local authorities to develop local plans for providing ancillary cycling and scooting facilities (including vehicle storage, lockers, charging and maintenance) for personal cycles and scooters. These will focus on safe, secure and convenient provision in key destinations including:

- City, town, district, local centres
- Business and retail parks
- Key public services
- Transport interchanges
- Residential areas with inadequate private storage options

Plans for delivering public ancillary infrastructure will be integrated as appropriate into wider proposals for mobility hubs. Delivery of proposals will be supported by local funds for transport, working with developers, and encouraging local businesses and services providers to improve their facilities and to make them available where appropriate to the public. Appropriate infrastructure for motorcycles, mopeds and other powered cycles should also be considered where appropriate.

Access to cycles/scooters

The following barriers can limit some people's ability to access a vehicle, even if they were keen to use one:

- Affordability of buying a personal cycle/scooter.
- Being somewhere far from home, where it is not possible to transport a cycle/scooter.
- The regulatory environment does not permit the use of a vehicle that would best meet someone's needs.

There are times when the public might not have access to a cycle/scooter of their own and we can support them. Financial assistance can help with the first two issues, but the last issue can only be resolved with significant legislative reform by Government, followed by local regulation within that.

Bikes and e-scooters should be financially accessible to all potential users. Often the cost of owning, refuelling and storing a vehicle can become barriers to mobility. Cycle Hire and Escooter hire can address the barrier of ownership for people to take up cycling and scooting.

Mobility credit schemes allow people to trade in their personal cars for credits towards alternative travel options.

Provision could be supported through grant funded schemes such as 'Big Birmingham Bikes' or, for example, through partnerships with public health to provide funding to support communities to be more active and healthy.

It is also important to enable unplanned, spontaneous or infrequent use of these modes to give people flexible and dynamic options for travel. The region is developing various shared mobility schemes including cycle hire and e-scooters to enable this.

Policies

WMCA and its partners will develop schemes to give people better access to a range of bikes, e-bikes and e-cargo bikes, particularly targeting those who can't afford to purchase their own vehicles. Measures will include grant schemes, mobility credits and public hire schemes.

Powered two wheelers

Powered cycling and scooting encompasses a wide variety of small, lightweight vehicles operating at low speeds (comparable to a pedal cycle). It also includes vehicles which are able to operate at higher speeds including motorcycles and mopeds and some powered cycles. Under current legislation, an Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle (EAPC) can meet the definition of either a motor vehicle or a cycle.

Types of powered mobility vehicles

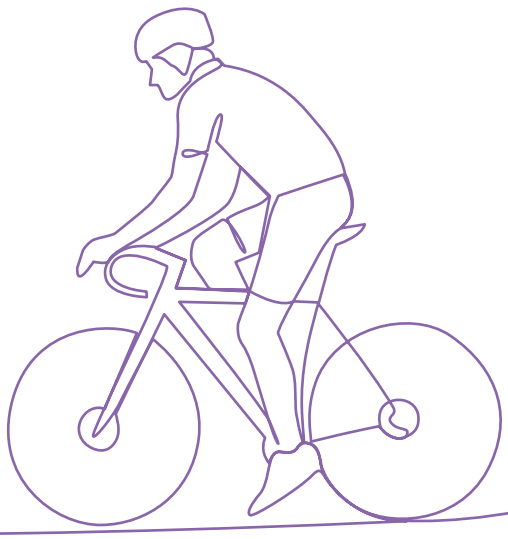
Bicycle | Standing scooter | Seated scooter | Self-balancing board | Non-self balancing board | Skates | One wheel

Cycle

To meet the definition of a cycle, the vehicle must be:

- fitted with pedals capable of propelling it.
- unable to reach a power over 250 watts.
- limited to an electrically assisted speed of 15.5mph.
- limited to the motor propelling only while it is being pedalled.

If these specifications are met, there is no need or insurance or to pay vehicle excise duty, they are treated like a traditional pedal cycle.



Motor Vehicles

Some electric motorbikes are classified as motor vehicles if they do not meet the classification of a cycle. In practice, this either means they must meet the criteria that a motorbike or moped would need to meet (and therefore need to be registered and taxed, with need for a licence and a helmet), or the vehicle is not permitted. There are some exceptions for vehicles sold before 2016, due to the change in EU legislation.

In the UK, electric scooters, and many other new forms of micromobility can be owned privately but are only allowed to be used on private land. Electric powered pedal cycles above a certain power also require licensing and insurance to be used on UK roads.

DfT introduced legislation in July 2020 to enable rental e-scooter trials to take place on public roads and cycle lanes across the UK. Birmingham's e-scooter trial was launched in September 2020.

E-scooters and other powered cycle and scoot modes have the opportunity to provide:

- Affordable personal transport
- Low emission vehicle types
- Fewer car journeys
- Last mile connections with public transport

As shown through the e-scooter trial, there is a real appetite for powered cycling and scooting. There is potential for expansion of public hire schemes and greater enabling of private ownership. To achieve this will require by changes in national regulation. This will allow for private powered cycles and scooters to be used on roads, pavements, parks, within town centres or canal towpaths. There are many valid concerns about road safety, nuisance and obstruction caused by powered cycle and scoot devices and motorcycles. These threats will need to be managed carefully to make the most of the opportunities presented.

Policy:

We are committed to working with the Government to permit safe use of powered cycle and scoot vehicles and motorcycles in our area. Our position on a number of key issues includes:

- We support the enablement of private vehicles as well as those accessed through public hire schemes.
- We support regulation that aims to enable a range of designs to be developed catering for a range of users, particularly considering designs that:
  - Help those with reduced mobility and/or impairments
  - Support the carriage of children and cargo (personal and commercial),
  - Are more suitable and comfortable for longer distance travel
  - Are more suitable for shorter distance travel and compact carriage on public transport
- Deliver greater stability, comfort and safety than e-scooters
- Regulation of vehicles must ensure user and non-user safety through manufacturing standards including but not limited to speed, power, weight, and steering.
- Regulations must create a simple and clear environment where it is easily and intuitively understood where and how vehicles can be used.

Regulation should aim to make safe compliant behaviour the default option rather than a choice, limiting the need for enforcement.

Education, promotion and awareness raising

Concerns over safety are a major barrier to active travel uptake. By creating training for all road users, they should have better skills to keep each other safe. We will support training for:

- cyclists and e-scooter users to ride safer
- motorcyclists
- drivers (including bus and freight drivers) to make it safer for cyclists on roads
- safe speeds on roads to reduce KSIs
- internal local authority staff on active travel and how to promote it
- blue light partners to develop road safety training

Community outreach also plays an important role in engaging with groups that may face barriers to active travel. Local people must be considered early in the process to ensure schemes are supported locally in the long term and so that residents are aware of the facilities available to them. Businesses are also important to engage with, to expand facilities at sites of employment. We will conduct research so that we can understand the best methods of promotion in the region.

Spotlight on current initiatives

The following West Midlands programmes are funded through the Capability and Ambition Fund and Cycling for Everyone 23-24 to improve cycling, walking and scooting awareness:

- Active Travel Partnerships - Cycling UK, British Cycling, Living Streets
- Cycle Security Measures/ Dr Bikes
- Adult Cycle Training
- Child Cycle Training
- Cycle Maintenance Training
- Social Prescribing
- Go Cycle and Scoot offer
- Community Grants
- Community Street Audits
- Active Travel Marketing, Communications and Engagement

Future community engagement and education schemes may rely on the Capability and Ambition Fund or other available grant funding. Additional programmes linked to the Regional Road Safety Strategy also seek to Enhance the accredited training for those using motorcycles.

Policy:

WMCA will work with local and national partners and major employers to develop coherent and well-resourced education, awareness raising and promotional activities that support more people to walk, wheel, cycle and scoot safely for everyday journeys. This needs to support existing as well as new users and consider all road users, including freight operators and motorists.

Integration with public transport

Active travel can form part of a wider journey such as when people access public transport using these modes to get to bus/tram/train stops and stations. Improving conditions for all forms of active travel described in this Big Move is important to encourage greater use of the extensive public transport network in the region. Further helping people to connect right across the West Midlands.

At Public Transport Stops, Stations and Interchanges

Docking stations and storage for shared and private cycles and scooters should be within proximity of other transport hubs. Co-locating these amenities with public transport stations/stops makes it easier to use bikes or scooters for first/last mile travel.

On Public Transport

Public transport vehicles can at times better accommodate bikes and scooters on them. WMCA will work collaboratively with transport providers to develop policies for allowing bikes and e-scooters on board. Work may also need to be done to provide facilities within public transport carriages to accommodate powered cycles and scooters.

Policy:

WMCA will work closely with local authorities and transport operators to better integrate walk, wheel, cycle and scoot, and public transport provision through improved active travel links to public transport stops and interchanges including park & ride sites; storage/docking facilities at public transport interchanges; and clearer policies on vehicle carriage on public transport services.


WARWICK
PASSAGE
23

Big Move 4: Safe, efficient and reliable network

In this Chapter we set out clearly the importance and role that a safe, efficient and reliable network needs to play if we are to achieve our vision for transport. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them in our Local Transport Plan.

Where we are now:

Our road networks are congested and we have challenges with keeping them well maintained. We have with high levels of air pollution. Journeys by car, bus and goods vehicle are often unpredictable and unreliable, and walking, wheeling and cycling feel unsafe due to heavy and fast-moving traffic. Managing and maintaining the network to ensure it adapts to climate change and changing travel habits is an ongoing challenge.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

Through better use of technology, partnership working and reallocation of space, our road network is reliable, safe and efficient for all users. It is well maintained and more resilient to extreme weather events, and road deaths are a thing of the past. We make better use of our existing infrastructure by giving more space to modes which move people and goods most efficiently rather than trying to accommodate more cars, vans and lorries. The road network supports our region's businesses to grow and thrive but balances this with creating safe and comfortable spaces on streets where people live or spend time.

Part 1: Strategic Context

The Core Strategy sets out the need to develop the West Midlands highway network in a way that supports active travel, public transport and ultimately delivering behaviour change. A key issue is that highways have been under invested in for a long period of time and now we conservatively need a significant amount of annual funding we currently get to ensure our highways and assets are in a good condition. This is without responding to the impact of climate change and adapting to future proof the network. Many of the biggest challenges will be on the Key Road Network (KRN) and we will work with our local authorities to create a framework to help us make the right decisions on its development and management and to monitor its performance and contribution towards the WMLTP5's objectives.

The purpose of this Big Move is to set out the West Midland's approach to making our streets easier for everyone to get around and support behaviour change by putting people first as we shape and manage our transport network.

How we manage the network is to:

- improve freight reliability and logistics efficiency, supporting growth clusters and supply chains.
- Improve safety for vulnerable users and supports equitable access to transport.
- enhances infrastructure resilience and supports climate adaptation and place-making.

It sets out how the West Midlands will plan, manage and maintain the transport network to support the vision for travel and identifies the key issues and challenges which need to be understood and addressed in a way that work for the different places and people of the region.

Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Reduce Traffic	We need to think differently about our roads, they are part of a holistic transport system to move people and goods, not just to move cars, vans and lorries. We can make roads more efficient and still reduce traffic. At the same time this can help create better places. The use of space on our roads will be one of, if not the most influential way in which we can achieve our overall aims for the Core Strategy. It is a scarce resource and one which we will need to manage appropriately. Sometimes we may need to reduce the amount of space available for traffic, in order to give that space to active and public transport, which will in-turn discourage some car use.
Improve Accessibility	Once again we need to think about accessibility differently. Previously we have been guilty of thinking in simple terms about how far a car, van or lorry can travel within a certain length of time. The further they could go was a measure of success.. To think differently we need to consider that success could mean that journeys are made within a more predictable journey time, as opposed to simply faster, and that the journey has been safe and contributed less to air pollution. Reliable and safe journeys can still help create an economically successful region. We need to be targeted as to what's the right approach for different parts of our network.
Electrify Transport	As with all our Big Moves we need to support the transition to all types of zero emission vehicles. Recharging and refuelling needs can largely be grouped into three: at home/business, en-route and at destination. The en-route elements is particularly important for how we plan our road networks. By working with the private sector we can help deliver a network of recharging and refuelling opportunities which meet all three of these needs, which over time will create more and more confidence for residents and businesses to make the switch.

Key Issues

Key issues facing people and businesses

- Poor reliability affects peoples travel choices - Unreliable journeys and especially by public transport are a key concern and research by TfWM suggests that people's perception of the reliability of public transport is getting worse. Delayed or unreliable journey times impact the freight and logistics sector by adding unplanned time and mileage onto journeys. This increases costs for the operator and impacts such as noise and emissions.
- Safety and the perception of safety - Research suggests that there is significant dissatisfaction with safety for pedestrians and cyclists and dissatisfaction with the quality of infrastructure for walking, cycling, wheeling and scooting. Challenges also exist around how people view their personal safety and security whilst travelling.
- Traffic impacts on the quality of our places and the environment - Streets in the past have not always been designed with people in mind, but high volumes of motorised vehicles. This combined with poor driver behaviour has made many areas less attractive and subject to a range of problems including road safety, air pollution and noise. Post pandemic there has been an increase in the amount of time that people are spending in their local areas and high streets, and increasingly are recognising the value of having safe places to walk and cycle and to spend time in, however, without the right policies in the place this progress could be lost.
- Traffic impacts on people - We need to address the problems of poor air quality, major roads disconnecting communities, parents worried about how to keep their children safe and active, and increased isolation for older people, those with mobility impairments and people without access to a car.
- A lack of quality, consistent and reliable information to help inform choices - Journey planning tools should provide people and business with consistent and straightforward information through a range of channels - including physical (signs, posters) and online (internet, apps). Poor and fragmented information is a barrier to helping people making informed choices.

Key issues facing WMCA and partners

- Fragmented powers and responsibilities for the management of the network - The roles and responsibilities for managing the transport system, infrastructure and services sits across a range of organisations and actors. This can present challenges for how well co-ordinated plans are to develop, manage and operate it. This has implications for the user experience and the ability to deliver WMLTP5 outcomes.
- Making the best use of existing infrastructure and assets - Decisions around how to manage the network will include making choices about the space we give to different modes and on the wider complimentary policy measures needed to support these decisions. In some cases these decisions will need cross boundary, possibly regional agreement to ensure a coherent approach and make it simple for people and businesses using the network.
- Understanding and communicating change to the transport network - Data is important to develop better strategy and to help with engagement to help people understand the issues and changes being made to the transport network, particularly where there is disruption. It will be important to demonstrate that we are delivering real benefits by making these changes. This includes thinking about the way our streetscapes and built environments are designed and how it can affect accessibility, safe and comfortable people feel when travelling.
- Funding - Funding for improvements to the network comes from a range of sources and this creates challenges around developing a coherent strategy. The allocation of multi-year settlements through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements (CRSTS) and now Transport in City Region (TCR) as part of the Integrated Settlement is welcome progress to help us create a safe, efficient and accessible network. It will allow us to better deliver improvements to our roads which follow the best possible evidence in terms of reducing danger, encouraging modal shift and enhancing the vitality of our neighbourhoods. There are still other funding streams which can be used for improvements to the network, which are often modally focused. Additionally, the increasing costs of construction, operation and maintenance of the network will mean that an even sharper focus will be required on how best we use existing assets.

Part 2: Policies

Ambition and approach

For us to achieve the aims of the WMLTP5, the West Midlands needs a more integrated and accessible transport network which is safe, efficient and reliable and delivers journeys for everyone works for everyone. Our roads and streets are critical to making it much easier to get around - 97% of all trips take place on the region's highway network. Traffic and especially car use has now returned to pre-pandemic levels.

The WM growth plan sets out significant housing and employment growth in the region but without the right mix of transport measures this will likely lead to even higher levels of traffic. To help us accommodate growth sustainably this we will need to manage the transport network differently.

We will need to be smarter and use the infrastructure we have more efficiently to help reduce the impact of transport on people and place and make sure that the network is resilient to the shocks and challenges it might face.

The West Midlands sits at the heart of the national transport network and the responsibility for planning, managing and maintaining our transport network falls to a range of organisations.

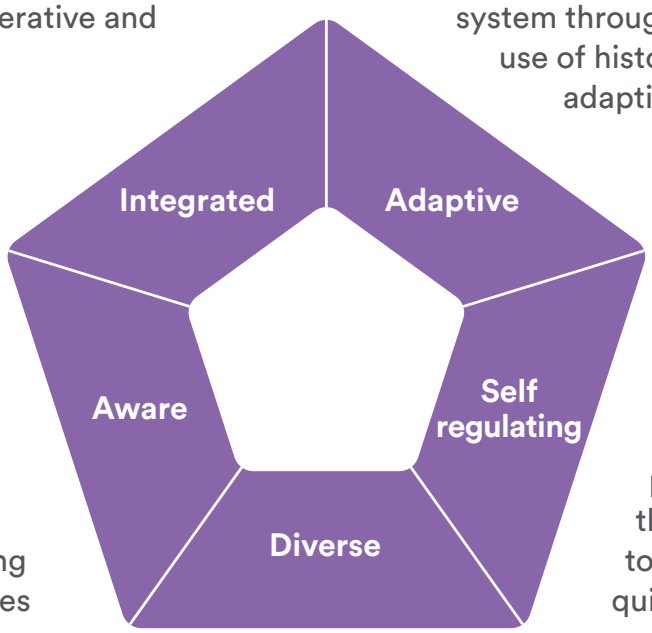
This can make it more complex to achieve consistent approaches and applications of policy to effectively deliver change and efficiently manage and maintain it. However, the WM has developed strong partnerships and the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre (RTCC) has shown how the region can deliver a collaborative approach ensuring better outcomes for residents and businesses.

The different organisations who have responsibilities for operating and maintaining the overall road network (across LAs, WMCA and National Highways) all have a role in helping to deliver our vision. There are a range of legislation and duties which inform decisions on how the highway network is managed. For the Key Route Network (KRN) and other local authority roads, key powers and duties are set out in the Traffic Management Act 2004. This legislation places a duty on highways authorities to reduce and manage congestion and to collaborate effectively with other traffic authorities to achieve this. Local authorities are also responsible for ensuring a co-ordinated approach to maintaining public safety through approval of all works on the public highway.

Principles for a Safe, Efficient and Reliable Network

We will combine an evidence base of data and operational process to help us recognise the importance of joint ownership and be cooperative and transparent.

We will assess the strengths, weaknesses and areas of vulnerability across our transport system through monitoring and the use of historic data, continuously adapting our approach.



We will learn more about our communities and how we can support them and apply this awareness when advising and encouraging changes to behaviour.

We will plan response to periods of disruption with out partners that enable the transport network to return to normal as quickly as possible.

We will use multiple sources of transport information and utilise a diversity of ideas and capabilities across our organisation to determine solutions.

Policy:

Our key objectives for ensuring a Safe, Efficient and Reliable Transport network are to:

- Encourage travel behaviour change and the use of more sustainable modes of transport.
- Promote safety for those using the network by improving behaviours and reducing collisions through how the network is planned, built and operated and through training and awareness of users.
- Create a more reliable network and support social and economic activity by connecting people to opportunities (employment, health, leisure and education) and businesses to customers embedding TfWM's customer experience principles.
- Reduce transport's impacts on places and the environment particularly in terms of air quality, noise pollution and carbon emissions.
- Ensure highway structures and road surfaces are designed and maintained with in-built resilience to cope with climate change and extreme weather events.

Delivering travel on a safe, efficient and reliable network

Thinking differently about our streets

Planning and developing the network there is a need to balance the needs of all network users, whilst promoting and prioritising walking, wheeling, cycling, scooting and public transport at every opportunity.

At the heart of this WMLTP5 is the principle of 'decide and provide'; where we decide on the outcomes we want to achieve and provide the transport system to achieve it. If we decide that the way to achieve our LTP outcomes is by shifting travel behaviours away from cars to more sustainable modes then we will need to manage vehicle use in the region and consider the role of our highways in relation to movement and place. It is also important to ensure that the space in our cities is distributed equitably, remembering that we have a large proportion of residents without access to a car.

Key to our approach is to reimagine our highway network to help us create the conditions that make non-car modes the first choice, especially for the 60% of trips in the region that are less than 5 miles long. There is a finite amount of road space and, in certain streets, some of that space will need to be taken away from cars to provide for walking, cycling and buses.

We don't need to make every journey faster but we do need to make sure road users know they will arrive safely and on time. Reliability is cited by residents and businesses as more important than out and out speed and in turn supports them use other modes (private to public or sustainable transport). It can also help with road safety as it can help improve driver behaviour as they are not frustrated by unpredictable delays.

Using our existing infrastructure more efficiently will also be important as we will not be able to provide the additional capacity to meet demand. The reallocation of road space will be key to helping us deliver behaviour change that helps us fundamentally change the way that people and goods move around the region.

We are clear that to meet the objectives of this WMLTP5 we will need to use our existing infrastructure more efficiently, rather than building more road capacity as a default. Evidence shows time and time again that road schemes built to improve general traffic movements will generate new demand and quickly reach capacity again. This is known as induced demand. With the impacts of climate change the cost of maintaining our infrastructure and assets will increase and we will need to consider carefully the benefits of new / enhanced infrastructure against the benefits of making best of use of what we already have.

The Key Route Network (KRN)

The KRN is only 8% of all roads in the region, but it carries over 50% of all trips every day. This means that many of the biggest challenges will be on the KRN and there is a need to use this highway space in a way that both helps us to shift to sustainable modes and support efficient movement of people and goods.

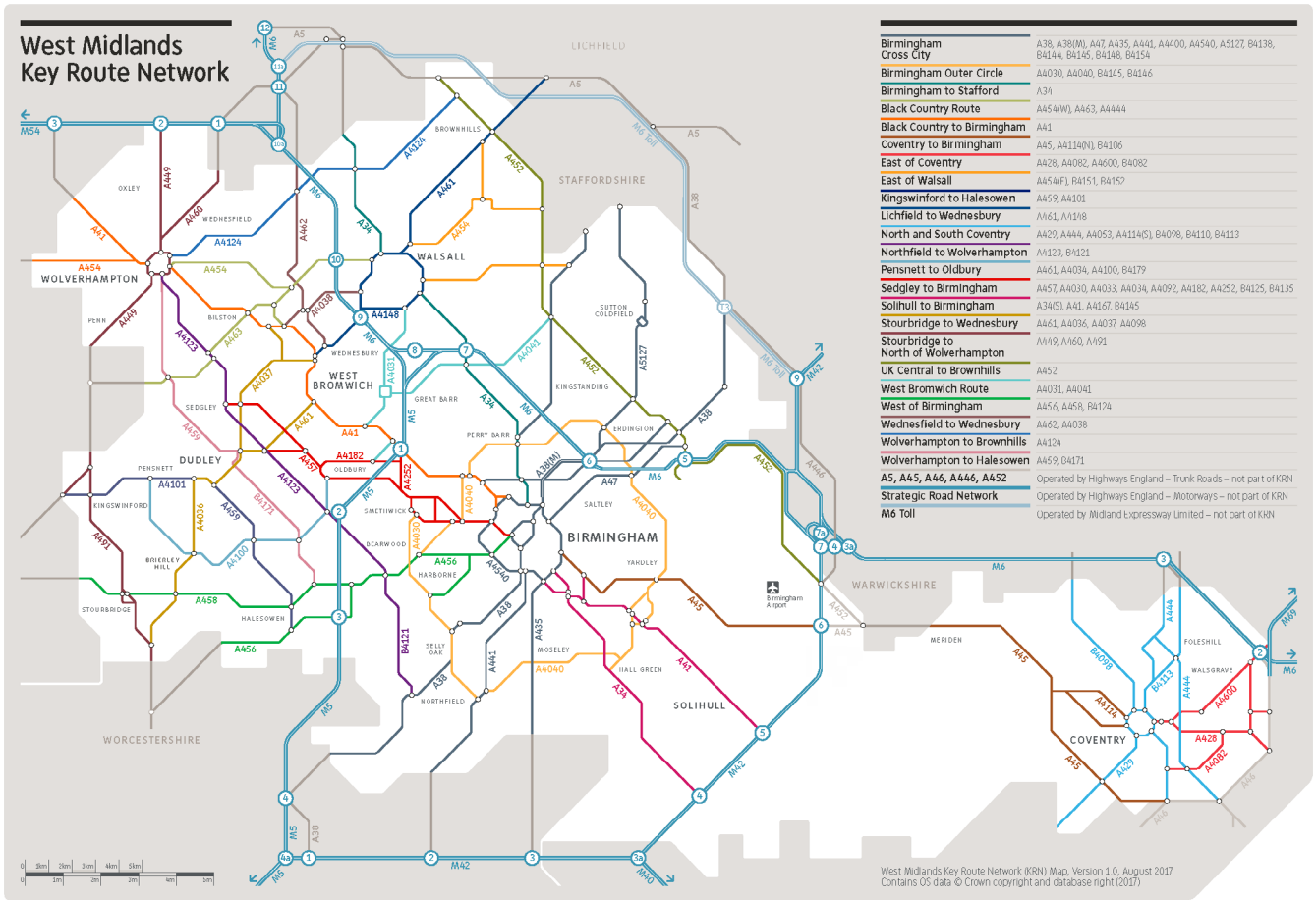
The region's 7 local authorities are responsible for the roads in their areas, which can create a disjointed customer experience. WMCA provides strategic overview for coordinating and managing the Key Route Network roads across local authority boundaries to assist with providing seamless movement around the region. We also maintain close working relationships with non-constituent authorities, who in some cases manage sections of the KRN that falls outside of the WMCA area.

In January 2016, the extent of the KRN was agreed by local highway authorities and WMCA, focussing on the largest volume traffic movements and important connections to the national Strategic Road Network (which are the roads owned and operated by National Highway). The KRN has subsequently been adopted in legislation as part of the creation of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). This legislation affords specific concurrent powers relating to road safety and air quality across the combined authority region and on the KRN only concurrent powers relating to permit scheme and bus lane contraventions.

In 2023/2024 the KRN was reviewed in line with the growing focus on active travel and public transport to reflect a network that supports "Journeys for Everyone" and contributes to the WMCA's ongoing commitment for a better connected, more prosperous, fairer, greener and healthier region.

The attributes of the revised KRN and the roads that form it focuses on journeys and have been refined to include:

- Accessibility for locations of large trip generation (including night-time economy).
- Accessibility for regional centres and services to support the 45 minute region
- Accessibility to the Strategic Road Network (SRN) which is essential for inter-regional movement and freight
- Key bus routes with multiple services and/or high frequency services.
- Provision of resilience with other routes to ensure the network can cope with and recover from shocks.
- As we have shifted our thinking from trips to journeys, the mix of traffic (including active travel) is important as we aspire to provide a reliable network that works for everyone.



Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will take a collaborative approach to managing the West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN) of roads, working closely with neighbouring authorities and National Highways and other partners to plan, manage, review and maintain the network in alignment with WMLTP5 objectives and guided by the following principles:

- **Customer-Centric Network Management**
  WMCA and local authorities will adopt a holistic, proactive customer-focused approach to ensure the KRN delivers safe, reliable, and seamless journeys.

- **Multi-Modal and Place-Based Planning**
  The KRN will be planned and maintained to support resilient, multi-modal travel and place-based outcomes. Modal priorities will be aligned with route functions to promote sustainable transport and inclusive growth.

- **Sustainable Asset Management**
  All maintenance and investment decisions will consider full asset lifecycles, prioritising long-term value, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience. This includes low-carbon materials, biodiversity protection, and climate risk adaptation.

- **Consistent Standards Across the Region**
  A common standard for maintenance and management will be adopted to ensure a consistent customer experience across the KRN, while respecting local constraints and priorities.
- **Safe System Approach**
  The KRN will be designed, operated, and maintained to eliminate deaths and serious injuries. Safety will be prioritised for vulnerable users, with integration of health and equity objectives.
- **Effective Regulation and Enforcement**
  Enforcement will be maximised and supported by data-driven targeting and further complemented, education, and campaigns to promote responsible road use and address high-risk behaviours.
- **Performance Monitoring and Responsive Intervention**
  The KRN will be routinely monitored for performance and reliability. Data will inform timely interventions and continuous improvement at both site and corridor levels.
- **Evidence-Based Decision Making**
  Data and research will underpin all decisions related to the KRN.
- **Innovation with Purpose**
  Technology deployment will follow a disciplined maturity pathway (Explore → Scale → Mainstream), driven by customer needs and validated benefits. Innovation will be integrated into mainstream operations.
- **Collaborative Improvement and Knowledge Sharing**
  WMCA and local authorities will collaborate across disciplines, share best practices, and jointly pursue funding and programme delivery. Forums and working groups will be used to foster continuous learning and improvement.

Through further devolution we will work with Government to identify how the region can secure the right powers and funding required to manage and improve the management of the KRN.

Roadspace reallocation

Roadspace reallocation is a way of managing demand and improving accessibility which is more equitable than measures such as road pricing. We need to make our streets are pleasant places to live and spend time in, where it is easy to access local facilities by walk, wheel, cycle or scoot. It can be achieved through simple measures such as using lines and bollards to change lane use and priority, taking out on-street parking spaces to widen the pavement, using planters to create parklets through to more substantial changes across an entire area such as the Places for People initiatives in Birmingham.

Government expects WMLTP5s to consider 'whole-route' approaches to create corridors for buses, taxis, cycles and access only on key routes into town and city centres. Allocation of road space therefore needs to be carefully considered and we will take an 'outcome-based' approach. That means we will consider what modes should be prioritised and how to achieve local aims. This will follow the road user hierarchy, which acts as a framework for guiding and assessing policy development and delivery and favours sustainable travel options over use of private motorised vehicles. A number of frameworks exist which can help to guide designs on how highways are used and road space is allocated. Adopting these is a decision for individual local authorities in their role as local highway authority.

The 10 indicators of Healthy Streets

For example, one of the four key principles of the Birmingham's Transport Plan is reallocating road space away from single occupancy private cars to support the delivery of a public transport system fit for a global city. Birmingham have also adopted the Healthy Streets approach we considering the design and layout of all roads on the highway networks. Healthy Streets design checks will be required as part of the decision framework for all highway schemes. These will provide a quantitative assessment of the proposal against the ten Healthy Streets indicators. Allocation of roadspace on the KRN should also consider WMCA's set of guiding principles. These are seen as a "general rule of thumb" initial approach for KRN routes, recognising the need to consider schemes and measures for KRN routes on a case-by-case basis. These are flexible and engagement with communities and businesses will be a key part of shaping how we use our streets.

The guiding principles are based on the following approach for KRN network corridors where it is not possible to deliver measures for bus, cycle and walk combined:

- If the KRN route is part of the revised regional LCWIP Strategic Cycle Network then a high-quality cycle route should be delivered, either as segregated cycle track provision, as part of the KRN road, or high-quality provision for cycling on a parallel route. This is to deliver the strategic cycle network as the backbone of cycling provision in the West Midlands, joined up with a finer mesh of local cycle networks and local area improvements.

- Bus priority measures, where needed, will be delivered on the core bus network. If the KRN route is also a revised regional LCWIP Strategic Cycle Network route and there is not enough space for cycling provision and bus priority measures, especially for priority rapid transit corridors, then a parallel route should be sought for the strategic cycle network route.

- Bus priority measures, where needed, will be delivered on the core bus network, subject to space available on high HGV flow routes (8% or higher HGVs as % of AADT or 1000 plus HGVs per day) where satisfactory general traffic lane widths are available for high volumes of HGVs. The needs of emergency diversion routes for the Strategic Road Network and the strategic function of the KRN route, agreed by the local authorities and WMCA, also need to be taken into account.

- Local Authority LCWIP local cycle network routes will have cycle infrastructure provision, either as segregated cycle track provision, as part of the KRN road, or high quality provision for cycling on a parallel route. This is subject to space available on core bus network routes where bus priority measures will have precedence.

- Local Authority LCWIP local cycle networks should seek to avoid routes on sections of the KRN which are also high HGV flow routes (8% or higher HGVs as % of AADT or 1000 plus HGVs per day). Where this is unavoidable then segregrated cycle infrastructure is essential.

- We will seek to deliver green infrastructure as part of schemes on the KRN, but where space is constrained with measures to promote bus, cycling and walking, then we will seek to provide green infrastructure locally in other suitable locations.

Policy:

WMCA, working with our local authorities will use a network planning approach not just to help us to design changes in specific locations, but to manage how changes to streets can encourage people to move differently around areas.

WMCA and local authorities will refer to the roadspace allocation guidelines when developing proposals which will noting that there is not a one size fits all approach and solutions will need to be tailored to suit individual areas , however, the principles will help to deliver a level of coinsistency across the region.

The overarching aim of this network planning approach will be to support higher proportions of journeys by sustainable modes of transport across the region and support a more people/user centric approach to how our streets are used reflecting the Sustainable Transport User Hierarchy. The aim is to have safe, accessible and high-quality environments throughout the region.

New highway capacity

There are situations where new roads (and in some cases widening roads and junctions) may be necessary. For example, this may be required to facilitate new developments. In recent years, significant investment has been secured to deliver new roads and build network capacity to facilitate housing development and employment growth in the region.

Government have indicated to Mayoral Strategic Authorities that delivery plans should allocate no more than 10% of 'Transport for City Regions' (TCR) funding towards local highways road schemes that increase capacity of the network (i.e. not including renewal of existing assets, or safety schemes which will reduce killed or seriously injured).

Highway Improvement Lines (HILs) are then often applied to achieve this. HILs help safeguard certain areas of land along current or future highway corridors, to allow for any required highway improvements or key infrastructure and schemes. Other examples of where new road capacity may be needed is to facilitate the removal of traffic from some areas, diverting it to more appropriate roads in order to leave behind improved residential or urban centre locations.

Policy:

There will be a general presumption against new roads and highway capacity for the explicit purpose of providing additional highway capacity for general traffic.

Schemes approved via the WMCAs SAF seeking funding from the Integrated Settlement will need to demonstrate how they help to achieve WMLTP5 objectives and proposals that include new capacity should demonstrate that this is required to:

- Support sustainable transport provision (specifically high-quality facilities for walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport and shared mobility).
- Unlock sustainable developments or manage existing land more sustainably but should be delivered with sustainable transport provision.
- Explicitly support sustainable transport provision such as a semi-fixed bus corridor or a high-capacity cycleway.
- With the support of digitisation we will seek to be creative with existing capacity by using the same road space for different purposes at different times.
- Support the delivery of active design principles which encourages more people to walk and cycle in their neighbourhoods.

Highway Improvement Lines

WMCA and local authorities will continue to manage and review the need for HILs through:

- Assessing whether a HIL remains necessary for its original purpose or for any future schemes, ensuring alignment with current WMLTP5 and local planning policies, considering any potential impacts on people, places, and the environment, and identifying where new HILs may be required in the future.

Planning for the transport network of the future

New technologies and innovations will be a key part of planning and improving the transport networks. This will help to create a more efficient and reliable network and as we make some of the difficult decisions around roadspace allocation, making these changes in the most effective way. We need to use what is already there efficiently.

The West Midlands is at the forefront of transport innovation and our proposals for a regulatory sandbox focused on the region would enable us to test and trial innovative new ways of developing, managing and maintaining the transport network.

Future proofing the network

As we rapidly shift towards zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) in the coming years we will need to make sure that the appropriate infrastructure is provided. Our Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy will set out how we will deliver this infrastructure. Locations close to the KRN will be critical to give confidence of a comprehensive charging network and support people to switch to sustainable modes.

Technologies and innovations in how we move around e.g. through micromobility and Connected Autonomous Mobility (CAM). CAM brings with it the opportunities to bring about positive developments in road safety, mobility and productivity, as well as the local opportunities for innovation to support our industry and transport system development of which the West Midlands has already been at the forefront.

Starting to future proof our network with systems for connected autonomous vehicles will also be essential. This could include upgrading maintenance regimes for line markings and signs, deployment of fibre ducting in all public realm works/ street works to enable ease of future connectivity, consideration of safe harbour spaces on any new infrastructure, consideration of signals or sensors in uncontrolled crossings and so on. Increasing numbers of vehicles incorporating on board speed limiters will make digital enforcement of speed possible, providing further opportunities to smooth flow and improve emissions and safety.

Technologies and innovation will also be key to help future proof the network in light of the challenges of climate change, which are discussed later in this Big Move.`

New ways of managing and controlling the transport network

Smart Infrastructure is the application of digital technology to our physical assets and offers the potential to use our assets more intelligently and enables us to get more from them. This includes using systems that will help to manage parking e.g. parking sensors, which provide live parking capacity data. Good quality information on parking locations and availability, makes use of the road network more efficient by avoiding circulation of drivers searching for parking spaces.

Traffic signals technology can be used to ensure operations are optimised for changing conditions, particularly along key corridors, at key junctions and in central areas to minimise queuing. By responding to levels of queuing and delay they can help to prioritise sustainable transport modes. By investing in technology traffic signals in the West Midlands will continue to keep traffic moving safely and efficiently across our networks, reducing travel times, emissions and fuel consumption. Through intelligent detection equipment and adaptive logic driven central control systems, changes to the timing and sequencing of traffic signals can be made in real time to keep road users moving efficiently, with an increasing consideration for road users other than just cars.

Drones will be an important asset to better understand issues in real time. They can fill gaps where more traditional CCTV technology is not achievable or cost prohibitive. Drone technology has the potential to revolutionise the public safety industry. Price Waterhouse Cooper were asked to assess the potential economic benefits of drones delivering public sector services in urban areas such as the West Midlands. Their analysis estimates that over 15 years the use of drones to support delivery of public services in areas such as the West Midlands could lead to cost savings of £150 million. TfWM is now exploring the use of drone footage to supplement information and data being fed into the Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC).

The effective use of national systems such as Street Manager and the emerging Digitised Traffic Regulation Order (D-TRO) database are other tools in the region's armoury that can assist with minimising and managing disruptive activities on the highway in pursuit of reliable journeys

Data and evidence

New technologies can help to gather and distribute information on conditions on the road network to enable effective management. Managing the network effectively will rely on making best use of available data on traffic conditions from the growing range of available sources.

On a day-to-day basis, efficient network management will continue to develop systems to use information gained from these sources to:

- Allow network managers to respond quickly and effectively to provide a co-ordinated response to incidents and changing traffic conditions.
- Provide appropriate information to those travelling.

Vehicles are also increasingly connected, transferring data with the wider world. We need to ensure our transport and digital networks support these developments and are ready to make best use of the opportunities they provide. Transport volume monitoring sensors can also be used which can provide information on the use of different modes, journey time or tracking data.

Policy:

The West Midland's is the home of UK transport innovation and is leading one of the largest national transport innovation programmes. We will continue to test and adopt new technology to improve our ability to manage and operate the transport network more reliably and safely.

WMCA and local authorities will ensure that improvements to the KRN take account of the latest guidance regarding CAM requirements as appropriate. We will develop an action plan with specific interventions to future-proof our transport systems for autonomous vehicles, in collaboration with local authorities, National Highways, public transport operators and other stakeholders.

WMCA and local authorities will develop and monitor technology enhancements for transport network including the Key Route Network through the RTCC-Highways Investment Strategy in collaboration with partners.

WMCA will develop an action plan with specific interventions to future-proof our transport systems for autonomous vehicles, in collaboration with local authorities and other stakeholders.

Develop and adopt the use of a Key Route Network Performance monitoring dashboard and produce evidence-based performance reports of the KRN.

Improving Road Safety

The results of a recent public consultation demonstrated the importance of safe roads for all residents, businesses and visitors travelling in and through our region. There is a need for us to better understand the risks encountered by vulnerable road users (i.e. pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists) and to take action to improve the safety and experiences of those travelling by these modes.

In September 2023, the Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030 was launched. This committed WMCA, the constituent authorities and partners such as West Midlands Police and the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner to a collective goal of achieving a 50% reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured (KSI)s across the region by 2030. In addition, all members of the Regional Road Safety Partnership have committed to Vision Zero - a long-term mission aimed at eliminating all death and serious injury on our roads.

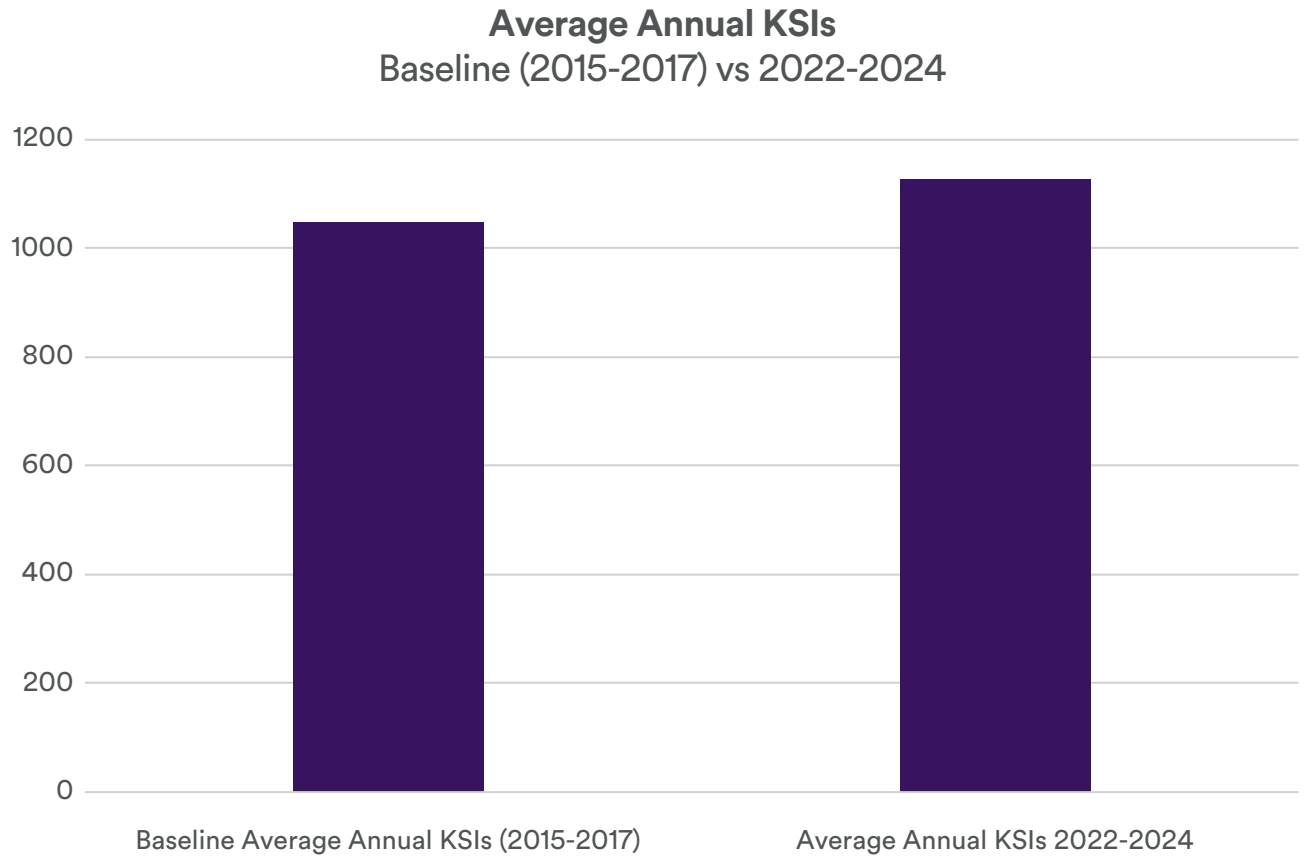
The principle strategic outcomes for road safety in our region are:

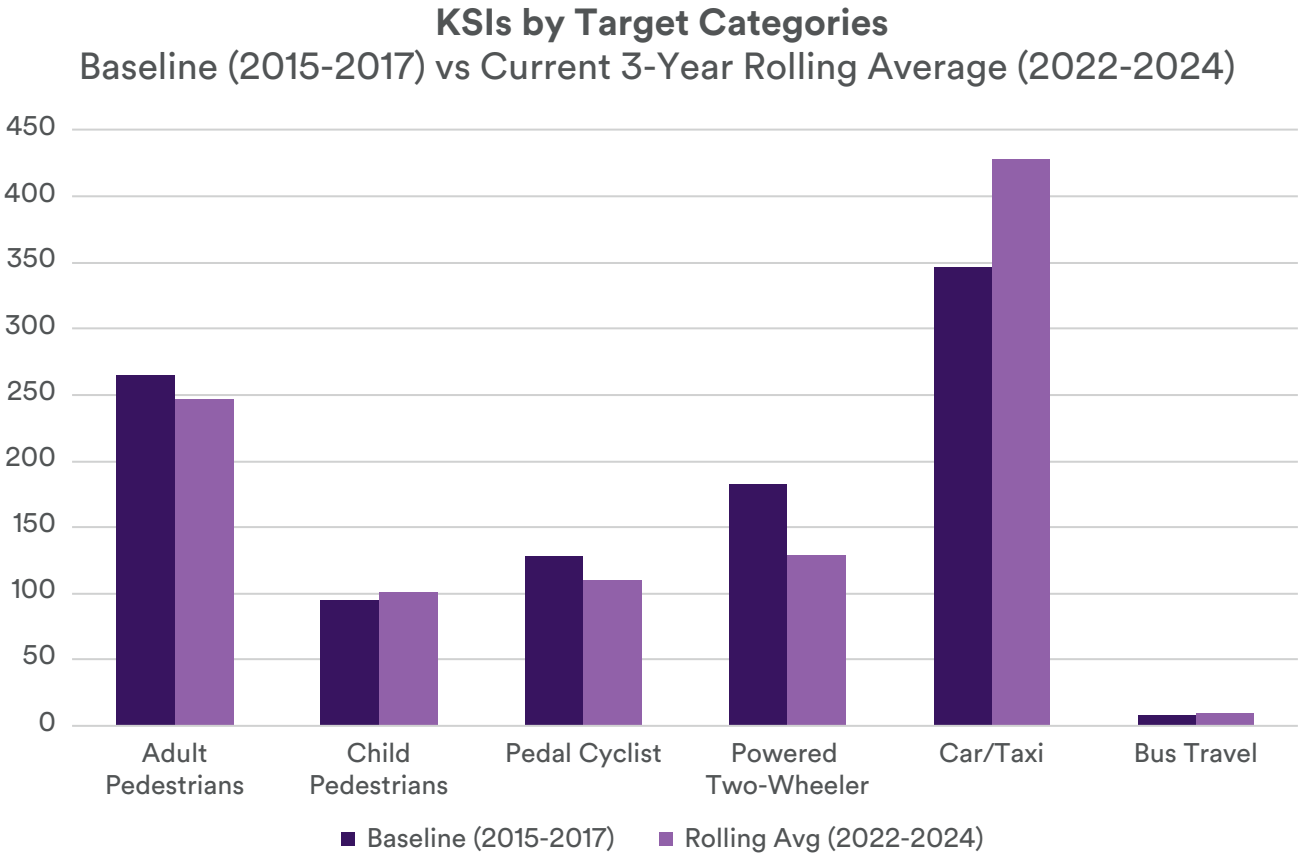
- A reduction in the number of vulnerable road users (VRUs) being injured on our region's roads and addressing gaps in equalities to promote inclusive growth;
- Encouraging more people to choose active travel, reducing car usage and improving our region's air quality; and
- Improving safety on the road environment for all users, thereby reducing the economic costs of collisions on society.

There is a need to accelerate progress on tackling road safety to support the outcomes of this WMLTP5. The recent public consultation also highlighted a high level of agreement among resident and communities for removing unsafe vehicles from our roads, deterring dangerous and anti-social driving, and expanding enforcement. These views are supported by data where incidents involving dangerous driving behaviour are over-represented in road safety statistics.

Data for 2022-2024 showed a 7% increase in total KSIs, but a 11% reduction in the number of people killed across the Metropolitan Region compared with the data for the 2015-2017 baseline.

In November 2024, the region launched a new evidence-based Regional Road Safety Action Plan aimed at achieving the strategic casualty reduction goal. The Action Plan consists of 23 targeted measures aimed increasing safety for road users most at-risk of injury and addressing concerns raised through a public consultation at the start of 2024. The Action Plan clearly sets out the roles, responsibilities and timeframes for delivery of the measures and how performance will be monitored between the period 2024-2030.


Average Annual KSIs
Baseline (2015-2017) vs 2022-2024
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
Baseline Average Annual KSIs (2015-2017)
Average Annual KSIs 2022-2024


KSIs by Target Categories
Baseline (2015-2017) vs Current 3-Year Rolling Average (2022-2024)
450
400
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
Adult Pedestrians
Child Pedestrians
Pedal Cyclist
Powered Two-Wheeler
Car/Taxi
Bus Travel
Baseline (2015-2017)
Rolling Avg (2022-2024)

It is concerning that KSIs involving car and taxi drivers and passengers have started to increase post-COVID19 restrictions. However, when assessing the numbers of car occupant KSIs proportionately against billion vehicle miles travelled (bvmt) by cars for both the baseline period (2015-2017) and the 2019-2022* reporting period, data shows a reduction of 13.3% (60 car occupant KSIs per BVMT during 2015-2017, to 52 car occupant KSIs per BVMT during 2019-2012*). This is due to a significant increase in miles travelled since the 2020 COVID travel restrictions.

Pedestrians are the region's most VRU group, although it is positive that reductions in KSIs have been achieved for pedestrians, pedal cyclists and motorcyclists. However, collectively VRUs account for approximately two-thirds of all KSIs on the region's roads.

The WMLTP5 and Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030 collectively recognise the needs of road users unable to afford a motor vehicle by improving social mobility and accessibility through the provision of safe and healthy travel choices, such as cycling and walking, and making streets safer to walk and wheel. It is vital that we better understand the risks encountered by those using active travel modes and provide safe, reliable and efficient infrastructure to support accessibility and mobility.

Policy:

The West Midlands will integrate Vision Zero into the future thinking of road safety - a long-term mission that recognises that deaths and serious injuries on the road are not an acceptable price to pay for mobility. Vision Zero road safety strategies are underpinned by the Safe Systems approach. The five components of the Safe System are:

- Safe road users
- Safe vehicles
- Safe speeds
- Safe roads and mobility
- Post-crash response

In the Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy 2023-2030, the Regional Road Safety Partnership consisting of 18 organisations, including WMCA, the seven constituent local authorities, West Midlands Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner have agreed to a target of a 50% reduction in number of killed and seriously injured road casualties by 2030.

More detail of the target and the approach to be taken can be found in the Refreshed Regional Road Safety Strategy

We will work with operators and other partners to improve safety and to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour on the transport network.

Through the WMLTP5 Area Strategies there are opportunities to design out hazards and create safer streets using a range of measures that will be pursued to support the regional road safety ambitions. These measures will make streets safer for all users and more attractive for active and personal mobility travel options.

Keeping the West Midlands moving safely, efficiently and reliably

Managing the network - Working in Partnership

Achieving coordinated and efficient network management of the West Midlands transport system is complex and involves multiple partners. It is essential in delivering the outcomes of this WMLTP5. A well-managed and reliable network is:

- Good for people and helping them to make the right travel choices,
- Good for businesses,
- Assists freight & logistic operators to plan effectively especially for just-in-time deliveries,
- Works well and reliability irrespective of severe weather and climate change
- Key to improving road safety, and
- Important to help tackle carbon and improve air quality and reduce noise pollution.

To achieve our aims involves a range of organisations who have a range of duties, powers and resources at their disposal. These include smarter traffic signals and intelligent traffic management, improved road design, use and enforcement of speed limits, well managed and enforced parking, real-time traffic monitoring and signage. In addition, measures to better plan, deliver and communicate the impacts of roadworks, network maintenance and events and how to avoid them also plays a key part of our collective strategy.

Policy:

Through a collaborative partnership and using the powers and responsibilities of WMCA, local and national highway authorities and key partners including National Highways and West Midlands Police, WMCA and local authorities will seek to improve the operational efficiency of the transport network.

This will be done through a range of initiatives and measures to better manage the operation and maintenance of the highway network and its response to disruption so that it runs smoothly, and the effects of traffic on communities and the environment are minimised.

Key areas of focus will be:

- The Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC)
- Improving Urban Traffic Control
- Managing Parking
- Traffic Enforcement
- Behaviour Change/Travel Demand Management

Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC)

Effective multi agency collaboration is critical for the management of the transport system and particularly the road network when there are cross boundary programmes of work or incidents that affect traffic flow, particularly outside of the normal operating hours. The Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) supports partners across the region in managing the network and planning for and mitigating disruptions. It's a hub for:

- Transport for West Midlands
- transport operators
- emergency services
- local authorities
- National Highways

The RTCC provides us with the means with how we work with the region's highway authority partners, transport operators and other agencies to manage the day-to-day operations of the network, planned events such as major construction programmes and culture and sporting events as well as major incidents.

Demand for travel will increase as the region's population continues to grow. We are upgrading infrastructure to help meet demand. Sometimes this means disruption to roads and public transport as we make changes. The RTCC utilises technology products, live data feeds and CCTV to monitor the West Midlands transport network. When things go wrong, the RTCC helps people get around the network using:

- social media
- information on our website
- text message and email alerts
- real-time information screens at stops

The RTCC can talk directly to transport operators to warn them about disruptions. It also warns customers about planned and unplanned disruptions impacting the transport network. The RTCC will work closely with partners to ensure a coordinated response, factoring a true multi-modal approach to how customer disruption and communication can be managed and mitigated.

Demand for travel will increase as the region's population continues to grow. We are upgrading infrastructure to help meet demand. Sometimes this means disruption to roads and public transport as we make changes. The RTCC utilises technology products, live data feeds and CCTV to monitor the West Midlands transport network. When things go wrong, the RTCC helps people get around the network using:

- social media
- information on our website
- text message and email alerts
- real-time information screens at bus stops

The RTCC can talk directly to transport operators to warn them about disruptions. It also warns people about planned disruptions in advance. We also have a system that collects information about disruptions. The system feeds the information to navigation apps like Google Maps. Whilst digital platforms are very useful, we also need to continue to think about how we continue to reach the 300,000 people that are not digital users or able to use online resources.

The RTCC will play a key role as we continue to develop and improve our regional approach to network management. Working together to provide better travel information and provide real time Open Data to support development of travel planning by third parties. These systems will be supported by a growing network of technology to help us monitor, understand, analyse and manage the network. These include:

- Utilising historic and live data from our technology partners
- Variable message signs,
- Passive sensor detectors,
- Traffic counters,
- Advanced number plate recognition (ANPR) and
- CCTV cameras

The information is displayed on an online platform providing an interactive experience. To date the Highways Investment Plan covers major WMCA highway schemes along with a selection of Local Authority schemes. This will expand as more information becomes available to WMCA. The Highways Investment Plan aims to provide a single source of information about highways investment in the West Midlands. The plan highlights some of the crucial work we're delivering to improve road infrastructure and increase capacity and traffic flow. WMCA

We will also explore new opportunities to improve the impact of the RTCC that could be achieved through new powers. For example, WMCA would like to see the wider use of Traffic Officers on the KRN to support future investment and maintenance programmes and to help deal with planned and unplanned incidents.

Policy:

WMCA will continue to develop and invest in the RTCC to:

- Minimise the impacts of disruptions on our local communities, businesses and visitors
- Manage the transport network in a more efficient way that supports a shift to more sustainable forms of travel in the region
- Strengthen our established partnerships with the key transport service providers operating across our region
- Deliver improvements in incident management via Incident Management System and enhanced data streams
- monitor and continuously seek to improve journey times on our local roads
- Develop new communication campaigns to keep our residents, businesses and visitors informed of network disruptions.
- connect CCTV to the RTCC
- Work with our local authority colleagues to introduce new technologies to support the efficient movement of traffic on the highway network.
- Use new and innovative technology to understand the transport network's performance. This helps us respond better when things go wrong.
- Explore opportunities to improve local authorities' Urban Traffic Control capabilities.

We will continuously develop and monitor technology enhancements for the transport network including the Key Route Network through the RTCC in collaboration with partners.

We will continue to explore opportunities to improve network management in the West Midlands such as the wider use of Traffic Officers on the KRN and pavement parking enforcement by lobbying Government for additional devolution of funding and powers to the region.

Ensure we reflect the diverse nature of our region and not simply be digital by default. We will continue to consider how best communicate to a range of different groups.

Managing parking

Managing where vehicles stop and park is a key part of keeping the region moving. All car journeys start and end at a parking space. Analysis suggests that cars and vans spend over 96% of the time parked and are in use for only a small amount of time.The availability (number of spaces, location, times) and cost of parking are significant influences on how people choose to travel and also on the vehicles they use. On both a regional and national scale public transport fares have dramatically increased compared to motoring costs which have remained comparatively level with the median household disposable income.

This has resulted in public transport being viewed as the 'more expensive' way to travel compared to driving in the region. Parking costs can also aggravate this issue, with free car parking compounding the perceived cost effectiveness of driving, leading to fewer people opting for public transport. We know local centres with strong parking controls promote higher bus use. Whilst analysis suggests that actual costs between public transport and car travel are roughly similar (when wider costs of purchase and operating the vehicle are considered), most people's perception is that car travel will be significantly cheaper than using public transport. Parking measures and charging are therefore important to manage travel demand by private car.Inconsiderate and illegal parking has a direct impact on the safety and quality of our streets and creates problems for other road users including public transport and freight. Kerb space in many areas is an important commodity and as the region grows there will be more demand for these spaces to accommodate deliveries, service vehicles, pick-ups and drop-offs, trees, public spaces, wider footpaths and bicycle lanes.

The amount of car parking provided in places which are well connected by public transport, such as Birmingham City Centre, is being reduced to help shift travel behaviours. Robust parking standards as part of planning policy and reviews of parking in key centres are essential. At the same time how parking is designed into developments is also important to ensure that people do park their vehicles sensibly and safely. This is an important area for local plans and the emerging Spatial Development Strategy to consider.Whilst a level of parking is required, a pragmatic approach to managing the supply of parking is needed as part of an integrated transport strategy. New ways of managing the demand for and availability of parking are needed to help balance competing demand for space. It will also be important to ensure that the right amount of parking for cycling, scooting motorcycles and public transport is provided in the right places.

Parking management is an important transport planning tool, enabling us to influence how people may choose to travel, with the aim of encouraging them to use more sustainable forms of transport and helping to reduce the impacts of transport on people and places. It needs to be delivered hand in hand alongside other measures in this WMLTP5 to deliver behaviour change. At the same time it is important to manage parking so that it does not create road safety problems or worsen conditions for other users e.g. blocking pavements or causing delays to bus services. Full digitisation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will open the way for better management of road space. Initial information on locality and then ultimately availability of spaces to reduce unnecessary movement of vehicles on network seeking parking and loading opportunities.

Policy:

Through developing the Area Based Implementation Plans WMCA and local authorities will explore:

- The need for new / different parking policies to address the availability and pricing of parking in centres, neighbourhoods and on corridors.
- The need for updated/revised parking standards to ensure that where accessibility is good parking provision is appropriate and that other measures to reduce car dependence e.g. car clubs are considered as part of the planning process.
- The role of pricing to encourage a shift to cleaner, less environmentally impactful vehicles.
- Ensuring that the right level of parking for sustainable modes is considered properly.
- Provision for freight & logistics - loading/deliveries.
- Parking restrictions which were introduced many years ago still reflect current needs and issues.

To support better parking management in the West Midlands, WMCA will:

- Consider the approach to parking provision through development as part of the Spatial Development Strategy and local plans
    - Continue to lobby Government on behalf of our local authorities for the introduction of pavement parking powers outside of London.
    - Explore how new technology can be used to manage kerbside space in a more efficient way using realtime information and through the digitisation of Traffic Regulation Orders.

Enforcement and regulation

Enforcement of the network is important to ensure its efficient and safe operation, supporting our objectives for a safe, efficient and reliable network. As set out in the Behaviour Change Big Move effective enforcement is essential to ensuring the effectiveness of measures to manage demand and prioritise access for higher priority Sustainable Transport Users.

Across the region traffic management measures are being used to support this including:

Speed limits

Excessive speed is considered to one of the biggest problems in road safety. Not only does it contribute towards the severity of injuries, but it also deters walking and cycling. Speed limits are introduced by local authorities (National Highway on SRN). Enforcement of speed limits in the West Midland is done in partnership between the local authorities and WM Police.

Bus lanes and bus priority

Increasing bus priority is key to making buses services more reliable and more attractive. Not only do delays worsen accessibility and reduce the number of people who can access locations in a reasonable journey time it also increases service operating costs. Through our Bus Service Improvement Plan we have committed to introduce over 100km of additional bus lanes in the region. Enforcement should be a key part of all bus priority measures delivered in the region. Bus Lanes and bus priority (including bus gates) is introduced and enforced by local authorities but WMCA does share concurrent powers.

Cycle lanes

The need to encourage active travel modes requires better quality infrastructure and in some cases the re-assignment of highway space. Ensuring that this infrastructure is protected from obstructions such as parked vehicles is key and delivers residents safety.

Moving Traffic Offences/Yellow box junctions

Government has recently made it possible for some local authorities to apply for new powers for the civil enforcement of moving traffic contraventions (MTCs) by commencing provisions in Part 6 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). A study of box junction contravention within the West Midlands found that across five junctions over three days, 3,768 vehicles were directly or indirectly delayed by box junction contraventions. Extrapolating this finding to the whole KRN suggests that thousands of hours of delay is caused by approx. 3.5 million yellow box contraventions every year. Data also suggests that moving traffic offences also contribute towards road safety issues.

Access Restrictions, Clean Air Zones, School Streets, Places for People

In some areas of the West Midlands a range of access restrictions have been implemented to support behaviour change and deliver local benefits from improving road safety and supporting sustainable travel to driving air quality improvements. Measures such as Places for People, School streets and Clean Air Zones could be measures that are considered in some places to help deliver the aims of WMLTP5.

Parking restrictions/Red Routes

Parking measures and Red Route restrictions and have been introduced to help manage the network and improve journeys and ensure safety and, in some areas, prioritise kerbside availability for users e.g. residents parking schemes to reduce/prevent commuter/shopper parking. Responsibility for the introduction of parking controls and their enforcement sits with local authorities.

The enforcement of on and off-street parking regulations is a key element of parking management. Illegal parking is inconsiderate. It can create problems including congestion and compromised driver and pedestrian safety and can create difficulties for residents and businesses. This is important across the network but particularly so on the KRN.

Digitisation of Traffic Regulation Orders and the ability to manage kerb space dynamically e.g. for loading or when temporary changes to the network are required will further support improved enforcement.

Street Works Permits

Street work permits schemes are used to control and coordinate the undertaking of works/ roadworks on the highway network. Where permit schemes have been introduced they have effectively cut works times, reduced inconvenience for road users and helped manage congestion. A coordinated view of current and upcoming roadworks will allow appropriate planning to mitigate impact of scheduled works on road users. All local authorities within the West Midlands operate a permit scheme.

Permit schemes also enable the potential to introduce lane rental schemes to further manage and coordinate roadworks minimising the impacts on congestion. As an example, lane rental schemes by Transport for London and Kent County Council have identified further efficiencies in managing roadworks which help reduce congestion and minimise disruptive impacts. WMCA is continuing to work with local authorities to review the potential for a lane rental scheme to provide a positive impact on managing congestion and associated works, particularly those impacting the KRN and bus routes.

Policy:

Speed enforcement:

Collaborate with West Midlands Police and West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner to enhance enforcement against motorists who deliberately chose to drive dangerously on all road types.

- Utilise digital speed enforcement to optimise speed compliance
- Develop the Road Safety Strategic Group aimed at developing effective target-orientated collaborations to achieve agreed regional casualty reduction targets.

Formulate a regional speed management policy per the regional road harm reduction plan, facilitating and resourcing the rollout of evidence-based speed limits across the 7 Local Authorities. WMCA will continue to lobby Government for the retention of speeding fines by local authorities to improve the ability to roll out speed enforcement measures as part of action to improve road safety. WMCA will continue to lobby Government to changes to:

Bus Lanes:

Ensure that bus lanes form a key part of bus priority measures being introduced in the region.

Yellow Box Junctions/Moving Traffic Offences:

WMCA will support local authorities as well as relevant partners, such as West Midlands Police and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, to develop applications for moving traffic offences enforcement powers.

Parking Restrictions and Red Routes:

Local authorities will seek to ensure that Traffic Regulation Orders are consistent, enforceable and appropriate and provide a level of parking enforcement that is commensurate to the problem in order to ensure that illegal parking does not create disruption on the network. WMCA and local authorities will continue to explore how technologies can deliver benefits in managing and enforcing parking and improve access to parking services and information. WMCA and local authorities will continue to lobby for the devolutions of pavement parking powers to local authorities outside London.

Street Works Permits:

We will monitor the further development, delivery, and reporting of Street Works Permits and Street Manager. WMCA will work local authorities to coordinate activities to develop the future plan for permits within WMCA.

Access Restrictions:

WMCA and local authorities will continue to consider where opportunities for measures such as Clean Air Zones, Low Traffic Neighbourhoods/Places for People and other access restrictions/traffic management

Behaviour change and communications

As set out in the Behaviour Change Big Move, communications can be an effective tool in encouraging those who may already have good alternatives to make different choices. Travel behaviour change will be encouraged and delivered through effective management of the transport system alongside wider communications and engagement on why these changes need to be made.

To help ensure we have a resilient transport network WMCA and partners have been delivering Travel Demand Management campaigns. These aim to explain disruptions and the benefits of using different types of transport or to travel at different times of the day to manage transport demand efficiently across the network. These have been key as part of efforts to reduce network disruption because of major transport infrastructure projects and roadworks e.g. HS2 Interchange works, National Highways improvement schemes and Metro extension work in the West Midlands Region.

WMCA and local authorities will also develop campaigns that will help to encourage longer term behaviour change. Our approach to delivering behaviour change projects will focus on promoting a range of interventions and measures that encourage behaviour change; ensuring our customers are supported to make better travel choices. We will support active travel infrastructure delivery and activate this as an option for local communities and realise the opportunities that new technologies can play in helping to deliver long lasting travel behaviour change across the region.

Our approach to TDM is framed as the 4 Rs:

- leave at a different time - retime
- use a different route - reroute
- work flexibly and commute less - reduce
- walk, cycle or get public transport instead of driving - remode

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will maintain a programme of interventions designed to encourage people to make sustainable journeys. We will support this through journey planning tools and information to encourage travel behaviour change and mode shift, and to make the most efficient use of available capacity (particularly during peak periods).

Support investment projects

TfWM's Behaviour Change Hub will lead on TDM and in other instances we will support, depending on capacity within our partner organisations and ultimately to ensure that information and advice about disruption is not singularly focused and adds choice and decisions across all modes.

Solutions development

Solutions development as well as behavioural change and communications and marketing tailored travel demand management strategies may require traffic regulation and management, infrastructure investments and operational adjustments including customer incentives and physical improvements (the latter sometimes being tactical and temporary).

Behavioural change and communications

- TfWM will deliver a behaviour change communications strategy with principles to:
- Improve how we keep in touch with the majority of network users;
- One joint and consistent message with partners;
- Communicate and engage with young people better;
- Ensure new travel choices stick; and
- Enable people to see the positive personal health and wellbeing benefits of active travel and wider air quality benefits for everyone.
- Take account of TfWM's customer experience principles.

Freight and logistics

Freight is a derived demand for goods and services, with freight transport and logistics almost entirely delivered by the private sector. However, private sector operators use publicly owned infrastructure networks and are subject to planning and regulatory policies. In broad terms, government policy is to support the efficiency and growth of the sector as a fundamental enabler of the wider economy, while mitigating the negative impacts of freight on communities and the environment.

Freight is a national issue - how we support it to underpin large sections of our economy, and how we attempt to mitigate some of its negative impacts - which is wrapped up in national government policy and action. But Freight and logistics movements are vital to the West Midlands economy and supply the goods and services used by people every day. Freight movements do not simply occur but rather they reflect our economic activity and provide the means to trade nationally and internationally. Whilst the West Midlands may wish to see more action to improve freight & logistics from a transport perspective, there is only so much the region can do by itself.

In support of the Modern Industrial Strategy and building upon the analysis behind WMCA's Plan for Growth, the WM Growth Plan identifies five future high growth sectors and clusters of industry where there is substantial opportunity to unlock future growth and high value jobs. These are: Smart Energy, Advanced Engineering, EVs and Batteries, Health & Digital Tech and Creative Next Generation Services. The effective movement of goods and people around the region is vital to these clusters and our strong logistics industry is central to that movement.

Through the West Midlands Logistics and Distribution Cluster Board, logistics and distribution businesses in the West Midlands are being supported by a programme of activity to achieve three key objectives:

- Logistics businesses going up the value chain, providing more advanced services.
- Logistics efficiency increasing, with impediments to transport movements and the location of facilities reduced.
- Logistics decarbonising, backed by the right skills, infrastructure and technology.

Action to optimise the freight system by WMCA and the seven metropolitan districts and boroughs, through and in partnership with the West Midlands Logistics Cluster Board, can directly contribute to the objectives to increase the efficiency of logistics businesses and to decarbonise logistics activity.

The freight and logistics sector is predominantly operated by private sector companies, but the public sector sets the context and conditions for the sector's operations through planning, regulation and incentives. In the most general terms, the private sector's interests are to deliver efficient and optimised operations to maximise financial performance, while the public sector sets the controls needed to achieve the best outcomes for society. Major challenges include:

- **Economic Growth and Efficiency:** Freight and logistics are vital to economic growth, driven by private sector efficiency. The key challenge for WMCA is to improve journey time reliability the KRN. This can be achieved not only through infrastructure investment but also by shifting everyday travel away from cars to free up road space for more efficient freight movement.

- **Efficiency and journey time reliability in urban areas:** Urban freight is primarily concerned with the so-called "last mile" delivery to businesses and consumers and efficient and safe freight operations in dense urban areas face unique challenges compared to strategic road networks. Last-mile delivery is driving some of the growth in the freight transport industry in terms of the increasing number of LGV (light goods vehicles) on the UK's roads. There was a 42% increase in the number of LGVs licensed between 2007 and 2022, and LGV traffic has increased steadily from 66 billion vehicle-kilometres in 2010 to 93 billion vehicle kilometres in 2022. Policies promoting sustainable, pedestrian-friendly streets can conflict with delivery needs, especially in city centres.

- **Balancing active travel with occasional freight access is essential:** TfWM data shows varied and diverging trends in peak freight flows, with limited shift to alternative delivery modes. Smaller, agile methods like cargo bikes and LGVs are better suited to urban environments but require costly, space-constrained distribution hubs. Progress on cargo bike deployment has been slow, though interest is growing. TfWM is advancing local delivery initiatives—such as parcel lockers and EV charging—and sees Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) as key partners in consolidating urban freight solutions.

- **Decarbonisation:** Transport is the UK's highest-emitting sector, with freight—especially HGVs—contributing significantly to greenhouse gas emissions. Decarbonisation progress in freight has lagged behind passenger transport due to limited electric alternatives for HGVs, insufficient LGV charging infrastructure, and competition for public charging investment. In the West Midlands, WMCA faces the challenge of supporting the freight and logistics sector in identifying and implementing viable decarbonisation pathways. This requires targeted incentives, infrastructure development, and strategic collaboration to align with national net zero commitments.

- **Air and Noise Pollution:** Freight vehicles, especially HGVs, contribute disproportionately to air and noise pollution due to their size, fuel inefficiency, and limited low-emission alternatives. These impacts are particularly problematic in residential and high-footfall areas, raising health and safety concerns. While clean air policies aim to improve environmental outcomes, freight operators face challenges adapting to restrictions, often viewing them as punitive. WMCA must balance environmental goals with operational realities by reducing pollution from freight journeys and aligning planning regulations with the sector's needs.

- **Road Safety:** Freight vehicles pose a disproportionate risk to road safety, with HGVs involved in a small share of collisions but a high rate of pedestrian fatalities. In the West Midlands, many fatal incidents occur on non-Key Route Network roads, where freight vehicles are less expected. Limited collision data quality hinders effective analysis and solution development. To meet Vision Zero goals, WMCA and local authorities must prioritise reducing freight-related casualties by improving data insights and tailoring safety interventions across all road environments.
- **'Freight awareness' in the public sector:** Freight and logistics often go unnoticed in public sector planning, leading to underdeveloped strategies and missed opportunities. Stakeholders report low levels of understanding and engagement from local authorities, compounded by limited data on freight movements. This lack of awareness can result in ineffective or counterproductive interventions. WMCA must improve public sector capability and collaboration to better plan for freight needs and support operational efficiency across the region.
- **Employment, Skills and access:** The freight sector's fragmented structure and reliance on small businesses hinder innovation and coordinated growth. Engagement between public authorities and grassroots operators remains limited, despite efforts like the Logistics Cluster. The sector faces a shortage of HGV drivers and struggles to attract young talent due to poor working conditions and low visibility. Additionally, freight employment sites are often located in car-dependent, out-of-town areas, making access difficult for non-drivers. WMCA must improve public perception of freight careers and enhance sustainable transport links to logistics hubs to widen access to employment.

The following table outlines how our objectives for freight align to our overall WMLTP5 Motives for Change and Primary Outcomes:

A - Improve accessibility	● - A link between the freight objective and the primary impact
T - Reduce traffic	●● - A strong link between the freight objective and the primary impact
E - Electrify transport	

Motive for Change	WMLTP5 objective	Freight objective	Link to LTP primary impacts		
			A	T	E
Sustaining economic success	Inclusive economy	1. Support the freight and logistics sector's role in delivering an inclusive economy through delivery of more efficient and reliable journeys on the network.	●	●●	
	Mobility market transformation				
Creating a fairer society	Fair access	2. Support safe, usable and affordable travel choices for people employed in the freight and logistics sector.	●●	●	
	Fair impacts	3. Make freight safer for everyone travelling in the West Midlands.	●	●	
		4. Reduce and manage the wider environmental impact of freight on people and communities.	●	●●	●●
Supporting local communities and places	Local access	5. Support the optimisation of freight in urban areas, reducing the potential for conflict between freight and people walking and cycling.	●●	●●	●
	Streets for communities				
Becoming more active	Physically active				
Tackling the climate emergency		6. Support the freight and logistics sector to accelerate the decarbonisation of their transport operations.		●	●●

We have developed a separate Freight Evidence Base which provides the context for and ideas for initiatives which can both support efficient freight and logistics across the region, but also mitigate many of the negative impacts that freight can have on transport and places/communities. We have used the “Avoid, Shift, Improve” framework, which sits behind much of the WMLTP5, as a guide to identified freight interventions in a hierarchical approach:

- **Avoid:** Minimise the number, distance, and intensity of freight trips by consolidating deliveries and co-locating supply chain activities.
- **Shift:** Transition freight to cleaner, more efficient modes—such as rail, water, cargo bikes, or pedestrian porters—especially for last-mile logistics.
- **Improve:** Optimise remaining freight journeys using cleaner vehicles, off-peak scheduling, and smarter network use to reduce emissions and enhance safety.

Policy:

WMCA working with local authorities and partners will:

Integrate Freight-Specific Interventions into Strategic Planning:
Embed freight-focused policies and actions within the Local Transport Plan and Area Based Implementation Plans and the emerging Spatial Development Strategy to promote sustainable freight movement, infrastructure development, and targeted interventions aligned with regional objectives.

Promote Safe and Sustainable Land Use and Infrastructure:
Utilise Local Plans and development management processes to safeguard freight facilities such as warehousing, railheads, and lorry parking facilities, and to ensure that new developments incorporate effective freight management measures,including Delivery and Servicing Plans and Construction Logistics Plans.

Enhance Urban Freight Efficiency and Safety:
Review and optimise kerbside management policies through the use of Traffic Regulation Orders, relaxing restrictions where appropriate to facilitate efficient delivery operations and reduce congestion and emissions. Engage with HGV fleet operators to encourage implementation of the Direct Vision Standard (which has already been implemented in London).

Strengthen Public-Private Sector Collaboration:
Foster the West Midlands Freight and Logistics Cluster and other partnerships to improve sector understanding, share best practices, and develop collaborative solutions to freight challenges.

Support the Transition to Cleaner and Safer Vehicles:
Assist operators through engagement and regulation, promoting the adoption of electric and zero-emission freight vehicles, and support infrastructure development such as charging points for vans and HGVs.

Influence Procurement and Contracting Practices:
Leverage public sector purchasing power to set standards for fleet accreditation, encourage the use of electric vehicles, and promote sustainable freight practices among suppliers and service providers.

Implement Innovative Traffic and Delivery Management Solutions:

- Support the deployment of real-time traffic information systems, digital TROs, and delivery re-timing initiatives to improve journey reliability, reduce congestion, and lower environmental impacts.
- Ensure that the development and management of the West Midlands transport network helps to support more efficient, safe and reliable freight & logistics journeys.
- We will work through West Midlands Rail Executive to ensure that the benefits of HS2 and the Midlands Rail Hub are optimised to support an increase of rail freight to/from and through the West Midlands.
- Through the Regional Road Safety Strategy take forward measures to improve road user safety and support and lobby for improvements to vehicle safety and improvements in vehicle design.
- Support the provision of zero emission vehicle and refuelling infrastructure and where appropriate introduce measures which can help to further drive and encourage change in vehicle fleets.
- Planning policy should ensure that developments which generate large volumes of freight traffic or involve the transport of bulk materials should make use of rail for freight movements wherever practical.
- Ensure that new development is planned and delivered in a way that integrates freight, logistics and servicing from the outset.
- Support innovation in new last mile operations including e-cargo bikes and parcel lockers and mobility hubs and in using new technologies to manage and control the kerbside to aid loading and servicing.

A well-maintained network

Maintaining a safe, efficient and reliable network

A well-maintained highway network is a fundamental part of the change we need to make. Our streets are key to how we choose to travel around and how transport impacts on people and places. A well-maintained network is critical to give people the confidence that they can make safe and reliable journeys. This is essential to help protect vulnerable road users, help people to feel safe when walking or cycling, improve the use of public transport and improve accessibility.

Existing and future challenges around the need to deliver significant behaviour change could require us to use our infrastructure differently in future. Significantly we may need to less new infrastructure if we can shift travel behaviours. This could be very important given the cost of maintaining our existing assets is going to become increasingly expensive due to the costs and pressures on raw materials and the impacts of climate change and the cost of energy.

The region will need to invest significantly more to address the maintenance backlog and to ensure the network is resilient and future proofed. The result of current underinvestment is a growing backlog of repairs, leading to more potholes and ever-increasing public dissatisfaction.

Road Surface condition

The condition of the road network remains a key area of concern for residents, with surveys consistently highlighting potholes and uneven surfaces as a priority issue. While overall road condition statistics for A, B and C roads in the West Midlands have generally remained stable, the condition of unclassified roads has shown a decline in recent years.

Local authorities hold statutory responsibility for highway maintenance under Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980. Across the West Midlands, most local highway authorities are already adopting a mix of preventative maintenance treatments alongside reactive works. However, there is currently no strategic maintenance programme in place specifically for the KRN. Looking ahead, there may be scope to prioritise KRN maintenance in areas that support wider transport objectives, such as bus routes and active travel infrastructure including footways and cycleways.

Funding levels remain a challenge. The move to longer term consolidated funding e.g. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and Transport in City Regions funding as part of the Integrated Settlement brings together the former Highways Maintenance Block, Potholes Fund, and Integrated Transport Block, but pressures on local authority budgets mean resources are stretched. Climate change impacts are likely to increase these pressures, requiring more resilient assets and a reassessment of the materials and methods used in maintenance.

Maintenance of roadside technologies

In addition to maintenance of the surfaces, there is a need to ensure that the wider assets of the highway network such as traffic signs, traffic signals, road markings, average speed enforcement cameras, variable message signs, bus lane enforcement cameras and other sensor technologies are well maintained.

These support the efficient running of the network however lack of maintenance resources impacts on the running of these critical tools on the KRN. This will become increasingly important for the successful delivery of the WMLTP5 objectives and is key to supporting measures set out in the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Gear Change and improved cycling infrastructure as local authorities apply and implement moving traffic offence powers which will all require additional technologies to be deployed and maintained.

They are also the foundational elements of a future road network where the technology assets are critical to delivering new infrastructure to support decarbonisation through electric charging infrastructure, connected and autonomous network sand 5G technologies etc.

The impacts of climate change

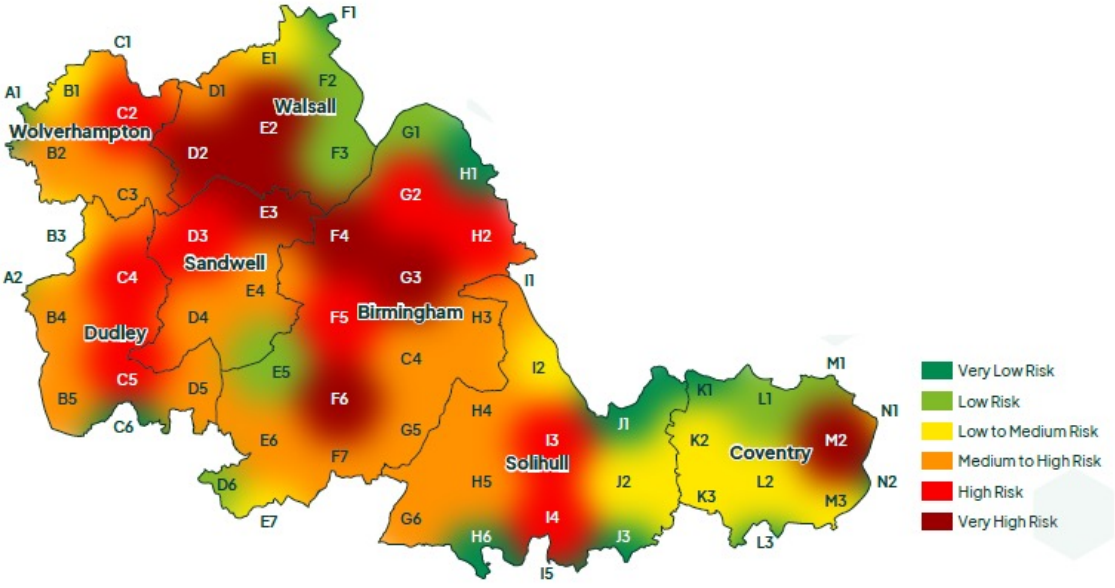
Research undertaken by WMCA suggests that overall, the West Midlands is already experiencing significant changes to our climate, with weather events projected to become even more extreme. We're likely to see both warmer and drier summers, which in turn have the potential to cause socio-economic and environmental problems through the impacts they will have on people, infrastructure and the natural environment. The failure of key infrastructure presents a significant challenge to the region and the UK.

Drainage is likely to be a significant area of challenge in terms of impacts for highway assets. There will be a need to review highways drainage infrastructure and maintenance regimes considering the challenges of climate change.

Adaptation will be more successful if action is taken within the next decade, and, if investment is put into the right responses, interventions could not only protect us from climate impacts, but also provide multiple benefits across society, the economy and support our broader efforts to tackle climate change through carbon reduction goals.

Where are our key climate change risks most prevalent?

Medium and High Fluvial Flood Risk Zones and Major Roads shown across the West Midlands



Infrastructure Climate Vulnerability hotspots for the West Midlands (Utilises infrastructure-based indicators and datasets including housing, public buildings, utilities, transport and service points cross referenced against flooding data, to provide a vulnerability rating).

Sustainable Energy

Current challenges around the supply and cost of energy present challenges for the transport network. We need to think about sustainable energy solutions in the region as the potential of power outages has highlighted a lack of contingency to operate highway assets dependent on power such as streetlighting, traffic signals, variable message signs.

Policy:

Highways assets will be maintained to a high standard through the region's Highway Maintenance Programme, including ensuring that street maintenance and cleaning considers the needs of more vulnerable road users, such as people walking, wheeling, scooting or cycling. TfWM will develop the Central Asset Repository for the KRN in collaboration with Local Authority partners to make best use of data to proactively maintain and improve the network. WMCA will monitor the delivery of the Highway Maintenance Programme as part of the Integrated Settlement.

- WMCA and local authorities will make use of the increasing amount of data available in relation to our assets, to make maintenance more efficient, pro-active and preventative wherever possible, rather than reactively responding to faults.
- We will develop the Central Asset Repository for the Key Route Network in collaboration with Local Authority partners.
- The region's maintenance approaches will take full account of ensuring that the environment is protected including the need to reduce transports impacts and ensure that the network is resilient to and adapts to inevitable climate change.
- WMCA and local authorities will use less carbon-intensive and more climate resilient materials in road construction and maintenance.

Big Move 5: Accessible and inclusive places

In this chapter we set out clearly the importance of creating a new kind of city-region, one where people and businesses can thrive, access all that the West Midlands has to offer; but also where they can live more sustainably without having to make sacrifices. Inclusive design supports access for marginalised groups and helps improve access to opportunities.

How we plan the growth and transformation of the places we live, work and play has a huge impact on the transport system we need to provide, and vice-versa, so we need to bring how we think of them together. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them in our Local Transport Plan.

Where we are now:

Most existing communities and new developments are still planned around the needs of the private vehicles, with sustainable transport modes an after thought. This locks in car dependent behaviours, undermining efforts to encourage more sustainable travel.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

We will have reduced the impacts of growth on the region by using land more effectively and reducing additional travel demand by private car. People will be living or working in places which do not need a car to access them. Those who need a car, can access a car club vehicle and have convenient access to electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

All communities have excellent walking, cycling and public transport access to local schools, shops, healthcare and leisure activities so that most local trips are made by sustainable modes of transport. As a result, neighbourhoods have less traffic, better air quality and people are more physically activity because they can safely and easily walk, wheel and cycle for everyday journeys. Careful consideration is given to servicing and deliveries to minimise the impact of goods vehicles on loal roads.

Part 1: Strategic Context

Introduction

Accessibility is critical to our economic and social success as it provides us with a measure of how well people and organisations can access all of what this region offers. This WMLTP5 reflects a key priority of the WM Growth Plan: to better connect the region's boroughs to its cities and its cities to each other by public transport and shared mobility. Accessibility is also more than just connecting places to each other. It is about the quality of that connection—whether people can use it, want to use it, and find it practical, and only one element within a broad spectrum of measures to making transport truly accessible. To achieve this, we need to move beyond previous definitions that focus only on journey times to accessing jobs and services as what determines 'good' accessibility is more complex. We will use the Triple Access System, which describes how accessibility is determined not only by transport but also by people's physical proximity and digital access to everyday services and opportunities.

According to the latest forecasts by the Office for National Statistics (2018 projections) the West Midlands Combined Authority area is expected to reach a total population of approximately 3.2 million by 2043. This is over 320,000 additional people and 285,000 new homes. This is like adding the equivalent of another city the size of Coventry to our region. If this is not planned well then there could be some significant impacts on the efficiency of our transport system, the safety and attractiveness of our communities, as well as undermining our net zero carbon ambitions.

Like transport, the policy framework which guides land use planning is complex. The updated NPPF (December 2024) set out a new vision led approach to deliver sustainable transport for new developments moving away from the 'predict and provide' approach. Local plans in the West Midlands set out the detailed policies and, in some cases, site-specific proposals. The Government have set out the basis for the reintroduction of strategic planning in the form of a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) in two Bills going through parliament. A SDS will provide a spatial strategy that guides local plans and enables growth. All tiers of planning policy from national, regional to local have a focus to enable economic growth and support the delivery of the Local Growth Plan.

Aligning transport and land use planning better together with opportunities for digital connectivity, to address some of the accessibility challenges which cannot be easily tackled by better transport is vitally important. We will continue to improve how new development is planned, designed and delivered in a coordinated way alongside wider transport policy to improve access and reduce car dependency).

Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Improve Accessibility	Improving accessibility through a positive 'decide and provide' approach should become the guiding principle for both new growth in the West Midlands (i.e. new developments) but also how we re-imagine our urban areas over time. Importantly, first we will need to redefine what we mean by 'accessibility'. In some cases the solution may not be a transport intervention, it could be that existing places need to change to bring more of people's everyday lives closer to where they live. To achieve this will need far greater interaction between the way in which we plan places and transport, and to reimagine neighbourhoods and communities to provide essential services locally and/or digitally where possible. The region will also need to keep ahead of the technology curve to ensure that our residents and businesses can take full advantage of advances in digital technology, to support new ways of working and living. Although our region is largely well supplied with super-fast broadband and 4G connectivity, there are some cold-spots in the network that require filling, and we will need to exploit all that 5G has to offer in the coming years.
Reduce Traffic	We want to grow our region in a way which fundamentally improves people's way of life, preferably being able to do more of their daily activities within a short walk or wheel from where they live; which is our local connected communities concept. In addition we need to exploit the opportunities at regional interchanges to ensure that people can access other services (e.g. health and leisure) by public transport; this is our '45 minute region' concept. This will help to reduce the number of cars on our roads. As well as reducing the need to drive, we also need to create the conditions where households feel that they can reduce the numbers of cars they own. In doing so we can create our virtuous circle where travelling by alternatives to the car just becomes habit for more and more journeys.
Electrify Transport	Although we want to see lower levels of dependency on cars in the region, we do recognise that the car will remain the most flexible form of transport for many journeys. We therefore need to support the transition to zero emission vehicles to deliver growth in a sustainable way. We can do this by ensuring that new homes and developments are built with access to charging points and that existing communities, particularly those homes with no access to an off-street parking place, are able to charge on-street near home. In the future, more community-led car clubs and car sharing options will also support greater use of zero emission vehicles.

Key Issues

Through our evidence base and focused consultation with communities and businesses we have built up a keen understanding of the issues they face and how we can combat these to create great places to live, visit and do business. The primary issues are:

Key issues facing people and businesses

- Car dependency and limiting choice of modes - For many, the car has become a necessity, but we want to create a region where it doesn't have to be. For those without a car, access to employment, education, retail and other opportunities becomes far more difficult. When planning for places we need to look differently and ensure that we consider space and access by modes other than car as a priority.
- Poor levels of accessibility - The triple-access model tells us that what's available to us locally is as important to accessibility as our transport options to travel further afield. Places must be planned in a way which focuses on bringing people's daily needs closer to where they live. Obviously, this is easier in some locations than others, so we will need to consider how the vision may be different in the most dense urban areas with rural, suburban and isolated areas.
- Poor Digital Accessibility - Increased digital connectivity opens up new opportunities for accessing services and helps remove some need to travel. There are some who may not be able to benefit directly from the wider benefits of digital connectivity. A key challenge to overcome is ensuring all communities are not being left behind by the digital divide and that businesses are fully able to benefit from the new digital revolution emerging.

Key issues facing WMCA and partners

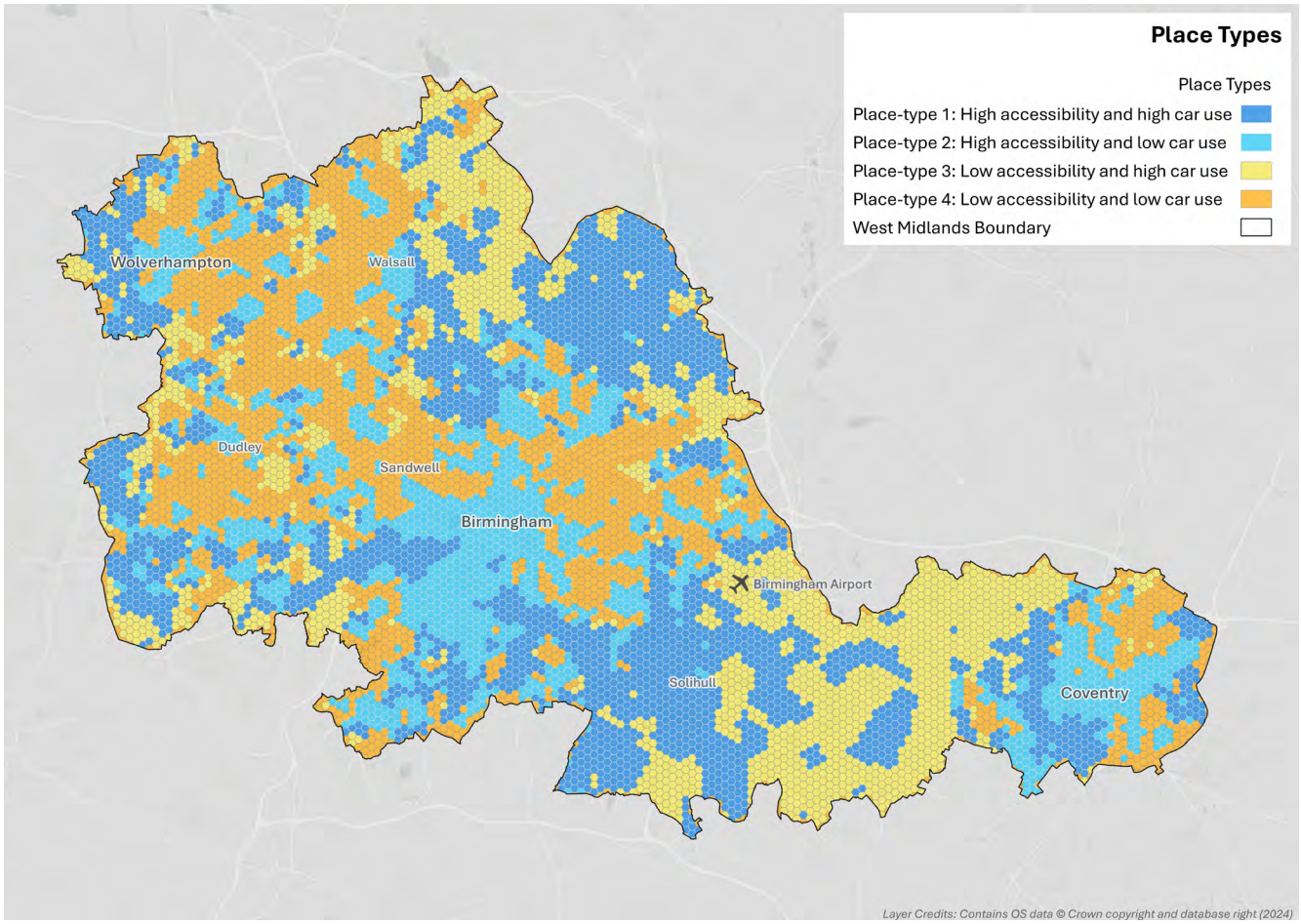
- Appreciating the diversity and individual needs of communities - There is no one size fits all approach to tackling accessibility and a range of solutions are often required, relevant to people's need, abilities, confidence levels and places themselves.
- Changes in our urban form - As the car has become the primary mode of personal travel for many, it has shaped the way the urban form has evolved. As we have such a range of different places, this has caused challenges when it comes to balancing provision for cars with its impacts on wider travel options and place making. Wider master planning may help provide a more holistic approach to ensure improved transport options are provided for new developments, especially in each area or community, helping to deliver on our ambition of a 45 minute region of connected communities and inclusive growth.
- Unlocking growth and new development - The WM Growth Plan seeks to deliver public and private investment in a series of major growth sites and corridors of opportunity. Transport is one of the most important enabling interventions to unlock them
- Limited opportunity for retrofitting - We are a built-out region, there is limited land available to continue to spread our urban form outwards. We know therefore that the next big changes will need us to focus developing brownfield land and retrofitting current assets. From a transport perspective this there is an advantage to this focus, it means we can densify people and activity, thereby reducing distances travelled and improving levels of accessibility overall.
- Governance of transport planning and land use planning - Both transport and land use policy makers are wrestling with very similar challenges of supply and demand, whilst also trying to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives.

Part 2: Policies

Accessibility

The Core Strategy sets out a vision for a 45 minute region of connected communities and the WM Growth Plan highlights the need to better connect the region's boroughs to its cities and its cities to each other by public transport. It will be key to ensure that transport and spatial planning policies help us to nlocks growth corridors and supports high-growth clusters through better connectivity. To help guide our policies and plans we have analysed our region in a way that has not been attempted before. We've taken the three types of accessibility, informed by the Triple Access System described earlier, and created a bespoke measure of how accessible micro-areas (100mx100m) of our region are and how dependent they are on cars. This has helped us enormously to understand the challenges and needs for places right across the region. We will use these place type definitions along with other tools to help guide decisions for what measures are best to help achieve WMLTP5 vision and outcomes across the region. This includes how we consider accessibility as part of the Spatial Development Strategy. This means planning places with accessibility fully in mind, by creating connected neighbourhoods with essential services close to home, improving walking, cycling, and local public transport and supporting car clubs and electric vehicle charging where cars are required and ensuring that digital connectivity is the same for all. By aligning spatial planning, sustainable transport, and digital connectivity, we can create places where people don't need a car to live well. This is central to improving accessibility for all.

Our region broken down into 100mx100m areas, defined by their combination of accessibility and level of car use



Policy:

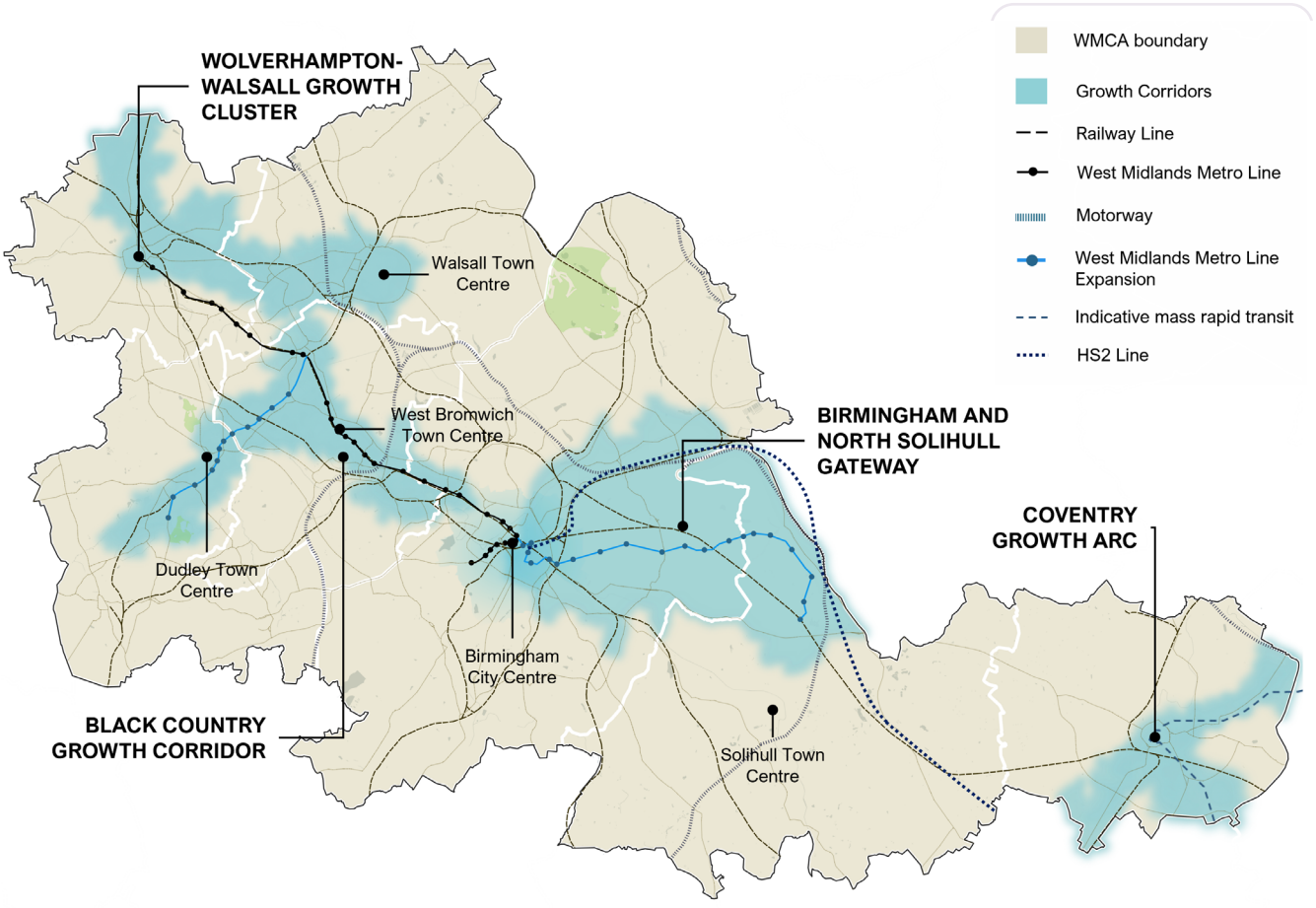
- We will use a range of tools to help us understand accessibility and WMCA will develop accessibility KPIs and targets to allow ongoing monitoring and improvement of people's access to key services and opportunities by sustainable modes.
    - We will ensure this new framework for accessibility is fully embedded in all decision making processes within WMCA, to deliver on good accessibility across all modes of the transport system.
    - We will ensure it considers marginalised groups who don't have any access to a car, especially younger people or those on low incomes.
    - We will consider the WMLTP5 place types as part of the development process for transport measures.
    - The Spatial Development Strategy will apportion and distribute housing need to the most appropriate locations.
    - An Accessibility Principles and Policy Document will be produced, outlining all our accessibility principles and policy areas in one place.
- In line with Government guidance in the NPPF, WMCA and local authorities will adopt a decide and provide (rather than predict and provide) approach to transport in new developments and associated transport enhancements.
    - We will seek to deepen our understanding of the role played by land use planning and digital connectivity, alongside transport accessibility (through the triple access system) and aim to influence the inter-related mechanisms of these three areas to bring about better economic, environmental and social outcomes.
- WMCA will work with local authorities and developers to identify opportunities to enhance accessibility in local areas and new developments, including:
    - Adopting connected neighbourhood principles
    - Providing good Public transport links along with good integration measures.
    - Ensure excellent active travel links and permeability.
    - Providing car clubs and other shared mobility services
    - EV charging infrastructure

Spatial Planning and Land Use

We know that in the past, spatial planning, land use and transport policy has not always been joined up effectively and a more coherent approach is required. The WM Growth Plan sets out that we need over 12,000 new homes and 93,000 more jobs over the next decade and significant development is required in the region to accommodate the growth. Left unaddressed, the positive impact of regeneration and growth could be undermined by traffic growth, if not handled carefully. We also need to meet the rising demand for (social) housing from our growing population. To support more sustainable travel behaviours we need to do this with a particular focus on increasing housing density around regional centres and transport hubs.

Transport also has a role in helping us to transform the priority urban centres and high streets of the region's cities and boroughs. To support the West Midland Local Growth Plan we will undertake continued development and delivery of place-based priorities and Local Network Improvement Plans (LNIPs). We have identified four draft transport corridors which will support housing and employment growth and improve accessibility, in:

- East Birmingham - North Solihull (UK Central Gateway),
- Coventry City Centre and Investment Zone Growth Corridor,
- Black Country Metro Corridor (Dudley to Sandwell), and
- Wolverhampton-Walsall Corridor.



Spatial Planning

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

While many of the spatial planning ambitions of our local authorities are based within their boundaries, it is crucial that cross-boundary collaboration takes place. WMCA can support this by planning the strategic transport needs of new developments. WMCA can promote key strategic policies to achieve our WMLTP5 objectives, especially the desire to create connected communities within a 45-minute region and create places with a good range of services in our neighbourhoods that can be accessed in a round trip of no more than 15 minutes". This provides partners with a strong framework for local areas to employ in their own spatial planning and development priorities.

Policy:

WMCA will work alongside Local Planning Authorities to ensure that the Spatial Development Strategy encourages and supports new development in accessible locations by:

- encouraging higher density development in locations with good accessibility close to high frequency transport corridors and hubs in the existing urban area before exploring growth areas in other locations.
- promoting mixed use development which provide a balance of land uses - served by sustainable transport infrastructure and services.
- adopting a brownfield first approach.
- An infrastructure first approach will serve as a guiding principle for the development of the Strategic Development Strategy. Growth must be supported by the guarantee for the provision of transport as well as other infrastructure requirements.

WMCA will collaborate with local planning authorities to ensure that all local plans and supplementary planning documents are accompanied by a robust transport evidence base and policy framework to maximise the accessibility and sustainability of new developments (in line with Planning Design and Principles Guide).

WMCA will ensure that any enhancements to the Key Route Network are co-ordinated carefully with local plan proposals along the corridor to maximise the benefits of investment.

WMCA will also ensure marginalised groups (including young people and low income groups) are considered in new transport schemes which support new development, so they can fully benefit and access new opportunities these deliver on.

Masterplanning

If done effectively master planning can convey a more strategic and comprehensive approach to new development; ensuring sustainable transport infrastructure and shared mobility options are fully built into a development's vision and design from day one. It's also vital we consider clusters of smaller developments in a given area or corridor where combined their cumulative impacts can be significant.

Master planning will also help align our overarching principles laid out in the WMLTP5 core strategy with that of local plans as well as help capture good sustainable transport routes both through the development itself as well as beyond site boundaries to the wider, existing transport network. Therefore, master planning should be seen as a key tool for strengthening our partnerships with Local Planning Authorities, delivering synergies within land use and transport planning and in helping to enhance people's levels of accessibility within new development.

Policy:

WMCA will support and encourage the use of Masterplans to help shape and inform new developments to enable their needs to be planned holistically. Masterplans can be used to help ensure that land is used efficiently while also creating high quality and sustainable places.

Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that the potential impacts of development on transport networks can be addressed and a range of transport measures coordinated and opportunities from existing or proposed transport infrastructure and services including changing transport technology and usage can be considered and realised.

Masterplanning allows new developments to be planned and delivered more effectively including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects.

Design

We want new developments to be designed in ways which encourage fewer car journeys with roads with lower speed and access restrictions; parking management measures; and road space reallocation to riding, walking and wheeling; which through good design principles, will allow for good street environments to be developed which encourage sustainable travel and promote good health and well-being. Therefore, working with our local planning authorities on new design codes will be essential to achieving this. The design of development must also prioritise accessibility to ensure that excluded groups can travel safely, independently, and with dignity. This involves inclusive planning that considers varied mobility, sensory, and caregiving needs to reinforce inclusion and equality throughout all our transport designs and development. The SDS together local plans will provide the key policies that will inform how new development and regeneration is delivered. To help inform this WMCA has developed supporting policy and guidance:

- The WMCA Design Charter sets out twelve principles across six themes to promote, inspire and encourage great design initiatives and quality place making across the West Midlands. The theme of 'connectivity and mobility' within the Charter promotes a 'regional network' where new developments must contribute to enhancing regional connectivity by integrating effectively to existing and planned transport networks, that considers both the development site and the wider area. The Charter also encourages 'modal shift' for new developments to demonstrate promoting walking, cycling and public transport over individual car journeys. The Charter is being reviewed with the aim to bring together different strands of policy from across WMCA into a cohesive one-stop document on design for new development. Improving the lives of residents sits at the forefront of the Design Charter review that will consider how we can address areas such as health, inequalities, affordability, biodiversity, public transport, community spaces, among others.

- WMCA Infrastructure Design Guidance will embed areas like safety and good accessibility standards into all our schemes and products. Then, to further strengthen good design quality, a Design Excellence Panel - made up of industry experts - is being established to review WMCA and partner-funded schemes, with a focus on key areas including good accessibility and design.

- TfWM has also developed a Planning Design guidance document in partnership with local planning authorities to develop a new Planning Design and Principles Guide, setting out how sustainable transport principles and triple access planning can be embedded into the planning process. These will help guide WMCA responses to new development proposals e.g. formalising the sustainable travel hierarchy and guidance on design and funding of sustainable transport infrastructure and services. Providing guidance on electric vehicle charging infrastructure, logistics and servicing, car clubs, mobility hubs and other transport innovations.

- Good design also requires Health and Equity Impact Assessments to be undertaken and meaningful engagement throughout the design process, including co-production and co-design with all affected communities, to ensure design solutions reflect real-life experiences.

Outside of new developments we also know that how we design our streets, including the West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN), is vitally important in helping to influence travel behaviours and to create good places. How WMCA and local authorities approach the design of the KRN and its allocation of scarce road space is considered in the “Safe, efficient and reliable network” Big Move. Local authorities also determine the design of their streets not on the KRN. This design needs to consider promotion of sustainable transport modes, such as through the “Healthy Streets” approach.

Policy:

WMCA and local planning authorities will work together through the SDS and local plans to ensure that new development and regeneration proposals consider sustainable transport principles and triple access planning to support WMLTP5 outcomes.

Digital Accessibility

Digital accessibility creates new opportunities for accessing education and for some can reduce the need to travel. There is a need to support the communities and businesses of the West Midlands and their ability to work, upskill and learn from home. This will also reduce the need to travel for work and reduce the overall demand on the transport network. The pandemic saw a step change in the adoption rate of digital solutions and the digital revolution has now transformed the way we communicate and access many services.

Good digital infrastructure is crucial for two reasons: to ensure that the digitally enabled transport services are reliable (such as Demand Responsive Transport (DRT)), and to give people better access to other services from home so they do not need to physically make some trips.

The region has world-class digital connectivity and being confirmed as the best-connected Combined Authority region for 5G outside London, with 65% geographic coverage, up from 22% in 2021. The region is also making strides with digital skills through skills provision which includes more than £27m in recent funding for bootcamps. WMCA are widely recognised as national leaders in using data to drive service improvement and have been crucial public sector partners to firms working on the future of mobility.

In 2024, the WMCA and its partners updated the West Midlands Digital Roadmap 2024-2027. This continues to take an evidence-based approach to digital connectivity, recognising the immense potential of digital technology in transforming the regional economy and enhancing economic resilience. The Roadmap outlines the trajectory for the next three years, emphasising collaboration and innovation. It also details some significant challenges for the region, including around digital inclusion with 46% of the region's population are non/limited users of the internet.

Digital Roadmap analysis also shows that the region needs 280,000 more people to gain essential digital skills to be line with the national average. Furthermore, there are 69,000 fewer adults in the region using digital public services compared to the national average. This discrepancy may indicate longstanding digital inclusion issues that require targeted interventions.

Policy:

WMCA will work with partners to reduce digital exclusion in our communities - through training, better digital service design and access to appropriate digital devices, taking forward the 5 Core missions as set out in the WMCA's Digital Roadmap:

- Securing access for everyone to digital opportunities, particularly those in poverty
- Sharing and using data to improve people's lives
- Becoming the UK's best-connected region
- Realising the potential of digital to transform our economy and build economic resilience
- Using digital public services to build a fairer, greener, healthier region.

Policy:

- WMCA will work with its partners to build a better understanding of how digital connectivity and accessibility can and does support wider accessibility to services and opportunities in the West Midlands, including identifying locations and communities that are experiencing digital exclusion.
- We will continue to build on our understanding of the potential benefits of digital connectivity - linked to wider work on accessibility and setting out support for the WMCA digital roadmap.


Unlock
Or enter unlock ID
Early Bird Ride
636-803
Or enter bike ID


West Midlands Cycle Hire

Big Move 6: Green transport revolution

In this Chapter we set out clearly the important role transport must to both reduce the impact of transport on people and places and ensure that we are ready for the impacts of climate change. Our region must work together to tackle the climate emergency, improve air quality and maintain biodiversity. We can achieve this by supporting sustainable lifestyles and supporting a technology revolution. We present our policies under this Big Move and provide the background and context for why we have included them in our Local Transport Plan.

Where we are now:

The pace and rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure is too slow and a known barrier to more people making the switch. Innovation in the transport field often happens in silos which is holding back further opportunities and benefits, particularly to accelerate our trajectory to net-zero carbon by 2041. Transport has a significant detrimental and ultimately unsustainable impact on the natural and built environment.

Where we would like to be if our Big Move is successful:

We are exploiting our strengths in products such as public transport, connected and autonomous vehicles, 5G, Mobility as a Service and modern infrastructure construction techniques as well as battery technology to provide world-class transport services for residents and businesses. Our region has become a place to test and trial innovative new ways of developing, managing and maintaining the transport network. The extensive network of recharging and refueling hubs available supports a rapid transition to low-emission vehicles (car/van, lorries and public transport), creating cleaner air and meeting our net zero commitments.

Part 1: Strategic Context

Introduction

The Green Transport Revolution outlined in WMLTP5 plays a vital role in improving public health and protecting the environment by accelerating the transition to zero-emission vehicles and reducing the harmful impacts of transport on air, land, and water. By supporting the rollout of electric vehicle infrastructure, promoting clean public transport fleets, and encouraging shared mobility, the plan helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter—key contributors to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.

These actions also reduce noise pollution and create quieter, safer streets that encourage walking and cycling, further supporting physical activity and mental wellbeing. Additionally, the plan integrates climate adaptation and biodiversity protection into transport planning, ensuring that infrastructure enhances rather than harms the natural environment, contributing to cleaner air, healthier communities, and a more resilient region.

Delivering a green revolution through our WMLTP5 means partnership working between the public and private sector to protect and enhance our built and natural environments, in a way that stimulates our local industry to produce the products and services that support inclusive growth.

The policies in this Big Move support the Growth Plan by

- helping to support and accelerate clean tech adoption, supports ZEV and battery clusters, and aligns with wider industrial decarbonisation goals.
- Setting out measures to enhance the built and natural environments, support biodiversity, and align with wider sustainability goals.
- supporting green skills development and inclusive access to clean mobility, tackling climate impacts on communities

We will aim to decarbonise the West Midland's private and public fleets by moving away from conventional and hybrid fossil fuel vehicles to zero emission alternatives. This will be critical to reducing emissions associated with transport and will also help to improve local air quality and reduce noise pollution. Our automotive industry is well placed to support this aim.

But transport innovation in the West Midlands, goes beyond making cars and we also have wider sector mobility strengths in products such as public transport, connected and autonomous vehicles, advanced digital connectivity such as 5G, Mobility as a Service and modern infrastructure construction techniques as well as battery technology.

Finally it isn't just enough to improve how we travel; we need to make sure that transport has a significantly reduced impact on the environment. The land, water and air that we depend on is being consumed and damaged at rates that are unsustainable. We need to reduce our impacts by pursuing the appropriate policies in an appropriate way to help us live within the capacity of our planet and minimise, and where possible turn back damage to our environment.

Our region must work together to tackle the climate emergency, improve air quality and maintain biodiversity. We can achieve this by supporting sustainable lifestyles and supporting a technology revolution.

Our Core Strategy says we need to:	How our Big Move will contribute to these goals:
Electrifying Transport	Accelerating the shift away from internal combustion engines is the main focus for this Big Move. Whilst progress is being made, the pace and rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure needs to accelerate and is a known barrier to more people making the switch. We need to get infrastructure to where users need it: at home (for areas where there is little or no off-street parking), enroute for longer journeys and at the destinations people travel to. Each of those has their own needs (in terms of space, standard long-stay/rapid or ultra-rapid charging) which will need to be planned for carefully. There is also a need for us to think about integrating electric vehicles into a wider 'public' transport offer through the use of car clubs and the promotion of shared use/ownership models for EVs.
Reduce Traffic	Technology will drive radical changes in transport in the next few decades with profound implications for users and businesses. Electrification, connectivity, automation, and real-time data collection and analysis are driving the development of new modes of travel and new ways to do business. Transport innovation has significant opportunities for the people and businesses of the region by making journeys more affordable, reliable and safer whilst reducing the impact on the environment. There is more to our innovation work than to simply reduce traffic but technology will have a strong role to play in both managing demand and reducing the need to travel.
Improve Accessibility	Digital connectivity forms part of our new definition and way of measuring accessibility for the West Midlands. Having access to good digital connectivity will have an increasing impact on people's quality of life. We will need to think carefully about some of the potential unintended consequences of future technology and innovation. We will ensure that it is a positive addition to our region and adds to our wider definition of how we want accessibility to improve. Without the right frameworks and policies in place new modes of transport and business models could have potentially disruptive impacts on accessibility.

Key Issues

Key issues facing transport users

- Charging and refuelling infrastructure - Switching to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) is one of the most accepted ways in which behaviour change can help to deliver towards our WMLTP5 objectives. However, concerns about the availability of charging infrastructure and a lack of understanding about the options comes up as a constant barrier for many seeking to change to ultra low or zero emission vehicles. There is an expected variation in ZEV uptake and charging pilots, but the pace in growth of infrastructure needs to be addressed to deliver the switch to ZEV's.
- Environmental impacts - We are already observing more frequent and intense extreme weather events as a result of climate change, causing widespread adverse impacts and related losses and damage to nature and people. Awareness of how travel choices impact the environment is increasing, but clearer links need to be made to encourage people to adopt more sustainable transport.
- Innovation - Transport innovation has significant opportunities for the people and businesses of the region by making journeys more affordable, reliable and safer whilst reducing the impact on the environment. But new technologies need to be designed in a user centric way and ensure they support the wider objectives of the WMLTP5. Otherwise a move to connected, automated and zero emission mobility has the potential, if poorly managed, to worsen congestion and public health.

Key issues facing WMCA and partners

- Role within the ZEV market - The number of charge points required to meet charging demand depends heavily on the type of charging technologies installed and the extent of change in travel behaviour away from private cars towards sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport. The responsibility for delivering, owning and operating charging infrastructure sits with multiple organisations, including WMCA. Local authorities and WMCA have a role in creating strategic plans for regional roll out of charging infrastructure, as well as collaborating with energy providers to improve the grid capacity in anticipation of ZEV's increased energy demands.
- Responding to environmental challenges - More adaptation action is required nationally, regionally and locally to respond to increased climate change risks. Funding to invest in improvements to respond to and address environmental challenges will need to come from a range of sources. Ensuring the right principles are embedded into the region's approach to transport planning and delivery will be a key part of helping to create a coherent response to these complex and cross cutting challenges.
- Ensuring new transport innovations work for people and place - If transport innovation and technological changes are not effectively managed or designed in a user centric way, they could have undesired effects on people and places. This could include increasing congestion or reducing sustainable travel, particularly public transport usage, which in turn could reduce the financial viability of the network. This could be a risk especially in areas where demand is already low and if services are cut further then this could have a range of social, economic and environmental implications including worsening social exclusion.

Part 2: Policies

Zero emission vehicles (ZEV)

A ZEV is defined as one which emits 0g of carbon dioxide from the tailpipe per kilometre travelled and typically refers to Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs) and Hydrogen Fuel-Cell Vehicles (FCEV). It should be noted that whilst ZEVs do not have any tailpipe emissions, they will still produce particulate matter emissions from brake and tyre wear; a key issue for air quality.

The UK's commitment is to stop the sale of new pure petrol and diesel cars by 2030, with all new cars needing to be 100% zero-emission (electric) by 2035. By 2035 it is expected that most new two and three wheeler vehicles will also be zero emissions by 2035 (subject to consultation).

Addressing carbon emissions and ZEV policy must be more than simply encouraging and planning for people to exchange their current vehicles for ZEVs of the same type as their previous vehicles. Some of the most popular hybrid and ZEV today are large and heavy SUVs - each requiring significantly more energy consumption and space than a smaller lighter vehicle to move the same people.

The higher the reliance on private ZEV cars is, the higher the charging demand will be, leading to more charge points required. The WMLTP5's ambition to move away from private vehicle use towards walking, cycling and public transport will affect the demand for ZEV charging/refueling - this will in turn affect charging/refueling infrastructure requirements.

Ensuring the West Midlands is well placed for the wide-scale uptake of ZEVs can help drive economic growth through regeneration, planning, business growth, skills, tourism and inward investment - all even more important in the light of ongoing economic pressures. Manufacturing is part of the West Midlands' future as well as its heritage. It supports 273,000 jobs and contributes £22 billion per annum to the regional economy. Anchored by several large manufacturing firms and leading innovation centres, the region hosts deep, high-value supply chains across metals, materials, and fabrication. It is now emerging as a hub for next-generation manufacturing, supported by a growing, innovative logistics sector and driven by advances in technology adoption, including robotics and AI.

Growth in ZEVs is accelerating with sales making up just under half of all new car registrations but is still a small part of overall vehicle fleet. We will need to ensure that charging infrastructure is not either a perceived or a real barrier to the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs). The Taking Charge strategy in 2022. This sets out that for Mayoral authorities, the roles and responsibilities are to:

Phasing out Internal Combustion Engines

The Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan sets out a roadmap for removing all emissions from the road transport:

2030 - end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans (updated from 2030)

2035 - all new cars and vans must be 100% zero emission at the tailpipe

2035 - all new L-category vehicles (powered two-/three-wheelers etc.) fully zero emission at the tailpipe (new ones): 2035 (subject to consultation in many cases)

2035 - All new HGVs up to ~26 t to be zero emission.

2040 - All new HGVs (heavy) to be zero emission by: 2040 backstop.

DfT consulted on setting a date to end sale/registration of new non-zero-emission buses/coaches and minbuses between 2025 and 2032; the consultation summary (July 2025) highlighted 2030 as the earliest realistic milestone for ending registration of non-ZEB local buses. Final legal date depends on legislation including the Bus Services Bill.

The need for charging and refuelling infrastructure

The West Midlands, has seen above average growth in ZEV ownership and with its geographical location at the heart of the UK's transport network it will see increasing pressure for charging infrastructure. Projected Ownership of private electric vehicles in WM is estimated to be around 543,000 by 2030 and 1.27 million by 2040. A total of 14,322 chargepoints is expected to be needed by 2030 and 40,230 by 2040, compared to the current 4,817 chargepoints in the region (July 2025).

Intervention from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Local Authorities (LAs) is needed to help co-ordinate and support delivery of:

- On-street residential ZEV charging infrastructure.
- Rapid or ultra-rapid transit charging and/or charging hubs in locations where significant grid reinforcement is required.
- Rapid or ultra-rapid transit charging in locations where short-term user demand is likely to be low.

A West Midlands ULEV Strategy was developed jointly by WMCA, the seven West Midlands LAs, Warwickshire CC and WMCA / Energy Capital and was approved by WMCA Board in January 2020. It set out an approach for the provision of chargepoint infrastructure for the region and detail on the trajectory of technology development in this sector and provides an assessment of infrastructure requirements for private/smaller fleet vehicles up to 2040. Further strategies have also been developed by local authorities.

WMCA is developing a refreshed ZEV infrastructure strategy (ZEVIS) to complement this WMLTP5. Work to inform the new ZEVIS has shown that from the mid 2020s, charging availability is expected to increase rapidly for homes without off-street parking, opening up mass ZEV adoption for private car owners and some van operators.

Private vehicle charging (catering for cars, vans and motorcycles) will be split between public network and home/private charging, whereas shared mobility services such as car clubs with largely will rely on a public network. There will need to be a mix of provision across the region in terms of on-street, local hubs, en-route and destination/ workplace parking.

The focus for the public sector will need to be supporting those who don't have access to charging at their properties. Approximately 1 in 4 households in the WM do not have access to off-street parking at their home. For those without access to off-street parking, there are two charging options to complement destination and en-route charging:

- Slow on-street charging - provides slow overnight charging close to their house/ property; for example, at lampposts or at the kerbside.
- Hub charging - provides quick and accessible charging at central locations within a local area, similar to taking a car to a petrol station. These can be fast or rapid, but a benefit of rapid hubs in residential locations is that they will also support other user groups such as hackney carriages, private hire vehicles and car clubs.

When planning our charging network it is crucial to select the appropriate location with sufficient power distribution and charging demand. Local area energy plans and the Infrastructure for Zero Emission Vehicle (IZEV) strategy considers how to integrate the planning of charging infrastructure with the wider energy infrastructure to ensure that the sites are optimally positioned for current and future grid capacity. Planning policy can help control the installation of charge points in current and new developments. This will ensure they are appropriately distributed and reflect spatial planning of the charging network. It can also drive developer contributions towards charging infrastructure.

The region will develop a regional ZEV infrastructure strategy to complement the WMLTP5 to:

- Help deliver ambitious tailored local ZEV charging infrastructure delivery that provide scaled, commercially sustainable public charging provisions.
- Ensure clear ownership and resourcing of the planning and delivery of EV charging infrastructure rollout.
- Ensure that local chargepoints are inclusively designed and accessible for residents, businesses, and visitors, and in line with local authorities' legal obligations.

Taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs)

Taxis and PHVs are a key user group for early deployment of fast and rapid charge points, partly because they drive many more miles annually than the average private car leading to higher charging demands. Electric taxis are slowly growing in adoption. 6% of taxis and 33% of PHV's in the WM are hybrid or electric. Private Hire Vehicles generally have the same choice of EV's as personal car owners, offering a wide variety of price points and models. Hackney Carriages must be a particular vehicle model and wheelchair accessible. Both will require standard EV charging infrastructure.

Taxi ranks in centres and at key destinations present quick-win locations for chargepoint installation. Provision of secure, reliable charging points in visible locations is important. Additionally, chargepoints should be interoperable for the range of charging connectors and networks available. This will allow both taxis and the public to utilise the infrastructure and de-risk investments.

Local Authorities are responsible for setting licensing standards for taxis/PHVs, but there is not currently a consistent regional approach to licencing standards and incentivising a shift to ZEV taxis and PHVs. However, the region will collectively need to require most taxi and private hire vehicles to switch to ZEV in line with legal requirements for the end of sales of petrol and diesel vehicles.

E-bikes & micromobility

Ownership and use of e-bikes and e-scooters has grown in recent years as devices have become more easily available to the public through retailers and as they have been made available through shared schemes (e.g. West Midlands Cycle Hire).

Government consulted on potential changes to UK e-bike legislation in terms of their power limit and throttle assistance in 2024 but decided not to proceed with the proposed changes. The consultation found insufficient evidence to support the proposed changes and gather enough favourable responses As such the regulations for Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycles (EAPCs) remain the same: motors must have a maximum power output of 250 watts, assistance must be pedal-activated, and the assisted speed limit is 15.5 mph (25 km/h).

Currently the majority of e-scooters and e-bikes are provided through public shared schemes. Charging should be located in conjunction with hire scheme docking stations, largely along key routes and at key destinations.

There has been limited recharging infrastructure interventions to facilitate their use. However, as their use grows, this may need to change. Whilst most privately owned e-bikes and micromobility vehicles will be charged at home / workplace, there will still be a need for en-route/destination charging facilities. Co-location with a local travel point / mobility hub network, could help to expand a network for both e-bikes.

Buses

To achieve the region's aim to achieve net zero by 2041, continued investment in zero-emission buses is critical. This not only means the vehicles themselves, but we source the energy to power these vehicles. Buses are also a major contributor to some of the region's on-going and acute air quality problems which harm local health, creating further imperative for this investment.

The region has been making progress towards cleaner bus fleets and most of the region's fleet is now Euro VI. In 2021 the first hydrogen buses in England outside London entered service in Birmingham following a project led by Birmingham City Council.

Around 20% of the region's buses are already zero-emission including the Coventry All Electric Bus project. This has enabled all buses operating in Coventry to be zero emission by 2025 and develop charging infrastructure including upgrades such as charge points at bus depots across Coventry and Warwickshire.

Being able to provide better buses including a zero emission fleet was one of the key objectives behind the decision to reform bus services and bring them back under public control in the West Midlands. Having taken the decision, WMCA is now in a transition and mobilisation phase with the first of three franchise tranches expected to go-live in October 2027. The other tranches will roll out over the next two years. As part of franchising implementation, we will develop a fleet strategy which sets out how we will move to a zero emissions fleet. The franchising assessment included various position and assumptions were set out in relation to the delivery model. For fleet, these included:

- WMCA owning fleet for the large contracts and providing this to operators.
- Acquisition of existing fleet, primarily from National Express and including their Zenobe contract for 459 battery electric buses.
- A renewal programme which would see vehicles replaced after 15-years, with diesel buses being replaced by zero emission buses (assuming funding available).

The current trajectory for achieving a zero emission bus fleet is 2036. Whilst more funding will be needed, franchising is the best platform for continuing this investment as it creates opportunities to reduce costs as well as giving WMCA the control over the pace of change and deployment of vehicles to best effect.

Policy:

Through franchising we will continue the transition to a zero-emission fleet to support net-zero ambitions and tackle poor air quality; working to ensure we have the funding to replace end of life diesel buses with new zero-emission vehicles and, if possible, accelerate the pace of change to achieve a transition faster than the current 2036 trajectory.

Rail

The West Midlands region features a diverse rail-based public transport system comprising very light rail, metro, heavy rail, and tram-trains. The West Midlands Metro already operates electric services using overhead lines and battery power, while Coventry's proposed Very Light Rail will be fully battery-electric.

However, the heavy rail network faces significant decarbonisation challenges. As of 2020, only 38% of the UK rail network was electrified. Although the Walsall-Rugeley Trent Valley line was electrified in 2019, and HS2 promotes zero-emission travel, the cancellation of HS2 north of Lichfield limits capacity gains for regional services.

Diesel trains dominate operations at Birmingham New Street, despite the station's electrification. Key unelectrified routes include services to Shrewsbury, Hereford, Leicester, Derby, Cardiff, and beyond. The Snow Hill lines are also fully diesel-operated, contributing to air pollution in enclosed stations like Birmingham Snow Hill and New Street.

Network Rail's 2020 Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy and the 2022 West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy both advocate a long-term rolling programme of electrification, supported by battery hybrid and hydrogen trains for rural areas. Electrification is seen as the most credible long-term solution, with bi-mode trains offering medium-term benefits.

Priority routes for electrification include:

- Snow Hill lines (Leamington Spa-Stratford-Worcester)
- Nuneaton-Birmingham/Walsall (freight corridor)
- Cross Country network and Midlands Rail Hub and the routes to the deep sea intermodal terminals at Southampton.

Despite financial constraints and cancellations of schemes like the Midland Main Line, progress is being made. West Midlands Railway has introduced lower-emission Class 196 trains, and Avanti West Coast now uses bi-mode trains. Chiltern Railways plans to deploy HVO-fuelled trains and explore battery/electric bi-modes for the Chiltern Main Line.

Bi-mode trains could reduce diesel use on partially electrified routes, improving air quality and noise levels. However, CrossCountry's refurbishment of diesel fleets may delay full transition until the late 2030s.

Finally, full decarbonisation requires sustainably sourced electricity. WMCA will review the energy supply for Metro trams to ensure alignment with net-zero goals.

The key challenge for rail based public transport is for the heavy rail network. Only 38% of the UK rail network was electrified as of 2020. Most recently electrification of the line between Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley has seen improvements to journeys. The delivery of HS2 in the West Midlands is championing zero-emission inter-regional/national rail travel. Rail is also currently the only means of transporting heavy goods in a low-carbon way using existing, proven technology through electrification.

However, significant gaps in the electrified network remain. Delivery of net zero by 2050, and the elimination of diesel-only trains by 2040 in line with Government commitments, means the rail industry needs to start delivering a significant programme of electrification very quickly if it is to meet these targets.

Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy states that achieving the Government's net zero target will require a commitment to a long-term, stable and efficient programme of works which will last at least the next thirty years. The West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy sets out a need for the rail industry to include electrification as a core part of any investments. The progress of electrification of the network will also have implications for service improvements.

The West Midlands supports the view that for most routes electrification is the only credible option, and that other options such as battery only or hydrogen-only trains are only likely to be suitable for lightly used lines or where a bespoke solution is appropriate. West Midlands Rail Executive strongly supports a rolling programme of electrification across the entire region and is working closely with Network Rail on their prioritisation process for electrification in the West Midlands. The key priorities for electrification in the West Midlands are:

- The Snow Hill lines between Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon and Worcester.
- Nuneaton - Birmingham/Walsall which is core artery for freight to/from the electrified West Coast main line.
- The wider Cross Country network, including Midlands Rail Hub and Leamington - Coventry - Nuneaton, for both local/national passenger and freight services to/from south west, north east and the deep sea intermodal terminals at Southampton.

The interim use of bi-mode rolling stock can bring decarbonisation benefits earlier than full electrification. These could be used to extend non-diesel operation beyond the extent of the overhead line on service groups that operate beyond their reach (and there are some of these in the West Midlands) or to reduce noise and pollution in built up areas and at stations.

Finally to fully decarbonise light rail and heavy rail services, the electricity supply must come from a sustainable and renewable source. WMCA will review the energy source for Midland Metro trams, with aim of converting it to sustainably sourced energy. Coventry's proposed Very Light Rail network will also be fully electric.

The future of freight and logistics charging and refuelling

The Government aims to phase out the sale of petrol and diesel HGV's by 2040, following consultation with the industry. This may be pushed back though, since the phase out of petrol and diesel cars has been.

Research undertaken for Midlands Connect in 2019 indicated the two main barriers constraining uptake of low carbon fuels by this sector by the mid-2020s are likely to be a lack of access to suitable charging infrastructure for larger vehicles and a lack of information about the benefits and operational suitability of this technology. Addressing these barriers could help increase rates of fleet uptake of plug-in vehicles in the Midlands.

WMCA is working with Birmingham University, Aston University and other stakeholders to further engage with the logistics sector in the West Midlands on plans for decarbonisation. We are is also engaging with Birmingham City University to explore the case of increased bio-methane applications in the transport sector. Preliminary evidence facilitated by BCU suggests significant potential for retrofit applications that could be advantageous in freight and sectors sector. This could be useful as part of a pathway towards longer term hydrogen and EV adoption.

The fuel of choice for the freight and logistics sector is still very much under consideration. There have been substantial developments with fuels like hydrogen, supported by government and the 'green industrial revolution', the technology is still being developed and is not ready for full-scale roll-out .

Due to the shortcomings of electric HGVs in terms of range and the increase in prevalence of biofuels, we must ensure that any infrastructure proposed caters for businesses' current and future needs.

Given the wider, cross boundary challenges associated with freight movements, we will need to work with a wider partnership of authorities and national bodies to develop a coherent strategy for infrastructure in and around the West Midlands.

Further work done by Midlands Connect has identified a potential network of recharging and refuelling locations that could satisfy the demand by the freight sector up to 2040. This will also need to be closely aligned with work on the West Midlands Local Area Energy Plans to see if and how these sites in the West Midlands could be brought forward.

Developing zero emission vehicle charging and refuelling infrastructure

WMCA will work with local authority partners to determine the best owner and operator models for the region. There isn't one model that can possibly cover the range and types of charging, it depends on a multiple range of factors. A mixed approach to owner / operators is better as it gives flexibility to WMCA and local authorities based on funding availability and the appetite for commercial operators to invest in the market. The updated West Midlands Zero Emissions Vehicle Charging and Refuelling Infrastructure Strategy will consider this.

Matching Commercial Arrangements to charging use cases

- **Own and Operate** is effective when the landowner has the appetite to take more responsibility, capital available to invest and/or needs to take control. It is good for areas where the private sector will not deploy but is a capital-intensive choice for the landowner.
- **Public-Private Commercial Partnerships** are suited to situations where private investment is sought onto the organisation's land, but the landowner wishes to retain a level of control. WMCA or a local authority can negotiate a contract which best meets their needs and is commercially acceptable to the market. Private sector funding is leveraged.
- **Land Lease** is preferable when landowner does not want control of the service but is in a position to release land for the use of EV charging. The arrangement is fully dependent on private investment for the infrastructure and reliant on the resulting service. This also means that the landowner has a smaller opportunity to control or benefit from the network.

The proposed owner/operator model for the West Midlands as set out in the ZEVI strategy is:

- **Residential public charging** will be led by LAs; WMCA will support where required.
- **Commercial charging** will be led by the respective private or public sector organisations (including WMCA at its sites).
- WMCA will commission **destination charging** where WMCA manages car parks and support LA activity.
- Development and provision of **EV stations** will be managed by WMCA, including Park and Ride locations, key transit interchanges and land owned by WMCA, subject to local planning policy.
- **En-route charging locations** will be made available by WMCA where it is the landowner.

Principles for choosing an operation model

- Availability of public funding to finance EV infrastructure.
- Level of involvement and control that WMCA or the LA's wish to have in infrastructure delivery.
- Level of control WMCA will allow the operator to have in service delivery.
- Level of financial and non-financial risk WMCA is willing to take on.

The preferred ownership/operation model and procurement processes across the LA's are set out in WMCA's ULEV strategy (Jan 2020). This will be updated to reflect national EV charging guidance and statutory requirements.

Each ownership model will reflect the market forces, infrastructure type and other factors found in each LA.

Policy:

WMCA, TfWM and local authorities partners will work together with National Highways, Midlands Connect and neighbouring authorities to develop an updated West Midlands Zero Emissions Vehicle Charging and Refuelling Infrastructure Strategy, to guide the provision of a public charging infrastructure network that meets the needs of existing and new communities and businesses across the region and which supports an equitable transition to electric vehicles. The strategy will consider the needs of private vehicles, and commercial vehicles, including HGVs, LGVs, Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles and other shared vehicles.

- WMCA and local authorities will ensure a range of public charging infrastructure is provided that meets the requirements of communities and businesses across the region, this will include destination and en-route charging in the right locations from slower charging to rapid and ultra rapid to ensure equitable access to electric vehicles.
- WMCA and local authorities LAs and WMCA will ensure a range of public charging infrastructure is provided that meets the requirements of communities and businesses across the region, this will include destination and en-route charging in the right locations from slower charging to rapid and ultra rapid to ensure equitable access to electric vehicles
- We will develop an updated West Midlands Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. This will build on the work already undertaken by TfWM and local authorities. This will support WMCA and Local Authorities to engage with the market across the range of charging infrastructure required for the West Midlands through procurement activities and to incentivise commercial investment in infrastructure to ensure best value for associated public investment.
- Key actions from this strategy include:
  - Convening stakeholders to oversee the programme
  - Capturing data based on measurable goals and KPIs
  - Creating a masterplan for EV charging infrastructure
  - Collaborating with regional bodies to deliver infrastructure

The provision and locations of charging stations will be strategically planned including on the key route network and strategic road network for HGVs and LGVs, but also at mobility hubs to provide easy access to other greener modes of transport and to provide charging for cars where private provision of off-street parking is unavailable.

- We will work with Midlands Connect / other local authorities to develop a coherent strategy for infrastructure in and around the West Midlands to develop and deliver a network of recharging and refuelling locations that could satisfy the demand by the freight sector up to 2040.
- Planning Policy including the Spatial Development Strategy will need to ensure that these factors are taken into account when bringing forward new development. At the same time the design of infrastructure will need to ensure that it is appropriately providing accessibility for all.
- WMCA commits through franchising to develop a coherent approach to rolling out low emission buses across the region as part of a fleet strategy.

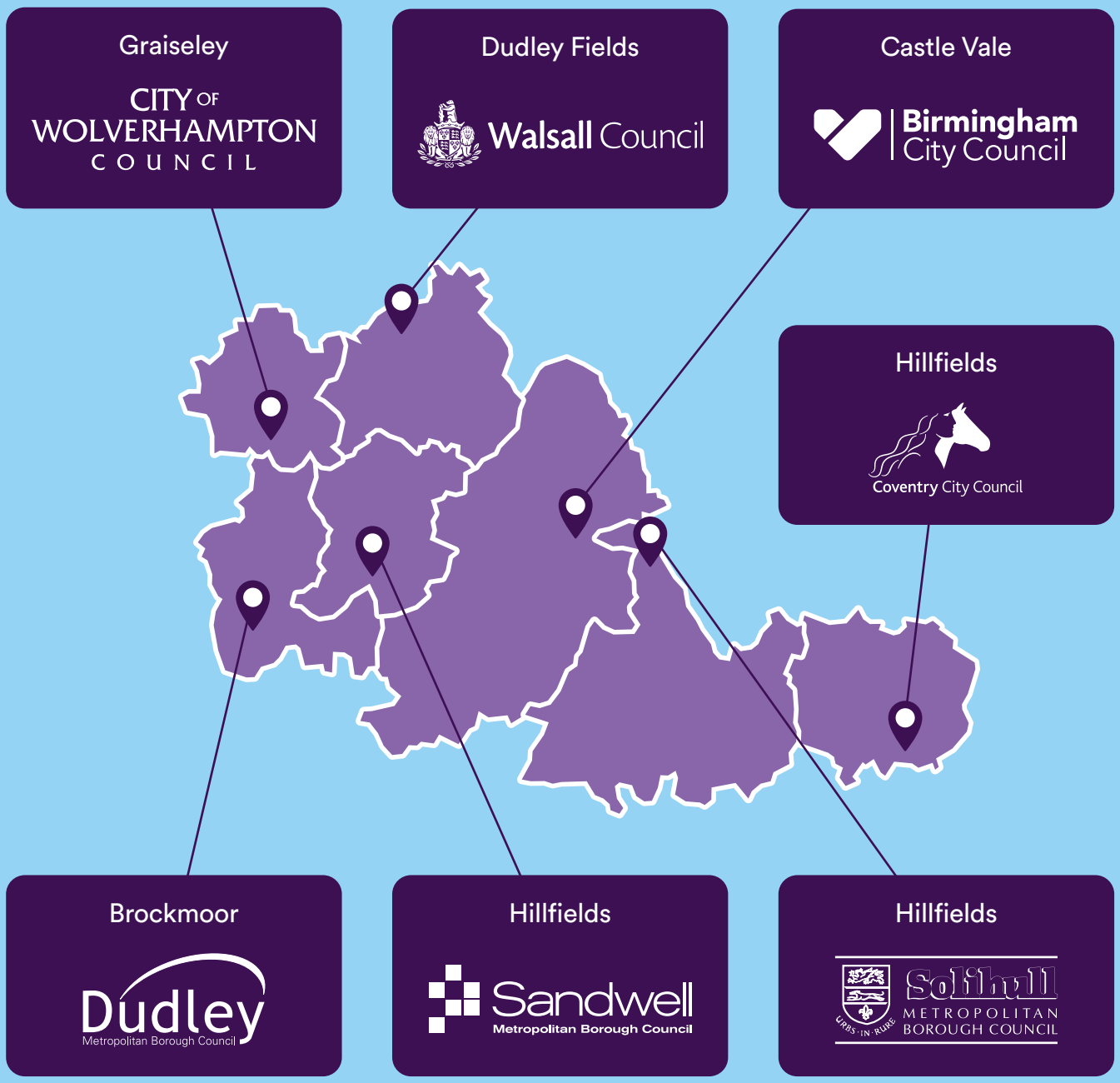
Energy infrastructure

The electrical network (both transmission and distribution) will need to be reinforced to manage the increasing demand of electrical vehicle charging. Transport is also just one of numerous sectors increasing their electricity demand, for example the increased electrification of heating.

National Grid Electricity Distribution (formally Western Power Distribution) has produced an EV charging strategy, identifying the planned upgrades required. This includes increasing grid capacity at current and new developments, as well as what interventions can improve capacity across the network.

Charging for larger vehicles and more rapid charging solutions will require a larger grid connection and therefore will need to be planned strategically.

WM Net Zero Neighbourhoods



Production of other fuels

Hydrogen only works as a decarbonisation vector when there is sufficient renewable energy generation to ensure the production of green hydrogen. WMCA have commissioned independent advice on the role of hydrogen for transport and other sectors, which has suggested that it would be best prioritised for long range transport use cases.

Biomethane and Natural Gas fuels are not a part of the WM strategy, as they are not fully net-zero fuels. They may be sufficient stop-gap solutions during the transition to net-zero, but our focus is on full decarbonisation of transport in the region.

The West Midlands is a land locked region and is a net importer of energy. Energy storage and demand management will be important to the region and could offer significant economic growth potential. WMCA should engage proactively with NGED and Cadent to facilitate grid improvements, identify potential sites and innovate within the sector.

A place-based approach can help the region determine where in a locality is appropriate when planning and executing energy supply for EV charging. Local area energy and spatial planning will be required. This will initially cluster chargepoint installations around sites that have both high grid capacity and vehicle traffic, but there is still work needed with to reinforce energy network infrastructure where we will need to put charging in the future. This is the medium to long-term plan that the CA can look to influence.

The West Midlands Net Zero Neighbourhoods support a place based approach to energy planning and focus on a holistic approach to neighbourhood-scale transitions. The key pillars are retrofit, low carbon travel, green space interventions and local, low carbon electricity generation. At the centre of these pillars is a deep focus on co-production, empowering citizens through co-design to create a vision for their very own Net Zero Neighbourhood.

Solutions for Energy Infrastructure

The ultimate goal of decarbonising transport is both having vehicles that produce no emissions and sourcing electricity and hydrogen for powering these vehicles in a sustainable and renewable way. A place-based approach can help the WCMA determine where in a locality is appropriate when planning and executing energy supply for EV charging. Local area energy and spatial planning will be required. This will cluster chargepoint installations around sites that have both high grid capacity and vehicle traffic. Data and evidence driven discussions will inform spatial planning of charging infrastructure in Local Area Energy Plans.

Bi-directional vehicle-to-grid and vehicle-to-home charging can help to balance the grid. This enables energy to be drawn from vehicle batteries but requires innovative consumption control and energy storage. All charging from 7kW overnight charging to 50 to 150kW rapid charging can be a burden on the energy grid's capacity. With Multi-MW charging specifications being developed for individual large vehicle chargers such as those to be used for HGVs (equivalent to several hundred houses) the impacts on the grid will be significant.

Collaboration with Distributors

Distribution Network Operators are responsible for maintaining, operating, distributing and investing in the electricity network within a given geography. This makes them instrumental to the deployment of vehicle chargepoints at scale.

The **Regional Energy System Operator** project is currently pioneering collaboration of energy, transport and spatial planning in the West Midlands. Lessons learned from this project can help deploy it across the region. The **Energy Capital team** at the WMCA, who led on this project are also carrying out further regional energy projects and strategies.

Work is also being done in geo-spatial planning to overlay energy infrastructure with transport to make long term decisions for both. WMCA has an opportunity to engage with local energy distributors and Energy Capital to understand current grid capacity and future improvement plans. This will be important throughout the lifecycles of public transport projects, such as Metro extensions. If grid reinforcement is planned alongside and aligned to transport infrastructure then significant cost efficiencies can be gained in both systems. Data sharing and data agreements within the planning process will be key.

Grid improvement plans should prioritise energy supply for public transport refuelling and recharging, but homes and private chargepoints should also be considered as part of the wider Local Area Energy Planning process to ensure effective roll out.

Policy:

We will publish a regional strategy for the roll out of zero emission vehicle charging infrastructure, which will also support development of strategies to ensure local energy networks can support the changing energy demands of the transport sector.

Local area energy plans will be developed through collaborative working with energy distributors.

When prioritising innovations

During the process of deciding which areas of innovation take top focus, the innovation principles must be considered. Choosing the most appropriate projects will reduce wasted time and resources and ensure the most promising innovations are examined.

Setting up and managing innovation projects

As an innovation project is taking shape and gets underway, the innovation principles must be considered. Keeping these priorities in mind as a project develops will ensure that it continues to serve a purpose, even if the focus changes somewhat over time.

Wider transport system planning and development

Throughout WMCA work, whether directly focussed on transport innovation or not, the innovation principles must be considered. All areas should be aware of upcoming innovations so services and infrastructure can be made ‘future-proof’ to save money retrofitting.

Transport innovation

Central to the WMLTP5 Core Strategy, and this Big Move is the need for investment in new transport innovation. If we have high ambitions for our transport systems, we want to look to the future. While many of the solutions to problems in transport can be found in traditional modes (such as walking), the future will also be governed by new answers. Innovation can provide ways to solve old and new problems, so we must be constantly looking ahead at what the future holds. WMCA initiatives will work alongside Government's 'Future of Transport' agenda which aims to shape transport innovation and make the UK a world leader in transport movement. This plan aims to help the West Midlands continue and develop its role as a leader in transport innovation.

Innovation is essential to achieving our transport objectives, but it must be purposeful. Without clear guiding principles, innovation risks becoming unfocused, wasting time and resources on projects that may not deliver meaningful benefits or could even undermine other goals. By aligning innovation with key principles of the WMLTP5, we can ensure new technologies support local needs while remaining open to broader benefits. These principles are not restrictive but help guide decision-making and prioritisation. This section outlines the principles we'll follow, the mechanisms that support innovation, and a look ahead at promising opportunities that could enhance our transport system soon.

Innovation principles

For innovation projects to best serve the priorities within the WMLTP5, a set of principles have been produced. To create these principles we considered what the major threats are from pursuing innovations, as well as the opportunities that could be missed. Wasting money and time could often be a fear in an area that involves a constant need for funding. Many of the principles are focussed on avoiding that waste, and ensuring the resources remain for future innovations or to invest fully in current innovations. Learning from past projects, including those that did not meet expectations, is also a priority to ensure continuous improvement.

The WMCA is developing a draft Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) Strategy to embed innovation more effectively into transport planning and delivery. The draft ITS Strategy adopts a three-stage delivery pathway:

Explore - Small-scale pilots to test ideas and "fail fast" with minimal risk.

Scale - Build an evidence base to justify scaling up, further investment and expansion.

Mainstream - Successful pilots transition into permanent, funded services.

The delivery pathway model supports a culture of learning, agility, and accountability in innovation, ensuring that only proven concepts receive long-term investment. The below figure explains at which point in the policy process these principles and priorities need to be considered. The principles must be used to ensure that the best innovation projects are selected for the resources, the projects remain focussed n WMLTP5 objectives (while being allowed to develop and adapt to circumstances)and to ensure infrastructure and services are ready for innovations to come.

Policy:

As the home of UK transport innovation and leading the largest national transport innovation programme, WMCA and its partners will continue to test and adopt new technology and innovative ways of working where these align with and help to deliver the objectives of our WMLTP5.

- Objective-led, aligned with the Core Strategy and wider public policy goals.
- Inclusive, considering how innovations impact different communities, whether directly or indirectly.
- Open to learning, embracing failure as a source of insight and aiming to “fail fast” where needed.
- Adaptive, recognising that opportunities and risks evolve as innovations move from Research & Development project and initiatives to mainstream use.
- Proactive, using current insights to future-proof transport planning and investment.
- Collaborative, partnering selectively to support innovation with funding, assets, and expertise.
- Supportive of local growth, using innovation to deliver early transport benefits and boost the regional supply chain.
- Evidence-based, increasing support as confidence in benefits grows and risks diminish.
- Informed by others, learning from national and regional projects to inspire local action.
- Consistent, developing a standardised approach to assess the value of innovations

To achieve success in transport innovation it is vital to utilise fully the key mechanisms that support progress. While money will always be an important mechanism to push new innovations along, there is a lot more that is available. Therefore, a list has been created of the key mechanisms. If the mechanisms are not identified, it will be harder to know what it is that is needed to be mobilised for any new project. Within the WMCA there exists great access to information and data, as well as access to important infrastructure and the wealth of experience and knowledge gained over decades of work through the transport authority. These can all feed into the development of new programmes, particularly those which use new technology. But what will always remain important is the work with other organisations. For a project to be successful, varying groups must have an interest and give an input.

Policy:

WMCA will work with a range of partners by leveraging these various mechanisms to support innovation according to the outlined principles

How?	Explanation	Example
Access to public funding	Innovation projects rely on money. WMCA applies for grants from Government for varying different projects.	Future Transport Zone - £22 million for numerous different innovations, such as Local Travel Points.
Access to authority and powers to plan, develop and regulate	To appropriately test new technologies, sometimes regulatory powers need to be changed. This allows trials to work in areas they would not previously.	Trailblazing Devolution Deal - negotiated to devolve more power to the metropolitan county. Includes a 'sandbox' to give more ability to trial new innovations.
Access to our partnerships and influence with key agents	WMCA innovation relies on constituent local authorities in the West Midlands, other nearby local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships, other local services, private enterprise and more.	Drone project is in partnership with police and local authorities within the West Midlands.
Access to public infrastructure	While the road/transport infrastructure comes collectively under the responsibility of WMCA, local authorities, national government and private sector businesses, we do maintain a significant function and control.	WMCA holds responsibility for the Key Route Network of roads, the 23 busiest routes in the West Midlands.
Access to skills and expertise	Institutional skills from across the WMCA assist in the identification and development of innovation. Knowledge and previous experience can guide new innovation projects.	West Midlands Metro advising on new Very Light Rail (VLR) projects, to give insight on challenges facing light rail projects.
Access to public data and information	In order to decide which innovations are necessary and assess any innovation projects, data collection and analysis is vital.	Regional Transport Co-Ordination Centre (RTCC) which gives the ability to view the transport network 24 hours a day.

Key opportunities

It will be important to consider how these principles will be manifesting themselves over the next few years. To plan ahead, we have selected 7 of the key opportunities in transport innovation which should improve transport, save money, keep the West Midlands as a centre for transport innovation, take advantage of opportunities, and help the region stay up-to-date with innovation emerging elsewhere. These are:

- **Local Travel Points (Mobility Hubs) -** bring together various transport modes: shared bikes, e-scooters, car clubs, and public transport, into one location. They may also include community-enhancing features like parklets, parcel lockers, and local info points.
- **Very Light Rail (VLR) -** is a tram system with lighter trains and shallower tracks, meaning more people can be carried for less money than a conventional tram system. The key advantage is that utility lines under roads do not need to be pulled up to make space for the rail lines.
- **Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) -** is a flexible service that provides shared transport to users who specify their desired location and time of pick-up and drop-off" (DfT). Service operators have no fixed route or timetables, the route is determined by demand.
- **Micromobility -** is a term used to define types of vehicles that are small and can transport people or goods. They include scooters, cycles, skateboards, hoverboards and even segways. They come in many forms including those powered by electric motors and those powered by people.
- **Drones -** or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), are flying vehicles not piloted from within. Current legislation requires them to be operated within visual line of sight (VLOS), though trials are underway to allow beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations and even automation. These developments open up significant opportunities for using drones in areas such as parcel delivery, medical supply transport, and infrastructure inspection.
- **Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) -** Connected and automated mobility (CAM) covers the range of different vehicles (for private use, freight or passenger service) which do not need constant human driving.
- **Zero Emission Vehicles (ZEV) -** are those (electric, hydrogen or other) which have no immediate emission of harmful gases out of the tailpipe

Innovation plays a vital role in delivering the objectives of the WMLTP5 through the 6 Big Moves:

Big Move	Opportunities	Threats	Barriers
Behaviour Change	Digital applications and behavioural nudges are effective tools to promote a shift from private car use to more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling, and shared public transport.	Digital exclusion may marginalise individuals who lack access to smartphones or mobile data. There is a risk of behavioural rebound, where cheaper autonomous vehicle trips could lead to increased car use.	Public mistrust of automation and emerging mobility platforms may hinder adoption. Cultural resistance to moving away from private car ownership remains a significant challenge.
Accessible and Inclusive Places	Specialised accessibility applications and digital maps enhance mobility for disabled users. Services like Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) improve accessibility by offering flexible transport options to rural and isolated communities.	Market-driven deployment of technology may prioritise only the most profitable routes or areas. Poorly managed e-scooter or bike schemes could reduce accessibility and clutter the public realm.	A lack of interoperability can hinder seamless integration of services. Additionally, limited digital skills may affect LA's ability to regulate innovations in an inclusive and effective way.

Big Move	Opportunities	Threats	Barriers
Walk, Wheel, Cycle andScoot	Applications promoting active travel use features like safe route mapping, gamification, and reward systems to motivate users to walk, cycle, or scoot more frequently. Smart sensor technology is deployed along active travel routes to monitor usage and enhance safety through data-driven interventions.	Poor regulation of e-scooter and e-bike schemes could lead to street clutter, increased accidents, and public resistance. A strong focus on tech-led solutions may also divert funding away from essential walking and cycling infrastructure.	Slow regulatory progress is delaying the safe integration of micromobility, with national legislation still needed to legalise and manage e-scooter use. Additionally, uncertainty around long-term funding poses a challenge to sustaining active travel technology programmes.
Public Transport and Shared Mobility	Real-time data integration across transport modes improves reliability, enhancing the user experience. VLR offers an attractive, high-quality public transport option that combines the comfort and reliability of traditional rail with significantly lower scheme costs. Connected and Automated Mobility (CAM) provide efficient solutions for first and last mile connectivity, complementing existing public transport networks.	Ride-hailing services and autonomous vehicles could draw passengers away from mass transit, potentially reducing its commercial viability and investment.	The lack of common ticketing and data standards limits integration across transport services. Additionally, procurement challenges and the risk of vendor lock-in can hinder flexibility and long-term innovation.

Big Move	Opportunities	Threats	Barriers
Safe, Efficient & Reliable Network	Artificial can analyse patterns and optimise vehicle flow, thereby reducing congestion. Sensors and digital models enable predictive maintenance helping to minimise service disruptions. Advanced safety features in CAM vehicles could significantly reduce traffic collisions and improve road safety. Drones are being explored for their potential in delivery services, traffic monitoring, and infrastructure inspection, contributing to a more efficient transport system.	Connected vehicles and smart infrastructure face cybersecurity risks that could compromise safety and data integrity. Without strong regulation, the deployment of autonomous vehicles (AVs) may introduce new safety and operational risks.	Public trust in automated systems remains limited, which may slow adoption. Additionally, complex governance across different transport modes and authorities can delay the integration of new technologies.

Big Move	Opportunities	Threats	Barriers
Green Transport Revolution	The deployment electric vehicles, hydrogen-powered buses, and clean freight solutions, plays a crucial role in lowering transport-related emissions. Smart grid systems and vehicle-to-grid (V2G) technologies integrate transport with renewable energy sources, enhancing sustainability and energy efficiency. Innovative logistics strategies such as freight consolidation, the use of cargo bikes, and intelligent routing software help reduce emissions associated with urban deliveries.	The lifecycle of electric vehicles (EVs), including the extraction of limited resources and challenges around recycling, poses environmental concerns. Additionally, widespread adoption of autonomous vehicles could increase total vehicle mileage, potentially offsetting emissions reductions.	High upfront costs for charging and hydrogen infrastructure, along with limitations in grid capacity, present significant challenges. Furthermore, fragmented rollout and a lack of long-term funding certainty hinder the sustained development of active travel and low-emission technologies.

Policy:

WMCA will work with a range of partners by leveraging these various mechanisms to support innovation according to the outlined principles.

WMCA should consider developing a framework or set of guiding principles to help assess transport innovations. This might include looking at how proposals align with WMLTP5 objectives, their potential value for money, and broader social or environmental benefits. Such an approach could support more informed and future-proof decision-making for transport innovation.

Protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment

The WMLTP5 will ensure that sustainability practices are embedded into projects from the initial planning stages through to the delivery and operation - whether it's physical infrastructure or the services that they use. Impacts on the natural and built environment occur throughout a project's lifecycle, so it is important to be proactive with ensuring our decision making takes these into account as we plan, deliver, operate (and decommission) the transport system and its component elements.

The issues that would be subject to assessment include Health & Equalities Impacts, Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation (including Green and Blue infrastructure and biodiversity), air quality, water, noise, cultural heritage and landscape. These assessments will take place at various points throughout the development and delivery of the transport system by the relevant authority.

The development of proposals to support delivery of the WMLTP5 (from Strategic Outline Business Case to Outline Business Case or appropriate stage) will provide further information on the various options and preferred option.At this stage the relevant assessments will be updated and any additional requirements (e.g. as a result of planning policies etc.) will be identified.

Consultation and engagement is critical in developing the Local Transport Plan. But ongoing consultation and engagement on the development and implementation of programmes and projects. We will also ensure that we assess our policy and strategy in terms of equalities. Health and Equity Impact Assessments (HEIAs) is encouraged as a useful systematic tool that enables public bodies to evidence duties under

The purpose of an EqIA is to ensure that:

- The effects of existing and proposed policies or practices on those who share protected characteristics are considered
- Opportunities to improve equality of opportunity eliminate discrimination and foster good relations are identified.

Along with equalities implications we will also ensure that key issues are considered across the planning , building and operation of the transport system: Integration, LTN 1/20, LTN 1/24, Women and safety, Climate adaptation, Bus stop guidelines, Holistic street designs, Sustainable Urban Drainage, Public realm and heritage, Whole life costs, Carbon, Land ownership constraints, Key Route Network (KRN) - Roadspace Reallocation Policy Framework.

Plan

- Authorities should consider how their strategies and implementation plans relate to all relevant equalities, health and environmental issues. To support this Local Transport Authorities are required to undertake a number of statutory assessments and duties. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is mandatory for all LTPs. As part of the commitments in the Environment Act 2021 new 'Environmental Outcomes Reports' ("EOR") will be required that will build on the information required in the reporting stages of the EIA and SEA Directive.

- The consideration of 'human health' via a Health Impact Assessment (HIA) is a legal requirement contained within an SEA. A number of health outcomes are at the heart of the LTP process including encouraging physical activity, improving air quality and road safety.

- WMCA will ensure that equalities, health and environmental issues are considered through the Local Transport Plan and its delivery programme. The ISA undertaken for the LTP helps to identify the key issues which need to considered throughout the development and implementation of policy and strategy. The WMCA's approach to policy / design will ensure that the key issues (statutory and non-statutory) are considered and responded to throughout the LTP's lifecycle.

Build

- Findings of the relevant assessments should also be incorporated into Detailed Scheme Design and Contract Documents.

- Requirements will also be set for the use of sustainable materials and design in infrastructure. The WMCA should strive to go above and beyond acceptable standards, driving a higher benchmark for schemes.

- Procurement standards will consider the environmental impact of suppliers. This will include their waste creation and disposal, impact on tranquility at the construction site, transportation emissions, etc.

- Where appropriate Construction Environmental Management Plans will be put in place when schemes are being built. Planned maintenance should focus on prolonging the life cycle as opposed to renewing the asset. This will need to become part of asset management plans as part of a whole life cost approach to asset management.

- Sustainable methods will be prioritised for infrastructure asset operation and maintenance. The assets should also be constructed in a way that requires less maintenance.

Operate

- The most sustainable action is to retain buildings and refrain from demolition. Reusing and recycling building materials is also important where possible. Where assets need to decommissioned This would be managed through a decommissioning Environmental Management Plan.
- Asset management plans will embed decarbonisation and climate adaptation plans as part of a whole life cost approach to asset management.
- We will look to challenge to designs to ensure that they are both of the highest standard and use innovative and best practice to ensure reduced carbon footprint and enhanced biodiversity where possible.

Greenhouse gases

Policies in this WMLTP5 emphasise the need to tackle transports emissions from users of and operations on the transport system. But transport's contributions also come from the construction of infrastructure which embeds carbon in materials, buildings, and structures. In addition, the emissions from maintenance of the existing network are at least as significant as new build emissions.

Operational and embodied emissions from infrastructure make up 6% of UK built environment emissions. Whilst this proportion appears modest, infrastructure is linked to broader emission impacts through the use of infrastructure assets, i.e., transport emissions. Currently there are no mandatory emissions measurement and reporting requirements for the public sector. However, the Government's Net Zero Strategy set out that all public bodies are expected to set targets to reduce their emissions.

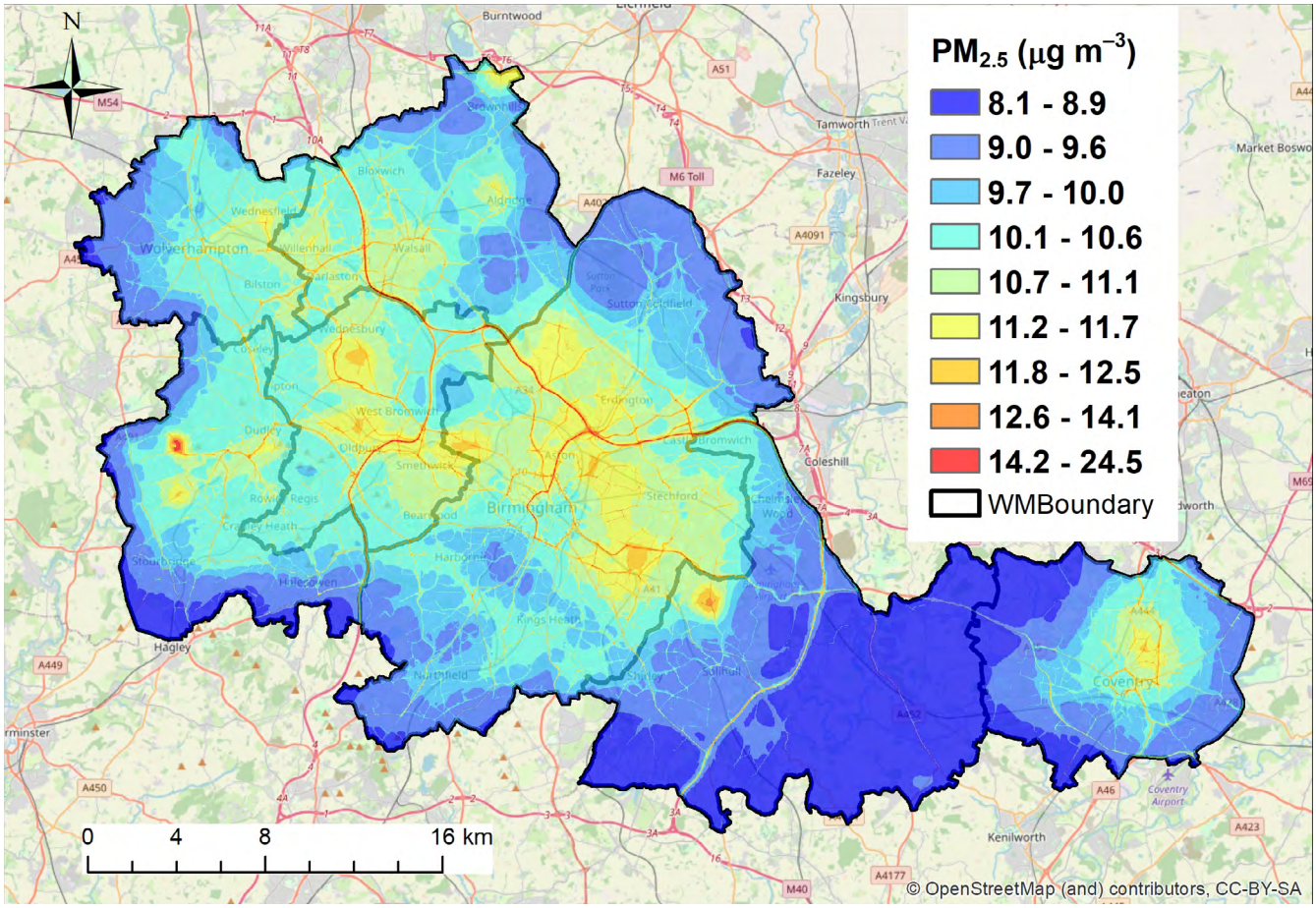
Accounting for carbon in WMLTP5 policies and programmes.

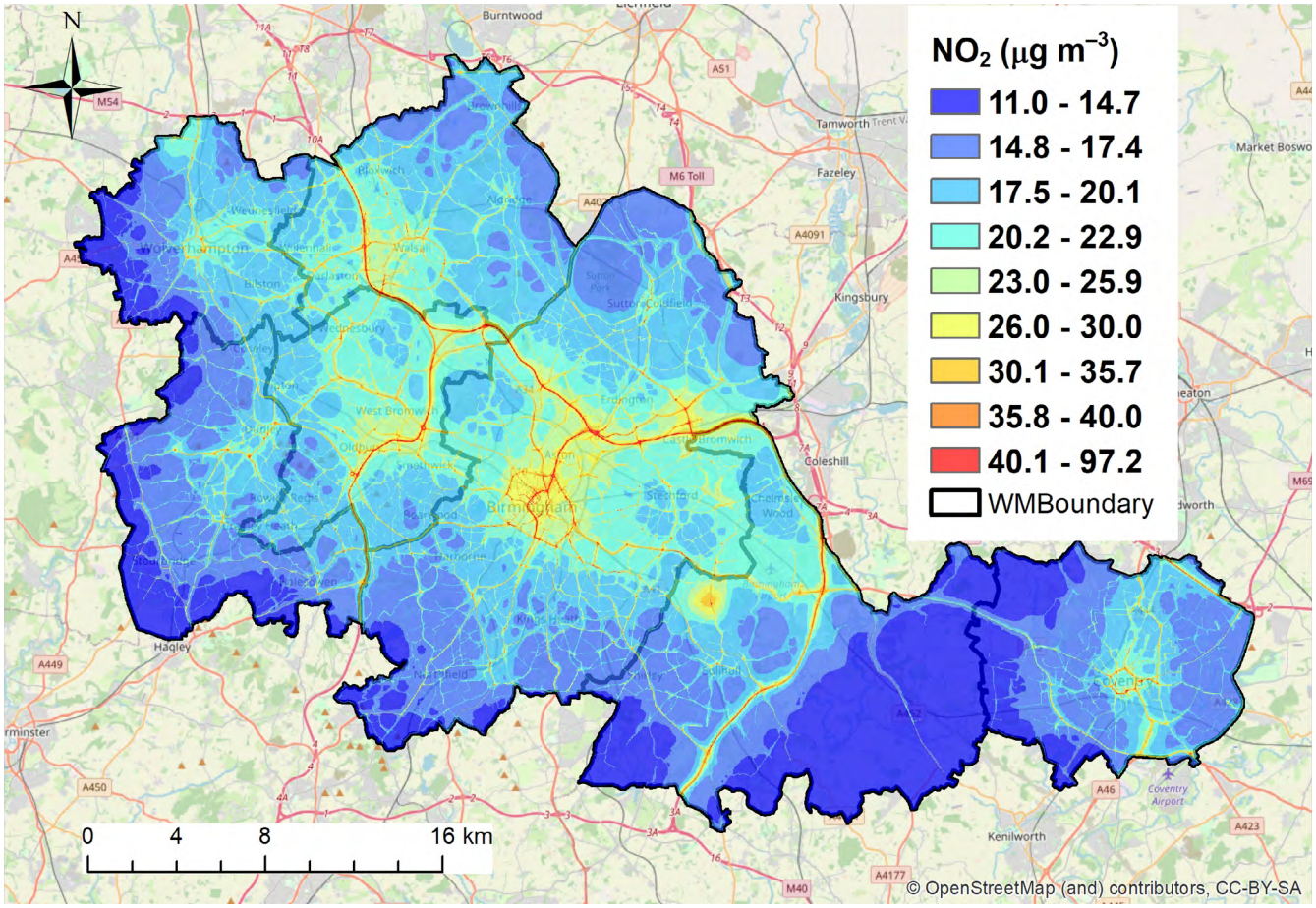
An integrated Sustainability Appraisal has been undertaken on the development of the WMLTP5 and has identified that due to the nature of the transport delivery programme some effects are anticipated as a result of CO2 emissions during construction of new infrastructure. It is recognised that measures should be taken to reduce the amount of carbon from the construction process. Reductions to the carbon footprint in the construction and operation of transport network assets can be delivered by using more energy efficient lights, or by using materials with less embedded carbon. WMCA will:

- Consider carbon emissions as part of the delivery of the region's transport investment programme, reflecting DfT's quantified carbon reduction guidance process.
- Use the guidance within PAS 2080:2023 to develop Carbon Management Plans.
- Support WMCA governance considerations and reporting through all work stages of our projects.
- Develop a Carbon Management Planning Process to enable our supply chain to work together particularly where our delivery agents are contractors.
- Define the monitoring and reporting requirement for our contractors and service providers through the lifecycle of the project by providing specification documents based upon the guidance.
- Emphasise the importance of the carbon reduction hierarchy for our whole life carbon reduction.
- Set out our approach to baselining our carbon emissions to then set reduction targets against these with KPIs to monitor and report performance against the targets.
- Look for creative and innovative design proposals that deliver multiple benefits while reducing environmental impacts
- Making best use of existing infrastructure. Adopting the "Avoid, Shift, Improve" hierarchy from PAS 2080.
- Use a variety of approaches to reducing carbon across the Whole Life of the asset including: construction methods, material selection, circular economy and offsetting principles.

Policy

We will ensure that through the development and delivery of transport measures we will consider how to contribute towards meeting national and local emissions targets. The WMLTP5 Area Based Implementation Plans will embed the Government's guidance on quantified carbon reduction to provide evidence on the impacts of the WMLTP5 to deliver decarbonisation of the region's transport system. WMCA and local authorities will seek to ensure a consistent approach to assessing and reporting on embedded / construction carbon across all projects.


N
PM2.5 (µg m−3)
8.1 - 8.9
9.0 - 9.6
9.7 - 10.0
10.1 - 10.6
10.7 - 11.1
11.2 - 11.7
11.8 - 12.5
12.6 - 14.1
14.2 - 24.5
WMBoundary
0 4 8 16 km
© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA


N
NO2 (µg m−3)
11.0 - 14.7
14.8 - 17.4
17.5 - 20.1
20.2 - 22.9
23.0 - 25.9
26.0 - 30.0
30.1 - 35.7
35.8 - 40.0
40.1 - 97.2
WMBoundary
0 4 8 16 km
© OpenStreetMap (and) contributors, CC-BY-SA

Local pollution

Air Quality

Up to 1500 people die prematurely from illnesses related to poor air quality in the West Midlands each year. The Environment Act (1995) and subsequently the 2021 Act requires local authorities to identify Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) where current or future air quality is unlikely to meet national air quality objectives, and to develop Air Quality Action Plans to tackle poor air quality in these areas.

There are 6 AQMAs across the region and Ministerial Directions were issued to the West Midlands with regard to tackling Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) and achieving compliance with legal limits within the shortest possible time. This resulted in several targeted measures being introduced in the region including Birmingham's Clean Air Zone.

The two key pollutants are Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) and particulate matter (PM2.5). NO2 is mostly a localised pollution from road transport, whilst PM2.5 has a wider range of sources and disperses more widely and is a more regional level problem by nature. At 20% of all PM2.5 emissions the West Midlands is higher than the national average (12.5%). The Government has retained a target of 40 µg m-3 for NO2. New targets in the Environment Act 2021 have been set for PM2.5:

- Annual Mean Concentration Target for PM2.5 levels in England of10 µgm-3 or below by 2040.
- A Population Exposure Reduction Target for a reduction in PM2.5 population exposure of 35% compared to 2018 to be achieved by 2040

To accelerate the improvement of air quality in the WMCA area Transport Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Committee has recommended the development of stretch targets , that are more ambitious in terms of timescales and pollutant concentration targets than the UK Government air quality targets, and which are closer to World Health Organisation (WHO) targets for NO2 and PM2.5. To support this WMCA has developed an Air Quality Framework Implementation Plan in partnership with stakeholders.

The region is working with the University of Birmingham on its WM Air project to look at how to improve monitoring and developing responses to air quality issues in the region. Actions across the Big Moves will deliver improvements in air quality. The WM Air Quality Framework and collaboration on the WM Air project will continue to inform and shape transport policy & strategy and the delivery of the WMLTP5 to help address transport derived air quality issues.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will need to demonstrate how measures are being designed with air quality in mind to support targets for legal limits and targets for improving air quality and reducing emissions.

Noise

Noise from running vehicle engines and road surfaces can be a key concern in many areas. There's no legal limit to road noise, however there are standards regarding road surface noise and also vehicle noise. Noise levels might be taken into account when new roads or houses and offices near roads are planned. In the event that new roads are planned local highway authorities assess how the noise at will change when the road opens.

Through the Environmental Noise Directive the impact of environmental noise is considered through strategic noise mapping and the preparation and implementation of noise Action Plans. In particular the Environmental Noise Directive requires local authorities to:

- Create strategic noise maps which estimate people's exposure to environmental noise from road, rail and aviation.
- Adopt action plans based on the results of noise mapping data, which are designed to manage environmental noise and its effects, including noise reduction if relevant.
- Preserve environmental noise quality where it is good, particularly in urban areas.
- Provide information to the public on environmental noise and its effects.

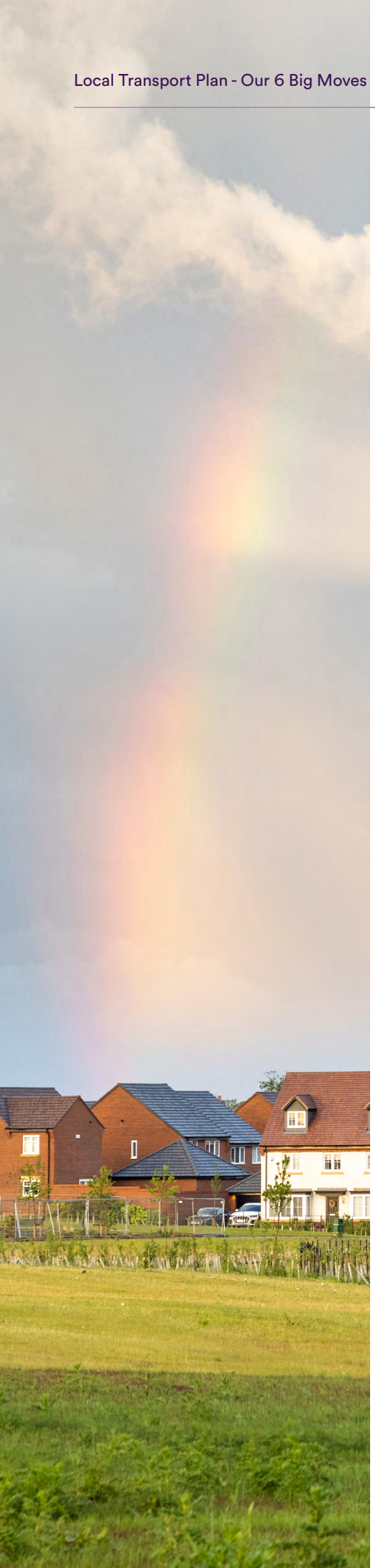
Measures in this WMLTP5 seek to support a shift to more sustainable forms of travel and reduce the amount of traffic, having positive impacts on noise.

Light pollution

Increased urbanisation (including transport) can result in light pollution and affect environmental quality across the region. As would be expected, the least tranquil areas are those closest to urban centres and major transport routes. from street lights on motorways and roads, headlights from cars and trains, and lights at stations. This disrupts natural darkness in the city and can affect humans and wildlife. New and innovative interventions and approaches can reduce pollution energy consumption in lighting columns. New transport schemes can result in new lighting being introduced. Through the planning and development process of schemes it will be necessary to ensure that the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenities, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation is limited.

Soil

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils. The region is geodiverse reflected by the designation of a 'Geopark' in the region. The approach in this WMLTP5 seeks to minimise the amount of new infrastructure required for transport in the region and reduce the harmful impacts of transport. In addition support for brownfield first for new development will also help to reduce the impacts of transport on soils. Run-off from transport infrastructure can affect soil quality. It can also contribute to soil erosion. Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) not only help with reducing flood risk, they also help soil loss by limiting run off from a construction site.



Water

The NPPF sets out that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment. There are considerable pressures on water resources with resulting major impacts on many of the waterbodies across the UK. Preventing new and existing development and infrastructure from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by water pollution development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans.

Rainwater that runs off roads, car parks, industrial areas, contaminated land, pavements and roofs carries pollutants into the water environment. These pollutants include a variety of chemicals, metals, plastics (micro and litter), oils and lubricants, sediment, nutrients and pathogens. 'First flush' events can have a significant effect on water quality. This is when intense rainfall following an extended dry period washes a large amount of contaminants from hard standing areas into local water bodies.

Green infrastructure as part of new development and infrastructure can avoid adverse impacts on the water environment. Seeking betterment, for example through reducing the risk of flooding, remediating contaminated land and reducing pollution also improves the environment. Contributions from developers can help achieve environmental benefits such as flood risk infrastructure. The WMLTP5 will need to seek to prevent pollution of water bodies (including groundwater) both during the construction and operation of any transport intervention. This could be achieved via the appropriate use of SuDS or other appropriate measures and new approaches in road drainage design / transport interventions to enhance water quality and reduce pollution and flood risk.

Policy:

WMCA and local authorities will ensure that these issues are considered using the appropriate processes and tools at each stage of the planning and transport planning process.

Climate change adaptation

Climate change is bringing with it a range of weather patterns that we're not used to in the West Midlands - including, increasingly hotter, drier summers & warmer, wetter winters and more extreme weather events. Unless we adapt to and build resilience against these changes, we are likely to see a range of climate impacts affecting our communities, our infrastructure, and our natural environment.

The implications of climate change on the transport system could be extensive:

- Damage to transport assets and infrastructure, including tram, road, bus, rail, bridges and active travel, due to increasing exposure to climate hazards including frequent flooding and erosion, slope and embankment failure, water scarcity, increasing incidences of high temperatures and increasing frequency of storms.
- Workforce exposure to more extreme weather conditions.
- Disruption to supply chains and distribution networks due to extreme weather both in the UK and abroad.
- Changes to service demand due to changing behaviour patterns.
- Impacts on accessibility affecting people's ability to get to education and employment opportunities and essential services.
- Disruption to utility supplies like energy, water and ICT system, impacting WMCA and Local Highway Authority monitoring and management systems.
- Disruption to the delivery of safe and reliable transport services.

The financial implications of which are:

- Increasing maintenance cost of transport assets and infrastructure if not designed to withstand future climate scenarios.
- Reduction in revenue streams from changes to travel patterns and behaviours, increasing the requirement for transport subsidies.
- The overall life cycle of assets could be compromised requiring frequent capital investment to renew.

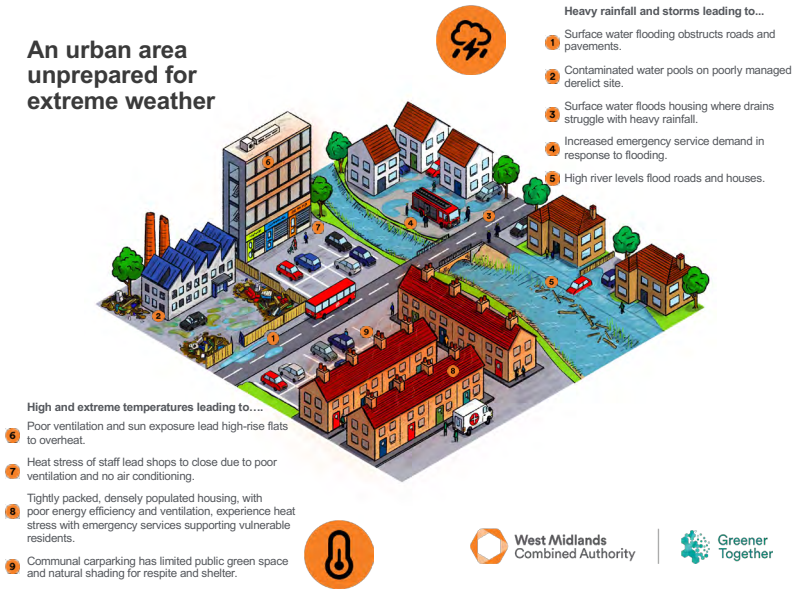
To create a resilient network we must:

- Have a network that runs safely and with minimised disruption, keeping people and businesses connected in all future climate scenarios.
- Have clear definitions of climate risks and 'levels' of risk that trigger action.
- Have robust plans in place that respond to a range of climate impacts.

As Local Transport Authority WMCA has a key role in leading action around climate adaptation for the region's transport system. A WMCA adaptation group has been running on a monthly basis since November 2023 and the group has been overseeing the development of a transport-focused Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) mapping tool is in development and close to being at 'minimum viable product' stage. This will help to inform next steps around priorities for action and establishing the dependencies and need for collaboration across different parts of the transport system.

Policy:

WMCA and partners will ensure that the transport network is planned and managed in a way that will allow it to be resilient to impacts from a changing climate, now and in the future. WMCA will lead on transport partner convening around climate adaptation, liaising with National Highways, DfT, Railways, etc in order to establish the sector partnerships needed to identify and respond to interdependencies and develop a shared vision and harmonise commitments for climate resilient in the region. WMCA will develop the Transport-focused Climate Risk & Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) tool and explore how it might be embedded into WMCA and local authority decision-making.



Natural capital and resource conservation and biodiversity

Blue and Green Infrastructure

It is widely recognised that green and blue infrastructure (GBI), which encompasses natural and semi-natural features, interventions, and structures, can bring many social, environmental, and economic benefits to a local area. The design and development of transport infrastructure will need to increasingly consider the role of these as part of the response to challenges associated with climate resilience and changing weather and where appropriate the need to respond to the requirement to meet biodiversity targets. At the same time the use of green and blue infrastructure can also have wider benefits in terms of

Types of Green Infrastructure interventions include:

- **Wildlife corridors** that help animal populations connect across human made boundaries, stay protected, and maintain strong population levels.
- Incorporating **tree-lined streets** into the finished design for every West Midlands transport scheme.
- **Green rail tracks** mitigate storm water issues, reduce noise and beautify their integration into the urban landscape.

Types of Blue Infrastructure interventions include:

- Where a natural solution to flood management is not suitable, SuDS, such as permeable pavements, swales, rain gardens, detention and retention ponds, and underground storage, can be an appropriate GBI alternative as they aim to mimic natural drainage systems. The National Planning Policy Framework set out that SuDS should be incorporated in all major developments and any developments in areas at risk of flooding. DEFRA recently published an assessment of how strategic surface water management informs SuDS.
- Transport measures should develop infrastructure which **enhances the natural environment** or mitigates adverse effects. They should also recognise the role of green and blue infrastructure in high quality places for people to live in and spend time in.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of plant and animal life in a given environment. Across the West Midlands there are a range of areas of biodiversity value, including those designated at the highest levels for nature conservation. In addition there are also areas known for their geodiversity - reflected by the designation of a 'Geopark' in the region.

Development of t**ransport infrastructure could lead to direct loss of habitat** or both direct and indirect disturbance of species and habitats. Thus, councils are adopting **biodiversity net gain** initiatives to leave that natural environment in a measurably better state than before it was developed.

Biodiversity net gain could apply to WMCA and local authorities in two ways:

- As a developer of a small and major developments requiring planning
- As a land manager

In the case of the former there would be a need to enter into an agreement around how the BNG requirements required as part of the planning conditions for that development would be delivered. WMCA and local authorities could also choose to adopt a voluntary approach around BNG linked to climate adaptation measures e.g as part of projects which don't require planning permission.

For the latter as a land manager i.e. if the assets/estate within WMCA or local authority control are appropriate to be used to meet BNG requirements we could essentially sell space / land to others as part of a credits type schemes. We would need to undertake work to see what the opportunities are for WMCA and whether there is a financial benefit.

WMCA's Local Nature Recovery Strategy

Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) are a system of spatial strategies for nature and environmental improvement required by law under the Environment Act 2021. Each strategy must:

- map most valuable areas for nature;
- agree priorities for nature's recovery (and actions to deliver); and
- map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals (adopting Nature Based Solutions).

The West Midlands LNRS has been developed through extensive stakeholder engagement and evidence gathering.

Policy

WMCA and local authorities will ensure that designs of new transport infrastructure will consider how to support the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and where possible include measures that can support and enhance the use of blue and green infrastructure to support sustainable travel whilst helping to enhance the built and natural environment.

We will ensure that our statutory requirements for planning towards Biodiversity Net Gain are met.

Circular economy

This is the concept of **reducing waste and materials use**, and **recycling materials** in design, production and consumption. Reduction in the amount of materials used and disposed of is also important.

The CA and local authorities can include **sustainability standards in procurement practices** to prioritise companies that engage in the circular economy.

The West Midlands is supporting the region to become more circular through the Resource Reuse Network, working with delivery providers to find new uses for their materials and save money.

How far the materials have to travel to reach the site, how far they have to travel to be disposed of, and how efficiently they're disposed of also determines their environmental impact.

Measures brought forward through the WMLTP5 should promote prudent use of finite natural resources from primary sources, maximise the use of alternative, secondary and recycled materials, reduce the level of waste generated. A shift to more sustainable and efficient forms of travel will have a significant impact and help to reduce the need for raw materials for vehicles and infrastructure as well as on energy demands.

Circular Manufacturing in the West Midlands will focus specifically on growing the clean tech sector, particularly to support the decarbonisation of the transport sector. This presents one of the biggest opportunities for the region since the West Midlands is already a leader in vehicle manufacturing and battery technologies, and a £2.5 billion Gigafactory is being planned in Coventry. Supporting Circular Manufacturing and Construction in the region supports the aims of the West Midlands Growth Plan by increasing supply chain resilience for companies in the region, and helping to lower the cost of doing business.

Other Resources - Minerals, deposits and wider geology

Sterilisation of mineral resources can be an issue as a result of new development and transport infrastructure. The West Midlands has a geology that presents opportunities for the working of a range of mineral resources, including aggregate minerals (e.g. sands, gravels), industrial minerals (e.g. silica sands, brick clay) and of course coal and other hydrocarbons. There are still some active sites extracting brick clay though in the black country, and sand and gravel extraction still goes on in Solihull and Coventry.

Policy

WMCA and local authorities will seek to ensure that measures brought forward through the WMLTP5 promote prudent use of finite natural resources from primary sources, maximise the use of alternative, secondary and recycled materials, reduce the level of waste generated.

Historic and cultural assets

New transport infrastructure needs to be sympathetic of the heritage and character of neighbourhoods. There is a risk for infrastructure to damage assets and weaken character. It should instead enhance and compliment the historic urban environment. Conservation areas already set out local neighbourhood design standards that should be adhered to.

Careful consideration of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings will help contribute to their significance and its contribution to the sense of place. This will then help deliver positive benefits which can only help to sustain and enhance the historic and built environments.

Each of our local authorities have undertaken townscape or urban character studies as part of the work to inform the development of their Local Plans. In several cases that work has been captured in supplementary guidance, which provides advice on the standards that should be observed in the design of new development within different character areas.

Transport has a large footprint that can encroach on rural environments. Green belt policies aim to limit this, but infrastructure planning should consider its footprint from the outset. WMCA and this WMLTP5 promote a Brownfield Land First development policy. This places a priority on developing previous industrial and brownfield sites before green belt or other undeveloped land.

Any Transport schemes should integrate the of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets and their settings as an aspect of their design, as all contribute to their significance and sense of place. This way, we are delivering positive benefits that to sustain and enhance the historic environments.

The development and delivery of transport schemes to support the WMLTP5 should aim to protect and preserve designated and non-designated heritage assets and their contexts and settings. Transport related development / infrastructure should be sensitively designed to be sympathetic to its existing historic character and quality, and opportunities for improving settings enhancement should be examined. Better accessibility to the historic environment should also be an aim for the WMLTP5, where appropriate. Where schemes would involve physical development that could affect previously undiscovered archaeological assets buried archaeology, the design of the scheme and site selection should be informed by early investigation of the potential archaeological interest of the affected land.

Policy:

Transport schemes should protect or where possible enhance the significance integrate elements of the conservation and enhancement of heritage assets (including their settings) as an aspect of their design to sustain them for future generations and better reveal their character as an aspect of placemaking, which all contribute to their significance and sense of place.


30
CAF

wmca.org.uk

Mayor of the West Midlands | West Midlands Combined Authority | Transport for West Midlands