



Transport for  
West Midlands



# Covid-19 Transport Action Plan

October 2020





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# Executive Summary

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**The West Midlands is dealing with the major health and economic impacts of Covid-19 and has quickly developed a strong approach for recovery**

This short-term transport action plan, as the new West Midlands local transport plan is prepared, sets out how we are approaching a transition out of Covid-19 for transport in line with this recovery. This is based on our established principles of :

- Providing travel that is safe and secure
- Getting workers and businesses back up and running (when safe)
- Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe
- Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise
- Supporting a green economic recovery

Our transition won't necessarily be a path that will be linear and straightforward, but nevertheless the West Midlands is observing steadily increasing traffic levels and public transport use. There are also higher levels of walking and cycling, arising from the low traffic conditions and the need for fresh air and exercise that went with lockdown.

This document sets out how our transport strategy is tackling this transition, based wholeheartedly on our longstanding sustainable aims for transport serving the West Midlands. It sets out the rapid progress currently being made to continue, and increase, the greater levels of walking and cycling. It considers the ongoing efforts to reassure customers as they return to use of our Covid-safe public transport network and efforts to promote the vitality of our local, town and city centres.

Critically, as well as these short-term measures, the document then sets out our key transport projects and measures which will be invaluable to our economic recovery. Covid-19 has had a wounding effect on the global economy and the West Midlands will build much needed infrastructure, with supporting measures, transport innovations and enhanced local powers. This is to help our region respond and grow strong again.

These schemes will all help lay the foundations for a net zero carbon future and an inclusive economy. Chapter 6 sets out how these short responses and recovery plan schemes join up with our new long-term transport plan with pointers for the main themes of the long-term transport plan - post-Covid-19

#### Example of a new pop-up cycle lane funded by EATF



## In summary, this plan has four key messages:

- We are making rapid progress in creating safe and attractive conditions for cycling and walking, whilst reassuring customers returning to our safe public transport network.
- We have a coherent plan for new sustainable infrastructure projects, transport innovation and enhanced local powers. This will support wider efforts to boost our economic recovery.
- The two points above help lay the foundations for our new local transport plan. This will set out our long-term strategy and the schemes and measures needed to create a carbon-free, inclusive, integrated transport system for the West Midlands.
- We will champion the West Midlands wherever possible, making the case at every available opportunity for further powers and funding, as set out in “Recharge the West Midlands”, ‘Devo Next’ programme and submission to the Comprehensive Spending Review/or for a subsequent future Budget. This includes:
  - £1.5bn capital and £87m revenue over the next five years for transport, as part of a single pot for infrastructure funding. This single pot approach has a specific focus on critical enabling infrastructure such as transport (as well as building on the opportunities of HS2 and UK Central Hub area), housing, energy, natural capital and digital connectivity.
  - Enhanced powers and local responsibility for the development, management and operation of our transport system.
  - Enhanced local powers for moving traffic offences and pavement parking, delivering double devolution.

- The asks would enhance the speed of our economy recovery but also allow us to deliver faster and smarter on our net zero agenda and provide the connectivity that underpins inclusive economic growth we are committed to deliver.

In line with these key messages are more detailed actions for TfWM and local authority partners over the next three to twelve months:

## Providing travel that is safe and secure

- Public transport is operating in a period of constant change and as such operators continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 and the measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus, whilst continuing to deliver an essential service.
- Operators will continue taking a safety-first approach as the situation evolves and will adapt its response accordingly.
- On 10th August a ‘Lessons Learnt’ review was undertaken to review the initial TfWM and transport response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The outputs from this are helping refine planning assumptions as well as response structures and communication channels. Whilst a significant amount of work has taken place to mitigate potential risks in relation to the return to school, further works are taking place for the return to universities of 87,000 students. In addition to this, TfWM are continuing to work with Local Authorities and other partners in relation to spikes in cases of Covid-19, making sure that transport is ‘plugged in’ and responsive to information being shared.

## Getting workers and businesses back up and running (when safe)

- Continued operation of the multi-modal and multi-organisation Transport Recovery Cell.
- Continued effective use of the Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC).
- Delivery of EATF tranche 2 schemes.
- Develop and deliver a comprehensive business case to HMG for new town centre transformation funding (£100m).

## Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe

- Effective communications delivered through the communications plan.
- Effective monitoring and actions to improve local highway and public transport performance through the Transport Recovery Cell and RTCC.

## Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise

- Supporting a green economic recovery through the delivery of EATF Tranche 2 Schemes.
- Lobbying for further funding of sustainable transport schemes, as part of a single pot infrastructure fund.
- Develop the evidence case to deliver enhanced powers for the local enforcement of pavement parking and moving traffic offences.
- Continue to develop the case for enhanced powers to enable delivery of the West Midlands Bus Vision, Very Light Rail and Single Network Rail Vision.

- Continue to place the West Midlands at the heart of a formal national policy to focus innovation support, funding and regulatory freedoms for future transport. We see a need to formalise a sandbox environment which is a single entity co-owned between Government and the places in which Government and industry have already most focused investment.
- Champion the West Midlands wherever possible, making the case at every available opportunity for further powers and funding, as set out in “Recharge the West Midlands”, ‘Devo Next’ Programme and submission to a forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review/or subsequent future Budget.

To support our recovery, this plan is designed to enhance our infrastructure and accelerate the development of the West Midlands integrated transport network.

This will need to be supported by enhanced powers and local responsibility for the development, management and operation of our transport system. This will enhance the speed of our Covid recovery but also allow us to deliver faster and smarter on our net zero agenda and provide the connectivity that underpins inclusive economic growth we are committed to deliver.

# 1. Introduction – Purpose of Document

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**The West Midlands is dealing with the major health and economic impacts of COVID-19 and has quickly developed a strong approach for recovery.**

This short term transport action plan, as the new West Midlands local transport plan is prepared, sets out how we are approaching a transition out of COVID-19 for transport in line with this recovery. This is based on our established principles of :

- Providing travel that is safe and secure
- Getting workers and businesses back up and running (when safe)
- Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe
- Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise
- Supporting a green economic recovery

The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan “Movement for Growth” is currently being reviewed and will be replaced with a new Local Transport Plan in 2021. Whilst the review progresses, this document sets out what we have done to maximise the positives that have arisen, such as cleaner air, and manage the negative aspects of this time we are in. It then sets out what we doing to maximise the funding and powers needed to hasten our delivery of a sustainable , inclusive , integrated transport system to support economic recovery and carbon reduction.



The West Midlands has a proud tradition of tenacity and innovation. It has used these strengths to respond quickly to the crisis presented to the world by COVID-19.

As part of this crisis, the national lockdown has given the West Midlands a chance to take a glimpse at other possibilities for the world of work, commuting, shopping and travel. It has given the West Midlands better air quality and lower carbon emissions. A big majority of people in the West Midlands have said they wish to retain this cleaner air and the lower levels of traffic from which it came.

We are now at a delicate recovery stage following the national lockdown. It won't necessarily be a path that will be linear and

straightforward, but nevertheless the West Midlands is observing steadily increasing traffic levels and public transport use. This is due to work, retail and leisure activities all starting to return to something resembling pre-COVID times. There are also higher levels of walking and cycling, arising from the low traffic conditions and the need for fresh air and exercise that went with lockdown.

We are in transition. This document sets out how our transport strategy is tackling this transition, based wholeheartedly on our longstanding sustainable aims for transport serving the West Midlands. It sets out the rapid progress currently being made to continue, and increase, the greater levels of walking and cycling. It considers the ongoing efforts to reassure customers as

### National Express West Midlands electric bus



they return to use of our COVID-safe public transport network and efforts to promote the vitality of our local, town and city centres. We have also been able to deliver some road maintenance schemes taking advantage of quieter roads.

Critically, as well as these short-term measures, the document then sets out our key transport projects and measures which will be invaluable to our economic recovery. COVID-19 has had a wounding effect on the global economy and the West Midlands will build much needed infrastructure, with supporting measures, transport innovations and enhanced local powers. This is to help our region respond and grow strong again. These schemes will all help lay the foundations for a net zero carbon future and an inclusive economy. This is considered in Chapter 5 of this document which provides the link between our short-term actions, our economic recovery package and pointers for a long-term transport plan - post-COVID-19. The need for a sustainable transport system runs consistently through all these phases, and from this a series of key themes is identified to help develop our long-term approach. This will help build on all the solid work set out in this document by TfWM, West Midlands local authorities and our partners.

In summary, this plan has four key messages:

1. We are making rapid progress in creating safe and attractive conditions for cycling and walking, whilst reassuring customers returning to our safe public transport network.
2. We have a coherent plan for new sustainable infrastructure projects, transport innovation and enhanced local powers. This will support wider efforts to boost our economic recovery.
3. The two points above help lay the foundations for our new local transport plan. This will set out our long term strategy and the schemes and measures needed to create a carbon-free, inclusive, integrated transport system for the West Midlands.
4. We will champion the West Midlands wherever possible, making the case at every available opportunity for further powers and funding, as set out in "[Recharge the West Midlands](#)", and our [Comprehensive Spending Review \(CSR\)](#) submission. This includes:
  - £1.5bn capital and £87m revenue over the next five years for transport
  - A single pot for infrastructure capital funding
  - Enhanced local powers for bus services and local rail devolution
  - Enhanced local powers for moving traffic offences and pavement parking

This will help us achieve the effective, sustainable transport system we seek; a transport system which is commensurate to the needs of the people and businesses of the West Midlands.

Section 7 gives an overview of the many schemes and measures currently being progressed in line with these key messages.

## 2. Challenges and Opportunities

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**The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the lives of people across the world, resulting in a major upheaval in the way we work, travel and socialise.**

For the West Midlands this has presented both challenges and opportunities for the transport system: immediate changes and reactions to the pandemic; medium-term solutions to kick-start the economy; and encouraging signs of changing travel behaviours which will help reap longer term benefits as we move into a post-pandemic world. However, it is important to note that whilst the challenges of COVID-19 change and subside, longer term challenges particularly around climate change persist. We therefore need to respond positively, be prepared to try new things and innovate in the ways we live and work. The COVID-19 response has shown that the West Midlands can be resourceful and rise to the challenge – it is this attitude and approach which will be needed to deliver on our commitments going forward.

### 2.1. Challenges

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#### 2.1.1. Preventing a high-carbon recovery

The transition from full societal lockdown to economic recovery is a difficult one to navigate, but ensuring that people are encouraged to make sustainable transport choices during the process is important for the future.

The reduction in air pollution and emissions levels over the past few months has been one of the positive aspects of significantly reduced travel, and managing the balance back to full mobility and full choice is important. Locking in these improvements in air quality by making the switch to active and low-carbon travel, encouraging more flexible working and investing in a greener economy will result in a healthier, more sustainable future for all. They will also support the West Midlands approach to meeting new future national air quality targets, to be set by 2022.

### 2.1.2. Decline in the use of public transport

The two main issues currently facing public transport operators are ensuring sufficient passenger capacity, to support social distancing guidelines, and a lack of patronage due to less travel or a reluctance to use public transport. Public transport use fell sharply with the lock-down, with a major drop in revenue from ticket sales.

Supporting public transport operators during this time is crucial. This is to allow full service provision to accommodate travel needs with the progressive return to schools, workplaces shops and services. Clear messaging to the public demonstrating additional measures for safety, clear social distancing protocols and codes of conduct for passengers and staff are helping to restore trust in the public transport system as they return to public transport use.

### 2.1.3. Reallocation of space

Social distancing measures have resulted in the need for extra footway space, and a sharp increase in cycling as a mode of transport and a leisure activity has encouraged many Local Authorities in the West Midlands to implement temporary reallocation of the public realm

to local businesses for overspill and queuing, pop-up cycle lanes and closure of roads to motorised vehicles. Demonstrating the success of these schemes now will be vital to show how these changes result in public spaces which are safer, more pleasant, and create an even better walking and cycling experience for the future. Evidence from TfL and Living Streets shows the importance of walking and cycling for **economic benefits for local high streets**. (<https://www.livingstreets.org.uk/policy-and-resources/our-policy/high-streets> , <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/walking-cycling-economic-benefits-summary-pack.pdf>).

### 2.1.4. Speed of delivery

Time is critical both in terms of making a successful economic recovery and ensuring that this recovery responds to the climate change challenge. There are many post-COVID projects to deliver which will encourage people to make healthier, more sustainable choices about their travel and their lifestyle; ensuring that these interventions are effective, inclusive and completed to a high standard will be crucial in making a good first impression and increasing the volume and diversity of the people who make use of these new schemes.

#### Example of Footway Widening



### 2.1.5. Leaving no one behind

Inclusivity and equality are two pillars of both the #WM2041: Actions to meet the climate crisis and the West Midlands' strategic transport plan **Movement for Growth**. At-risk and minority groups are most likely to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they must therefore feature clearly in plans for recovery and a sustainable transport future. Investing in transport measures in local centres and neighbourhoods as well as town and city centres will allow people to readily access the transport they need for work, shopping, health and leisure.

### 2.1.6. Working across boundaries

In order for people to move seamlessly across the region, interventions must line up across different Local Authority areas. The Starley Cycle Network is an example of collaboration ensuring a joined up approach across the West Midlands. Continued cooperation and collaboration is vital to ensure that people have the same opportunities and access to sustainable transport no matter where they come from.

Achieving all of the post-COVID changes to the transport system will also require additional powers, facilitated by the Government, to WMCA. Working jointly with the Department for Transport and other Local Highway Authorities to explore more opportunities for devolved legislation on issues such as traffic management would allow the West Midlands to have greater control over implementing and enforcing the measures it has proposed to establish positive transport behaviours as a result of the pandemic.

## 2.2. Opportunities

### 2.2.1. A new way of life

The speed at which life has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic is a once-in-a-lifetime event, making it the perfect opportunity to begin a dialogue about the scale of change necessary to meet the climate change challenges, and get the public engaged in the conversation about how this can happen. 42% of the respondents to WMCA's COVID travel survey were either 'very optimistic' or 'somewhat optimistic' about the ability to protect the environment post-pandemic; 84% of people also recognised that the pandemic had a positive effect on environmental conditions.

Guiding people through making the permanent changes necessary to reduce emissions, air pollution and improve health and wellbeing is the backbone of a successful transition to a more sustainable post-pandemic future.

#### Aspects of life during the pandemic that people want to see continued in the future:

- Cleaner air – 81%
- Reduced road traffic – 75%
- Better work/life balance – 67%

### 2.2.2. More active travel

The COVID-19 lockdown resulted in traffic in the West Midlands reducing to 30% of normal levels as people were instructed to stay at home. During this time, walking and cycling levels increased both for leisure and commuting purposes in response to the reduced capacity on public transport, and as people chose to stay local for activities such as shopping. Cycle monitoring data is shown below:



**People have also been walking more:**

Travel Type	Before COVID-19	Since COVID-19
Cycle to Work	1%	7%
Walk to Work	5%	20%
Cycle to Shops	2%	4%
Walk to Shops	8%	40%

People walked and cycled on quieter roads and began to see this as a viable alternative to the car for local journeys, There is therefore an opportunity to lock in these behaviours by investing in infrastructure to support active travel. A third of people in the WMCA survey thought that pop-up cycle lanes would encourage cycling, and 26% felt that cycle- and bus-only lanes would be beneficial. Safety on the highway is a major concern among those who would potentially choose active travel over a motor vehicle and engaging with this is an important step towards encouraging more people to embed active travel into their daily lives. There will be a need to engage with the freight industry as well, in order to consider ways to safely manage delivery volumes, which have increased in many sectors over lockdown, and ensure that there are no conflicts between the safety of active user modes and HGVs and LGVs.

### 2.2.3. Green transport for recovery

A low-carbon recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic is only possible if the West Midlands begins working towards an economy which supports a sustainable transport future. Developing battery technology and charging infrastructure to meet the demands of an electric future, testing Very Light Rail urban transport solutions and accelerating decarbonisation in industry are all important opportunities for re-skilling the population ready for a net-zero carbon future.

Investment in green transport solutions will not only create and safeguard the jobs that people need during the economic recovery process but will also help the West Midlands meet its target of net-zero emissions in the region no later than 2041.

### 2.2.4. Changes to the workplace

The way that we work has changed fundamentally as a result of the need to stay at home to control the pandemic. For many, working from home has changed how we see our jobs and how it fits in with the rest of our lives; 66% of those surveyed by WMCA in June, who are currently employed, had not travelled or commuted for work purposes within the preceding seven days. This lack of need to travel into an office or other location has played a major role in the reduction of road traffic and the improvement in air quality over the last few months. There has also been positive feedback regarding the effect on work/life balance, and the potential for such working patterns to be carried over long after society has reopened.

As well as employees enjoying these benefits, employers have also seen the technology systems cope well with the increased demands arising from remote-working, for those jobs where this is possible, and have benefited from increased productivity from their workforce. For employers, these benefits can potentially extend to financial savings arising from reduced travel expenses (less requirement to travel for business

meetings) and potentially in reduced office space requirements should home-working become the norm for more people.

These new attitudes to work travel will therefore present an opportunity to work with employers as businesses open back up, to encourage the permanent adoption of flexible and agile working practices, giving people more freedom to choose when and how often they travel for work. There are also newly created and adapted travel planning resources, such as Modeshift Stars, which can assist businesses in short- and medium-term planning for the return of their staff to the office.

### 2.2.5. E-scooter trials

According to the WMCA survey in the summer, 65% of respondents knew nothing about the West Midlands' e-scooter trial and, while there was some concern about hygiene, safety and suitability for all age groups, committing to raising awareness of the trial and the technology may bring it to a wider audience and result in more people adopting the technology as a low-carbon first and last mile solution.

#### West Midlands e-scooter



# 3. Strategic Principles

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## **TfWM has set out five strategic principles for the recovery from Covid-19;**

- Providing travel that is safe and secure
- Getting workers and businesses back up and running (when safe)
- Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe
- Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise
- Supporting a green economic recovery

The short term actions of the first four principles are considered in section 4, with further actions identified for each principle, Green economic recovery schemes and measures are part of a wider economic stimulus package and are considered in section 5. This is then followed by consideration of how our short and medium term actions relate to long term strategy development



## 4. Transport Actions

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### 4.1. Providing travel that is safe and secure

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Public transport use was massively affected as a result of the pandemic, with patronage figures on rail as low as 15% of pre-Covid levels at the height of the lockdown. Measures being taken now are crucial to ensuring that the progress in building up patronage of buses, trams and rail is not lost in the economic recovery.

Bus patronage has increased from 20% of pre-Covid levels at the start of May 2020 to 60% in mid-September 2020. Mid-september figures for Metro tram use are over 55% of pre-Covid levels and rail use is still less than 30%.

Critical to patronage recovery is the provision of safe public transport and the communication of this to people travelling in the West Midlands. TfWM has worked intensely with operators on both of these aspects. TfWM has provided a critical co-ordinating role as the commercial nature of operations disappeared overnight, whilst the need for vital public transport services in the public interest came to the fore. Measures taken include:

- Establishment of multi-modal and multi-organisation Transport Recovery Cell
- To support NHS staff attending sites with reduced public transport services, Ring and Ride services repurposed to provide shuttles to key hospital sites from transport stops have been deployed. This has been running on a demand and responsive service and has seen strong take up by NHS workers, currently at around 1,000 journeys per week and as of 26th August 17,896 journeys since it started.
- Bus Alliance commitments, including :
  - apply, promote and enforce social distancing standards and Government regulations on face coverings
  - enhanced cleaning of buses, interchanges, bus shelters and travel centres

- Rail measures have included :
  - Individual station specific Covid plans
  - enhanced cleaning with a focus on high touch point areas
  - one way systems at larger stations
  - extra announcements and signing
  - information on train capacity to encourage use of trains at times of higher capacity
  - Wearing of face masks on board trains is mandatory for most passengers, with some exemptions
- Metro measures have included:
  - enhanced cleaning
  - customer communications
  - monitoring capacity and adapting service
  - new flexible ticketing range

### Further actions in the next 3 to 12 months:

- Public transport is operating in a period of constant change and as such operators continue to monitor the impact of Covid-19 and the measures put in place to help prevent the spread of the virus, whilst continuing to deliver an essential service.
- Operators will continue taking a safety-first approach as the situation evolves and will adapt its response accordingly.
- On 10th August a 'Lessons Learnt' review was undertaken to review the initial TfWM and transport response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The outputs from this are helping refine planning assumptions as well as response structures and communication channels. Whilst a significant amount of work has taken place to mitigate potential risks in relation to the return to school, further works are taking place for the return to university of 87,000 students. In addition to this, TfWM are continuing to work with Local Authorities and other partners in relation to spikes in cases of COVID-19, making sure that transport is 'plugged in' and responsive to information being shared.

#### West Midlands Railway train



## 4.2 Getting workers and businesses back up and running (when safe)

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A return to safe workplaces and business activity requires the safe public transport system considered in section 4.1. It also requires a Key Route Network which works effectively without large increases in car traffic causing congestion and unreliable journey times. Attractive town and city centres are also vital. TfWM has worked with local authorities to keep the KRN working effectively through the Transport Cell, use of enhanced data and operation of RTCC in an integrated manner. Between July and September, TfWM also issued COVID-19 recovery travel advice to 1,526 businesses.

Joint operational planning and coordination to revise services and monitor and oversee public transport modes and roads has been shown to be powerful as a coordinating resource. We are developing real time capabilities and innovation at pace in our data streams which is accelerating the aims and objectives of the RTCC, allowing us through this insight to iterate our operational response.

Local centres have taken on an even more important role in recent months as people have been required to shop and socialise locally to avoid unnecessary travel. Creating a sense of place in these communities not only makes the experience more pleasant but could also encourage active travel to and from local hubs. Improved conditions for town and city centres have also been important for their economic vitality.

Road space reallocation has been a key tool across the West Midlands in response to social distancing requirements, with schemes to promote appropriate distance in locations including Dudley town centre. Allowing businesses to spill out onto footways and roads has allowed them to open with an increased capacity and assurances of their customers' safety. Road closures and parking suspensions are both measures which have been widely used to support this and they also allow for safer use of active travel modes and better air

quality. Funding from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and the Emergency Active Travel Fund have assisted the return to centres and their vitality.

To support town centre recovery, WMCA has produced with partners a set of principles for town centre renewal:

- Creating a rich tapestry of mixed uses, giving multiple reasons for visiting town centres
- Devising a new economic model for town centres with 'town centre living' at its heart
- Improving the physical fabric, celebrating distinctiveness and providing more green space
- Maximising the potential of vacant and underused land
- Creating new public/private/third sector partnerships
- Managing our town centres actively, organising events and curating the experience
- Securing the devolution of powers from central to local and regional government

### Further actions in the next 3 to 12 months:

- Continued operation of the multi-modal and multi-organisation Transport Recovery Cell
- Continued effective use of the Regional Traffic Control Centre (RTCC)
- Delivery of EATF tranche 2 schemes
- Develop and deliver a comprehensive business case to HMG for new town centre transformation funding (£100m)

### 4.3 Supporting travel to schools and keeping children and families safe

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Public transport has played an important role in the reopening of schools in September 2020. Many pupils make broad use of public transport services, especially buses. The Department for Transport provided £2m to increase dedicated services to support the return to schools in the West Midlands and TfWM has provided advice on its website for school and college students. In addition DfT provided £150, 000 for travel demand management. While the government has advised that Local Authorities work to reduce this demand where possible, ensuring that pupils can safely use buses and increasing capacity to cater for them has been important. TfWM has pro-actively worked with Local Authorities, schools, colleges and transport operators to develop GIS maps of potential hot spots on the network during the return to school. At these locations, members of TfWM staff along with operators, are patrolling the network to ensure that service is meeting demand, highlighting in real time potential risks and instigating the use of sweeper services. A robust communications plan has been put in place with a strong emphasis on travel demand management, encouraging passengers, where possible to spread their journeys. Through its 12-week TDM programme for schools and colleges, TfWM, together with West Midlands local authorities, provided the following support:

- A regional school toolkit was produced and circulated to 1,500 schools.
- During September and October, five grant-funded travel planners were embedded in the seven local authorities. They made direct contact with 191 schools and identified 82 live issues with solutions in progress.
- 79 education sites contacted are now in the Modeshift system for schools, which will leave an active travel legacy.

#### Further actions in the 3 to 12 months are:

- Effective communications delivered through the communications plan
- Effective monitoring and actions to improve local highway and public transport performance through the Transport recovery cell and RTCC
- Monitoring and evaluation of the schools restart

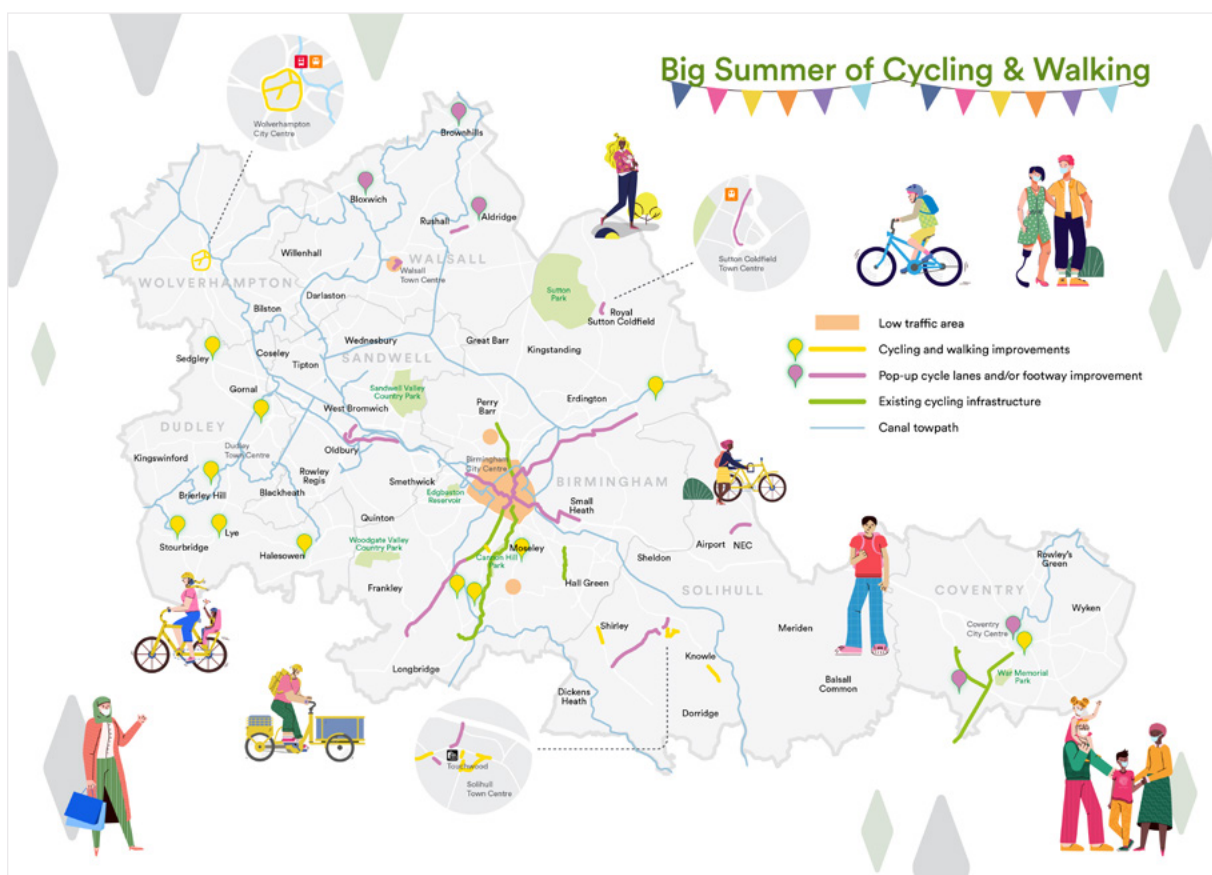
## 4.4 Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise

The three top aspects of life during the pandemic that people wanted to see continued in the future in the West Midlands are

- Cleaner air – 81%
- Reduced road traffic – 75%
- Better work/life balance – 67%

The Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund was established to rapidly create and then enhance safe conditions for walking and cycling. This was to consolidate and grow increased national levels of cycling and walking and so contribute to reduced traffic, lower air pollution and increased physical activity.

The West Midlands Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 bid received more funding from the Department for Transport than bid for, reflecting the strength of the bid. The schemes are shown in the promotional map below and are described in the tables of tranche 1 and 2 schemes:



## Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) Schemes

### Tranche 1

Authority	Scheme Types
<b>Birmingham – 14 schemes</b>	Local centre transport reallocation
	Low Traffic Neighbourhoods
	City centre traffic cells initiative
	Pop-up cycle lanes
	Park and pedal city-wide programme
<b>Coventry – 6 schemes</b>	City centre cycling and pedestrian zone
	Protected footways
	Pop-up cycle lanes
	City centre modal filters
	Supporting behavior change
<b>Dudley – 2 schemes</b>	Road space reallocation to support social distancing and active travel
	Cycle parking
<b>Sandwell – 2 schemes</b>	Oldbury town centre
	Smethwick town centre
<b>Solihull – 14 schemes</b>	Stencil markings and signage
	Footway widening
	Pop-up cycle lanes
	School streets
	Space for walking and cycling
	Road closures/modal filters
	Central cycle hub
<b>Walsall – 7 schemes</b>	Walsall town centre
	District and local centres
	Footway widening
	Cycle parking
	Renewing existing cycle infrastructure
<b>Wolverhampton – 4 schemes</b>	City centre pedestrian space
	Pedestrian/cycling zone
	Contra-flow cycle lane
	Social distance markings
<b>TfWM – 2 schemes</b>	Supporting measures
	Communication and marketing

## Tranche 2 – to be delivered late 2020/21

Authority	Scheme Types
<b>Birmingham – 22 schemes</b>	Local centre space reallocation
	Pop-up cycle lanes
	Low Traffic Neighborhoods
	School streets measures
	City centre traffic cells initiative
	City wide cycle parking
	Big Birmingham bikes
<b>Coventry – 3 schemes</b>	Segregated cycleways
<b>Dudley – 2 schemes</b>	Segregated cycleways
<b>Sandwell – 4 schemes</b>	Blackheath town centre
	Wednesbury town centre
	Bearwood High Street
	A4123 segregated cycleway section
<b>Solihull – 4 schemes</b>	Installing segregation to existing cycle routes
	Cycle parking
<b>Walsall – 2 schemes</b>	Connecting Bentley cycle and pedestrian route
	School streets
<b>Wolverhampton – 3 schemes</b>	Segregated cycleways
	Behaviour change measures
<b>TfWM – supporting measures</b>	Communications and promotion

A large number of the schemes have now been implemented, such as pop-up cycle lanes and widened footways. A Government announcement on Tranche 2 funding is expected soon.

Pop-up cycle lanes are examples of where road space is transferred from cars to cycles using temporary measures such as cones or barriers in order to give cyclists more protection. They have been instrumental in encouraging new and less confident cyclists to view cycling as a safe and accessible mode of transport. With the increased use of cycle lanes, there has also been a need for better cycle parking provision which has also been established at key urban destinations

In a similar reallocation of space, footways in many parts of the West Midlands have been widened to accommodate social distancing measures, queueing outside of shops and to make it easier and more comfortable for people to move around. Several different measures to improve the pedestrian environment, including closing roads to traffic as in Walsall Town Centre, and pavement widening in Moseley as part of the successful Emergency Active Travel Fund (tranche 1) bid.

In addition to EATF schemes, TfWM and its local authority partners are progressing funded cycle route schemes on the Starley Cycle Network for A34 Perry Barr to Alexander Stadium, A45 Birmingham to Solihull boundary, Binley Road Coventry and Wednesbury to Brierley Hill corridor access improvements to stops. The West Midlands Bike Hire Scheme will also be rolled out in spring 2021 following an initial trial.

Canals also have an important role to play by providing attractive walk and cycle routes on well-maintained towpaths and as foci for local regeneration.

### Case Study: Solihull COVID-19 active travel response

Following the Government's announcement of a phased re-opening of society Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council developed a dedicated strategy for implementing cycling and walking provision throughout the Borough, in line with the COVID-19 Recovery Strategy.

Step 1 of the plan began in May 2020 when the first restrictions were lifted. In response to the reduced capacity on public transport and the gradual rise of trips on the network, the following types of measures were introduced:

- Road closures to traffic e.g. A34 Stratford Road (service roads), Drury Lane
- Partial one-way traffic for better walking/cycling connections e.g. Homer Road
- Footpath widening e.g. Warwick Road
- Removal of parking bays to allow better walking/cycling access e.g. Station Road/Poplar Road

These measures cement the priority of active travel over motor vehicles and encouraging people to opt for walking and cycling trips.



Communications have been important in promoting sustainable transport. Active travel campaigns such as the Big Summer of Cycling and Walking have been important to raise the profile of low-carbon travel and set out the measures implemented to facilitate this. Online engagement has taken place on the emergency active travel infrastructure in towns and neighbourhoods to provide a clear outline of the detail design

Improved public transport also has a role to play in improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions. Improvements to bus services are being made as part of an integrated approach to main corridor enhancements. An example of this is the Cross City Region Bus Priority project, funded in part through the Government's 'A Better Deal for Bus Users' announcement and matched locally. Bus priority lanes, bus gates and other such measures will ensure improved bus reliability and journey times to give more attractive services.

### Case Study: The Big Summer of Cycling and Walking

TfWM has delivered a range of schemes across the West Midlands, with supporting communications to raise awareness and use. Widespread communication has been key to:

- Making people aware of schemes in their area;
- Addressing people's fears and safety concerns around cycling to get them on the road;
- Publicising the safety benefits

A new website has been designed to provide people with the resources they need to take part in the campaign, from information on bike maintenance and cycle routes to walking groups and road safety advice.



### Case Study: Cross City Region Bus Priority

A change is required in bus priority infrastructure across the West Midlands in order to increase connectivity across the region and create larger catchment areas to encompass new and productive socio-economic markets.

Six bus priority packages have been proposed, designed to complement upgrades across other modes including Sprint, Metro and rail. The initial upgrades, focused on Birmingham and Dudley, will provide:

A benefit to almost 90 million passengers per year;

- Bus gates providing bus-only roads;
- 5.5km of new bus lanes;
- Junction upgrades to improve journey times and reliability;

Prioritising buses and other forms of public transport will encourage people to reap the time-saving benefits by opting to leave the car at home.

Future mobility interventions are likely to have an increasingly large part to play in a sustainable transport future. WMCA and TfWM have already begun to roll out a twelve-month trial of e-scooters, providing possibilities for micro-mobility as an alternative to car use.

The potential of mobility hubs will also be explored in the West Midlands. This is to support local centres and reduce car use for some trips at busy times to reduce pressures on the network and reduce carbon emissions.

In response to the pandemic, transport operators have also begun to adapt or advertise their contactless payment methods and app-based, Mobility as a Service (MaaS)-style booking systems. MaaS technology has particular benefits during this period of change in the transport system, as the data can be used to track trends and make decisions about adding capacity on the transport network as people begin to make longer term travel plans.

### Further actions in the next 3 to 12 months:

- Delivery of EATF Tranche 2 Schemes
- Lobbying for further funding of sustainable transport schemes
- Lobbying for greater powers such as greater powers to manage pavement parking
- Lobbying for greater powers to enable delivery of the West Midlands Bus Vision
- Pursue trials of mobility hubs in the West Midlands to help reduce car use

#### Example of a mobility hub: Cologne



# 5. Supporting a Green Economic Recovery

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**The UK as a whole is experiencing the severe impacts of the economic slowdown from Covid-19. There have been significant job losses (Birmingham's unemployment rate in mid-september is just under 10% and rising) and, without careful planning, the threat of recession may increase the likelihood of a high-carbon response to stimulate economic recovery.**

The West Midlands has put in place its “Recharge the West Midlands” plan to focus efforts for recovery. This is by creating and safeguarding jobs for the long-term in economic sectors which add value and provide research and innovation capacity in sought-after areas of business and manufacturing. This chapter outlines six of the areas with transport interventions that will provide the West Midlands with the regional economic stimulus to help a ‘green’ recovery.

## 5.1. Industry

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The West Midlands has always had a strong industrial pedigree and channelling this to support future growth through automotive innovation is an important stepping stone towards a green recovery.

Plans for a ‘Gigafactory’ are underway, with the aim of building battery manufacturing capability in the face of the electrification of the transport system. Improved research and development capacity for electric vehicles (EVs) will not only put the West Midlands in a favourable position as EVs become more popular, but also safeguard and create up to 5500 jobs across the country. A rapid charging network powered by renewable energy will begin its roll-out in Birmingham in Autumn 2020 and this, combined with the technological expertise in the region, will help remove the barriers that have so far hampered the take-up of EVs.

From a public transport perspective, electric buses are now in service on commercial routes in Birmingham, Solihull and Coventry as a pre-cursor to wider use. Coventry, Dudley and industry partners based in the West Midlands are also developing a prototype of a new Very Light Rail solution for urban connectivity which will be tested at the new VLR National Innovation Centre in Dudley during 2021, with a scheme for a first

## #WM2041

One of the key themes running throughout this document is the need to consider the impact on the climate of any delay in switching to a low-carbon economy. The pandemic has provided an opening for a boom in active travel modes, but there should also be consideration of how the need to transition to a sustainable future is tied up with industry, housing, resources and all other aspects of society. The West Midlands 2041: Actions to meet the climate crisis with inclusivity, prosperity and fairness sets out the following actions as the path to a net-zero economy over the next 21 years:

- Decouple prosperity from consumption
- Create connected places
- Use the industrial past to create a new future
- Ensure the resilience of the WM
- Change the economy to leave no one behind

line in Coventry linking the city centre and the Hospital under development. This £114m project will support the Government's targets for net-zero emissions by 2050, as well as reducing the cost of track construction. It provides an autonomous, battery powered transport solution to getting people moving around cities in a sustainable manner. HS2 is also an opportunity to combine a major public transport intervention with benefits to the local area; the regeneration of the Curzon Street and Digbeth areas of Birmingham will encourage a cultural revival and create jobs in the creative sector which was hard-hit by COVID-19. Additional funding would allow for the acceleration of these projects and plans surrounding the Curzon Street HS2 interchange.

The West Midlands is also at the centre of the UK's freight and logistics operations. TfWM is currently seeking central Government funding of a new package of interventions for a new West Midlands innovation hub for freight and logistics.

## 5.2. Infrastructure

As demonstrated by the West Midlands' initial COVID-19 responses, infrastructure improvements for sustainable transport modes are key to shaping the way that people behave and the effectiveness of the response. One of the biggest projects in the region is Metro expansion with the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill, Eastside and Westside schemes, the Wolverhampton city centre extension and the East Birmingham to Solihull scheme. Aside from supporting regional connectivity and adding capacity to the system, more Metro will unlock land for high-quality, high-density housing growth and continue to encourage modal shift away from the private car. Sprint Bus Rapid Transit is another project which will expand the West Midlands rail and rapid transit network and connect local communities with strategic centres. The first Sprint scheme, for the A34 and A45, will help reduce transport inequality by ensuring that a higher proportion of the West Midlands' population will be able to reach three or more strategic centres within 45 minutes using public transport. New local rail stations and services will expand the rail and rapid transit network even further, with new stations at Darlaston, Willenhall, Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell. West Midlands Rail are also progressing upgrades to University and Perry Barr stations, as well as improvements in rail access. Work has been continuing throughout the lockdown period on the Coventry Station Masterplan, which will see a new station building, improved passenger facilities and a new station car park and public transport interchange, delivered in time for the City of Culture 2021 next May. These schemes will attract patronage for the long term, as part of the post covid recovery phase and beyond.

Main corridors will see multi-modal benefits which will benefit walking, cycling and bus services. For example, improvements to the A454, from Wolverhampton to Walsall, will result in improvements to congestion and therefore air quality, and will have the additional benefit of improvements in bus journey times and journey time reliability.

Also important are smaller scale local community projects and measures which assist the creation of a more integrated transport network

Physical networks are not the only focus of upgrades in the region; the COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of teleworking, and how it may become more common in the future. Investment is still required, but by delivering full fibre connectivity to less affluent areas in the region the inequalities in opportunities for flexible working arrangements will be reduced, and productivity across these local authority areas will improve. Similarly, the upgrades to 5G will allow more people to choose to work from home and encouraging this will have a knock-on effect on the demand for transport and helping to drive down emissions.

TfWM's capital register is assessing the overall impacts of covid on delivery and will inform future prioritisation of capital projects to aid economic recovery. Much current capital funding is through the Transforming Cities Fund. The purpose of the Transforming Cities Fund is to invest in new local transport infrastructure to boost productivity by improving public and sustainable transport connectivity.

With continued support and closer collaboration with Government, the acceleration of TCF investment programmes can help to deliver immediate impact in the real economy to help address the short-term risks of Covid-19 by creating and safeguarding jobs and strengthening regional innovation, competitiveness and resilience. We are committed to invest in the West Midlands which will help deliver the government's priority of levelling-up and achieving net zero carbon.

### 5.3. Building and Regeneration

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Investment in West Midlands' strategic public transport, such as Metro and HS2, will have the effect of unlocking land for housing, as well as making the region more desirable as a result of its connectivity. As a sustainable approach, developers must be encouraged to make the most of brownfield sites, using development principles to encourage cycling, walking and public transport, as set out in the West Midlands design charter.

Besides the regeneration that will come as part of the HS2 Curzon Street development, the Commonwealth Games and Coventry's year as City of Culture are both opportunities for the West Midlands to showcase itself and reap the economic benefits from the associated investment and tourism.

### 5.4. Business and Employment

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The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the job market, and rates of unemployment across the UK. Safeguarding and creating new jobs in areas which will benefit from post-COVID expansion and investment is the best way to support the West Midlands region from this perspective. From managing demand by encouraging people to shop local, to prioritising active travel in town and city centres to maximise the turnover rates associated with increased footfall, there are many ways that transport and business are interlinked.

Workwise is a sound example of the benefits of making low-carbon travel accessible; it gives newly employed people, including apprentices, support with travel costs on public transport for their first three months of employment. The scheme currently offers 50% off the full-cost price of most selected four-week West Midlands

Network, West Midlands Bus, National Express West Midlands bus and Metro travel passes and includes those increasing their hours to 16 or more per week. Approximately half of Workwise customers would not have been able to take up their offer of employment without this support, and the scheme helps prevent borrowing and use of payday loans. The majority of Workwise customers continue to buy a ticket after accessing Workwise travel support. The scheme is important as part of the COVID-19 recovery process because of how it assists people into employment by helping with transport costs and encourages continuous use of sustainable transport methods.

## 5.5. Travel Demand Management

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Travel Demand Management (TDM) will have a greater role to play in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) refresh as we want to manage capacity and provide a safe reliable network for all that need to use it. Until now, TDM has supported the regional investment programme and shown a measurable impact on journeys in the short term.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought to the fore the need for targeted operational TDM strategies delivered at pace, so as to support businesses and their workers; and education sites re-opening in the September term. This interim TDM programme has required wider mobilisation of resources across TfWM and its partners with the combined programme coordinated in Network Resilience. Data and intelligence has augmented intuition in targeting communications and engagement and traffic solutions.

The more systemic approach taken in the interim Covid-19 TDM programme is enhancing success.

### HS2 Curzon Street Station



As well as being able to implement traffic solutions, we also need to use active travel as an alternative to reduce demand, reduce car trips and keep everybody moving. We need to integrate our TDM approach to good effect with other initiatives and funding to help manage capacity and provide a safe reliable network for all that need to use it.

Common communications and engagement techniques help people to contemplate behavioural change. However, it is widely accepted that behavioural change takes a greater effort in reinforcing steps to embedding new behaviours in our lifestyle – with an estimated 66 days to embed the change in daily life (University College London). To achieve this will require incentives and disincentives appropriate to target audiences at key intervention points.

Having demand management strategies to promote the use of mass transit and minimise use of road space and fuel or energy is all part of the circular economy described in #WM2041. Decarbonising industry and the transport system will set the region in the right direction for minimising waste and maximising the contribution to the Government’s net zero strategy.

## 5.6. Devolution

The projects and measures set out in WMCA’s “Recharge the West Midlands” underpin the recovery of the West Midlands. Our contribution to regional and national economic growth can be even greater with further long-term funding and devolved powers.

The West Midlands has developed its thinking on this for a series of asks of Government. The West Midlands approach is based on the principles of simpler, longer and larger funding settlements, and practical devolved legal powers to help us unlock barriers to deliver and manage a sustainable, inclusive transport system. An example of this is devolution of powers to enforce moving traffic offences enabling, for example, better yellow box enforcement.

WMCA’s initial set of asks of Government covers proposals for:

- More say on how public funds are spent locally
- More control over regional transport such as buses and rail
- Local design of an affordable housing policy and ability to influence levels of housing benefit
- Powers that will help accelerate large infrastructure projects
- Responsibility for the skills system for 16 to 18-year-olds including careers service and technical training
- Greater involvement in the regional energy market to tackle fuel poverty; and
- Ability to shape employment support programmes

They are set out in item ten of the agenda below: <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=137&MId=366>

### Further actions in the next 3 to 12 months:

- Champion the West Midlands wherever possible, making the case at every available opportunity for further powers and funding, as set out in “Recharge the West Midlands”, and our CSR submission. This includes:
  - £1.5bn capital and £87m revenue over the next five years for transport
  - A single pot for infrastructure capital funding
  - Enhanced local powers for bus services and local rail devolution
  - Enhanced local powers for moving traffic offences and pavement parking

## 6. Long-term Strategy Development

**The West Midlands has a valuable chance to change its emissions trajectory, address transport inequality, support local communities and work towards a thriving, green economy.**


The key to making the most of this opportunity is setting out clear actions as part of a long-term strategy for the region. The “Movement for Growth” Local Transport Plan is currently being reviewed, and this section aims to demonstrate how the short-term responses to the COVID-19 pandemic support longer-term investments and projects to put the West Midlands at the cutting edge of future mobility technology, inclusive sustainability and adaptations for climate breakdown.

### Five Motives for Change

The existing local transport plan (LTP) is built around five themes that summarise the challenges facing the West Midlands in the future. These themes are likely to be carried forward in the new LTP refresh to set the scene for a more radical approach to dealing with these challenges, and the beginnings of this can be seen in the interventions that have taken place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Motives for Change are as follows:

 Climate emergency

 Transport inequality

 Supporting local communities and places

 Physical inactivity

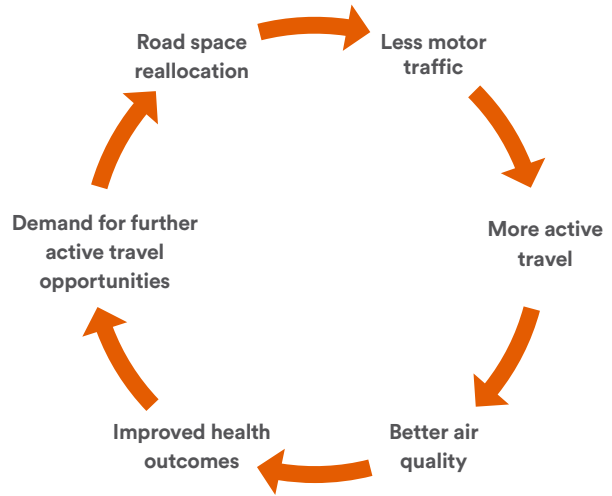
 Sustaining economic success



## 6.1. Walking and cycling

Capitalising on the gains made in walking and cycling through the first round of measures will provide a good footing for setting a longer-term precedent for their prioritisation. Supporting a shift to active travel will require reconsidering the existing hierarchies of the public realm and backing projects which reallocate road space to walking and cycling. Encouraging walking and cycling directly combats climate change by reducing emissions, and will also have a positive effect on both transport inequality and physical inactivity.

Pop-up cycle lanes have been a great success during lockdown. As more traffic returns to the roads, so local authorities are committed to investing in permanent infrastructure which meets the high standards set out in the Government’s Gear Change: A bold vision for cycling and walking document. This is being seen in the West Midlands with new high



quality cycle routes for the A45 and the A34 to Alexander Stadium in Birmingham, and for Coundon and Binley Road in Coventry. The regional Starley Cycle Network has recently been announced which aims to create, improve,

**STARLEY NETWORK**

**West Midlands Cycle & Walk**

- TfWM cycling network
- Local authority cycling network\*
- Pop-up cycle lanes and/or footway improvements
- Canal towpaths
- Core walking zones

\* More details of the Birmingham Walking & Cycling Strategy and Infrastructure Plan can be found on [birmingham.gov.uk/walkingcyclingstrategy](http://birmingham.gov.uk/walkingcyclingstrategy)

Birmingham City Council | Coventry City Council | CITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON COUNCIL | Solihull METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL | Dudley | Sandwell METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL | Walsall Council

and join up, 500 miles of protected cycle routes across the region. This is part of a bid to rebrand cycling in the West Midlands and will bring quality cycle infrastructure closer to people’s homes. Accelerating the deployment of this infrastructure to capture the recent enthusiasm for cycling is an important move to ensure that active travel choices become embedded.

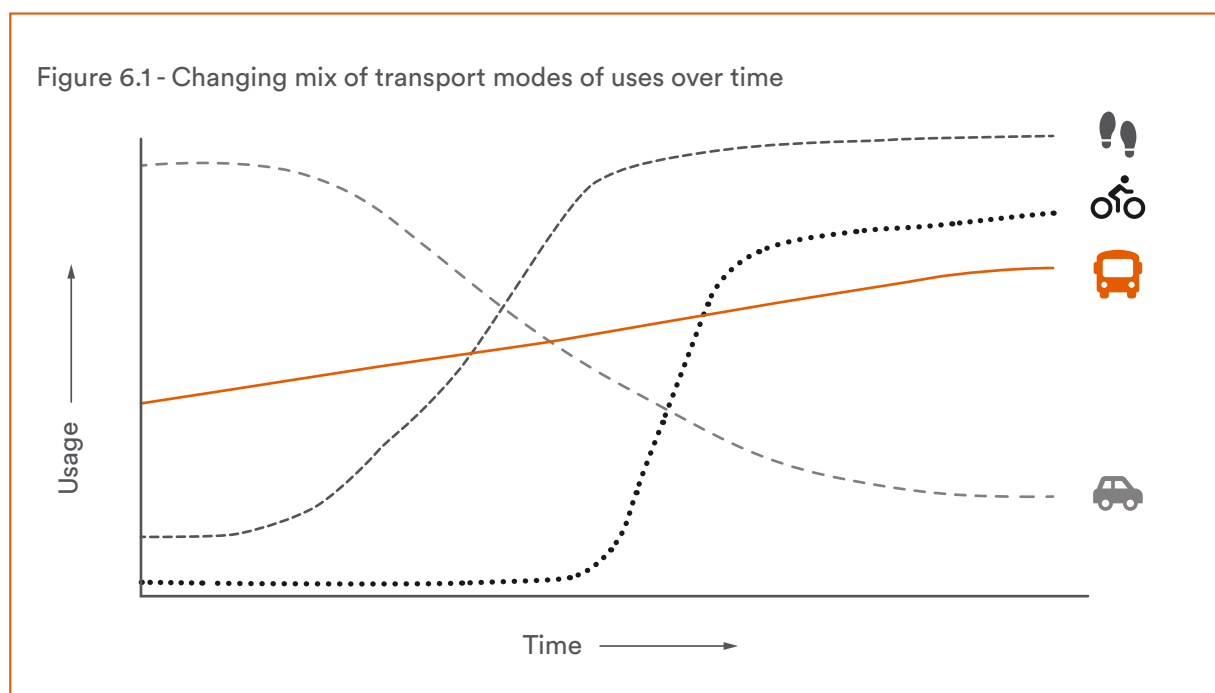
Low-traffic neighbourhoods are another positive way to showcase the benefits of active travel. By allowing areas to be fully permeable to walkers and cyclists but restricted to motor traffic there are benefits for air and noise pollution, reduced severance and improved safety. Birmingham is already implementing these measures in Kings Heath and Lozells and incorporating plans as part of a future strategy could see the benefits reaped across the West Midlands. Similarly, widespread adoption of the School Streets initiative would encourage parents and carers to choose active travel modes for the school run as encouraged by WMCA and TfWM in response to the reopening of schools in September 2020.

The new West Midlands bike hire scheme, to be launched in 2021 will further promote cycling in the West Midlands.

## 6.2. Main Corridors

The effective movement of people and goods on the Key Route Network is fundamental to an efficient, productive economy. As the West Midlands rebounds from the effects of the COVID-19 lockdown, managing demand and using road space effectively will be required. Figure 6.1 shows a scenario of the changing mix of transport modes over time which will be core to achieving a net zero carbon West Midlands. Main corridor strategies will need to consider integrated sets of suitable interventions which ensure the effective movement of people and goods and achieve target carbon reductions.

Public transport will also need to reflect the changing nature of travel and ways of working in the post-pandemic world. Many people are unlikely to be travelling into an office every day for the foreseeable future, and flexible working will become the norm for many. In response to this, TfWM has worked with public transport operators to launch the new Swift Go service on Metro with roll out to bus in 2021. The new Swift Go service is aimed at occasional travellers and calculates the best value fare at the end of each day based on the journeys taken.



Work is also underway with operators to offer best-value capping across three-day and seven-day periods which will benefit those working part-time, or those working at home working on some days and in an office on other days.

### 6.3. Future mobility

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The West Midlands is well-placed to capitalise on future mobility technology in the journey to a net-zero economy by 2041. The region was selected as the UK's first Future Mobility Zone and awarded £22m by the Government to work towards transitioning from research and development projects to integration of this new technology into the transport system. The Midlands Future Mobility testbed is one of the largest public realm Connected and Autonomous Vehicle (CAV) labs in Europe, using over 250km of urban, rural and inter-urban roads to test new technologies. Alongside the mobility clusters, the UK Battery Industrialisation Centre in Coventry will provide research facilities and manufacturing capability to meet the demands of the electrification of the transport system. This investment in industry can be harnessed as a way to up-skill and re-skill people who have lost their jobs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, or whose industries are unsustainable in the face of climate breakdown.

Shared use transport facilities also have a part to play as we recover from lockdown. Modes such as bike share, e-bike schemes and e-scooters provide means of travel compatible with physical distancing. Supporting the expansion of these schemes will increase the number of bikes/scooters available, broaden the extent of the network and ultimately reduce costs for users.

In some cities, shared use modes have been repurposed during COVID-19. West Midlands Ring and Ride vehicles have been deployed to

serve hospitals for key health workers. Research in Paris has suggested that there may be some success in moving vehicle-sharing models over to the logistics sector to promote shared EV use, and the use of 'microhubs' in built up areas which then allow deliveries to be made by cargo bike or electric vehicle<sup>1</sup>. The West Midlands has been facing challenges surrounding the congestion and safety issues caused by increase freight and parcel distribution using LGVs; incorporating some of these future mobility solutions long-term could alleviate these problems and leave more space for walking and cycling in the city centre.

With investment in and widespread use of CAVs, MaaS, online booking and other future mobility technology however, it will be important to continue to consider those who cannot or do not wish to use internet connectivity whether based at home or on a mobile device. It is important that there remains a simple way for them to access modes of transport which allow them to carry out their daily lives without being excluded from the system.

### 6.4. Centres

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Centres have a role to play in preventing the rebound to a high carbon economy while tackling inequalities. Local centres have become a focal point for most people during the lockdown as they shopped, exercised and socialised closer to home. The concept of 'future cities' encompasses all aspects of urban life and the market for urban solutions is growing ever stronger. But it is not just cities that people call home; local centres now have an opportunity to lead the way in the transformation to more sustainable transport options, better quality housing and better overall connectivity.

Reallocating parts of the public realm to make more space for moving and queuing not only

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1 <https://www.polisnetwork.eu/news/post-lockdown-mobility-webinar-report-urban-logistics-in-lockdown/>

encourages active travel, discourages the use of motor vehicles and leads to lower emissions, it also has a part to play in place-making aspects which improve living conditions by making places more pleasant and attractive. Legislating to protect space for walking and cycling within local and town centres will have long-term benefits for personal and environmental health and make it easier to act against infringements against active travel when they do occur, such as illegal or pavement parking and the use of vehicles in restricted areas. Protecting assets designed for disabled users should remain an important aspect of any strategy, including accessible parking spaces.

City centres will also need to recover with schemes and measures to provide attractive conditions for new visits, new housing and attractions which assist footfall and economic vitality.

Projects, such as Solihull MBC's planned major upgrade of Solihull station, are also needed to support the role of strategic and town centres by acting as gateways and important public transport hubs on an integrated public transport network.

#### **Illustration of how a future West Midlands residential street could look like, with more space for walking and cycling**



## **6.5. Communications**

Communication has been central throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; televised briefings, social media campaigns, advertisement and letters from local and national government laying out the plans and the guidelines meant to keep people safe and stop the spread of the virus. TfWM has led key messaging in the West Midlands for use of the transport system with key overall themes of reduce, re-time and re-mode to encourage walking and cycling, prevent high car use post-lockdown, and provide advice on use of the safe public transport network.

In a post-COVID world, communication remains one of the West Midlands' key tools to influence the decisions that people make and how they feel as society re-opens and finds a new way of operating. Swift, clear and accessible messaging should be at the core of every new decision, and a bold commitment to avoiding a permanent shift back to high levels of motor vehicle use needs to be made so that people understand the direction of travel and how they can positively contribute towards it. This is an opportunity to set the tone for a more radical change in policy going forward, and communicating the reasons behind this need for progress, such as resistance and adaptation to climate change, through multiple channels will give people time to absorb and internalise this new focus.

TfWM has demonstrated success in developing clear, recognisable messaging previously, with the travel disruption campaign in Birmingham during 2019. Using this experience to create a campaign for long-term change to the transport system, including travel demand management, encouraging active travel behaviours and keeping people safe from COVID-19, will complement the investment in physical infrastructure and new technology required to transform the region.

## 7. Summary of Transport Schemes

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**This chapter provides an overview of key transport schemes which underpin a green economic recovery and support longer term sustainable transport development. They support the walking and cycling schemes set out in section 4.4 “Keeping the clean air, reduced carbon emissions and physical exercise”.**

Each scheme has been linked with the five Motives for Change as described in Chapter 6, demonstrating how they feed into the West Midlands’ priorities for the future, and the benefits they will incur for the local community.

**The icons for the Motives for Change are shown below:**

 Climate emergency

 Transport inequality

 Supporting local communities and places





 Physical inactivity

 Sustaining economic success






## Main Corridors

Package	Schemes	Timescales for start of construction	Motives for change
	SPRINT Bus Rapid Transit	Phase 1 Ongoing	
	Cross City Region Bus Priority (packages 1 and 3)	Late 2020/21	
	Dudley Road Major Scheme	Late 2020/2021	
Metro extension programme	Wednesbury – Brierley Hill	Ongoing	
	Westside	Ongoing	
	Eastside	Scheme in development	
	East Birmingham to Solihull	Scheme in development	
	Wolverhampton city centre	Ongoing	
	A454 Wolverhampton to Walsall	2021	
	Walsall – Wolverhampton passenger rail and new stations	2021	
	Camp Hill line passenger rail and new stations	2021	
	University station	2020	
	Perry Barr station	2021	
	Birchley Island	2021	
	Coventry Local Air Quality Action Plan	Ongoing	



## Future Mobilities

Schemes	Timescales for start of construction	Motives for change
E-scooter trial	Ongoing	
Digital connectivity -fibre network	Ongoing	
Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre - Dudley	Ongoing	
Very Light Rail -Coventry station – University Hospital	2024	

## Centres

Schemes	Timescales for start of construction	Motives for change
Selly Oak New Road highway improvement scheme	Ongoing	
Birmingham City Centre traffic cells	September 2020-	
Coventry City of Culture	Ongoing	
Dudley Interchange	2021	
Coventry Station Masterplan	Ongoing	

## Communication

Schemes	Timescales for start of construction	Motives for change
TfWM Covid Recovery Key Messaging	Ongoing	
Local authorities COVID-19 messaging	Ongoing	

## 8. Conclusions

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**The West Midlands is dealing with the huge health and economic impacts of Covid-19. As part of this, TfWM and its partners reacted rapidly to ensure that the West Midlands' transport system enabled key workers to do their absolutely vital work.**

TfWM provided a pivotal role to ensure this happened. TfWM has continued to play a pivotal role to retain and grow the cycling and walking increases in the West Midlands, and to ensure safe, effective operations of the public transport and highway networks with the start of the recovery phase. TfWM and WMCA now seek further powers and funding to deliver recharge the west midlands, our economic recovery plan, and our CSR asks. This includes:

- £1.5bn capital and £87m revenue over the next five years for transport
- A single pot for infrastructure capital funding
- Enhanced local powers for bus services and local rail devolution
- Enhanced local powers for moving traffic offences and pavement parking

Achieving these will put the West Midlands on a strong, sound footing: a solid base from which to build a sustainable, inclusive, integrated transport system, the details of which are now being developed with work on our new long term transport plan for the West Midlands.







Transport for  
**West Midlands**