



Solihull Connected

2023

Transport Strategy

Solihull Connected 2023

Solihull Connected is the transport strategy for the Metropolitan Borough of Solihull. It looks at why and how we travel and sets out what we are intending to do to improve travel and transport in the Borough.

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1 PREFACE

The Transport Strategy for Solihull – Solihull Connected – was adopted in 2016. In 2023, the Council, neighbouring authorities, stakeholders, businesses, partner organisations and residents are living in a very different age. Background changes were already taking place, such as efforts to find ways to reduce carbon consumption and take other environmental protection measures. However, the Covid-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the pace of change and is likely to have lasting effects on our economy, travel, transport, and wider lifestyles, influencing how we work and how we spend our leisure time.

This refreshed Transport Strategy – Solihull Connected 2023 – repositions the Council’s approach to transport over the next decade and is supported by a refreshed Delivery Plan. It sits alongside the Council’s Draft Local Plan, looking forward to 2037.

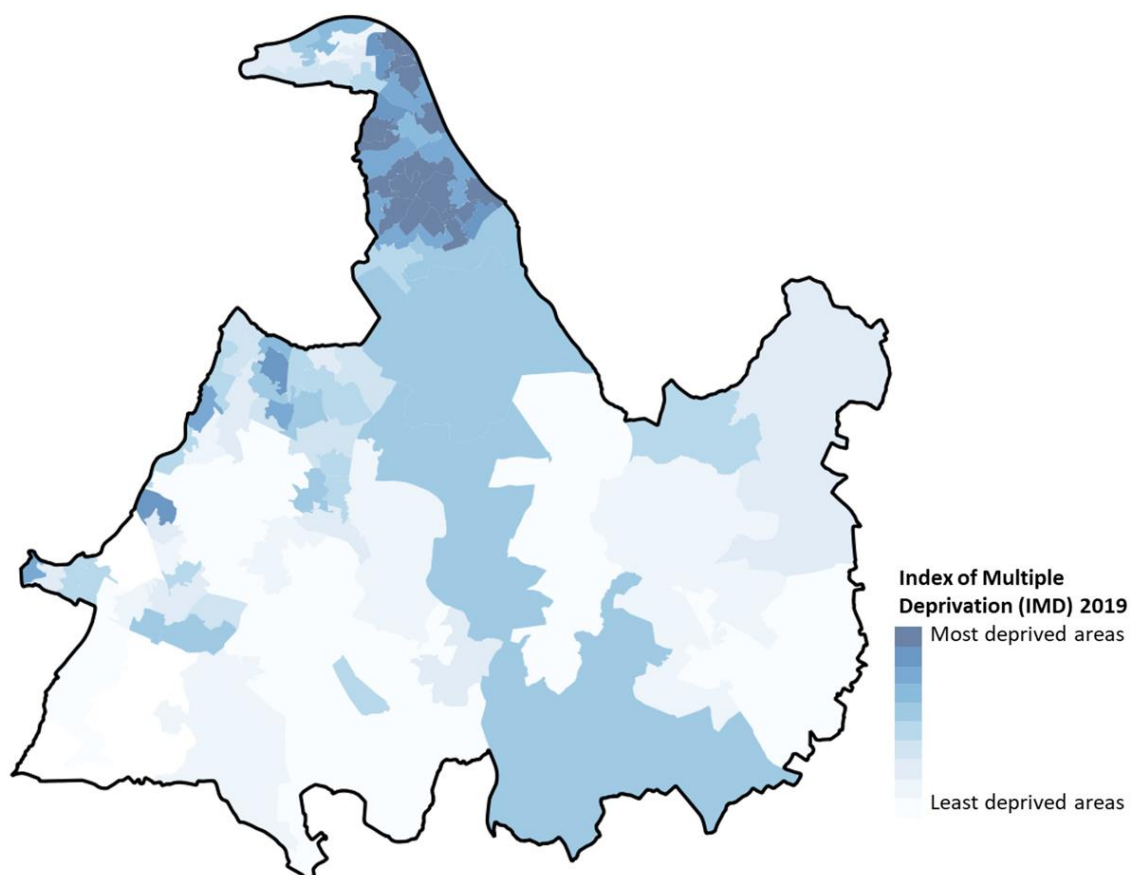
We have undertaken extensive analysis and prepared a series of evidence documents to support development of the objectives and policies set out in this new transport strategy. These documents will also be used to inform further work with stakeholders and local communities to develop further initiatives for inclusion in the Solihull Connected 2023 Delivery Plan. The evidence documents include:

- A Local Centres Accessibility Review
- Solihull Town Centre Access Strategy
- A Public Transport Vision

Data and analysis used to develop Solihull Connected 2023 is generally set out within supporting documents. Census data from 2011 has been used as an initial basis from which to work, as it remains more robust from a ‘travel to work’ perspective than the 2021 Census data, which was skewed by Covid-19 restrictions being in place at the time. However, wherever possible, the 2011 Census data has been supplemented by analysis based on more recently captured travel survey and traffic data, public transport passenger information and transport model development and application (including that associated with the Draft Local Plan).

Solihull Borough covers a diverse area, with areas of deprivation and dense housing in the north, large suburban areas in the core and to the south of the Borough, whilst the east is largely Green Belt area consisting of agricultural uses and countryside. The population of the Borough contains more elderly people than surrounding areas. The 2021 Census data indicates that there has been an increase of 15.2% in people living in the Borough aged 65 years and over.

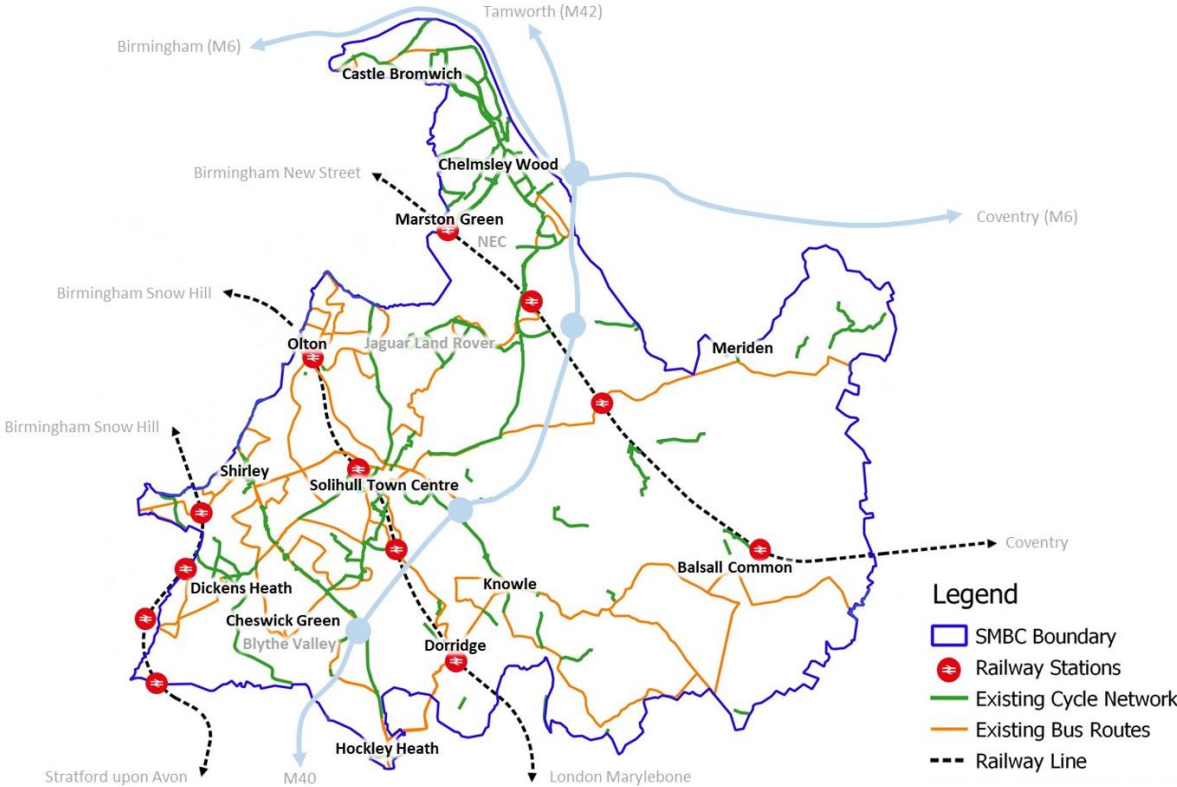
Solihull MBC Index of Multiple Deprivation



The increasing affordability and access to private motor vehicles relative to public transport has, over time, resulted in a society that is increasingly mobile. Improvements to telecommunications may have reduced the need to travel for some things, but it has not necessarily manifest in an overall reduction in travel. Rather, it has modified why, where and when we travel, and impacted patterns of goods delivery.

As our lifestyles have become more car-centric, our relationships with places have changed. Travel patterns are more dispersed than ever; our travel horizons have expanded, meaning we often make longer journeys, with most of those journeys not being focused on major centres. The role of walking, cycling and public transport in our lives has arguably therefore reduced. This has come with a host of issues; congestion, less safe streets, emissions, and marginalising people who cannot drive or access a car.

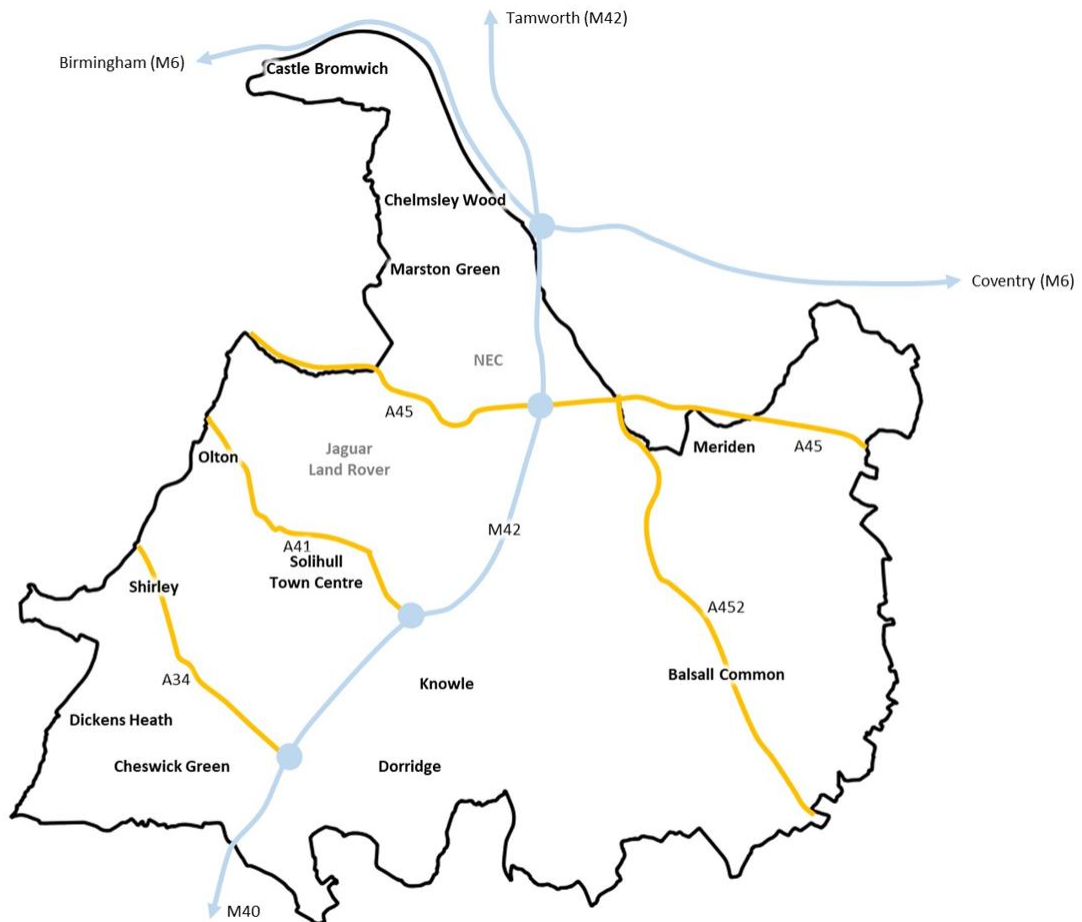
Existing Transport Network



2 BACKGROUND

Solihull is home to major economic and infrastructure assets and already benefits from high levels of regional and national connectivity. This will be enhanced as further major investment is made in the coming years, such as the new M42 Junction 5A and the arrival of HS2.

Solihull Borough



The biggest change to the Borough's transport network will be associated with the opening of the HS2 Interchange Station. HS2 is planned to open around the turn of the decade. On opening, the consented scheme could introduce up to 7,500 additional car parking spaces to serve the station (although the quantum of parking provision that is delivered is subject to on-going discussion), alongside highway changes and new cycling and walking routes. New public transport services are also expected to serve the new station.

HS2 Limited expects that, in addition to Solihull, the catchment area of the Interchange station will include Coventry, the east side of Birmingham, Sutton Coldfield, Tamworth and parts of both Warwickshire and Worcestershire. If correct, journeys will be coming into the Interchange from a large area, and we will need

to work closely with neighbouring authorities to consider cross border travel demands and infrastructure requirements both within Solihull and beyond. The opening of the new high speed railway line offers an opportunity to realign some of our regional rail services.

Solihull Town Centre



Birmingham Airport, also located within Solihull Borough, is expected to share in the increasing demand for air travel following the pandemic, growing towards 18 million passengers by 2033 as set out in the Birmingham Airport masterplan 2018. As passenger numbers increase, additional bus, coach and rail services will be vital to provide sufficient airport accessibility for both passengers and workers at the Airport.

The work of the Council and its Urban Growth Company (UGC) to develop the UK Central Hub, including the NEC and Arden Cross site, will support thousands of new jobs and homes with future workers, residents and visitors benefiting from unparalleled access to air, rail, and road travel. The Hub's strategic location in the centre of the UK and its proximity to an educated and skilled workforce, will provide an attractive proposition for international investors and occupiers looking to establish and expand. Management of travel and transport in this area will be a significant test of our transport strategy.

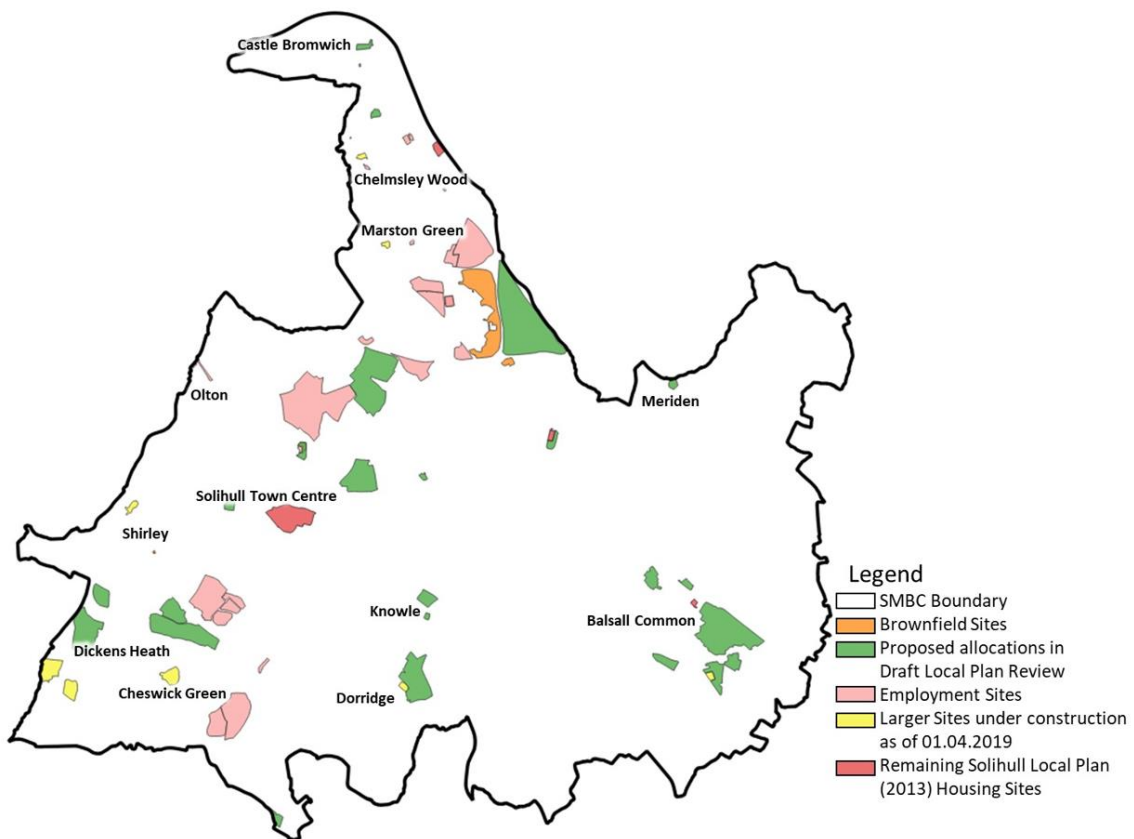
The expectation is that the UKC Hub will become a sustainable community and this new role as a place and a community will be achieved through ensuring the right transport solutions to transition to the use of more sustainable modes of travel, new behaviours, and new technologies.

Major development proposals set out in the Solihull Town Centre masterplan will also come forward over the next few years. The Masterplan sets out six areas of change that could deliver more than 1,000 new homes, 4,000 jobs and add £325 million GVA to the economy. This will change how people travel, and many transport schemes and investment opportunities are identified within the Masterplan to support this change.

The Draft Local Plan, and associated Infrastructure Delivery Plan, set out the proposals and infrastructure requirements for future housing growth within the Borough and it is critical that this transport strategy sets out the overall approach to ensure that these new homes and new residents can be accommodated within the Borough's transport network. The policies and infrastructure requirements set out in this strategy, and its Delivery Plan, therefore complement those set out in the Draft Local Plan.

There are also major developments in surrounding areas – for example, there will be significant expansion of housing at Eastern Green near Coventry, expansion of the University of Warwick and we can expect new investment and development in Warwickshire, East Birmingham, and Worcestershire to generate new travel trips within Solihull, particularly to destinations within the UK Central Hub.

Solihull Draft Local Plan Allocations



3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Solihull Connected looks at why and how we travel and sets out what changes will be made in coming years to achieve four objectives. We know that different parts of the Borough have distinctive needs and therefore this strategy contains recommendations tailored for six separate sub-areas.

The Council Plan for 2020 to 2025 sets out the ambition for our Borough to be one where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer, and more prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all. Within the Council Plan there are nine things to do, which transport helps with:

- Being part of revitalising our towns and local centres
- Being part of bringing forward UK Central and maximising the opportunities from the new HS2 railway line and Birmingham Interchange Railway Station
- Providing access to areas of new housing
- Enhancing the natural environment
- Improving air quality
- Reducing net carbon emissions
- Improving life chances in our most disadvantaged communities by improving access
- Enabling our communities to thrive

The transport system needs to provide access to all parts of the Borough so that all residents can access the opportunities that are available. These opportunities may be in education, employment, leisure, or retail sectors.

Our transport choices also have an environmental impact, which we must be aware of whilst the desire held internationally to reduce the carbon consumption from transport suggests that we need to find a path to deliver sustainable accessibility.

Sound transport investments lower the costs of moving people and goods. This increases economic productivity and supports our recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic. We need to develop transport so that the Borough has inclusive economic growth, greater human and social capital and our communities are better connected.

To do this the transport system has to be attractive to use and part of this involves making it safe to walk, cycle and travel around the Borough. A safe environment supports greater activity in our local centres and greater use of alternative modes to the car.

Our vision for the Solihull Connected Transport Strategy draws out these points and underpins our approach to transport in the Borough:

The Vision

Solihull will have a multi-modal transport system that accesses all parts of the Borough, supports our economy, is safe to use and makes the Borough healthier and fairer for communities, businesses, and visitors.

Objectives

To achieve this vision, our transport strategy has four objectives, each of which has three outcomes. An objective is what we think is important. An outcome is what we want to happen.

Objective 1: To make the transport network accessible to all people

Outcomes: Our transport system will offer access for our residents including those with disabilities, it will be simple and comfortable to use, and it will use new products, services, and technology and will add diversity of modal choices.

Objective 2: To help the economy grow in a way that is equal and fair for everyone

Outcomes: Our transport system will get people and goods to where they need to be, provide access to new housing and employment sites, and will support regeneration of our town, local and district centres.

Objective 3: To be safe and secure for all users

Outcomes: People of all backgrounds will be confident travelling in the Borough. Transport will support steps to improve equality whilst accident and crime rates on the transport network in the Borough will fall.

Objective 4: Transport will contribute to improving the quality of life in our borough

Outcomes: Our transport system will make it easier for residents to travel around the Borough, offer a choice of travel modes to allow us to reach net zero carbon and will make our communities great places to live.

Solihull Connected refers to several organisations and includes technical transport phrases and acronyms. We explain what these are in the glossary at the end of Solihull Connected.

4 THE WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY

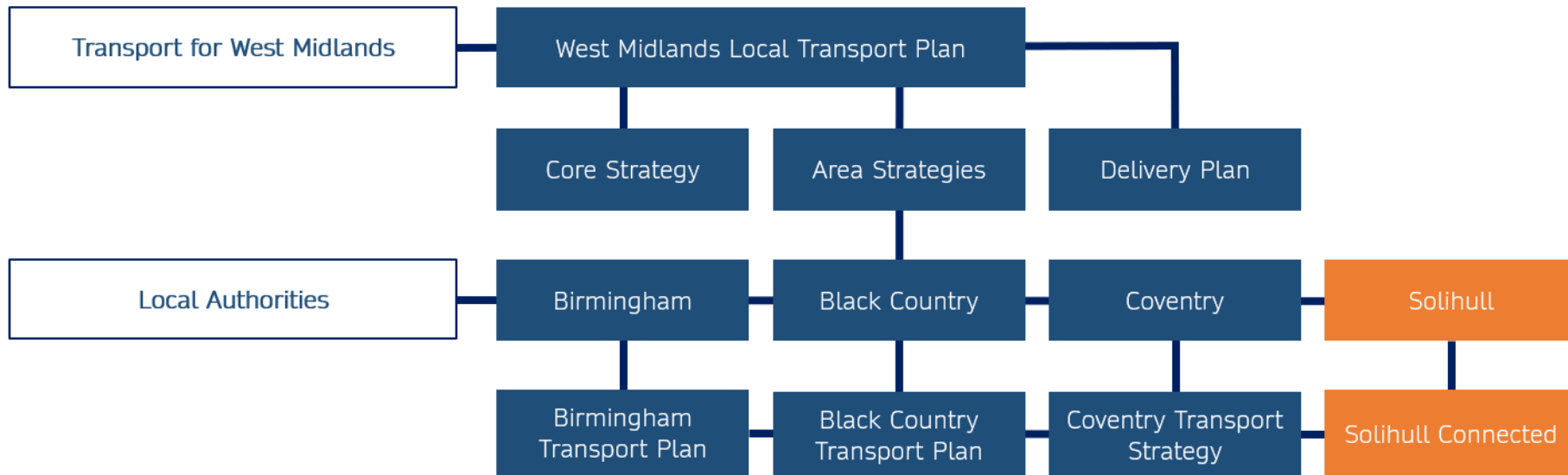
Solihull MBC is one of seven local authorities that make up the West Midlands metropolitan area and, to deliver joined up services across this area, we are members of the West Midlands Combined Authority. Many people who live within Solihull Borough, especially in the north of Solihull or in the Urban Core of our Borough, travel within the West Midlands conurbation for health, education, leisure, employment, or retail purposes and often these are short distance journeys. We need to work with neighbouring authorities and the West Midlands Combined Authority to plan and improve the network.

The West Midlands Combined Authority comprises several operations, including from a transport perspective, Transport for West Midlands, and the West Midlands Rail Executive. The West Midlands Combined Authority is the Local Transport Authority for the West Midlands. As the Local Transport Authority, the West Midlands Combined Authority produces the Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands. The Local Transport Plan is a statutory document that Local Transport Authorities are required to prepare.

Transport for West Midlands also oversees the West Midlands Cycle Hire Scheme, the West Midlands Bus Alliance, the Enhanced Partnership for bus services and the Bus Services Improvement Plan.

The information overleaf explains how our transport strategy and the documents produced by Transport for West Midlands fit together.

West Midlands Transport Plans



West Midlands Transport Plans

West Midlands Local Transport Plan Core Strategy

Part of the LTP – This is focused on the statutory responsibilities to set out policies.

The LTP core strategy provides overarching strategic direction for transport in the region. It sets out aims and vision, thereby establishing a universal framework for the strategic case/rationale for any transport policy.

It also sets out general principles for formulating strategy (affecting how we approach transport policy making) and sets the scope within which proposals will be identified and developed.

West Midlands Local Transport Plan Area Strategy

Part of the LTP – This is focused on the statutory responsibilities to set out policies and implementation proposals.

To determine and set out how to apply proposals from the Six Big Moves in a way most appropriate to local circumstances within each Borough. Chiefly focused on determining difference in approach needed between the neighbourhoods, corridors, and centres of Boroughs rather than strategic differences between Boroughs. Four area strategies are being produced covering Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry, and Solihull.

	<p>Complements and influences the Area Strategy (and vice versa) and translates relevant elements of the LTP into strategy and policy directly applicable within Solihull.</p>
<p>Solihull MBC Transport Strategy (Solihull Connected)</p>	<p>Provides focus on the Council's intention to act using its relevant statutory functions (i.e., planning authority, highways and traffic management authority).</p>
<p>West Midlands Local Transport Plan Delivery Plan</p>	<p>Part of the LTP – This is focused on the statutory responsibilities to set out implementation proposals.</p> <p>A plan (schedule and resourcing) of implementation proposals to deliver the LTP.</p>

The West Midlands Local Transport Plan will include detailed strategies for Six Big Moves setting out challenges, opportunities, and principles to consider across the region. Four Area Strategies will then set out how actions across the Big Moves are applied in specific places as appropriate to local views and context. The Six Big Moves at the core of this are:

1. Behaviour change for the better
2. Growth that helps everyone
3. Safer streets to walk and wheel
4. Public transport that connects people and places
5. A resilient transport network
6. Delivering a green revolution

Our Solihull Connected objectives and vision cover several similar areas and reflect similar concerns around helping people to access opportunities, making our communities safer places to be, and reducing carbon consumption.

West Midlands Cycle Hire



5 WHY DO WE NEED A TRANSPORT STRATEGY?

Overall, there are four reasons why Solihull MBC needs an updated transport strategy.

Reason 1: To take account of the progress since the first Solihull Connected transport strategy was adopted in 2016

We set out the achievements and success of our first Solihull Connected in our Solihull Connected Progress report. In that report we explain that it has been a busy period with progress made across several schemes and programmes by the Council and our partners, which will help support economic growth and improved connectivity for the Borough. We also explain the progress made against the objectives of Solihull Connected 1, the place strategies and the delivery plan.

Reason 2: To respond to the environmental and transport challenges and opportunities facing people living in the Borough

There are existing transport challenges within our Borough. Our Solihull Connected Principles & Priorities report identified the following challenges and discusses their likely impact:

- The impacts of Covid-19 and the changes to people's lifestyles and travel patterns that have taken place.
- The population of the Borough is ageing, creating challenges such as provision of transport services to healthcare facilities, making public transport more convenient for older people, encouraging greater active travel amongst older people, planning for having older drivers on our roads and providing people in the rural east of the Borough sufficient access to public transport.
- To address Climate Change the UK has pledged to reduce its greenhouse-gas emissions to net zero by 2050. Net zero means a country takes as much of these climate-changing gases out of the atmosphere as it puts in.
- When HS2 opens, the new Interchange station will place Solihull at the focal point of the high-speed rail network. HS2 will have positive impacts

on the economy of Solihull but the new station, and resultant accelerated growth across the Borough, will bring new travel demands into Solihull and accentuate the need for improved cross-Borough transport to realise opportunities for Solihull residents and businesses.

- The UK is entering a period of greater economic uncertainty, which may lead to a rise in unemployment. As a result, impacts could be felt on travel and transport and, critically, government funding to support transport.
- The 2022 Levelling Up White Paper, which aims to reduce regional disparity and promote local growth, and the impact that may have on travel patterns and funding opportunities.
- Transport can also impact upon quality of life due to high levels of exposure to traffic-related air and noise pollution, especially in dense urban areas.

Reason 3: To support the housing and economic plans for the Borough

Our Solihull transport strategy is needed as we seek to develop the Borough in a sustainable way and ensure that the Borough's climate targets are met. The draft Solihull Local Plan establishes the Borough as a growing area, setting targets for around 940 new dwellings to be built within the Borough each year up to 2037 and for around 52 hectares of employment land to be developed over the same period.

Firm proposals exist within Solihull to:

- Develop the economic opportunity of the Borough under the UK Central heading.
- Extend Birmingham Business Park by 9 hectares to accelerate the delivery of new employment opportunities.
- Extend Blythe Valley Business Park by 7 hectares to make the business park attractive to further investors and occupiers.
- Create an urban village at the NEC through development of 75 hectares of the wider 175-hectare National Exhibition Centre campus site over the next 20 years.
- Build up to 8,000 homes focussed on two areas within the UK Central Hub: land at Arden Cross and land at the National Exhibition Centre.
- Construct circa 2,000 homes at sites in the locality of Balsall Common and Berkswell.

- Progress plans for circa 1,900 homes at sites near Shirley and circa 800 homes at sites in the Knowle area.
- Bring forward the Solihull Town Centre masterplan that will regenerate the retail experience, adding new residential and employment and developing a thriving commercial centre.

A transport network is needed that will contribute to the Borough's economic, environmental, and social needs now and in the future, that will connect our communities with the regional centres and that will provide access to health, education, leisure, employment, retail, and tourism services in a safe, reliable, efficient, and low carbon manner.

Reason 4: To provide clarity as a number of high-profile schemes take place in the Borough

Several high-profile schemes are being delivered in the Borough, with further schemes to come, which will lead to significant alterations to the transport network in the Borough to accommodate infrastructure works. There will be construction traffic on our road network and diversions to services for several years.

We also need to prepare for population growth as new housing growth is planned and allow for new infrastructure such as new schools in our thinking. At the same time our environment and countryside are valued resources that we need to protect as we develop and deliver new transport systems.

However, our transport strategy will not make decisions for people, and nor should it. It is the job of the Council to create the conditions for change, to provide options for its people and to empower them to make their own choices. We are clear that change needs to take place. Businesses, residents, and visitors now need to consider their role in responding to the four areas discussed above.

6 WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

In planning for future travel needs in the Borough we have our own transport strategy work and implementation plans, we work with the communities within the Borough, we work with several regional and national bodies, and we work with developers bringing forward plans for new homes and commercial sites.

From a land use perspective, the most important document regarding future planning in Solihull Borough is the Solihull Local Plan, which sets out how and where Solihull will develop in the future. It outlines challenges facing Solihull and how they will be addressed, the vision for the future of Solihull, the strategy for achieving the vision, and policies and proposals to enable the Borough to grow and develop into the place we would like it to be.

Sites for new housing and employment development are also identified. The Plan has been informed by extensive involvement with a wide range of stakeholders and the community. The next Local Plan, covering the period to 2037, is in the process of being examined by the Planning Inspectorate after which it will be formally adopted by the Council.

The Local Plan includes the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), which forms part of the evidence base to support the Local Plan. The IDP describes the existing infrastructure and needs in the Borough and highlights the infrastructure needed to support the predicted growth set out in the Local Plan.

This transport strategy therefore needs to respond to the Local Plan and IDP by setting out our plan of action for what we want to do to improve travel and transport in the Borough to enable sustainable growth.

Our transport strategy also cuts across several other planning and strategy documents that impact upon different aspects of transport provision within the Borough. These are explained in more detail in Appendix A. These strategy documents then support bids made by the Council for funds to deliver the schemes needed to achieve the outcomes identified here and in the documents themselves.

The following documents have been adopted by Solihull MBC:

2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Solihull Connected	Road Safety Strategy for Solihull Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy		Clean Air Strategy	Electric Vehicle Strategy	Net Zero Action Plan Cycling & Walking Strategy Local Cycle Walking Infrastructure Plan	Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

In addition, several partners produce documents that have an important influence on how travel and transport will evolve in the Borough. Some of these are listed below:

Birmingham Airport	Surface Access Strategy
Midlands Connect	Strategic Transport Plan
National Exhibition Centre	NEC Masterplan
National Highways	Road Investment Strategy Delivery Plan
Network Rail	Long Term Planning Process
Transport for West Midlands	Local Transport Plan West Midlands Freight Strategy
West Midlands Rail Executive	West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy

Finally, we also work with communities assisting with the development of their Neighbourhood Plans and developers who need to prepare Transport Assessments or Transport Statements as part of the planning applications for their developments.

Proposals for redevelopment of Solihull railway station



7 OUR FUTURE DIRECTION

In the coming years we will look to take our transport strategy in the following direction by having twelve policies that are set out here, starting with public transport.

Policy 1: We will work with Transport for West Midlands and bus operators to expand the scope of the bus network, to ensure it is responsive to the different needs of different groups, such as people with disabilities.

To develop the bus network there will have to be more people travelling by bus or additional funding for bus services. To get there we will have to overcome the weaknesses in the bus network in the Borough. We know that:

- The focus is on routes to Birmingham and is not primarily on Solihull Borough's needs
- Long and variable / unreliable journey times put people off
- Bus services are not integrated with cycle routes, rail services and other bus services
- Some route frequencies are insufficient
- Frequent timetable changes put people off
- There is a lack of consistent marketing
- Vehicle quality varies
- Limited bus priority measures on existing highway network leads to buses becoming stuck in congestion, increasing journey times.

As part of the West Midlands wide Bus Enhanced Partnership, and a wholesale review of bus services being led by Transport for West Midlands, the following opportunities exist:

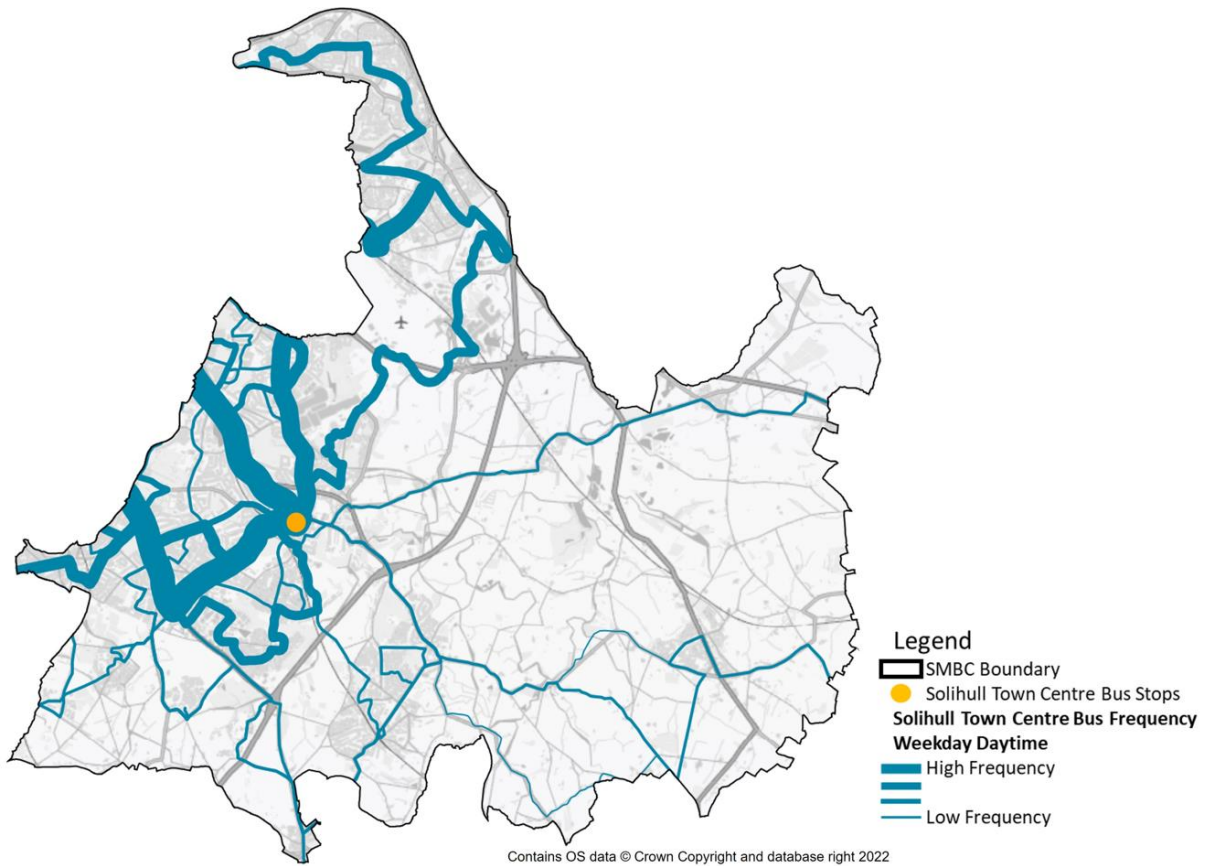
- Improve bus services that operate across the Solihull Borough to connect centres of employment and retail in Solihull with residents of the Borough
- Continue to bring forward initiatives in the West Midlands Bus Enhanced Partnership and Bus Services Improvement Plan
- Develop a joint brand, and inter-modal integrated ticketing, for the bus network potentially using the West Midlands Bus brand developed by Transport for West Midlands

- Expand the range of the “West Midlands Bus on Demand” demand responsive transport to further areas of the Borough in partnership with Transport for West Midlands
- Improve information provision for bus services including enhancing real-time information and rolling real-time information out to more bus stops in the Borough
- Invest in new bus shelter and bus station infrastructure including cycle parking
- Invest in bus priorities where beneficial and feasible
- Integrate public transport infrastructure with that required for taxis and private hire vehicles
- Provide seed funding for new bus services
- Partner with operators to fund new vehicles
- Reduce the cost of travel
- Reduce bus journey times from north Solihull to Solihull town centre
- Extensions to the Sprint network to serve HS2 Interchange
- Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) could connect high frequency bus routes with lower density residential areas – so called last mile solutions

National Express West Midlands electric bus



Existing Service Frequency

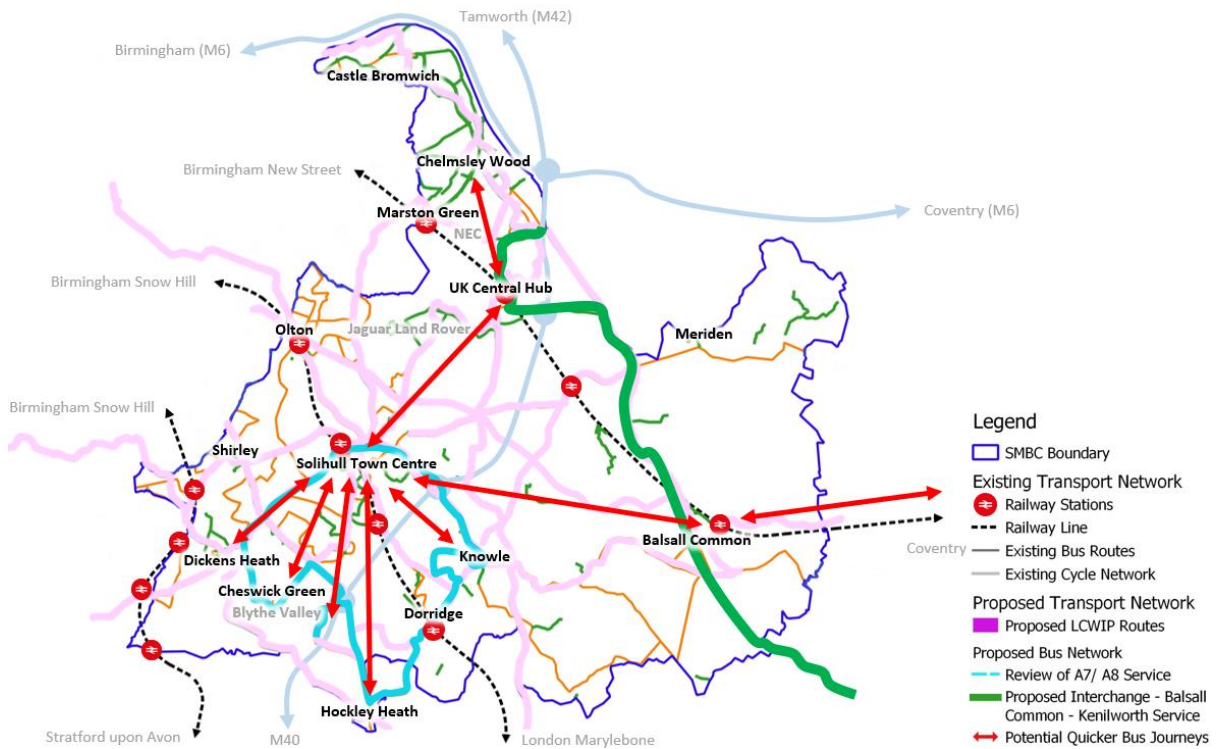


Key Priority

Develop and deliver improvements to infrastructure and services via the **UKC Hub – Solihull – Dorridge Bus Priority Route** proposal, further information on which is set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan.

Delivery of the initial priority scheme, and taking up of the above opportunities, will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough reducing transport poverty, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Public Transport Priorities



Policy 2: We will work with the West Midlands Rail Executive and other parties to improve rail services and infrastructure in the Borough.

We know that the railway is struggling to redefine its role in a commuting landscape transformed by the pandemic. Yet, we feel that this moment represents an opportunity to shape the rail network in the West Midlands around the needs of customers, with modern ticketing and timetables that reflect their new needs and new patterns of work and life.

We know that:

- There is a scarcity of track capacity
- There are network bottlenecks
- There are overcrowded trains
- There is poor access to the rail network for some people in the Borough
- There are gaps in the existing network of services
- Some service frequencies are low, and some journey times are too long
- There are inferior station facilities
- There is poor accessibility at some railway stations in the Borough

- There is insufficient integration with bus links
- The fares and ticketing system is overcomplicated and acts as a deterrent to rail travel

Not all the above issues are within the authority of the Council to be able to resolve but, through liaison with partners such as the West Midlands Rail Executive and Midlands Connect, the following opportunities exist:

- The West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy plans for increase in rail service frequencies but before then steps need to be taken to lengthen trains on the Snow Hill lines to accommodate the numbers of travellers
- Emerging work suggests that there may be a business case for a new railway station serving Castle Bromwich
- The Cross-Country route from Newcastle upon Tyne to Reading could be diverted via Birmingham International and a new Birmingham – Solihull – Oxford rail service introduced
- Improved services could be offered to Berkswell, Hampton in Arden and Marston Green
- Improved services could be offered on Sundays
- Solihull MBC and our Urban Growth Company (UGC) are developing proposals to improve facilities at Birmingham International and Solihull railway stations
- The opening of HS2 is an opportunity but there is a need to ensure connectivity from population nodes in the borough to Interchange station
- There is a need to provide relevant facilities for passengers with reduced mobility at several stations across the Borough, e.g., Hampton in Arden
- We can provide new cycling and walking links to railway stations and better integrate with bus, taxi, and private hire infrastructure to build cross Solihull connectivity

Key Priority

Develop and deliver capacity and interchange improvements at Solihull Station as part of the **Solihull Railway Station Multi-modal Interchange** proposal, further information on which is set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan.

Delivery of the initial priority scheme, and taking up of the above opportunities, will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve quality of life in the Borough.

Policy P19 of the Solihull MBC Draft Local Plan identifies the district centre and local centres in our Borough, as set out below.

Larger Centres (3)	Chelmsley Wood, Shirley and Solihull
District Centre (1)	Castle Bromwich
Local Centres (13)	Balsall Common, Chelmund's Cross, Dickens Heath, Dorridge, Hatchford Brook, Hobs Moat, Kingshurst, Knowle, Marston Green, Meriden, Olton, Shelly Farm, Smiths Wood

Large, District and Local Centres



We know that:

- Our local centres are valued by the community and have a lot of potential
- Our local centres differ in terms of scale, character, and nature

- Our local centres are often dominated by car parking yet car parking for those with disabilities can be limited
- Both cycle and motorcycle parking at our local centres can be limited and low quality
- There can be accessibility issues at our local centres for people with limited mobility, parents with pushchairs or people in mobility scooters
- There can be certain road safety issues around our local centres

The following opportunities exist:

- Delivery of important and cost-effective 'quick wins' that make a real difference to people's everyday journeys, such as providing additional seating, improving public realm and new pedestrian crossings
- We will develop access to these centres by bus, cycle and on foot
- We will improve perceptions of personal safety around our local centres
- These centres can become more attractive to people with disabilities, elderly people, and families
- There will be a new local centre at Arden Cross that could be an exemplar point for low carbon access by a diversity of modes
- A network of safe routes for cycling and walking, which connect people with their neighbourhoods, local centres and further afield could play a major role in changing behaviour for the better and reducing traffic
- We can develop mobility hubs at these centres
- Mobility hubs can extend the appeal of public transport
- Additional lighting and vegetation management will make people feel safer
- CAVs could provide access for deliveries or passengers
- Electric Vehicle charging points will encourage people to visit and dwell in the centres

A mobility hub can be a highly visible, safe, and accessible space where public, shared and active travel modes are co-located. A hub can have a cycle and scooter hire facility, motorcycle parking, rapid electric vehicle charging, taxi and demand responsive travel pick up/drop off, parcel lockers, bike shop repair, space for a car hire/share scheme to operate and café or information centre.

Key Priority

Build upon analysis and evidence work undertaken to inform this strategy to develop a series of comprehensive Town, District and Local Centre Action / Delivery Plans.

An approach to town, district, and local centres like this will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Policy 4: We will extend our network of cycle infrastructure across the Borough through cycle lanes, other cycle priorities and cycle parking.

To get to a position where cycling is a widely used form of daily transport across the Borough, we must plan for it in the same way we would plan for any other mode of transport. Cyclists are like any other road user: they want to make their journey as quickly, reliably, and safely as possible. We should look to make cycling safer and in our adopted Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) we recognise that different cyclists have different levels of confidence and proficiency. Finally, we need to broaden the appeal of cycling to more people living in our borough.

We know that:

- There is a perception that roads in general are too dangerous and uncomfortable for cycling, largely due to high volumes and high speeds of motor traffic
- This perception of road safety is also preventing pupils cycling to school more often
- The lack of maintenance and presentation of cycling routes may also be a deterrent
- The lack of dedicated cycle lanes and poor road layouts deter people from cycling
- A lack of safe storage facilities for cycles deters people from cycling
- Only around 30% of cyclists in the UK are women. Safety concerns are the largest reason for this, both highway safety and personal safety

The following opportunities exist:

- The National Cycling & Walking Plan and the creation of Active Travel England have put greater emphasis on the benefits of cycling at a government level
- Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 presents guidance on implementing high quality cycle infrastructure, including how cycle infrastructure can be implemented on an existing, constrained road network.
- LTN 1/20 includes five core design principles to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot - networks and routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive
- The West Midlands LCWIP seeks to promote cycling, build cycling networks, and increase the funding available to develop cycling further
- The West Midlands Starley network covers 500 miles of connected cycling routes and walking trails in the West Midlands, offering an opportunity for people to start cycling and developing their cycling skills.
- Cycle ownership is high in the Borough
- There are significant funding opportunities for investment in cycling infrastructure, including in measures to improve highway safety and conditions in circumstances where new cycle lanes may not be viable and / or acceptable
- We can tie into Birmingham's developing cycle network; thereby creating greater journey opportunities for our residents
- We can integrate cycling further with bus and rail services
- Through the Borough's work on its Cycle & Walking Strategy and LCWIP the network of cycle routes within the Borough is expanding
- The expansion and design of cycling infrastructure will closely consider the needs and safety of motorcyclists
- Consideration will be given to dual use parking facilities that will benefit and facilitate uptake of both cycling and motorcycling as alternatives to the car
- Adequate and appropriate lighting on dedicated cycle routes will support safety concerns for moving about the borough on a bicycle (and on foot)
- There is an opportunity to work with the Canal & River Trust to improve the existing towpath network within the Borough, which could contribute to a modal shift towards walking and cycling

- The Kenilworth Greenway offers a high quality, off road, safe route for cyclists from Balsall Common directly to Coventry, Kenilworth, Leamington, and the University of Warwick
- The West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme can be introduced in more areas
- There is City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding to begin developing the first wave of cycle routes connecting the Borough

Existing Cycle Network



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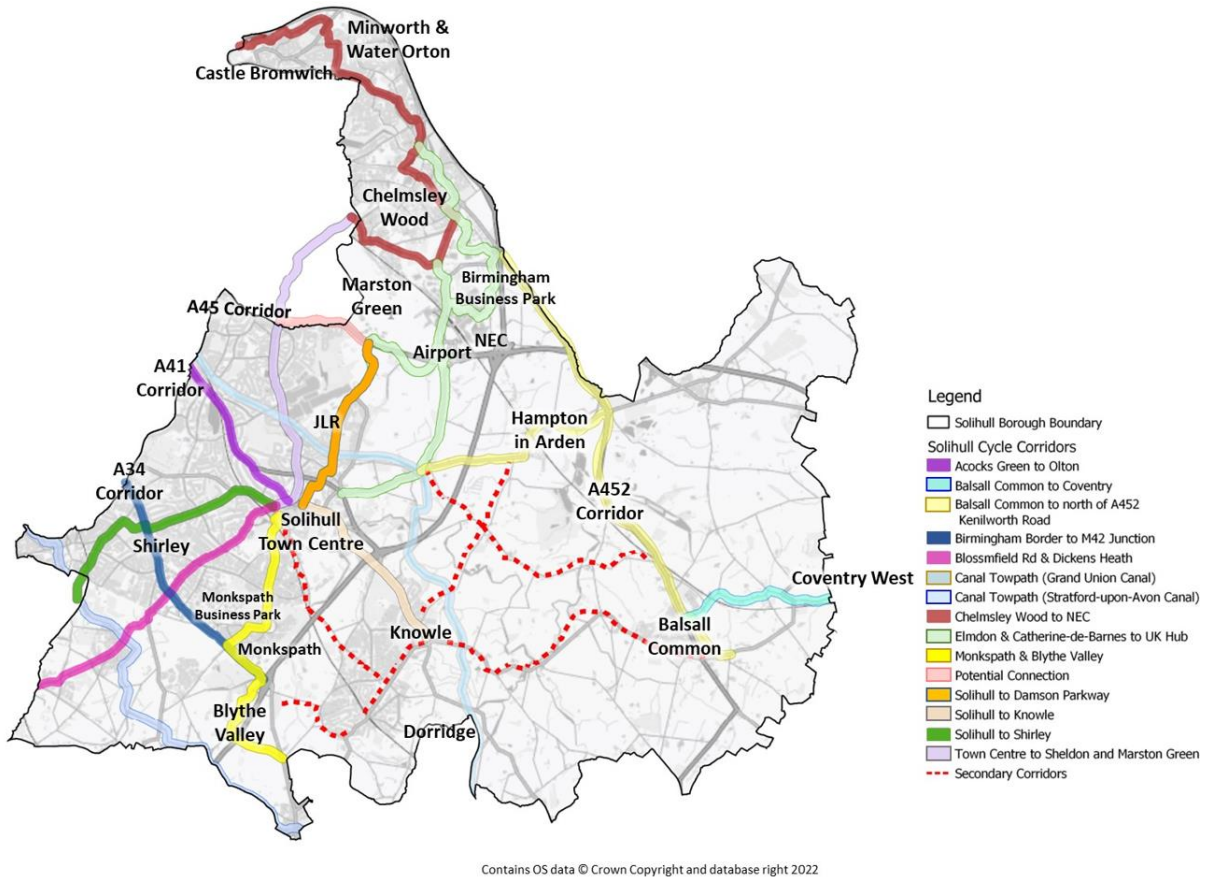
Key Priority

Develop and deliver permanent, high quality segregated cycle infrastructure through the **Solihull Town Centre to Dickens Heath** and **Solihull Town Centre to Knowle** LCWIP proposals, further information on which is set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan.

Delivery of the initial priority schemes, and taking up of the above opportunities, will address our objectives by extending the coverage of the cycling and walking

network across our Borough, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Solihull LCWIP - Strategic Cycling Network Plan



Policy 5: We will focus on highway schemes that address congestion hotspots, address community concerns around traffic impacts, unlock development opportunities and that relieve constraints to economic growth / retention of economic assets.

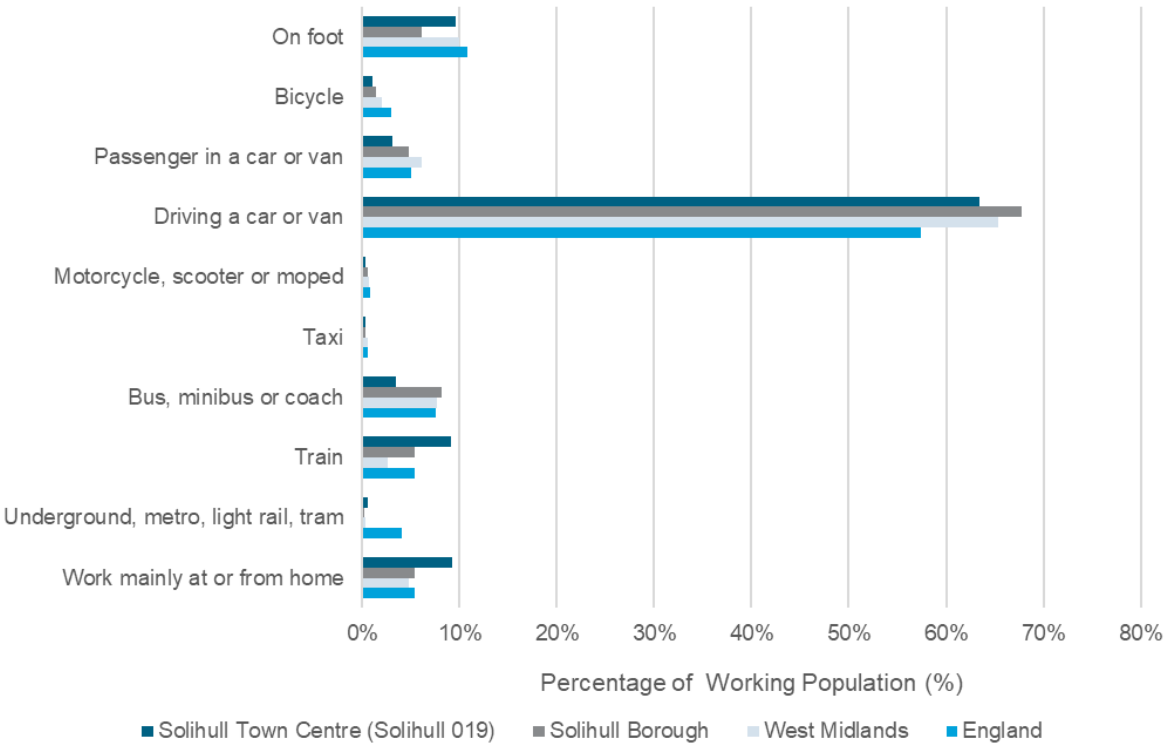
We understand that new roads generate new traffic and that to achieve a reduction in carbon use we will need to reduce the traffic on our road network. However, the reality is that there are significant traffic delays on certain roads in the Borough. Roads that were designed and laid out before most of us were born.

We also have to plan for changes in how our roads are used. People are living longer, healthier, more active lives, and driving longer. As our Borough ages so the number of older drivers will increase. This influx of older drivers has important economic and social value but means that we must change our approach to road safety.

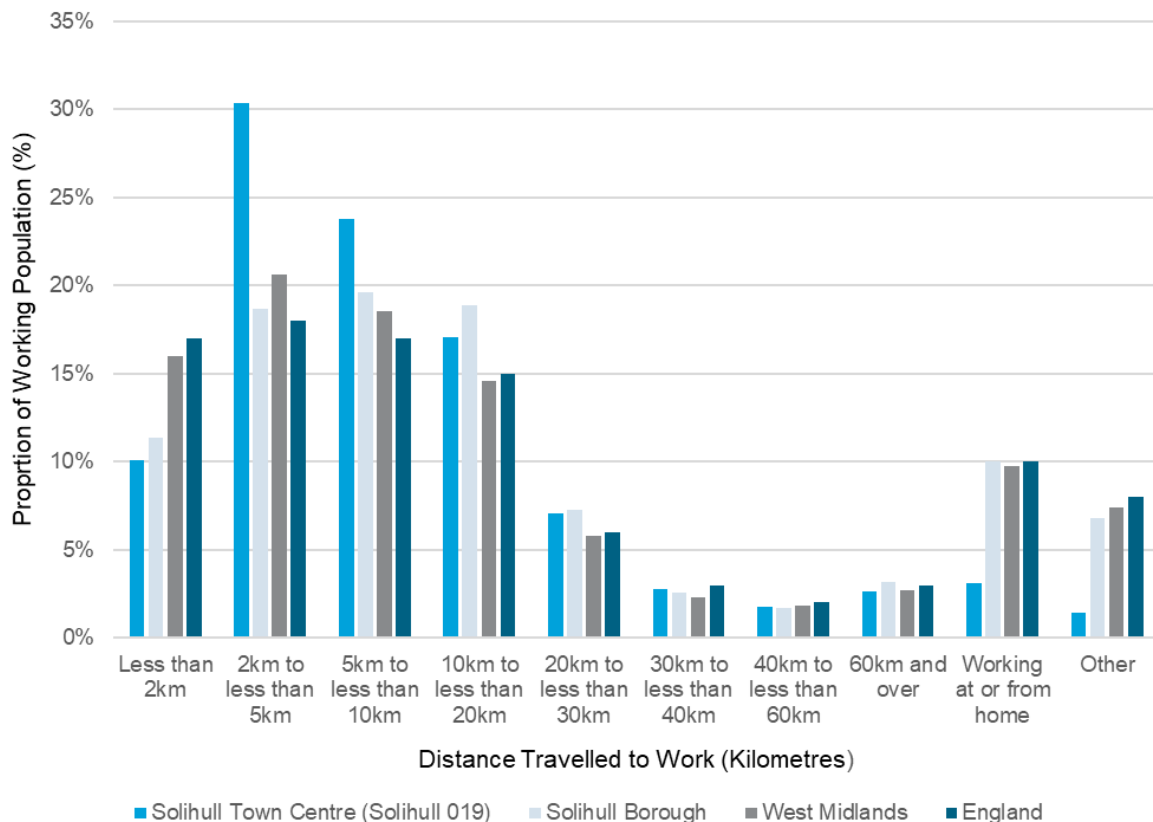
We know that:

- Heavy traffic reduces air quality, which in turn creates health issues
- Heavy traffic cuts communities and causes noise which reduces the quality of life in parts of the Borough
- Traffic congestion impacts our bus network, causing delays to bus services and making bus journey times irregular
- Heavy traffic makes cycling and walking less pleasant
- Heavy traffic impacts on the efficiency of businesses in the Borough
- As traffic grows the average response times of the emergency services rises
- Most employment trips are undertaken by car
- Most people travel between 5km and 10km to work across the Borough

Method of Travel to Work



Average Distance Travelled to Work



The following opportunities exist:

- Resolving pinch points in the Borough such as the junction of the A45 and Damson Parkway to improve access to Birmingham, Jaguar Land Rover, and Solihull Moors FC
- Developing a bus corridor from Dorridge to the UKC Hub offers the opportunity to review how some junctions work and add bus priority
- Developing proposals for a relief road for Balsall Common thereby enabling the centre of the village to become more people focused
- Working with partners to improve road access to the Airport, National Exhibition Centre, and the new HS2 railway station at Birmingham Interchange
- Combining road improvements with bus, cycle and walking improvements can deliver wider benefits for the community
- Whilst improving highways we could install infrastructure for autonomous vehicles

The West Midlands Key Route Network covers several routes in the Borough (e.g., the A45) and we 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 across the West Midlands.

Key Priority

Develop and deliver multi-modal infrastructure improvements at two congestion hotspots through the **A45 / Damson Parkway Multi-modal Junction Improvements** and **Chester Road Corridor – Segregated Cycleway & Capacity Enhancement** at Chelmonds Cross proposals, further information on which is set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan.

Delivery of the initial priority schemes, and taking up of the above opportunities, will address our objectives to support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Policy 6: We will ensure that all parts of the Borough can access the UKC Hub by bus, rail, cycle or, in future, by the West Midlands Metro.

The UKC Hub will be one of the country's most strategically important development sites and one of the region's major drivers of economic growth. The ambition is to create a globally renowned and internationally connected destination for business, leisure and living, facilitated by the Council with wider support from local, regional, and central Government.

The UGC are working on a Supplementary Planning Document for the UKC Hub area giving detailed guidance on how policies and proposals for the UKC Hub will be applied and what steps are expected from partners, and developers.

We know that:

- Much of the bus network in Solihull is focused on access to Birmingham and Coventry, resulting in a separation between the UKC Hub, Solihull town centre and surrounding residential areas
- The airport, railway lines and roads form barriers between differing parts of UKC Hub
- There is a lack of continuous cycling and walking routes in the area
- Parts of the existing rail and road network close to UKC Hub are at capacity
- Some well-connected places within the UKC Hub area have single use as transport interchanges
- There are no overnight or early morning rail services to the Airport

- The area is dominated by car travel and is designed for mass car access
- The scale of development proposed at UKC Hub will result in significantly different movement patterns throughout the UKC Hub

The following opportunities exist:

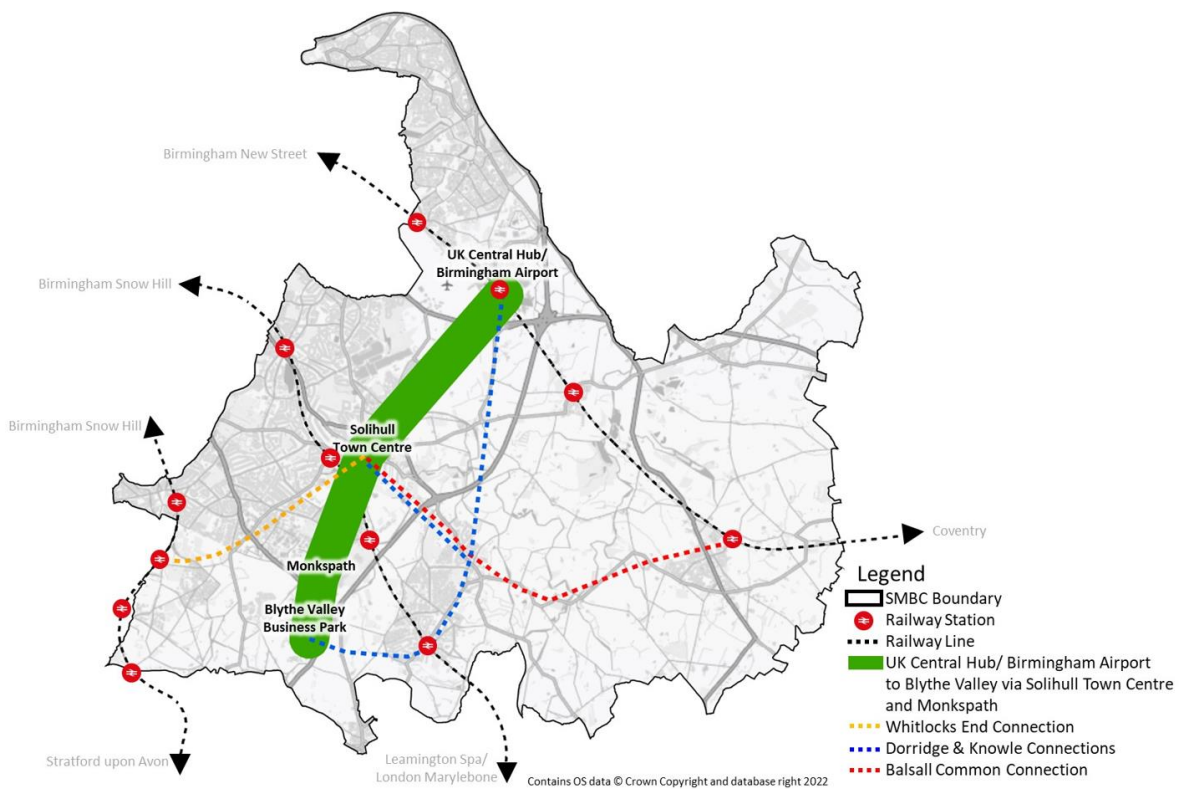
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement funding has been allocated for us to investigate bus access from the south of the Borough through central Solihull
- The opening of Birmingham Interchange HS2 station is a major opportunity to provide new transport links between UKC Hub and central Solihull, other parts of the West Midlands and further afield
- UGC, Network Rail and regional partners will continue to develop plans for expanding Birmingham International station to accommodate the numbers forecast to use the station in future and to improve passenger facilities
- There is an opportunity to plan for people with reduced mobility from the outset
- The masterplan for the National Exhibition Centre proposes an urban village with 5,000 homes. The masterplan recommends infrastructure investment to support this including new cycle and walking routes, a mobility hub, major road improvements, extensions of the bus network with new Sprint bus rapid transit routes and potentially the extension of the Midland Metro
- Similarly, the Arden Cross Masterplan includes proposals for new cycle and walking routes, new road connections, and potential to expand the bus network, Sprint bus rapid transit routes, and an extension of the Midland Metro to serve the Arden Cross area
- Ensuring connectivity across and within the UK Central Hub is an opportunity to transition to use of more sustainable forms of transport
- The West Midlands Bus on Demand could fill gaps in the existing bus service coverage, with the potential for an initial trial to demonstrate the need for a commercial service
- The UKC Hub can test use of Autonomous vehicles and where appropriate adopt to provide some of the access needs of UKC Hub

Key Priority

Develop and deliver **West Coast Mainline and M42 Public Transport and Active Travel bridge links to HS2 Interchange** and wider **Multi-modal Access to HS2** Enhancement proposals, along with other infrastructure improvements to bus, cycling and walking that would support future growth and modal shift in and to the UKC Hub area. Further information on which is set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan but could include delivery of the metro or other mass rapid transit routes to the UKC Hub area including the NEC and proposals within their masterplan.

Successful delivery of our policies for the UKC Hub will address the objectives in Solihull Connected to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough by ensuring all the Borough is able to access the UKC Hub area, it will support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, it will improve safety on our transport network and will improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Priority Transport Corridors to UKC Hub



Policy 7: We will work with communities and developers to make best use of Section 106 payments and the Community Infrastructure Levy to lead early investment in the transport network and mitigate the impacts of development in a sustainable manner.

Increasing traffic across our Borough has led to journey times by bus services increasing, more congestion around our schools and pressure on the environment. Solihull Borough does not currently have any Air Quality Management Areas. However, traffic growth from development means that this position may not persist, and continuation of the status quo may not be possible.

We know that:

- The success of the Borough in previous decades has created an area with a high quality of life and this makes it attractive place for people to live
- There are many advantages to living within the Borough such as high-quality schools, with easy access to well-paid employment and within 100miles of the capital
- There will be significant new housing development across the Borough
- There will be significant expansion of Blythe Valley and Birmingham Business Park along with new commercial developments at Arden Cross and at the NEC
- Much of our new housing in our Borough has been built around cars - not around sustainable transport. This is adding to traffic jams, carbon emissions, and locking communities into car-dependence
- There is already high car ownership and traffic levels within our Borough
- People are more likely to cycle or walk if they live in a location within or closely connected to an existing settlement that has a clear centre
- People are more likely to cycle or walk if they live in a location with a welcoming environment rather than an environment dominated by cars
- People are more likely to use bus services if the service is operational when they move into their new home and if facilities are easy to access by public transport
- Section 106 contributions for transport related infrastructure will need to be viewed in the context of the Community Infrastructure Levy and affordable housing commitments. Contributions from developments will need to satisfy the regulation tests and financial viability considerations

However, the following opportunities exist:

- Through the Borough's work on its Cycle & Walking Strategy and LCWIP the network of cycle routes within the Borough is expanding
- There was significant investment in public transport before the Commonwealth Games
- Significant investment is planned for both bus and rail networks in coming years
- Although bus and rail networks are in period of flux following the pandemic, there is already a decent bus and rail service in many parts of the Borough but a cross Borough bus link to the UKC Hub would improve connectivity and access to services
- There is integrated ticketing between bus, metro, and rail
- Providing secure public and private cycle parking within developments encourages the take up of cycling from the area
- A mix of uses adds vitality to streets, spaces, and places
- Higher density housing will support greater public transport
- Land use and design principles support new mixed-use developments with car light neighbourhoods as a concept
- We can secure financial contributions (including retrospectively) from section 106 planning agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy

Key Priority

Identify opportunities to secure advanced S106 funding (that can be recouped retrospectively) that enable and / or accelerate delivery of schemes set out in the Solihull Connected Delivery Plan and other Solihull Connected documents (e.g., the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan).

This will achieve our objectives of expanding the transport network across our Borough by ensuring that new places in the Borough have access to the transport network. Adding to our network supports steps to encourage economic growth and productivity and will raise the quality of life in the Borough.

Policy 8: During periods of construction works, we will strengthen our approach to managing capacity on the highway network by emphasising information for users on travel and traffic conditions and making parallel improvements to sustainable travel modes.

There are several major infrastructure schemes taking place in the Borough during the period from 2022 to 2025. Examples include a new National Highways motorway junction (M42 J5a), the HS2 railway line, new housing schemes identified in the Local Plan, the Sprint bus rapid transit scheme and the Council's own capital programme of works, all of which are forecast to come online at a period when demand for travel is also increasing.

We know that this programme of works will bring with it:

- An increase in construction traffic on the road network
- Physical works taking place on the road layout leading to an increase in journey times and congestion
- Several short to medium term changes to the road network such as additional traffic signals, traffic diversions and/or lane closures
- Potential impacts on the operation of businesses in our Borough

We also know that Solihull's major employers are constrained by congested networks, and this has the potential to, or is, limiting investment and growth

However, we can:

- Provide incentives in contracts for contractors to accelerate construction
- Consider other planned construction works in the vicinity of a project when planning when works are to take place
- Ensure good coordination between differing agencies, utilities companies, emergency services etc. before and during construction
- Ensure good coordination along the West Midlands Key Route Network to ensure all highway assets are maintained to a high standard for all road users along the network
- Use traffic models for early identification of diversion routes and for analysing impacts of construction works on traffic flows such as changes in traffic flows
- Provide better advice to bus and taxi operators to allow them to plan services

- Consider full closures of junctions or roads for accelerated completion of projects
- Amend traffic signals sequences or traffic regulation orders during spells of road works
- Provide effective communications regarding road works and road closure along with details of cycling, public transport, and walking alternatives
- Make use of night time, weekend and bank holiday periods for critical work

We need to concentrate on how we implement schemes, or we risk undermining achieving our objectives by causing unexpected disruption to our travel networks, leading to economic costs and disruption to communities.

For example, Birmingham Airport has different needs in terms of access, and night-time, weekend and bank holiday periods are busy times for the Airport, for example the peak arrival time for passengers is between 04.00 and 06.00.

Key Priority

Build upon existing liaison with HS2 Limited, National Highways and Transport for West Midlands to ensure that respective works programmes are shared, individual and cumulative impacts assessed, and appropriate measures are implemented to manage travel needs and to mitigate impacts.

Policy 9: We will continue work on reducing carbon from transport in the Borough by promoting low carbon travel, providing access to new forms of travel, and supporting efforts by businesses or residents to change to ultra-low emission vehicles.

Globally this will be a decisive decade if we are to avert the worst impacts of climate change. Communities across Solihull are already starting to see the effects of extreme weather, with flooding being a particular issue. The Committee on Climate Change forecasts that by 2030 we need to see around one in ten car journeys taken by public transport instead to achieve net zero by 2050.

As part of Solihull MBC's commitment to achieve net zero, the council has worked with stakeholders and residents to develop a Net Zero Action Plan, which will help inform the kind of action that will be needed across the Borough. In addition to our own actions, we will also need to take a number of steps to support the Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan.

We know that:

- Transport emissions make up 39% of Solihull's emissions and to reduce these emissions will need combined action from a range of stakeholders

- Reducing carbon emissions improves the air quality and general environmental conditions
- The quantum of carbon we release is leading to climate change, which in turn is having an impact on public health and plant and animal diversity
- Reducing carbon emissions would reduce the number of air pollution-related deaths, thereby easing pressure on healthcare systems
- To reduce carbon emissions, we need to encourage businesses and people across the Borough to replace diesel and petrol vehicles with ultra-low emission vehicles

However, the following opportunities exist:

- Recognising the scale of the climate emergency, Solihull MBC has set the goal of reducing the Borough's carbon dioxide emissions to net zero by 2041
- Low to medium cost transport interventions can make large reductions in carbon emissions
- Encouraging people taking short distance journeys to cycle or walk will not only reduce carbon use but will also stimulate mental and physical health
- Encouraging residents to shop locally and engage in local activities reduces carbon use and boosts our local economy
- The Solihull MBC Going Electric Action Plan for 2022 to 2024 sets out the Council's approach to extending the number of public electric vehicle charging points in the Borough
- Our targets are shared by national and regional organisations offering the opportunity to work with partners and stakeholders to achieve our net zero objective
- There is already significant take up of electric cars within Solihull Borough when compared to neighbouring areas suggesting an appetite and support for change
- Birmingham Airport and National Express West Midlands are already using electric buses in our Borough. Funding grants have been made to the area for electric buses in Coventry and hydrogen buses on Sprint routes that will appear in our Borough in due course
- Through licencing, support the continued rollout of electric taxis

Successful reduction in carbon use from transport in the Borough will support our objectives. We will need to ensure that all parts of the Borough have access to

charging facilities including residents with no off-street parking, but the work to reduce travel will support our own local centres. Reducing carbon use will contribute to the quality of life within the Borough in several ways – for example improving air quality, improving the value of our environment, and contributing to long term sustainability. These also lead to mental and physical health benefits.

Key Priority

Deliver a significant step-change in the number of electric vehicle charging facilities across the Borough for cars and motorcycles and build upon work undertaken to inform this strategy to develop a series of comprehensive Town, District and Local Centre Action / Delivery Plans.

Policy 10: We will look at the relationship between parking supply and economic success, congestion levels and uptake of active travel modes and public transport.

There have always been arguments to improve the way we manage car parking as part of a balanced transport strategy with a view to encouraging greater use of alternatives, noting that restricting supply of parking spaces leads to lower car ownership and higher levels of cycling, bus use and walking.

We know that:

- When car owners make decisions about how to travel, they factor in the abundance, convenience, and price of parking
- There is an oversupply of car parking at some of our local centres and larger centres
- Parking on pavements causes major accessibility problems in locations where there is insufficient parking provision and / or parking provision is inconveniently located
- We also need to provide safe, secure parking for cycles and motorcycles
- The new generation of electric cars are generally larger and can have difficulty accessing many parking spaces

Opportunities exist if:

- We get parking correct in new developments. The quantum of parking provided in new developments must be based on its accessibility by public transport and active travel modes, considering any improvements brought forward in association with the development

- We expand Park & Ride, for example at Whitlocks End. We already have successful Park & Ride schemes that have reduced the number of journeys on roads within the wider West Midlands
- Consider the impacts of changes to parking as more electric vehicles take to our roads
- We work with businesses to reduce the free car parking that they provide for staff or implement a workplace parking levy to influence businesses

We know that as well as building alternatives to car travel to achieve our objectives we need to be finding ways to reduce car travel. Otherwise, congestion will stall economic growth, communities will become isolated, air quality will decline and the quality of life across the Borough will stagnate.

Key Priority

Undertake further research into the relationship between parking supply and economic success, congestion levels and uptake of active travel modes and public transport.

Policy 11: We will engage with the freight and logistics industry to understand their needs and ensure the sectors are engaged in our planning processes.

Our roads are used for freight, with large numbers of light and heavy goods vehicles passing through the Borough on long distance trips or travelling to places within the Borough. However, this can lead to noise, disturbance, and congestion. Engagement with the freight industry may help to address these issues whilst other benefits could be improved road safety and reduced carbon consumption.

Growth of motorcycles for last mile delivery is significant and the motorcycle industry is gearing up for this to be its most significant area of growth. Solihull MBC will take what steps it can to facilitate this.

We know that:

- We need to plan for access to our larger, district and local centres and business districts to better facilitate and manage access for freight and deliveries within the Borough
- The sector needs sites for goods vehicle parking, consolidation centres, facilitating modal shift, bonded warehouses and sites that allow for 24hour freight movements
- We do not have sufficient awareness of how the sector is developing and how the needs of the freight and logistics sector are changing

- We need to work with the sector to understand how we can work together to reduce carbon consumption by the sector

However, this could produce benefits for businesses and communities due to:

- Reduced congestion and delay for all road users
- Improved quality of life for residents and communities
- Enhanced road safety
- Better efficiency for participating organisations such as freight operators
- Improved environment
- CAVs could make deliveries within Solihull town centre

Improving conditions and infrastructure for freight, deliveries and logistics would contribute to our objective to support economic development, contribute to safety for the sector and on our road network and improve quality of life across the Borough.

Key Priority

Support on-going research being undertaken by Midlands Connect and TfWM into planning for future freight needs, subsequently translating that into a Freight Strategy for Solihull.

Policy 12: We will take an active role in the development of future transport technology and be supportive of new innovations that can improve our transport network.

Our view is that we should look for new technology-based transport interventions that can be integrated into our existing network to improve conditions for all user groups. We may be able to realise our objectives at lower cost through a technology-based solution to problems in an identified area or corridor and not necessarily through large scale infrastructure interventions.

We know that:

- We have built up considerable expertise through the operation of our own CAVs at both the NEC and the Airport
- The recent enormous expansion of data has enabled people to know when their buses will arrive and has allowed drivers to change their routes using real time traffic information
- A lack of investment in innovation could hold back the Borough from adopting new technologies and restrict opportunities for future growth

- There are concerns about the ability of these vehicles to interact safely with vulnerable road user groups

Alongside this the following opportunities also exist:

- There is considerable interest in new technology and opportunities exist to bring in new funding and work with partners such as Midlands Connect
- The UKC Hub area offers the ideal new test bed for new types of technology
- The National Exhibition Centre regularly hosts events that showcase new technology and experimental products e.g., highways and public transport
- CAVs could connect to high frequency bus routes or rail stations to give public transport greater reach in our Borough – so called last mile solutions
- A new bus service across the Solihull Borough – from Blythe Valley, Dorridge and Shirley through Solihull town centre to the Airport, NEC and UKC Hub could showcase new public transport technology

Developing and supporting innovative forms of transport delivery offers opportunities to contribute to all our Solihull Connected objectives and ensure that the transport network allows new technological developments to come forward.

Key Priority

Continue to conduct trials of CAV capability for different use cases, whilst bidding for further funding to deliver feasibility studies for additional deployment of the technology.

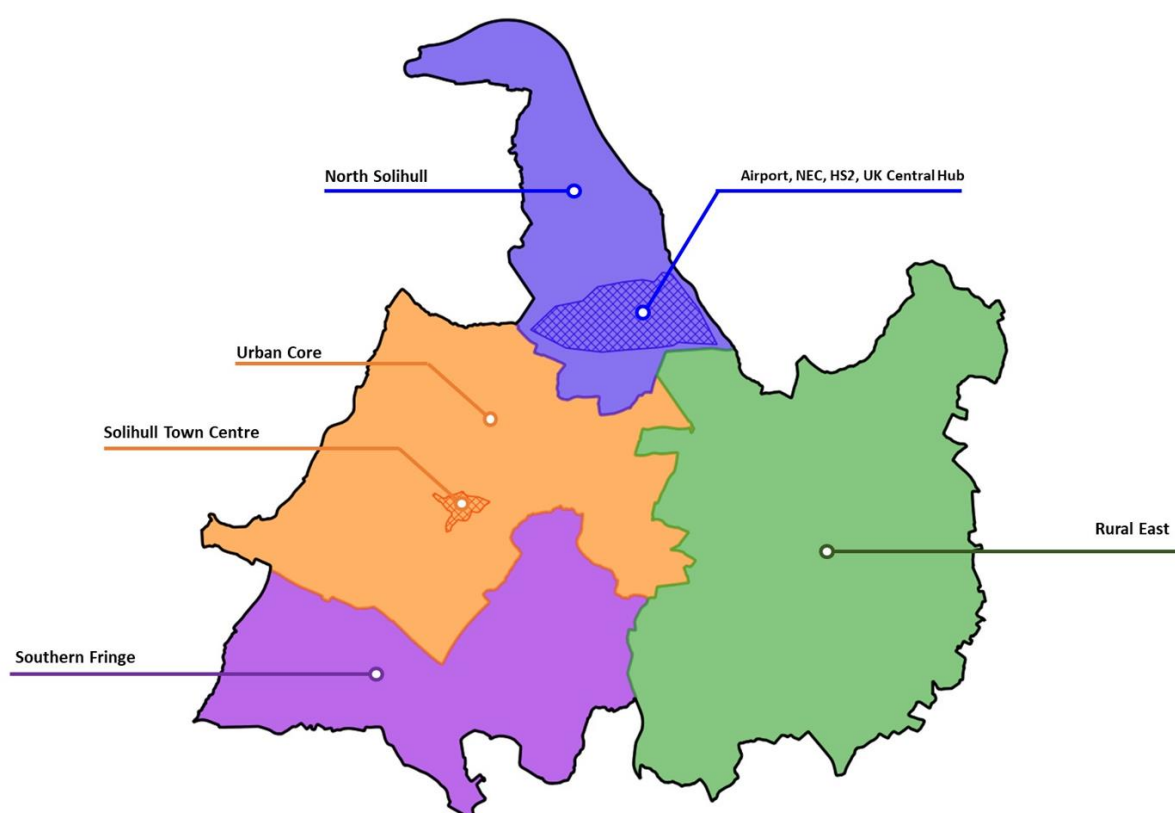
CAV trials at the National Exhibition Centre



8 AREA STRATEGIES

Solihull Connected splits the Borough into six areas, each of which has a place-based strategy specific to transport needs in that area. We are sure that residents and neighbourhood groups have a real interest in wanting to see high quality and sustainable improvements in their localities, and these area strategies pave the way for packages of such improvements to be developed, consulted upon, and delivered. A summary of the priorities and schemes relevant to each area is provided below.

Overview of Solihull



UK Central Hub

This is one of the most strategically connected locations in the whole of the United Kingdom. It lies at the junction of the M6 and M42, has Birmingham International station on the West Coast Main Line and the prospect of HS2 arriving at the turn of the decade, whilst the airport connects places across the world to the West Midlands and beyond.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Improving public transport connections from central Solihull and the wider borough

2. A land use mix and design that encourages walking, cycling and public transport access and interchange within the area
3. Enhanced and new cycle and pedestrian links to connect the area with the wider Borough
4. Developing a high-quality public transport interchange at Birmingham International Station. Improvements seek to establish a multi-modal transport hub using an Automated People Mover, which will connect the Interchange Station to Birmingham Airport via International Railway Station and provide improved local and regional connectivity. Improvements should also include passive provision to support WMCA ambition for Metro connection, to include reserved route through to UKC Hub from the North to International Station.
5. Making improvements to highways infrastructure to accommodate access by car
6. Work with HS2 on plans for Stonebridge Island and M6 Junction 4 to accommodate new traffic generated by the HS2 Interchange station
7. Develop and deliver West Coast Mainline and M42 Public Transport and active travel bridge links to HS2 Interchange
8. Seeking a permanent route for CAVs

Successful delivery of our area strategy for the UK Central Hub will address the objectives in Solihull Connected to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough by ensuring all the Borough is able to access this area, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity, it will improve safety on our transport network and will improve the quality of life in the Borough.

North Solihull

North Solihull includes several residential areas such as Castle Bromwich, Chelmsley Wood, Kingshurst and Marston Green. It is home to 28% of the population of the Borough and has a far younger population profile than other areas of the Borough. Other than Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre, this area is not well connected to other parts of the Borough.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Improving public transport connectivity to Solihull town centre and the UK Central Hub to provide economic opportunities
2. Working with partners to enhance facilities at existing railway stations and explore opportunities for a new station to serve Castle Bromwich

3. Finding ways to improve access to our local centres to make them more accessible and raising their profile
4. Putting a greater focus on providing safe and attractive cycle links.
5. Putting a greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so
6. Addressing concerns around personal safety so that people of all groups feel safe using car parks, cycle parking, walking around local centres and using public transport
7. Adding further electric vehicle charging points to the area
8. Working with partners to improve bus services to the local centres in the area such as Chelmunds Cross, which has a Doctor's Surgery, pharmacy, and school
9. There is a significant interaction between the north of Solihull and places in the east of Birmingham. As such a close working relationship will be needed with partners to improve travel and transport across this area

This will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough, providing better connectivity will support steps to encourage economic growth, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the north of Solihull.

Rural East

The Rural East of the Borough is an area associated with agriculture and broken by villages such as Balsall Common and Berkswell. The whole of this area is green belt and, being near high earning employment opportunities in Birmingham, Coventry, the University of Warwick, and Warwickshire, makes this an attractive place to live. The construction of both HS2 and the additional M42 junction at Catherine-de-Barnes are going to create a significant amount of construction traffic in the area for the medium term.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Taking steps to ensure that the impacts of traffic and speeds in villages are considered and treated appropriately
2. Working with partners to ensure that there is sufficient capacity at rail station Park & Ride facilities to provide this area with a viable option to driving to work

3. Putting a greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so
4. Finding ways to make bus and rail services more appropriate to the needs of this area, recognising that the rail service from Berkswell currently plays limited role in meeting current travel to work needs
5. Developing the Balsall Common transport package (relief road plus complementary village centre public realm, pedestrian, and cycle improvements) to remove the A452 traffic from the centre of the village and to access new housing at Barratt's Farm
6. Improving cycle connectivity with urban Solihull, Coventry, and Warwickshire in line with our LCWIP through new cycle routes and improving the Kenilworth Greenway by working with HS2 Ltd. to deliver the connection to Station Road
7. Extending the number of electric vehicle charging points in this area
8. Working with TfWM on a sustained improvement to bus services to create the culture change for a move from car travel to public transport travel
9. Working to improve safety for vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists, equestrians, and motorcyclists.

Balsall Common centre



This will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough by providing public transport across this area, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity by supporting sites for new homes, improve safety for residents on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough by reducing the negative impacts created by traffic.

Solihull Town Centre

The central business district of the Borough, Solihull town centre is the commercial and core area of Solihull. The town centre is traditionally associated with retail and shopping and has two shopping centres and large department stores. Public buildings including the Civic Centre, the Core library and theatre and Solihull Hospital are in the town centre and public transport hubs such as the railway station.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Carrying out research to understand the current and future car parking needs of the town centre and developing a strategy for car parking in the central business district
2. Continuing to develop the network of bus routes into central Solihull
3. Continuing to develop proposals for improving Solihull railway station
4. Improving accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists into and across the centre
5. Improving the public realm within Solihull centre
6. Adding further electric vehicle charging points to the area
7. Building public transport links to UKC Hub, Arden Cross and HS2 Birmingham Interchange station as those new facilities open.

This will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough by improving links to the centre, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity in this area and improving the quality of life in the Borough by upgrading infrastructure and connectivity.

Southern Fringe

This area of the Borough comprises of a swathe of countryside that is predominantly green belt, but which also takes in the Blythe Valley Business Park and a number of villages such as Dickens Heath, Dorridge and Knowle. There are significant plans for new homes and employment in the Southern Fringe. The area has both railway and motorway connections.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Improving bus and cycling connections to Blythe Valley Business Park from the wider Borough and beyond, as further development occurs
2. Working with partners to ensure that there is sufficient capacity at rail station Park & Ride facilities to provide this area with a viable option to driving to work
3. Putting a greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so
4. Finding ways to improve access to our local centres to make these centres more accessible and raising their profile
5. Improving public transport connectivity to Solihull Town Centre and the central area of the Borough
6. Adding further electric vehicle charging points to the area
7. Seeking a permanent route for CAVs

This will address our objectives to extend the coverage of the transport network across our Borough, support steps to encourage economic growth and productivity by improving access to business sites, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

Urban Core

The Urban Core represents the major residential areas of the west of Solihull Borough. Around half of the people who live in the Borough live in these areas and the A34 Stratford Road corridor represents a major retail and employment area. The area is well served in terms of amenities and transport links and the growth plans for the Borough could see 8,000 more people and 6,000 more jobs by 2031.

To achieve our Solihull Connected objectives we will be taking the following approach to developing access to this area of the Borough in coming years:

1. Changing the perception of public transport to make it more popular and to form an attractive alternative to car travel
2. Providing improved pedestrian, cycle, and bus accessibility to, and infrastructure at, Olton and Shirley railway stations enable commuters to get into the rail system quicker and easier

3. Taking advantage of the latent demand for cycling from the resident population who already own and use bikes for leisure purposes. Provide a network of cycle facilities which lie along peak demand lines for commuting purposes but also connect parks and rural areas, taking advantage of the 'green lungs' of the Borough
4. Putting a greater focus on improving local streets and reducing severance from busy roads so that people are encouraged to walk and cycle and are happy to let their children do so
5. Finding ways to improve access to Shirley and Stratford Road shopping along with other local centres in the urban core of the Borough, by sustainable travel modes, to make these centres more accessible and reduce carbon use
6. Adding further electric vehicle charging points to the area

This will address our objectives regarding the coverage and use of the transport network in our Borough, boost use of our local centres and Shirley retail area to encourage economic growth and productivity, improve safety on our transport network and improve the quality of life in the Borough.

EV Charging at Dorridge



9 DELIVERY PLAN

To accompany this strategy document, we have developed a Delivery Plan. This sets out a prioritised list of schemes and initiatives, all of which are focused on the objectives of Solihull Connected. Knowing what our objectives and vision are, means that we can be ready when funding from Central Government (e.g., City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement) or private developers becomes available. We hope to use this Delivery Plan to start getting more than our fair share of investment into our transport system. It is intended that the Delivery Plan be treated as a live document following adoption, that can be updated as and when new initiatives, interventions and funding opportunities arise. Progress on development of schemes within the Delivery Plan will be reported through the Council's Democratic Processes,

Proposals for HS2 Interchange



APPENDIX A: SUPPORTING STRATEGIES

Solihull Clean Air Strategy

What is it?

All of us want to live in an environment with clean air, where we can enjoy active healthy lifestyles and where it's safe for our children to grow up. Air pollution is the top environmental risk to human health in the UK. Whilst our latest assessment of air quality shows that Solihull is within the national air quality objectives, and therefore not required to develop a Local Air Quality Action Plan, we recognise that improvements in air quality will benefit the health and economy of Solihull. Therefore, we decided to introduce the first Solihull Clean Air Strategy, which covers the period of 2019 to 2024.

Our Clean Air Strategy focuses on actions led by Solihull MBC to improve air quality across the Borough, however, to be truly effective, the action plans will be reliant on an integrated approach which encompasses behavioural, strategic and infrastructure changes, working alongside a range of partners.

Why are we doing it?

Air pollution is the top environmental risk to human health in the United Kingdom and the fourth greatest threat to public health after cancer, heart disease and obesity. Whilst our latest assessment of air quality shows that Solihull is within the national air quality objectives, and therefore not required to develop a Local Air Quality Action Plan, we recognise that improvements in air quality will benefit the health and economy of Solihull, which is also acknowledged within the current Council Plan.

Air quality is a cross cutting theme which has implications for health, the environment and transport. Our Clean Air Strategy sets out the case for action and outlines the measures that will be taken over the next five years within Solihull to improve air quality and reduce population exposure to the pollutants recognised as being the most harmful to human health.

As road traffic emissions are the largest source of local air pollutants in Solihull, we are keen to ensure that there is a process in place to continually improve air quality across the Borough. Locations with high traffic volumes and congestion are subject to the greatest amount of air pollution. Therefore, those who live near these roads are at increased risk of ill health and early death. Congestion results in higher pollutant emissions, as emissions from vehicles are high when travelling

at intermittent speeds. The dispersion of air pollution is another factor in determining areas of poor air quality; in narrow high-sided streets the dispersal of pollution can be limited resulting in high pollutant concentrations.

The rail network is also responsible for air pollution, particularly from stationary diesel trains within enclosed railway stations. The ambitious target within the National Clean Air Strategy 2019 of removing all diesel only trains by 2040 will significantly improve air quality at railway stations.

Cleaner technologies and simple changes in individual behaviour will therefore contribute to improved air quality for everyone.

Where are we starting?

Our Clean Air Strategy has six themes with considered, achievable actions that will work on over the five-year lifetime of the strategy. The themes are:

1. Education
2. Transport
3. Planning
4. Environment
5. Public messaging
6. Procurement

The transport action plan in the Air Quality Strategy includes the following actions:

- Work with Support businesses in the Borough to develop travel plans which include car sharing schemes and modal shift initiatives – including agile working practices. partners to promote more electric charging points at workplaces and car parks
- Investigate schemes to reduce traffic congestion, in particular standing traffic at junctions
- Work with partners to promote use of electric bikes
- Deliver the West Midlands Cycle Hire scheme in conjunction with the Combined Authority
- Provide and promote a choice of cycle routes, including routes that avoid highly polluted roads
- Negotiate to turn bus shelters with open fronts facing very busy roads around so they are facing the pavement instead
- Promote electric taxis and buses

Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy (including the Local Cycle Walking Infrastructure Plan)

What is it?

To support our wider transport strategy 'Solihull Connected', we have adopted a Cycling and Walking Strategy for the Borough. The strategy sets out our vision for how we will deliver cycling and walking infrastructure, how we will improve the capability and confidence of our residents to cycle and walk more often and how we will ensure new developments cater for cycling and walking.

The Cycling and Walking Strategy forms part of the Council's approach to accommodating the growth in travel demand that is forecast for our network. It also forms part of the approach to maintaining Solihull's special character. The Cycling and Walking Vision included within the strategy is:

"Develop Solihull into a Borough where cycling and walking are the most convenient modes of travel for local journeys. Developing a network of safe, attractive, and direct cycle and walking routes, improving physical activity and wellbeing."

As part of the strategy, we have also produced a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), which is a new Government approach to identify cycling and walking improvements required at a local level. The Solihull LCWIP provides a long-term (10 year) approach to the development of a cycling and walking network within the Borough. A Steering Group including officers from Solihull MBC, TfWM and other partners was established and met regularly to inform the development of the LCWIP.

Why are we doing it?

In April 2017, the Government published a Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) for England which set out several targets, including to double cycling trips and increase walking levels by 2025. Following on from this, in July 2020, the National Cycling and Walking Plan was adopted which included a £2bn investment package for cycling and walking (in addition to any existing funding).

The National Plan was complemented with Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 which presents guidance on implementing high quality cycle infrastructure. LTN 1/20 includes five core design principles to achieve more people travelling by cycle or on foot - networks and routes should be coherent, direct, safe, comfortable, and attractive. To reinforce this, the National Plan states that:

- *"We will not fund or part-fund any scheme that does not meet the new standards and principles..."; (although it should be noted that the new LTN*

1/20 guidance does acknowledge that achievement of such standards is dependent on local circumstance, e.g., constraints to available road space)

- *“Active Travel England’s assessment of an authority’s performance on active travel will influence the funding it receives for other forms of transport.”*

Adoption of a compliant local cycling and walking strategy and LCWIP ensures that Solihull can capitalise on increased active travel investment and is in a strong position to bid for any future rounds of transport funding.

Cycling and walking are recognised as important components to reduce congestion, improve air quality, and support better physical and mental health. Cycling and walking are also the most inclusive transport choice and have the real potential to enhance the vibrancy and special character of our Borough. The significant benefits which cycling, and walking can generate in Solihull include:

- Economic benefits and supporting sustainable growth including providing value for money, supporting the creation of local jobs, and boosting the high street and tourism industry
- Health benefits including improved physical and mental health, reduced all-cause mortality and improved life expectancy by increasing physical activity
- Cleaner air, reduced air pollution and contribution to Solihull’s Net Zero Action Plan
- Social benefits including making new friends, improved sense of belonging and better self-esteem

The transport strategy, ‘Solihull Connected’, acknowledges that there is a risk that without a properly planned transport system growth could cause ever-increasing congestion on our roads, stifling our economy, worsening our quality of life, and hampering transition to a sustainable low carbon economy.

Through the identification of a long-term cycle network plan and Core Walking Zones (CWZs), the LCWIP supports identification of the active travel provision required to support new developments and ensure that growth outlined in the local plan is delivered sustainably. The LCWIP has considered proposed developments as part of the cycle network plan to ensure these are linked to trip attractors.

The recent Covid-19 restrictions were found to impact the way people travelled, with the National Plan outlining that “despite fewer people travelling overall during this pandemic, we’ve seen around a 100% increase in weekday cycling... The opportunity is huge, but it is also time limited – without intervention, people will likely slip back to old behaviours. We need to act now.” Investing in walking and cycle schemes will assist with embedding the changes in people’s travel behaviour,

increasing active travel permanently and enable us to apply the learning around active travel that we gained during the pandemic.

Where are we starting?

The Solihull LCWIP is focused on primary corridors where the highest propensity for cycling is anticipated. This approach is consistent with DfT LCWIP guidance and ensures we are well placed to react to the new cycling and walking funding.

As part of the LCWIP prioritisation process, the following three primary cycle corridors were identified as the short-term priorities for implementation:

- Priority Corridor 1 – Dickens Heath to Solihull Town Centre
- Priority Corridor 2 – Knowle to Solihull Town Centre
- Priority Corridor 3 – Castle Bromwich/Chelmsley Wood to UKC Hub Area

For all the priority corridors outlined above, we will shortly begin the business case and detailed design process (dependant on funding being secured). The West Midlands City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) includes an allocation for Priority Corridor 1 and Priority Corridor 2 (£10.3 million and £8 million respectively), subject to submission of a business case to the Combined Authority. Priority Corridor 3 is included within the list of reserved schemes.

Other priority routes identified in the LCWIP will serve destinations such as Blythe Valley Business Park, UKC HUB and Birmingham Airport and Shirley. Work on developing these routes should naturally follow on from the three primary corridors.

Core Walking Zones (CWZs) are also identified within the LCWIP. The CWZs identify interventions which improve the overall pedestrian environment as well as addressing issues such as severance and safety. They consist of major trip generators in proximity across the Borough and where high propensity for walking is present or forecasted.

The CWZs identified in the LCWIP are:

- CWZ 1: North Solihull
- CWZ 2: Jaguar Land Rover site-bounded area
- CWZ 3: Solihull Town Centre
- CWZ 4: Shirley, Monkspath and Solihull College area
- CWZ 5: Blythe Valley
- CWZ 6: Balsall Common

Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Plan

What is it?

The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan presents the Council's strategy for the management of the Council's highway assets and allows planning for the longer term. It has been produced following an assessment of customer needs, local priorities, and asset condition. It also ensures that both short- and long-term needs are appropriately considered, whilst delivering an optimal whole life cost approach to our Highway Assets. This Strategy will be used to inform the highway maintenance schemes that are implemented within the Council's Delivery Plan. The selection of these schemes will be driven predominantly by condition data and supported by local members.

This strategy covers all highway maintenance activities funded by revenue and capital streams. The strategy does not directly relate to capital improvements but where linkages exist these are identified. The Asset Management Plan will be used to inform priorities in the Business Planning Process and will support the continuous improvement of highway asset management.

Why are we doing it?

The Borough's Road network provides the backbone of its economy and the maintenance of its highways in an appropriate condition is paramount. This is reflected in customer contact data which indicates on-going customer interest in the condition of carriageways.

Recent results for the Borough, from the National Highways & Transport customer survey, show that the condition of roads is both the item that is "most important to users" and the aspect "in most need of improvement". The data indicates strong support for improvement in carriageway (road) condition.

Where are we starting?

The new focus is, in order to prevent a progressive deterioration of our highway assets, Solihull MBC targeting increased investment in the assets with the aim of improving their condition. Investment will include the following:

- Investment in drainage maintenance and improvements will continue
- Investment in safety fence maintenance and upgrades will continue
- Removal of surplus roadside signing, and fencing will be considered
- Investment will take place to improve the condition of busier footways
- Investment on the remaining footways shall be maintained based upon targeting a "no worse than at present condition" state

- Maintaining the safety of structures
- Strengthening of structures where there are significant benefits to users
- Investing in a small number of priority structures – e.g., the B4102 Fillongley Road Bridge
- Investment in traffic signal junctions and signal-controlled crossings that are in need of replacement
- A refurbishment programme of traffic signals based on age and condition of equipment, whether the equipment has deteriorated, its reliability and whether any part is obsolete

This strategy also sets out to reduce carbon emissions resulting from highway works, either from recycling or through the use of low carbon producing products. The largest contributor to carbon emissions is from electricity for street lighting and illuminated signs; the programme to install new LED streetlights will see substantial reductions in the amount of electricity consumed.

Road Safety Strategy for Solihull 2017 – 2030

What is it?

The Solihull Road Safety Strategy 2017 – 2030 guides everything we do to improve safety on the road network across the Borough. Our aim is to make the Borough a safer place to walk, cycle and drive. To help achieve this we deliver engineering schemes supported by a wide range of targeted education, training and publicity measures. The strategy is a great source of information and ideas and sets out our vision for road safety in the Solihull Borough.

Why are we doing it?

We have been very successful at reducing casualties in Solihull over recent years, particularly the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads which has reached an all-time low. This is despite a steady increase in traffic growth. Now many of the quick wins have already been achieved and it is increasingly difficult to find patterns in collisions that can be addressed through engineering measures. Our main challenges are:

- The 'Fatal four': (excess speed; use of mobile phones/electronic devices; failure to wear a seatbelt and drink or drugs)
- Child pedestrians aged between 10 and 15
- Male cyclists between the ages of 30 and 60

- Young male motorcyclists between the ages of 16 and 29
- Young male drivers between the ages of 17 and 29

The Borough is also planning for new housing and population growth, which will bring new traffic to the Borough. The population of the Borough and surrounding area is also ageing, creating new needs when considering road safety.

Where are we starting?

The strategy is an integral part of wider reaching transport plans and has a balanced approach that takes account of other Council and Safer Solihull Partnership objectives, particularly those relating to health and wellbeing. Within that context, the aim is to minimise the number of people in Solihull who are injured in road traffic collisions, set out our expectations on performance and show how road safety will be developed. In addition to investing funds in road safety we have set out to adopting the Safe Systems approach that promotes a 'five pillar' strategic approach for managing road safety as listed below:

- Pillar 1: Road safety management
- Pillar 2: Safer roads and mobility
- Pillar 3: Safer vehicles
- Pillar 4: Safer Road users
- Pillar 5: Post crash response

Increasingly we are now placing more emphasis on educating road users to change risky behaviours. Most collisions are attributed to human error. Aggression and a lack of empathy towards other road users are characteristic of the way too many people travel, and we need to try to utilise behaviour change techniques to tackle those attitudes. In particular, we will look to develop programmes that address the 'Fatal four': excess speed, use of mobile phones / electronic devices, failure to wear a seatbelt and drink or drugs.

Solihull Electric Vehicle Strategy

What is it?

Solihull's Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy 'Going Electric' was adopted in June 2020 with the central aim of ensuring that when any existing petrol- or diesel-powered vehicle owned or operated in the Borough is sold or scrapped, it is replaced with an electric vehicle, leading to reductions in carbon emissions and improvements in air quality. A refreshed strategy is currently being produced.

The adopted strategy seeks to address the barriers which are currently restricting further EV adoption, and which are within the Council's ability to influence. Challenges currently experienced include under-communication, insufficient charging infrastructure and the need for further incentives to improve cost-competitiveness and attractiveness of EV ownership.

The EV strategy has the following overarching objectives:

- Reliable, convenient, and affordable charging in the Borough
- Awareness of the benefits and availability of services
- Engagement to understand and address challenges and concerns
- Council leading the way

To achieve these objectives, the document identifies the areas where the Council will focus its efforts to encourage uptake of electric vehicles. These are:

- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure
- Council operations and resources
- Communication, advocacy, and outreach
- Taxis and private hire vehicles
- Electric buses
- Car clubs
- Preferential parking and access for EVs
- Planning, regulations, and guidance

The strategy focusses specifically on electric vehicles, rather than incorporating the wider family of ultra-low emission vehicle technologies, such as hydrogen vehicles. Whilst it is acknowledged that other forms of ultra-low-emission vehicle (ULEV) are expected have an important role in improving air quality and reducing carbon emissions in the future, at the time of writing these technologies were not at a sufficient level of development to enable widespread use and, in the short term, would therefore only have a small impact on air quality and carbon emissions.

Why are we doing it?

Private vehicle usage represents the primary mode of travel across Solihull and accounts for a significantly higher proportion of travel than the average for the United Kingdom, with more than 75 per cent of journeys to work being undertaken using single-occupancy vehicles in 2011. This poses several challenges for Solihull, including high levels of greenhouse gas emissions, increased air pollution,

increasing levels of congestion and negative impacts on physical activity. Furthermore, the population of Solihull is expected to increase substantially over the coming years, with the emerging Solihull Local Plan allocating sites for significant commercial and residential development. This growth is expected to increase the demands on the transport network.

Whilst an increased focus on other modes of transport such as walking, cycling and public transport aims to limit any increases in the use of private vehicle usage across the Borough, car use is still expected to continue to account for a significant proportion of travel going forward. This usage creates clear challenges about air quality and carbon emissions, for which vehicle use accounted for 46 per cent of total carbon emissions in Solihull in 2017. In recent years, ULEVs have increasingly emerged as a solution to these two challenges since they emit zero or very low tailpipe emissions compared to conventional combustion engines.

Through reducing barriers to increased EV uptake, the strategy intends to contribute to the following three aims:

- Air Quality – reduce hazardous pollutants originating from road vehicles that have severe impacts on residents' health
- Carbon Emissions - reduce carbon emissions from road vehicles that are contributing to climate change
- Economic Development – supporting local economic growth through job creation, reduced transportation costs and increased disposable income for residents as well as advancing the image and reputation of Solihull

Solihull's Electric Vehicle Strategy sets out a clear roadmap towards achieving these outcomes by focussing on expanding charging infrastructure and putting electric vehicles at the centre of future planning, parking, and public transport decisions. It also looks at how we will promote electric vehicles through our advocacy and outreach and incorporate them into the Council's own operations and resources.

The strategy forms part of the Council's wider UK Central Solihull programme, delivering infrastructure projects to support sustainable and inclusive growth across the Borough and to complement the investment stimulated by the connectivity associated with the forthcoming Interchange Station.

Where are we starting?

Solihull has potential for high levels of electric vehicle adoption, with a significant proportion of residents earning above average salaries and many properties having off-street parking provision which is suited to domestic electric vehicle charging. This potential is reflected in the relatively high levels of EV uptake across

the Borough to date. At the end of the third quarter of 2022 there were 9,481 ULEVs registered in the Solihull local authority area.

Solihull Net Zero Action Plan

What is it?

Recognising the scale of the climate emergency, Solihull MBC has set the aspiration of reducing the Borough's CO2 emissions to net zero by 2041. As part of this commitment to achieve net zero, the council has been working with stakeholders and consulting with residents to develop a Net Zero Action Plan (NZAP), which will help inform the kind of action that will be needed across the Borough.

Objectives of the NZAP are as follows:

- Identify actions Solihull MBC can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions across the Borough
- Estimate the carbon savings, costs or payback and co-benefits associated with implementing the actions
- Explore a method of prioritising actions needed to enable the net zero transition

This will help Solihull MBC to:

- Develop a priority list of actions to take forward
- Understand the different stakeholders in the Borough who will need to be engaged in action and their role
- Focus resource and funding towards actions with the greatest positive impact

The NZAP contains 54 goals and 203 actions across seven sectors, including Transport.

Why are we doing it?

It is now widely agreed that climate change poses an unprecedented threat, and that action is required across all aspects of society. The UK Climate Projections

Report¹ is the latest generation of national climate projections in the UK which helps to predict the changes that will occur with future climate change. The main trends from the projections are increasing warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers along with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events. Communities in Solihull are already seeing more extremes in weather events, with flooding being a particular issue.

The Solihull NZAP ambition of reaching net zero carbon by 2041 is in line with the West Midlands Combined Authority ambition. As an organisation, the Council itself has a 2030 net zero ambition.

Where are we starting?

The themes of the NZAP include buildings, transport, energy, environment and waste and industry. The Action Plan states that:

“Emissions from transport represents a significant proportion of Solihull’s emissions profile (39%), with on-road transport contributing to almost all of transport emissions.”

Transport has the highest number of goals considered to have a high carbon savings potential, highlighting the importance of focusing resources to action in this sector. Goals include infrastructure and policy designed to facilitate walking and cycling, more electric vehicle uptake, reduced private vehicle use, improved accessibility to public transport and reduce unnecessary flights.

In relation to transport, there has been the following progress to date:

- Improvements to A45 being progressed through design and planning stages, the A45 Coventry Road is already beginning to see major junction improvements
- Solihull MBC’s Cycle & Walking Strategy along with Town Centre Access Strategy will focus attention on providing new cycle and pedestrian links to Solihull town centre
- Progress towards remodelling both Birmingham International Railway Station and Solihull Railway Station, as well as Park & Ride improvements at both stations

¹ <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/binaries/content/assets/metofficegovuk/pdf/research/ukcp/ukcp-headline-findings-v2.pdf>

- Improvements have been made to bus links to/from Solihull town centre and TfWM has invested in bus priority infrastructure as a precursor to the Commonwealth Games
- At the end of Q3 2022, there were 9,481 ULEVs registered to addresses in the Solihull local authority area

Solihull Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy

What is it?

The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy outlines how Solihull MBC will assist schools across the Borough to produce and maintain approved School Travel Plans and promote and encourage sustainable travel and transport for children and young people from the age of 5 through to 16.

The Strategy sets out all the proposals and programmes that will be undertaken to encourage school communities to choose safer, healthier, and more environmentally friendly modes of travel.

Why are we doing it?

Solihull MBC has a statutory duty under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to promote sustainable travel to and from school, between schools and other institutions and to publish a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy. Education authorities such as Solihull MBC are required to:

- Carry out an assessment of the travel and transport needs of children, and young people within the authority's area
- Audit the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions
- Have a strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority so that the travel and transport needs of children and young people are better catered for
- Promote sustainable travel and transport modes on the journey to, from and between schools and other institutions

The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy relates directly to objectives in Solihull Connected to make transport network reach all parts of the Borough, improve highway safety and personal safety and to improve the quality of life for pupils and people living close to schools.

Where are we starting?

Solihull MBC has had a Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy in place for many years. A number of initiatives have been undertaken to widen the appeal of sustainable modes for travel to school. These include cycling initiatives such as bikeability, walking initiatives such as walking buses and Park & Stride and a range of general programmes with schools such as nursery packs, travel training and Safer Routes to Schools.

Our “School Streets” programme started in September 2017 and now covers eight schools across the Borough. This is a project which aims to address traffic related issues at the beginning and end of each school day by limiting traffic in the streets surrounding schools at these times, creating a predominantly car free zone. The aim is to create a safer, more pleasant environment for everyone around schools. The scheme promotes active travel to school by walking and cycling, which in turn, will help to reduce congestion and pollution in the area.

The Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy links into a variety of work programmes to improve children’s health and well-being, especially about childhood obesity. By working with Children’s Services through the Home to School Travel Assistance Policy, the Strategy supports an integrated approach to addressing common issues in a consistent way.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The glossary of terms below contains explanations of concepts relevant to Solihull Connected and referred to in our transport strategy.

Active Travel England	Executive agency responsible for improving the standards of cycling and walking infrastructure in England.
Air Quality Management Area	An area where air pollution levels have exceeded the national air quality objectives.
Birmingham Interchange	New railway station on the HS2 railway line close to Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre. (See HS2 below).
Bus Enhanced Partnership	An Enhanced Partnership is an agreement that enables local authorities to work with bus operating companies to set a shared approach to improving bus services in a defined area.
Connected autonomous vehicle	CAV are vehicles that can replace the driver for some or all the driving tasks. Vehicles acting automatically on the brakes, the accelerator and/or the steering control under the constant supervision of the driver ('SAE level 2') are already available on the EU market
Community Infrastructure Levy	CIL is a charge that local authorities can set on new development to raise funds to help fund the infrastructure, facilities, and services - such as transport improvements - needed to support new homes and businesses.
DfT	Department for Transport.
District Centre	A group of shops and some service outlets serving part of an urban area and providing a geographic focus for it, separate from the town centre but with more variety than local centres.
Freight consolidation centre	Where many suppliers have goods delivered directly to a place (consolidation centre or delivery hub) where it is stored and then when needed is combined into a single fuller load for the onward journey.
Great British Railways	A planned state-owned public body that will oversee rail transport in Great Britain from 2023.
HS2	High Speed 2 or HS2 is the new high speed railway line under construction between Birmingham and London. The line passes through the east of our Borough and there will be a new station, to be called Birmingham Interchange close to Birmingham Airport and the National Exhibition Centre.

Local Centre	A small group of shops and perhaps limited service outlets of a local nature (for example, a suburban housing estate) serving a small catchment.
Local Cycle Walking Investment Programme	LCWIPs are a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required at the local level. They enable a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks and form part of Government's strategy to increase the number of trips made on foot or by cycle.
Local Economic Partnership	Solihull MBC forms part of the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
Local Plan	The Solihull Local Plan sets out how and where Solihull will develop in the future. It outlines challenges facing Solihull and how they will be addressed.
Local Plan – Infrastructure Development Plan	An Infrastructure Delivery Plan forms part of the evidence base to support the Local Plan. The plan describes the existing infrastructure and needs in the Borough and highlights the infrastructure needed to support the predicted growth set out in the Local Plan.
Local Transport Plan	The Local Transport Plan is a statutory transport plan deriving from the Transport Act (2000).
Midlands Connect	A partnership of LEPs and councils from across the Midlands that develop and implement the strategic transport strategy for the Midlands. Midlands Connect is the Sub-National Transport Body for the Midlands.
Mobility Hub	A mobility hub can be a highly visible, safe, and accessible space where public, shared and active travel modes are co-located. Facilities vary but a hub can have a cycle and scooter hire facility, rapid electric vehicle charging, taxi and demand responsive travel pick up/drop off, parcel lockers, bike shop repair, space for a car hire/share scheme to operate and café or information centre.
National Freight Network	The DfT is to identify a National Freight Network covering road, rail, maritime, aviation, inland waterway, and warehouse infrastructure, with a long-term goal of removing barriers to allow a seamless flow of freight around the country.
Neighbourhood Plan	Neighbourhood Plans set out the vision for an area and the planning policies for the use and development of land within a parish or neighbourhood area. These policies support the strategic policies within the Local Plan, guiding development rather than stopping it.

Net Zero Action Plan	The Net Zero Action Plan sets out Solihull MBC’s plan to achieve Net Zero in a clear and transparent way that will help to focus the city residents, businesses, and public sector organisations on a sequence of actions for the years ahead. These actions should also be reflected in Solihull MBC and organisational plans.
Network Rail	The owner and infrastructure manager of most of the railway network in Great Britain. Forms part of the Department for Transport.
Transport Assessment / Statement	This process sets out various transport issues relating to a proposed development. It identifies what measures will be taken to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the scheme in relation to all forms of travel. National guidance recommends that the improvement of accessibility and encouragement to use sustainable travel should take precedent over measures to increase traffic capacity and increased use of vehicles. However, safety and congestion should also be addressed in the assessment or statement.
Transport Poverty	A household that spends 10% or more of its expenditure on how its members move from A to B is considered “transport poor”.
Transport for West Midlands	Transport delivery arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority.
UKC Hub	United Kingdom Central Hub. The area is made up of Birmingham Airport, Birmingham Business Park, the National Exhibition Centre, Jaguar Land Rover, HS2 Interchange and the proposed development within Arden Cross triangle.
ULEV	Ultra-low emission vehicle. Typically, electric but also extends to hydrogen.
Urban Growth Company	The Urban Growth Company is a special purpose vehicle specifically created by Solihull MBC to be a catalyst for growth by planning and coordinating the delivery of infrastructure and investment in UKC Hub.
West Midlands Combined Authority	A combined authority is a group of local authorities working together to make their region a better place to live. The government gives combined authorities the money and power to make decisions for their regions.
West Midlands Rail Executive	The Rail Executive works with local authorities such as Solihull MBC and the rail industry to decide how to invest money in our region’s railways. This helps to open new routes, improve train frequencies, and improve railway stations.