

# Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy

Cycling and Walking Technical Report

Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council

5th October 2020



# Contents

Chapter	Page
<b>1. Background and Introduction to Solihull</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. Solihull – Realising our Growth Ambitions</b>	<b>5</b>
2.1. Solihull Growth Ambitions	5
2.2. Transport Challenges in Solihull	5
2.3. Growth on the Existing Network	9
2.4. Cycling and Walking within Solihull	9
<b>3. Benefits of Cycling and Walking in Solihull</b>	<b>10</b>
3.1. Cycling and Walking Benefits the West Midlands	11
3.2. Sustainable Growth	12
3.3. Health Benefits	13
3.4. Clean Air	14
3.5. Social	14
<b>4. Policy Review</b>	<b>16</b>
4.1. National Policy	17
4.2. Regional Policy	19
4.3. Local Policy	23
<b>5. Active Travel – Public Perception</b>	<b>24</b>
5.1. Solihull Connected Consultation	24
5.2. Cycling and Walking Solihull Survey	25
5.3. West Midlands COVID-19 Travel Survey	26
5.4. Busting Myths around Cycling!	27
<b>6. Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy</b>	<b>29</b>
6.1. Cycling and Walking Vision	29
6.2. Objectives	29
6.3. Delivery Plan – From Vision to Action	29
<b>7. Themes 31</b>	
7.1. Infrastructure and Connectivity	32
7.2. Enabling	37
7.3. New Developments	41
7.4. Promoting	45
7.5. Monitoring and Funding	48
<b>8. Delivery Plan</b>	<b>51</b>
8.1. Infrastructure and Connectivity	51
8.2. Enabling	52
8.3. New Developments	53
8.4. Promotion	54
8.5. Monitoring and Funding	55

# 1. Background and Introduction to Solihull

The Cycling and Walking Strategy presents the overall strategic approach to active travel in Solihull. It marks out our vision for active travel which will support:

- Delivering cycling and walking infrastructure;
- Further promotional and behavioural change programmes;
- Maximising new technology; and
- Opportunities arising from new developments.

The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy is a key step in our approach to accommodate growth in travel demand on our network and how we will seek to maintain Solihull's character. These are exciting times for the Borough with significant opportunities for investment to ensure our environment and economic health are maintained and enhanced.

Solihull MBC is embarking on a strategy of 'Managed Growth' through the promotion of 'UK Central'. This plan brings together all of the economic assets of the Borough, including regional business parks, town centres, Jaguar Land Rover, the Airport, future HS2 and the NEC. The Council is determined to make this vision of 'managed growth' a reality.

As we recover from COVID-19, we will support the National Cycling and Walking Plan<sup>1</sup> adopted in July 2020. The vision for cycling and walking is clear in the national plan, the vision is for England to be a "great walking and cycling nation and places will be truly walkable. A travel revolution in our streets, towns and communities will have made cycling a mass form of transit. Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030"

Our 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 our transition to a sustainable low-carbon economy.

Solihull Connected acknowledges the importance of active travel to the transport network in Solihull and to the overall health and wellbeing of our residents. Solihull Connected through the development of this Cycling and Walking Strategy, plans for cycling to become a mass participation form of transport for our residents.

As a council, we are aware that many of our residents and visitors would like to cycle but face a number of barriers. The 2019 West Midlands Bike Life Report has identified some general trends relating to cycling and walking which highlight the significance of local authorities across the West Midlands in investing in active travel:

- 76% of women and 72% of men think that cycle safety needs improving, with 30% of respondents wanting to cycle but currently don't;

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf)

- 57% of respondents agree that more cycling would make the West Midlands a better place to live and work;
- 76% think space should be increased for people socialising, cycling and walking on their local high street;
- 59% think streets outside local schools should be closed to cars during drop off and pick up times to help cycling and walking journeys;
- 76% think that more cycle tracks along roads physically separated from traffic and pedestrians would be useful to help them cycle more;
- 65% support building more of these tracks, even when this would mean less room for other road traffic.

To get to a position where cycling and walking are well-used and convenient forms of daily transport across the Borough, we must ensure that high quality and well maintained infrastructure is provided. For cycling in particular, we need to provide the appropriate training to ensure all users are confident to cycle on the local network. Through this strategy, we acknowledge that local users who choose to cycle or walk are like road users: they want to make their journey as quickly, reliably and safely as possible.

To enable our residents and visitors to travel by cycling or on foot, we need to provide a comprehensive network of cycle and walking routes across the Borough. This would build upon our recent schemes in delivering the North Solihull Cycle Network and the current Wildlife Ways programme. We will seek to develop high-quality and connected routes across the borough, designed to the appropriate national design standards. The high quality network of cycling and walking routes will be supported by a range cycle promotion and education activities that promote and encourage use of the new and existing network.

Making Solihull a preferred choice for investment and living, whilst maintaining the unique character of the borough, relies on a high quality environment in which to work and live. That's why the priority of the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy is to make Solihull a cleaner, greener and more active Borough. Cycling and walking as forms of transport, have a significant contribution to make towards a more sustainable transport network, one that can transform the health and wellbeing of our residents and visitors.

## 2. Solihull – Realising our Growth Ambitions

### 2.1. Solihull Growth Ambitions

Our borough has significant growth aspirations based on the opportunities presented by UK Central and HS2. The big catalyst for growth is the arrival of the HS2 Interchange in 2028. This national-level infrastructure being located in the Borough presents huge opportunities for us to attract investment and growth.

Over the next 20 years, we have exciting growth plans for the Borough which are presented below. We will only be able to achieve our growth ambitions if we can provide a reliable and sustainable transport network, which can accommodate the increased demand on the network and minimise the impact of growth on air quality and maintain our unique character in Solihull.

Our key areas for growth include:

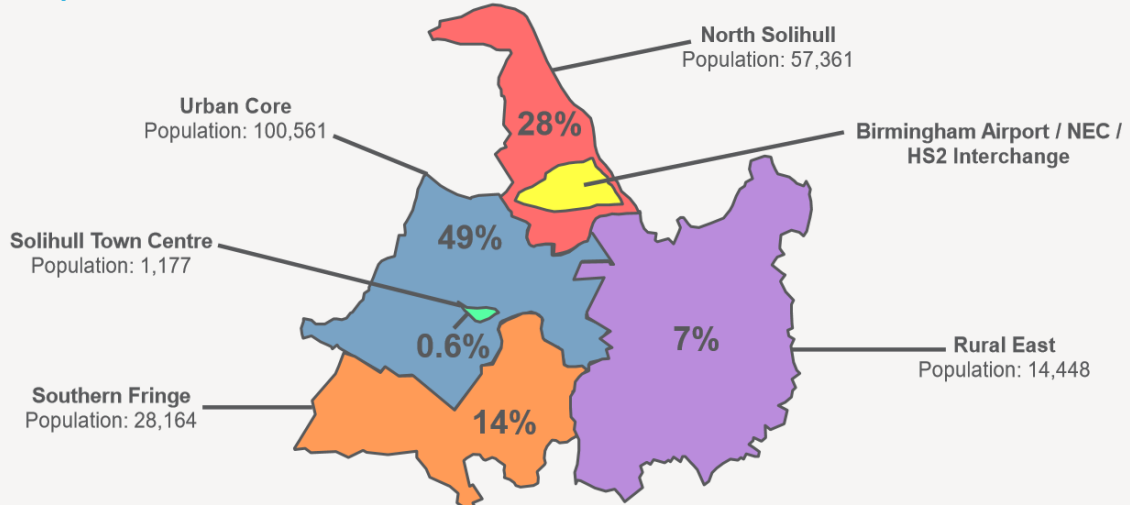
- **Solihull Town Centre** has the capacity and desire to grow, both in terms of its retail offering but also providing high-quality 'city centre' style accommodation and other new job opportunities. Many of the journeys undertaken in the city centre will be short in nature, perfect for walking and/or cycling.
- **HS2 Interchange** to be located near the airport, provides a wealth of opportunities including new jobs and accommodation. High quality pedestrian and cycling routes will provide local residents with convenient access to employment opportunities.
- **New and existing major employers** recognise the advantages of our location and are seeking to expand and grow their operations here. It's therefore important that we provide a transport network which provides employees with a variety of transport options, reducing the volume of motor vehicles at peak hours. It is imperative that we can manage journey reliability to provide confidence to our employers.
- **Blythe Valley** and other development sites have opportunities to grow and also provide land for new homes and jobs. We must ensure that such developments are incorporated into a well-connected network, reducing the demand on the motorised vehicle.

### 2.2. Transport Challenges in Solihull

Through gathering an evidence base across Solihull, we have identified the following challenges and opportunities for cycling and walking based on the following locations in the borough (as presented in the below map:

- North Solihull
- Urban Core
- Solihull Town Centre
- Southern Fringe;
- and the Rural East

## Population of areas in Solihull



Location	Challenge/Opportunities	What Impact can cycling/walking make?
<b>North Solihull</b>	34% of households have no access to a car	With over a third of households without access to a car, cycling and walking are likely to be viable (potentially essential) forms of travel for all journey purposes.
	Congestion hotspots along the A452, the A45 and M42	Cycling and walking have the potential to reduce congestion by offering a viable alternative for short distance journeys, particularly on the A45 and A452.
	50% of the area's population is under 34	A younger population generally have a greater propensity to cycle or walk. Improving provision in North Solihull has the potential to see a significant number of journeys undertaken by active modes.
	Area has the highest levels of deprivation in the Borough	With areas of deprivation, it is imperative that local residents have a variety of low cost transport options including cycling and walking to access key services including employment opportunities.
<b>Urban Core</b>	Almost 50% of the Borough's daily commuters live in this area	With a significant number of commuter journeys from this area, improving cycle and walking provision to encourage more journeys by active travel, has the potential to reduce traffic issues within this core area of the borough.
	Almost 60% of people in the Borough who cycle to work live in this area	The evidence shows the highest level of propensity is within the urban core area. With greater investment in cycling and walking, further journeys are expected to be undertaken by active travel, leading to a variety of additional benefits.

	50% of jobs in the area are taken up by people who do not live in Solihull	Depending on the location of 'out of borough' journeys, cross boundary cycle routes have the potential to reduce demand on the local network within the borough.
	Only 36% of Solihull's residents can reach JLR within 30 minutes by public transport	With limited public transport options, a well-developed cycle route to the JLR site (from various locations) has the potential to be a convenient option for a significant number of JLR employees who live in close proximity to the site.
<b>Rural East</b>	Around 70% of daily trips are made by car	With a rural setting, it is unlikely that a major modal shift from the car to cycling and walking for the majority of journeys is achievable. Small scale measures do have the potential to improve rural connectivity and reduce severance which can have a significant beneficial impact on local communities.
	The area has both one of the highest proportions of long distance trip making, and the highest proportion of short distance trip making	Whilst the rural network isn't currently conducive for cycling or walking, improving rural conditions for active travel can have a major impact on the local community. With a significant number of short distance journeys in rural communities, modal shift is possible with good quality cycling and walking provision.
	Public transport options in the area are limited	With public transport options limited, it is important that rural communities have the option to travel safely by cycling or walking. Improving rural connectivity has the potential to improve employment opportunities and provide a wealth of social benefits.
	There is very little cycling infrastructure in the area	With high traffic speeds on rural roads, it is important to consider the need of those that choose to cycle or walk. Improving cycling and walking provision is important on rural roads to tackle issues of safety.
<b>Solihull Town Centre</b>	79% of people arriving in the area travel by car	Increasing congestion in and around Solihull town centre is a major issue. Modal shift for journeys heading to and from the town centre will reduce pressure on the local network. Cycle and walking should be convenient modes of travel for those who live in close proximity to the town centre.
	The corridors within and approaching the town centre are heavily congested during commuter peak periods	Key corridors on approach to the town centre have limited cycle provision and mixed walking provision. Providing high quality cycling and walking infrastructure has the potential to reduce pressure on key corridors and limit air quality issues.

	Solihull Railway Station is disconnected from the core area by a number of busy roads	Solihull Railway station location is ideal for cycling and walking journeys to the station and to the town centre. It is imperative that we identify opportunities to reduce severance and improve the attractiveness of cycling and walking. This will encourage multi modal journeys and create a pleasant environment.
	There are major barriers to pedestrian and cyclist movements in the area	Currently key junctions on approach to the town centre have inadequate provision for cycling and walking. Severance and the issue of safety are key barriers for cycling and walking journeys. Improving provision for all users at key junctions will increase network performance and cater for a wider range of transport options.
<b>Southern Fringe</b>	Blythe Valley Business Park is poorly connected with just 13% of Solihull residents able to access it within 30 minutes by public transport	With limited public transport access to a major employment site within the borough, it is important we continue to look at improving connectivity. Cycling and walking to work provide a wealth of health and social benefits including improving wellbeing.
	By 2031, there could be up to 6,600 new jobs in the area	The area is anticipating further employment growth which is likely to result in increasing journeys to the area. To facilitate the growth expected, it is important to encourage more sustainable journeys by improving public transport and active travel options.
	45% of residents are in employment which is the highest in the Borough	With a significant proportion of residents in employment, cycling and walking are ideal forms of travel for those that travel a short distance to work. With a significant proportion of residents in employment, it is important to manage peak demands on the network through encouraging mass transit and active travel.  Travelling to work by cycling and walking also has the potential to meet recommended physical activity levels.
	Residents travel an average of 14km to get to work	Whilst average journeys are likely to be too long for cycling or walking, multi modal journeys e.g. walking and bus are an ideal way to travel by a more sustainable and active form of travel.



## 2.3. Growth on the Existing Network

As outlined in Solihull Connected, in total, assuming HS2 is completed, there could be as many as 32,000 more jobs and 8,000 new households in the Borough over the next 20 years or so; which will represent a 30% and 9% increase on today. These are significant numbers which present both opportunities and challenges for us all.

This level of growth will bring challenges to our transport system. For example, we estimate that Solihull residents alone currently generate around 572,000 daily trips by all modes, this could rise to 675,000 within 20 years with the increase in households. In addition, we know from the 2011 census that there are around 50,000 people who come into the Borough each day to work, representing approximately 50% of our jobs being taken up by people travelling in from elsewhere. In addition, around 60% of Solihull commuters travel out of the Borough for work each day.

If the current patterns continue then in 20 years there could be as many as 120,000 people travelling in and out of the Borough each day for work, making 240,000 trips; of which 164,000 will be by car. Across the Borough, our roads already experience congestion, given an increased focus on carbon reduction and a lack of physical space on the road network, increasing active travel is imperative. The focus in the future will be the movement of people rather than the movement of motorised vehicles.

## 2.4. Cycling and Walking within Solihull

To understand the role of cycling and walking within Solihull, it is important to understand the strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats (SWOT) relating to active travel within the borough

### Strengths

- Number of local parks in close proximity to residential areas
- Significant proportion of short distance journeys
- High level of bike ownership
- Highest walking mode share in the West Midlands
- Close proximity of Solihull Railway Station to Town Centre
- Increasing political and local support for active travel

### Weaknesses

- Major highway infrastructure without cycling and walking provision
- High car mode share across journey purposes
- Limited cycle infrastructure
- Pedestrian severance issues on approach to town centre
- Low cycle mode share, below national average

### Opportunities

- Active travel moving up the national political agenda
- Development of Solihull LCWIP
- The development of E Bikes
- Maximising on Wildlife Ways Programme
- West Midlands Bike Share scheme
- Linking to new West Midlands cycle infrastructure
- Solihull Railway Station redevelopment

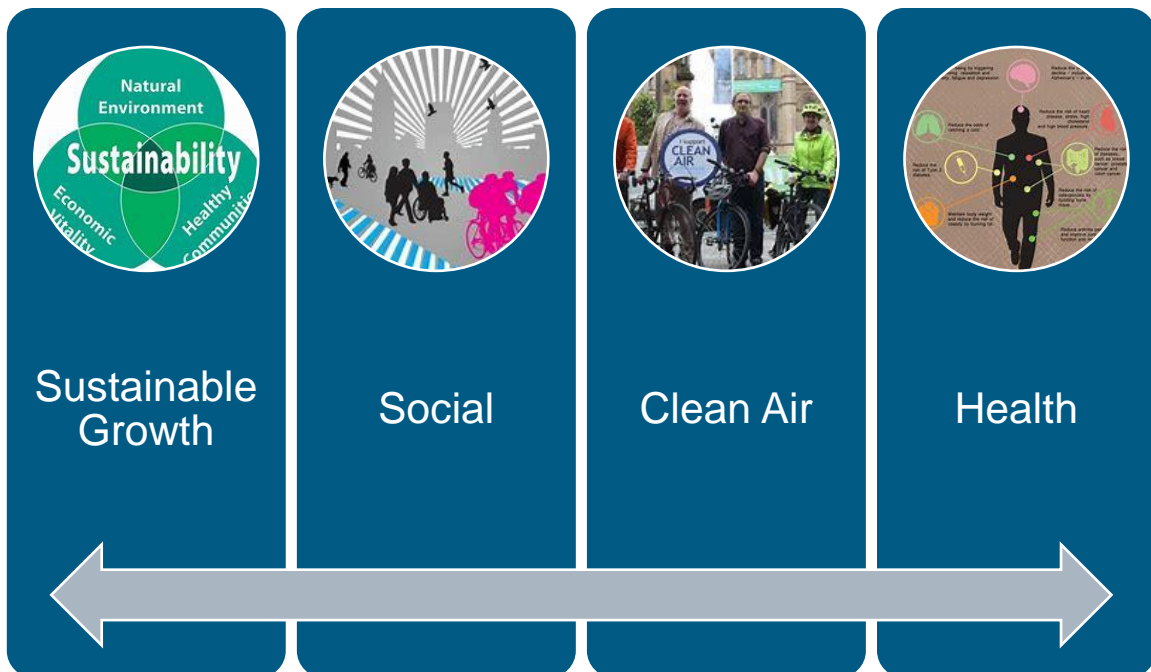
### Threats

- New road infrastructure deters cycling and walking journeys
- Change of transport priorities in the borough
- Lack of government and local level funding
- Lack of stakeholder support for LCWIP schemes
- Lack of public support for LCWIP schemes

### 3. Benefits of Cycling and Walking in Solihull

Cycling and walking for all journey purposes, can provide significant benefits to the health of our community and improve the environment that we live in. Both cycling and walking are healthy, non-polluting and space efficient forms of travelling. In the right environment, both forms of active travel can be the most convenient and pleasant ways to travel for short to medium distance journeys. As we embark on a period of substantial growth in the borough, it is important that we utilise the benefits of cycling and walking to ensure we can achieve sustainable growth.

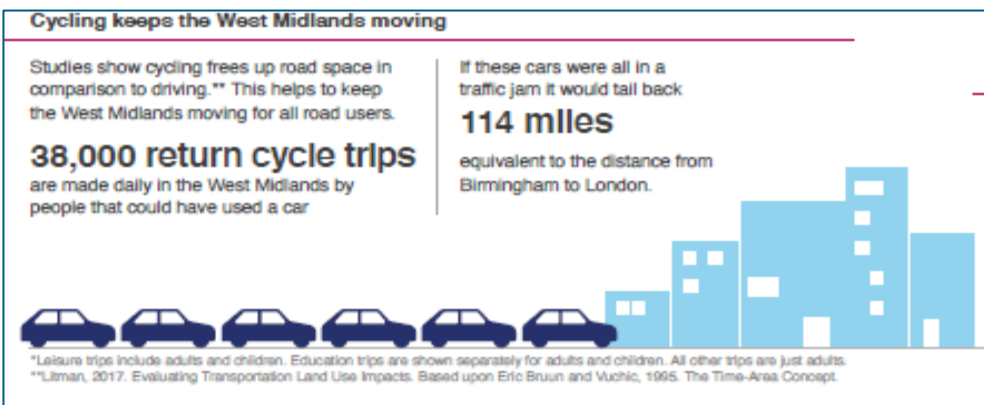
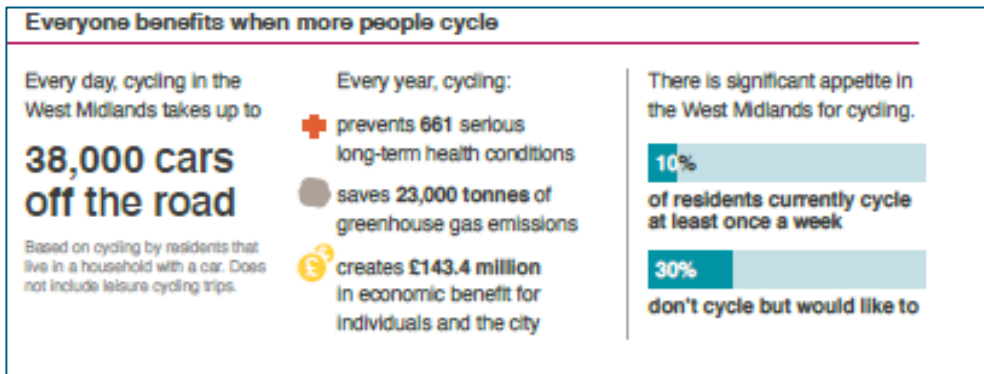
This strategy aligns closely to the objectives outlined within Solihull Connected, acknowledging the major benefits that cycling and walking can provide to Solihull residents and visitors. The strategy seeks to deliver a sustainable and active future for our residents, ensuring we can maximise the key benefits that cycling and walking can provide, such as:



### 3.1. Cycling and Walking Benefits the West Midlands

In 2019, the Bike Life Programme gathered a wide range of information from West Midlands residents on cycling. The information gathered includes local cycling data, modelling and a representative survey of 1,554 residents. Respondents came from a wide demographic background and include those that cycle and those that don't or do so very rarely.

Some of the key benefits of cycling identified within the West Midlands Bike Life Report include:



## 3.2. Sustainable Growth

Cycling and walking offer a variety of economic benefits and can support sustainable growth by providing an alternative to motorised vehicles. Both forms of active travel provide a low cost transport solution to access a variety of services including employment, education and retail sites. In comparison to the private car, a bicycle has low running costs including low capital outlay, low maintenance and no fuel costs.

Research shows that designing cities and towns to be active can have a significant beneficial impact on the economy.<sup>2</sup> Where local authorities have made it easier to walk and cycle, residents and visitors have started to see the benefit, this includes improved access to retail sites boosting local trade, supporting and creating local jobs and reducing the demand on the NHS by improving public health.

Cycling and walking have a variety of sustainable growth and economic benefits such as:

- **Supporting sustainable growth within Solihull** - Minimising the impact of new developments through a more balanced demand across transport modes will allow for further growth opportunities. Reducing the mode share of cars will reduce traffic flows leading to improved journey reliability, giving businesses more confidence around growth opportunities in the borough
- **Supporting the creation of local jobs** - 12.7 jobs are supported or sustained per £1 million spent on active travel, more than spending on roads.<sup>3</sup>
- **Value for money** – Recent research concludes that investment in sustainable travel and cycling and walking in particular, regularly offer high to very high value for money<sup>4</sup> The assessment of the Cycle Ambition Grants programme (2013) concludes that for every £1 spent, £5-6 worth of benefits were received.
- **A healthier workforce**<sup>5</sup> - On average, cycle commuting employees take one less sick day p.a. than non-cyclists and save the UK economy almost £83m
- **A boost to the high street\*** - Although cyclists may spend less than shoppers travelling by car per trip, their total expenditure is on average greater because they tend to visit the shops more often.
- **Attractive neighbourhoods** - Neighbourhoods with cycle-friendly characteristics – low traffic volumes, walkable, close to off-road cycle paths – are more desirable or have higher property values<sup>6</sup>
- **Boost to tourism industry\*\*** - Cycle tourists on average spend more: around 9% per head per trip, or around £81 per head per trip.

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<sup>2</sup> Active Cities Report

<sup>3</sup> Sustrans – Economic benefits of active travel in Scotland

<sup>4</sup> Department for Transport – Investing in Cycling and Walking – the economic case

<sup>5</sup> \*Cycling UK – Benefits to the UK economy

<sup>6</sup> \*\*Department for Transport – The value of cycling

### 3.3. Health Benefits

Promoting active lifestyles can help us address various challenges facing the UK and locally within Solihull today. Increasing physical activity has the potential to improve the physical and mental health of the nation, reduce all-cause mortality and improve life expectancy. Leading a healthier lifestyle can be achieved through physical activity which includes everyday walking or cycling to get from A to B.

Cycling UK has developed a briefing note<sup>7</sup> outlining the health benefits of physical activity in general and of cycling in particular. Key facts presented in the briefing paper are presented below:

- Cycling to work is linked with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer, and a 46% lower risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), compared to commuting by car or public transport
- Boys aged 10-16 who cycle regularly to school are 30% more likely to meet recommended fitness levels, while girls who cycle are seven times more likely to do so.
- In England, physical inactivity causes around 37,000 preventable premature deaths p.a. amongst people aged 40-79. In 2015, there were 525 thousand admissions in NHS hospitals where obesity was recorded as a factor.
- Without action, 60% of men, 50% of women and 25% of children could be obese by 2050 in the UK, at a cost of £10 billion p.a. to the NHS.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' guidance for adults includes 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity a week; this can be achieved through daily activity such as walking and cycling to work or for leisure trips.

A report undertaken by Public Health England<sup>8</sup> assessing the impact of walking and cycling on different health outcomes found that:

- People who walk or cycle have improved metabolic health and a reduced risk of premature mortality;
- Walking and cycling reduce the risk factors for a number of diseases, including cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, some cancers, and Type II diabetes;
- Walking and cycling also have positive effects on mental health and general well-being. The mental health and neurological benefits include reduced risk of dementia, improved sleep quality, and a greater sense of wellbeing;
- In environmental terms, health benefits accrue for the general population from a reduction in pollution due to car use and a decrease in road congestion; and
- The evidence is that the health benefits of walking and cycling outweigh any potential health risks and harms – for example from injury or pollution

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<sup>7</sup> Cycling UK – Health benefits of cycling

<sup>8</sup> Public Health England - Cycling and walking for individual and population health benefits

### 3.4. Clean Air

Air pollution is a major issue across the country and it is important that as a borough, we seek to improve air quality across Solihull. Air pollution is currently damaging our environment and our health; recent research has indicated that up to 40,000 early deaths are attributable to air pollution each year in the UK and road transport is responsible for 80% of the pollution where legal limits are being broken<sup>9</sup>. Transport has a significant contribution to air pollution, it is important that we seek to travel in more sustainable modes which will support national policy to address air quality issues.

A consistent trend in the UK is that the majority of short trip journeys are undertaken by car; approximately 19% of journeys are less than 1 mile in length, a distance which can be undertaken on foot or by bike. Cars, buses, and lorries release pollutants and greenhouse gases that promote warming with motorised vehicle journeys having a major contribution to climate change. Shifting short distance journeys from motorised vehicles to cycling or walking would have a major beneficial impact on the environment.

Research undertaken by Sustrans to develop a model to determine the role of walking and cycling in solving the UK's air quality crisis found that:<sup>10</sup>

- Savings to the economy of £567m each year would be realised from improved air quality alone, by delivering and meeting the targets to double cycling and increase walking set out in the Government's Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy. It would also mean more than 8,300 premature deaths from air pollution would be prevented over ten years.
- Investing in cycling and walking would further improve air quality by mitigating the 45% of particulate matter that comes from tyre and brake wear.
- Area wide intervention model in Southampton using a figure of a 10% drop in car use found air quality benefits to all residents of £477,000 per year from a reduction in nitrogen dioxide.

### 3.5. Social

There is no surprise that exercise would bring a variety of significant health benefits for your body. Doing exercises such as cycling and brisk walking on a regular basis has the potential of boosting your energy, controlling body weight and potentially preventing a variety of diseases and illnesses. Regular exercise can also alleviate the symptoms of depression. Exercise also has the great benefit of unlocking various social benefits.

*"If exercise were a pill, it would be one of the most cost-effective drugs ever invented"*

Dr Nick Cavill, a health promotion consultant.

In today's society where we live our lives more digitally, the frequency of people having a face-to-face conversation becomes less frequent. With exercise such as cycling and walking, particularly within a social environment, there is the potential for a range of social benefits. Here are some the social benefits that you can get from exercise:

<sup>9</sup> Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (2015) Improving air quality in the UK: tackling nitrogen dioxide in our towns and cities, UK Overview Document, December 2015

<sup>10</sup> Sustrans - The role of walking and cycling in solving the UK's air quality crisis

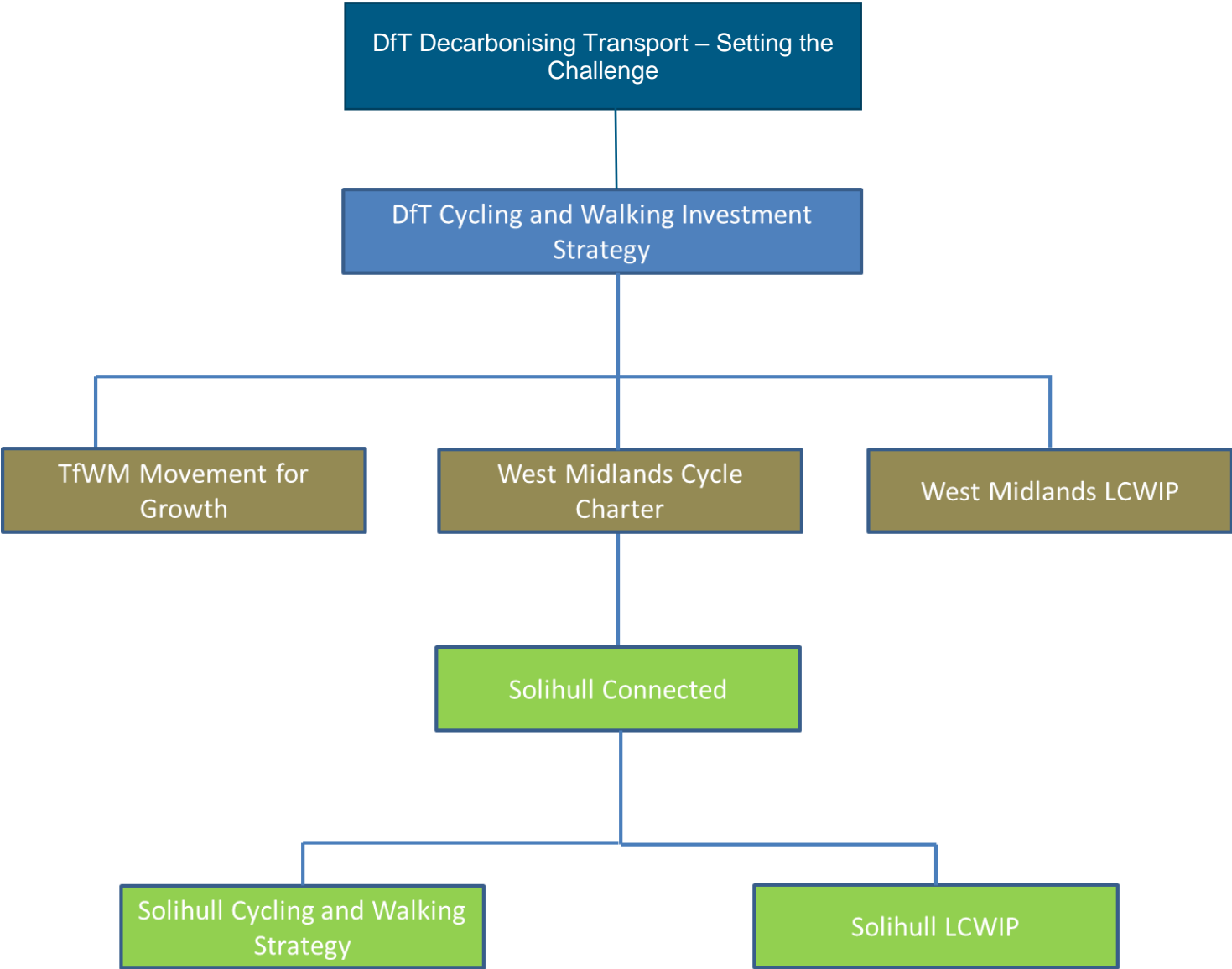
- **Make new friends** – cycling as part of a local cycling group or through organised events is an ideal opportunity to meet new people.
- **Learn how to work as part of a team or group** – cycling within a group is an ideal opportunity to test leadership skills
- **Improved sense of belonging** – Taking part in group led rides and local cycling events can make you feel part of the cycling community, building up confidence of interacting with people.
- **Learn how to respect others and work to rules** – Cycling is a great way of working and interacting with other cyclists and road users.
- **Better communication skills** – Cycling with a group is a way to improve communication skills which can be beneficial when seeking employment and education opportunities.
- **Improved dedication** – Cycling can give people dedication to get fit and to concentrate on something positive and healthy
- **Learn how to deal with frustration and anxiety** – Cycling is a positive way to deal with frustration and anxiety, physical activity is known to contribute to improving health and wellbeing.
- **Better self-esteem** – Exercise is a great way to build up confidence! Building up self-esteem can be vital in developing confidence and leading a more positive and active lifestyle.



# 4. Policy Review

## Policy Overview

At a national level, the Government's ambition is to make cycling and walking the natural choices for shorter journeys such as going to work, school and local services. To achieve such an aspiration, it is imperative that national, regional and local policies all ensure that active travel is an integral part of the current and future transport network. The policies presented below all have a key role in supporting an increase in cycling and walking journeys within England.





## 4.1. National Policy

### DfT Decarbonising Transport – Setting the Challenge

The Government through the Transport Decarbonisation Plan (TDP) is developing an ambitious plan to accelerate the decarbonisation of transport. The TDP will set out the strategy to deliver the significant emissions reduction needed across all modes of transport, putting us on a pathway to achieving carbon budgets and net zero emissions across every single mode of transport by 2050.

The TDP sets out six key strategic priorities to deliver a vision of a net zero transport system. A key strategic priority is “**Accelerating modal shift to public and active transport**” the objectives based around this strategic objective are as follows

- Help make public transport and active travel the natural first choice for daily activities
- Support fewer car trips through a coherent, convenient and cost-effective public network; and explore how we might use cars differently in future
- Encourage cycling and walking for short journeys
- Explore how to best support the behaviour change required

Cycling and walking are key modes of transport in the overall success of the TDP. Active travel is the ultimate form of zero GHG emission transport. To accelerate mode shift from the car, the government acknowledges that the public must be able to rely on a convenient, cost-effective and coherent public transport network. For those able to do so, the Government would like cycling and walking to be the easy and obvious choice for short journeys.

The government acknowledges the need to further invest in cycling and walking to support the objectives set within the Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy and therefore, will create a long-term programme and budget that dramatically increases investment in cycling and walking. Final decisions on future funding for cycling and walking over this Parliament (to 2025) will be made as part of the Spending Review, expected later this year.

Solihull MBC is encouraged by the Government’s ambition to decarbonise the transport system and fully support the objective of accelerating modal shift to public and active travel. The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy will set in place local policies which will encourage cycling and walking to be the natural choice for short distance journeys. The strategy will enable more journeys by bike or on foot through a range of initiatives such as improved infrastructure and improving the confidence and skills of people who would like to cycle.

### DfT Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

In 2015, the Infrastructure Bill became an Act, meaning the Secretary of State for Transport was required by law to set out a strategy for cycling and walking infrastructure. In April 2017, the Department for Transport published the first Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS) which set the following long term vision:

*“The Government wants walking and cycling to be a normal part of everyday life, and the natural choices for shorter journeys such as going to school, college or work, travelling to the station, and for simple enjoyment. As part of our aim to build a society that works for all, we want more people to have access to safe, attractive routes for cycling and walking by 2040”.*

Short term targets for 2020 as set out in the CWIS are to:

- Increase cycling activity, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of cycle stages made;
- Increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person;
- Reduce the rate of cyclists killed or seriously injured on England's roads, measured as the number of fatalities and serious injuries per billion miles cycled; and
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school.

The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy and accompanying LCWIP will seek to support the Government's active travel ambition by increasing the number of journeys undertaken by cycling or walking. Increasing the amount of active travel journeys within the borough will be achieved through a combination of factors including improved connectivity and behavioural change programmes.

As part of Solihull LCWIP, cycle infrastructure schemes will be designed to West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance standards. Improving the standard of cycle infrastructure will seek to reduce the cycle casualty rates and reduce perceived barriers around safety. The network planning process will consider how infrastructure improvements can increase the percentage of children travelling by active modes.

## National Cycling and Walking Plan – Bold Vision for New Era

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have seen an upsurge in cycling and walking journeys. Across the country, we have seen people rekindling or finding a new passion for cycling. As we move forward in our COVID-19 recovery, the Government has acknowledged the importance of improving health and reducing obesity, active travel has a role in improving the health of the nation.

In July 2020, the National Cycling and Walking Plan was adopted. The National Plan was complimented with an updated Local Transport Note 2/08 which reinforces guidance on implementing high quality cycle infrastructure. The Prime Minister has highlighted the well-known fact that many more people would like to cycle and that conditions need to improve to enable people to do so. The Prime Minister states the following:

*"I have always known that millions more people in this country want to cycle, if the conditions are right, and the past four months have proved it. That is why this document aims to kick off the most radical change to our cities since the arrival of mass motoring. We announced in May £2 billion of new funding for cycling and walking – representing a sixfold increase in dedicated funding, the biggest increase this country has ever seen. That will pay for first hundreds, then thousands of miles of protected bike lanes, so anyone can ride safely; low-traffic neighbourhoods, to stop rat-running and make it easier to walk and cycle".*

The vision outlined in the National Plan focuses on healthier and happier communities, safer streets, convenient and accessible travel and active travel at the heart of transport decision making. The vision states:

*"England will be a great walking and cycling nation, places will be truly walkable. A travel revolution in our streets, towns and communities will have made cycling a mass form of transit. Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030".*

The principles below are closely aligned to Local Transport Note 1/20

- Cyclists must be separated from volume traffic, both at junctions and on the stretches of road between them.
- Cyclists must be separated from pedestrians.
- Cyclists must be treated as vehicles, not pedestrians.
- Routes must join together; isolated stretches of good provision are of little value.
- Routes must feel direct, logical and be intuitively understandable by all road users;
- Routes and schemes must take account of how users actually behave;
- Purely cosmetic alterations should be avoided.
- Barriers, such as chicane barriers and dismount signs, should be avoided.
- Routes should be designed only by those who have experienced the road on a cycle.

Solihull MBC fully support the emphasis of improved cycling and walking conditions post COVID-19. The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy will utilise the improved cycle design guidance (Local Transport Note 2/08) and design principles to present clear policy to improve cycle and walking provision across the borough.

Evidence from the UK and abroad is clear. Physically segregated bike tracks on main roads, including at junctions, are the most important thing we can do to promote cycle use. This has been identified within local consultation undertaken as part of this strategy. Segregated cycle lanes give people the confidence to cycle and dramatically increase the numbers of people cycling.

As outlined within the National Cycling and Walking Plan, at a national level, we want – and need – to see a step-change in cycling and walking in the coming years. The challenge is huge across the country, but the ambition is clear. We have a unique opportunity to transform the role cycling and walking can play in our transport system, and get the borough moving differently.

## 4.2. Regional Policy

### TfWM Movement for Growth Strategy

The strategic transport plan (STP) for the West Midlands sets out the long-term approach to ensure sufficient transportation improvements are made to support sustainable economic growth. Across the West Midlands, travel demand is forecast to grow by 22% over the next 20 years due to increased population and higher employment levels.

Research undertaken as part of the STP has shown that adding significant new highway capacity in congested urban areas can lead to issues around poor connectivity and severance issues for local communities. Increased traffic volumes resulting in congestion further raises concerns around road safety and air quality. The STP preferred approach is for an integrated transport network which includes the following:

- More effective use of existing capacity with smarter choice initiatives supporting capital improvements
- New transport capacity to meet new travel demand – based on additional public transport services, cycle infrastructure and key walking routes
- Better walking conditions

- Better cycling, including a high quality cycle network
- A metropolitan area parking policy co-ordinated with improvements to sustainable modes of transport

The Movement for Growth Strategy outlines that a new Metropolitan Cycle Network will be developed to serve main flow corridors and to raise the profile of cycling in the West Midlands. This key objective has been developed through the West Midlands LCWIP. In relation to cycling and walking, the strategy states that the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will:

*“Ensure that walking and cycling are a safe and attractive option for many journeys especially short journeys, by delivering a strategic cycle network and enhancing local conditions for active travel”.*

The Solihull Cycling Strategy and LCWIP acknowledge the need for cycling and walking as transport modes to be safe and attractive options for all journey purposes. It is imperative that both forms of active travel have a more positive public perception as modes of travel if we're to achieve a mode shift from the car.

The Solihull LCWIP aims to make effective use of existing capacity and highway space through high quality cycle infrastructure in combination with smarter choice initiatives which will be developed through engagement with the public. The cycle and walking network to be developed as part of Solihull LCWIP will help to cater for future travel demand in Solihull by increasing options to travel by sustainable modes of travel.

## West Midlands Cycle Charter

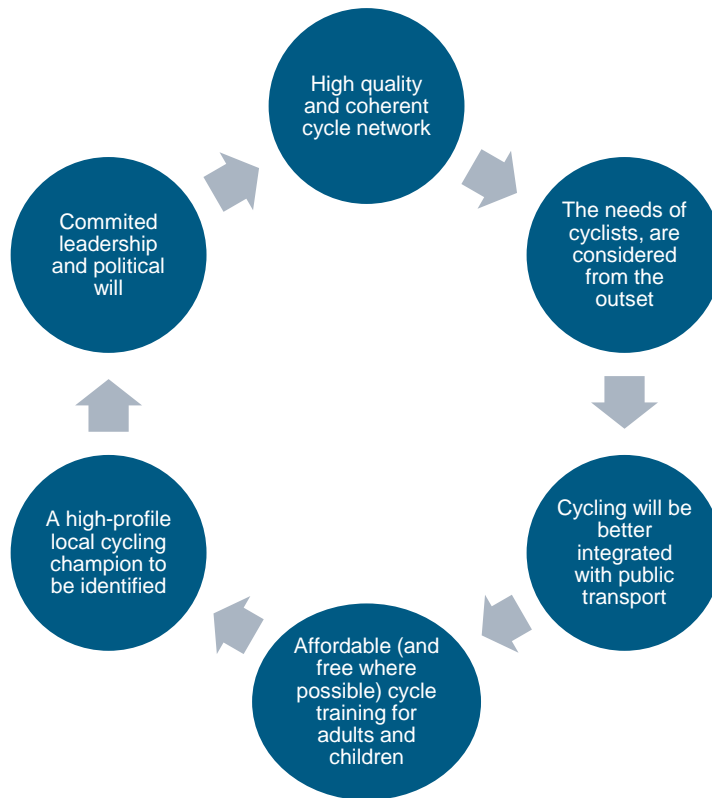
As outlined within the West Midlands Cycle Charter, the regions cycling levels are significantly lower than those of many other metropolitan areas and core cities across the UK. The success other areas have had is based around a clear aim and overall vision for cycling, combined with a range of cycle infrastructure programmes such as the DfT Cycle City Ambition Programme.

The vision for Cycling in the West Midlands is to:

*“Realise the full potential of cycling’s contribution to the health and wealth of the West Midlands – creating more sustainable suburbs, towns and cities that are healthier, safer and more desirable places to live, work and learn. Addressing the safety concerns of existing and potential cyclists has been fundamental to increasing cycling everywhere”*

The Cycle Charter has set an ambitious but achievable aim to raise levels of cycling across the West Midlands Metropolitan area to 5% of all trips by 2023. This represents a 400% increase in cycling journeys from the 1% baseline. If the region can achieve a 5% mode share for cycling across the West Midlands, it will help to change the perception that cycling is a marginal transport option to a mode of transport that is safe, convenient and attractive for all journey purposes

The charter outlines a number of key principles that all partners (including Solihull MBC) will adopt to deliver the required step change in cycling across the West Midlands Metropolitan area. A number of key principles which will be supported through the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy are presented below:



## West Midlands Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

The West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) was undertaken in 2018 to identify and develop the Strategic Cycle Network proposed as part of the Movement for Growth Strategy. The LCWIP process is a key component of the CWIS. Through producing an LCWIP, the West Midlands has an opportunity to develop a long term approach (e.g. ten year plans) to provide improved cycling and walking provision at a local level. The objectives of the West Midlands LCWIP are presented below:

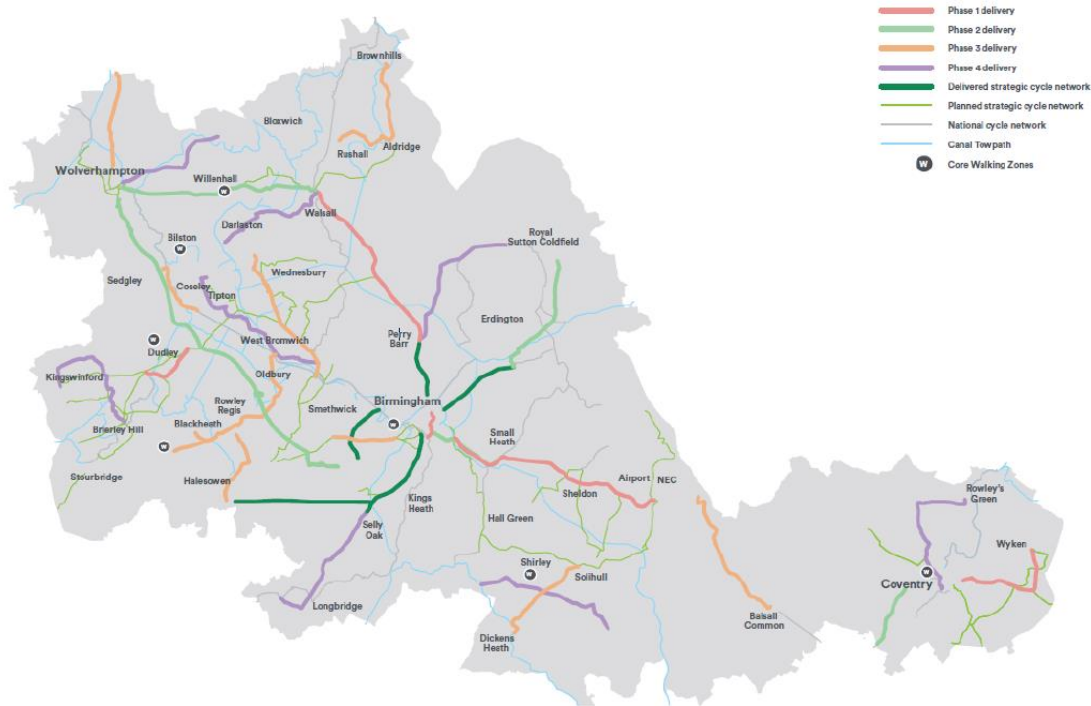
- Inform the implementation plan for the Strategic Cycle Network
- Identify the local network within each local authority with a prioritised plan for delivery
- Coordinate the plans across the local authorities to ensure a consistent and aligned approach to delivery
- Integrate these plans into a clear series of planning and transport policies, strategies and delivery plans in the West Midlands
- Training on effective use of the Propensity to Cycle Tool (PCT) Cycling Route Selection Tool, Walking Route Audit Tool to continue to develop and update the LCWIP

To build on the existing activity and achieve the necessary step change for cycling and walking, the LCWIP sets out to identify the key cycling routes and pedestrian zones where investment would provide benefit to the people living, visiting and working in the region, providing:

- Improved access to safer infrastructure providing attractive routes for short journeys;
- Links to key destinations and event sites that can be enjoyed by everyone;

- Opportunities to combine cycling and walking with public transport for longer journeys;
- Routes predominantly used for leisure journeys such as green routes or the canal towpaths;
- Alternatives to the car which in turn will increase levels of physical activity as well as improve air quality and reduce congestion; and
- Safer infrastructure that is accessible by all including anyone new to cycling, children and people of all abilities.

The following map summarises the prioritised routes in the West Midlands Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan



The following four routes in Solihull have been prioritised as part of the West Midlands Strategic Cycle Network

- A45 Birmingham to Solihull (Birmingham Airport/NEC)
- B4102 Dickens Heath to Solihull town centre
- Balsall Common to Stonebridge via A452
- Shirley to Bentley Heath

It is recommended that future investment in cycling is focused on the priority routes of the LCWIP using a multimodal, holistic approach. With the LCWIP, the West Midlands now has the opportunity to demonstrate ambition which matches other UK regions and cities (such as London and Manchester) to deliver exemplar schemes.

As part of the LCWIP process, seven Core Walking Zones (CWZ) were assessed and audited. The aims of the CWZs were to identify current conditions for pedestrians in key localities across the West Midlands and potential opportunities to improve the overall pedestrian environment. Shirley High Street through discussions with Solihull MBC was identified as the Solihull CWZ. It is recommended as part of West Midlands LCWIP, results of the CWZ audits be used to inform a



common approach across the region to deliver exemplary public realm and healthy streets to improve walking and accessibility.

## 4.3. Local Policy

### Solihull Connected

Solihull Connected is the Transport strategy for Solihull MBC. The strategy sets out our vision for:

- Delivering transport infrastructure and initiatives in the future
- How we will accommodate growth in travel demand on our network and;
- How we will seek to maintain Solihull's character.

Solihull Connected links directly with our plans for economic growth set out by our Council Managed Growth priorities and promoted by UK Central. To accompany Solihull Connected, a delivery plan has been developed. The delivery plan sets out a prioritised list of schemes and initiatives which will support the Solihull Connected objectives which are presented below:



#### Objective 1

Ensure that major transport investment enables and manages growth to achieve the Council priorities for homes and jobs.



#### Objective 2

Support and enable the integrated delivery of sustainable and efficient forms of transport like mass-transit, cycling and walking.



#### Objective 3

Contribute to the council priorities to support people's everyday lives and improve health and wellbeing through the promotion of smarter choices programmes linked to major and local infrastructure investment.



#### Objective 4

Identify a prioritised short, medium and long-term delivery plan to achieve the overarching vision and objectives whilst recognising the specific needs of the different parts of the Borough.



#### Objective 5

Ensure that the objectives of Solihull Connected are embedded in Local Plan and Health and Wellbeing policies to support walking, cycling and public transport use.

Solihull Connected has been developed to ensure the borough has a long term strategic vision in place to respond to the challenges and opportunities that HS2 and other major growth projects will create. Over the next 20 years, the Borough has ambitious growth plans as in Chapter 2. It is imperative that an efficient and sustainable transport network is facilitated to facilitate such growth plans

The existing road network across Solihull will largely be the same in the future therefore, it is imperative that the existing road space is managed efficiently, seeking alternatives to the car to provide a more sustainable transport system. Ensuring we provide high quality alternatives to the car will reduce the impact of growth on the local network and reduce the likelihood of traffic congestion worsening across the borough.

The aim of the Cycling and Walking Strategy (and accompanying Solihull LCWIP) is to provide the strategic approach to developing a high quality cycling and walking network. It is important to acknowledge that infrastructure alone will not create a mode shift to active travel therefore, the strategy and LCWIP will ensure the role of promotion and enabling activities are developed alongside infrastructure schemes.

# 5. Active Travel – Public Perception

## 5.1. Solihull Connected Consultation

Over the summer of 2015, we consulted stakeholders and residents on the Solihull Connected Green Paper. The public consultation was undertaken to understand the key transport issues that residents face as well as to identify an overall vision for transport moving forward in Solihull

In regard to cycling and walking a number of interesting findings were identified

- 80% of stakeholders strongly agreed/agreed that a strategic cycle network focused on providing safe facilities for cyclists is required
- The consultation identified various physical and emotional barriers to walking and cycling.
- Residents are particularly concerned about the safety of cycling and there is felt to be a need for a comprehensive and continuous network of segregated cycle routes (with separation from traffic)
- Across the borough, facilities for cyclists at destinations (including secure parking) and well-signed and well-publicised cycle routes are required
- Respondents felt that softer measures such as adult cycle training and education are important to compliment infrastructure
- To increase levels of walking, there is felt to be a need to improve streets in local centres and residential areas to make walking more enjoyable and safer.

Other key findings from Solihull Connected included:

- Convenience is felt to be fundamental and until alternative modes are able to compete in this regard, the car will continue to be the primary mode of transport in the borough
- Low cost and availability of car parking in the town centre and at business parks is deterring more cycling and walking journeys
- Some reluctance amongst residents to acknowledge the negative impact of their own personal car use. They are frustrated by the delays caused by congestion and accept that congestion is going to increase in the future, but this is not yet sufficient a motivator for them to consider changing modes
- Stakeholders identified the need for complementary initiatives that provide residents with the information and skills they need in order to make sustainable travel choices and help realise the necessary education and cultural shift.
- There is distinct support for what Solihull Connected is trying to achieve. In terms of improving the transport system, frequency, reliability, affordability and connectivity are the most important aspects.
- **To achieve modal shift, the challenge is to demonstrate that sustainable travel can be cheaper, quicker and more convenient than using the car.**



## 5.2. Cycling and Walking Solihull Survey

Between February – March 2020 as part of developing this strategy, public engagement activities were undertaken across the borough including an online survey. The purpose of public engagement was to:

- Gather feedback on the draft Cycling and Walking Strategy, ensuring our active travel policies align with the aspirations of our residents
- Understand major barriers for cycling and walking
- Identify key corridors in the borough for investment
- Gather feedback on the draft Solihull Cycling Primary Network as outlined within the Solihull LCWIP
- Gather feedback on the type of cycling provision preferred in Solihull

A total of 286 respondents took part in the online survey with key findings presented below:

### General Travel Behaviour

- 64% of respondents currently cycle
- 85% have access to a bicycle
- 97% have access to a car
- 70% use the car as their main mode of travel during the week
- 30% use the bicycle as their main mode of travel during the weekend
- 29% walk as their main mode of travel during the weekend

### Cycling Travel Trends

- Of those respondents that cycle, the highest percentage cycle once/twice a week (36%)
- Of those that cycle
  - 90% undertake leisure journeys
  - 34% commute to work
  - 18% undertake journeys for retail and shopping
- When respondents were asked what prevents them from cycling or cycling for more journeys, the following factors were cited (respondents were invited to tick more than one reason)
  - Lack of dedicated cycle infrastructure – 69%
  - Climate – 28%
  - Safety issues (fear of traffic, injury) – 60%
  - Vandalism – 17%
  - Lack of cycling facilities at end destination – 25%
  - Lack of information (including signage) – 12%
  - Lack of time – 12%
- When asked what would encourage respondents to cycle more, the top three incentives were:
  - More segregated cycle lanes – 74%

- Well maintained cycle lanes including surfacing and signage – 72%
- Improved safety including protection at key junctions – 69%

## Walking Travel Trends

- 38% of respondents walk for more than 20 minutes instead of using another mode of transport
- Leisure was the most popular reason for walking (63%) followed by shopping (44%). Commuters travelling on foot was 16%.
- Better walking infrastructure was the most popular incentive to get people walking more often (41%) this includes direct links and wider paths.

## Potential Actions for SMBC

- 76% of respondents feel that Solihull Town Centre and other High Streets should have better cycling and walking provision
- 94% of respondents support the prioritisation of linking residential and employment areas by cycling and walking provision
- 86% of respondents would like to see more designated cycle infrastructure
- 61% of respondents would support shared use (cyclists and pedestrians) if road space is limited
- 69% of respondents would like to see rural connectivity improved for those that cycle and/or walk
- Of the strategic corridors identified within the LCWIP, the top three identified in the online survey were:
  - Dickens Heath to Solihull Town Centre
  - Knowle to Solihull Town Centre
  - Blythe Valley/Monkspath to Solihull Town Centre

## 5.3. West Midlands COVID-19 Travel Survey

In April/May 2020, Transport for West Midlands developed a travel survey to understand how the regions travel patterns and behaviours had changed since COVID-19. The survey also gathered the public views on how transport should change in the future including their own travel behaviours. Over 6,000 respondents took part and the key findings are summarised below.

- 67% of respondents do not have access to a bike, 68% have a driving license
- Since COVID-19, 13% of respondents have walked more and 11% have cycled more
- 39% will work from home more post COVID-19
- 36% will use public transport less
- 47% will walk more following COVID-19
- 17% will cycle more following COVID-19

- 81% of respondents want to see cleaner air in the future, 75% want reduced traffic on roads/reduced car use and 65% of respondents want to be healthier/exercise more.

## 5.4. Busting Myths around Cycling!

Research carried out by Sustrans <sup>11</sup>on behalf of the Department for Transport (DfT) identified a set of common myths about cycling and car infrastructure. The below figure presents the myths identified and supports our aim to invest in more cycling and walking infrastructure. It is important to note that the below evidence is not anti-car, but a robust evidence base to demonstrate the importance of active travel

### Myth 1 – There is no public support for cycle infrastructure

#### Evidence

The Bike Life Surveys undertaken by Sustrans has identified that:

- 75% of people would like to see more money spent on cycling in their city.
- The types of infrastructure people would find most useful are segregated on-road tracks (64%) and traffic free cycling routes (60%).
- No study showing that the public do not support investment in cycling infrastructure has been found.

### Myth 2 - Road space reallocation to bicycles will bring urban areas to a grinding halt

#### Evidence

Academic research has identified that:

- A three-metre wide lane can move 700 to 1,100 people per hour in cars, whereas for bicycles and walking this increases to 2000 to 6,500.
- Two weeks after opening, cycle superhighway corridors in London were moving 5% more people per hour than they could without cycle lanes

### Myth 3 - Removing car parking spaces will harm the local economy

#### Evidence

Academic research has identified that:

- Retailers overestimate how many of their customers travel by car by a factor of 100%.
- Per square metre, cycle parking delivers five-times higher retail spend than the same area of car parking
- Converting car parking spaces to seating and planting to improve ‘place’ impact can contribute to regeneration and improvement in retail performance. Removal of car parking spaces from a shopping street in Seattle was followed by a 400% increase in retail sales

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/our-blog/research/all-themes/all/common-misconceptions-about-active-travel-investment/>

#### **Myth 4 - Our streets are too narrow to accommodate cycle lanes**

##### **Evidence**

Academic research has identified that:

- Many streets can accommodate high quality cycling infrastructure by changing the layout of the road including removing car parking or making streets one-way to motorised traffic.
- On narrow streets, reducing traffic volume and speed can mean no special infrastructure is required.

#### **Myth 5 - People don't support road space reallocation to bicycles**

##### **Evidence**

The Bike Life Survey has identified that:

- 78% of residents in UK cities support building more protected roadside cycle lanes, even when this could mean less space for other road traffic.
- Of those surveyed who do not ride a bike, 74% were in support of protected road space.
- The results show that it is not only people who ride bikes that would like the segregated infrastructure.

# 6. Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy

## 6.1. Cycling and Walking Vision

*“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”*

## 6.2. Objectives

In order for our cycling and walking vision to be realised in the borough, we have identified a range of objectives. The objectives presented below will be achieved through the policies set out in the 5 key themes (further detail found in Chapter 7). The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy objectives are as follows:

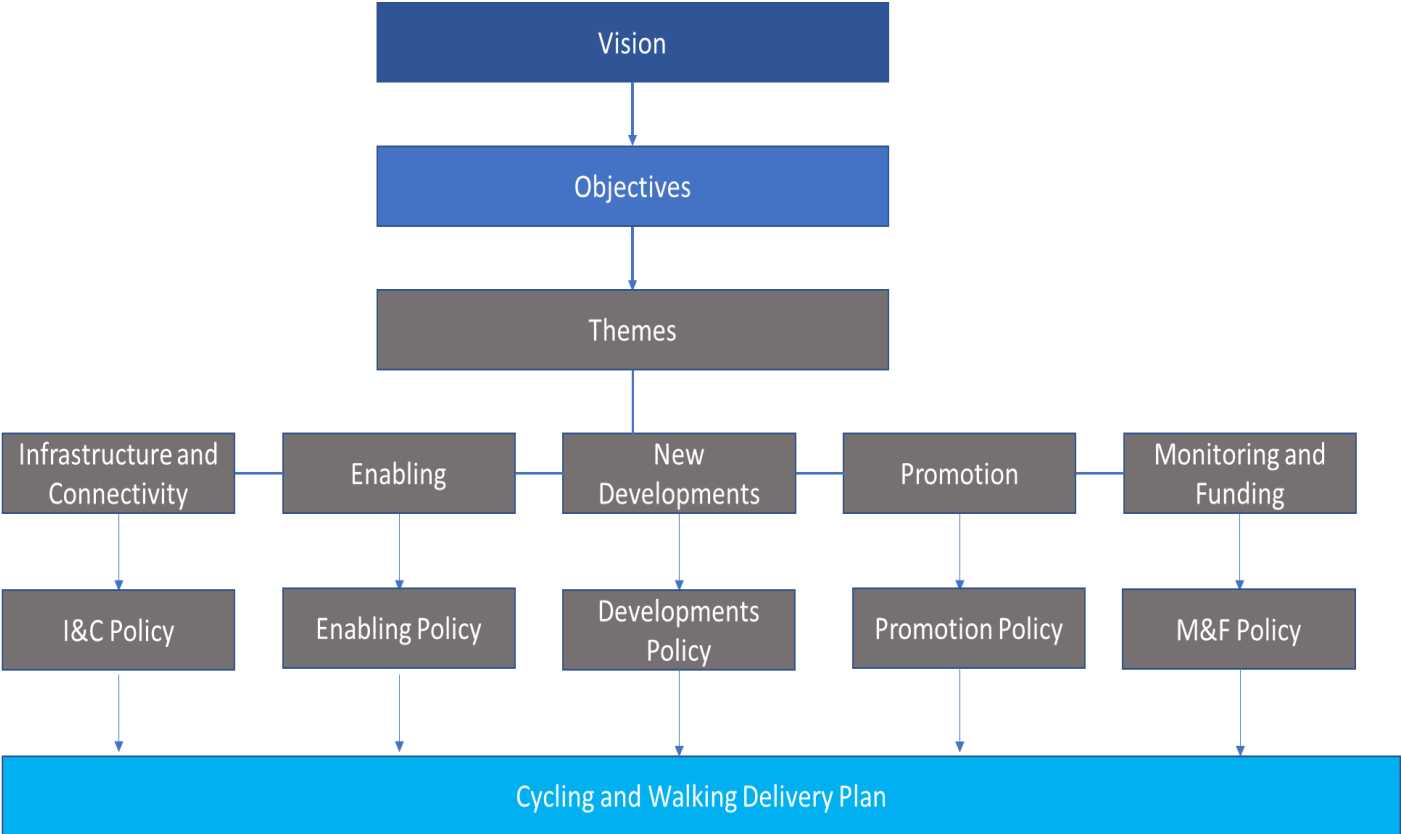
- Increase the number of people cycling and walking in Solihull; contributing towards the national target of 50% of short distance journeys undertaken by cycling and walking within the town centre
- Improve the provision of cycling and walking infrastructure, increasing the number of segregated cycle routes, making active travel more convenient for short distance journeys thus supporting the local economy;
- Improve cycling capability throughout the borough by providing cycle training and initiatives; including Bikeability for children across the borough;
- Make cycling and walking ‘the norm’ through a major campaign and targeted promotion, particularly working with local schools, to educate and raise awareness of the benefits and opportunities for walking and cycling locally; and
- New developments to include high quality cycle and walking infrastructure and facilities.
- Increase leisure journeys through improved cycling and walking provision connecting to green spaces and targeted programmes to encourage physical activity.

## 6.3. Delivery Plan – From Vision to Action

It will be imperative that we develop a delivery plan to help achieve our objectives. A number of cycling and walking themes have been developed (further detail to follow) which sets out a range of key policies which have influenced the delivery plan. The delivery plan is presented within Chapter 8 and covers short to long term projects setting out quick win to aspirational projects which we will seek to deliver. The plan presents projects that already have funding, which are currently being delivered and those where we will seek funding in the coming years.

The figure below presents the framework for how the strategies vision and objectives will be achieved. As shown below, policies have been developed across five key themes which cover a broad spectrum of cycling and walking activities. The policies have been developed to help achieve the objectives of the strategy. The delivery plan sets out the specific interventions to be delivered as part of the strategy.

**Cycling and Walking Strategy Framework**

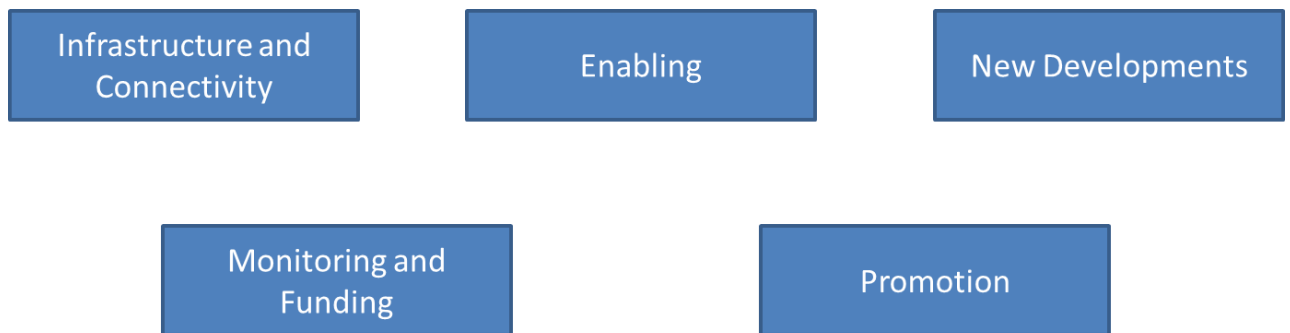


# 7. Themes

The Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy sets out five key themes to help shape the future direction of cycling and walking in the borough. The themes are underpinned by key programmes and initiatives which will be delivered across Solihull over the coming years. These themes have been identified:

- In recognition of the wide variety of topics and projects relating to cycling and walking in the borough
- To support the overall Cycling and Walking Strategy vision
- To acknowledge the need to improve cycling and walking infrastructure with safety at its core
- Tackle the challenges faced by a lack of confidence, opportunity and/or ability to cycle:
- Maximise on new development opportunities:
- Ensure funding opportunities are capitalised upon; and
- To better promote cycling and walking across Solihull

The Solihull Cycling and Walking themes are presented below



There are many links between the themes outlined above. It is imperative that a coordinated investment programme is implemented to ensure that walking and cycling in Solihull are seen as attractive travel and leisure options, particularly for shorter journeys. A coordinated approach will maximise on investment, particularly through the promotion of new infrastructure, including engaging with the local community. Examples of our coordinated approach across the themes include

- Developing behavioural change programmes as part of new cycling and walking infrastructure schemes
- Ensure that all new cycling infrastructure has a monitoring programme to develop evidence base for benefits of new infrastructure and;
- All new behavioural change programmes (as part of enabling theme) have a coordinated package of promotional activities.

## 7.1. Infrastructure and Connectivity

### 7.1.1. Background

To encourage more people to cycle and walk within Solihull, it is imperative that high quality cycling and walking provision is provided to enable more people to travel by bike or on foot. Currently, the cycling network within Solihull is made up of a variety of shared use paths and on carriageway advisory cycle lanes, moving forward we will look to provide dedicated provision for people who choose to cycle. The walking environment in Solihull is generally pleasant however, we will explore opportunities to improve the pedestrian experience, particularly within the town centre and links to Solihull Railway Station.

As part of this strategy, infrastructure and connectivity is a core element in seeking a significant shift of car journeys to active travel. As seen in various major research commissions, safety is a major barrier to people cycling (or cycling more often) it is therefore vital that we set high standards for cycling infrastructure. In terms of walking, we will seek to reduce severance issues and ensure that the walking environment is pleasant and convenient.

The importance of high quality infrastructure is highlighted within the DfT Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy research<sup>12</sup>, which finds that

*“Off-road or traffic free cycle routes have an important role in changing attitudes of non-cyclists. Other strongly preferred routes include those with substantial physical separation along roads (e.g. with hedge or kerb separation), and on very quiet streets with little or no motor traffic. Evidence on differences by age and gender suggest under-represented groups have particularly strong preferences for separation from motor traffic”*

Ensuring we connect our major trip attractors to where people live is vital to our vision for cycling and walking in Solihull. As we move forward as a borough, we will seek to provide high quality infrastructure to all major destinations such as the town centre and major employment areas across the borough. We will also explore opportunities to connect rural communities and better links from villages to our urban centres.

### 7.1.2. Infrastructure and Connectivity Policy

**I & C Policy 1** - We will develop a high quality cycling network which ensures cycling is a convenient mode of travel

To achieve our cycling and walking vision, the development of a high quality cycling network is imperative. We will need to consider new cycle infrastructure as well as improving the existing network including enhancing existing provision to meet updated Local Transport Note 2/08 and West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance. The maintenance of the existing network is something we will explore as part of this strategy.

The Solihull Cycling Network will consist of the following three key elements:

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<sup>12</sup> Department for Transport - Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy Investment Inputs, Outputs and Outcomes



- **Solihull Strategic Corridors** – Largely made up of radial routes serving Solihull Town Centre and key district centres. Strategic corridors will also serve major local destinations. Strategic corridors are identified within the Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- **Solihull Local Routes** – Local access routes serving residential, education, leisure and employment areas generally not on major highways. These routes will provide the user with a quieter route free from high traffic volumes.
- **Solihull Green Corridors** - These are routes that are free from traffic including the use of canals and parks in the borough. Green corridors are perfect for leisure journeys but can also provide a pleasant commuter experience. The Wildlife Ways Programme currently underway is a perfect example of Green Corridors being improved for the benefit of people choosing to walk or cycle.

In conjunction with the Solihull Cycling Network and improvements to the pedestrian environment, 20mph zones will be considered as part of an updated Solihull Connected.

**I & C Policy 2** - Cycle infrastructure schemes will meet National Cycling Standards set out within Local Transport Note 1/20 (where viable)

It will be important that cycle infrastructure delivered in Solihull meets the standards set out within the Local Transport Note 1/20 and any local specific requirements set out within the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance where possible. Cycle routes will be designed and assessed against the cycle design principles outlined within the recently adopted National Cycling and Walking Plan (set out within Section 4.1)

At times where space is limited, it will not be feasible to meet the highest standards of cycle infrastructure therefore, it will be important to ensure key principles of cycle infrastructure are still met. We are committed to providing the highest standard of cycle infrastructure possible in the available space. The Solihull Cycling Network will follow the five key principles:

- **Safety** – All cycle routes within the network will be designed with safety as the most important design principle. Routes should be safe to use and should feel safe for all users, particularly those who are new to cycling or with little experience. On Strategic corridors, local and town centres, cyclists will be segregated from motor vehicles. Solihull Green Corridors will be designed to offer good visibility for users and personal security will be considered as part of the design process.
- **Directness** – We will seek to design routes which connect origin (where people travel from) and destination (where people travel to) using the least distance and least delay as possible.
- **Coherence** – We will design routes to a consistent standard. The network will comprise of different types of routes, but the aim will be to provide continuous provision, with no 'gaps' at difficult locations. We will provide signage along routes to make sure the network is easy to use.
- **Attractiveness** – Cycle routes will be designed to make them attractive options for potential users. We will do this by designing for all abilities, allowing for adequate width, reducing conflict with motorised vehicles, incorporating green space and reducing noise where feasible.

- **Comfort** - Routes will be designed to be physically comfortable, with a high quality surface key to the overall design of cycle routes. Routes will be made comfort by providing clarity at junctions, protection from opposing traffic movements, separation where possible from pedestrians and clearing street furniture where required.

**I & C Policy 3** - Improve the walkability of Solihull, providing pedestrians with increasing priority on the network and improving the public realm.

Moving forward as a borough, it is important that we increase our emphasis on designing around people not cars. Designing Solihull Town Centre and districts around people will lead to a healthier population and less congestion in Solihull, creating a more pleasant environment and supporting our Clean Air Strategy.

As part of the Cycling and Walking Strategy, we will base upcoming transport infrastructure around the following principles when improving the pedestrian environment

- Making walking a priority
- Ensure the pedestrian environment is accessible for all
- Ensure the pedestrian network is well connected with safe crossings
- Design streets as places to enjoy

Moving forward we want Solihull to be a walking borough, one is that is healthier, more economically successful, greener and a greater sense of community. To achieve this, we will consider the below tasks during the 15 year time frame of the strategy (to coincide with the duration of the Local Plan). It will be important that our transport schemes are integrated to ensure that cycling and walking are considered as part of all transport schemes regardless of scale, location and scope.

- Make walking for short journeys a central theme of transport, planning, health and clean air strategies to encourage complementary policies and actions;
- Collect quantitative and qualitative data about walking and the pedestrian experience to measure success and inform future improvements;
- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport in urban planning with specific reference to Active Design guidance;
- Build, improve and maintain a high-quality network of direct, safe and inviting walking routes;
- Work with communities to understand key walking destinations and local barriers to walking including a review of the role of residential parking;
- Seek to avoid conflict between people walking and cycling through the design process;
- The potential for area-wide default 20mph speed limits to create low speed neighbourhoods;
- Make it easier for people to apply for temporary street closure, 'play streets', active streets; and
- Reduce severance on the network including safe crossing points and reduced waiting times

**I & C Policy 4** – We will prioritise active travel investment in routes and locations with key employment and education sites.

As part of the Solihull Cycling Network, we will prioritise corridors which link major residential sites to employment and education sites. We will also prioritise investment based on:

- **High levels of cycling demand** – we will identify where people are currently cycling but also determine where people are likely to travel in the future based on our local plan. potential);
- **Clusters of cyclist collisions/ casualties** – Any locations where a cluster of cycle collisions have occurred will be analysed and potentially taken forward as a priority intervention as part of the cycle network;
- **Poor air quality** – As part of developing the cycling network, we will analyse air quality issues and the potential role of active travel in supporting our Clean Air Strategy. Corridors identified to have air quality issues
- **Inadequate facilities and poor connections to key destinations** – As part of developing the cycle network, we will identify key destinations such as growth sites, local centres, education sites, large employers and public transport hubs. We will audit links to such key destinations, those determined to have poor connectivity will be put forward for priority consideration as part of the cycle network development.

As part of the strategy, it will be imperative to improve the pedestrian environment across the borough. We will prioritise pedestrian improvements in high footfall areas including key transport interchanges, Solihull town centre and local districts. As part of the pedestrian network, we will undertake a review of pedestrian access to local schools and major employment zones, identifying key severance issues and potential interventions.

**I & C Policy 5** - Cycling and walking will be accessible for all.

Moving forward, it is important that our cycling network and the pedestrian environment is clearly accessible for all users, regardless of ability and/or confidence. A key focus will be to improve access to services for our more deprived communities. This will ensure that everyone has good access to health, social and education facilities. We will also seek to ensure that new cycling and walking provision caters for improved access to employment opportunities.

The introduction of E-Bikes is a great opportunity for people who are unable to travel by a manual bike to travel by a clean form of travel. Around half of e-bike trips replace trips that would otherwise be made by car. <sup>13</sup>E-bikes are used for longer journeys than conventional bikes, and they have broader appeal, including to older people, women and those who are less active. E-bikes make up 10-30% of all bike sales in Austria, Belgium, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden – but less than 3% of bike sales in the UK. As a council we will explore opportunities to maximise on the potential of E-bikes to shift journeys from the car. E-bikes are a great opportunity to connect our

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<sup>13</sup> Effects of e-bikes on bicycle use and mode share – Researchgate.net

rural areas to urban centres including the town centre, E-bikes increase the potential of medium to long distance journeys being undertaken by cycling.

As we look to develop the Cycling Network and pedestrian environment within Solihull, we will engage with the local public, hard to reach groups and wider stakeholders to discuss improving access for all. We will also work with disability groups where possible and follow the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance to cater for users with disabilities. All new developments are expected to be audited to ensure that the needs of all pedestrians, especially people with mobility impairments will be met.

## 7.2. Enabling

### 7.2.1. Background

The SMBC Sustainable Travel Team's purpose is to 'increase sustainable modes of travel, decrease dependency on the car and improve the environment'. This in turn supports the implementation of the priorities of the Solihull Borough Council Plan 2020-2025 which are:

- Building a vibrant economy
- Promoting and delivering social value
- Enabling communities to thrive
- Actioning our climate change declaration
- Improving skills and access to good work

The vision for the team is to 'actively promote and encourage sustainable travel to ensure everyone has an equal opportunity to be healthier, happier, safer and prosperous'. This is currently achieved through the delivery of a range of smarter choices/behaviour change programmes with the support of local schools, businesses and other partners which help to achieve our vision. Examples of projects include:

- Bikeability cycle training;
- Scootability safe scooting to school;
- Mode Shift School Travel Planning;
- Programmes to improve air quality;
- Walk to School initiatives; and
- Support of Walking Busses.

Within the Sustainable Travel Team sits the Independent Travel Training service that supports young people with Special Educational Needs to travel independently to school, further education or work. Also, within the Sustainable Travel Team sit the Business Support Service that has funding to implement the project until December 2021. This function supports local businesses to support and encourage their employees to move away from single car journeys to work to.

### 7.2.2. Enabling Policy

**Enabling Policy 1** – We will develop awareness and capability programmes as part of new cycle and walking infrastructure delivered

As part of new cycle infrastructure, it will be imperative that we develop a range of awareness and capability programmes to maximise on the opportunities arising from high quality cycle infrastructure. As a council, we understand that not everyone will have the confidence to cycle, regardless of the type of cycle route offered therefore; we will seek to improve the capability and confidence of Solihull residents to cycle more often. We will also work with local communities to understand the current barriers to walking, developing awareness programmes to promote the many pleasant walking routes within the borough.

As part of the strategy, we will develop a range of creative ideas and workshops with members of the public that promotes travelling by active modes provided by the new infrastructure that we

deliver. We will also provide widespread advertising on social media and local media alongside interactive public launch events to ensure visibility of new infrastructure.

**Enabling Policy 2 – We will work with local schools to provide Bikeability (level 1-3) to primary and secondary school children.**

Bikeability has been a great success in Solihull. In 2019/2020 we expect to deliver the programme to over 4,500 children. Lessons will enable children to develop basic skills on motor traffic free environments all the way to more complex, often busier or faster roads and junctions and prepares riders for cycling in diverse road environments

Moving forward, we want to build on the success of the Bikeability programme. We want to ensure that children from the earliest opportunity are aware of the great benefits of being more active and the role that cycling and walking can play in a positive and fun lifestyle. We will therefore work with local schools across the borough to develop strong partnerships to encourage and develop the Bikeability programme further.

As part of our partnership with local schools through the Bikeability programme, we will undertake the following:

- We will ensure cycle training is available to all schools within the borough from learn to ride through to advanced on road training.
- Provide complimentary training such as maintenance skills which will provide children with the skills to maintain their own bike
- Work with parents to build cycle confidence and address common perceived issues around cycling and walking that will result in their children cycling more

**Enabling Policy 3 – Continue to develop adult cycle training programmes, ensuring adults in the borough have the capability to cycle**

Improving the capability of adults to cycle is a key component of our strategy. A recent study by the British Heart Foundation, identified that 1 in 8 cannot ride a bike and one in 10 of us has forgotten how to cycle. Whilst we recognise the importance of ensuring children can cycle from an early age, it is clear that we need to improve the confidence and capability of adults, this will allow for more journeys to be undertaken by bike to school and other destinations.

We will work with local communities to ensure that adults can access expert training to improve their capabilities to cycle. Initiatives we will roll out during the duration of the strategy include the following:

- Development of adult programme incorporating training for those that have never rode a bike through to developing skills required to commute to employment
- Provide workplace cycle training – helping to build confidence and capability
- Provide confidence building through engagement and training activities

- Provide Led rides that encourage people to get on a bike

**Enabling Policy 4 – Develop walking programmes targeting the journey to school and working with the vulnerable and hard to reach groups**

Walking for any type of journey is generally the simplest, free and one of the easiest ways to get more active, lose weight and become healthier. A generation ago, 70% of young people walked to school – now it's less than half.

A recent survey undertaken by Living Streets identified that:

- Rates of walking to school have been in a steady decline for decades, with negative consequences for mental and physical wellbeing, children's independence and road safety skills
- Distance, time and safety are the most significant barriers to children walking to school, as many parents do not feel confident allowing their children to walk alone but also report not having time to walk with them;

The walk to school is good for everyone; it is hugely beneficial for the health and wellbeing of children and increases the physical activity of adults, leading to improved wellbeing. Increasing the number of journeys on foot will relieve pressure on the local network by reducing the number of cars making short journeys on our local roads.

Whilst we seek to ensure more journeys to school are undertaken on foot, it is imperative that the walk is healthy and enjoyable; we will seek to improve the pedestrian network across the Borough to ensure walking for any journey purpose is attractive and convenient. As part of this strategy, we will seek to support the UK government target for 55% of primary school children in England walking to school by 2025.

The initiatives we will develop as part of the strategy including the following

- Provide incentives to walk to school such as "walking breakfast"
- Create and implement class room challenges
- Continue to expand the Independent Travel Training Service to reach more vulnerable people
- Implement "School Streets" type projects and support with marketing and engagement

**Enabling Policy 5 – Explore opportunities to offer travel planning support to local schools and businesses**

As a council, we are aware of the various benefits of local schools and businesses developing travel plans. As the Borough continues to grow, we encourage employers and schools to consider how to promote and enable sustainable modes of transport

Examples of the potential benefits of travel plans include:

- Reduction in vehicular trips leading to reduced congestion and improved journey times
- Creating additional site capacity at local businesses by reducing the need for car parking spaces and their on-going maintenance costs

- Enhancing the image of the company/organisation in question in environmental terms which supports Corporate Responsibility
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles through more physical activity and use of active travel modes

As a council we are keen to work with local businesses and schools to promote the benefits of sustainable transport. We will look to continue to build on our close relationship with various employers and schools to identify travel planning opportunities moving forward. Initiatives we will seek to implement include the following:

- Work with Planning Team to develop policy that attracts funding from new developments to help implement travel plan measures and mitigates the effect of increased traffic
- Attracting funding to support implementation of travel plans for both residential development and businesses
- Provide support for schools through Modeshift Stars accredited Travel Plan scheme
- Support Schools with implementation of Travel Plan actions such as creating walking buses
- Work with Businesses to produce, implement and monitor Travel Plans



## 7.3. New Developments

### 7.3.1. Background

As outlined within the Solihull Local Plan ‘A Plan for People and Places; Where Wellbeing and the Environment Matter’ it is imperative that all transport modes are deemed convenient and attractive based on a safe transport network to enable economic growth.

The Council Plan vision is one:

*‘Where everyone has an equal chance to be healthier, happier, safer and more prosperous through growth that creates opportunities for all’.*

The location and design of housing developments in particular, influences how people travel and plays a significant role in encouraging economic vibrancy, access to education, workplaces and retail and overall community cohesion

The West Midlands Local Transport Plan (Movement for Growth) outlines the need for change with an increasing population leading to further congestion and journey unreliability. 41% of journeys under 2 miles within the West Midlands are undertaken by car. 67% of UK journeys are less than 5 miles, of which 55% are undertaken by car.

With climate change high on the agenda, there is significant scope for more sustainable developments which will provide Solihull with a more reliable, greener and accessible local network. With major new developments planned in Solihull, it is anticipated that short distance journeys will make up a significant proportion of all journeys.

Key policies outlined in the Solihull Local Plan which relate to cycling and walking in new developments are presented below

Policy Number	Policy Headline
Policy P7	<p>All new development should be focussed in the most accessible locations and seek to enhance existing accessibility levels and promote ease of access.</p> <p>Access to all development will be required to demonstrate that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is safe, attractive and suitable for all people by all modes;</li> <li>• Priority is given first to pedestrian and cycle movements;</li> <li>• Opportunities for sustainable transport modes have been taken up.</li> </ul> <p>The Council will expect development proposals to fulfil the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate how access to the site will be achieved in a sustainable manner by a range and choice of transport modes.</li> <li>• Provide, contribute to and/or enhance off-site transport infrastructure schemes (including, but not limited to, public rights of way/public footpaths and cycleways) where appropriate and viable;</li> <li>• Are consistent with, and contribute to, the implementation of the ‘Solihull Connected’ strategy (or its replacement);</li> </ul>

<b>Policy P8</b>	The Council will support development proposals which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• are located in accordance with the spatial strategy in seeking to reduce the need to travel and that essential travel can be met by forms of sustainable transport in addition to the private car;</li> </ul>
	The Council is unlikely to support developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the impacts of increased delay to vehicles, pedestrians or cyclists, taking account of the residual cumulative transport effects of development, are severe.</li> <li>• where they will result in a reduction in safety for any users of the highway or other transport network.</li> </ul>

### 7.3.2. New Development Policy

To support the Local Plan, we encourage developers to consider the following policies relating to cycling and walking infrastructure and standards

**Development Policy 1** – Development proposals should incorporate appropriate safe and convenient access to walking and cycling routes, linking to existing cycling and walking provision where possible. The expected level of provision within the development will depend on the scale, use and location of the site.

Manual for Streets (MfS) published in 2003 (a companion guide Manual for Street 2 was published in 2010) identifies that attractive and well-connected networks encourage more people to walk and cycle to local destinations. Increasing the uptake of active travel within new developments has a beneficial impact on health while reducing motor traffic, energy use and pollution.

We expect developers to review their proposals against the principles of active travel provision within Manual for Streets.

- Developments in Solihull should also align to the core principles of sustainable transport as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework:
- Give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities;
- Create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones; and
- Consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

We require new developments to be accessible and permeable by walking and cycling. A key focus of new developments will be to make cycling and walking more convenient and attractive than using a car, particularly for frequent shorter journeys.

Developments are expected to review the recently published Solihull Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The Solihull LCWIP will provide a strategic approach to identifying cycling and walking improvements required across the borough. As part of the process, new developments are required to incorporate high quality cycling and walking infrastructure within developments and to link to the key routes proposed within the LCWIP.

Developers should contact the Solihull MBC Development Management Team in the early stages, to ensure that the appropriate design guidance is used for developments to function appropriately in their local context.

**Development Policy 2** – A complementary network of connected ‘Quiet Streets’ should be considered as part of new housing developments.

The quiet streets approach through filtered permeability, includes physical measures to control and restrict certain traffic movements and vehicle speeds. Filtered Permeability is a catch-all term for measures which can help to reduce people's exposure to motor traffic, particularly within residential areas. The techniques do not always seek to prevent motor-vehicle access but restrain it to make areas more people-friendly.

Measures can be used to offer short cuts and through routes for cyclists and pedestrians on routes that are unavailable to motor traffic. As part of new developments, developers should consider a variety of options to achieve filtered permeability including:

- Closure of existing streets (including pedestrianisation),
- Short walking & cycling links,
- Walking & cycling crossings between adjacent areas,
- Grade separation of walking & cycling,
- Providing distance/ time advantage to walking & cycling,
- Options for emergency access, buses & servicing.

**Development Policy 3** – High quality cycle parking and associated facilities, such as changing, shower and storage, should be considered as part of new development proposals (particularly employment sites)

Cycle parking is a key component in encouraging people to cycle. Storing a bike in a convenient but secure location near the front door is a great way to make people use their bike automatically, particularly for short distance journeys. Employers are also encouraged to consider providing high quality storage and changing facilities to enable more people to cycle and walk to work.

As part of new developments, developers are expected to consider the following when delivering cycle storage

- **Convenience** – Storing a bike should be convenient therefore; cycle parking should be located near main entrances and easily accessible.
- **Security** – High quality and secure stands are vital. It is important that the frame of the bike can be locked to a cycle stand which is clearly visible. Isolated stands can deter people from cycling.
- **Quantity** – Developers should determine the sufficient levels of cycle parking for the number of residents or, for amenities such as shops/workplace, the likely number of visitors and employees
- **Space** - There must be sufficient space for people to approach and leave the cycle parking easily. It must be easy for someone to locate their bike.

**Developers are expected to review the West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance where further guidance on cycle parking is provided.**

**Development Policy 4** – The Council will require Transport Assessments and/or Travel Plans to accompany planning applications that include proposals which may generate significant traffic volumes, situated in traffic-sensitive locations or otherwise likely to have a significant impact on the highway network.”

To ensure developments are as sustainable as possible and promote cycling and walking journeys where possible, the council (as stated within the Local Plan) will require transport assessments and/or travel plans where developments have the potential to generate significant traffic volumes or have the potential to have a significant impact on the highway network.

Travel Plans can and do deliver a wide range of benefit. A well-developed Travel Plan can help achieve local government objectives, support councils sustainability policies, encourage sustainable growth and manage the dependency of various transport modes. A Travel Plan will assist in bringing about a wide range of benefits to the wider community such as: -

- Reducing peak time congestion
- Reducing harmful transport emissions and reducing energy use
- Improving accessibility and tackling social exclusion
- Improved public transport

Within Travel Plans, it is expected that developers will consider specific activities that can enable and encourage new residents to travel by sustainable modes including cycling and walking. Developers should provide specific modal share targets for active travel modes which can be measured on a regular basis. Measures to be considered within Travel Plans include:

- Personalised Travel Planning
- Active Travel competitions
- Promotion of cycling and walking campaigns
- Distribution of local cycling and walking maps
- Incentives to encourage cycling journeys e.g. vouchers, maintenance courses.

**Development Policy 5** – We will seek developer contributions to develop the strategic cycle corridors and walking improvements outlined within the Solihull LCWIP.

Developer contributions will be sought for highway improvements and this may include connection to cycleways/improvements outside of local plan site boundaries.

## 7.4. Promoting

### 7.4.1. Background

To encourage cycling and walking journeys across the borough, we will promote both modes as convenient and attractive forms of travel. Whilst many of our residents know the health benefits of cycling and walking, we need to demonstrate the various other benefits that travelling on foot or by bike can achieve. Through our policies outlined below, we will seek to make cycling and walking the normal way to travel rather than simple ways to exercise.

The media and social platforms play an important role in producing and reinforcing perceptions of active travel through shaping news and steering topics to suit a particular agenda. The media plays a role in determining how walking and cycling is portrayed, how people who walk and cycle are represented, and how people who walk and cycle are viewed by the general public.

Research undertaken by Sustrans identified that the majority of articles (61%) that mention or are about walking or cycling are generally framed negatively<sup>14</sup>. It is therefore important that we work with local media and through our own social platforms to highlight the significant health, social, environmental and economic benefits that can be achieved through cycling and walking.

How the media and social platforms portray cycling and walking as modes of transport and how they present those that travel by such modes has the potential to influence the way an individual chooses to travel. As part of our Cycling and Walking Strategy our key principles for promoting cycling and walking are:

- **Continue to highlight the positive aspects of active travel**– Through the policies outlined below we will use various platforms to highlight cycling and walking in a positive tone. We will highlight key local and national evidence which highlights the benefits of active modes.
- **Work with local champions and key stakeholders** – We will work with the West Midlands Cycling and Walking Ambassador and the local Solihull Cycling and Walking Champion (tbc) to promote cycling and walking with local schools, businesses, key stakeholders and residents.
- **Work with local community to promote cycling and walking** – As part of our promotional strategy to make cycling and walking the norm, we will work with local community groups and key stakeholders to highlight success stories taking place across the borough. Case studies will be promoted across various promotional channels

### 7.4.2. Promoting Policy

**Promoting Policy 1** – We will promote all new cycling and walking infrastructure through various engagement methods

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/media/3035/3035.pdf>

Over the coming years, we will look to deliver high quality cycling and walking infrastructure. Lessons learnt from major infrastructure projects across the country have shown that promoting new infrastructure is key to maximising use and achieving major benefits. From development through to deliver, we will look to engage with the local community to ensure that residents are aware of our concept options through to upcoming changes to the local transport network.

Prior to the construction phase, we will ensure residents, commuters and visitors to Solihull are aware of upcoming road works, we will provide information on the scheme to ensure the benefits of the scheme are well known. Once the scheme has been delivered, we will use all communication platforms to make the local community aware of new infrastructure. Promoting cycle and walking infrastructure is key to seeking a mode shift away from the car.

**Promoting Policy 2 –** Cycling and walking will be promoted across Council Departments and disseminated through a new active travel page on the Solihull MBC website.

Promoting cycling and walking will start within our own media platforms. As part of the overall redevelopment of the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council website, we will develop a new Cycling and Walking Page which will a sub section of the Solihull Connected page. The cycling and walking page will including latest policy development, cycling and walking maps and information on local cycling and walking groups

**Promoting Policy 3 –** Promote local and national cycling campaigns

At a local, regional and national level, various cycling and walking campaigns take place across the UK to highlight the benefits of cycling and walking. Such campaigns have a great impact in promoting active travel and enables the message to reach a far greater audience. Campaigns undertaken by the public and charity sector in particular have been met positively by schools and local businesses across the borough.

Our communications team will work closely with our sustainable travel team to identify and promote regional and national campaigns; we will use our various media platforms including the Solihull MBC website, Facebook and twitter accounts to promote campaigns and activities taking place across throughout the year. At a local level we will work with local schools and businesses to promote activities such as Bikeability and Cycle to Work programme.

**Promoting Policy 4 –** Utilise new technology to encourage cycling and walking journeys

With technology ever improving, it is expected that the way we travel will change. To utilise advances in technology, we will work with stakeholders to develop and test new systems to help people in their everyday lives and make travelling around the borough easier. As E-bikes become more popular, we will look to promote their use across the borough including working with local stakeholders and user groups who wouldn't be able to use regular bicycles.

With new technology helping to support 'Service as a Mobility' we will seek to develop platforms which will enable better multi modal journeys across the borough. Through Service as a Mobility, we will look to better connect our sustainable transport services such as linking local bus services with bike hire or better wayfinding to our local Railway stations. We will work with local operators such as National Express, Chiltern Railways and our partners Transport for West Midlands to explore new technology ways to promote active travel through technology.

## 7.5. Monitoring and Funding

### 7.5.1. Background

Solihull MBC has been successful in securing external funding through a variety of funding sources including the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the West Midlands Combined Authority. Whilst we will continue to dedicate revenue and capital funding to active travel, further Council and external funding will be required to deliver transformational change across the Borough

To enable a step change in the numbers of people cycling, the 'All Party Parliamentary Cycling Group' has recommended a minimum investment of £10 per person per year, rising to £20 per person, more consistent with funding levels in continental Europe<sup>[1]</sup>. To meet this target, we will need to explore a wide variety of local, regional and national funding opportunities to obtain funding for cycling and walking in Solihull.

There are many reasons why monitoring a strategy or a particular piece of infrastructure is important:

- Monitoring strategy objectives helps to assess the current performance of a strategy, identifying measures which are working well and those that are under performing
- Data relating to a given route or network can be used to report back to funders, to generate public support, or to make the case for continued improvement
- when planning a new route or a cycle network, or improvements to existing infrastructure, data from similar routes and networks can be used as the basis for comparison including it's likely usage and benefits

As part of monitoring the Solihull Cycling and Walking Strategy, we will monitor objectives on an annual basis, ensuring we revise our delivery plan where necessary to achieve our objectives and overall vision. We will also continue to monitor travel patterns and behaviours to ensure we are aware of current transport trends, this will allow us to amend our focus around active travel if required.

### 7.5.2. Monitoring and Funding Policy

**M & F Policy 1 – Monitor cycle and walking movements across the Borough**

When new cycle infrastructure is delivered, it is imperative to monitor its use to assess whether implementation has been successful. Monitoring new cycle infrastructure will also allow us to identify elements that have worked well and those that need improving. We will also be able to assess the impact of different types of cycle infrastructure including shared use routes and dedicated cycle routes segregated from motorised vehicles.

[1] <https://allpartycycling.files.wordpress.com/2016/06/appcg-inquiry-stuck-in-first-gear-the-governments-cycling-revolution1.pdf>



Whilst the focus of monitoring will be on new infrastructure, we will assess the entire network to identify suitable locations to monitor cycle journeys. We will also assess pedestrian movements in Solihull Town Centre to help inform public realm improvements and town centre connectivity.

The key principles we will follow when monitoring cycling and walking journeys are:

- Monitoring the impact of past interventions can strengthen the case for future investment – monitoring will be a key aspect for all new cycle infrastructure within the borough
- Monitoring must be planned to address the scheme objectives – as part of new cycle infrastructure we will set overall targets
- Tools for data collection will be selected according to the information required – we will determine the type of information we require for cycling and walking prior to any monitoring tools being implemented within Solihull
- Investment in data gathering should take into account the scheme cost – We will assess the overall cost of cycling, walking and public realm improvement prior to allocating a monitoring budget
- Monitoring should be clear - key results will be presented in a form that is relevant and accessible to key stakeholders and funders

**M & F Policy 2 – Regular engagement with local residents to monitor transport trends**

As our strategy evolves, it is important that we continue to engage with the local community to identify any changes to the way in which people travel. Regularly engaging with the local community will help to identify constraints and opportunities relating to travelling on foot or by bike. Through working with the local community, we can start to tailor our priorities based on local needs.

As part of this strategy, we have engaged with the local community through public engagement events and online material including a cycling and walking survey. Over the coming years, we will continue to monitor transport behaviour through engaging with the local community through a variety of channels including online surveys and engagement events.

**M & F Policy 3 – Develop a funding process to ensure delivery of cycle and walking infrastructure and associated programmes**

To deliver our priority cycle routes and pedestrian improvements identified through the Solihull LCWIP, it is imperative that we continue to develop our schemes. Developing our schemes through the business case process will help us to be in pole position to attract funding at a local, national and regional level.

To secure funding for cycle and walking infrastructure and associated programmes we will seek to:

- Provide a consistent level of revenue and capital funding to support the delivery of this strategy (based on securing funding from regional and national funding programmes)
- Review the utilisation and prioritisation of other funding sources such as developer contributions and central Government grants/allocations.
- Develop funding bids on a regular basis based on local to national funding opportunities.

**M & F Policy 4 – Monitor the Cycling and Walking Strategy on an annual process**

As a council, we will review the Cycling and Walking Strategy on an annual basis. We will work closely with the key stakeholders, local cycling and walking group and our local residents during this review process.

## 8. Delivery Plan

### 8.1. Infrastructure and Connectivity

As part of the Infrastructure and Connectivity theme, the following initiatives will form part of the Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan.

- **Production of an LCWIP**

To deliver an improved Solihull Cycling Network and pedestrian environment, we are currently in the final stages of developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan. The document follows the guidance produced by the Department for Transport. The infrastructure plan includes a number of priority cycle routes and core areas for improved walking provision. The infrastructure plan will help us deliver high quality cycling and walking provision in the borough over the next 10 years.

- **Engineers trained on West Midlands Cycle Design Guide**

To ensure we deliver high quality cycling and walking infrastructure, we will seek to follow West Midlands Cycle Design Guidance. In partnership with Transport for West Midlands, we will ensure that existing and future engineers are trained to the key principles and standards of the design guidance through a regular training/workshop programme.

- **Audit of existing cycle infrastructure**

Whilst it is important that we pay attention to developing new cycle provision based on improved cycle infrastructure guidance, we will continue to monitor our existing cycle infrastructure to determine improvements across our existing network. A full audit of cycle provision within the Borough is anticipated to take place in 2021.

- **Pedestrian audit of Solihull town centre**

As part of our aim to improve the levels of walking into our Town Centre (and to reduce the use of the car) we will undertake a detailed pedestrian audit of the Town Centre and the key corridors which connect into the centre. The audit will look at opportunities to improve the environment for pedestrians as well as identifying major severance issues which might deter potential walking trips. The audit is expected to take place during 2020/2021.

- **Appoint a Solihull Cycling and Walking Champion**

To ensure we are able to maximise on the Cycling and Walking Strategy, we will appoint a Solihull Cycling and Walking Champion to be at forefront of active travel in the Borough.

## 8.2. Enabling

As part of the Enabling theme, the following initiatives will form part of the Cycling and Walking Delivery Plan

- **Training and Promotion of New Cycle Infrastructure**

As part of new cycle infrastructure delivered, we will seek to work with local businesses, schools and community groups to ensure potential users have the skills and confidence to use new infrastructure.

- **Bikeability Training**

We will continue to develop the Bikeability programme in Solihull. We will seek to build upon strong relationships with existing schools whilst focusing on engaging with new schools to ensure Bikeability is delivered across the borough.

- **Adult Cycle Training Programmes**

We will work with local community groups to seek opportunities to develop adult training programmes. We will also work with local schools to identify parents who wish to improve their cycle skills and confidence. We will work with small to major businesses to develop cycle courses including maintenance programmes

- **Development of Walking Programmes**

A more focused approach on walking will be delivered. We will work with local schools to provide new initiatives such as 'walking breakfast' to encourage more children and parents to walk to school. We will continue to deliver and further develop our 'School Streets' project with the aim for more schools taking part in the coming years.

- **Travel Plan Support**

We are currently supporting business travel plans as part of Wildlife Ways. We will explore opportunities to provide further travel plan support however; this will be dependent on securing funding.

## 8.3. New Developments

- **Work with developers to provide high quality cycle and walking provision**

As part of new developments, we will work with developers to ensure that cycling and walking provision is provided. We will review development proposals and provide guidance on the most suitable form of provision for cycling and walking.

- **Explore opportunities to provide support and monitoring of travel plans as part of new developments**

As part of new developments, particularly major housing and retail developments, it will be important to promote sustainable transport options including cycling and walking. We will work with developers to encourage travel plans that promote cycling and walking including the use of personalised travel planning to promote local cycling and walking routes.

- **Work with local stakeholders and neighbourhood forum groups to develop local connectivity improvements to link to existing and new developments**

As part of major new housing developments as part of the updated Solihull Local Plan, feedback from the local community on connectivity within new developments is welcomed. As part of new developments, we will work with developers, local stakeholders and neighbourhood forums to discuss opportunities for high quality cycling and walking links. We will work with local stakeholders as part of the LCWIP process to identify opportunities to link up new and existing cycling and walking infrastructure to new developments.

## 8.4. Promotion

- **New Cycling and Walking Page on Solihull MBC Council Website**

As part of a redevelopment of the Solihull MBC website, we will develop a cycling and walking page under the Solihull Connected banner. The Cycling and Walking Page will include:

- Cycling and Walking Policy – The Cycling and Walking Strategy
- Information on the existing cycle and walking network
- Information on proposed schemes – Solihull LCWIP
- News and signposting to local cycling and walking groups
- Information on cycle and walking training and initiatives
- Promotion of local, regional and national cycling and walking campaigns

- **Promote local and national cycling and walking campaigns**

Through our media platforms such as the new cycling and walking page on the Solihull MBC website and social media, we will regular promote cycling and walking campaigns taking place locally and across the UK. Campaigns are likely to include Sustrans Big Pedal which sees young people across the UK compete with one another to make the most journeys by bike, foot or scooter.

We will also look to promote Bike Week, delivered by Cycling UK, which is an annual celebration to showcase cycling. Riding a bike can easily be a part of everyday life and Bike Week has been developed to inspire people to give cycling a try.

We will also work on educational campaigns helping to educate those that travel by bike and other modes. Our communications and sustainable transport team will work closely with neighbouring authorities to make sure we can reach a wider audience and deliver cross boundary initiatives.

- **Actively engage with residents throughout the development of new cycle routes and pedestrian improvements**

As part of all new cycle routes and major pedestrian infrastructure improvements developed and delivered within Solihull, we will undertake extensive engagement with local users. Engagement is likely to be in the form of events in the local area, online surveys and working with local stakeholders such as cycling and walking groups and major cycling and walking organisations.

## 8.5. Monitoring and Funding

- **Develop strategic cycle corridors within the Solihull Cycling Network as prioritised within the Solihull LCWIP.**

During 2020/21, we will begin to develop a number of strategic cycle corridors identified within the Solihull LCWIP. Development of the cycle corridors will go through the business case process including developing a detailed design for the corridors. Throughout the process it will be important to engage with local residents and users. It is anticipated that a local workshop will take place before detailed designs are developed.

- **Prepare the strategic case for all priority cycle routes identified through the Solihull LCWIP.**

Recent Government announcements have indicated that further funding will be dedicated to cycle infrastructure. To ensure we are in a position to maximise on funding opportunities, we will need to prepare a detailed strategic case for each cycle route within the Solihull Cycle Network. Over the next two years, we will develop a strategic case outlining the benefits of each route ensuring we are ready to submit bids for regional and national funding opportunities.

- **Monitor new cycle infrastructure and pedestrian improvements delivered within the borough**

During the development of new cycle infrastructure, we will develop a monitoring programme to ensure we set targets for new infrastructure and monitor their delivery. As part of the monitoring programme, we will determine whether cycle counters and/or surveys are required to monitor use and level of service.

As part of new pedestrian infrastructure including public realm improvements, we will look to undertake street surveys to gain feedback from local users. We will also monitor pedestrian movements to ensure that schemes provide local users with direct and convenient links to key trip attractors

- **Monitor the standard of existing cycle and walking infrastructure across the network**

Over the coming years, it will be important to monitor the standard and quality of our existing network as well as new infrastructure that is delivered. As part of our overall highway maintenance programme, we will identify cycle and walking provision which requires maintenance and will undertake such activity as appropriate.

We will also work with local user groups to monitor accident trends, ensuring we record accident hotspots and work across departments to solve such issues. We will welcome feedback from local users and will regularly undertake feedback exercises through face to face sessions and through the SMBC website.

- **Annual review of proposed cycle schemes to assess funding priorities**

As part of the Solihull LCWIP, we will be identifying a number of cycle routes which will be part of a long term network plan. As part of the network plan, a prioritisation process will be undertaken. As the network will be delivered over a 10 year plus timeframe, it is important that we monitor travel patterns and behaviours across the borough. We must also understand how the proposed cycle network aligns with new and proposed development moving forward.

As part of this strategy, we will undertake an annual review of the Solihull Cycling Network Plan, particularly focusing on the prioritisation process undertaken as part of the Solihull LCWIP. We will review the position of cycle routes within the prioritisation table and make amendments where required, this will ensure that schemes which will have the biggest impact are delivered in the shortest possible timeframe.