

Chance to shape West Midlands' transport system of the future

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The public have been invited to have their say on a far-reaching strategy laying out how the West Midlands' transport system can be decarbonised and to improve services over the next two decades.

The draft West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP), called *Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands*, shows how the region's transport bosses can meet the challenges of tackling climate change, reducing traffic congestion and improving access to transport while supporting the post-COVID 19 economic recovery.

The plan, drawn up by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), also builds on changes in travel behaviour seen during the coronavirus pandemic such as increases in cycling, walking and scooting and a reduction in five-days-per-week commuting.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands and chair of the WMCA, said: "We are at a pivotal moment in the history of transport in our region, with an unprecedented £1.3 billion of investment to be made over the next five years. From improved cycle routes to new train stations, this investment will enable us to continue to connect communities as part of our transport revolution, as well as cut carbon emissions as

part of our [#WM2041 plan](#).

“Our draft Local Transport Plan is the guiding hand behind this and future investment, which is why it is so important residents have their say and make sure their views are heard.”

It was developed following the publication of an open ‘green paper’ discussion document on the future of transport last year which drew almost 700 responses from across the region. Five motives for change were set out for the new plan to consider; tackling the climate emergency, making streets safer, fairer access to transport, supporting the economy and encouraging more active travel.

The draft LTP Core Strategy highlights how plans to further expand the Metro tram network, open new railway stations and invest in cleaner zero-emission buses through programmes such as the [Coventry All Electric Bus City](#) will make a difference. However, these can take time to deliver and more also needs to be done quickly by using existing infrastructure better to support behaviour change such as developing bus priority lanes and safe cycle routes.

Innovations and emerging technology such as autonomous vehicles, the growing 5G mobile phone network, better use of data, [bus on demand](#) services can play a part in encouraging a shift from private cars. While last mile transport such as e-bikes and e-scooters could play a part in reducing traffic and improving safety on local roads as well as improving health.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board last month agreed the draft LTP and residents and businesses can, from today, have their say as part of an eight-week public consultation.

Key to delivering the the first phase of the plan over the next five years will be the [£1.3 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement](#) investment announced last month. The money will be used to bolster the offer of convenient and affordable alternatives to the private car such as expanding the [Starley Network](#) of safe cycle routes, greater integration of bus, rail, tram and bike hire ticketing and more [bus priority routes](#).

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: “We cannot go on as we have with traffic congestion clogging our roads, high levels of pollution and poor air quality in our town and city centres. If we do nothing these problems will worsen and hold us back as a region.

“Cars don’t have to be the daily default choice for many of us – public transport and active travel are both better for the environment and can save people money.

“So, we have to make those alternatives more convenient and more cost effective and this local transport plan sets out some of the ways we can do that.”

Public engagement on last year’s green paper included more than 600 people taking an online survey and 70 people, representing a cross-section of the West Midlands, took part in citizens panel groups. It revealed 92% were either concerned or very concerned about the impact of climate change, while two-thirds thought busy local roads were a major problem preventing them cycling and walking.

The public are now invited to have their say on the draft Local Transport Plan via [the website survey](#).

Photo credit: West Midlands Combined Authority

Video credit: Transport for West Midlands