



1.0 Introduction

This note outlines discussions had at the forth West Midlands Greener Together Forum on the 13th March 2023, where the topic discussed focused on regional transport. The Forum brought together speakers from Local Authorities involved in tackling fuel poverty;

David Harris, Transport Strategy and Place Manager at Transport for West Midlands

Jon Hayes, Head of Bus at Transport for West Midlands

Laura Smith, Senior Project Manager and Alistair Crisp, Paths for Everyone Project Manager for Sustrans

Sandra Green, Car Free Birmingham Campaigner for Possible

Please see the presentations from the meeting [here](#) and the Forum Terms of Reference [here](#).

2.0 Greener Together Forums Purpose

- 2.1 The Forum is to bring together Bring together all those across the region who are committed to cutting carbon emissions and enhancing the natural environment to discuss, collaborate and debate different initiatives. The Forum is a space to share ideas and views that people, campaign groups, organisations and businesses **can all take forward and we are all leaving the Forum with takeaway actions.**
- 2.2 The WMCA has acted in response to discussions had within this Forum (please see slides for action take). However, we are in a climate crisis and every organisation within the region needs to be working collectively towards tackling this. Which is why the Forum is a shared space to collaborate, share ideas and work together.
- 2.3 An Advisory Board has been created to help shape the direction and logistics of the Forum. We thank David Evans (Birmingham City Council), Danielle Parker (Birmingham Climate Justice Network and West Midlands Climate Coalition) and Kamran Shezad (BAHU Trust) for joining the board.
Advisory board to help with;
- To help bring new voices to the Forum.
 - Ensure the Forum remains action focused.
 - Support with improving the Forum for all.
 - To **contribute to the agenda setting** for each meeting.
- 2.3 Receive the monthly West Midlands Combined Authority Energy and Environment newsletter by registering [via this link](#).

3.0 Regional Transport

3.1 West Midlands Local Transport Plan open for consultation.

Transport for West Midlands are currently consulting on the Local Transport Plan strategy. It's important to get a representative view from lots of different perspectives, especially on the local transport plan as it affects everyone.

The Local Transport Plan (LTP) Core Strategy sets out why we want to better our region to:

- Improve accessibility
- Reduce traffic
- Electrify transport



In the LTP Core Strategy, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) set out the building blocks for how we can achieve the vision and objectives for the region. Behaviour change is key to delivering our aims.

From this, '6 Big Moves' have been created. Each move lays out the principles, policies and, in some cases, specific changes to help achieve the goals.

Share your views

TfWM want to make sure that the plans work for you and your beneficiaries. This will help shape the next phase of TfWM Local Transport Plan. Full details on the consultation, including the online survey where you can provide feedback, are available at www.tfwm.org.uk/BigMoves

If you have any questions, please email PolicyandStrategy@tfwm.org.uk

3.2 What is the plan for behaviour change to get people out of their cars and take public transport and active travel?

The Local Transport Plan has identified six big moves and behavioural changes is a fundamental part of the LTP. The LTP unpicks what behavioural change means for public transport such as giving people more options which can be done through improving current offers such as through the ongoing bus improvement plan. Some of the behaviour changes identified in the LTP will be less popular such as parking charges, low traffic neighbourhoods and bus priority lanes. Consultation on the LTP is open now and TfWM need to work through what options will work in different areas as behaviour change will only happen if the community are involved from the start.

Communication needs to be improved to communicate these complex issues to the community. The LTP needs to be communicated to people in a way that will show people what will happen on your road and how will it impact your neighbourhood and lives. The Forum felt that education needs to be improved for people to understand each mode of transport, how to pay etc. to encourage uptake.

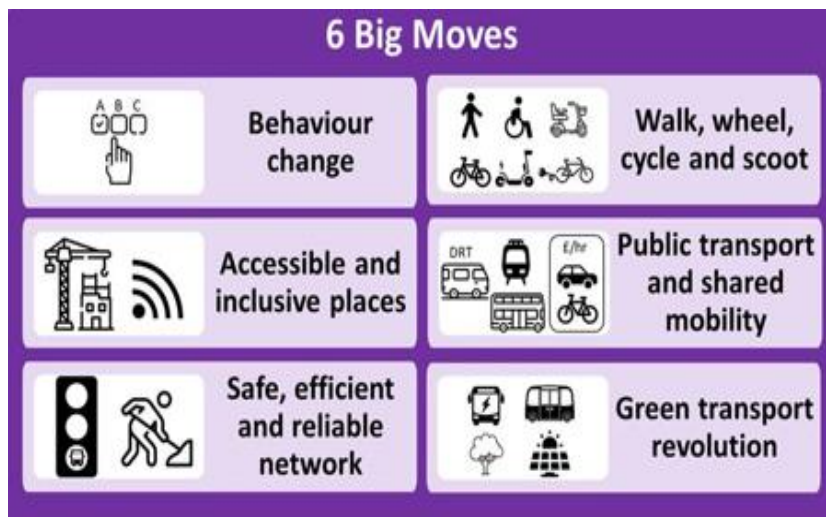


Figure 1: 6 Big Moves from the Local Transport Plan

3.3 Free public transport has worked in other cities - has there been any ideas of running a pilot of free public transport?

TfWM have looked into free public transport previously as noted it has worked in other places such as Luxembourg however, research suggests that free transport will not bring the modal shift needed for people to not use their cars, which has been found in Tallinn, Estonia. There is also the question of where the budget would be sourced for this. TfWM support concessionary tickets through the £30 million transport as seen in

the table below. However uptake of this free travel is limited in some areas which is why policies are being looked at this year to see if widening the offer encourages uptake.

A question was asked on why job seekers are not supported, but TfWM do offer discounts already which can be found [here](#).

Supported Travel Policy	Approx. Cost per Annum (22/23)
Child Concessions	£6.7M
Rail and Metro Concessions	£4.6M
Accessible Transport (including Ring and Ride)	£6.7M
Tendered Bus Network	£13.5M
English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) post 11pm add-on	£0.1M
Total costs	£31.6M

Figure 2: Transport for West Midlands Supported Travel Policy in 2023.

The Bus Improvement Plan has £35 million allocated to incentivise people who have recently stopped using public transport, to encourage them back onto the network. There are different methods being trialled to see what works.

There is a nation-wide shortage of bus drivers, which is increasing pressure on the reliability of services.

3.4 Are there plans to bring transport into public hands rather than the private sector?

TfWM have undertaken a review which determined there was a potential case for franchising bus services in the West Midlands. The next stage of this process is to undertake a Full Franchising Assessment which will set out the full business case. This work has now commenced and is due to report to the Mayor and wider Combined Authority Board in Summer 2024 for a decision as to whether to proceed or not.

Franchising the bus network would see the control (and risk) of the services bought under TfWM. Currently different operators such as National Express and Arriva are able to run the services, set the fares they charge and the vehicles they use. Operators can focus on the most profitable journeys, with local transport authorities having to pay operators to run journeys where it is deemed there is an unmet social need. TfWM are currently working in partnership with local bus operators, local authorities, and other stakeholders to make significant transformational changes to bus services in the region and deliver the aspirations set out in the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan. This includes investment in Zero Emission Buses (ZEBs), bus priority and simplification of fares and ticketing. Discussions are on-going with operators to agree the delivery of these measures.

There will be a public consultation on the franchising of the bus services. ACORN are campaigning for this to happen and stated that their members are very supportive of this outcome.

3.5 Are there plans for green roofs for bus shelters to help wildlife?

TfWM are currently trialing green roof bus shelters at numerous locations across the region. We are looking not only at the success of these but of those installed in other areas across the UK to ensure that any future examples are carefully designed, specified, and located to ensure greatest benefit for biodiversity, climate adaptation and people. We are also looking at how our network of sites can be 'greened' and where feasible these will provide improved green infrastructure that delivers a range of benefits. When we have a method that works and funding allows we will seek to implement more of these environmental improvements.

3.6 How can we get planning departments more involved in transport?

Planning departments are engaged with transport infrastructure and TfWM work with them to make decisions such as where bus shelters go. Planning departments have a key role to play with the relationship between transport and land use. TfWM do not make planning decisions but work closely with each Local Authority to create guidance and support in ensuring the networks are connected and investments are being taken in the right place.

In the breakout rooms it was felt by the Forum that 15-minute neighbourhoods will only work if the local infrastructure supports this. For example, if good schools are outside of the area then people will need to travel outside of these areas.

4.0 Community Updates

- 4.1 Better Buses for Birmingham coalition first meeting is taking place on Tuesday 21st March, 10am at The Warehouse in Birmingham. If you would like to attend, please email Sandra.green@wearepossible.org

WMCA Air Quality survey is live to gain an understanding of current knowledge people have on air quality. The survey is open to anyone living in the West Midlands and 5, £25 Love to Shop vouchers are available to win. Survey closes on the 14th April; <https://tfwm.commonplace.is/proposals/west-midlands-air-quality-survey/>

This briefing note will be shared with the WMCA's Energy and Environment board at the next board meeting.