

Local Transport Functional Strategy



**Mayor of the
West Midlands**



**West Midlands
Combined Authority**

Contents

Context and ambition 2

 Regional context..... 2

 Existing strategies and ambitions 3

Funding and outcomes 5

 Outcomes 5

 Roles, responsibilities and current functions 5

 Integrated Settlement resources available for the coming Spending Review..... 6

How we will invest 7

 Place-Based Strategies 8

 Integration with other Functional Strategies 10

 Inclusive growth 11

Funding delivery 11

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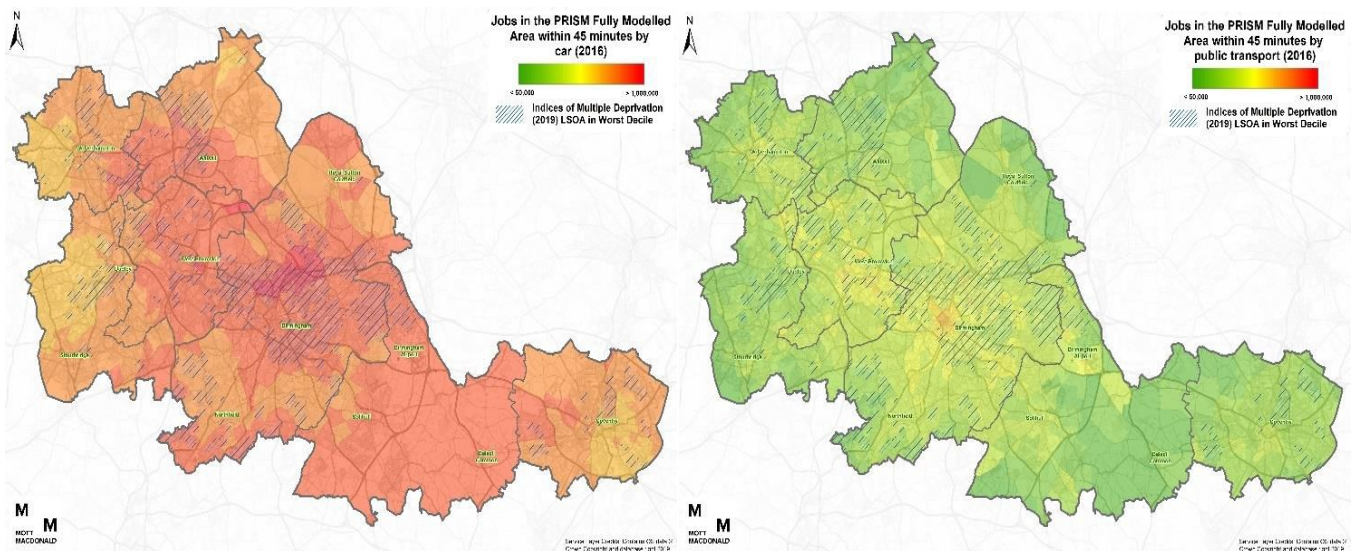
Context and ambition

Regional context

Travel in the region is dominated by car use and historically planning and policy has prioritised this mode rather than more sustainable options, exacerbating wider issues such as poor-quality places, poor air quality, high levels of road related deaths and injuries, physical inactivity and climate change. Investments across the WMCA area are delivering improvements to the transport system. However, there are key projects in delivery, and it will take time to see all these benefits. A key challenge remains around the scale of the impacts the region can have without a more coherent national strategy for transport which seeks to tackle behaviour change. The forecast growth in traffic across the UK is likely to mean that achieving strategic outcomes is even more difficult. Key challenges for the region to consider include:

Accessibility. Whilst a key part of our strategy is focused on shifting behaviours away from car dependency, we also need to ensure we support those who do not have alternatives to car use. On average 27% of households don't have access to a car and this rises to 40% in some areas. Job and skills accessibility declines significantly for residents who are reliant on public transport, with this being more pronounced in deprived areas where car ownership is less common, this is demonstrated by the figures on the right of this page. The quality of access to public transport varies across our region and can be a significant barrier for lower income households and more vulnerable groups for accessing economic opportunities. Bus service frequencies have reduced in some parts of the region by 30% since 2010.

Whilst disabled people make up over 20% of our region's population, they account for less than 9% of journeys. Everyone should have equal opportunities to travel in ways that meet their needs and expectations. Disabled people have diverse requirements, and we will continue to ensure our transport network responds to their lived experiences and address their needs.



Affordability of public transport services and network. Bus use within the West Midlands has experienced a long-term decline in patronage (like most places outside of London). Affordability is a barrier to public transport use with the region ranking in the bottom quartile for public transport affordability of 66 global cities. Whilst post pandemic patronage levels on public transport are returning to pre pandemic levels, the increasing cost of operating the bus network mean that an increasingly smaller element of the network can be run commercially. This puts more pressure on WMCA to subsidise more to maintain the bus network. In addition, future bus policy

delivery options are being investigated including the potential of a franchised bus system. Options will have cost implications for subsidy, depots/assets and transition.

Growing reliance on road travel. Despite recent investments in sustainable transport alternatives, car mileage has continued to grow. Current forecasts suggest that traffic will grow between 5 and 12% between 2025 and 2035. In comparison the impact of the LTP's current and anticipated proposals are only likely to off-set this traffic by around 1% in the same time frame. Most trips in the West Midlands are less than 10 miles and around 70% of all journeys which are less than 5 miles are made by car. This dependence on cars results in congestion, road safety issues, poor air quality and negative environmental impacts and contributes to declining health outcomes. 57 lives were lost on our roads in 2022, and around 950 people suffer from serious, sometimes life-changing injuries each year. Significant action is required if we want to achieve Vision Zero as set out in the Regional Road Safety Strategy.

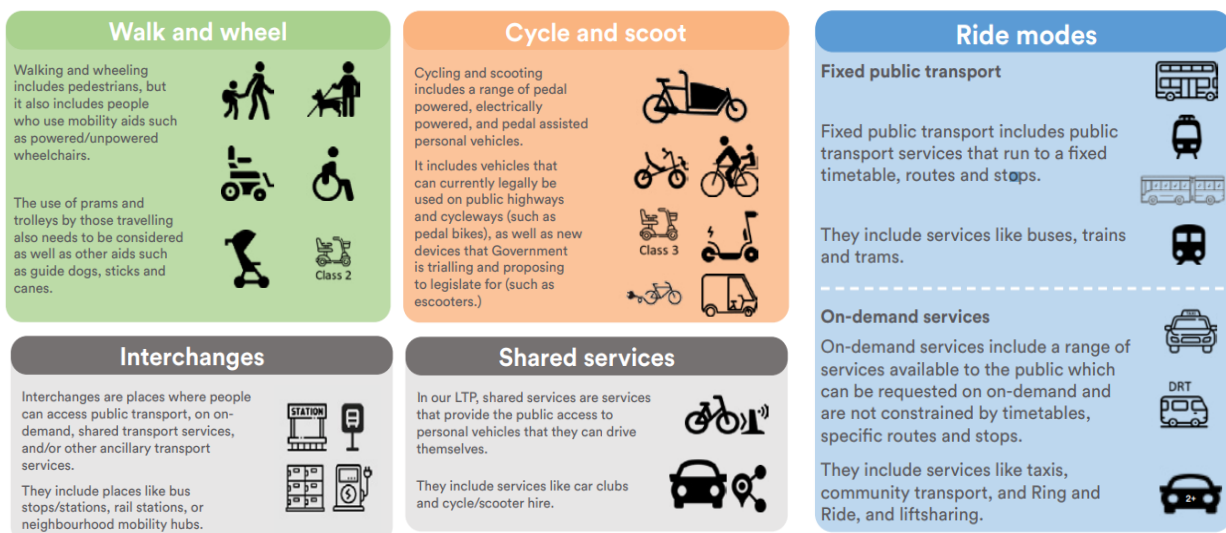
Climate and the environment. Reliance on private transport has led to a built environment which prioritises car-based travel and has resulted in a legacy of a hazardous, unattractive environment for pedestrians and cyclists. There are also implications for climate change: WMCA has an ambitious target to be net zero by 2041 which will require significant modal shift as well as an increase in zero emission vehicles. As it stands local transport interventions are having little impact on addressing emissions at a rate and scale commensurate with either local or national targets. We will also have to respond to the challenges in the LTP around climate resilience. We will also need to consider how the network adapts to the changes already happening, building on the WMCA's climate change adaptation plan.

Existing strategies and ambitions

The West Midlands Combined Authority receives a complex web of capital and revenue funding streams, including the local transport levy, to deliver its strategic transport policies and programmes. This complexity makes it difficult to deliver transformational outcomes that improve the lives of our residents. The Integrated Settlement (IS) and its Local Transport Functional Strategy allow us to do things differently, providing greater freedom and flexibility. It will build on the efforts we have made to protect our bus network services, and to develop, manage and deliver the £1.2bn City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS).

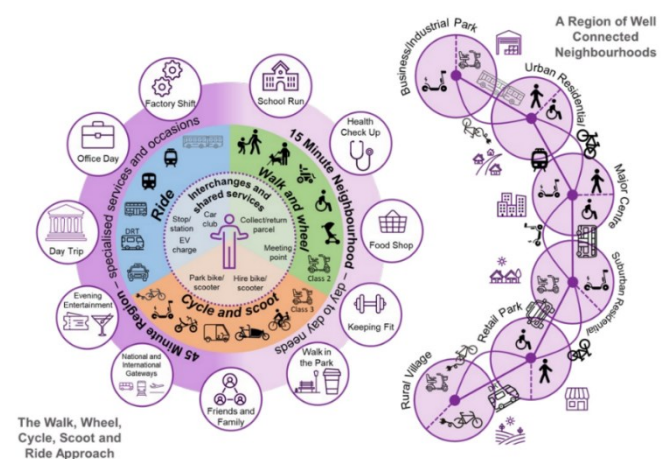
West Midlands Local Transport Plan Framework

Using the big ideas of the people and businesses of the West Midlands, we will show the world how we reimagined and decarbonised our transport system.



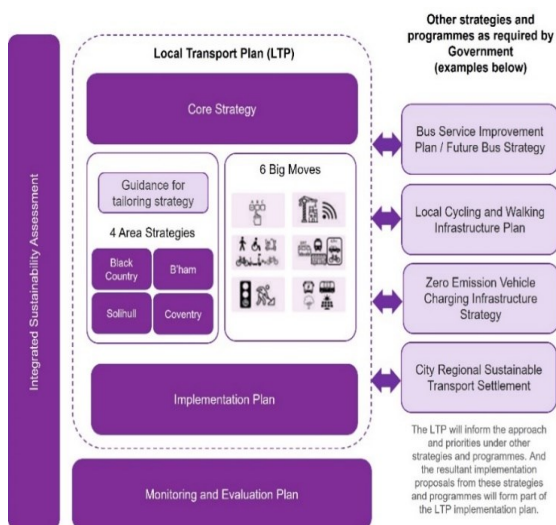
Private motor vehicles provide the majority of journeys for residents of the West Midlands now and will continue to do so into the future. However, we must also acknowledge two important facts: 1 in 4 households in the West Midlands do not have access to a car and too many cars on our constrained road network have led to several negative impacts on our neighbourhoods, such as pedestrian and cycle accidents, poor air quality, delays/congestion etc. We therefore want to create a more inclusive transport system that doesn't say that people cannot or should not drive but instead provides plenty of options to make reliable, safe and pleasant journeys by other means; whilst also supporting those people who either do not have a car now or who are only just struggling to afford one.

We have conceptualised our vision for travel through the concept of connected 15-minute neighbourhoods within a 45-minute region. It means that a good range of everyday services in our neighbourhoods can be accessed in a round trip of no more than 15 minutes, and a good range of places across our region to undertake work, leisure and socialising can be accessed within a 45 minute trip. To achieve this overall vision, it must be remembered that an investment in transport may not always be the case. We would also strongly support services and amenities coming back into neighbourhoods and communities to make them much easier to access from home.



The vision is based on options to enable people to safely and reliably walk and wheel, cycle and scoot, or ride that support households to use cars less where it is better for them to so and to give equitable access to opportunity for those who wish to live without the expense of owning or running a car. Our choices will create safe, reliable and affordable connections for everyone that are healthy, sustainable and efficient creating great places where generations will thrive.

The [West Midlands Local Transport Plan](#) (LTP) explains how we are working to deliver our vision and is the basis for the development of the Local Transport Functional Strategy, which focuses on how we will use the resources and flexibilities available through the Integrated Settlement. In all, our LTP sets out five clear Motives for Change to deliver against the Inclusive Growth Framework.



- The **Core Strategy** sets out what, how and importantly why we want to change our region to address the challenges we face now and in future, and provides the overarching aims, vision, approach and framework for transport action in the region up to the end of 2041.
- The **Six Big Moves** set out more detailed policies for thematic areas of policy affecting the whole of the West Midlands.
- Four **Area Strategies** which outline the local investment and policy proposals that will be progressed in different parts in the West Midlands and outlines priorities for developing these further.
- The LTP **Implementation Plan** sets out the detail of committed proposals and sets out a plan for further policy development.

This Local Transport Functional Strategy plans is a high-level investment plan for the actions we can take over the course of this Spending Review funded through the Integrated Settlement, aligned to and supporting the delivery of our LTP – which is broader in scope and longer-term in focus.

Funding and outcomes

Outcomes

Outcome	Outcome indicator(s)	Outputs
Improved public transport, especially bus services, in the WMCA area.	Number of trips made by bus. Bus patronage, disaggregated into commercial and concessionary patronage. Proportion of bus passengers that are satisfied or very satisfied with their service.	Improved punctuality and reliability across the bus network. Improved safety on the bus network.
Healthier and greener transport in the WMCA area	% change in active travel stages taken by walking and cycling*.	New / improved Active Travel network delivered. Provision of government-subsidised EVSE and charging devices. % of the bus fleet that is zero tailpipe emission.

Outcomes, outputs and targets are subject to confirmation by HMG. * = indicates no target for FY25

Roles, responsibilities and current functions

The Memorandum of Understand (MoU) for the Integrated Settlement sets out roles and responsibilities that cover a wider range of local and regional transport statutory and non-statutory duties shared across the WMCA and partner authorities. These roles and responsibilities, summarised below, are critical for planning, operating, managing and delivering a safe, clean and efficient transport system. The functions of the Integrated Settlement and the scope for expansion will be reviewed over time.

Integrated Settlement function	What this means
Oversight and delivery of the area's transport strategy. This includes developing local transport plans, considering how transport will support wider objectives such as employment, housing, and net zero.	WMCA developed the LTP Core Strategy, with outcomes focused on levelling up sustainable accessibility across the WMCA area, electrifying the transport system and reducing traffic through behaviour change.
Working with Local Highway Authorities to deliver local transport capital projects, including highways maintenance, small-scale renewals as well as transformational local projects. Excludes strategic national transport infrastructure.	Local authorities have a legal duty to maintain highways (including asset management of structures) and deliver critical infrastructure schemes in their local areas. WMCA will support the development and funding of these schemes through CRSTS1 and beyond.
Managing local public transport services, including but not limited to the local bus network, mass transit, local rail integration, integrated multimodal fares, network information and branding, promoting safety and tackling anti-social behaviour.	WMCA manages and coordinates the local public transport network, including local bus and metro services and oversight of the local rail franchise performance; multi modal fares, ticketing and payments including Swift Go on Rail; and promoting safety and security working with the police and emergency services.

Delivery of local active travel strategy and schemes.	WMCA and partner authorities work together to develop regional and local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP) including development and delivery of active travel schemes from Active Travel Fund(s) and CRSTS1.
Delivery of local transport decarbonisation schemes, such as the local electric vehicle infrastructure funding programmes.	WMCA partners together develop and deliver transport decarbonisation schemes. A Zero Emission Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy has been developed.
Strategic oversight of local road network and promotion of road safety.	WMCA and partner authorities collaborate to manage the Key Route Network. Our local authorities as highways & traffic authorities have legal duties to undertake urban traffic control and network management including planning, management and operational performance of the network for all users and responding to (un)planned events. We continue to support local authorities and other partners through the Regional Transport Coordination Centre to promote the Regional Road Safety Strategy.
Undertaking scalable, feasible, and tangible transport innovation, including trialling new transport-related products and processes, improving existing services via technological upgrades, and implementing regulatory changes / best practice.	WMCA and partner authorities are a trusted partner for government with expertise and maturity, and continued leadership in transport innovation.

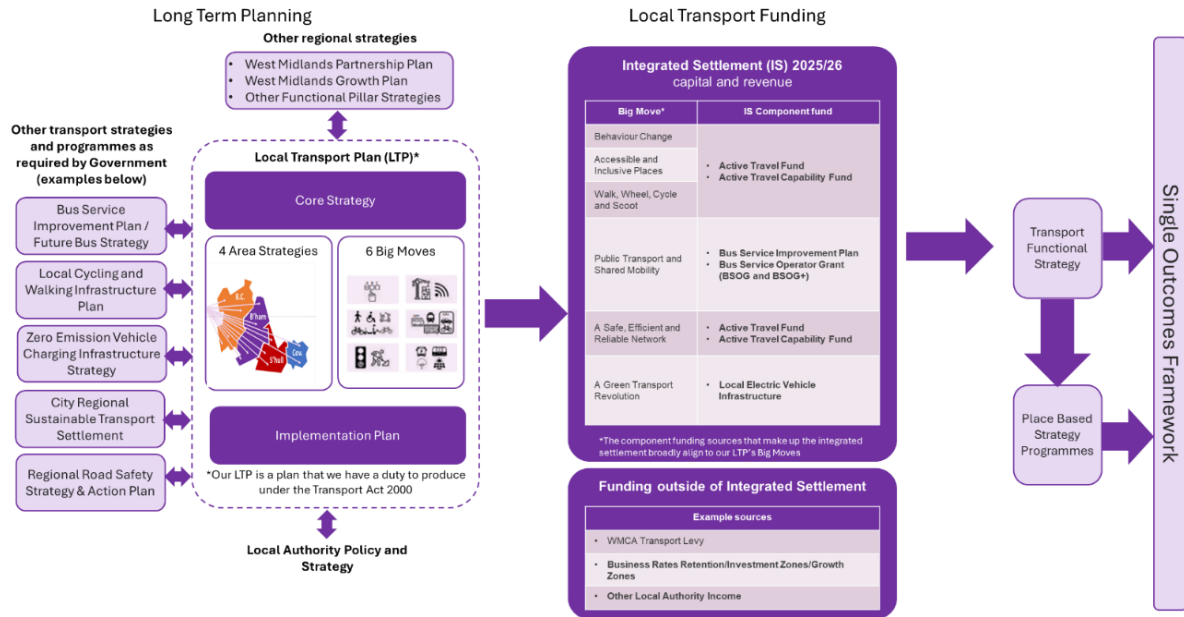
Delivering to meet the needs of residents

In delivering and operating the transport system, measures will be subject to the appropriate level of assessment by the relevant authority. We will work with relevant partners and stakeholders including WMCA's Taskforces. This will ensure that we understand potential impacts and how these can be best avoided or mitigated or enhanced where beneficial.

Integrated Settlement resources available for the coming Spending Review

Funding line	Financial year 2025 allocation	Type	Existing or newly devolved fund
Bus Service Improvement Plan	£37.1m	Revenue	Existing
Bus Service Operators Grant	£1.8m	Revenue	Existing
Bus Service Operators Grant+	£11.0m	Revenue	Existing
Active Travel	£12.34m	Capital	Existing
Active Travel Capability	£3.615m	Revenue	Existing
LEVI Fund	TBC	Capital	Existing
LEVI Fund Capability	£0.493m	Revenue	Existing

Longer Term Planning



How we will invest

We have initially identified 2025/25 integrated settlement resources that are aligned to the LTP Big Moves but also highlight wider local transport levy and CRSTS1 investment alignment. TfWM (on behalf of the WMCA and its authorities) will continue to ensure there are Journeys for Everyone, creating a better connected, more prosperous, fairer, greener and healthier region.

Building on delivery across the Big Moves - the region is starting to develop a pipeline of regional transport investment from FY 27 onwards.

Behaviour Change. Using Bus Service Improvement Plan resources devolved into the Integrated Settlement, TfWM will work with operators, local authorities and public sector partners to continue to **deliver a comprehensive passenger incentive programme (PIP)**. This programme is providing bespoke discounted offers that address affordability barriers, encourage people to return to public transport and generate new users. During 2025/26, the focus will be on stabilising the bus network but there could be opportunities for TfWM and authorities to develop a more agile behaviour change programme. The PIP is also being used to tackle social inclusion and support access for more deprived communities.

Public Transport and Shared Mobility. The region's bus network has an indisputable role in our transport system. During 2025/26 we will use Integrated Settlement funding to **maintain and sustain the current bus network** (agreed by Board, Nov 2024). This is alongside local transport levy investment to provide discretionary travel schemes supporting people who face affordability challenges. BSIP funding will be used for network support and planning is underway for post April 2025 services agreements with operators. This will be reported to WMCA Board. BSIP targets and reporting will be monitored by a Bus Reform Steering Board. Externally, reporting will be to the Enhanced Partnership Reference Group and Bus Alliance Board, with a Bus Reform Panel providing oversight on the next stages of bus reform. Outside of IS, we jointly continue to deliver the bus priority, Sprint Phase 2, Dudley Interchange and WM rail programme; Metro extensions and continued VLR development in Coventry (and Dudley); support for the operations of West Midlands Metro; and support for WMRE.

Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot. WMCA and authorities work together to develop regional and Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIP). This includes development/delivery of schemes from Active Travel Fund(s) and CRSTS1. 2025/26 Integrated Settlement investment will help to **deliver current Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans**. We will also refresh the regional LCWIP and develop a programme business case – running up to 2030. Development and oversight will be provided by an existing TfWM and LA Working Group and reported through to STOG.

Accessible and Inclusive Places. CRSTS1 – which will be included in the Integrated Settlement from FY26 onwards – is delivering place-based priorities, including: Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and Birmingham Eastside extensions, Coventry South/Gigafactory and Very Light Rail (VLR); infrastructure on the Walsall to Wolverhampton rail line corridor and the Greater Icknield and Smethwick corridor; development works for UK Central and East Birmingham North Solihull (EBNS) area initiatives; and Local Network Improvement Plans (LNIPs). As CRSTS2 programme emerges, we will develop interventions over the period that support place-based priorities.

Safe, Efficient and Reliable Road Network. We'll better the manage the local and regional road network to deliver on policy priorities such as bus reform and our longer-term outcomes. The Regional Road Safety Strategy is a leading partnership model, and we will jointly develop this using local and stakeholder resourcing. Highway maintenance will continue to be provided to local authorities (CRSTS1) for prioritisation (balanced against stretched statutory functions) and delivery. In addition, here are new opportunities to forge closer working relationships, as WMCA and local authorities begin a new era of collaboration on local road network management and UTC operations.

Green Transport Revolution. Local authorities play a key role in supporting installation of public chargepoints in key locations across the region and delivering wider net zero neighbourhoods. The West Midlands Zero Emissions Vehicle Charging and Refuelling Infrastructure Strategy already sets out priorities for 2025/26 investment, including our plans to **deliver 9 ultra-rapid charging stations** across the region. A programme business case developed collaboratively with local authorities will invest the 2024/25 LEVI capital (£14.5m), which can be spent up to 2028. The figures for 2025/26 are TBC. This OBC is scheduled to be submitted to Q4 2024/25, with an FBC scheduled for Q2 2025/26. Delivery will commence from Q4 2025/26. Oversight will be provided by the WM ULEV Officer (joint TfWM and LA) Working Group and LEVI Capital Project Board (to be established) and reported through to STOG.

Place-Based Strategies

Transport investment acts as a key catalyst for inclusive economic growth by unlocking critical investment and housing opportunities, supporting new industries, connecting residents to employment and training opportunities and addressing transport inequality in areas of high deprivation.

The four LTP Area Strategies provide evidence, through common metrics and qualitative information, on the key transport challenges and context of sub-regional geographies. The LTP Area Strategies inform the development of the delivery pipeline. This will reflect the logic map developed for the LTP. As part of the process of developing the delivery pipeline, areas identified within Place Based Strategies will be prioritised for investment.

Place-Based Strategies have been under development by local authorities over the course of 2025, with iterations of drafts being provided to Functional Strategy leads to inform the development of the Functional Strategies. Place-Based Strategies have been particularly helpful in setting out local authorities' overall objectives for different geographies, the priority schemes and subject-relevant context.

Looking further ahead, projects featured in Place-Based Strategies will be considered as part of the pipeline for the second round of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (FY27 onwards). We will engage with local authorities on the process for doing this.

We're already leveraging CRSTS1 investment to improve housing, skills and employment outcomes for places. Our future place-based investment will be targeted at maximising the impact of the significant levels of infrastructure and in delivery across transport, housing and regeneration.

For 2025, where we have flexibility over new resources, initially over active travel schemes (and electric vehicle infrastructure to follow) and, LAs have the opportunity to put forward mature proposals that support their Place-Based Strategies as part of prioritisation discussions and scheme development activity.

Place Based Strategy delivery and investments (2025-26 and into 2027)

	Black Country	Coventry	Birmingham	Solihull
Behaviour Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Travel Points/Mobility Hubs Swift Ticketing & Payments (cEMV/MaaS) 			
Accessible & Inclusive Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Smethwick & Icknield Inclusive Growth Corridor Darlaston & Willenhall Stations Sustainable Access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foleshill Transport Package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greater Icknield & Smethwick Corridor EBNS Corridor Snow Hill Growth Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Birmingham & North Solihull Corridor
Public Transport & Shared Mobility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBHE Metro and Dudley Interchange Darlaston and Willenhall Stations A34 Sprint Phase 2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coventry All Electric Bus City/ZEBRA VLR Route City Centre Demonstrator Tile Hill Station Interchange and P&R 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Birmingham Eastside Metro Camp Hill Line Stations Cross City Bus Priority Routes A45/A34 Sprint Ph2 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Solihull Rail Station UKC - Solihull – Bus Priority A46 Sprint Phase 2
Walk, Wheel, Cycle and Scoot	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WBHE Walking and Cycling connectivity Wolverhampton, Dudley & Stourbridge Centres – Active Travel A454 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor A4123 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor A449 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor LCWIP (ATF) schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coventry South/Gigafactory Links (London Rd Segregated Cycleway) LCWIP (ATF) schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One Station (New Street Station/Moor Station Link) City Centre Active Travel Connections to Interchange Selly Oak to Longbridge Segregated Cycling A46 segregated Cycling LCWIP (ATF) schemes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dickens Heath to Solihull LCWIP Knowle To Solihull LCWIP Chester Road Corridor – Segregated Cycleway and Capacity Enhancement LCWIP (ATF) schemes M42 Public Transport and Active Travel bridge links to HS2 Hub
A Safe, Efficient and Reliable Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor A41 Moxley Walsall Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foleshill Transport Package 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highways maintenance and structures 	
A Green Transport Revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ULEV + Ultra Rapid Charging Transit Stations + LEVI schemes Obligation to maintain bus network funding Local Network Improvement Plan 			

We are committed to continued transport investment as it acts as a key catalyst for inclusive economy, such as unlocking critical investment and housing opportunities, supporting new industries and addressing transport inequality in areas of high deprivation. Through place-based strategies we look to work together to ensure local growth is enabled and how we can improve accessibility – with transport acting as a key enabler to delivering the inclusive growth ambitions.

We are already leveraging CRSTS1 investment to improve the outcomes for residents around housing, skills and employment. Our future place-based investment will be targeted at maximising the impact of the significant levels of infrastructure and in delivery across transport, housing and regeneration. This will be important in supporting the development and delivery of Investment and Growth Zones.

Integration with other Functional Strategies

Housing & Regeneration. The LTP Core Strategy sets out a future vision whereby “*The West Midlands has a public transport system that fulfils our goal of being a 45-minute region and connected 15-minute neighbourhoods*”. Transport infrastructure investment is already supporting the unlocking of housing, land and regeneration opportunities e.g. at Greater Icknield and Smethwick Corridor, Walsall to Wolverhampton rail line and at Perry Barr. We will jointly invest to use land more effectively and deliver capital investments to unlock additional housing and regeneration. **This will lead to high quality and inclusive neighbourhoods and more homes for the West Midlands.**

Net Zero. As set out in the LTP Core Strategy, Transport and Net Zero pillars are intrinsically interlinked. The Green Transport Revolution Big Move, we will support the transition to a zero-emission vehicle fleet in the region to radically reduce transport emissions. The right recharging and refuelling network is needed to support an accelerated shift away from internal combustion engines; and requires investment to support rapid transition of the public transport and shared transport fleet.

Local authorities play a key role in installing local chargepoints in key locations across the region and delivering wider net zero neighbourhoods. They will also be important in determining the best types of charging infrastructure for areas, as well as ensuring the chargepoints are interconnected with other local transport networks and local energy infrastructure. TfWM will work with local stakeholders throughout the development of the updated Regional Energy Strategy and Zero Emissions Vehicle Charging and Refuelling Infrastructure Strategy. More adaptation action is required nationally, regionally and locally to respond to increased environmental challenges and climate risks. Alongside the ‘safe, efficient and reliable network’ Big Move we will target investment to respond to and address environmental challenges.

Local Growth and Place. Our long term LTP Core Strategy ambition is to deliver inclusive economic growth and sustain economic success. However, all the Big Moves identified challenges to achieving this. We have diverse and individual needs of communities - appreciating our regions demographic profiles; by different subgroups, is required to understand their accessibility levels. There is also no one size fits all approach to tackling accessibility. Through the functional and place-based strategies we look to work together to ensure local growth is enabled and how we can improve accessibility – with transport acting as a key enabler to delivering the inclusive growth ambitions.

Our region is a place to test and trial innovative new ways of developing, managing and maintaining the transport network and already exploiting our strengths in products such as public transport, connected and autonomous vehicles, 5G, Mobility as a Service and modern infrastructure construction techniques as well as battery technology to provide world-class transport services for residents and businesses. Alongside the Local Growth and Place pillar we will invest and exploit wider funding and private investment to deliver innovation opportunities, making journeys more affordable, reliable and safer for customers and businesses.

Adult Skills. For some people and businesses, there sometimes isn’t an affordable, trusted and reliable public transport network to get people where they need, when they need to go. The region’s bus network has an indisputable role in our transport system. Recent economic research undertaken by Steer, on behalf of TfWM, demonstrate that for every £1 invested into buses - a further £12 is generated back into our economy - showing its importance as an employer and investor in the local, regional, and national economy.

We will continue to use the local transport levy and single settlement to provide discretionary travel fares and tickets targeted at people in the West Midlands who face the greatest affordability challenges. We will support different ways to pay to access the system, ensuring everyone can access the cheapest fares, helping young people and economically inactive adults into the labour market, unemployed adults into good work.

Inclusive growth

Our LTP Core Strategy sets out what, how and importantly why we want to change our region to offset problems and issues we see now and how those may worsen in the future. In all, our LTP sets out five clear Motives for Change to deliver Inclusive Growth.

Funding delivery

Funding Line	Allocation Mechanism	CA-LA funding delivery forum	Decision/ communication of LA allocations / projects	Requirements on LAs to access funding	Document required by CA to release funding	CA approval timeline
Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) Grant	Contractual agreements with network operators	Strategic Transport Officers Group	N/a	N/a	New Programme Business Case	WMCA Board - March
BSIP (capacity and capability)			N/a	N/a		
Bus Service Operators Grant			N/a	N/a		
Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG+)			N/a	N/a		
Active Travel Fund	Pipeline / prioritisation then onward awarded	Strategic Transport Officers Group	Post-April following prioritisation discussion	Prioritisation process	Business Case	Investment Board / Panel – TBD
Active Travel Capability Fund	Onward awarded				Business Case	DSO - April
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund	TBD		Pre-April (via STOG)	TBD	N/a	Exec Director