

Birmingham Transport Plan Cabinet Report Briefing Notes

Date:

08 October 2021

Report summary for Cabinet:

The Birmingham Transport Plan sets out the vision and principles for transport investment in the period to 2031.

In early 2020, public consultation on the Draft BTP was held and this document summarises the feedback received. This feedback has informed the final version of the plan which seeks adoption at this Cabinet meeting.

The vision of the remains the same, however, the Principles have been updated to reflect new developments in the city – especially insights resulting from changes in travel patterns during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

Four key Principles - summarised:

1. Road space will be re-allocated to support the delivery of a fully integrated, high quality, public transport system
2. City centre transformed to create safe and healthy environments for walking and cycling, as well as priority routes for public transport
3. Active travel will be prioritised in local centres and neighbourhoods. A limit of 20mph will be standard on all local roads.
4. Parking will be used as a means to manage demand for travel by car and land currently occupied by car parking will be put to more productive use

Birmingham is blighted by poor air quality and significant health inequalities.

We know that our over-dependence on car is bad for the health of ourselves and our families, bad for our communities and bad for business, and bad for the future in terms of transport's contribution to carbon emissions leading to climate change.

Investment in our transport system and implementation of schemes that prioritise people over cars, will help develop a cleaner, greener, healthier and more sustainable environment.

The declaration of a climate emergency and the introduction of Birmingham's Clean Air Zone was a signal of our intention and an important first step towards establishing a net zero emissions city for the benefit of our citizens, particularly children, whilst standing toe to toe with investment competitors nationally and internationally.

Even without the current climate emergency, we want to do all this anyway to get our transport system up to scratch, tackle congestion and other issues. However, the climate emergency sets the pace for us to make these changes now – before it's too late.

The measures outlined in the BTP aim to serve a future Birmingham that is home to more people, and that is a better environment in which to live and work for everyone, irrespective of age, disability or income. It is about creating a better Birmingham for everyone.

What did the public consultation say?

The consultation attracted 619 responses from individuals and responses from 44 organisations. 76% (489 respondents) said they agreed with the BTP.

Why has it taken so long to adopt?

Prior to the pandemic we published our draft Birmingham Transport Plan with the intention of adopting it by the end of 2020.

In March 2020 the Council went into emergency planning mode. We took decisive action and decided to bring forward aspects of the Birmingham Transport Plan that would help with safe social distancing, encourage more people to walk and cycle short journeys, and maintain safe public transport for our key workers.

These plans were detailed in a new Emergency Transport Plan and the first set of measures were delivered through the Government's first tranche of Emergency Active Travel Funding.

Following the delivery of the emergency transport measures we delivered in 2020, we have already had reports of quieter streets with better air quality and parents finding that it is safer and more pleasant to walk, scoot or cycle with their children to school.

Birmingham is set to receive circa £4.5 million in the second tranche of funding from the Department for Transport Active Travel Fund and we hope to use this funding to:

- Develop, expand or make more permanent the emergency measures we implemented in 2020
- Deliver some new active travel schemes focussed on supporting a green, low carbon recovery – including more pop-up cycle lanes, further walking improvements in local centres, and further development of Places for People and the City Centre Segments scheme.

An engagement programme with residents and businesses is already underway.

Are there plans to close the A38 through the city centre?

The BTP does not contain a firm proposal to do this at this stage. The plan does not contain any specific schemes or proposals, it's a set of policies and principles

The vision is for a city centre that no longer needs the A38 in its current form, because people are travelling in a different way.

Where's the delivery plan for the BTP?

The BTP Delivery Plan is currently under development. While the BTP provides the vision and guiding principles, the Delivery Plan will provide the detailed interventions required to deliver the vision, including infrastructure, policy and travel behaviour measures required.

Where's the funding for schemes coming from?

Interventions identified within the Delivery Plan will be developed to a "shelf ready" stage, enabling the City Council to be in an enhanced position to explore new funding opportunities as they arise in the future. These include government funding programmes such as the Levelling Up Fund, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, the Bus Back Better Fund, and the Active Travel Fund.