



# DRAFT WEST MIDLANDS FREIGHT STRATEGY: Supporting our Economy, Tackling Carbon



# West Midlands Freight Strategy

Supporting our economy; tackling carbon

**West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority**

## **Confidential**

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# Quality Management

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# 1 Introduction

1.1.1 The West Midlands is at the heart of the UK and through our devolution deal we have been given more powers to shape our own economic plan. Our excellent transport links nationally and internationally are key to our prosperity and future growth.

1.1.2 At the same time, the region is facing both tremendous challenges and opportunities arising from major infrastructure investments and the disruption that they will bring as they are delivered. Maintaining and improving the resilience of our networks at such a time is essential.

1.1.3 This freight strategy will provide us with tools to work together with businesses, and a programme to deliver a West Midlands that shines as a beacon for best practice in urban logistics management providing:

- Improved access to the West Midlands by road and rail
- New ways of managing deliveries which provide businesses and residents with high quality access to goods and services
- A range of techniques to reduce emissions, noise, and congestion caused by goods vehicles
- Support for the introduction of very low emissions or zero emissions delivery systems
- Safer vehicles and reduced goods vehicle accidents, particularly those accidents which involve vulnerable road users
- A commitment to deliver these improvements through a partnership with businesses and government.

1.1.4 The West Midlands Freight Strategy seeks to do more than enhance our existing strengths. It outlines an approach whereby the West Midlands can be seen as a beacon of best practice in freight management, where efficient logistics is seen as a vital engine for the economy, but imposes a much lower impact on our communities, our environment, and our transport infrastructure.

1.1.5 This is our vision:

**“By 2030, the West Midlands will have safer, more reliable, sustainable, and efficient freight and logistics movements to, from and within the West Midlands. We will be seen as a beacon of best practice, in which logistics supports economic growth and boosts productivity, with significantly reduced impacts on communities and the environment.”**

## 1.2 The Need for a Strategy

1.2.1 The recently signed West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Agreement provides new powers to support policies and actions across all modes and all transport users. Efficient logistics is recognised as being a key issue for the new combined authority. The agreement recognises and supports the importance of the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan: Movement For Growth. This freight strategy is aligned with, and feeds into, the Strategic Transport Plan.

1.2.2 It is important the West Midlands has an integrated freight strategy to provide a framework for steering investment locally by differing authorities, LEPs and bodies. At the same time, the freight strategy will advise and inform the longer term decision making and prioritisation occurring by national bodies such as Network Rail, Highways England and the Department for Transport (DfT).

1.2.3 The movement of freight is not restricted by administrative boundaries, nor does it occur in isolation from other users of our local and strategic transport networks. This means interaction with and impacts on other users and our communities, whilst also having impacts on efforts towards reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality and enhancing road safety.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Freight Strategy

1.3.1 The multi-agency, cross boundary governance of the West Midlands, along with the private sector nature of freight movements, means that the Freight Strategy will undertake a range of functions including:

- Provide a framework to inform and steer transport investment programmes developed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) / metropolitan Local Authorities across the metropolitan area
- Set out a framework to work with industry to deliver strategic objectives at the same time as improving sustainability, efficiency and attracting investment
- Inform and advise land use planning documents and processes by planning authorities and be deemed material consideration in planning decisions/ inquiries
- Inform, advise and help prioritise decision making by partner bodies such as LEP and Local Transport Boards
- Inform, advise and help prioritise decision making relating to future Major Schemes towards supporting freight and the economy;
- Outline the West Midlands position towards strategic transport assets and corridors beyond our boundary, to inform decision making by national bodies such as the Highways England and Network Rail
- Influence Government policy development and
- Enable the West Midlands to be seen as a beacon of logistics best practice and an excellent location for businesses to grow.

### Freight and the West Midlands Devolution Deal

1.3.2 The devolution deal, signed in November 2015, for the creation of a West Midlands Combined Authority, contained a number of things that could impact on freight initiatives in the future. These included:

- Responsibility over a 'Key Route Network' of local authority roads. This could include initiatives to ensure that freight is given some priority on this network.
- A commitment to develop a new Roads Investment Strategy, collectively with central government, which will target investments specifically to facilitate the movement of people and goods on our roads.
- A commitment to work collectively with Network Rail and Highways England to better integrate the needs of local and national networks.

1.3.3 Overall, the Combined Authority has been given the remit to deliver economic growth across the region and facilitating freight movements, as well as securing jobs and productivity in the freight sector will be an important part of their work.

## 1.4 Relationships

1.4.1 The WMMFS has been influenced by a range of other strategy documents and stakeholders locally and nationally. In turn, it will play a central role influencing regional and national policy. Figure 1 illustrates the key relationships.

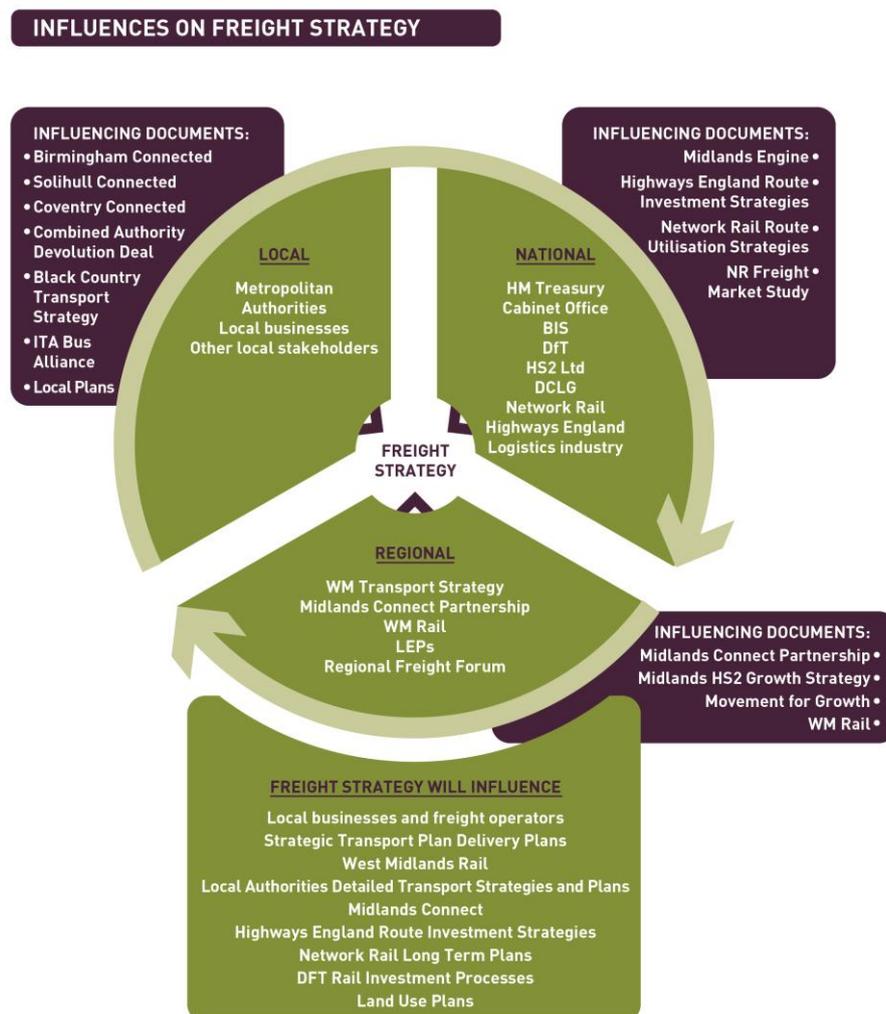


Figure 1: Key relationships

1.4.2 The relationship with local businesses and the logistics industry will be central to successful delivery of the strategy. A Regional Logistics Forum will ensure that the needs of freight users and operators are heard, and that policies and plans are not only deliverable but will support a growing and efficient logistics sector in the West Midlands.

## 1.5 Freight Strategy Coverage

1.5.1 Reflecting the administrative boundary of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), this Freight Strategy covers the seven local authorities which comprise the metropolitan area.

1.5.2 However, it is appropriate that the freight strategy also outlines priorities and aspirations for strategic transport corridors and assets beyond the Combined Authority area to our key trading destinations such as the deep sea ports, ferry ports or other major urban areas.

- 1.5.3 The WMCA has coordinated the development of the Freight Strategy in partnership with the seven metropolitan local authorities:
- Birmingham City Council
  - Coventry City Council
  - Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
  - Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
  - Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
  - Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
  - City of Wolverhampton
- 1.5.4 There are also a number of non-constituent members of the Combined Authority and other local authorities may become constituent members in the future.
- 1.5.5 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were set up to reflect local economic geographies, which do not necessarily have to align with local authority boundaries, meaning that the three LEPs covering the metropolitan area also cover economic areas outside the metropolitan area boundary. Three LEP's cover the metropolitan area:
- Greater Birmingham & Solihull
  - Black Country
  - Coventry & Warwickshire
- 1.5.6 Each LEP has plans to address barriers to growth and strategies to boost economic development and job creation. These strategies have been taken into account in the development of the WMMFS.
- 1.5.7 At the same time, LEPs will have a prominent role in future major scheme prioritisation, reflecting the requirements of their growth strategies, and are key members of Local Transport Boards. As a consequence, LEPs are key stakeholders in the development and delivery of the strategy.
- 1.5.8 The three LEPs have produced Strategic Economic Plans at the Combined Authority level which outline their economic priorities. In all three cases, the importance of freight transport and good connectivity is acknowledged, and this strategy reflects the transport priorities contained in the SEPs.

## 1.6 Midlands Connect

- 1.6.1 Midlands Connect is an ambitious initiative to identify transport connectivity improvements to maximise long-term economic growth in the Midlands. This will provide a platform for engagement with Government, High Speed 2 Limited, Network Rail and Highways England, to influence long-term investment in the strategic transport networks across the Midlands.
- 1.6.2 Midlands Connect brings together a partnership between LEPs and Local Authorities across the Midlands (working with Network Rail and Highways England) to develop the strongest possible case for strategic transport investment in the Midlands. The focus is on connecting towns and cities in the Midlands, both to each other and to key cities and gateways outside the Midlands, to realise the region's full economic growth potential.

- 1.6.3 Midlands Connect will seek to make the best use of the existing transport networks, while supporting enhancements, where necessary, in order to facilitate economic growth across the region. Midlands Connect comprises two key workstreams, as follows:
- Strategic Communications: developing a ‘One Voice’ approach to ensure that the Midlands reaches a unified position on what strategic interventions are required to maximise the growth potential of the region; and
  - A programme of technical work: in parallel with Route Studies by Network Rail and Highways England, this is focused on building the strongest economic case for strategic transport investment in the region.

- 1.6.4 WMCA will work through Midlands Connect to influence the provision of strategic freight infrastructure and to improve connections within the region and externally.

## 1.7 The Changing Relationship Between Government And Freight

- 1.7.1 In the past, freight was often seen by government in its many forms as a problem to be addressed – particularly in terms of impact on communities. Hence the main policy reaction was to restrict and regulate freight movement, particularly in urban areas.

- 1.7.2 More recently, local and national government have come to understand the importance of partnership – listening to freight users and operators and involving them in the development of policies through, for example, Freight Quality Partnerships.

- 1.7.3 Today the view is more sophisticated. The logistics industry is recognised as an important employer, and freight transport as a major enabler of efficient business. Government recognises that working with industry at a regional level can have a significant impact on efficiency as well as reducing emissions and improving safety.

- 1.7.4 The role of central government within the freight sector is to focus on infrastructure investment, regulation, licensing, safety and compliance. This leaves an important opportunity for regional and local government to provide an environment where freight moves (by appropriate modes) freely, efficiently, safely and sustainably to service needs of local businesses.

- 1.7.5 Local and regional government needs industry links to engage decision-makers and make changes possible.

- 1.7.6 Over time, government has recognised that it can’t solve freight issues in isolation – freight trips are generated by business and consumer demand, so it needs to understand these and facilitate, not just constrain and restrict.

- 1.7.7 There are huge opportunities, through partnership working, to change the way that freight is managed and transported, with significant benefits for communities and business.

# 2 Opportunities and Challenges

## 2.1 The West Midlands

- 2.1.1 Freight and logistics movements are vital to the West Midlands economy and supply the goods and services used by its people every day. Freight movements do not simply occur but rather they reflect our economic activity and provide the means to trade nationally and internationally.
- 2.1.2 With a population of 2.8 million, 1.1 million households, 1.3 million jobs and 66,000 individual businesses of varying sizes in the metropolitan area alone, the region is served by a complex network of freight and logistics movements, which impose a variety of demands on our transport networks.
- 2.1.3 The West Midlands metropolitan area is located at the heart of the UK and is at the centre of the UK's motorway and railway networks. Our location gives us strong access to major domestic and international markets and provides the West Midlands with a strategic economic advantage, with 90% of UK businesses and population being located within a four hour road travel time from the West Midlands, demonstrated by Figure 2.
- 2.1.4 However, the strategic geographical advantage of the metropolitan area comes with a cost. Being the crossroads of the UK also means that our transport networks must carry large volumes of traffic between other regions or, indeed, other countries.
- 2.1.5 The impact of road congestion, reflecting the national and local trips our transport networks carry, costs the metropolitan area economy some £2.3bn per year in higher costs, lost business and reduced productivity. The impact nationally of congestion in our area will be even higher.
- 2.1.6 Within this figure of £2.3bn, despite representing just 6% of all trips, congestion to road freight movements costs the economy some £600M per year<sup>1</sup>, almost a quarter of the estimated annualised cost, due to the high value of freight loads.
- 2.1.7 The metropolitan area faces challenges on the rail network which has seen considerable freight and passenger growth. Again, the rail network has to provide efficient services for passengers as well as freight and for long distance inter regional traffic as well as traffic to and from the West Midlands.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: West Midlands "Gridlock or Growth? Congestion Management Study" 2007

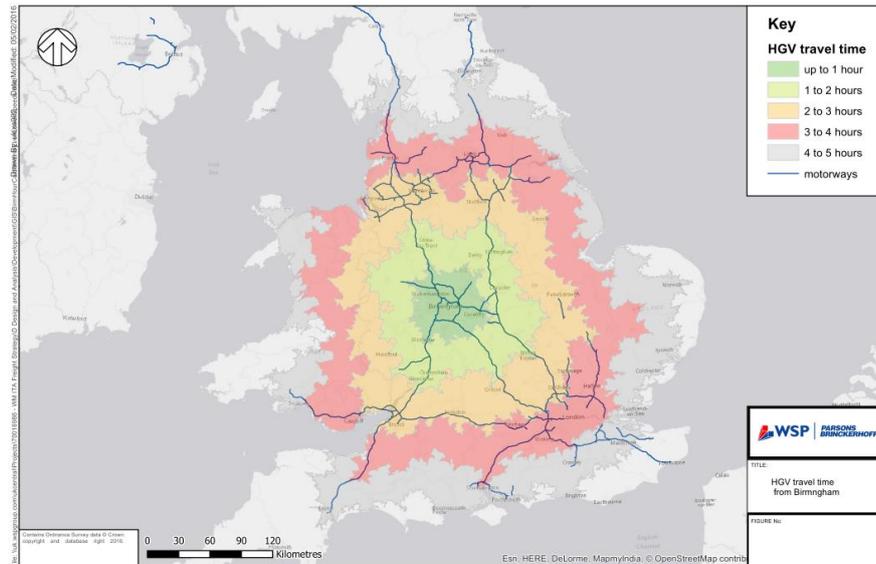


Figure 2: Road Based Journey Times from the West Midlands

## 2.2 Opportunities

### Freight Transport and the Economy

2.2.1 Today our transport networks carry an increasing mix of national, regional and local journeys undertaken by a mixture of freight, public and private transport. Transport networks across the West Midlands regularly suffer chronic levels of congestion, especially on the road network, which are having impacts on the West Midlands economy, constraining our ability to attract investment, create jobs, and to trade with the rest of the UK, Europe and the global market place.

2.2.2 The link between investment in transport infrastructure and sustainable economic benefits has been evaluated and, whilst definitions differ, broadly, the following seven economic benefits can be captured by investment in transport infrastructure:

- Improved business efficiency, notably by travel time savings, improving journey time reliability and; travel quality. A 5 per cent reduction in travel time for all business travel on the national road network could generate cost savings of around £2.5 billion<sup>2</sup>
- Stimulating business investment and innovation by supporting economies of scale and new ways of working
- Agglomeration of economies which brings firms closer (in space or time) to other firms or workers in the same sector
- Improved labour market efficiency, enabling firms to access a larger labour supply and; wider employment opportunities for people and those seeking work
- Increasing competition by opening access to new markets, principally by integration of world markets
- Increasing domestic and international trade by reducing trading costs, and
- Attracting globally mobile businesses to locate in an area by providing an attractive business environment, access to markets and skilled employees.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Department for Transport “Eddington Transport Study – The Case for Action” (2006)

## Logistics As An Employer

- 2.2.3 The Logistics Sector in the West Midlands (region) employs 155,000 people across 18,690 companies. Including those who work in logistics occupations in other sectors, the actual size of the sector is 222,600 people which equates to 9% of the region's workforce<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.2.4 Managers comprise 20% of the logistics workforce in the West Midlands. Of these, only 54% hold a level 3 or above qualification. 52% of staff are employed in transport and machine operative roles (includes LGV and van drivers) and elementary occupations (warehouse worker, postal workers and couriers). This is a much higher proportion than all sector data of 21% for these two major occupational groups.
- 2.2.5 17% of logistics employers report skills gaps in their workforce.
- 2.2.6 Innovation in logistics requires new technologies and new skills. Developing and offering new logistics services will provide local businesses with opportunities to improve efficiency while attracting investment from new businesses.

## Logistics is Changing

- 2.2.7 The volume of freight moved (tonne kilometres) is no longer closely linked to changes in GDP, so while GDP may grow, the volume of freight grows at a slower rate. This reflects changes such as the move towards a service based economy and away from heavy raw materials, as well as increased efficiency.
- 2.2.8 Movement of freight is becoming more efficient, using larger vehicles (such as 44T articulated lorries and double deck trailers), and more efficient distribution systems so that goods vehicle traffic volumes have recently been falling or stable. Nonetheless, as reported in the Data Report, articulated heavy goods vehicle volumes are forecast to grow by around 22% between 2015 and 2025.
- 2.2.9 More dramatic changes are occurring in the rail freight sector. In the last year the volume of coal carried has plummeted by around 50%, but the number of containers carried is growing strongly. Continued strength in trade through ports and the development of new Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges is forecast to increase rail freight volume and see a change from a freight railway focused on bulk commodities to one dominated by the movement of food and consumer goods.
- 2.2.10 Most significant of all is the rapid growth in movements of Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs), which includes vehicles under 3.5T, notably vans. This traffic includes freight movements but also servicing and other businesses, such as tradesmen and engineers. LGV traffic has grown by 20% over the last 10 years<sup>4</sup> and is forecast to grow by 50% over the next 20 years<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Skills for Logistics West Midlands Labour Market Fact Sheet

<sup>4</sup> DfT Road Traffic Estimates: Great Britain 2014

<sup>5</sup> DfT Road Traffic Forecasts 2015

2.2.11 What is driving these changes? And how is logistics likely to change in the future? There are a number of important influences, some of which have contradicting impacts on freight transport. These include:

- Continued increase in international trade
- Movement towards centralised manufacturing and distribution (for example, the growth of huge national distribution centres for retailers)
- Internet shopping and home deliveries, including demand for same day delivery
- The internet of things and big data – allowing real time management of supply chains and transport movements
- The sustainability agenda, leading to the development of ultra-low emission vehicles and changes in the way supply chains are structured

2.2.12 These changes lead to challenges, but also to opportunities for the West Midlands. These opportunities and challenges include:

- Providing the right infrastructure for changing patterns of goods transport
- Ensuring that the West Midlands is in the lead in adapting to different supply chains and technologies
- Attracting innovative logistics businesses to invest and grow in the West Midlands

### Smart City Logistics

2.2.13 Efficient, economic, safe and sustainable freight movement is absolutely essential to our everyday lives and is the lifeblood of our town and city economies, ensuring we receive the goods we need at the time and location we want, in perfect condition.

2.2.14 Whether we call it “City Logistics”, “Urban Logistics” or “Smart Logistics” there is increasing recognition that new approaches to managing freight in urban areas can offer huge benefits to businesses and to communities.

2.2.15 These new approaches fit alongside other developments in society and transport management that mean that more information is available in real time to enable truly “Smart” solutions to logistics problems. For example, Smart Deliveries can be managed in real time, making use of information on which loading bays are available. Smart Hybrid Technology can be used to switch goods vehicles to electric mode when passing through areas of known poor air quality.

2.2.16 To date, many sustainable distribution projects at the local, national and European levels have focused on the wide variety of individual freight transport measures which can be implemented to help improve local urban and interurban freight performance, such as;

- Use of Consolidation Centres
- Retiming to out-of-hours deliveries
- Establishing urban delivery platforms
- Controlling freight vehicle access
- Alternative/innovative mode use for urban freight shipments (e.g. freight tram or barge)
- Low emission zones and vehicles
- Freight routeing and signposting

- 2.2.17 All of these measures are potential solutions to help improve urban freight movement, but often individual freight management measures (or a small cluster of measures) are introduced simply because they seem like a good idea or there is some political will to trial them.
- 2.2.18 This ‘piecemeal’ approach does not necessarily involve, at the outset, the collection of data for analysis to actually understand the exact nature of local freight movement and its associated challenges, nor the development of coherent urban freight management strategies, with clear objectives and corresponding action plans with clear targets, timescales, deliverables and responsibilities.
- 2.2.19 Effective, coherent, integrated urban freight management planning involves a comprehensive process that begins with:
- Data collection of freight traffic flows, leading to -
  - Analysis and interpretation of issues, to understand the precise ‘nature of freight’ movement locally, resulting in -
  - The development and implementation of freight strategies and action plans, requiring input from -
  - Appropriate delivery bodies, fully engaged with and involving industry, overseeing -
  - Innovative yet deliverable measures entirely appropriate for the specific environment
  - All supported by ongoing evaluation to understand which measures worked well and why
- 2.2.20 This approach, built on data to highlight the actual freight issues, enables an informed Freight Strategy and supporting interventions to be developed.

## 2.3 Challenges

### Freight transport and Carbon

- 2.3.1 Transport in general, and freight transport in particular, is a major contributor to carbon emissions and also to other emissions which are harmful on a more local level.
- 2.3.2 The UK legally committed to reducing carbon emissions by 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050 under the Climate Change Act (2009). The transport sector (including aviation and international shipping) is the third largest sector for the source of UK greenhouse gas emissions. In 2013, the transport sector accounted for 23% of all the UK’s domestic greenhouse gas emissions, as demonstrated in Figure 3.
- 2.3.3 Within the transport sector, private vehicles account for more than half of all transport emissions (53%). Heavy Goods Vehicles account for 21% of all transport emissions with Light Duty Vehicles accounting for 13%, meaning the road freight sector contributes 34% of transport emissions, as outlined in Figure 4, despite freight representing just 19% of all vehicle miles undertaken in the UK<sup>6</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Source: Department for Transport Statistics Table TRA0101 “Road traffic (vehicle miles) by vehicle type in Great Britain, annual 2014”

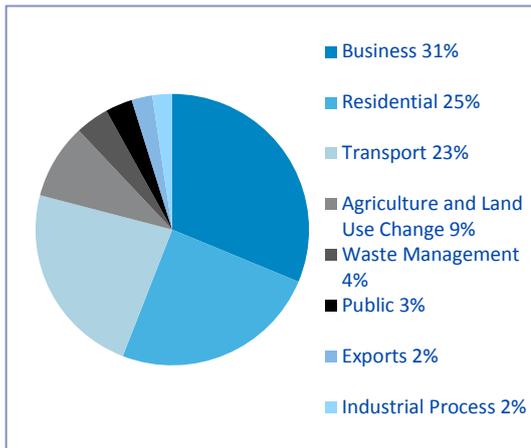


Figure 3: UK GHG Emissions by Sector, 2013<sup>7</sup>

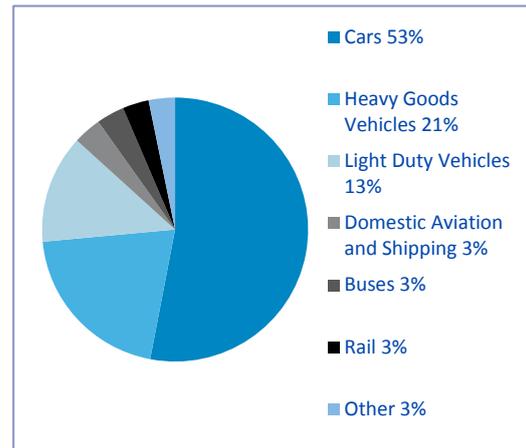


Figure 4: UK GHG Emissions from Transport by Mode, 2013<sup>8</sup>

## Freight Transport and Communities

- 2.3.4 Carbon emissions are a global issue, but other impacts of logistics are of great local significance including:
- Emission of harmful pollutants such as NO<sub>x</sub> and Particulate Matter (PM)
  - Noise, light, and visual intrusion from vehicles and other logistics activities
  - Accidents involving goods vehicles
- 2.3.5 HGVs contributed around 1.23 thousand tonnes of PM smaller than 2.5 micrometers in 2012. This was a decrease of 16 per cent from 2011 and continued a downward trend in particulate emissions. However, HGVs and LGVs remain a major source of particulate matter, particularly in the West Midlands.
- 2.3.6 Freight transport is also a major contributor of NO<sub>x</sub> emissions in urban areas. At the location in the West Midlands with the highest level of NO<sub>x</sub> recorded, it is estimated that 64% of NO<sub>x</sub> measured was emitted from local traffic, and 33% of local traffic emissions were from freight vehicles specifically (most from LGVs).
- 2.3.7 A significant proportion of urban and roadside locations in the West Midlands were considered to have exceeded annual limits in 2013.
- 2.3.8 Noise from HGV traffic can be a concern, particularly at night, and particularly for neighbours of logistics activities (where light pollution can also be an issue).
- 2.3.9 Urban road freight movements inevitably have interaction with other road users and such interaction gives rise to potential accidents involving other road users, including cyclists and pedestrians.
- 2.3.10 Between 1999 and 2012. In total there were 3,520 collisions involving LGVs and HGVs, of which 93 were fatal and 372 were 'serious'. These figures include motorways and trunk roads.

<sup>7</sup> Source: Final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2013

<sup>8</sup> Source: Final UK greenhouse gas emissions national statistics 2013

## Network Capacity and Reliability

- 2.3.11 There are 10 sections of motorway in and around the metropolitan area which the DfT identifies as being in the lowest 10% of motorways for journey reliability, measured as average vehicle delay (in minutes) experienced for every ten miles driven on the network.
- 2.3.12 In addition, businesses in the West Midlands are impacted by congestion on trunk routes in other regions, routes which they rely on to serve markets in the UK and overseas.
- 2.3.13 Capacity is becoming a constraint on the rail network. More trains can be handled on the direct “F2N” route between Felixstowe and the Midlands once a series of investments are complete. Access to Southampton is constrained by capacity, particularly around Oxford and Basingstoke.
- 2.3.14 More significantly, the West Coast Main Line is the most important rail freight corridor in the UK. Freight trains on the WCML don't only serve businesses in the West Midlands, they also carry long distance freight that would otherwise have to use the M6. HS2 provides an opportunity to provide much needed extra freight capacity on the WCML.

## 2.4 Specific Issues Identified

- 2.4.1 In order to provide guidance to the Freight Strategy, the WMCA has liaised with stakeholders, including through the development of Strategic Transport Plan (STP)<sup>3</sup> and the Freight Strategy ‘Vision & Key Issues’ consultation. This consultation identified issues which the freight strategy needs to address, in order to meet the key objectives and support the freight industry.
- 2.4.2 The key issues are described in detail in the Appendix. They have been divided into the categories of transport system defined in the Movement for Growth, but with the addition of an overarching tier which covers all categories. They are summarised as follows:

### Overarching Issues

- Improving data on freight transport to support decision making
- Making the West Midlands a beacon for logistics best practice

### National and regional tier

- Accessibility to and journey reliability on West Midlands motorways and trunk roads
- Maximising rail freight accessibility and connectivity
- Imbalance of road freight on the M6 and M6 toll
- Maximising the economic benefit and minimising the carbon impact of air freight
- Providing the strategic rail freight interchanges and intermodal rail

freight interchanges’ capacity to encourage freight to move by rail

- Providing efficient access to rail freight for industry

### Metropolitan tier

- Urban road network journey reliability
- Maximising water freight
- Improving air quality
- Improving freight vehicle road safety with vulnerable road users
- Safe and secure overnight HGV parking

### Local tier

- Efficient deliveries to centres and homes

# 3 Our Vision and Objectives

## 3.1 Vision

- 3.1.1 The Freight Strategy will aspire to deliver actions and investment in freight which meets the following vision within the national and local policy context outlined in The Data Report which is published alongside this strategy:

***“By 2030, the West Midlands will have safer, more reliable, sustainable and efficient freight and logistics movements to, from and within the West Midlands. We will be seen as a beacon of best practice, in which logistics supports economic growth and boosts productivity, with significantly reduced impacts on communities and the environment.”***

## 3.2 Objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to deliver this vision, there is a need for key objectives to focus investment and measure the success of our achievements. In 2015, the WMCA published Movement for Growth, The West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) which included nine objectives. This Freight Strategy uses the nine STP objectives from Movement for Growth.

2015 Strategic Transport Plan	Freight Relevance
<b>Economic Growth and Economic Inclusion</b>	
ECON1 To support growth in wealth creation (GVA) and employment (jobs) in the West Midlands, as a prized national economic asset	Efficient logistics and excellent connectivity are recognised as being important drivers of growth.
ECON2 To support improved levels of economic well-being for people with low incomes in the West Midlands to help make it a successful, inclusive, European city region economy.	The logistics industry is an important employer in its own right. Freight strategies can be used to direct employment where it is most needed.
<b>Population Growth and Housing Development</b>	
POP1 To help meet future housing needs, by supporting new housing development in locations deemed appropriate by local planning authorities, following their consideration of sustainable development criteria.	Improved freight operations, through Construction and Logistics Plans, better routeing, and safer vehicles, can support efficient and safe delivery of housing.
<b>Environment</b>	
ENV1 To significantly improve the quality of the local environment in the West Midlands	While the impact of freight movements on local areas is perceived as being significant, there is much that can be done to address such concerns, including moving freight more efficiently (fewer vehicle trips) and more sustainably.
ENV2 To help tackle climate change by ensuring large decreases in greenhouse gas emissions from the West Midlands.	Freight transport is a significant contributor to GHG emissions. Cleaner alternative vehicles and fuels can contribute to reducing GHG but current levels of uptake are low.

2015 Strategic Transport Plan		Freight Relevance
<b>Public Health</b>		
PUBH1 To significantly increase the amount of active travel in the West Midlands		HGV traffic can be a deterrent to uptake of active travel, through perception of risks to vulnerable road user safety.
PUBH2 To significantly reduce the number and severity of road traffic casualties in the West Midlands		Accidents with goods vehicles are a significant issue.
PUBH3 To assist with the reduction of health inequalities in the West Midlands		Freight transport is a significant source of harmful pollutants, particularly in inner urban areas.
<b>Social Well-Being</b>		
SOC1 To improve the well-being of socially excluded people.		Again, freight investment and policies can be used to improve the attractiveness of areas for investors.

# 4 Our Strategy

## 4.1 Our Approach

- 4.1.1 Our approach is designed to complement and influence the other transport, economic and land use plans in the Metropolitan area. It is intended to be delivered as a partnership between the various stakeholders, including the logistics industry and other businesses in the West Midlands.
- 4.1.2 Our strategy is unlikely to require major capital investments but may influence the pattern of general transport investment, for which freight is but one component. However, some investment may be required for projects focussed on freight and where value for money can be demonstrated.
- 4.1.3 Delivery of our vision is likely to take 20 years, however, we will identify and prioritise “quick wins”, which deliver measurable benefits within 3 years.
- 4.1.4 In line with Movement for Growth, our strategy is based on developing and enhancing the way that freight is managed, looking at overarching policies, supported by three tiers of the transport system.

## 4.2 OverArching Tier

- 4.2.1 We will work in partnership with industry and other authorities in the West Midlands to deliver the objectives of the strategy. In order for the West Midlands Metropolitan area to be seen as a beacon for logistics best practice, we will encourage innovation and work with partners in the UK and internationally to identify and implement better ways of managing the movement of goods.
- 4.2.2 Better data needs to be collected to support decision making.
- 4.2.3 Policies to support this tier will include:
- Delivering the strategy working in partnership with a Logistics Forum
  - Ensuring that the West Midlands is seen as a beacon of logistics best practice internationally
  - A programme of data collection, to address gaps in our understanding of freight movements
  - Encouragement of innovation in logistics management
  - Ensuring that the local workforce benefits from growth in logistics, including ensuring the right skills are available
  - Working with the best partners in industry and internationally to deliver improvements

## 4.3 National and Regional Tier

- 4.3.1 We wish to influence and support investment in the transport routes which link the West Midlands to its markets in the UK and overseas. A key role in achieving this objective will be to work through Midlands Connect to ensure that the Metropolitan area is well served by a comprehensive network of strategic roads and railways.

#### 4.3.2 In particular we wish to see:

- Adequate capacity provided on motorways serving the region and improved reliability for long distance road transport
- Completion of planned investments in Smart Motorways and addressing localised capacity constraints
- Maximum volumes of “through” freight diverted onto the M6 Toll
- Adequate capacity provided on rail routes to and through the region, particularly to ports and the Channel Tunnel
- Freight to be provided with an adequate share of capacity released on main routes when HS2 is opened
- Freight needs to be taken into account when planning passenger rail services
- Continued development of Strategic Freight Interchanges (SRFI)
- Gaps in the provision of Intermodal Rail Freight Interchanges (IRFI) to be addressed, particularly in the Black Country
- More direct connections to be provided from the rail network to business premises
- Improved access to regional airports and encouragement for these to be developed as air freight hubs.

## 4.4 Metropolitan Tier

### 4.4.1

Within the West Midlands, we must provide and manage infrastructure which makes it easier for goods to move around the Metropolitan area efficiently, reliably, and sustainably. This will generally mean movement of goods by road (including to and from rail interchanges), but the region’s canals can also play a role. Proposals to deliver this include:

- Ensure the Key Route Network has appropriate measures for freight, with elements of the network identified for special consideration
- The KRN will deliver the following objectives:
  - Provide measures to enhance road journey time reliability
  - Provide dynamic traffic management to better reflect and respond to business and freight requirements during differing time periods
  - Reduce carbon emissions as road freight traffic flows become more reliable
  - Reduce unnecessary road freight in residential areas
- Provide safe and secure parking for HGVs where it is needed
- Support greater use of water freight
- Enhance road safety for HGV movement

## 4.5 Local Tier

4.5.1 It is at the local tier where action is likely to have the most impact. Putting resources together as a group of major towns and cities we can develop common solutions which will help businesses to reach their customers efficiently and sustainably. Specific areas include:

- Use of technology
- Improving Air quality
- Use of Consolidation
- Retiming of Deliveries

## 4.6 Delivering the Strategy

4.6.1 The Freight Strategy requires an Implementation Plan to achieve changes on the ground to meet the Strategy's objectives. The Implementation Plan is set out in Chapters 5 and 6 of this document and develops an approach to local freight movements which is comprehensive and makes use of the full range of new techniques being delivered internationally. Solutions will be delivered through the Metropolitan Logistics Forum, ensuring that they are focussed on local needs.

- A comprehensive Urban Freight Management Plan making use of recent developments in logistics best practice and delivered in partnership with industry to include:
  - Freight operator recognition
  - Delivery and servicing planning to reduce trips generated
  - Innovations to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including vehicle standards and driver training
  - Construction logistics innovations to enable housing and business growth to be delivered efficiently
  - Establishing urban delivery platforms, and specialised consolidation centres
  - Controlling freight vehicle access and routing
  - Alternative/innovative mode use for urban freight shipments (e.g. Freight tram, cycle, or canal)

# 5 Governance and Delivery

## 5.1 Role and Responsibility of the WMCA

5.1.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority is well placed to manage and deliver the freight strategy. There are clear benefits in a co-ordinated approach between the local authority members of the CA including:

- Ensuring a common approach across the Metropolitan area
- Bringing together expertise and experience from the members and other stakeholders
- Being able to apply new powers and resources, particularly resulting from the devolution deal.

5.1.2 However, experience international and in the UK underlines that freight strategy is best delivered as a partnership – between different authorities, between the public sector and businesses, and between infrastructure owners, operators, and customers. Therefore, while core responsibility for developing and delivering the freight strategy lies with WMCA, structures are required to support delivery including dedicated staff, a budget to allow policies to be implemented, and a West Midlands Logistics Forum (WMLF) to co-ordinate and take forward delivery.

## 5.2 West Midlands Logistics Forum

5.2.1 The purpose of the Forum will be to bring together the main stakeholders with an interest in freight issues across the West Midlands. It will serve as the primary body to oversee the delivery of the freight strategy and the supporting Implementation Plan, through partnership working. The model is built on the successful experience of Transport for London's Freight Forum.

5.2.2 The Forum requires a number of features to make it sustainable. This includes:

- Strong support from the organising authorities, which identifies the Forum as a key component in developing and delivering logistics policies
- Making sure that the membership includes people who bring experience and commitment
- Delivering projects through Working Groups to ensure that full Forum meetings are not diverted with detail
- Making Forum meetings manageable, measurable, worthwhile and interesting – and keeping participants, particularly industry, engaged in overseeing and delivering a tangible work programme.
- It will continue to update and amend the Freight Strategy to take account of changing priorities.

5.2.3 The Forum must include a mix of industry, local government, and other stakeholders. Ideally, industry representation should be broad enough to include expertise from a range of sectors including both freight operators and freight customers as well as reflecting differing size of organisation who may have differing issues. Involvement of the LEPs will be particularly valuable.

5.2.4 An essential initial phase of the set-up of the Forum is to establish its governance, its objectives, key outputs and measures of success and how it contributes to the overall Freight Strategy.

## Key tasks

5.2.5 The key tasks of the Forum will be to:

- Provide a group specifically focused on freight issues within the West Midlands
- Provide a platform to engage with stakeholders by enabling them to raise freight-related issues and work in partnership with the appropriate organisations to find solutions
- Promote the importance of efficient, safe and sustainable freight transport for the West Midlands economies and communities
- Oversee delivery of the West Midlands Freight Strategy through its supporting Implementation Plan
- Review and revise the West Midlands Freight Strategy, throughout the implementation phase, to ensure it ongoing relevance and effectiveness
- Offer recommendations about the prioritising of projects

5.2.6 In addition to the above activity, specific tasks the Forum will undertake are:

- Data collection: The Forum will have responsibility for freight data collection, which is crucial in helping to understand the exact nature of freight movement into, within, out of and through the West Midlands. The data will be used to inform the Forum's selection of measures and the prioritised work programme.
- Measure Selection: The Forum will select suitable measures (options are presented throughout Section 6) and prioritise these for implementation within its work programme, allocating responsibilities for delivery to the relevant Working Group(s). Working Groups are discussed in more detail in Section 5.3.
- Beacon: The Forum will continually work towards national and international recognition of the West Midlands as a leader in innovative and effective urban freight management solutions – not just doing bare minimum, but effectively promoting freight management as a critical component of urban transportation and economic prosperity
- Progress Reports: The Forum will formally report annually on its work and progress in delivering the Freight Strategy and its component Implementation Plan. Informal reporting on Forum and Working Group progress will be given at each Forum meeting.

## Membership

5.2.7 An essential initial phase of the set-up of the Forum is to establish its governance, its objectives, key outputs and measures of success and how it contributes to the overall Freight Strategy.

5.2.8 The Forum must include a mix of industry, local government, and other stakeholders. Industry representation should be broad enough to include expertise from a range of sectors including both freight operators and freight customers as well as reflecting differing size of organisation who may have differing issues. Involvement of the LEP will be particularly valuable.

5.2.9 Therefore the membership of the Forum will comprise all key stakeholders with an interest and involvement in the movement of freight within the West Midlands, including:

- WMCA
- The 7 WM local authorities
- Industry operators from across sectors and reflecting differing sizes
- LEP
- Major freight trip generating businesses
- West Midlands Police
- Industry trade associations (For example, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association)
- Environmental groups
- Other interested parties

### Reporting

5.2.10 The Forum should formally report annually on progress in delivering the Freight Strategy and its supporting Implementation Plan, with evidence of impact and improvements, along with recommendations on future measures to further enhance performance

### Timescales

5.2.11 Setting up the initial membership and first Forum meeting will take up to 6 weeks. This will involve identification of the target businesses together with invitations through industry bodies, who themselves will be key potential Forum members. These will include, in addition to industry representatives, the Freight Transport Association, the Road Haulage Association, the Rail Freight Group, and the LEPs.

### Costs

5.2.12 Costs associated with the Forum set-up and ongoing management will relate predominantly to staff time required to coordinate the group, manage changes in participant details and keep the Forum active. Venue and catering costs will also be incurred, as a result of periodic meetings.

5.2.13 The forum should also have a delivery budget to fund studies and projects.

## 5.3 Forum Working Groups

5.3.1 Forum Working Groups are useful for the delivery of the Strategy, through the Implementation Plan. The main initiatives identified in should be delivered through these dedicated Working Groups. While the Forum may include numerous members, the Working Groups will be a core of approximately 6 key members, each committed to using their experience to ensuring successful delivery. Working Groups are likely to meet 1-2 monthly while their projects are progressing.

5.3.2 The Forum will oversee three Working Groups, which will each have responsibility for development and delivery of Implementation Plan measures specific to their areas of focus.

5.3.3 The structure of the Working Groups needs to be agreed by the Forum as well as their exact focus and priorities , however, as an indication, the Working Groups will cover:

- **Road** – to deliver freight operator recognition and other environmental and safety improvements and liaise on highways issues, such as Fleet Recognition schemes
- **Modal Shift** – to ensure that plans are delivered to maximise the use of rail and waterways
- **Urban Logistics** – to ensure effective implementation of Out of Hours, Delivery Servicing Plans, Construction and Logistics Plans, and other elements of Urban Logistics

5.3.4 In time, Working Groups could be expanded or have their own sub-groups if the Forum believes that's necessary in order to deliver the Strategy's objectives.

### Meetings

5.3.5 The Forum will meet every two months during its first year of operation in order to ensure that momentum is generated and maintained, with frequency thereafter to be decided by its members.

# 6 Implementation Plan

## 6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The Implementation Plan aims to identify and map out the actions needed in order to facilitate the achievement of the objectives in the overall Strategy. This is achieved through a coordinated, integrated and comprehensive planning approach, led by the WMCA through the Freight Lead and the West Midlands Logistics Forum, which cumulates into the development and implementation of innovative logistics measures.

6.1.2 The process is illustrated in Figure 5 below:



**Figure 5: Proposed Implementation Plan**

6.1.3 It is important to note that this Implementation Plan presents the structure and a selection of measures which can be introduced to deliver the West Midlands Freight Strategy. It will be the Forum and its supporting Working Groups which decide the measures to be introduced and in which priority. The Forum is the core delivery body for the Strategy. The success of the Strategy and this supporting Implementation plan depends on the Forum being well attended, by the right people, willing to participate in and lead delivery of the required programme of work. The structure and objectives of the Forum are covered in Section 5.

## 6.2 Key Measure Proposals

6.2.1 Key to delivery of the Strategy is the implementation of packages of measures which are appropriate to the needs of this area, based on the data collected. The specific measures and their priority will be agreed by the WMCA and the Forum.

6.2.2 Proposed measures include:

- Lobbying and influencing for investment in infrastructure, including routes outside the Metropolitan area which are crucial to deliver efficient logistics
- Publicising and encouraging businesses to adopt improved logistics practice
- Undertaking pilot projects and studies
- Proposing changes to planning requirements or other levers within Metropolitan influence
- Identifying and securing third party funding in logistics projects
- Collecting and disseminating data

6.2.3 The next section summarises a large number of key measures proposed. For each of the key measures, an outline plan has been developed which covers: :

- Summary of the measure
- Its benefits and contribution to objectives
- Responsibility for delivery and supporting roles
- Timescales and, milestones
- Potential costs

6.2.4 The outline plan has been provided as an Appendix to this strategy. It is provided in spreadsheet form, allowing it to be used as a tool to manage and monitor projects.

## 6.3 Overarching Tier

### Overarching Tier Proposed Measures

A freight data warehouse and a programme of data collection

Policy recognition of logistics beacon status. participation in best practice development

### A freight data warehouse and programme of data collection

6.3.1 Lack of freight data is identified as a key issue. Without high quality data it is difficult to forecast changes in demand, identify constraints, measure capacity shortfalls, or quantify the benefits of proposed interventions. This puts freight planning at a particular disadvantage compared to planning for cars or public transport.

6.3.2 Clearly data **is** available. For example, Prism – the West Midlands tool for transport planning - includes base year goods vehicle volumes on highways. The separate GB Freight Model provides base data and forecasts of strategic movements of freight by road and rail. Ad hoc traffic data is available for roads and for rail. But often the data is too coarse to inform regional decision making and particularly delivery at the local level.

6.3.3 That is not to say that transport planners should aspire to developing a freight data set and model as sophisticated as Prism. Freight movement is much more difficult to model, as large volumes of freight are controlled by small numbers of businesses who take into account their own circumstances when making logistic decisions.

6.3.4 In practice, different sets of freight data may be required to inform different types of policy decision. For example:

- Decision making on the right strategy regarding the M6 Toll is hampered by a lack of detailed data on freight traffic on the M6 or the M6Toll. Where are HGVs joining and leaving each road? How far do they travel? Are there other freight movements using A roads that might divert to the Toll, or to the M6 to fill released capacity? Ultimately, what are the benefits of diverting more lorries onto the Toll?
- In contrast, planning for a consolidation centre will require detailed data on its target market, for example, deliveries to a retail centre.
- 'Nature of freight' surveys identify and profile movements on strategic routes but there is also a need to understand activity on High Streets to determine the potential for urban freight management interventions.

6.3.5 The WMCA should therefore act as a focal point for freight data, defining, collecting, compiling and disseminating available information and commissioning data collection exercises as required.

### Policy recognition of logistics beacon status and participation in best practice development

6.3.6 Given its strategic location and importance, the West Midlands should undoubtedly be seen as a best practice beacon for the management of freight movements. What that means in practice is having policies in place to proactively promote safe, efficient and sustainable freight movements and a clear set of objectives to work towards.

6.3.7 As well as identifying opportunities to manage freight differently, the West Midlands should be seen to develop suitable initiatives and interventions, implement them, assess their impact, alter them and then showcase their benefits both within the UK and internationally.

6.3.8 The West Midlands should sit alongside key European cities like Paris, Barcelona and Berlin in being seen as a trailblazer in the field of urban logistics planning and management. Plenty of collaborative project opportunities are available for willing city partners across Europe to work together to share best practice and to learn from others. The West Midlands should be an active partner, or ideally leader, in those city freight networks and projects.

## 6.4 National and Regional Tier

6.4.1 The development of an efficient, high quality, infrastructure network linking the Metropolitan area to ports and markets will be a key role for Midlands Connect. This strategy proposes working with and through Midlands Connect to ensure that freight needs for businesses and communities in the Metropolitan area are understood and addressed. In particular, the WMCA and Logistics Forum will work with Midlands Connect on the following initiatives.

### National and Regional Tier Proposed Measures

Additional Managed Motorways Schemes

Encouraging Greater Freight Use of the M6 Toll

Motorway Junction Access and Motorway Connectivity Enhancements

West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor

Providing Capacity For Rail Freight

Maximising the economic Benefits of our National Airports

Encouraging the development and growth of Rail Freight Interchanges

Improving access to rail freight for industry

## Additional Managed Motorways Schemes

- 6.4.2 In 2006, Highways England commenced its “Managed Motorways” strategy (previously referred to as ‘Active Traffic Management’) which focused on the use of technology to regulate and manage traffic flows on the motorway network. The objective of Managed Motorways was to deliver more reliable journeys which would generate economic and carbon benefits as well as improvements to road safety.
- 6.4.3 The first trial of Managed Motorways was in 2006 on the M42 between J3a and J6. Highways England’s post project study found that:
- The number of collisions decreased from an average of 5.1 per month to 1.8 per month;
  - Drivers’ ability to predict their weekday journey times has improved by up to 27%;
  - Fuel consumption has reduced by 4%; and
  - Vehicle emissions have reduced by up to 10%
- 6.4.4 The metropolitan area believes that Managed Motorways has been a great success and demonstrated that the use of technology to create dynamic highway networks helps reduce congestion, generates economic and carbon benefits for our area. With a cost per kilometre of £5.6M against the average £25M per kilometre of traditional motorway widening schemes, we recognise the value for money of Managed Motorways as well as the ability to deliver the overwhelming majority of schemes within existing motorway footprints rather than requiring new land take.
- 6.4.5 However, there are still significant ‘Managed Motorway’ gaps on the motorway network in and around the metropolitan area.
- 6.4.6 Whilst acknowledging that Highways England has undertaken studies to assess future demand, the metropolitan area believes there is support and justification to suggest further Managed Motorway schemes required at the following locations:
- M5 between M6 Interchange and J3
  - M42 Junction 9 and 11

## Encouraging Greater Freight Use of the M6 Toll

- 6.4.7 There is an imbalance between the levels of freight carried by the M6 and parallel M6 Toll, even for national long distance freight movements.
- 6.4.8 Stakeholders have indicated that tolls are not considered to be a standalone barrier as long as it is perceived that the toll ‘buys’ benefits which are greater than the cost, e.g. fuel, time, reliability savings. In the case of the M6 Toll, the perceived levels of benefits from the tolls are not attractive to all freight users, whilst the time periods for reduced tolls are not perceived to reflect road freight movements or demands.
- 6.4.9 If more long distance freight traffic could use the M6 Toll, capacity would be released on the M6 for local traffic and potentially reduce congestion. More research is needed to understand how the released space would be used and to quantify other benefits of diversion to the M6 Toll such as the impact on metropolitan air quality.
- 6.4.10 Therefore, the metropolitan area is proposing the following short and long term proposals:
- **Shorter Term:** the metropolitan area is keen to work with MEL through the West Midlands Logistics Forum to identify solutions including the potential for more variable

time structures, distance based tolls and greater levels of affordability of tolls in order to generate additional patronage on the M6 Toll. Ultimately, additional patronage is mutually beneficial to both the metropolitan area as outlined above and MEL who would benefit from additional income.

- **Longer Term:** Recognising that MEL is contracted to maintain and operate the M6 Toll until 2054, the metropolitan area is of the view that unless the short term approach proposed delivers a better balance of traffic that in the long term the model of how the M6 Toll is owned and operated would need to be changed. In the exploration of potential options WMCA is keen to assess new governance structures which potentially splits 'ownership' away from 'operation'. This may provide the opportunity to ensure the M6 Toll can fully contribute to the wider economic, social and carbon reduction objectives of the metropolitan area whilst maintaining the commercial requirements of MEL;

## Motorway Junction Access & Motorway Connectivity Enhancements

- 6.4.11 The UK's motorway and trunk road network carries the overwhelming proportion of road freight and therefore access to the motorway network via junctions and is of key importance. Motorway junctions are the interface between the motorway network and the local highway network and with the majority located on the principal road network means that junctions are key freight destinations but also carry localised traffic movements as well as being the location of some major developments.
- 6.4.12 Junctions are the responsibility of either the local highway authority or the HA and therefore subject to differing traffic management as well as differing responsibility for enhancement schemes and associated funding.
- 6.4.13 In October 2012, the DfT announced schemes which would be included in the HAs 'Pinch Point Programme' aimed to deliver small scale schemes to address capacity constraints at key locations on the national road network.
- 6.4.14 In 2012 Highways England commissioned a study into future requirements of the motorway network aligned to future metropolitan area population, economic and major development needs.
- 6.4.15 Whilst the study is yet to report, the metropolitan area believes that in order to ensure reliable and efficient road freight access to national and international markets, major infrastructure enhancements are required for the following motorway sections and junctions and need to be considered in the development of future Highways England investment programmes:
  - M5 Junction 1, 2 and 3; M6 Junction 8, 9 and 10
  - M54/ M6/ M6 Toll Link Road

## West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor

- 6.4.16 The rail schemes and initiatives required to meet future growth have been detailed through the West Midlands Rail Vision which was developed in partnership with the West Midlands Regional Rail Forum.
- 6.4.17 In the development of both documents, there is synergy for the promotion of a new West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor which can support the objectives of both this Freight Strategy and those of the West Midlands Rail Vision.

- 6.4.18 The metropolitan area's strategic location at the centre of the UK's rail network means significant numbers of longer distance freight trains pass through our area. Any such services moving between South Wales and the South West to the East Midlands, North East, or Yorkshire, for example, pass through the metropolitan area via the central Birmingham and Water Orton corridors.
- 6.4.19 By 2030 the Water Orton corridor and central Birmingham rail network is forecast to see a substantial increase in freight traffic from 50-75 trains per day to 75-100 per day.
- 6.4.20 The metropolitan area believes there is an emerging case for the development of a West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor from Stourbridge through to Lichfield via Walsall. This would allow the metropolitan area the opportunity to meet strategic and local needs through the subsequent delivery of the interconnected and dependent schemes.
- 6.4.21 This proposal would deliver a new alternative corridor for strategic rail freight movements across the metropolitan area. The scheme would enhance journey times, reliability and rail path availability all of which will increase the attractiveness of rail freight to more businesses to underpin further growth in the sector. This proposal would complement the SRFN.
- 6.4.22 Should the West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor be electrified in alignment with the Government's aspirations for a national electric freight spine, its attractiveness to rail freight operators and businesses would be enhanced further from shorter journey times, more flexible rail path timings, network capacity and greater market accessibility and connectivity.
- 6.4.23 There is a need to ensure that the West Midlands Strategic Freight Corridor is developed in a manner which is compatible for WMCA's aspirations for a Metro link between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill. The metropolitan area aspires to increase passenger rail services between Walsall and Birmingham city and this proposal needs to be complementary to this aspiration.

### Providing Capacity for Rail Freight

- 6.4.24 Research for this strategy and consultation with stakeholders has asserted the need to provide capacity for rail freight to, from, and through the West Midlands to grow. In particular, there are four aspects where this strategy recommends action:
- Ensuring that rail freight paths are provided when track capacity is released following the opening of HS2.
  - Lobbying and representing the interests of the West Midlands through the rail industry long term planning process to ensure that required capacity is provided on all strategic routes to and through the region.
  - Ensuring that increasing freight demand is taken into account when planning passenger services within the metropolitan area.
  - Protecting existing and potential interchange sites.

### Maximising the Economic Benefits of our National Airports

- 6.4.25 Nationally, Heathrow handles the overwhelming majority of Air Freight volumes in and out of the UK. This requires national road freight movements from across the UK to Heathrow.
- 6.4.26 Understanding the air freight supply chain and the needs of local businesses will allow us to work with airports, stakeholders and freight operators to help promote the case and benefits of air links to new market destinations, as well as allowing us to address any other barriers identified.
- 6.4.27 The key opportunities to maximise air freight are likely to be:

- Promote direct freight services or freight use of passenger services to a wider range of destinations.
- Promote hub and spoke services linking regional airports to European freight hubs offering a wide selection of destinations.

## Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges and Intermodal Rail Freight Terminals

### Strategic Rail Freight Interchanges

- 6.4.28 The Data Report demonstrates the important role and opportunities played by SRFI in supporting our economy and supporting national and international freight movements as well as the regional 'supply gap' of such warehousing in order to meet projected demand up to 2027.
- 6.4.29 SRFI are important employment centres. When located in the West Midlands our businesses benefit from excellent access to national distribution centres. More SRFI directly leads to more rail freight – a fact acknowledged by Network Rail and the DfT.
- 6.4.30 Identifying a suitable approach to encouraging the development of SRFI in and near to the West Midlands will require strategic coordination between West Midlands authorities, transport stakeholders, developers, and the freight and logistics sector. Therefore, the metropolitan area is proposing the following approach to encourage the development of SRFIs:
- **Maximise the potential of existing SRFI:** The SRFI located around the metropolitan area should be expanded where possible and businesses encouraged to locate there within the framework set out by relevant Local Plans.
  - **Encouraging future SRFI development:** We will work with the appropriate Planning Authorities within the wider West Midlands region through the Duty of Cooperation and through appropriate LEPs to ensure that:
    - Potential SRFI locations are identified and safeguarded
    - Planning and DCO applications for SRFI are encouraged and supported where relevant criteria are met and where there is real potential for rail freight use.
- 6.4.31 This strategy acknowledges that several developers have aspirations for a SRFI in southern Staffordshire. The strategy is neutral as to a preferred location, and acknowledges that, while there is finite demand for large warehouses, any development which provides rail access to a concentration of distribution centres will maximise potential for rail freight.

### Intermodal Rail Freight Interchanges

- 6.4.32 IRFI are characterised as intermodal transfer terminals which are not located in an SRFI.
- 6.4.33 Key Issue C2 identified the need to provide additional IRFI facilities in and around the metropolitan area to:
- Provide capacity to meet future demand
  - Address the existing spatial gaps in provision, notably the Black Country and;
  - Ensure rail freight operators have access to the metropolitan area to maximise rail freight potential
- 6.4.34 Work undertaken by independent consultants suggested there was a strategic case for additional IRFI terminal in the Black Country which would address some of these issues. The study assessed potential suitable sites and identified Bescot Yard as the most suitable location as a consequence of:

- Connectivity to local and national road networks
- High levels of rail connectivity and accessibility to key markets and destinations
- Proximity to the Black Country providing accessibility to a critical mass of the predominantly SME business sectors which are likely to use intermodal rail freight as well as Darlaston Enterprise Zone
- Electrification of Bescot Yard in reference to DfT proposals for the electric freight spine;
- Strategic location on the national rail network and associated rail connectivity to markets

6.4.35 An outline assessment of an IRFI scheme demonstrated that an average sized IRFI in the Black Country, used by a single rail freight operator, would generate economic benefits in the region of £13M per year in terms of GVA. Such an IRFI would act as a regional hub for the FOC and could turnover as many as 270,000 TEUs per annum<sup>9</sup>.

6.4.36 The WMCA would therefore welcome the opportunity to discuss IRFI provision and facilities with the rail freight industry in order to develop a consensus. In particular, WMCA would welcome the opportunity to support the development of an IRFI in the Black Country.

6.4.37 Other locations for IRFI will also be supported and encouraged where appropriate.

6.4.38 In the longer term we are keen to work with the rail freight industry to explore the potential for multi-operator open access IRFIs across the metropolitan area which would act as a regional hub for multiple FOCs to provide the capacity to meet future regional demand for rail freight, particularly intermodal traffic.

6.4.39 We have named this approach 'Rail Freight Gateway'. We believe this solution would present a better long term outcome for the metropolitan area and the rail freight sector. Subject to future stakeholder engagement, Bescot Yard would represent a potential site to such a Rail Freight Gateway site reflecting its strategic size, location and rail network access and connectivity.

6.4.40 We believe the strategic benefits of the scheme would be:

- Provide an IRFI which has high levels of connectivity and accessibility to key markets and destinations such across the UK.
- A highly attractive facility to encourage inward investment into the metropolitan area supporting the potential of economic development schemes such as Darlaston Enterprise Zone
- Allow for greater innovation and market accessibility by rail freight operators
- Reduced costs for rail freight operators compared to developing and maintaining separate IRFI, allowing rail freight to enhance the competitiveness of their product
- Brings back into use a strategic site in the heart of the Black Country supporting job creation and acting as a catalyst for economic development.
- Efficient land use across the Rail Freight Gateway through joint use of facilities, storage areas, overhead cranes and access points.
- Reduce overall HGV mileage on the UK road network through modal shift to rail, reducing associated congestion and carbon emissions.

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<sup>9</sup> Source: Centro "Black Country Gateway Study" 2012

- Better integration with rail path planning and service coordination;
- The critical mass of rail freight demand to justify any future complementary investment in the rail network to further enhance access and connectivity to markets;
- Finally, allow a level of customer information and sources akin to public transport with multi-operator services, times, costs and destinations all available from a single source.

6.4.41 Ultimately, the market should drive demand. However, reflecting the potential benefits of the proposal and the role of the public sector, we are keen to work with the rail freight industry and stakeholders to further develop the proposal recognising the potential wide range of benefits which could be captured for the metropolitan area as well as FOCs and the rail industry.

### Improving Access to Rail Freight for Industry

6.4.42 IRFI are important facilities for the movement of a wide range of products for businesses which cannot have direct access to the rail network or which have irregular volumes of potential rail freight. SRFIs provide an opportunity to maximise rail freight to and from large distribution centres.

6.4.43 However, for businesses producing or consuming large volumes of goods, a direct connection to the rail network will always be the best option for maximising rail freight and minimising local road freight traffic.

6.4.44 A major challenge is to provide rail connections to large manufacturing sites which never had, or had and lost, a rail connection, particularly in the automotive industry.

6.4.45 There is also ongoing need to provide and encourage rail freight access to a range of facilities such as:

- Aggregates or concrete terminals
- Waste transfer or disposal facilities
- Steel stockholders or suppliers

6.4.46 The strategy recommends:

- A comprehensive programme of identifying potential rail freight facilities
- Planning protection against development which might render future connections unfeasible
- Working across the rail industry to identify mechanisms to support the provision of rail connections with grant or loan support

## 6.5 Metropolitan Tier

### Metropolitan Tier Proposed Measures

Metropolitan Area Urban Road Freight Network
Safe and Secure Overnight HGV Parking
Supporting a Greater Use of Water Freight

## West Midlands Key Route Network

- 6.5.1 The West Midlands has a Key Route Network for both passengers and freight. The Logistics Forum will need to ensure that key measures for freight users continue to be adequately reflected in KRN priorities.
- 6.5.2 The performance measures for the KRN already include journey time reliability for freight users.

## Safe and Secure Overnight HGV Parking

- 6.5.3 Providing safe and secure overnight HGV parking is a long standing priority for the road freight industry which was reflected by the West Midlands LTP3 and was the subject of studies by the metropolitan area in 2007 and again in 2009.
- 6.5.4 Stakeholders outlined that with the West Midlands being the centre of the national road network there needs to be HGV parking for national road freight movements through the metropolitan area as well as enhanced local provision to support deliveries in and around the metropolitan area. The metropolitan area believes that the issue can be tackled at two levels:

### Strategic HGV Parking Sites on the national road network.

- 6.5.5 The Data Report demonstrated the lack of larger strategic HGV parking on the motorway and trunk road network in and around the metropolitan area. Such facilities support the road freight industry by providing flexibility for driver's time regulations and delivery planning which allows for efficient utilisation of drivers and vehicles. The best practice sites include a full range of facilities and amenities including the provision of secure overnight parking. The West Midlands Regional Lorry Parking Study (2005) identified the following locations in or immediately around the metropolitan area where more provision is required:
  - M6 from Jct 13 to Jct 16
  - M5 from Jct 1 to Jct 4
  - M5 from Jct 5 to 8 and M50
  - M40 from Jct 16 to Jct 12
  - M42 from M6 to regional boundary

- 6.5.6 For illustrative purposes, 200 spaces per site would lead to 1000 additional spaces, increasing existing provision by around 50%; The metropolitan area is keen to work with motorway service station operators, commercial HGV Parking providers, Highways England and relevant Planning Authorities to identify opportunities to provide Strategic HGV parking facilities at these locations on the national road network to address demand.

### Local HGV Parking Facilities in the Urban Area.

- 6.5.7 Whilst strategic HGV parking will support operators undertaking national road freight movements, there is also a need to address localised HGV parking issues to support deliveries to/ from centres, industrial areas, business parks etc.
- 6.5.8 Such facilities allow drivers to comply with driver time regulations without the need to park in unsuitable locations on the highway or in residential areas. Such sites can be straight forward road side lay-bys or more formal off-street facilities, such as Brewery Street Coach & Lorry Park in central Birmingham which opened in 2011.
- 6.5.9 In addressing the issues and identifying potential locations against demand and destinations, the West Midlands Lorry Parking Study (2005) identified the following broad locations, which subject to review, are best suited to meet demand:

- East Wolverhampton
- South Wolverhampton
- North Dudley
- Sandwell
- South Dudley
- Halesowen
- Hams Hall
- North Coventry
- West Coventry
- East Coventry
- Walsall
- West Birmingham
- East Birmingham
- North Birmingham
- South-West Birmingham

6.5.10 Following the DfT's publication of "*Strategy for Lorry Parking*" (2009) Centro considered the use of local rail park & ride sites to provide some HGV parking facilities. The concept was assessed and a number of operational difficulties were highlighted, as well as access and construction design constraints.

6.5.11 Therefore the use of park & ride is not expected to be the primary approach to delivering facilities to meet the demand outlined above, however should an appropriate park & ride site be forthcoming it will be considered on an individual site basis rather than a blanket policy approach.

### Supporting a Greater Use of Water Freight

6.5.12 The West Midlands Freight Canal Study highlighted some potential for the movements of low value, time-unrestricted freight movements such as domestic waste or construction aggregates on local canals.

6.5.13 The study identified 49 sites in Birmingham and 27 sites in Coventry that offered potential for wharf locations, although the majority were not protected for freight related activity in land use plans.

6.5.14 Whilst recognising that the practicalities and market demand will differ for different centres, the metropolitan area is advocating the following multi stepped approach to encouraging greater use of water borne freight movements:

- **Step One:** Greater protection of wharf sites in Local Plans. By protecting potential sites against other development, noticeably residential, there is certainty for interested companies to invest in water freight development
- **Step Two:** Identification of canal/ lock infrastructure enhancements. Working with the Canal & River Trust (formerly British Waterways) to identify potential schemes and new funding to invest in canal infrastructure to facilitate greater water freight use.
- **Step Three:** Use of the planning system to identify any potential use of water freight in the movement of building/ construction aggregates and materials for new developments in the proximity of canals;
- **Step Four:** work with freight operators to access national or international funding sources and grants which would facilitate greater water freight use in meeting the above.

## 6.6 Local Tier

Local Tier Proposed Measures
Freight operator recognition:
Delivery and servicing plans (DSP)
Innovations to improve the safety of vulnerable road users
Construction Logistics Plans (CLP)

Encouragement of ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles
Trialling and Encouraging Out-of-hours deliveries
Establishing urban delivery platforms, and specialised consolidation centres
Controlling freight vehicle access and routing
Alternative/innovative mode use for urban freight shipments

- 6.6.1 Despite an increasingly higher profile in recent years, freight transport still remains the poor relation in urban mobility planning.
- 6.6.2 Yet efficient, economic, safe and sustainable freight movement is absolutely essential to our everyday lives and is the lifeblood of our town and city economies, ensuring we receive the goods we need at the time and location we want, in perfect condition.
- 6.6.3 To date, many sustainable distribution projects at the local, national and European levels have focused on the wide variety of individual freight transport measures which can be implemented to help improve local urban and interurban freight performance, such as;
- Use of Consolidation Centres
  - Trialling Out-of-hours deliveries
  - Establishing urban delivery platforms
  - Controlling freight vehicle access
  - Alternative/innovative mode use for urban freight shipments (e.g. freight tram or barge)
- 6.6.4 All of these measures are potential solutions to help improve urban-interurban freight movement but often individual freight management measures (or a small cluster of measures) are introduced simply because they seem like a good idea or there is some political will to trial them.
- 6.6.5 This 'piecemeal' approach does not necessarily involve, at the outset, the collection of data for analysis to actually understand the exact nature of local freight movement and its associated challenges, nor the development of coherent urban freight management strategies with clear objectives and corresponding action plans with clear targets, timescales, deliverables and responsibilities.
- 6.6.6 The Urban Freight Management Plan, which is a subset of the overall Implementation Plan, highlights a framework of measures which can be used to help streamline the level of freight movements which then contributes to the objectives of the Strategy.
- 6.6.7 The proposed Plan covers a range of measures for the Forum to consider for reducing the levels of freight activity. There is no single 'silver bullet' solution but rather the adoption of a package of these measures will be needed, some of which are appropriate to be led by WMCA and some potentially by business. Each measure adopted will make a contribution to reducing the impact of freight movements in the area. Combined, these contributions should result in the significant level of impact needed.
- 6.6.8 It is for the Forum to determine which measures are adopted for implementation and in which order of priority within the programme of work.
- 6.6.9 The Urban Freight Management Plan includes:

### Freight operator recognition:

- 6.6.10 Fleet operator recognition schemes are an important tool for local government to work with industry to deliver improved efficiency and environmental performance, as well as other benefits including safety resulting from driver training. A number of approaches are available, and it would be the responsibility of the Forum or Working Group to establish the best approach.
- 6.6.11 The Working group will work with industry and public sector representatives to consider options for and produce a recommendation report on the implementation of a fleet recognition scheme within the West Midlands. The report will include a scheme development and roll out plan. Any recommendations will be supported by evidence which demonstrates expected operational improvements in relation to safe, sustainable and efficient freight transportation methods.

### Delivery and servicing plans (DSP) and Construction logistics plans (CLPs)

- 6.6.12 DSPs and CLPs are valuable means by which to deliver significant environmental and efficiency benefits from activity relating to building construction and then ongoing operations.
- 6.6.13 Effective promotion of CLPs and DSPs is essential. Case studies to demonstrate approaches and benefits are important and implementation will rely on promoting demonstrable examples of successful CLPs and DSPs (in or outside the area).

### Innovations to improve the safety of vulnerable road users, including vehicle standards and driver training

- 6.6.14 West Midlands has ambitious proposals for a significant increase in levels of walking and cycling
- 6.6.15 The Forum will review the existing and proposed walking and cycling policies and work streams of the West Midlands Combined Authority to identify where the Forum can add value as well as reviewing the data to establish the level of HGV involvement in accidents. This may identify a specific subset of the HGV sector which poses the greatest risk. The range of activities to be considered should include:
- Driver training and fleet accreditation
  - Vehicle standards
  - Cycle training and awareness
  - Identification of hot spots and dangerous time periods
  - Promoting education and awareness of Vulnerable Road Users
  - Analysis of accidents

### Encouragement of ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles

- 6.6.16 The encouragement of ultra-low or zero emissions vehicles is perhaps the most challenging but most far reaching of the initiatives. It is important that Ultra low or zero emission vehicles are both available and that a demand is encouraged. This will require engagement with the key players in the industry; freight and fleet operators, vehicle manufacturers and infrastructure providers. The plan will look at the means by which these vehicles could be made available, what the barriers are to uptake and how these can be addressed.

- 6.6.17 This is an important measure in proactive support of the Clean Air Zone research underway as of Spring 2016. New clean vehicle technology will play an important role within any future plan to introduce vehicle emission based access restrictions.

### Trialling and Encouraging Out-of-hours deliveries

- 6.6.18 Out-of-hours deliveries to retail premises, comprising quiet deliveries at night time and also during the "shoulders" of the day (i.e. prior to opening, after closing), away from peak periods, potentially offers significant benefits to retailers and transport operators, in addition to wider social and environmental benefits.
- 6.6.19 The Forum will identify and implement at least one opportunity for an Out of Hours Delivery pilot within the West Midlands, with the aim of establishing a case study for the further promotion of such activities. The trial will bring industry and local authority(ies) together to form a project team, using a tested effective methodology, to oversee trial set-up and live activity. Noise monitoring will be used to demonstrate impact compared to ambient noise at the new delivery time. A written case study, accompanied by video and audio footage will be key outputs from this task.

### Establishing urban delivery platforms, and specialised consolidation centres

- 6.6.20 Establishing alternative urban delivery methods and last mile solutions, including close proximity delivery platforms, consolidation centres and other innovative measures can help to better coordinate and reduce the number of HGV trips occurring within town and city centres.
- 6.6.21 The Forum will explore the potential to develop these solutions and oversee trials of the preferred options to assess the positive benefits of each.

### Controlling freight vehicle access and routeing

- 6.6.22 Developing an HGV route hierarchy and proactively publicising it can help to better coordinate HGV movements within and through the West Midlands.
- 6.6.23 Linking parts of this to a fleet recognition scheme, giving preferential access (by time, location) to cleaner, higher-rated fleets can encourage the uptake of better management and fleet procurement practices.
- 6.6.24 This is an important measure in proactive support of the Clean Air Zone research underway as of Spring 2016. New clean vehicle technology will play an important role within any future plan to introduce vehicle emission based access restrictions.

### Alternative/innovative mode use for urban freight shipments (e.g. Freight tram, cycle, or canal)

- 6.6.25 The Forum should explore and encourage the use of innovative, alternative modes for deliveries and servicing within the urban area, including cargo cycle services. These alternative modes for urban freight movements are often seen as novelty projects but well-run trials can demonstrate the positive and sustainable benefits of using those which make sound operational sense in the most congested urban areas. The Forum should be seen to spearhead research and implementation in this area.