



accidents don't have to happen

# Reimagining transport in the West Midlands

RoSPA's response to Transport for West Midlands' consultation

April 2022



Response to Transport for West Midlands' consultation: Reimagining transport in the West Midlands

## Introduction

This is the response of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to Transport for West Midlands' consultation on reimagining transport in the West Midlands. It has been produced following consultation with RoSPA's National Road Safety Committee. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

The consultation seeks views on the draft core strategy for the West Midlands' new Local Transport Plan. It proposes a new vision for travel in the West Midlands where people can thrive without having to drive or own a car.



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## About you

### You are completing this questionnaire on behalf of:

Other charity, voluntary or community sector organisation.

### Please provide details of your organisation:

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), the national leading accident prevention charity. Our head office is situated in Edgbaston.



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## Our aims

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our aims as set out in the following sections:

### RoSPA response

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Motives for change	X					
Reimagining transport	X					
Behaviour change	X					
Citizen focussed mobility	X					

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our aims?

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.

If you have any further comments about our aims; please provide them below:

### RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees with the motives for change. In particular, we support becoming more active. Changes to our lifestyles, diet and the nature of work have resulted in long-term trends of declining physical activity and increasing obesity. In the West Midlands, many adults are spending less than 30 minutes participating in physical



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activity each week, far less than the recommended 150 minutes per week. The estimated cost to the region's economy is about £147m a year.

One of the key areas for behaviour change is considering the transport mode we select to travel to work. Building exercise into our commute, or travelling to meetings and other sites is one of the easiest ways to build exercise into our lifestyle. If everyone in a town of 150,000 people walked for ten minutes or more per day, 31 lives a year would be saved, with a value of £30 million<sup>1</sup>. However, despite the health benefits of walking and the government's guidance on recommended physical activity, a recent report highlighted that four out of ten adults aged 40 to 60 do not achieve ten minutes of brisk walking over a period of a month<sup>2</sup>.

A shift to more cycling and walking can help to improve road safety and address air pollution by reducing traffic in the area, by reducing the number of vehicles that are on our roads at once, particularly in peak travel periods.

In terms of reimagining transport, RoSPA believes that the one of biggest changes in transport over the next 20 years will be the phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles. New ultra low emission vehicles will be necessary to achieve the WMCA's target to reach net-zero emissions by 2041. Automated vehicles are also likely to have a role to play within this timeframe.

RoSPA is hopeful that during this period, more people will shift from private vehicle use to more sustainable travel modes such as walking and cycling where possible, with the use of public transport where necessary. We also expect that new forms of transport, such as micromobility, are likely to become more prevalent. The concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods will make cycling and walking more feasible for everyday activities, as access to key services will be improved.

The citizen focussed transport aim is also key. It is vital that those travelling in the West Midlands feel safe and that the transport options available are good for wellbeing, cost-effective and convenient if we are to change travel behaviours.

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<sup>1</sup> Public Health England (2017) 'Working Together to Promote Active Travel: A briefing for local authorities' [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/523460/Working\\_Together\\_to\\_Promote\\_Active\\_Travel\\_A\\_briefing\\_for\\_local\\_authorities.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/523460/Working_Together_to_Promote_Active_Travel_A_briefing_for_local_authorities.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Public Health England (2017) '6 million adults do not do a monthly brisk 10 minute walk' <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/6-million-adults-do-not-do-a-monthly-brisk-10-minute-walk?>



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## Our vision

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision as set out in the following sections:

### RoSPA response

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
What we want to achieve for people of the West Midlands?	X					
Vision for travel?	X					

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our vision?

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.

If you have any further comments about our vision; please provide them below:

### RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees with the proposed vision. In particular, we support delivering affordable and dependable travel services. It is essential that people have access to the safe, simple and reliable connections they need without having to own a car. We also support better quality of life and places, which will make streets safer and quieter, encouraging use of active travel modes such as cycling and walking. It will also allow people to enjoy more time outside.

We support the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods within a 45-minute region. The vision is based on a combination of walking, wheeling and riding – travel options that require neither an expensive private vehicle or a full driving licence. This system will work better for the one in four households in the West Midlands who do not



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have access to a car. This will also help us to create more healthy and liveable communities. However, we must ensure that the cycling and walking infrastructure is in place to help people to make healthier choices about travel.



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## Our approach

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach as set out in the following sections:

### RoSPA response

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
A plan that works for all places?	X					
A long-term plan that starts today?	X					
A plan to avoid car-led delivery?	X					
A plan that makes an impact?	X					
A dynamic plan in the hands of communities?	X					
A plan that ensures a just transition?	X					

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach?

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.





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**If you have any further comments about our approach; please provide them below:**

### **RoSPA response**

RoSPA agrees that a “one size fits all” approach to delivering the strategy is not appropriate, as spaces and places in the West Midlands are diverse- from cul-de-sacs to busy town centres and village streets. A range of solutions will need to be developed and tested, with engagement with local communities and businesses being an essential element of any new proposals as part of a citizen-focussed approach. We support the idea of area strategies, which will allow different solutions that work for the diverse environment. It also makes good sense to encourage collaboration to solve the problems in places that face similar challenges.

We also recognise that the document is a long-term plan, but that change must begin now, if we are to meet the Government and region's ambitious net zero targets. As the paper states, the switch to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs), whilst positive and important, will not deliver substantial reductions in carbon emissions until closer to that date and will not address our wider aims. Earlier behaviour change is essential for doing our bit to address the climate emergency. The suggestions included in the paper, such as avoiding unnecessary travel through digital connectivity and driving more efficiently and in an eco-friendly are changes that can begin now with a view to more radical changes in how places are set up in the longer term. The shift to hybrid and remote working as a result of the pandemic has accelerated some of these patterns. However, we also recognise that the pandemic has led to changes in travel behaviours, and that the advice to avoid public transport and social distance earlier in the pandemic may mean that people choose not to use public transport, such as bus and rail, for some time to come. Data suggests that car travel is returning to pre-pandemic levels more quickly than bus and rail travel. We agree that a 'car-led recovery' from the pandemic must be avoided and a plan should be formed to prevent this.

The plan also recognises that it is not only the transport options made available to people that will lead to success- people will be required to change their behaviour and make healthier and more environmentally friendly choices about travel. We agree with the approach proposed, in which the way that the transport system is governed will be vital to provide options and support people to change behaviour, focussing on investing in measures that support better access and managing demand.

Finally, we support the approach that the plan should result in a just transition. RoSPA agrees that we need to help people access what they need without needing a driving licence and having to own an expensive vehicle.



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## Our actions

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our actions as set out in the following sections:

### RoSPA response

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Behaviour change for the better?	X					
Growth that helps everyone?	X					
Safer streets to walk and wheel?	X					
Public transport that connects people and places?	X					
A resilient transport network?	X					
Delivering a green revolution?	X					

Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our actions?

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.



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**If you have any further comments about our actions; please provide them below:**

### **RoSPA response**

RoSPA agrees that behaviour change needs to be at the heart of the strategy, and that the actions taken can help to enable behaviour change. We support the approach for providing better information to make better travel choices, managing the transport network to promote behaviour change and building consensus and appetite for action on our streets, as engagement with the public and stakeholders will be an essential part of the design and delivery of a new transport strategy.

RoSPA also strongly supports the proposal for safer streets to walk and wheel, as we share the Government's target of half of journeys being walked and cycled in towns and cities by 2030. Walking, cycling and wheeling also have a part to play as part of longer journeys. Newer technologies, such as e-bikes and e-scooters make active travel modes more accessible for those who have mobility problems and are less able to walk or cycle. However, we know that perception of safety is a barrier to opting for active travel modes. Therefore, the appropriate infrastructure must be in place to enable people to make healthier choices. Educating users on how they can make journeys safely using new modes of transport will also be vital. These changes in behaviour will bring wider benefits such as a reduction in carbon emissions and improvements in local air quality, noise, safety and the local environment.

Public transport that connects people and places will also be important. As the paper states, a safe, convenient, affordable and accessible public transport system is essential for enabling people to travel beyond their local neighbourhood without a car. Finally, we agree that the strategy should involve a plan to deliver a green revolution, from shifting towards zero emission vehicles to making healthier choices about travel, opting for active travel modes.



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## Our approach to implementation

To what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach to implementation as set out in the following sections:

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Unsure
Sustainability throughout plan implementation?	X					
Prioritising and resourcing our efforts?	X					

**Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with our approach to implementation?**

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.

**If you have any further comments about our approach to implementation; please provide them below:**

### RoSPA response

RoSPA has no further comments.



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## **Integrated Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulation Assessment**

We have completed a draft Integrated Sustainability Appraisal (ISA) to assess the draft core strategy and to form the basis for assessment of future components of the LTP. The role of the ISA is to assess the extent to which the emerging LTP policies will help or hinder the achievement of wider environmental, economic and social objectives.

**We welcome your views on this, please add any comments below:**

### **RoSPA response**

RoSPA is not in a position to comment.

**We have also completed a draft Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA). The HRA is the process by which WMCA as a “competent authority” are legally required to assess the potential impacts of plans (including the LTP) on particular internationally important sites designated for their nature conservation value.**

**We welcome your views on this, please add any comments below:**

### **RoSPA response**

RoSPA is not in a position to comment.



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## Further feedback

**Overall, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the draft core strategy?**

### RoSPA response

Strongly agree.

**Please highlight any issues that you consider the draft Core Strategy does not sufficiently cover.**

### RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that the draft core strategy covers the key issues sufficiently.

**Please add any other comments that you would like to make on the draft Core Strategy.**

### RoSPA response

RoSPA has no further comments to make, other than to thank Transport for West Midlands for the opportunity to comment. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

