



accidents don't have to happen

West Midlands local transport plan green paper

RoSPA's response to Transport for West
Midlands' consultation

August 2021



Response to Transport for West Midlands' consultation: West Midlands local transport plan green paper

Introduction

This is the response of The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) to Transport for West Midlands' (TfWM) consultation the West Midlands local transport plan green paper. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

TfWM, established in 2016, delivers transport on behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). WMCA must produce a Local Transport Plan that sets out policies to promote safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within the area as well as plans to implement those policies.

The consultation seeks views on the TfWM's green paper, [Reimagining transport in the West Midlands](#), which is the beginning of the process to develop a new Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands.



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About your organisation

Organisation name:

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)

Postcode:

B15 1RP

Web address:

www.rospa.com

Your role:

Road safety officer, England

Email:

rneedham@rospa.com

Which of the following best describes the nature of your organisation?

Other – accident prevention charity

What times of day does your organisation operate?

Typical opening hours (e.g. 9am to 5pm)

How many people does your organisation employ?

101-250.

Please describe how the views of your organisation were gathered.

RoSPA has gathered the views of key colleagues within the organisation, including the executive, communications, road safety and road fleet services teams.



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Motives for change

As we write a new Local Transport Plan we need to think about the trade-offs between how we can meet everybody's transport needs and how we can limit the harmful impacts of transport on people and places.

We have developed five "Motives for Change" that explore key issues where we could improve this balance. All the Motives for Change are important. As we work with the public (including local businesses and organisations) and other key stakeholders to set a new direction for transport, our collective challenge will be finding a new direction that best delivers the level of change people want across all our Motives for Change.

The motives for change are:

- Sustaining economic success
- Creating a fairer society
- Supporting local communities and places
- Becoming more active
- Tackling the climate change emergency



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Sustaining economic success

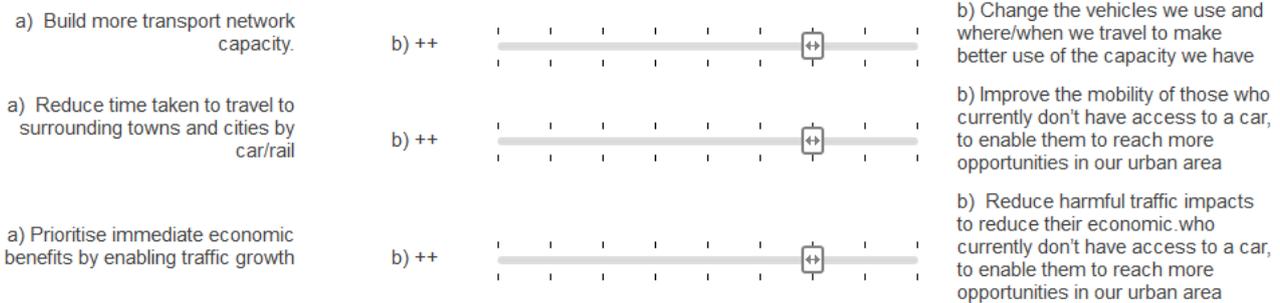
The West Midlands has experienced strong economic growth and investment in recent years; we want to use the way we manage and improve the transport system to sustain this success and to ensure everyone can benefit and participate. The economy and transport are intrinsically linked; as the economy has grown so has our desire to travel and move goods using the same vehicles. However, we think that without a change to this relationship, transport could actually start to hold the economy back.

Maintaining the status quo risks increasing congestion, pollution, transport infrastructure and maintenance costs, undermining the region's productivity, attractiveness, and quality of both life and places.

Delivering transformative benefits to our economy could be achieved by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure by travelling less, at different times of day or by using different vehicles that use less energy and less space per passenger. This would allow us to reduce the damaging impacts of transport on people and the environment and could help new, more affordable modes of access to flourish, providing better access to opportunities for everyone.

We could have a very different approach to driving growth through transport policy.

Which focus do you think could help us best deliver economic growth over the next 10 years? Move the slider towards the kind of change you think we should favour.



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Creating a fairer society

The development of the transport system and where we have chosen to build houses, shops, schools, factories and offices means that for people who do not have access to a car, their opportunities are much more limited.

If you compare what people can access with and without a car in a given time you will find a very big gap. Almost all people can access basic services and amenities without a car, however, people thrive when they have access to a greater range of opportunities.

When you look at who has access to a car there is inequality between and within households (ie. where there is less than one car per adult); younger adults, women, poorer people, disabled people and those from minority ethnic backgrounds are all less likely to have access to a car.

Those who are most mobile generate the most transport impacts such as road injuries and deaths, air pollution and noise. Whereas those who are more deprived (and likely to be less mobile) tend to be more exposed and vulnerable to traffic impacts.

Does your organisation agree or disagree that a key policy aim should be to tackle inequity of access?

RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees. Where people can travel determines the facilities and opportunities people are able to access and affects the extent that people can participate in the economy and society. It is unfair that currently, a large group of the population do not have access to a range of employment opportunities, affordable housing that meets their needs and are unable to meet the travel demands that having a family brings because they do not have access to a car. The status quo means that motoring has become more affordable as public transport has become less affordable, disadvantaging those without access to a vehicle.



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There are two broad options to address this inequity, reducing the mobility of the most mobile, and/or increasing the mobility of the least mobile. The gap cannot be closed by upgrading public transport and active travel whilst the car remains as it is today. If those with access to cars remain as mobile as they are today, then levelling up the mobility of those who do not have access to a car could involve improving their access to cars or another highly mobile personal vehicle (including for example e-bikes/e-scooters).

How should the West Midlands strike a balance between these two extremes of closing the gap in access? Move the slider towards the approach you think we should favour?

RoSPA response



Please explain what you think are the most promising options for closing the gap in what people can access by improving the mobility of those who do not currently have access to a private car.

RoSPA response

RoSPA would encourage everyone to use active travel modes, such as walking and cycling where possible, as these are excellent ways to get around, with health and environmental benefits. However, we recognise that for longer journeys, it will not always be possible to opt for an active travel mode.

How land is used and how facilities are distributed will be an important consideration, as if people live within a short distance of amenities, it will be much more feasible to opt to walk or cycle that journey. RoSPA is supportive of the fifteen-minute neighbourhood approach, based around the idea that residents can access a variety of daily goods and services within 15 minutes of their home without using a car.

Where people need to use motorised transport, such as public transport, this must be affordable and accessible for all. This does not only include cost, but geographic accessibility and the frequency of service. For public transport to be an attractive option it will need to be reliable, within walking or cycling distance of people's homes and services will need to be frequent. Demand responsive services could be considered for areas where demand for public transport is not high enough for a fixed service.

There is a need for transport services for socially disadvantaged groups, such as the elderly, the young and the disabled in rural areas. A well-organised public transport system in these areas can enhance economic growth by improving social inclusion, accessibility and mobility. Traditionally, the characteristics of rural areas have presented barriers to improving public transport. This is because rural homes are often distributed over larger areas, population density is low and therefore potential passenger numbers are limited and the level of demand is unpredictable. As a result, public transport systems in rural areas generally suffer from low and uncertain



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demand, and service coverage is very limited since the provision of frequent and widespread public transport services is financially unjustifiable for the passenger numbers attainable¹.

Evidence² suggests that a well-designed flexible transport system can integrate different modes of transport to provide more user-centric, comfortable, and cost effective transport options by offering desired flexibility in choosing route, time, mode of transport, service provider and payment system.

Increasingly, micromobility may also have a role to play. Micromobility vehicles offer a new way of moving around. They can make journeys quicker and easier, particularly where there are limited public transport alternatives. They could provide a substitute to making short journeys by car. However, RoSPA is concerned that people may choose micromobility vehicles such as electric scooters over active modes of travel, such as walking and cycling. There is currently little evidence to show a modal shift either away from motorised transport or away from walking or cycling.

If journeys by micromobility vehicles replace those that would otherwise be made by car, this could help reduce carbon emissions from road transport and improve air quality in towns and cities. As well as being cheaper to purchase than traditional motor vehicles, micromobility devices do not depend on traditional fuels, meaning they have much lower running costs.³

Micromobility vehicles can also provide new transport choices for some disabled or older people, for example, for those who are less able to walk medium to long distances and otherwise may use a car. However, this needs to be balanced against concerns about the possible negative impact of micromobility vehicles on older or disabled people. There are apprehensions about those riding on the pavement causing problems for these groups, and about the risk of obstruction and littering from poorly parked micromobility vehicles, such as hired electric scooters.

Currently, the car remains the most popular choice because it offers affordability at the point of use and flexible convenience. For all, but in particular to encourage those who currently use private motor vehicles to use other transport modes, public transport services must be convenient and provide positive user experiences. For example, if people feel vulnerable when using these modes to being a victim of crime, this will act as a deterrent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is likely to be particularly important to passengers that these services are cleaned regularly and have ample space for all passengers.

¹ Velaga, N. R. et al. The Potential Role of Flexible Transport Services in Enhancing Rural Public Transport Provision, Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2012

<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1099&context=jpt>

² Nelson and Phonphitakchai cited in Velaga, N. R. et al. The Potential Role of Flexible Transport Services in Enhancing Rural Public Transport Provision, Journal of Public Transportation, Vol. 15, No. 1, 2012

<https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1099&context=jpt>

³ Clewlow R. The Micro-Mobility Revolution: The Introduction and Adoption of Electric Scooters in the United States. Transportation Research Board. 2018;1(1):1



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Supporting local communities and places

As our growing society has become more car dependent, more people have bought cars and we understand that more people now feel that they could not do without a car. However, this has come with consequences on our local streets.

As traffic and car ownership have increased, motor vehicles have increasingly taken over the function of streets and the space available on them. This has harmed the quality of places and limited opportunities to use streets for wider functions that deliver greater social and economic value to communities.

How big a problem, if at all, is the impact of transport on the quality of places for your organisation?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that this is a moderate problem. RoSPA House is situated on Calthorpe Road in Edgbaston, which is a busy three-lane one-way road, with a 30mph speed limit. The right-hand lane of the road hosts a number of short stay parking bays, but many of the office blocks and businesses on the road have access to some off-road parking. The road comprises of a variety of office buildings, businesses and a school. The road is well served by public transport, with several bus stops.

The businesses and school generate significant motor traffic at peak times, such as during the morning and evening rush hour and at school drop-off and pick-up times. At these times, many vehicles park next to or on the pavement. This can make it difficult for pedestrians to pass and for any vehicles attempting to enter or exit premises to join the road. Calthorpe Road is also often used for excessive speeding.

There are large numbers of pedestrians that use Calthorpe Road throughout the day. Although there are pedestrian crossings at either end of Calthorpe Road, pedestrians can be seen trying to cross the busy three-lane road away from crossings. It seems that the current facilities may not align with pedestrian desire lines. There are also no cycling facilities, such as cycle lanes, present on the road. This discourages walking to the retail and leisure buildings on the road.

Explain some of the changes your organisation believes we could make to streets to help improve the quality of place by reducing the impacts of traffic and parked vehicles.

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that there are a number of measures that can be considered to improve the quality of places. Well-designed spaces have the potential to increase social contact, physical activity and support improved community cohesion.

Firstly, to encourage active travel, it is vital that the appropriate infrastructure is in place, and that the road 'feels safe' for those who wish to walk or cycle. The main ways in which to create a physically safer and more attractive



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environment are by introducing a safe system approach to the road system to reduce the risk of any collision occurring and to reduce the severity of those that do occur and to reduce motor traffic volume.

The safe system approach is advocated by the World Health Organisation and Vision Zero philosophy and is based on the understanding that injury is caused by an exchange of energy in quantities higher than human tolerance to it. Preventing or minimising the exchange of energy, therefore, prevents injuries. The safe system approach recognises that people make mistakes, and designs roads and vehicles so that these mistakes are not likely to result in death or serious injury. This places human vulnerability to injury at the centre of the road system, and proposes that roads, vehicles, and traffic speeds are modified to prevent exchanges of energy that are likely to cause fatal injuries. This approach can be applied to all types of roads and for all road users.

The safe system model includes many measures to prevent fatal collisions from occurring. The main approaches are separating different road users by physical infrastructure and where separation cannot be achieved, reducing vehicle speeds to reduce the likelihood of crashes occurring and the severity of any that do occur so they are unlikely to cause fatal injuries. The introduction of segregated cycle lanes, for example, would be welcomed. If more people opt for active travel modes over vehicles, less parking space for vehicles will be required.

As the paper states, investments in measures to encourage cycling and walking can boost the economy. These investments have proven to benefit many local retailers and businesses by increasing trade, even when this has reduced space for motor vehicles, Living Streets found that where the pedestrian experience has been improved, footfall has increased between 20 and 35%.

Land use and the spacing of amenities must also be considered. With quieter streets and a good selection of local services and amenities, people could travel less and stay local. This could help people live healthier lifestyles and reduce the impacts of traffic in their area.

Do you agree or disagree that the idea of 15-minute neighbourhoods where people could access a good variety of daily goods and services within 15 minutes of their home without using a car would be a good or bad thing for your organisation?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that this would be a good thing, encouraging people to travel in more sustainable ways. Ensuring that people have access to key services such as food stores, doctors surgeries, post offices and schools in the local area will be key to enable the reduction of travel.



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Becoming more active

Our lifestyles, including our travel behaviours, have contributed to creating some serious health issues for our society. Some of these would be improved if we undertook more physical activity.

Please tell us whether your organisation agrees with the following statements:

Our organisation needs a healthy and active workforce.

RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees for a number of reasons, the main being that exercise is excellent for our health, with evidence suggesting that people in better physical condition tend to have better mental health and cognition, helping them perform better when working and learning. Because of this, fewer days are taken as sick leave and people can remain economically active for more of their life. There are also benefits to the health system, in that less public funding is needed for the treatment of preventable conditions and to provide long-term support for people who become unable to work because of poor health.

Changes to the way we travel has made us less physically active, which is bad for our health.

RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees. As the paper states, 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 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.

The West Midlands should aim to have an urban environment (including streets) that supports people to exercise and work physical activity into their travel.

RoSPA response

RoSPA strongly agrees. 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



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or more per day, 31 lives a year would be saved, with a value of £30 million⁴. 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 month⁵.

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.

Are there any ways that your organisation could encourage more physical activity as part of its day-to-day movements?

RoSPA response

RoSPA encourages active travel as part of the commute and when travelling to other sites and meetings in a number of ways:

- Providing cycle storage and shower facilities for those who wish to cycle to work
- Part of the cycle for work scheme
- Encouraging staff to walk or cycle where possible when travelling for work and to use public transport such as buses and trains rather than cars and planes for longer journeys
- Wellbeing committee promotes the benefits of physical activity to staff

RoSPA would welcome any further initiatives to help employees to undertake more exercise.

What do you think are the biggest barriers stopping your organisation from swapping more journeys from the car to more active modes like walking and cycling?

RoSPA response

Perceptions of safety are likely to play a role as a barrier to walking and cycling. For example, the increase in traffic and parked cars have made parents reluctant to allow their children to play and exercise in the street and made people nervous to walk or cycle.

⁴ 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

⁵ 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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A YouGov survey commissioned by RoSPA in 2015 of UK adults found that when asked how much they would like to cycle in the future, 36% said they would like to cycle more than they currently do, 44% said about the same as now, and 3% said they'd like to cycle less often.

The main reasons given when asked what prevents them from cycling more often were "concerns around the safety of road cycling" (41%) and "concerns about drivers treating me badly when cycling" (31%).

Other common reasons were "cycling not a realistic option for the journeys I make" (32%), "weather not good enough" (24%), "lack of motivation to cycle" (22%) and "a health condition" (16%). "I'd like to improve my cycling skills first" was cited by 7% of respondents, and another 7% said they could not ride a bicycle. Overall, 39% of respondents said they would cycle more often if cycling on the roads were safer.

These findings suggest that a perception that cycling is not safe is preventing many people from cycling, which means that they are not benefitting from the health improvements that cycling brings.



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Tackling the Climate Emergency

Carbon emissions are causing global warming which is resulting in climate change. Transport is the UK's biggest source of carbon emissions, most of these are from surface transport, most of these are from cars. We have not reduced transport emissions in 30 years because of increased demand to travel and fashions for larger vehicles.

If global temperatures exceed a certain point (predicted to be 2030 if we do not significantly reduce emissions before then) natural stores of carbon emissions will be released at an uncontrollable rate causing unstoppable climate change. It will have catastrophic impacts in particular places around the world but will also have considerable direct and indirect impacts on life in the West Midlands.

How concerned, if at all, are you about the impact of climate change on your organisation?

RoSPA response

RoSPA is very concerned about the impacts of climate change, not only on the organisation, but also on people's health and the environment. As the paper states, if we do not reduce our carbon emissions, the average global temperature will soon reach a point where natural stores of carbon will start to be released into the atmosphere. Transport produces the majority of carbon emissions in the region, and most of this is produced by car use. Therefore, we must address high levels of car use, encouraging people to walk and cycle for shorter journeys or as part of longer journeys and to opt for other modes of transport when needed, such as public transport.

For those using motor transport, the shift to ultra-low emission vehicles, along with other measures to reduce the use of vehicles, will be critical to decarbonise the transport system.



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Government has committed to decarbonise the UK by 2050. However, evidence suggests that global efforts, particular in developed countries, need to be greater. This is why WMCA has adopted its own carbon budget with a net-zero date of 2041. It is no use decarbonising quickly if others around the world are not pulling their weight, but by adopting the more ambitious target, we can demonstrate to the world that faster change is possible and good and inspire others to follow.

Decarbonising transport will require a shift to ultra-low emission vehicles; however, this will not be sufficient to meet Government's commitments to reduce carbon emissions or our own. We will also need to reduce the energy we use to travel through behavioural changes such as; consolidating our trips/travel, using private vehicles that consume less energy (which may be lighter and less powerful), using public transport, avoiding travel by communicating and accessing services online.

How important or unimportant is it for your organisation that the West Midlands shows leadership in tackling the climate change emergency by decarbonising transport?

RoSPA response

The UK has signed the Paris Agreement and is committed to global efforts to prevent this environmental breakdown by reducing carbon emissions to net-zero by 2050 WMCA is committed to these efforts and has adopted its own WM2041 carbon ambition It is developing plans to decarbonise our region by 2041. To meet these ambitious targets, RoSPA believes that it is very important that the West Midlands shows leadership in tackling the climate change emergency by decarbonising transport.



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Climate change is not necessarily more important than the other Motives for Change but it is different from the others in the sense that there is a point after which we will lose the ability to prevent escalating harm.

Addressing this Motive for Change means we have to act now and cannot pursue a more gradual transition like we might with others. This perhaps enables us to be bolder on our plans to address the wider Motives for Change.

Does your organisation believe that rapidly addressing the climate emergency would represent a threat or an opportunity to address our wider Motives for Change?

Sustaining economic success

RoSPA believes that tackling climate change will present strong, new opportunities to sustain economic success. People's health is also likely to improve, which means that people will take less sick leave days and have the opportunity to be economically active for longer. There are also benefits to the health system, reducing the costs of treatment of illnesses that are caused by physical inactivity.

Encouraging walking and cycling will be central to tackling the climate change emergency and investments in measures to encourage cycling and walking can boost the economy. These investments have proven to benefit many local retailers and businesses by increasing trade, even when this has reduced space for motor vehicles. Living Streets found that where the pedestrian experience has been improved, footfall has increased between 20% and 35%.

Creating a fairer society

To encourage people to use their cars less, it will be vital to make other forms of motorised transport, such as public transport, better connected, accessible and affordable for all. Therefore, RoSPA believes that there is a strong opportunity to create a fairer society, by enabling those in more deprived areas more access to public transport and opportunities.

Becoming more active

RoSPA believes that tackling climate change will provide a strong opportunity for becoming more active. Part of tackling climate change will involve encouraging people to walk and cycle shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey.

Supporting local communities and places

RoSPA believes that the decarbonisation plan will present a strong opportunity to make places more green and attractive. As people use motor transport less, it will be possible to allocate more space to active travel infrastructure, making areas more attractive for walking and cycling.



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Change over time

The West Midlands has gone from a collection of small but important towns and cities to the UK's second biggest metropolitan area in just 150 years.

Transport has transformed over a few generations, some who are alive today. As transport technologies changed, the way we used land and the way we lived our lives has changed. Places used to be no bigger than a walking distance because this was mainly how people got around. The railways and then motor vehicle changed this.

The car is currently the main mode of travel for people, even though there are many who cannot access one. As lives and places became more car centric (supported by public policies and infrastructure building) public transport generally has become absolutely and relatively less useful and available. In the West Midlands, we have invested significantly to address these wider issues by improving bus routes and introducing best value fare capping, but more needs to be done.

What do you see as the most significant changes over the lifespan of your organisation?

RoSPA response

Following a public meeting in Caxton Hall in 1916, it was decided to elect a London "Safety First" Council to tackle the "alarming increase in traffic accidents, and the direct connection therewith of the restricted street lighting which had been necessitated by the War conditions". So began the organisation that was to become the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Much has changed in terms of transport in the last 105 years. Just some of the transport and road safety interventions and legislation RoSPA has played a key part in include the change the pedestrian rule so that walkers faced oncoming traffic, the first edition of the Highway Code, the beginning of the analysis of road accidents in 1933, the kerb drill, cycling proficiency scheme, Tufty Club, the introduction of drink drive, hand-held mobile phones and seatbelt legislation and the introduction of minibus driver training. Vehicle safety has also massively improved over this time, with the introduction of new active and passive safety features.

The ways in which we travel, and how much we travel, have also changed. As car ownership has become affordable to many, people are choosing to live further away from their workplace, using their car or public transport to commute to work. Shopping habits have also changed. People would have previously shopped locally, but transport accessibility means that we can now travel further to visit specific stores and access more choice. We can now also shop online, which has led to an increase in the number of commercial vehicles on our roads and the rise of the gig economy. Our leisure activities have also changed, we are now able to holiday abroad as well as in the UK, in comparison to the early 1900s where people would have only gone on holiday in the UK, if at all. The rise of telecommunications also means that we do not have to travel to meetings or to friends and family to keep in touch.



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What has been positive about this change for your organisation?

RoSPA response

RoSPA's focus is on accident prevention, meaning that the main positive of these changes, is that the number of casualties on our roads has reduced. We believe that no one should be killed or seriously injured because of their need to travel. In 1979, 6,352 people were killed and 86,896 seriously injured on Great Britain's roads. By 2019, this had reduced to 1,752 people killed and 30,144 seriously injured. Although the current number of people killed and seriously injured on our roads is unacceptable and we must continue to reduce these numbers, there has been a considerable reduction in the last 40 years.

This reduction is a result of a combination of public education campaigns, better transport infrastructure, enforcement, vehicle safety improvements and safety initiatives by road safety organisations such as RoSPA.

What has been negative about this change for your organisation?

RoSPA response

One of the negative results of transport becoming more accessible and changes in our lifestyle is that people are less physically active than they were in the past. 27.1% of adults in the UK can be described as 'inactive', engaging in less than 30 minutes of physical activity a week⁶.

Over much of the 20th century, the level of cycling in Great Britain fell substantially, but at the same time, levels of motor vehicle traffic increased massively. However, during the pandemic, levels of cycling have risen. The National Travel Attitudes survey reports that 34% of pre-pandemic cyclists were cycling more. RoSPA hopes that these increased levels of cycling will continue.

According to the National Travel Survey⁷, on average, individuals made 250 walking trips in 2019. This accounted for 26% of trips made, but just 3% of distance travelled. 18% of adults reported that, they walk for 20 minutes or more less than once a year or never.

⁶ Sport England (2021) 'Active Lives Adult Survey November 2019/20 Report'

<https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-04/Active%20Lives%20Adult%20November%202019-20%20Report.pdf?VersionId=OjWdwCLnI3dNgDwp3X4ukcODJIDVG7Kd>

Date accessed: 16/08/2021.

⁷ Department for Transport (2020) 'National Travel Survey: 2019'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-travel-survey-2019>

Date accessed: 16/08/2021.



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In England, the amount of children walking to school has declined considerably. In the 1970's, around 70% of children walked to school. However, by 2016, only just over half (53%) of primary school children walked to school and one-third (37%) of secondary school children. For all children, aged 5-16, the figure was just under half (46%).

After a period of sustained under investment we are now seeing unprecedented levels of investment to improve our transport infrastructure, does it feel like transport in the West Midlands is getting better, worse or staying the same?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that transport infrastructure is improving in the West Midlands. RoSPA particularly welcomes the introduction of blue cycle routes, such as the A38 Bristol Road cycle route, which provides a high quality two-way segregated cycle route between Selly Oak, the University of Birmingham and Birmingham city centre.

We also welcome other innovations, such as the extension of the Metro and Swift ticketing systems, which makes public transport simpler for people to access, ensuring that they get the best value for money.



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The pandemic will have long lasting effects – economic shocks, changes to travel behaviour and the way we work and live, and a reshuffling of priorities.

There is uncertainty as to how consumer demands may change as people explore new ways of working.

Public transport, which many rely on, will be vulnerable if patterns of demand do not return to town and city centres. Car use has recovered quickest as lockdown measures have relaxed. Any sustained mode shift to cars will increase the harmful impacts of transport in the region.

The pandemic has presented challenges to everyone and has obviously hit people hard (some more than others), but in the face of adversity we have shown our ability to adapt to new circumstances to try to ensure as much social and economic activity could continue within the guidelines and laws.

How has the way your organisation adapted to the pandemic changed your transport needs and behaviours?

RoSPA response

At the beginning of the pandemic, the advice for everyone to work at home if possible meant that the majority of RoSPA staff moved to homeworking overnight. Only a few key members of staff remained in the office during this time.

As restrictions have started to lift, RoSPA has now moved to a hybrid-working model, allowing staff to spend some of their time working from home, and some time in the office. This means that the majority of RoSPA staff are spending less time commuting to the office. This provides staff with a better work-life balance, with less time spent travelling, while still allowing for the social interaction and face-to-face team working in the office.

Describe in more detail the positive changes you want to continue in future:

RoSPA response

RoSPA will continue with the hybrid-working model, avoiding staff needing to spend unnecessary time travelling to the office every working day.

Describe in more detail the negative changes you want to avoid in future:

RoSPA response

RoSPA will avoid reverting to a working pattern where the majority of staff work in the office at all times, as this requires staff to spend unnecessary time commuting and could affect their work life balance.



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Thinking back on how life and transport has changed over a few generations, it is certain that transport will continue to change whether we want it to or not. Even though the pandemic has made us less certain about exactly what the future will look like, it will certainly be different.

How does your organisation feel transport will change over the next 20 years?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that the one of biggest changes in transport over the next 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.

What do you think will be the main advantages of this change?

RoSPA response

RoSPA believes that decarbonisation and a move towards more active travel will have considerable health benefits for the population. As a result, there will be cost savings to the health service, which spends considerable funds on treating conditions caused by physical inactivity and exacerbated by poor air quality. This in turn will lead to less sick days taken at work, and people being able to be economically active for longer, boosting the economy.

If more people are walking and cycling, road space can be reallocated for active travel, improving the quality of places, making them more green and attractive and will reduce air pollution. Less traffic is likely to contribute towards a reduction in the numbers of people injured on our roads.

What do you think will be the main disadvantages of this change?

RoSPA response

RoSPA recognises that although new forms of transport and technology will come with benefits, they will also present new challenges and risks for road safety. Considering the example of autonomous vehicles, if used properly, they have enormous potential to reduce crashes and casualties, but if they are not used properly, they can also increase risk, especially if drivers over-rely on the technology. There will also be regulatory challenges to consider, such as how insuring these vehicles and how to determine liability of the vehicle or the driver in the event of a collision.



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Although micromobility could be a solution, there will also be challenges and risks to address. Safety must be a priority. Any vehicle being used on the road presents a risk to the user and to other road users, particularly vulnerable groups such as cyclists and pedestrians. Any regulation must provide suitable protections against these risks. Considerations include whether micromobility vehicles are physically robust and safe by design; whether users have the skills to use them safely; how micromobility vehicles interact with other vehicles, road users and pedestrians; and how liability is handled when collisions occur. We must also ensure that micromobility trips replace car trips, rather than trips by more sustainable modes such as cycling and walking.



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The traditional approach to understanding what investment is needed in the transport system is to use current trends to predict future volumes of vehicular movements and try to increase capacity where needed to cater for this. This approach is called “predict and provide”.

However, over time it has become more apparent that enabling consumer driven trends to continue has made many of the harmful impacts of traffic worse, and our ability to provide additional capacity often falls short of the extent to which demand can grow.

A new school of thought has recently been developed where we start with a vision of what we want our towns, cities and neighbourhoods to look like in the future, including how people could travel around, and then work out what transport improvements are needed to make this happen. In this approach, we may seek to change consumer trends if they're heading in a direction that is not conducive to the vision. This approach is called “decide and provide”.

Which approach does your organisation think we should take to planning our transport system?

RoSPA response

Given the information provided above, RoSPA believe that a ‘decide and provide’ approach would be preferable, due to the harmful impacts of the ‘predict and provide’ model.



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Reimagining transport in the West Midlands

Building back better from the COVID-19 pandemic means we need to reduce the harmful impacts of transport on people, places and the environment, while ensuring we equitably improve what people can access.

Access is critical for social and economic prosperity. The ability to access something is not solely dependent on your transport options; accessibility can be enabled by being physically mobile, being close to opportunities, or through digital connectivity. However, there are also many options for travelling that could help us achieve better and more sustainable productivity and quality of life.

A new LTP could have a much stronger focus on achieving transformational change within the next 10 years, rather than focussing on a longer-term vision and more gradual change.

In that time frame we are not going to fundamentally redevelop our urban environment; it takes time for land uses to change. This means that in the short-term we would need to focus on rapidly changing how we travel using existing transport technology and infrastructure, as well as making the most of digital connectivity.

Does your organisation agree or disagree that a new transport plan for the West Midlands should focus on rapidly changing how we travel using existing technology and infrastructure, as well as making the most of digital connectivity.

RoSPA response

Given the ambitious target to be decarbonise the region by 2041, RoSPA strongly agrees that it will be important for the new transport plan to focus on rapidly changing how we travel using existing technology and infrastructure. This will be vital to tackle climate change and address wider issues such as road safety, the impact of traffic on streets and physical inactivity

The changes in travel because of the pandemic also offer new opportunities. For example, as the paper states, because many people are increasingly working from home and using videoconferencing, the commuting peaks and pressure on the transport network were reduced, and people order more goods online and via local shops rather than travelling far. This means that people have benefitted from quieter streets and reduced emissions.

How concerned or unconcerned would your organisation be of policy driven rapid changes to the following?

The way we use land

RoSPA would not be that concerned. As the paper states, we can, and should, ensure that new developments are built in a way that is well suited to our future vision for transport, and this could for example involve encouraging higher density walkable mixed-use developments in places accessible by public transport. We would welcome a reallocation of road space for active travel modes.



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The way we travel

RoSPA would not be that concerned. We would welcome changes in travel habits, particularly a shift towards more sustainable forms of transport and greener vehicles, as these are better for population health and the environment.

The way we use digital connectivity

RoSPA would not be that concerned. Because of the pandemic, RoSPA has moved to largely virtual meetings and events and this has become the norm. This requires staff to make fewer long journeys, is cost effective, and allows us to connect with contacts all over the world.

Although we look forward to some of our meetings and events returning to being face-to-face, such as some of our training courses, awards ceremonies and conferences, we believe that in many instances, digital meetings will remain a viable option. Telecommunications means that we no longer need to travel as often, which is better for the environment. Less motor vehicle journeys can also lead to positive impacts for road safety.

Like many other organisations, RoSPA staff have been homeworking throughout the pandemic, with a view to a hybrid-working model becoming the norm for most staff. Working at home some of the time reduces the costs and time spent commuting, and allows people from all over the region to work for an organisation. Digital connectivity has made homeworking possible for many.

As the paper states, ecommerce has also increased the range of goods available to consumers, consolidating delivery trips and drastically reducing travel for shopping while still providing accessibility for consumers.



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We can frame the changes we can make to how we travel around the “avoid, shift, improve” model.

In a world with fewer cars, how do you think we'd adapt? How would we continue to access the things we need?

Short term change (less than 10 years)

How important are each of the following in terms of how people could access what they need within the next 10 years?

Avoiding travel by using telecommunications to communicate and collaborate

RoSPA believes that this will be essential. Where telecommunications is available and being physically present at a meeting or event is not necessary, telecommunications will play a vital role in reducing the number of journeys we make.

As the paper states, less time spent travelling can also contribute to good wellbeing, and people have more time for other activities that are good for their health and wellbeing such as sleep, exercising or spending time with friends and family.

Shifting travel by having goods delivered to consumers rather than consumers travelling to pick up goods

RoSPA believes that this will be important, as it may reduce the number of vehicles on the road, which is better for the environment and road safety.

Shifting our choice of destination to use local services, suppliers and amenities rather than those further away

RoSPA believes that this is important, but is unsure that individuals and organisations will opt for a local supplier if a supplier located further away is a more cost effective option or offers more choice. However, if good quality amenities and services are available nearby, RoSPA believes that individuals and organisations may be willing to make this change.

Avoiding travel by consolidating our journeys (e.g. completing multiple tasks with one trip rather than several trips)

RoSPA believes that this will be important, as reductions in travel are beneficial for the environment and road safety.



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Shifting our choice of vehicle to a lighter, smaller, lower powered car/ "microcar"

RoSPA believes that the shift to smaller ultra-low emission vehicles has a role to play, but this alone will not help us to meet ambitious carbon emission targets. There will need to be more focus on encouraging people to use their car less and move towards using vehicles with higher occupancy, such as buses, trams and trains and more sustainable forms of transport, such as cycling and walking.

However, a shift to lower impact vehicles, which could be more affordable and enable people to reach places that are not accessible by public transport, walking or cycling could be advantageous.

Shifting our choice of vehicle to a powered two wheeler (e.g. motorbike)

Although motorcycles are not high occupancy vehicles, they have an important role to play as they take up less road space, produce fewer emissions than cars and reduce the amount of congestion on our roads. Particularly in the current climate, where people may be less willing to use public transport, motorcycles offer a COVID-safe way to fill the gap between active travel and reduced public transport without relying on the car.

Shifting our choice of vehicle to a form of micromobility (e.g. e-bike, e-scooter, or mobility scooter)

RoSPA believes that this is important, and that there may be a role for micromobility to play in the last mile commute. Micromobility vehicles offer a new way of moving around. They can make journeys quicker and easier, particularly where there are limited public transport alternatives. They could provide a substitute to making short journeys by car.

If journeys by micromobility vehicles replace those that would otherwise be made by car, this could help reduce carbon emissions from road transport and improve air quality in towns and cities. Traditional motor vehicles are inherently inefficient due to the fact they use lots of energy in order to pull their own weight – one kilowatt hour (kWh) of energy allows a petrol-powered car to travel less than a mile. For example, when using an electric scooter, one kWh provides 80 miles of travel. Coupled with their reduced usage outputs due to an electric motor, they are much more energy efficient and environmentally friendly to use. When the inefficiencies of motor vehicles are paired with congestion, a problem that is rife in cities, there is a huge environmental impact. The Royal College of Physicians estimate that deaths due to exposure to air pollution result in a social cost of £20 billion per year⁸, and 80% of the concentration of nitrogen oxides (significant environmental pollutants) at the roadside are caused by road transport⁹.

⁸ Royal College of Physicians (2016) 'Every breath we take: the lifelong impact of air pollution.'

<https://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/projects/outputs/every-breath-we-take-lifelong-impact-air-pollution>

⁹ Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Department for Transport (2017) 'Air quality plan for nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) in UK (2017)'



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Shifting to cycling

RoSPA believes that this is essential. There is strong evidence^{10,11,12} that cycling provides a wide range of health benefits, mainly because it is a convenient and affordable form of physical activity, and increasing physical activity reduces the risk of many forms of ill-health and disease.

Cycling can easily be incorporated into daily life – by cycling to work, school, to see friends or to the shops. It is estimated that from 1961 to 2005, there was a 20% reduction in physical activity within Britain, which is predicted to rise to 35% by 2030. More than 4 in 10 people do not take enough physical activity to achieve good health, which has significant negative impacts upon their lives. The All Party Commission on Physical Activity report estimates that physical inactivity leads to 37,000 premature deaths in England alone each year¹³.

Lack of physical activity is one of the most important risk factors for coronary heart disease, with a physically inactive lifestyle doubling the risk compared to an active lifestyle. Regular exercise is central to improving the nation's health, with cycling being an excellent method of building regular exercise into people's daily lives.

Shifting to walking

RoSPA believes that this is essential. The above health and environmental benefits apply to walking.

Shifting to use your local rail station

RoSPA believes that this is important, but recognises that some local rail stations will not offer services as regularly or may offer a slower travelling service with more stops than those at larger interchange stations. Convenience to the individual in terms of travel time and choice of services available may outweigh the desire to use the local rail station.

Trains are a higher occupancy vehicle than private vehicles and therefore mean that there are less vehicles on the road, which has environmental and road safety benefits.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/air-quality-plan-for-nitrogen-dioxide-no2-in-uk-2017>

¹⁰ Hillman, M. (1992) Cycling: Towards health and safety, British Medical Association, Oxford University press: Oxford.

¹¹ Cavill, N and Davis, A. (2007) Cycling and Health: What's the Evidence? Cycling England.

¹² NICE (2012) Walking and cycling: local measures to promote walking and cycling as forms of travel or recreation

¹³ All Party Commission on Physical Activity (2014) Tackling Physical Inactivity – A coordinated Approach.
www.sportsandplay.com/upload/public/APCOPA%20Final.pdf



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Shifting to use your local tram line

RoSPA believes that this will be important, although it appears that concerns about public transport remain due to the pandemic. At the beginning of the pandemic, operators had to enforce restrictions on public transport to reduce the transmission of the virus, such as running at a lower capacity and enforcing face-covering requirements. The public were asked to avoid public transport where possible.

Trams are a higher occupancy vehicle than private vehicles and therefore mean that there are less vehicles on the road, which has environmental and road safety benefits

Shifting to use your local bus service

RoSPA believes that this will be important, although the above comments about the pandemic will apply, at least in the short term. At the time of writing, bus usage outside of London remains at about 55% of the levels seen at the beginning of March 2020¹⁴.

Shifting to use a demand responsive service

RoSPA recognises that this could be an important and attractive option. Demand responsive services could include taxis, much as well as new demand responsive forms of public transport, which could provide coverage where demand is too low for good quality fixed public transport and for people who are unable to drive or use public transport.

Improving how we access vehicles, for example by using a car club rather than owning a private vehicle

RoSPA believes that car clubs could be important, offering an alternative to vehicle ownership. This approach would have extra benefits if the car club vehicles were ultra low emission vehicles. These vehicles could also provide access to the benefits of cars for those who cannot afford to own.

¹⁴ Department for Transport (2021) 'Transport use during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-use-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-pandemic>

Date accessed: 13/08/2021.



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Please explain if we have missed any changes that you think need to be considered in this timescale.

RoSPA response

RoSPA has no further comment.



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These are all things that we think we could progress today, but which would take time to scale up to have significant impacts across the whole region.

How important are each of the following in terms of how people could access what they need beyond the next 10 years?

Changing land uses in existing and future areas to put homes, work, services and amenities closer to each other

RoSPA believes that this will be important. If we want to encourage people to make journeys using public transport, walking and cycling, rather than in private vehicles, changes in land use will be required. More sustainable forms of transport are likely to be a more feasible if homes, work, services and amenities are located closer to one another.

Redeveloping the urban realm to provide high quality infrastructure with green spaces and places to dwell

RoSPA believes that this will be essential if we wish to shift more journeys to active travel modes such as cycling and walking.

Having a more extensive rail and rapid transport network to increase journeys that could be made by public transport

RoSPA believes that this will be essential. An improved service will increase the number of journeys that can switch to public transport.

Having an ultra-low emission fleet

RoSPA believes that this will be important; however, having an ultra-low emission fleet alone will not be enough to achieve ambitious carbon emission reduction targets.

Using connected and autonomous technologies across all kinds of transport vehicles

RoSPA believes that this will be important. As the paper states, these technologies have the potential to improve many aspects of travel, potentially revolutionising public transport, improving the productivity of time spent travelling, reducing road accidents and improving the flow of traffic.

Please explain if we have missed any changes that you think need to be considered in this timescale.

RoSPA response

RoSPA has no further comment.



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If you wish to provide further information, please use the opportunity here, or attach any relevant supporting information using to 'attach-it' button below

RoSPA has no further comments to make on the consultation process, other than to thank TfWM for the opportunity to comment. We have no objection to our response being reproduced or attributed.

