10. Accessibility

Relevant Evidence Base

- Census travel to work data ONS (2011)
- West Midlands Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) (2011-2026)
- West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (2015)
- West Midlands Household Survey
- West Midlands 1500-point Survey (2015)
- Coventry and Warwickshire Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) (2014)
- Coventry Area Strategic Model (CASM) – WSP (2015 and 2016)
- Coventry and Warwickshire's Commuting Movements (2015)
- Traffic Master Data (2015)
- Coventry Rail Investment Strategy (2013)
- Coventry Vehicular Cordon Survey (2013)
- Coventry Pedestrian and Cycle Cordon Survey (2015)
- The Coventry Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy (2012)
- Report to Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee, Air Quality (2014)
- Coventry Air Quality Action Plan and Progress Report (2012-14)
- Report to Cabinet – Age Friendly City Programme (2014)

Introduction

The local transport system will play a critically important role in supporting major housing and jobs growth in Coventry, and the Council's ambition to become a top ten city.

In addition to enabling everyday activities such as accessing work, education, shops and leisure facilities, transport can also have a significant influence on peoples' health and wellbeing and overall quality of life. Transport is also an enabler of economic activity, providing connections between people and jobs, access to markets and business supply chains.

Individual transport needs can vary significantly. It is therefore important to ensure that everyone who lives in, works in or visits the city is able to access a choice of accessible and high-quality transport modes and make well informed and appropriate decisions about how and when they travel.

Coventry's existing transport network generally works effectively, however there are a number of important wider challenges to address:

- The dominance of the car in the context of a compact growing city with a high proportion of short local car trips which discourages physical activity, thus promoting less healthy lifestyles.
- Relatively low levels of cycling, and to a lesser extent walking and public transport usage for local trips, especially for trips to school and work.
- Low levels of accessibility and a high reliance on access by car to some edge of city employment and retail sites.

- Road congestion on some major road corridors, primarily during peak periods, which can negatively affect economic growth and air quality.
- The impact of the car in the street environment such as obstructive on-street parking, road safety and general street clutter.
- Working towards achieving current road casualty reduction targets and making our roads safer for all.
- The need for improved strategic connectivity to surrounding areas which are economically linked to Coventry.

Public Health and Air Quality

Transport, public health and land use planning are intrinsically linked. For example, physical inactivity, which is typically exacerbated by excessive reliance on the private car, is major contributory factor to the cause of obesity which is linked to the onset of type 2 diabetes, both of which are rising rapidly in the resident population. For example, the Coventry Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy shows that 20% of Coventry's year 6 children are obese with a further 14% overweight. A major contributory factor is an increase in sedentary lifestyles and poor diet. There is evidence of this locally which shows that a large proportion of very short local trips are made by car, further amplifying levels of physical inactivity. The health sector is keen to promote a more proactive approach to healthcare by encouraging the take-up of active travel modes. Therefore, the promotion and uptake of walking and cycling as an everyday travel mode presents an ideal solution to address these issues. Coventry is a designated Marmot City, so is seeking ways to address health inequalities across the city. The Cycle Coventry Programme also helps support cycle infrastructure improvements and supporting Smarter Choice modes together with the TfWM's Strategic Transport Plan where it includes developing a metropolitan strategic cycle network to ensure seamless travel.

A citywide Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared in Coventry in 20096 due to significantly high levels of air quality emissions. Research demonstrates that emissions from road transport are the principal source of elevated concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) which causes poor air quality. The main transport corridors to the North and North East of Coventry (linked to the M6) are identified as being most likely to exceed the NO2 standard7.

The development and expansion of the city provides an opportunity to address these issues through investment in the existing transport network, and by ensuring that new developments cater for the accessibility needs of a diverse, forward looking low carbon city. This includes opportunities for the promotion of intelligent mobility and more active and environmentally sustainable modes of travel such as walking and cycling, public transport and ultra-low emission vehicles such as electric cars.

There are already a number of positive initiatives taking place including a successful programme of investment in transport networks across the city. This includes a successful programme of public realm enhancements in the city centre, targeted investment to address congestion along a series of busy road corridors and the delivery of a substantial programme of cycle routes.

Strategic Connectivity

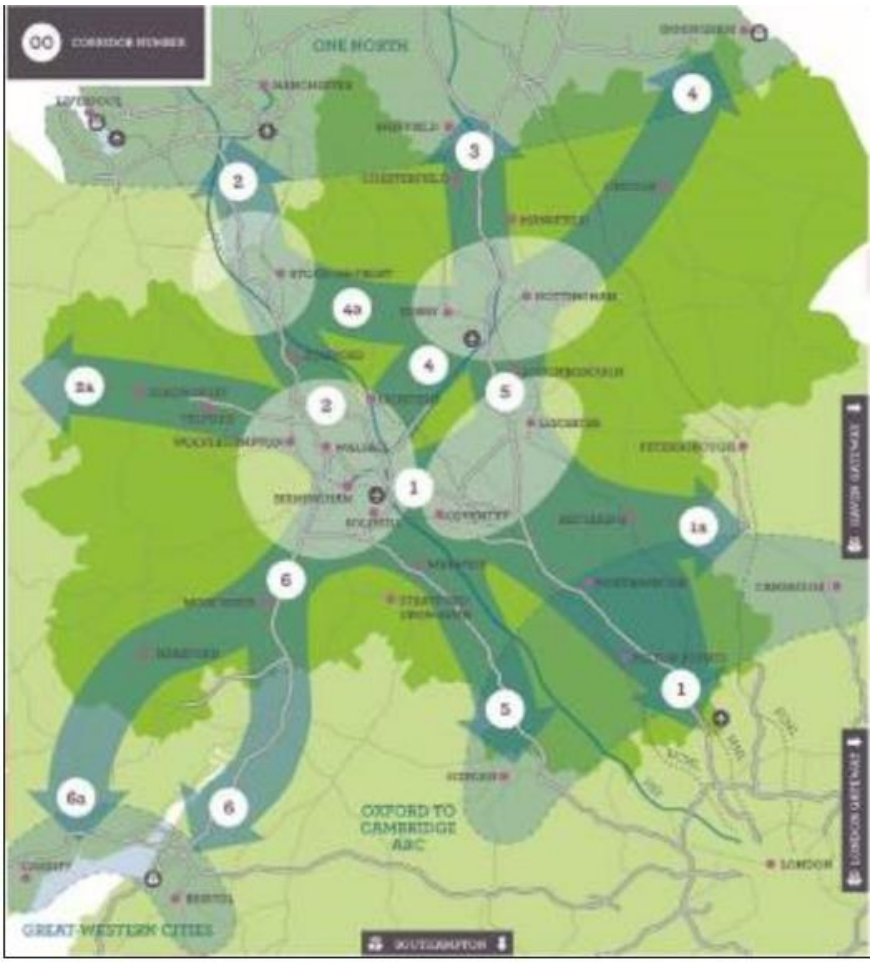
The need to enhance accessibility within the city is underpinned by a wider objective to strengthen accessibility across Coventry and Warwickshire and with neighbouring areas in the East and West Midlands. This approach recognises the established economic travel to work area and reinforces opportunities to enhance business connectivity and supply chains.

The Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, through its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), acknowledges the important role transport plays in supporting economic growth proposals and the strong interactions which exist on the Coventry and Warwickshire north-south corridor, and those with the West

Midlands, East Midlands, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire. These interactions have also been identified by the initial findings of the Midlands Connect programme which is seeking to improve the strategic connectivity to support growth objectives.

The approved Strategic Transport Plan for the West Midlands Metropolitan Area "Movement for Growth" sets out the overarching transport strategy for the West Midlands Metropolitan area. The plan's approach of a metropolitan tier with a metropolitan rail and rapid transit network, key route network and metropolitan strategic cycle network will help deliver a transport system which boosts our economy and improves the environment.

Figure 10.1 - Midlands Connect – Strategic Growth Corridors and Hubs



An Accessible Transport Network

In order to create a prosperous and attractive city, local people must have good access to the jobs and services they need. This can only be achieved if the transport network offers a wide choice of convenient, affordable and reliable transport modes which meet the needs of the varying types of trips which people need to make.

The principles adopted in this development plan promote the utilisation of accessible brownfield sites with additional housing being met through the development of Sustainable Urban Extensions (See Policies H1- H3).

The use of brownfield sites will:

- Make sustainable travel options, such as walking and cycling more attractive options for local trips;
- Help to focus development towards accessible locations making it easier for local people to access employment, education and skills, shops and leisure facilities and reduce the distance people need to travel;
- Support higher density development proposals which will help support the viability of public transport services

It is essential that major housing and employment sites are appropriately linked to the local and strategic road network. The provision of high-quality transport infrastructure associated with the development of Sustainable Urban Extensions (SUE's) will be crucial to their success as an environmentally and economically sustainable approach to meeting housing need. SUE's and other major development sites will need to be seamlessly integrated into wider transport networks to encourage the uptake of walking, cycling and public transport.

Transport Infrastructure Hierarchy

A modal hierarchy has been developed to guide the types of infrastructure required to fulfil the needs of a growing and manageable sustainable transport network.

- **Local trips** – Shorter trips within and between local neighbourhoods,
- **City trips** – citywide and some cross boundary
- **Strategic trips** – Cross-boundary, regional and national

Local Trips

For shorter, local trips to amenities such as to schools and local shops, walking, cycling and public transport should be developed to the point of being the most attractive modes of travel. These modes are more feasible for shorter journeys as well as being more sustainable in terms of reducing local congestion, improving air quality, reducing carbon emissions and have significant added health benefits. At present approximately 60% of all trips within the city are less than 2 miles, a distance which can be easily made by these modes.

Local walking and cycling networks must be of a sufficiently high quality and be safe in order to encourage their use by a wide variety of people with different mobility needs.

City Trips

For longer trips within the city, such as access to peripheral employment sites and the city centre, a mix of walking, cycling and public transport should remain as the preferred and most viable options, particularly for trips to school and work. Car use will remain an important part of the transport network, especially for trips involving the movement of goods or for people with more limited mobility.

Strategic Trips

For long distance trips to destinations outside of the city, car, rail, rapid transit and air will be the preferred modes of travel. It will be important that everyone in the city has a good level of access to major public transport hubs such as Coventry Station and Pool Meadow Bus Station to boost the attractiveness of public transport services. Opportunities to enhance access to Birmingham Airport, the new high-speed rail interchange and proposals for UK Central located in Solihull will also be sought to strengthen national and international connectivity. The road network will continue to cater for a largest proportion of strategic freight, business and leisure trips including the M6, A45/M1 and A46/M40.

Opportunities will be sought to meet the rising demand for rail trips in accordance with the Council's Rail Investment Strategy.

Equality and Choice

In order to ensure opportunities for travel are equitably available, the needs of everyone in the community should be considered, including those with physical and sensory disabilities, people with special needs, the elderly and young children.

Due to the increasing number of older people in Coventry, the Council is working in partnership with Coventry University and Age UK Coventry to help the city become more age-friendly[1]. Transport has been identified as one of three priority areas to address. To support the achievement of this objective, new development proposals should consider the specific needs of an Age Friendly City. The needs of these groups must be considered and accommodated where possible within new development proposals and associated transport infrastructure.

Intelligent Mobility

Coventry is rapidly establishing itself as a test-bed for intelligent mobility. Established links with the car manufacturing sector and Coventry's two universities offers a unique opportunity to develop a high-tech low carbon transport technology industry which could support increased jobs, and provide the opportunity to develop a truly sustainable, integrated and accessible transport network.

Policy AC1: Accessible Transport Network

1. Development proposals which are expected to generate additional trips on the transport network should:

   a) Integrate with existing transport networks including roads, public transport and walking and cycling routes to promote access by a choice of transport modes.

   b) Consider the transport and accessibility needs of everyone living, working or visiting the city. Special attention should be paid to the needs of disabled people, young children, and people with special needs. Special attention should be paid to the needs of an aging population to make Coventry an Age Friendly City.

   c) Support the delivery of new and improved high-quality local transport networks which are closely integrated into the built form. This includes networks which support access to strategic growth corridors. The scale of measures required should be appropriate to the scale and impact of the proposed development.

d) Actively support the provision and integration of emerging and future intelligent mobility infrastructure, including electric vehicle charging points, Car Club schemes and bicycle hire.

2. Further guidance will be contained in the Coventry Connected SPD.

[1] http://democraticservices.coventry.gov.uk/documents/s18644/Age%20Friendly%20City%20Programme.pdf

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/13783/air_quality_management_area_aqma_order

http://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/download/618/air_quality_in_coventry