

# 1. Executive Summary

## 1.1. Introduction

During 2020, as part of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Birmingham City Council used a number of funding streams to introduce a variety of schemes across the city with the aim of making active travel modes, such as walking and cycling, more appealing to the public and facilitating social distancing.

The purpose of this review is to help inform which schemes should be kept in place and to identify what can be done to improve those schemes should they be brought forward into the next round of funding which runs during the financial year 2021/2022.

The review considered the schemes under the following four elements:

- Traffic and Transport Data
- Technical / Engineering Review
- Equality Impact Assessments and
- Engagement Analysis.

## 1.2. Traffic and Transport Data

The timescales in which the council was required to deliver these schemes, coupled with the various restrictions that have been in place during this period, restricted the surveys that could be commissioned. Where possible, use was made of available data sources, although it was not possible to draw full conclusions. This experience is being used to develop a monitoring strategy for Tranche 2.

**Recommendation:** A robust monitoring strategy, including collection of baseline data, needs to be developed for Tranche 2, to assess the success of the schemes, to address the DfT's reporting requirements and to respond to queries from members of the public.

## 1.3. Technical/Engineering Review

The technical aspect of the review was undertaken by an external consultant and looked at design standards overall as well as which schemes should be changed, removed, or made more permanent for the second round of funding.

Many 'snagging' issues were identified which can readily be addressed through existing council procedures. Maintenance issues were also raised, both relating to the schemes themselves, particularly cycle routes, and where maintenance of existing council assets was made more difficult following scheme implementation. An example of this is where the introduction of a pop-up cycle lane on a dual carriageway left one lane available to motor vehicles, which then had to be closed to allow for maintenance of street lighting.

The technical review also incorporated the Road Safety Audits carried out in accordance with industry standard procedures. Again, many of the issues raised related to 'snagging' and maintenance, and apart from the interaction of bus stops and associated build outs where pop-up cycle lanes have been introduced, can be easily addressed.

In some instances, the boarding/alighting area at bus stops lies directly in the path of the pop-up cycle lane, presenting a danger to cyclists and bus users, particularly people with pushchairs and those with visual impairments.

The technical/engineering review has identified some 'snagging' issues that remain outstanding, but are currently being addressed, 'Quick wins' that can be implemented in the short term and further more substantial recommendations to be incorporated into the development of schemes being brought forward in the second round of funding.

The implications of new schemes on existing maintenance regimes is considered as part of the usual design process and any issues that arise post-implementation are addressed as appropriate. The council is aware of the issues around the build-up of leaves and debris in cycle lanes and other schemes and is working to address it.

**Recommendation:** The interaction between pop-up cycle lanes and bus stops should be carefully considered and potential conflicts between bus users and cyclists removed through the design process where possible.

## 1.4. Equality Impact Assessments

The EIAs for each scheme are an established and credible tool for demonstrating 'due regard' to the public sector equality duty and were undertaken by an external consultant, who independently reviewed each project. To assess the effects of the schemes on each protected characteristic group, a qualitative methodology was adopted. A workshop was also held with representatives of a number of interest groups.

Overall, the schemes have a positive impact on all protected characteristic groups. The assessment identified some implementation issues which may have some adverse impacts on protected characteristic groups, in particular, people with disabilities. These adverse impacts include loss of on-street parking and lack of appropriate tactile paving. The issues raised are being incorporated into the design process for the second round of funding.

A further issue raised during the workshop was the lack of an identifiable point of contact in relation to the EATF schemes, which has precluded effective engagement with these groups both in relation to the EATF schemes and to highway schemes in general.

**Recommendation:** A point of contact should be identified to ensure effective liaison with representative groups during the second round of the funding programme and for highway schemes in general.

**Recommendation:** Consideration should be given to more effectively embedding the findings of EIAs into the design process as appropriate.

## 1.5. Engagement Analysis

The timescale that the council was required to deliver these schemes in, coupled with the various restrictions that have been in place during this period, did restrict the extent to which consultation and engagement with citizens and stakeholders could take place in the normal way prior to implementation. Meetings that would previously have been held face-to-face were moved online, and other in-person activities, e.g. community planting, curtailed due to

restrictions. The impact of this approach needs to be considered in view of the proportion of people, approximately a tenth in the West Midlands, that do not use the internet.

Despite these restrictions on engagement activities, over 7,600 comments have been made by members of the public on the Commonplace platform and over 1,000 emails were received via the Birmingham Connected inbox. These comments and emails have been analysed with a view to gauging levels of public support for the schemes as well as identifying suggestions for changes and improvements. It is clear that the nature of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) and associated consultation period is not readily understood by members of the public and further information on this should be included in the consultation strategy for the second round of funding.

Due to the experimental and temporary nature of these schemes, feedback from members of the public is an important tool in refining the measures. Some changes have already been made to schemes in response to such feedback and this has also been used to identify some of the 'quick wins' mentioned above.

**Recommendation:** A robust communications strategy should be developed and implemented for the second round of funding, with a view to reaching those that may have been excluded from commenting on the initial round of schemes, and returning to face-to-face engagement activities as soon as COVID-19 restrictions allow.

**Recommendation:** For experimental or temporary schemes, comments from members of the public should be monitored throughout the period of the scheme, with a view to identifying issues that can be easily rectified (quick wins) and those that need to be considered through further design revisions. These should be reviewed at agreed intervals, through existing council structures.

## 1.6. Conclusion

Overall, the schemes delivered under the EATF and RHSSF provided a positive response to the COVID-19 emergency within the parameters of the funding. They also provide a step towards the visions outlined in the draft Birmingham Transport Plan (Jan 20).

Given the urgency of the situation and the timescales of the funding, a great deal has been delivered, albeit not always to the expected standards in terms of delivery and engagement. Many of these issues arose as a result of the emergency nature of the situation faced and the challenging timescales for delivery and would not have arisen in the usual course of business. However, this review has identified many useful lessons that will be brought forward into the second round of funding and more widely.

The past year has afforded the opportunity to trial some innovative solutions and this has resulted in radical changes in some places. It is recognised that it may take some time for members of the public to adapt their travel behaviours and choices and make use of these schemes to their full advantage, thus unlocking the potential benefits. Care needs to be taken to fully engage with the communities affected and involve them in the delivery of further changes needed to achieve the vision of a sustainable, green, inclusive, go-anywhere transport network.

The outcome of the review of EATF schemes is listed in the table below. Schemes to be retained will be subject to further consultation and approval.

	<b>Scheme Name</b>	<b>Scheme Type</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<b>1</b>	Moseley	Local Centre	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>2</b>	Stirchley	Local Centre	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>3</b>	Lozells	Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)	Progress to developing further in 2021/22*
<b>4</b>	Kings Heath	Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)	Progress to developing further in 2021/22*
<b>5</b>	Moseley, Bournville and Castle Vale	Places for People	Progress to developing further in 2021/22*
<b>6</b>	City Centre Traffic Segments	City Centre Traffic Segments	Progress to developing further in 2021/22*
<b>7</b>	Sutton Coldfield	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Withdrawn (removed prior to completion)
<b>8</b>	City Centre to Small Heath (A45 Corridor)	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22
<b>9</b>	Selly Oak to Northfield (A38 Corridor)	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Remove bus/cycle lane Selly Oak town centre elements to progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>10</b>	City Centre to Fort Dunlop (A47 Corridor)	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>11</b>	City Centre to City Hospital via Jewellery Quarter	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>12</b>	Bradford Street	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Progress to making more permanent in 2021/22*
<b>13</b>	A38 to A34 City Centre Connection	Pop-up Cycle Lane	Further development and delivery to be aligned with other programmes, including HS2

\*Through the DfT Active Travel Fund, further development of these schemes will now be carried out and, subject to consultation and approvals, further measures will be delivered during 2021/22. This will include appropriate mitigation measures where identified.