

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The analyses presented and discussed in this report forms Workstage 3(b) of the Strategic Transport Assessment to inform Bromsgrove's District Plan Review. In Workstage 3(a) a transport assessment criterion was defined and then applied to six broad option areas to provide a high-level assessment of transport connectivity. In Workstage 3(b) the assessment criterion has been refined and applied to 20 cluster groups to provide a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) score with regards to transport sustainability.
- 7.2 In aggregate, these scores begin to present a picture of how sustainable, or otherwise, each cluster group is. It is well-recognised that several other infrastructure and policy considerations will impact BDC's decision-making as the emerging plan progresses through the statutory plan-making process. Following this assessment of existing connectivity, a review of the strategic transport investment opportunities was carried out to explore the potential for improving the transport sustainability of each cluster group and how these opportunities could be phased.

Key Findings

Assessment

- 7.3 Considering just Workstage 3(b), as presented in Chapter 4 and 5, the multi-criteria Red/Amber/Green assessment of the transport sustainability showed that:
- Cluster group 12 (Wythall North), 17 (Frankley), 13 (Wythall South) and 11 (Conurbation West A441) received the most 'Green' RAG scores which means they perform particularly well in terms of proximity to existing sustainable transport connections, future proposed transport investment (particularly Wythall North and South); and public transport accessibility to jobs, healthcare and education.
 - Conversely, cluster group 14 (Redditch North), 15 (Redditch West) and 16 (Tardebigge) received the most 'Red' RAG scores. This was mainly due to existing access by public transport to jobs and education, as well as limited identified future proposed transport investments – reducing opportunities to deliver enhanced sustainable mobility services and infrastructure alongside spatial growth.
 - The clusters in-between scored predominantly 'amber' ratings, suggesting that with some infrastructure and service improvements there could be opportunities for improving connectivity by sustainable transport.

Transport Opportunities

- 7.4 A review of the strategic transport investment opportunities reinforced the findings from the transport assessment. The cluster groups around Wythall (Cluster 12 and 13) and the northern edge of the District (Cluster Group 11 and 17) not only had the highest base level of sustainable transport connectivity – reflected by the number of ‘Green’ RAG scores, but also showed the greatest potential for enhancing the sustainable connectivity further, with a broadly lower level of investment, compared to other cluster groups. The cluster groups around Wythall (Cluster 12 and 13) present an opportunity for creating a settlement focused on sustainable connectivity, whereby most of the transport opportunities lie within the District. Although there would be longer-distance journeys out of the District, there is the opportunity for these to be made from nearby existing rail stations (Wythall and Whitlocks End) which already have planned improvements alongside localised daily journeys to a new centre within the settlement. The high-performing cluster groups on the edge of the conurbation (Cluster Group 11 and 17) would need relatively low levels of investment to provide connecting services and/or new infrastructure that would maximise opportunities for sustainable mobility outcomes across the boundary into the conurbation.
- 7.5 Several cluster groups received predominately ‘amber’ ratings, indicating some existing sustainable transport connectivity for at least part of the cluster group which could be enhanced further through infrastructure and service enhancements. They have potential to score more ‘Green’ ratings in the RAG assessment if such improvements were delivered, but this needs to be verified through further analysis and assessment. The predominantly ‘amber’ cluster groups which had the most potential for improved sustainable transport connectivity were around Bromsgrove (Cluster groups 1 & 3), Catshill (Cluster group 4 & 5), Barnt Green (Cluster group 6) and, to a lesser extent, Alvechurch South (Cluster group 7) and Hagley (Cluster group 18). The opportunities for Bromsgrove and Catshill focus on improving active travel and public transport connections into Bromsgrove by diverting and improving frequency of existing bus services and improving active travel routes. In Alvechurch, Barnt Green and Hagley opportunities could focus on localised active travel connections to the neighbourhood centres and rail stations for access to larger district centres by train.
- 7.6 Other cluster groups which scored predominantly ‘amber’ ratings, were those along the A441 corridor and Alvechurch, which includes cluster groups 8 (Alvechurch North), 9 (Conurbation West A441) and 10 (Conurbation East A441). Fewer transport opportunities were identified for these cluster groups. Existing bus services and rail connections to district or local centres were typically low frequency. Although these could be improved,

the proposed scale of growth may not justify the investment needed for increasing rail frequency and for bus services, increased operating costs relating to the provision of higher frequency services may not be commercially viable in the long term. Although there is potential to improve localised active travel connections to the neighbourhood centres, it is likely that prospective residents would need to travel out of the cluster group to access key facilities and employment. With the constraints outlined above on improving connectivity by bus and rail, it could potentially lead to a predominantly car-dominated settlement.

- 7.7 Opportunities to improve the sustainable transport connectivity of the lower-performing, predominantly 'Red', cluster groups were also explored. Cluster groups on the edge of Redditch (Cluster groups 14, 15 and 16) were all beyond reasonable walking distance to the district centre (2km) and on the fringes of being accessible by cycling (5km), this means there is likely to be a reliance on bus services for sustainable connectivity. Improving such services would require cross-boundary collaboration with the County and Redditch Borough Council and the relevant bus operators. Although cross-boundary opportunities have been presented for cluster groups on the edge of the conurbation, there is potentially more risk involved for those around Redditch. This reflects that if the transport improvements are not delivered or, are deemed not to be long-term commercially viable, there isn't the same base level of sustainable transport connectivity to the nearest local centre compared to other, better-performing clusters. Ultimately, this could lead to higher car dependence.
- 7.8 In summary, based on the findings from the transport assessment and the review of transport opportunities:
- Those clusters which have greatest potential for encouraging sustainable connectivity, purely from a transport perspective, are **Wythall and the north-east and north-west edge of Bromsgrove District adjacent to the conurbation**.
 - With higher levels of investment in sustainable mobility infrastructure and service improvements, some of the clusters in **Bromsgrove, Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Catshill and Hagley** appear to have potential to achieve better-than-current levels of sustainable mobility outcomes (reflected in motorised mode trip-rates and mode share percentages). The likely scope of potential improvement from existing travel norms may require further analysis and assessment.
 - Sustainable transport connectivity for clusters around the **A441 corridor** could also be improved, but there are potential long-term challenges to the feasibility and deliverability of these improvements in achieving widespread adoption of sustainable transport. Similar issues could also apply to clusters around Redditch.

Study Limitations

- 7.9 Workstage 3(b) focused on the assessment of 20 cluster groups identified, purely from a transport perspective. The assessment outputs have not been directly informed by other elements of the District Plan review. As such it is possible that sites identified as 'more sustainable' through this transport assessment may prove to be less sustainable when a broader set of metrics (e.g., covering Green Belt, flood risk, and other environmental factors).
- 7.10 As part of the assessment a high-level review of transport opportunities has been carried out to determine the possible sustainable transport infrastructure investment opportunities (beyond that already proposed in the Local Transport Plan / Bromsgrove IDP) to create places that prioritise and embed sustainable travel at the development stage. These transport opportunities have been considered collectively for each cluster group (i.e. all sub clusters being delivered together) although some phasing has been considered. More detailed, site-specific, transport assessments and opportunities assessments would be required if any of these sub-clusters were allocated as part of the District Plan.
- 7.11 The potential impact the transport opportunities could have on the RAG ratings for each cluster groups and each metric has not been re-assessed using the methodology applied to the initial transport assessment for Workstage 3(b) rather, professional judgement has been used to give a broad understanding on which improvements are likely to have an impact on improving the connectivity of each cluster group. Further analysis may be required to apply the same assessment methodology to a refined number of cluster groups to robustly demonstrate the likely impact on sustainable connectivity. Furthermore a layer of quantitative assessment, such as considerations of likely forecast trip generation, split by journey purpose and mode, could be built on top of the Stage 3B analysis.
- 7.12 In reality transport infrastructure investment is relatively fluid; evolving over time to reflect delivery, funding and local growth opportunities. In this sense the Local Transport Plan and IDPs are living documents that will continue to evolve as Bromsgrove's District Plan is delivered. In this context, the RAG assessment against metrics relating to future transport investment proposals is considered to be correct as at the time this work was completed (Summer 2022).



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