Sandwell Cycling Forum  
Wednesday 20th January, 2016 at 5.15pm  
Room G5, Sandwell Council House, Freeth Street, Oldbury

Minutes

Present:  
- Andy Thorpe (AT) - Transportation Planning, SMBC  
- Wayne Moore (WM) - Transportation Planning, SMBC  
- Nathan Moore (NM) - Public Health, SMBC  
- Emma Crowton (EC) - Centro  
- Lesley Easter (LE) - Bike Right!  
- George Reeves (GR) - CTC local campaigner for Sandwell  
- Charlie Newman (CH) - Cyclist

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<th>Ref</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<td>1/16</td>
<td>Welcome, Apologies and Introductions</td>
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Apologies received from: Cllr Bill Gavan, Debbie Hyde (Highways, SMBC) |
| 2/16 | Actions of Last Meeting |  
4/15.3 The use of contact details for people who participate in cycle events/organisations for consultation purposes and invitations to participate in the Sandwell Cycling Forum was confirmed by the following organisations:  
- CTC members were emailed  
- Participants of cycle events organised by CANDO officers  
- Participants of cycle training sessions organised by Bike Right!  
- Bostin Bikes to be offered through CANDO officers  
- Attendees of Love Your Bike sessions organised by Centro  
Still need to approach bike hire at Sandwell Valley, Bikeability trainees and trainers at schools, Cycling in Sandwell (although this is Facebook group) | AT  
4/15.5 The Canal and River Trust’s trial of GPS data for cycle counts is ongoing.  
4/15.6 Alison Kennedy at Centro has asked the Business travel plans team to look into asking businesses to sponsor cycling events.  
AT to approach hauliers, but first need a re-print of the warning stickers. | AT  
5/15.2 No SMBC funding is available, although Westminster School will be purchasing their own bikes through “School Premium” funding (and Bike Right will be running an instructor training course for teachers in April).  
NM said the CANDOs will look into other opportunities for establishing supplies of bikes in the community. |
| 6/15.1 | Cycle routes across parks will be shown on the next edition of the cycle routes map (likely to be mid 2017). Geoff Cox to be approached about route ideas for a potential charity bike ride. Creation of a publicity leaflet for the forum ongoing. Other publicity methods to include use of Facebook and Twitter to direct people to the Cycling page of the Council’s website in order to view agendas and meetings minutes. |
| 3/16 | **Cycling Infrastructure** |
| 3/16.1 | WM reported that the A4123 cycle track scheme between Hill Road and Lower City Road in Tividale is nearing completion. |
| 3/16.2 | Sandwell’s Managing Short Trips (MST) scheme, towpath improvements between Galton Bridge and the Birmingham/Sandwell boundary is now on site and expected to be complete by April 2016. |
| 3/16.3 | The Public Health funded schemes for 2015/16 are commencing, including:  
- Sheepwash Lane pedestrian crossing upgrade and resurfacing and lighting of Fred Perry Walk  
- Tree thinning and lighting of the bridleway between Broom Road (Yew Tree) and Q3 Academy (Wilderness Lane). LE said that this would be useful because the route has a reputation for being dark, overgrown and suffering from fly-tipping. GR said that the bend on the path near Q3 should be improved. WM and AT will investigate by site visit.  
- Improvements to public right of way between Johns Lane and Tipton Road via Sheepwash and Birmingham Canal, including path resurfacing and improved drainage of railway tunnels  
- Solar lighting cats-eyes along West Bromwich Parkway between the Hawthorns and Black Lake  
- Toucan crossing upgrades at Hill Road/A4123 (Tividale) and Gladstone Street/All Saints Way (West Bromwich) |
| 3/16.4 | An expression of interest for future MST projects (“Phase 2”) has been submitted to Centro although funding has not yet been secured. The schemes include:  
- Improvements to the local cycle network along A4123 between Lower City Road and Joseph Street (Oldbury)  
- Improvements to the local cycle network along A461 between Great Bridge and Burnt Tree via Horseley Heath and Dudley Port  
- Improvements to the local cycle network between Black Patch Park and Cape Hill via Birmingham Canal (National Cycle Network, route 5) and the Midland Metropolitan Hospital  
- All Saints Way Link connecting communities to West Bromwich town centre via A41 pedestrian and cycle bridge  
- Improvements to local cycle network between Walsall canal/Bannister Road and Wednesbury town centre via Wednesbury Parkway and Wednesbury Great Western tram stops  
- Traffic calming along Rolfe Street (Smethwick) with access ramps onto platforms 1 and 2 at Rolfe Street railway station. |
3/16.5 GR suggested a possible quick win could be to clear the towpath next to the Tame Valley canal under which there is a gas main. Perhaps CRT could use offenders from the Probation Service to carry out the work. AT to approach CRT.

3/16.6 EC updated the Forum about a number of items that Centro is involved with:
- The West Midlands Rail Franchise consultation closes on March 22\textsuperscript{nd} 2016. Cyclists are encouraged to express their views online via - www.gov.uk/government/consultations/west-midlands-rail-franchise
  GR said that the extra capacity created through removing toilets in carriages and banning cycles on trains at peak times etc would not bring about significant extra capacity for passengers.
- Centro would like to improve secure cycle parking facilities at Dudley Port railway station. The budgeted sum of £4k for five cycle stands (10 spaces) has been found to be insufficient due to site requirements of Network Rail. The sum required is now £12k, to be spent during this financial year. SMBC will investigate whether or not match funding can be provided.
- A public “bicycle pump” installation is planned for both Cradley Heath and Rowley Regis stations. The stations were selected by ATOC, (Association of Train Operating Companies). A supplier will be chosen soon.
- New CCTV coverage will be provided at Smethwick Galton Bridge station.

4/16 **Cyclist Training**

4/16.1 Centro have published a list of free cycling activities for over 16s taking place in the Black Country, ie cycling skills training and tuition, cycle maintenance training and led rides. More information can be found on the Smart Network Smarter Choices website - www.mynetwork.org.uk

4/16.2 NM said the “Bostin Bikes” initiative will, through Sandwell Public Health, provide 10 bikes for each town area in Sandwell. Working with community groups, the initiative will include a behaviour change element where participants will need to attend 4 to 6 led rides.

Further training opportunities for training at the town level around Sandwell will involve the CANDO officers finding free storage places for currently unused bikes that have become available from a number of sources.

LE asked about the maintenance of the bikes and offered maintenance courses to ensure the bikes are kept in a usable condition. A source of funding for ongoing maintenance would need to be found.

4/16.3 NM said the CANDO officers will explore how to commission services for cycle training and ride leaders.

4/16.4 GR mentioned the Cycling in Sandwell monthly rides as being easy rides that cyclists who cannot or who are unable to do long rides could attend.

NM said weekly, sociable rides for small groups of people in local parks (rather than just Sandwell Valley) is the key to ensuring long term
participation in frequent leisure cycling.

### 5/16 Cycling Promotion

**5/16.1** The cycle hub at Rowley Regis station (which is like the ones at Stourbridge and Sell Oak stations) could be better signposted and the method of accessing it better publicised. EC to look into this.

**5/16.2** The minutes, agendas and other information relating to the Forum should be publicised using Facebook and Twitter accounts. The various papers are available on the Council’s website at www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling.

NM said the Twitter and Facebook accounts for the CANDO officers can also be used for publicising the Forum’s papers and information from Centro on active travel. For information (supplied after the meeting) the contact details are:

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<tr>
<td>@WestbromwichCAN</td>
<td>Tipton CAN</td>
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<tr>
<td>@OldburyCAN</td>
<td>Oldbury CAN</td>
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<td>@CANDOwednesbury</td>
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<td>@TiptonCAN</td>
<td>Smethwick CAN</td>
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<td>@RowleyCANDO</td>
<td>Rowley CAN</td>
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<td>@smethwickCANDO</td>
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**5/16.3** Centro, with the British Transport Police, have planned 35 “Love Your Bike” sessions to be held at railway and metro stations in the Black Country. D-locks, security marking and cycle training promotion will be available to anyone who takes a bike along to an event.

Centro are to look into the possibility of doing off-station LYB events, possibly in parks and town centres, but local police or Bike Right would need to do the security marking. It might therefore be more appropriate to better publicise the 35 planned LYB events through the press, posters at stations and leaflets.

### 6/16 Further Updates

**6/16.1** The Action Plan for the WM Cycling Charter (endorsed by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority - WMITA on Sept 17th) has been updated and will be reported to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) Member Board meeting on January 25th 2016.

Work to prioritise the Action Plan is ongoing and was the subject of a workshop held at the quarterly WM Cycle Charter meeting on December 17th 2015 to look into this aspect of the Charter.

**6/16.2** The Government’s recent spending review stated that some budgets to support cycling would be available until the end of this Parliament in 2020, although some commentators have said that this only equates to £1.39 per head of population instead of the £10 per head that the Get Britain Cycling report stated would be needed.

- £580m LSTF “Access Fund” for sustainable travel includes £500m
capital (for infrastructure) and £80m revenue (for publicity, promotion etc) and will be available through the Local Growth Fund, which is administered by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP). Unfortunately the funds are not ring fenced, although the Government are hopeful that a substantial number of cycling schemes will be funded.

- £300m in total for Bikeability, the current Cycling Ambition Cities and capital schemes (£90m, £114m and £96m respectively). There is no advice on how the £96m will be accessed by local authorities.
- £475m Local Majors Fund, which is for road schemes that can be completed before the end of this Parliament. Schemes could include cycling infrastructure.

6/16.3 The Government’s Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy needs to be finalised as a result of the Infrastructure Act passed in 2015. The associated methodology is expected by summer 2016. Funding associated with the Strategy should be announced in February 2016.

6/16.4 Highways England (formerly Highways Agency) have asked for ideas on what should be considered for a stakeholder management plan in relation to how the strategic road network (trunk roads and motorways) should accommodate the needs of cyclists. HE is planning to ensure that new schemes include cycling infrastructure.

Although Sandwell has no HE roads within its boundaries apart from the M5 and M6 motorways and associated junctions, the motorway structures themselves create boundaries that need to be crossed. Tunnels and bridges enable local roads, public rights of way and canals to do this, but in some locations the structures can be limited and aspirations to increase the number of crossing point can be difficult and expensive to achieve, resulting in severance. SMBC has stated to HE that the HE should aim to remove such problems. The response to HE also described the nature of severance at M6 junctions 7 and 9, M5 junctions 1 and 2, and requested that other issues in relation to parking cars on-road, ensuring that cycle route signage does not simply “end” and that developing cycle routes along the shortest route/desire line should be the priority.

6/16.5 The West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (WMITA) have identified a Key Route Network as part of the emerging Strategic Transport Plan, for which a 10 years delivery plan is currently being produced. SMBC’s response to the proposals is to ensure that the KRN accommodates cyclists either or on-road through roadspace allocation or on a parallel route in the same corridor.

7/16 Any Other Business

GR asked if the proposals to enforce a bus only street on New Street in West Bromwich, past the Central Sixth building (formerly The Public), could include a right turn from High Street into Lombard Street to enable private hire drivers to have better access to West Bromwich. AT said that the reason this does not exist at the moment is because it would encourage more drivers to travel from the south of West Bromwich along Oak Lane to the A41 Expressway and therefore increase traffic levels through residential areas.
AT advised that the consultation period for the New Street proposals had ended on January 11th 2016 and that anyone wishing to make further representations about the proposals should attend the appropriate Decision Making Session at Sandwell Council House when this matter will be considered. (This has subsequently been confirmed as being the Cabinet DMS on Wednesday 3rd February 2016, starting at 3pm in Sandwell Council House.)

8/16 Dates of next meetings

- Wednesday 20th April 2016
- Wednesday 20th July 2016
- Wednesday 19th October 2016
- Wednesday 25th January 2017

Minutes prepared by Transportation Planning, Strategic Policy, Directorate of Regeneration and Economy
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Cycling information and online map: www.sandwell.gov.uk/cycling