

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**8 March 2016****West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority**

Overview of Centro Activities**1. Bus Network**

Work is ongoing to identify specific initiatives that will be delivered with partners through the new Bus Alliance. There are well over 100 specific workstreams that are being tracked, many of which build on initiatives from previous agreements such as the area Voluntary Multilateral Agreements and Partnership Plus.

Discussions have commenced with Intu, the owners of Merry Hill Shopping Centre, regarding their future development plans for the site. Improving public transport access is a key priority. With the extension of the Metro to Merry Hill and Brierley Hill now a real possibility as part of the HS2 Connectivity Package, work will take place to ensure benefits are maximised and that this is fully integrated with wider improvements to bus services and infrastructure, including a new bus station and improved connectivity to Brierley Hill and the Waterfront

The on-going Paradise Circus redevelopment and extension of the Metro into Broad Street continues to present operational challenges within Birmingham City Centre, with knock-on impacts on the wider network. Discussions on the works continue to be facilitated through fortnightly meetings which include Centro, National Express, Birmingham City Council, Carillion (Paradise contractor) and Amey.

The new Highways Partnership Manager is now in post and working closely with bus operators and traffic managers across all districts to identify opportunities for schemes to improve bus journey times. The intention is to develop a package of schemes that can then be used to form the basis of bids to the Local Growth Fund in the summer.

2. Park and Ride

The work at Bescot Stadium Station which sits within Sandwell has now been completed and usage at the P & R location has increased. This location is also being used to trial Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) to help manage car park capacity and security. The latest figures for the accuracy of the automated system vs manual counts is 99%.

The main car park at Tame Bridge is on a slope and in winter with a ground frost we have experienced cars sliding out of bays. In previous years this has been managed by closing off large areas of the car park. To mitigate against this, this year an anti-skid surface has been applied which should allow the car park to stay completely open.

Work has commenced the upgrade of CCTV and lighting at all car parks across the network and includes a move to digital CCTV and LED lighting. Resurfacing work at various car parks has also commenced, including comprehensive advanced notification to P & R users.

Park and Ride Expansion

The expansion of the Park and Ride network will continue through the development of a detailed multi-modal Park and Ride programme to ensure that the most effective use can be made of both development funding and the capital available. The programme will also take into account the improvements required at sites to encourage walking and cycling to stations and well as park and ride. The allocation of funding will be determined using a Department for Transport model that ensures that each Park and Ride proposal is assessed against five criteria as follows:

- Strategic fit
- Financial viability
- Commercial viability
- Management viability
- Economic viability

Use of this model is essential given the restrictions on capital, but will also enable us to make effective use of development funds to ensure we are bringing the right projects forward to planning stage, ready for delivery as and when funding comes available. A number of projects are already being developed to planning stage at Bradley Lane (Metro), Tipton and Whitlocks End stations.

A new Considerate Parking Enforcement contract is about to go out to tender to ensure that the current low levels of inconsiderate parking at locations such as Cradley Heath can be maintained.

3. Rail Investment

London Midland were awarded a new franchise which commences on 1 April 2016 and expires on 15 October 2017 with an option to extend for a further 13 rail periods as required to accommodate the new West Midlands Rail Franchise.

The new franchise commits London Midland to £13m of new investment, as well as new performance and customer service targets and additional services across their network.

Specifically, for the West Midlands Route the improvements are as follows:

- All Centro area stations to have ticketing buying facility (except Bordesley)
- All stations between Birmingham and Shrewsbury to have ticket buying facility
- Older ticket vending machines to be upgraded
- Extension of Swift operation for direct debit nTrain tickets
- Bar code ticketing and print at home
- CCTV on Class 323s
- Improved train cleanliness
- Wi-Fi on Class 350s
- Class 323 reliability improvements
- Increased revenue protection and security
- Focus on delivery of Chase Line enhancements
- Improved management of planned and unplanned disruption
- Hand held devices for information dissemination by stations' teams
- Services arriving in Birmingham before 1000 from Lichfield, Longbridge, Dorridge, Whitlocks End and Rugby
- Later and faster trains from London to Lichfield (1946 and 2046 not via Northampton)
- 1954 London to Birmingham to depart at 2013 (19 minutes faster)
- Community Rail Partnership Support
- New Apprenticeship schemes
- Renewed commitment to the Princes Trust programme

There is also a commitment to refresh the Centro and London Midland partnership agreement which will commence on 2 March and will be relaunched on 1 April as part of the new Franchise programme.

The new station at Bromsgrove remains on target for delivery in Spring 2016.

The exact details of the impact of the Strategic Spending and Hendy Reviews are still being determined but Electrification of the Cross City to Bromsgrove and of the Chaseline will be delivered in 2017/18.

4. Swift Smart ticketing

National Express introduced a discounted rate for Swift Pay-As-You-Go (PAYG) customers on the 2nd of January that offers a 10p saving against single fares and a 20p saving against day tickets. Other operators offer similar discounts. This initiative has driven up take up and we now have over 9,000 customers benefitting from Swift PAYG.

The savings for PAYG customers are in addition to savings that were already being made by customers using Swift to purchase a number of other products including e-Daysaver (20p per day), Coventry nBus (£120 per year) and the Black Country nBus (£85 per year).

There are now over 35,000 Swift card holders with access to c.40 different product types. In January these Swift card holders made more than 630,000 journeys on the Bus and Metro.

February will see Swift move onto the rail network with the migration of the nNetwork Direct Debit scheme across to Swift following the successful deployment of Swift technology on to the gates at New Street, Moor Street, Snow Hill, Five Ways and University stations. Further work will be undertaken in the coming months to move the thousands of nTrain direct debit customers across to the Swift platform which will enhance the profile of Swift on the rail network even further.

5. Smarter Network Smarter Choices

The Local Sustainable Transport Funded *Smart Network, Smarter Choices* (SNSC) programme is a wide ranging project that aims to tackle congestion, reduce carbon emissions and strengthen the economy by improving and promoting walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing options. The programme ran from 2012 to 2015 across 10 congested corridors in the West Midlands and then successfully secured funding to continue in 2015/16, focusing on key areas of regeneration.

WorkWise has now supported 5,845 unemployed jobseekers across the West Midlands (including 479 Sandwell residents) since 1.4.15 to find, start and stay in new employment with free journey planning and ticketing support to travel to interviews and new jobs.

In addition, the new Workwise Travel Training Curriculum resource (for use by training providers teaching basic literacy, ICT and numeracy skills to unemployed adults) is currently being piloted with Training providers, (including a number in the Black Co) and feedback to date is extremely positive.

Employers: of the 89 new Employers signed up to the 2015/16 programme, and the 56 Employers active from the 2012-15 programme, there are 19 sites (including nPower, the West Bromwich Building Society, Legrand Electric Limited, Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust (Sandwell General Hospital), Doosan Babcock, Trident Reach The People Charity and Warburtons) signed up to the SNSC programme in Sandwell, covering over 11,200 employees.

These employers and their staff benefit from a tailored Travel Support package to improve access to their workplaces, reduce congestion and encourage healthy active travel. Support delivered to employees include cycle training, Dr Bike maintenance courses, Travel Plan grants, Top Cycle Location accreditation, Try Before You Buy ticketing offers, car-share events and Smart Events Boxes.

Education – of the new Education sites signed up to the 2015/16 programme, and the Education sites active from the 2012-15 programme, there are 13 schools and 1 College signed up to the SNSC programme in Sandwell, covering over 2000 employees and 10,100 students. Engaged sites include the following:

George Salter Academy	Sandwell Community School – Tipton Campus
Health Futures UTC	Sandwell Community School – Wodens Rise Campus
The Phoenix Collegiate Academy	Sandwell College
Q3 Academy	Wood Green Academy
RSA Academy	Stuart Bathurst
Sandwell Academy	Ormiston Forge Academy
Sandwell Community School – The West Bromwich Campus	St Michael’s High School

Students and employees staff benefit from a tailored Travel Support package to improve access to their place of education/work, reduce congestion and encourage healthy active travel. Support delivered to students and staff include cycle training, Dr Bike maintenance courses, the Big Bike Challenge, participation in the Travel Academy, Safer Travel workshops, SEN Journey Planning workshops, Moving On Up workshops, Class Pass for school trips, accreditation to Modeshift STARS, Top Cycle Location accreditation and Smart Events Boxes.

Community Engagement, Personalised Travel Planning Projects: as part of the 2012-1 SNSC programme, 1,500 Sandwell households benefitted from tailored sustainable travel advice on the A4123/A459 Black Country West corridor, while 1,500 Sandwell households participated along the A34 Walsall Road corridor and approximately 2,750 households participated in the Sandwell area of the Route 4 PTP project. In 2015/16, engagement with community groups in these areas continues, offering local residents sustainable travel support.

Cycling: from April 2015 to 31 January 2016, 8,723 participants had benefitted from SNSC cycling support (including cycle training, maintenance training, route planning, journey accompaniment) across the West Midlands, including 757 Sandwell residents.

The **Bostin Bikes pilot** commenced in August 2015 and will continue until March 2016. The project offered Black Country residents the opportunity to loan a bike while undertaking cycle training, and then purchase the bike at a reduced price of £50 upon successful completion of their Level 2 on-road cycle training. A total of 313 bikes have been funded, with very high take-up. Sixty of these bikes have been assigned specifically to Sandwell Public Health through their CANDO officers to help raise physical activity levels among local residents. Sandwell Public Health also fund the £50 deposit for the participants, meaning they get their bike for free on completion of the CANDO programme.

The **Bostin Bike Commuters Pilot** also commenced in January 2016, offering a further 100 bikes to employees in a selection of Black Country businesses engaged in the SNSC programme. The employee is required to live within a reasonable commutable cycling distance from their place of work, and as well as being required to complete their Level 2 cycle training, they must also take part in a 'journey accompaniment' from their home to place of work. This is to further instil behavioural change and build a strong relationship with their instructor in the hope that they will move on to complete their Level 3 Advanced cycle training.

Results of both pilots will be closely monitored to inform future programmes.

Station Travel Plans – since April 2015 a total of 24 *Love your Bike* sessions have taken place at stations in the Black Country. Station Travel Plan promotional work took place between July and November 2015 with a ‘shake up your day’ theme, encouraging commuters to try walking or cycling to their station as part of their commute. 36 stations were targeted as part of the 2015/16 Station Travel Plan soft measures programme benefitting from mobile and Facebook advertising, while 10 of the stations (including Rowley Regis, The Hawthorns and Wednesbury Parkway) benefitted from tailored door drops outdoor media, and promotional staff based at each of these stations over a three day period, providing commuters with cycling and walking information and incentives. There was also some focussed work at Rowley Regis station to encourage people to sign up to use the cycle hub.

Managing Short Trips Infrastructure improvements: the *Managing Short Trips (MST)* is a programme of infrastructure schemes that will make improvements to canal towpaths in the Black Country together with associated physical highway improvements, such as footway widening, improved crossing facilities and tactile paving. These improvements are all designed to create cycle friendly corridors between existing cycle routes, residential areas and local centres.

MST is on schedule to deliver the £1.785m forecast for 2015/16, with improvements to 1.7km of canal towpath improvements along the Birmingham new mainline canal between Galton Bridge and Bridge Street North having started on site in January 2016.

6. High Speed 2 Connectivity Package

Following the submission of the HS2 Midlands Growth Strategy in April 2015, an agreement was reached within the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Devolution Deal to fund key proposals within the strategy.

The HS2 Midlands Growth Strategy focuses on four key priorities: economic growth, skills, housing and transport. The HS2 Connectivity Package has been developed in response to this. This package consists of an integrated rail and rapid transit network which connects the region’s main centres with quick and frequent services and increases the number of people who can readily access HS2 stations and main centres.

The vision of the HS2 Connectivity Package is to harness the unrivalled connectivity and investment of HS2 to create a step change in the Midlands' economic performance, driving growth and significantly improving outcomes for its people, businesses and places. Four key objectives have been outlined to achieve this vision as set out below.

- **Connectivity to HS2 Stations:** Providing excellent local and sub-regional connectivity from across the Midlands to HS2 stations in the area thus improving access to businesses and job opportunities;
- **An Integrated HS2:** Ensuring the delivery of a fully integrated network between HS2 and the local and national transport networks to ensure that businesses in the wider area have excellent access to the HS2 network;
- **Midlands Connect:** Maximising the capacity released by HS2 on the conventional rail network (including improving links to Birmingham Airport and HS2 Hubs) and optimising the Midlands' local rail and road networks in preparation for, and post, HS2; and
- **International Connectivity:** Providing direct international services from the West Midlands to Paris, Brussels and beyond via a direct rail link between HS2 and the existing HS1 line to the Channel Tunnel and wider European High Speed Rail Network.

Strategic partners across the region have worked together to identify a robust set of schemes aimed at delivering excellent local and sub-regional connectivity to HS2 stations. The agreed package seeks to maximise the benefits of HS2 to the wider region by focusing on:

- a) Improving access to appropriately qualified labour to the Station Masterplan sites;
- b) Improving access to HS2 for key business sectors;
- c) Improving access to opportunity for deprived areas

The connectivity package will comprise of a package of 20 major transport infrastructure schemes to necessary to secure seamless connectivity to Curzon Street and Interchange (Table 1). A number of these schemes will support enhanced connectivity in the Black Country.

Table 1 – HS2 Connectivity Package Schemes

Infrastructure Type	Scheme	Benefitting Station	
Metro	East Birmingham / North Solihull	Curzon Street	
	Brierley Hill Line 1 Metro Extension		
Heavy Rail	Camp Hill Chords		
	Water Orton and local enhancements		
	Snow Hill line improvements		
	Aldridge Station and Electrification		
	Walsall to Rugely rail line speed improvements		
	Shrewsbury to Wolverhampton rail electrification		
SPRINT	Longbridge to Birmingham		Interchange
	Sutton Coldfield (potential CityLink);		
	Walsall to Birmingham		
	Bartley Green		
	Extension to Halesowen		
	i54 (including extension to Penn and Merry Hill		
	A45 UK Central to Coventry		
	Solihull to Interchange		
	Interchange to Coleshill Parkway		
	Sutton Coldfield to Interchange		
Warwick to Interchange			
Hall Green to Solihull			

Governance arrangements for HS2 have been put in place which establishes a HS2 Local Delivery Team which will oversee the development of the HS2 Connectivity Package.

Work has been progressing on developing an HS2 Growth Strategy Implementation Plan for Government. This plan will set out the governance, key milestones, detailed programmes, resources, financial profiles and key benefits for the elements within the HS2 Growth Strategy. This implementation plan will be submitted to Government at the end of Spring 2016.

7. West Midlands Rail Franchise direct award, 2017 franchise and devolution

A number of successes and key milestones have happened in our journey towards the devolution of rail services in the West Midlands region.

The Department for Transport (DfT) and West Midlands Rail (WMR) launched a joint public consultation on 15 December 2015 seeking views on the future of rail services and stations provided in the next West Midlands rail franchise which starts in October 2017.

This includes all the rail services and stations currently run by London Midland. They operate a range of services including:

- Long distance services between Birmingham and London between Liverpool, Crewe and Birmingham and between Crewe and London;
- West Midlands regional services eg Worcester Shrub Hill to Stratford-upon-Avon and local services eg Birmingham New Street to Walsall;
- Commuter services between Northampton and London including branch lines from Bedford and St Albans Abbey.

The consultation is due to close at 23:45 on 22nd March 2016. WMR are helping with the analysis of responses and have organised and staffed all the regional stakeholder and public events.

Collaboration with the DfT has increased with two West Midlands Rail officers now seconded to work full time within the West Midlands Franchise Specification team. They are working to help inform what operators will be asked to provide in the new franchise, with wider 14 authorities that make up WMR also feeding proposals and evidence into this work.

A Devolution Project Group has also been set up to plan how the two organisations work together in the period up to and during the next franchise to lay the foundations for full local specification and control of rail services by WMR in the region at a future date.

As well as the launch of the public consultation, a further two major milestones occurred during December. West Midlands Rail was formally set up as a limited company on 4 December 2015 and also attended Bidder Day with the DfT, presenting to train companies interested in running the next West Midlands franchise together with other rail industry stakeholders about our proposals for devolution.

8. Metro

The delivery of the BCCE and Fleet Refurbishment Programme will provide a 40% increase in capacity on Line 1 through the new fleet of trams and bring Metro onto the streets of Birmingham City Centre to the main access to the newly refurbished New Street Station.

New trams went into service On Midland Metro Line 1 on 5 September 2014, the depot extension is completed and works to construct the tramway in Bull Street, Corporation Street and Stephenson Street are in their final stages with the line having been opened to Bull Street on 6 December 2015 and the remainder of the line set to complete in Spring this year.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II visited the Bull Street tram stop on 19 November and named tram 35 Angus Adams in memory of the former ITA Chair, attracting considerable media interest.

In its recent announcement within the West Midlands Combined Authority Devolution Deal the Government announced its commitment to funding the Eastside Metro extension to Digbeth, subject to a business case, to support the first part of the HS2 Growth Strategy, and confirmed its support for the work of the West Midlands Combined Authority Shadow Board to develop a delivery plan, encompassing the Metro extensions from Curzon to Interchange and from Brierley Hill, in order to realise the full benefits of HS2. Work on the business case for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill extension is proceeding and will be completed in summer 2016.

Metro Operations – Bradley Lane Park and Ride Update

Currently Midland Metro has 3 dedicated park and sites, Priestfield, Wednesbury Parkway and Black Lake. These sites are consistently reported as being 'capacity filled' with usage above 100%.

Recognising this shortage of parking spaces, opportunities have been explored for expanding park and ride provision to better serve metro passengers. Open space land next to Bradley Lane stop was identified as having most potential for a new facility.

Plans were drawn up which offer 196 space car park accessed off Bradley Lane - maintaining the current provision of 3 full size and 1 junior pitch at the site.

A public consultation took place in the Autumn of 2015 based on the Bradley Lane access. However, this identified a preference for an alternative access at Belmont Street. Centro have listened to consultees and are currently finalising plans which propose this alternative access. This was communicated via a public feedback exercise on 23rd February .A planning application will be submitted in early March and expect a decision in June.

Measuring Success

To measure success, key areas of focus are patronage, modal share, customer satisfaction and performance of the network. Understanding how many people are accessing the network along with measures of customer satisfaction is a good indicator of if we are getting it right. In addition ensuring the services are reliable and punctual is an important factor in retaining and growing patronage.

The summary table below sets out the latest performance for the West Midlands (performance as of December 2015), along with the target. Progress in achieving these targets and other supporting measures are monitored and reported on a regular basis. This means that planning arrangements are informed by a clear evidence base of factors which are important to our customers.

More detail and a breakdown for Sandwell is presented further on in the report (where available).

Indicator	Performance		
	Bus	Rail	Metro
Patronage	269.1m	53.3m	4.5m
Patronage - Target	N/A	51m	4.5m
Reliability	96.8%	97.3%	99.8%
Reliability - Target	97%	98%	98%
Punctuality	82.8%	73.3%	-
Punctuality - Target	81.7%	80%	-
Customer Satisfaction	87%	83%	90%

Patronage

Rail

Analysis of long-term patronage trends shows that demand for rail travel continues to increase, with latest figures showing 53.3 million trips were made as of December 2015, compared with 50.3 million during the previous year and only 27.4 million a decade ago. This trend is reflected across the UK, with rail patronage having increased by a quarter in the last five years.

The current rail patronage of 53.3 million is the highest rail patronage the West Midlands has seen. Centro continues to work with London Midland and other industry partners in developing local rail services to improve rail infrastructure and services and meet growing demand.

Bus

Bus Patronage over the past 12 months has declined each month. The latest annual bus patronage is 269.1 million (as of December 2015), compared with the previous 12 months there has been a 2.6% decline in patronage.

The introduction of initiatives within Transforming Bus Travel (TBT) has helped slow the decline in bus patronage within the TBT area with the focus on modifying the network to help better meet current travel demands. In the Network Review areas the general patronage trend has also been a decline, however comparing the results with the West Midlands total patronage over the same period generally shows a lower decline than the network as a whole. For the Sandwell Review area during year 1 we saw an increase of 0.8%, this was against a 2% decline in the West Midlands during the same period. In Year 2 bus patronage in Sandwell fell by 0.4% compared to Year 1 which was very slightly less than the overall West Midlands figure of 0.0% for the same time period. Year 3 results showed a decline in Sandwell similar to that of the whole West Midlands.

Voluntary Multi-lateral Agreements (VMAs) in place are successful in delivering better patronage outcomes than in areas where these agreements currently do not exist. There is commitment therefore to work towards the introduction of new Bus Network Development plans and continue to monitor bus patronage demand as part of the agreements

Metro

No update since last briefing.

Ring and Ride

No update since last briefing.

Park and Ride

Cars parked at Park & Ride sites are counted every other month with the current average occupancy (April, June, August, October and December

2015) of all sites (41) being 89.4%. The following table shows average occupancy for the 12 park and ride sites within the Sandwell district.

Park & Ride Site	Average % Occupancy
Black Lake (Metro)	98.1
Cradley Heath	95.1
Dudley Port	82.9
Langley Green	88.3
Old Hill	93.1
Rowley Regis	82.1
Sandwell & Dudley	95.0
Smethwick Galton Bridge	93.0
Tame Bridge	94.5
The Hawthorns	94.4
Tipton	96.6
Wednesbury Parkway (Metro)	96.1
ALL SANDWELL	90.6

Modal Share

No update since last briefing.

Sandwell Bus Network Review Monitoring

Customer Satisfaction

As part of the TBT initiatives, when Network Reviews take place we also monitor the satisfaction of passengers, in addition to patronage and bus reliability and punctuality within the area.

Customer Satisfaction is monitored over a number of variables, including the experience when waiting for a bus, the journey, information provision, value for money and the overall experience.

Overall satisfaction with the bus service increased in Year 1 with a drop in Year 3. Other significant improvements were noted with the safety while on the bus, reliability and punctuality, and the availability of information.

The Sandwell Network Review results are presented in the table below;

SANDWELL Review Date: 28/10/2012	Baseline Year Nov 11 to Oct 12	Year 1 Nov 12 to Oct 13	Year 2 Nov 13 to Oct 14	Year 3 Nov 14 to Oct 15
Overall Customer Satisfaction	84%	87%	87%	84%
Overall comfort while waiting for the bus	83%	88%	85%	82%
Overall comfort while travelling on bus	92%	93%	93%	92%
Overall driving and drivers behaviour	88%	93%	91%	91%
Value for money	62%	65%	65%	64%

Reliability and punctuality

Reliability (% of buses that operated)

Bus reliability in Sandwell currently stands at 96.3% which is below the West Midlands average of 96.8%.

Punctuality (% of buses operating within the Traffic Commissioner's standard of 1 minute early and 5 minutes late)

Bus punctuality in Sandwell currently stands at 78.2% which is lower than the West Midlands average of 82.0%.