

## **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**6 March 2018**

### **Transport for West Midlands**

Report by Councillor Roger Horton

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## **Overview of Transport for West Midlands Activities**

### **1. Strategic Update**

- Commonwealth Games

Following discussions with Birmingham City Council, the Host City of the Commonwealth games, it has been agreed from a governance perspective that the transport plan for both games time transport operations and infrastructure delivery of projects named within the Bid will be led by Laura Shoaf, MD Transport for West Midlands. This will be on a one team one network philosophy with the Director of Network Resilience (Anne Shaw) supporting Laura developing the Games Time Operations transport plan and also the Assistant Director of Transport and Connectivity at Birmingham City Council (Phil Edwards) who will lead on the infrastructure delivery.

The transport theme will report into the Commonwealth Games strategic board and work with the Organising Committee, which is in the process of being recruited to, to ensure that transport meets the needs of the games and ensures that the region can operate without too much impact.

During the delivery of the games, the strategy is to have a public transport games. This will make best use of the public transport network currently being enhanced alongside additional temporary services which will provide the capacity required in the run up to and during the games.

There were a number of named funded schemes in the bid including Sprint Routes on the A45, A34 and A38 north and the completion of Metro projects within Birmingham City Centre, Wolverhampton City Centre and Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

In addition there are a number of rail improvements included within the new West Midlands Rail Franchise as well as a number of improved stations. In addition we will work with rail operators to provide additional temporary services to the stations closest to the venues including Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street.

Site visits are currently being arranged with Sandwell officers to understand the requirements, opportunities and constraints for access to the Aquatics Centre during the games and after the games. Improving local bus services to the Centre are of key importance and links are being investigated to improve the existing rail to bus interchange from Smethwick Galton Bridge, Smethwick Rolfe Street and potentially Langley Green rail station's.

Initial discussions have also taken place with DfT in relation to the support required and with Highways England, HS2 and Network Rail. More detailed briefings are being planned.

An initial scoping meeting with the Commonwealth Games Federation is planned which will provide greater understanding of the roles and responsibilities around transport operations during the games including the spectator and work force services and as well as games family services (officials/athletes/media).

Following this, a briefing session will be called for the relevant transport teams from the various local authorities to explain the arrangements and governance being set up to manage the development of the games transport plan.

A transport strategy will be developed and tested with partners to ensure that we have planned for the necessary capacity for transport, understood the operational needs and conflicts with road based sports including running and cycling and ensure the background transport requirements are understood for residents and business to be as little impacted as possible.

- M5 Oldbury Viaduct works

Work is continuing between the M5 Junctions 1 and 2 by Highways England. The next major milestone will be the switching of the contraflow onto the newly resurfaced southbound carriageway, this is scheduled for May/June 2018. The overall delivery remains on programme with the contraflow traffic management expected to be removed from the network in autumn 2018. Following this the traffic management in place will be reverted to three narrow lanes until spring 2019 when the scheme is completed.

Co-ordination between Highways England, Sandwell, Birmingham, Walsall, Worcester and TfWM has been active and continues. Bi-monthly progress meetings are now held at the site compound on Kelvin Way in West Bromwich.

There remains in places a co-ordinated approach to communications between all stakeholders and the project team and local businesses are kept informed of progress through various channels including visits by the stakeholder manager, social media, the project website and the disruption pages on Network West Midlands website.

## **2. Bus Network**

### **- West Midlands Bus Alliance**

The West Midlands Bus Alliance has been in place since November 2015 and has delivered some significant improvements for passengers across the region. Using the experience of the initial 18 month period the Bus Alliance Board are now developing 50 key deliverables to be delivered by the partners over the next 2 years.

These will be tangible tasks to meet the key objectives around increasing modal share and patronage, maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction for passengers, improving reliability and punctuality, investing in the local highway to improve journey speeds and improving Air Quality.

One of the key deliverables of the Bus Alliance is to deliver a series of Network Development Plans (NDP) across the region. The plans will describe how the network and associated infrastructure will change over a 10 year period in reaction to changes in land use and policy in a

specified geographical area. The NDP and associated actions plan will set deliverables for the partners to make this happen.

TfWM officers have recently liaised with Sandwell MBC officers to propose a timeline of delivery for the NDP's. It is anticipated that the work to develop the Sandwell NDP will commence in September 2018. This will be an area based review which will identify characteristics and improvements but also include a review of cross-boundary services and growth.

### **3. Rail Investment & Partnerships**

#### **- West Midlands Franchise**

On 10th December West Midlands Trains Ltd took over from London Midland as the operator of the West Midlands Franchise. At the time that this report was published, the new Franchise had only been in existence for six weeks. However, a number of Franchise commitments have already been discharged. These include new apps and websites, more generous delay-repay, and the rebranding of Snow Hill station.

A critical milestone will be the 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2018, which is the date by which West Midlands Trains must submit their timetable for December 2018 to Network Rail. This timetable is West Midlands Trains first major opportunity to improve journey times, introduce new services, and improve punctuality.

West Midlands Rail (on behalf of TfWM) are working closely with West Midlands Trains to help them develop the timetable.

#### **- WMR Rail Investment Strategy (WMRIS)**

Progress on developing the WMR Rail Investment Strategy (WMRIS) has improved following the appointment of external consultant support. The current focus is on economic modelling of various timetable enhancement scenarios through to 2047, which have been developed with support from the Officers Rail Devolution Group.

It is now intended to seek sign-off of the WMRIS executive summary and the public consultation approach at the WMR Board of Directors meeting on 19th June.

- Stations Alliance

The formal Stations Alliance agreement between WMR, Network Rail and new local rail operator West Midlands Trains is expected to be signed within the next couple of months. The Stations Alliance will be trialled on the Chase line and the Stour line. Stour Valley line stations include Smethwick Rolfe St, Smethwick Galton Bridge, Sandwell & Dudley, Dudley Port and Tipton.

The recruitment process for a Stations Alliance Manager, jointly funded by West Midlands Railway, Network Rail and WMR, failed to appoint a suitable candidate and the Job Specification is being reviewed prior to going out to the market for a second time.

#### **4. HS2 Connectivity Package**

The HS2 Growth Strategy sets out how the positive effect of HS2 will be felt across the region. The approach we have taken uses HS2 to create an outstanding legacy in terms of regeneration, jobs, skills, economic development and connectivity for the Midlands.

Work on the Connectivity Package has been progressing in line with the Implementation Plan, with updates being provided through regular dashboard reports to the HS2 Growth Delivery Board.

A headline summary of activity is set out below:

**Sprint:** Work has been progressing with the seven Sprint Routes across the Metropolitan Area with the work being undertaken by TfWM and Local Authorities. During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnerships approval of the Sprint Hagley Road Phase 1 route business case;
- Completion of initial feasibility studies for a number of routes to enable an assessment of scheme viability;
- Strategic Outline Business Cases (SOBC's) developed and approved for all seven Sprint routes in line with the WMCA's Assurance Framework for viable schemes;
- Prioritisation of 3 Sprint routes to support Commonwealth Games venues;
- Progression of A45 to preliminary design; and

- Setting of route specific project teams to take forward development of schemes to Outline Business Case (OBC).

**Rail:** Work has been progressing on taking forward the rail elements of the HS2 Connectivity Package with the work being undertaken by TfWM, Local Authorities, Network Rail and West Midlands Rail. During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Commencement of SOBC work for the Midlands Rail Hub following the award of £5m development funding announced in the 2016 Autumn Statement;
- Strategic Outline Business Cases produced and approved for potential new stations on Camp Hill Line, Walsall to Wolverhampton Line and Stourbridge to Round Oak; and
- Outline Business Cases now being taken forward for new stations in line with WMCA's Assurance Framework.

## **5. Metro Programme and Operations**

### **- Metro Programme**

Work is progressing on all six extension projects being undertaken by the Midland Metro Alliance (MMA). During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Wolverhampton City Centre Extension – agreement has been reached with City of Wolverhampton Council to commence works on Pipers Row and Railway Drive based on a road closure of Pipers Row commencing in spring 2018 for approximately 3 months;
- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension – The Government announced a £250m grant fund from which WMCA has allocated £207m to this scheme in December 2017. The MMA team are pushing ahead the design based on a twin track scheme with future provision for a shared heavy rail freight route. Approval for the release of funds ahead Final Business Case is being sought to accelerate detailed design, advanced utility works and key structures associated with the delta junction. These measures aim to support ambitions to open the line to Dudley prior to the Commonwealth Games. However, this cannot currently be confirmed given the project complexity and the key risks to delivery in particular the Network Rail (NR) freight

interface which has been subject of a letter from the Mayor to the NR Chief Executive requesting support to agree measures to mitigate delivery risks;

- East Birmingham to North Solihull Metro – Survey information has been received, and traffic modelling is underway to enable the outline design to be developed in preparation of the Transport & Works Act (TWA) Order submission anticipated in December 2018;
- Eastside Extension – Following a positive public enquiry there is potential to obtain the Transport and Works Act order within a 6 month timeframe rather than the 12 months anticipated. If successful this would facilitate the bringing forward of the Final Business Case submission;
- Centenary Square Extension – TfWM approved the MMA project proposal on 26<sup>th</sup> January 2018. A more efficient approach to construction has been developed with the aim of bringing forward passenger service to end of 2019. Proposals have been presented to the BCC Cabinet Member including plans for a closure of Paradise Circus and Board Street supported by complimentary highway measures from September 2018 for 10 months; and
- Edgbaston Extension – Funding for the combined schemes CSQ and Edgbaston projects confirmed at £149.2m. Utility diversion works are ongoing and associated traffic management is in place. Preliminary designs have been progressed and issued to TfWM and BCC for review and acceptance. The team are working towards finalising land agreements with Barclays Bank and 54 Hagley Road.

The Catenary Free prototype tram has completed site commissioning tests and is anticipated to be accepted back in to passenger service in Q1 2018. This will trigger the fitting of batteries to the rest of the fleet which will take place at the Wednesbury depot.

Procurement of the third generation trams required to operate the extensions from 2021 has commenced with a market sounding exercise leading to a contract award anticipated in 2019.

- Bilston Rd

Works continued this year to improve the infrastructure on Midland Metro. Up to 10th December 2017 Midland Metro operated between Grand Central, Birmingham and Priestfield tram stops only whilst Midland Metro

Alliance delivered a project to replace the tram tracks on Bilston Road. The project replaced 1.35km of double tram track (2.7km of track in total). Other works delivered by the project include the replacement of drainage water boxes, stray current collection system and the replacement of signalling loops as well as highway resurfacing works on behalf of the City of Wolverhampton.

- Midland Metro Limited

Following the approval at the WMCA Board meeting on the 17th March 2017, to transfer the rights and obligations to operate and maintain Metro into a subsidiary company, Midland Metro Limited (MML), the new company has been working towards transition.

The business plan has been drafted and the budget approved at the WMCA board meeting on the 9th February 2018.

## **6. Sustainable Travel**

- Smarter Choices

Now that LSTF funding has ended, we continue to offer low key support to Sandwell businesses and university staff. We also work jointly with colleagues at Sandwell Council's Transportation department offering assistance to and companies requiring Smarter Choices support through planning legislation. We continue to work with Sandwell & Birmingham NHS Trust and advise on their staff re-location to the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital.

This year we have continued to support education sites. Schools are also encouraged to sign up to Modeshift STARS, a national schools awards scheme to recognise schools that have demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. RSA Academy have achieved Bronze and Phoenix Collegiate have achieved Silver Modeshift STARS accreditation.

Smarter Choices activities are now focused within areas facing disruption as part of large developments. We are currently working with sites in the Oldbury area who are affected by the M5 viaduct works.



- Community Cycle Clubs

The LSTF Cycle Training programme has now concluded. In partnership with Cycling UK three new Community Cycle Clubs have been set up in Sandwell. Smethwick Beat the Street Community Cycle Club meet every Monday for Adult Learn to Ride Sessions where bikes and helmets can be borrowed.

The second club at Hallam Street Hospital is in the process of purchasing brand new bikes - storage for the bikes has been negotiated at Sandwell Valley. The third is Victoria Park Community Cycle Club, where Sandwell's CANDO team provide bikes for all to use. More information can be found on new and emerging clubs at [www.cyclinguk.org/community-cycle-clubs](http://www.cyclinguk.org/community-cycle-clubs)

- Living Streets Walk to School Programme

The Living Streets Walk to School engagement programme has been underway in Sandwell since June 2017, with pupils at five schools currently recording daily journey data with a further two more schools scheduled to launch. On the 6<sup>th</sup> Feb Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street visited Glebefields Primary in Tipton to take part in a walk with pupils to celebrate the success of the project.

Walk to School activities and parent engagement to coincide with Walk to School Week in May are being planned and further walking activities with schools around the borough through the summer term.

- Managing Short Trips Infrastructure improvements

Managing Short Trips is a programme of infrastructure schemes that is delivering cycleway 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.

The first tranche of works included an investment of £6.44m are now complete and include the Birmingham Canal route from Galton Bridge into central Birmingham, along with an improved all weather surface on the

Tame Valley and Rushall canals between Old Walsall Road (B4124) and Hill Farm Bridge.

A second tranche of work along the canal tow path has been funded by the Black Country Consortium and there will be further investment of £4.2m to improve the towpath between Wolverhampton and Birmingham. This programme is being coordinated by WMCA in partnership with the Canal and River Trust and is set to be delivered in two phases between 2017 and 2019.

Work started in November 2017 in Wolverhampton at Wyrley and Essington Canal (Horseley Fields to New Cross). In Sandwell, the works on the towpath at Galton Bridge to Bromford Road as well as Bromford Lane Bridge to Izon Bridge commenced January 2018 with expected completion by March 2018.

The second phase of this tranche is expected to start in May 2018 and will include the sections along the Birmingham New Main Line in Sandwell and Dudley.

- West Midlands Bikeshare

TfWM, on behalf of the 7 constituent Local Authorities are in the process of delivering a West Midlands wide Bikeshare scheme. Customers will benefit from a consistent Bikeshare offer, enabling a seamless journey wherever they travel in the West Midlands. Bikeshare also enables users to use the cycle for a whole (short) journey or as part of a first/last-mile.

The scheme will look to deliver around 3000-5000 docked bikes for the region including the Black Country at key interchanges, trip attractors and other such locations. Customers will be able to access through a number of means, including SWIFT and Mobility as a Service. The West Midlands Bikeshare scheme is currently being procured on a zero-cost basis and appointment of operator is expected in April 2018.

The scheme will be phased, with expected delivery of a first phase in summer 2018, and further delivery up to autumn 2019.

- Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

TfWM's YEI Team are working closely with Black Country Impact, the ESF/YEI funded project to support young people with their travel support. Contracts are being signed and the YEI online system is ready to be used by Sandwell MBC in due course.

## **7. Safety and Security**

The Safer Travel Partnership is responsible for delivering the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioners 'Local Transport Policing Plan'. The key objectives of this plan for 2017/18 continue to be to reduce crime and improve passenger perception of personal safety.

The West Midlands public transport network continues to be one of the safest in the UK. Over the last decade, crime on the bus network has been in a downward trend having fallen by over 60%.

Whilst recorded crime for 2017/18 has slightly increased there have still been reductions in route crime and cycle offences on 'rail' and theft, violence and public order offences on 'bus'. At the current time any increase is a reflection of what is happening at national level with BTP and also across the West Midlands force area.

The Partnership has had a clear focus on tackling anti-social behaviour (ASB) in recent years and clearly this has yielded good feedback. Surveys from "Transport Focus" the independent watchdog shows that of 3000 passengers asked for survey, had experienced ASB on their journey is now only 8% compared with 18% in 2011.

The day to day activity of the Partnership involves;

- Intelligence led high visibility police patrols of problem bus, rail and metro services.
- ASB casework – The Safer travel ASB team aided by a seconded member of staff from National Express have now managed over 3600 cases since its inception in 2013.
- 24/7, 365 days a year proactive monitoring of over 1,000 CCTV cameras right across the public transport network including new technology allowing live coverage on-board bus services.

Other initiatives and achievements of the Partnership covering Sandwell have included;

- Upgraded state of art High Definition CCTV installed at West Bromwich and Wednesbury bus stations. These join Cradley Heath, and Bearwood which have already been upgraded. At Park and Ride Sites, TfWM has also upgraded Rowley Regis, with a programme to upgrade many more.
- The TfWM CCTV Control Centre received its annual external and independent audit in December retaining its accreditation against relevant British Standards confirming the service is well managed and operates effectively within all legal requirements.
- “Safer Bus Station” Accreditation independently assessed for 10 of our 12 stations including Wednesbury, Cradley Heath and Bearwood. The award demonstrates everything is being done to prevent crime and reduce fear of crime at these locations.
- Retention of “Safer Tram Stop award” covering all stations on the line including those routing through Sandwell.
- Annual Partnership initiative aimed at addressing poor behaviour amongst students on bus at the start of the school and college year. In September 2017 a number of schools were identified and focused upon as causing repeated anti-social behaviour problems on the network. Hi-visibility patrols of affected bus services and bus stations took place and an educational video was distributed to the regions schools to encourage good behaviour.
- Specifically, good work in partnership with Sandwell College to encourage better student behaviour on metro services.
- The highly regarded restorative justice project addressing anti-social and low level criminal behaviour from young people on the network has successfully extended into Sandwell and other areas of the Black Country.

## Appendix 1 – Measuring Success

Success is measured through the continual monitoring and evaluation of schemes and programmes to ensure they are delivering against the overall strategic objectives. Monitoring ensures we understand changes of the performance of the transport system arising from schemes, for example the reliability of public transport, modal usage and customer satisfaction.

### - Headline Measures

	Performance		
	Patronage	Punctuality	Satisfaction
Bus	256m	81%	84%
Rail	55m	69%	85%
Metro	7m	100%	92%

### - Rail

Rail Patronage has seen a small decline, with patronage at 54.6m in the 12 months to November '17 compared to 54.9m the same period last year. This trend is reflected across the UK with some periods of decline followed by continued growth. Growth continues to be central to TfWM/WMR vision in developing local rail services to improve rail infrastructure and services and meeting the growing demand.

Rail Punctuality (trains arriving not more than 5 minutes late) has been improving since 2013/14. The latest punctuality (period nine) stands at 69%.

Satisfaction with rail services has fluctuated between 81% to 87% since spring 2012. Recent surveys shows satisfaction at 87% (Autumn 15 survey) and 85% (Autumn 16 survey).

### - Metro

Metro continues to grow with 7.2m passengers during the period December 2016 to November 2017 in comparison to 6.9m in the same period the previous year. Metro punctuality is consistently high between 99 to 100%.

Satisfaction increased from autumn 2015 (81%) to autumn 2016 (92%) in comparison to 93% for all light rail systems in both England and Scotland.

- Bus

Bus Patronage overall is seeing a decline, with Bus patronage at 256m during the period December 2016 to November 2017 compared with 262m the previous year. Bus has been declining 2% per annum for many years. However, there has been some peak growth on journeys to cities (especially with new buses). This is a similar trend in England.

Bus Punctuality stands at 81% of surveyed buses departing one minute early and five minutes late in December 2017, down from 85% in December 2016. The Bus Alliance targets major improvement in Punctuality.

Bus Satisfaction has seen a slight long-term increase in the last five years. Recent survey showed satisfaction at 84%.

- Ring and Ride

Patronage for Ring and Ride across Sandwell during the 12 months up to and including January 2018 has seen relatively strong growth. The average year on year increase in trip numbers by all users is running at 5.36%. Ring and Ride trip numbers across the whole operating area are down year on year by an average of 2.49%.

Across the Sandwell operating area there has been particularly strong growth in August 2017 (13.17%) September 2017 (9.60%) October 2017 (10.54%) November 2017 (11.85%) and January 2018 (11.73%). This dramatic increase in trip numbers across Sandwell can be attributed to extra work from groups such as Age UK, Options for Life and a couple of church groups whose numbers have increased. They have gained this extra work by their Manager and his staff going out to see various clubs & promoting the service.

The average increase would be higher were it not for the figures for December 2017 (down 20.96%) due to a large reduction in the number of trips in December due to a number of days lost as a result of poor weather.