

## **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

**16 October 2018**

### **Transport for West Midlands**

Report by Councillor Roger Horton

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

### **1. 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 delivery of the infrastructure projects will be led by Laura Shoaf, MD, TfWM. 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 team 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 ensure that the region can operate without too much impact.

As part of the governance, the Joint Transport Group has now been established which includes officers from Sandwell (led by Andy Miller), and work is progressing on developing the transport plan, the games route network and undertaking the modelling and forecasting.

We are also working through the budget development with government with all of the partners for submission to Treasury.

Venue transport working groups have also been set up so that we can understand the requirements for accessing the sites including the Sandwell Aquatic Centre. Officers from Sandwell are leading this group.

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 'Games' 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 to minimise the impact for residents and businesses.

## **2. M5 Oldbury Viaduct works**

The project is about to achieve a key milestone with the switch-over of traffic from the southbound to northbound carriageway. This will subsequently see work commencing on the northbound carriageway over the course of the autumn and throughout 2019.

Following the previous update, it should be noted that a number of additional repairs were required to the viaduct. In addition, the hot summer weather did pose an issue for the application of the waterproofing. There were too many days when the surface temperature of the deck exceeded the recommended temperature for application.

Highways England are now predicting that completion of the work will be in autumn 2019. They are expecting to recover some of the time lost due

to the above factors with improved work management and it is anticipated that the northbound carriageway is in better condition than the southbound.

In late July Highways England published a Traffic Management report highlighting the performance of the strategic traffic management to date. In summary, it should be noted that overall in Sandwell the traffic management has worked well in most areas having an overall reduction in traffic flows compared with the previous year.

A coordinated approach to communication between all stakeholders and the project team remains in place, and local businesses are being 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.

### **3. 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. The Bus Alliance renewed its commitment to 50 deliverables across 8 key objectives by 2020. These are around congestion; air quality; ticketing; making it easier, cheaper, safer and more pleasant to travel by bus.

A key deliverable 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 up to 2026 in response to changes in land use and policy in a specified geographical area. It seeks to enhance what is currently in place (e.g. with better ticketing, bus stops, congestion management), rather than change the network itself.

TfWM officers have recently liaised with Sandwell MBC officers to propose a timeline of delivery for the NDPs. It is anticipated that the work to develop the Sandwell NDP will be completed by the end of 2018, for approval by the Bus Alliance and Sandwell MBC. The NDPs seek to

enhance what is already in place, rather than specifically change the routes.

Bus passenger satisfaction is at a record high, with nearly nine in ten bus passengers (88%) happy with their service and record numbers seeing it as good value for money.

A new partnership route between Diamond and National Express West Midlands has been introduced on the 42/43 service covering West Bromwich to Tipton and Bilston, where the operators have worked together with TfWM to develop a new West Midlands Transport livery and provide a new joint timetable. The new arrangement means that passengers can simply catch the first bus that comes, as both operators accept each other's tickets.

Following an extensive public consultation, National Express West Midlands have made a number of changes to bus routes in the Sandwell (and Dudley) area. This includes minor changes (such as timetable improvements to help services run more reliably), but also some bigger changes to cater for new and emerging travel needs. New express services and new links have been introduced, with Platinum buses able to serve more areas, including Blackheath, Oldbury and Smethwick. Many route numbers have also changed to create a new Sandwell and Dudley network, helping to create a new local identity for buses in the area.

This has built upon the rollout of contactless ticketing by National Express West Midlands to all their buses. TfWM has also waived the £10 fee for 16-18 photo cards, so they can now get 50% discounts on bus, train and tram travel for free; concessionary pass holders still benefit from National Express West Midlands' £1 pre-0930 fare.

#### **4. Rail Investment & Partnerships**

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

A number of important milestones in the life of the Franchise have been reached over the past six months. On 1st April 2018, Wolverhampton station transferred from the West Coast Franchise (operated by Virgin Trains since 1996) to the West Midlands Railway brand of West Midlands Trains (WMT). This move, which will help facilitate the City Council's

£132m station rebuilding scheme and put Wolverhampton more firmly within in the local rail network, would not have occurred without the involvement of West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE). April also saw the introduction of the Service Quality Regime (SQR) across trains and stations in the West Midlands. The aim of the SQR is to incentivise WMT to improve the standard of customer service offered to passengers in the West Midlands.

In July the first electric passenger service called at Bromsgrove station. This brings to a conclusion the multi-million pound scheme to extend the Cross City Line from its current terminus at Longbridge to north Worcestershire, providing Bromsgrove with three extra trains an hour in the process.

The arrival of electric trains at Bromsgrove represents the second time that WMT have introduced new services to the region. In spring, the first passenger trains began calling at the new station at Kenilworth, and on 20<sup>th</sup> July the station was officially opened.

Given the difficulties experienced by Northern and Thameslink following the introduction of major timetable changes in May, DfT have decided to defer all major timetable changes planned for December 2018 until May 2019. WMT are one of those Franchises who were planning on introducing new services at this time.

An unintended consequence of the decision to defer the December timetable is that the local Sunday service on the Shrewsbury Line will no longer transfer to WMT in December as planned. Instead it will continue to be operated by the Welsh Franchise until the December timetable is implemented in May 2019.

In July WMT began the process of rebranding all of the trains that make up the West Midlands Railway part of their business. The brand is being introduced in two forms; a permanent livery that will be applied to the units that are being retained by WMT until the end of the Franchise, and an interim livery that adorn those vehicles that are due to be replaced by the new fleets that WMT have ordered.

- WMR Rail Investment Strategy (WMRIS)

The West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy is due to go out to consultation in late September following approval by WMR Board.

- 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, has not yet been successful although work continues to take this forward.

## **5. HS2 Connectivity Package**

The HS2 Growth Strategy sets out how the positive effect of HS2 will be felt across the region. The approach 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 on seven Sprint Routes across the Metropolitan Area with work being undertaken by TfWM and Local Authorities. During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Prioritisation of 3 Sprint routes to support Commonwealth Games Venues: Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell (A34), Birmingham to Birmingham Airport and Solihull (A45), and Sutton Coldfield to Birmingham via Langleigh (SBL);
- Each of the priority routes has completed preliminary design and consultation drawings; and
- The Outline Business Case for these schemes is scheduled to be submitted by the end of 2018.

Public consultation on Sprint was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2018 via TfWM's website. An online questionnaire hosted by Birmingham City Council went live at the same time and the consultation has been promoted through social and traditional media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, local and regional press, bus shelter posters and RTI screens. LA partners have also been supporting the public consultation through their own internal and external communication channels.

Five public consultation events will take place during September 2018 in Sutton Coldfield, Sandwell, Walsall, Solihull and Birmingham with consultation due to close at the end of the month.

**Rail:** Significant activity has been underway developing a number of rail investment projects by WMRE/TfWM. A joint project team is being created to help the delivery of the investment programme. Projects currently underway include:

- Snow Hill 3<sup>rd</sup> Entrance (in delivery);
- Willenhall and Darlaston new stations;
- Camp Hill line new stations (Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell);
- University station rebuild;
- Perry Barr station rebuild; and
- Dudley Port Station – Initial discussions are underway between TfWM, WMRE, Network Rail and Sandwell MBC to begin to develop a proposal to improve interchange facilities and accessibility at the station.

Work on the options for providing rail services to serve the new stations is also being taken forwards.

## **6. 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 Phase 2 works on Pipers Row and Railway Drive based on a road closure of Pipers Row which commenced in spring 2018. Pipers Row is due to reopen to traffic on 2<sup>nd</sup> September with the remainder of the Phase 2 works continuing into the autumn.
- 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 provision for a shared heavy rail freight route. Preliminary design, schedule and cost review will be completed in the autumn and this will inform the delivery strategy for which the release of funds ahead of Final Business Case approval will be required to facilitate the earliest practicable opening of the extension. Following a letter from the Mayor to the NR Chief Executive, negotiations have progressed with Network Rail to effect the transfer of the corridor to WMCA ownership which will reduce cost and schedule risk within the programme. Network Rail have commenced their formal consultation processes ahead of formal confirmation of their and the Office of Road and Rail's agreement to the transfer. TfWM are developing an overall programme for the delivery of Metro and will be confirming the drawdown of the local contributions required to complete the funding package for the programme;
- 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 – The decision of the Secretary of State in respect of the granting of the Transport and Works Act Order is awaited, without which construction works cannot commence. MMA is finalising its preliminary design and Target Cost proposal which will be submitted to TfWM in September 2018 and which will inform the Final Business Case submission to DfT for the release of their £137m contribution to the scheme;
- Centenary Square Extension – Construction works have continued during the period with trackslab construction now underway in



Pinfold Street. BCC Cabinet Member has approved plans for the closure of Paradise Circus (3<sup>rd</sup> September) and Broad Street (Centenary Square – 21<sup>st</sup> September) supported by complimentary highway measures until the summer of 2019. The extension remains on schedule to open to the public in December 2019; 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.. The project remains on schedule to open in December 2021.

The Catenary Free project is continuing with 3 trams now retrofitted and in passenger service. The Retrofitting of batteries to the rest of the fleet is continuing at the Wednesbury depot and is on target to be completed in Q4 2019 ahead of the opening of the CSQ extension.

Procurement of the third generation trams required to operate the extensions from 2021 is progressing to schedule following completion of the market sounding exercise.

- Midland Metro Limited

On the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Midland Metro Limited (MML) became the new operator and maintainer for the West Midlands tram network. This follows a successful transition from its predecessor ALTRAM LRT. (National Express Midland Metro). The line has been rebranded West Midlands Metro (WMM) and a programme to rebrand the tram fleet and all metro stops has commenced. Staff who transferred into the new company have received a new and smart uniform, whilst passengers have benefited from the introduction of lower fares and new ticket types. This includes new metro only Day Tickets and metro only Group Tickets.

A new WMM Website has also been established alongside a new WMM Facebook and Twitter account. Although the first month of operation was challenging as a result of overhead line failures impacting service, WMM are working towards a number of improvements which will be introduced in the coming months.

## **7. Sustainable Travel**

- Travel Choices

TfWM 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.

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.

With recent formation of the Network Resilience team in TfWM, we are shaping a new approach to managing travel demand. We will agree consistent messaging with partners around significant investment programmes such as the M5 Oldbury Viaduct to keep people moving.

- Community Cycle Clubs

In partnership with Cycling UK, 4 new Community Cycle Clubs have been set up in Sandwell. Smethwick Beat the Street Community Cycle Club meet every Monday at Smethwick Fire Station for Adult Learn to Ride Sessions where bikes and helmets can be borrowed.

The second club at Hallam Street Hospital is operating and is ideally placed for National Cycle Network Route 5 and any future developments through nearby local cycling and walking infrastructure plan led investment. The third club is a Lightwoods Park and has only recently been formed with training running on Wednesday mornings. The fourth 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

Living Streets have received extension funding from the DfT and TfWM to continue their Walk to School engagement with Sandwell primary schools

through the 2018/19 academic year. All five schools currently signed up to the programme will continue to receive support and additional recruitment is ongoing with two new schools scheduled to come on board in September. Living Streets is also working with schools, local businesses and grant-awarding organisations to secure further funding to expand the reach of the project in the borough.

- 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. 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 currently being delivered with expected completion by March 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 started in May 2018 and includes the sections along the Birmingham New Main Line in Sandwell, Dudley and Wolverhampton and will form a continuous traffic free cycle route between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

- West Midlands Bikeshare

TfWM, on behalf of the 7 constituent Local Authorities are in the process of delivering a West Midlands wide Bike share scheme. Customers will benefit from a consistent Bike share offer, enabling a seamless journey wherever they travel in the West Midlands. Bike share also enables users to use the cycle for a whole (short) journey or as part of a first/last-mile. Similar to the Boris bike share scheme in London, residents and visitors will be able to hire a bike, ride it and return to any docking station.

Nextbike (UK) Ltd have been chosen as the preferred supplier to deliver and manage the bike share scheme. The scheme will look to deliver 5000 cycles and an estimated 500 docking station locations for the region including the Black Country at key interchanges, trip attractors and other such locations. Sandwell will receive 300 bikes and an estimated 30 docking stations

Customers will be able to access through a number of means, including SWIFT, Mobility as a Service and through Nextbike's app, website and call centre.

Bike share will be delivered in phases across the West Midlands. In phase 1 (autumn 2018), 100 cycles will be launched at the University of Birmingham. Delivery will then commence in Coventry, Wolverhampton and Birmingham city centres in autumn 2018. In phase 3, the scheme will be expanded across all 7 constituents, including Sandwell. It is estimated the delivery will be by late spring 2019, with a consultation on docking station locations in early 2019.

- Youth Employment Initiative (YEI)

TfWM's Travel Support Team are working with Black Country Impact, the European Social Fund/YEI funded project to support young people with their travel support. Agreements are being finalised and the YEI online system is ready to be used by Sandwell.

## **8. Safety and Security**

The Safer Travel Partnership is responsible for delivering the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Local Transport Policing Plan'. The key objectives of this plan for 2018/19 continue to be to reduce crime and improve passenger perception of personal safety.

Whilst overall recorded crime so far in 2018 has slightly increased there have still been good reductions in robbery and violence/ aggression offences on 'rail' and criminal damages offences on 'bus'. At the current time levels of bus related crime have continued to fall since April and appear to be following the predicted seasonal trend.

The Partnership continues to receive good feedback from the independent watchdog "Transport Focus" in terms of passenger perception of crime and anti-social behaviour. In the last survey of over 3000 passengers conducted in Autumn 2017, the Partnership maintained overall satisfaction levels in terms of "personal security on board bus journeys" at 78%. Those experiencing anti-social behaviour on their journey is 10% of those surveyed 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 5000 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 including Sandwell have included;

- Completion of state of art High Definition digital CCTV camera upgrades at bus stations in West Bromwich, Wednesbury, Cradley Heath and Bearwood, Park and Ride Sites including Rowley Regis, Tipton, Tame Bridge, The Hawthorns and Sandwell & Dudley, as well as Black Lake and Wednesbury metro stops.
- The TfWM CCTV Control Centre received its annual external and independent audit in December 2017 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. West Bromwich did not receive accreditation based on minor issues (such as signage rather than actual safety issues) which will be addressed with the intention of reassessment by the end of the year.

- Retention of “Safer Tram Stop award” covering all stations on the line including those routing through Sandwell.
- During our first academic year since employing an Education Officer, the Safer Travel Education Programme has engaged with 30,694 young people in schools, colleges, Pupil Referral Units and SEN establishments across the whole of the West Midlands to reduce ASB on bus, train and tram and instill confidence to travel. The various sessions have included assemblies, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) sessions, classroom lessons and full day mini school activities to encourage young people to travel safely and responsibly while using the public transport network and to follow the rules of our Passenger Code of Conduct. Many schools and colleges have incorporated the student contract version of the Passenger Code of Conduct into their new Year 7 student induction pack.
- 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.

## **9. Branding**

West Midlands Transport (building on Network West Midlands) is bringing a single identity to the public transport network in the West Midlands, centred on the distinctive West Midlands Transport diamond logo. In addition, each mode will have its own distinctive livery- orange for trains, blue for trams, red for buses, and green for bikes, with scope to expand for other modes in the future, such as drones.

TfWM, part of the WMCA, has introduced the new look to ‘spearhead the drive towards a comprehensive and integrated system for the region’. The livery and rebranding will take place gradually, and costs will be decreased through implementing certain elements, such as bus stop and

station rebranding, in line with the normal process of replacing and refreshing them.

## 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	82%	84%
Rail	56m	87%	85%
Metro	7m	97%	92%

### - Bus

Bus patronage overall is seeing a decline, with bus patronage at 256m during the period August 2017 to July 2018 compared with 258m 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 82% of surveyed buses departing one minute early and five minutes late in July 2018, the same as in July 2017. The Bus Alliance targets major improvement in punctuality.

Bus passenger satisfaction has seen a slight long-term increase in the last five years. Recent survey showed satisfaction at 88%.

### - Rail

Rail patronage has seen an increase, with patronage at 55.9m in the 12 months to July 2018 compared to 54.6m the same period last year. Growth continues to be central to TfWM/WMRE 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 five 2018/19) stands at 87%.

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

- Metro

Metro patronage stands at 6.8m passengers during the period August 2017 to July 2018 in comparison to 7.8m in the same period the previous year. Metro punctuality has fallen slightly over the last 8 months with an average of 97% over the last year August 2017 to July 2018.

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

- Ring and Ride

Patronage for Ring and Ride across Sandwell during the 12 months up to and including July 2018 has continued to see relatively strong growth. The average year on year increase in trip numbers by all users is running at 2.86%. Ring and Ride trip numbers across the whole operating area are down year on year by an average of 5.77%.

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 the Ring and Ride Manager and staff going out to see various clubs & promoting the service. However, numbers have dropped back as a result of a number of trip generators closing and the associated reduction in trips.



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.