

## **Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

### **Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)**

**6 October 2020**

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#### **Overview**

##### **1. Covid-19 recovery**

Since the rise of the pandemic and the subsequent dramatic drop in patronage and overall usage of our public transport network a vast amount of work has been undertaken by TfWM, local authorities and operators to recover the network and ensure that it is open, safe and reliable for our customers.

Throughout Covid-19 our transport services have remained open for key workers and those needing it for essential journeys and over time, using critical data analysis and collaborative intelligence we have slowly increased services to meet the gradual rise in demand across the region. To date we have seen three timetable increases for both Bus and Rail, and two for Metro. The bus network is now operating at 102% of the pre-pandemic mileage to provide additional capacity due to the social distancing requirements.

In order to ensure a truly collaborative and cohesive approach to recovering the transport network, the CV19 Transport Recovery Cell was created to agree a common approach, share information, provide support and most importantly work as a group to ensure activities were streamlined across the region taking into account interdependencies and interfaces between all parties and areas. The cell has made joint key decisions and collated information and responses to government as one consolidated group to make processes run more smoothly. Additional sub-groups have also been established to develop detailed recovery plans including with Bus Operators, Local Transport Authorities, Local Education Authorities, Passenger Infrastructure Managers and further education providers.

In addition, a CV19 Transport Recovery Communications group was also set up to ensure a common and consistent approach to the sharing of information and key messaging across all operators and local authorities, and has along with the transport cell been a real success and key to keeping the people of the region updated.

Since the formation of the transport cell a huge amount of work has been completed over the past 5-6 months. We have managed operators and the integrated public transport network to meet the required level of demand at differing points of the pandemic, introduced and managed social distancing measures across all modes of transport, towns and cities in the region as well as introducing the mandatory use of face coverings and its enforcement all supported with communication campaigns, agreed protocols for enhanced levels of cleaning across the TfWM estate and of vehicles with operators. We have made excellent progress in the sharing, collation

and analysis of operator data which has been integral in driving our approach and helping us to make informed decisions throughout the pandemic, the measures implemented and where, as well as enabling us to target services and resources where they are most needed.

As a result of CV19 we have created a data sharing platform accessible to all local authorities and key partners where daily data is published to continue to assist in the monitoring and planning of the network as well as our preparations for when the reopening of non-essential retail and hospitality occurred. Work has also been undertaken to gauge public opinion on public transport with three surveys issued to date and that feedback is incorporated into our approach and shared via the transport cell.

The return of educational establishments is currently taking place and TfWM, operators and the local authorities have worked together to ensure the smooth return to the public transport network. Daily monitoring and evaluation of the network continues, and we are responding to any issues that arise in these early days, as well as focussing on the future return of colleges and universities throughout September. We are operating above pre covid-19 service levels for both Metro and Bus with rail around 90-95% at present.

At the Transport cell in early September, TfWM received a request from Sandwell MBC for further support in implementing additional measures around social distancing at and around West Bromwich Bus Station due to the nature of its location next to the town centre, adjacent to West Bromwich Central Metro stop as well being in close proximity to Sandwell College. We have worked closely with our partners at Sandwell MBC and the following measures have been put in place.

1. Floor markings and signage have been refreshed.
2. Additional face covering signage vinyl's have been ordered and put in place.
3. Additional digital notices will be displayed from 4th September.
4. PA announcements have been updated and are being carried out.
5. There will be 2 x TfWM bus station supervisors available per shift and they will be encouraging social distancing, use of face coverings etc.
6. The security shift (1600 to 0000) have been re-briefed and understand their focus.
7. We are trying to recruit additional volunteers through the DfT's volunteering initiative.
8. Additional social distancing was provided on the highway around the pedestrian crossing between the bus station and the Metro stop on 4th September.
9. The toilets in both West Bromwich market and the New Square are open to help reduce pressure on the bus station toilets.

The use of face coverings on the public transport network including at Stations and Interchanges is mandatory, although some exceptions do apply. The proportion of passengers using face coverings is high although it does remain a point of concern for passengers and there has been a recent decrease in compliance since schools and colleges have returned.

The CV19 Communications group is currently developing a harder hitting campaign to emphasise the importance of using a face covering on the public transport network and also around the individual responsibility of passengers to keep other people safe.

This will include the use of face coverings, adhering to social distancing and hand washing / sanitising.

Enhanced levels of cleaning of passenger waiting facilities and vehicles remains of the highest priority. Through the West Midlands Bus Alliance, a protocol has been agreed with operators to provide daily deep clean of all buses and interim cleaning during the operational day. National Express are employing additional cleaners across the network to clean buses whilst they are waiting at Bus Stations and Interchanges. Other operators have provided cleaning kits to drivers to wipe down high touch areas on-board buses.

## **2. 2022 Commonwealth Games**

The transport planning for the Commonwealth Games is proceeding well with the development of an Integrated Transport Programme reporting into a multi-agency Joint Transport Group (JTG). The JTG includes officers from Sandwell as part of its governance, and work is progressing in ensuring a fully integrated transport response to the Games.

With just under two years to go, strategic planning moves into to detailed planning and development on both Games Family, Regional and Spectator Transport Operations is progressing well.

Games Transport Plan and supporting legislation are developing in line with the objectives for successful transport delivery in 2022.

Work on development of several key areas is underway with delivery partners across the region; Traffic Management, Bus, Spectator Transport and Venue Transport operations are all progressing to more detail in this stage of planning for the Games.

## **3. Bus Network**

At the lowest point during lock down use on the bus network dropped to around 10% of pre-covid levels. As we move through the recovery stage this has increased to just under 60% and is expected to increase further in the coming months as the economy starts to recover. Operators reduced service levels to around 40% of pre-covid mileage focusing service provision towards the needs of key workers. TfWM have worked with operators to restart the network and mileage now sits at above 100% of pre-covid mileage to give greater capacity due to social distancing needs.

TfWM, through the West Midlands Bus Alliance, are continuing to support bus operators using local funding through a variety of measures and as directed by the DfT and Central Government;

- Maintaining English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) at a rate should Covid-19 not happened.
- Maintaining tender payments at pre-covid rates.
- Providing operators with a payment holiday for use of bus stations and the provision of roadside information.
- (Using money provided by the DfT) made up the revenue shortfall on tendered services and also met the costs of restarting the network following the shutdown.

There has been considerable focus for the return of schools and colleges and TfWM have coordinated bus operators to ensure capacity is sufficient to meet the expected pupil and student passenger numbers.

TfWM have received £2.5m of funding from the DfE to support the return to school for the first half of the Autumn term. TfWM have used their allocation of this funding to strengthen services across the region and in some cases provided dedicated school services.

TfWM are continuing to work with Local Highways Authorities to monitor the success or otherwise of the Tranche 1 Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF) schemes and also the development of the Tranche 2 schemes, in particularly the impact on bus. In Sandwell, a scheme on Smethwick High Street has caused issue for bus access and journey times and we are working with colleagues to review this scheme later in the Autumn. Journey times for some bus passengers has increased as a result of this scheme. TfWM will continue to work with Sandwell colleagues and bus operators to ensure it remains an absolute priority that highway congestion is managed.

TfWM continue to manage the provision and performance of the subsidised bus network. We are currently working towards a tendering exercise in January when it is hoped the network will be more stable and therefore changes minimal.

- Ring and Ride Update

The West Midlands Ring and Ride service, operated by National Express Accessible Transport (NEAT), has been seriously impacted by the pandemic. In response to much reduced demand from registered customers, they have been running a very limited service since the lockdown restrictions began in March this year.

However, throughout the pandemic the service has been available to those who need it and has been playing an important part in helping keep those key workers who absolutely needed to travel to do so safely. We all remain grateful for the heroic work of the NHS staff and you may be interested to know that, working with NEAT, we were able to offer additional support by repurposing some of the Ring and Ride fleet to provide links to hospitals. These services have been very well used by NHS staff, carrying over 19,000 people since 1st April, with up to 200 people being carried some days. A number of these services will continue to be operated until further notice.

Whilst demand from registered customers is now increasing, it remains at much lower levels than earlier in the year and considering this demand we have asked NEAT to continue to offer service between 8.30am and 3.30pm on Mondays to Saturdays. We have suspended evening and Sunday services for the time being, this is under constant review.

NEAT has implemented a new booking system, which means users should no longer need to wait for a call back to confirm, it can be confirmed instantly in most cases. In order to maintain safe social distancing, capacity on the buses is reduced. Enhanced extensive cleaning regimes to ensure high levels of hygiene for both customers and employees have been implemented, with regular “fogging” of vehicles with an aerosol-based disinfection containing a high-performance antiviral solution and all drivers are given hand sanitiser, gloves and face masks.

- Vision for Bus

Following the approval of Sprint by the WMCA Board on the 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Enhanced Partnership (EP) went to the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2020 for approval to consult. Public consultation ran for a 10-week period, closing on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

Approval to 'make' the EP Plan and Scheme will be sought from all partners, including Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, after the end of the consultation period. It is then expected, subject to no further changes post-consultation that the EP Plan and associated Scheme can be made by January 2021. This would be the first urban EP made in England using the new Bus Services Act 2017 powers.

#### **4. Rail Network**

- West Midlands Franchise

Since 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 all of the train companies serving the region have been operating under temporary emergency contracts, known as EMAs. These were introduced in response to plummeting patronage, which in turn led to a collapse in revenue. The EMAs have transferred cost and revenue risk away from the private sector and to central government. The operators receive a management fee in return for operating the trains, with the ability to supplement this via a performance bonus, the exact amount being dependent on their ability to achieve certain KPIs.

The EMAs were only ever intended to be a short-term arrangement, and on 20 September they will expire. As rail patronage has shown the slowest rate of recovery (c.30% of pre-covid19 levels), a return to the previous commercial terms will not be tenable. Consequently, DfT are proposing to introduce a new iteration of management contract, known as an ERMA. Like the EMA, cost and revenue risk is retained by DfT, and the operator is paid a management fee. However, the value of the management fee is set to fall, whilst the value of the performance bonus is set to increase. This is intended to incentivise the operator to go beyond business as usual activity and deliver improving standards of customer care and operational performance.

The ERMA is also designed to last for a longer period of time than the EMA. Consequently, some of the performance regimes that were deactivated under the EMA may be switched back on. These would include those regimes that incentivised the operator to ensure high standards of cleanliness at stations and on trains, something that will be of considerable importance to customers as a result of covid-19.

A new rail timetable went live on the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2020, where additional capacity was added to the network. WMT are reporting manageable patronage levels across their network with only minor increases being seen in relation to the return to school, however this may increase over the next 7 days and also again at the end of September with the return to Universities. The main challenges for patronage are being seen on those routes where there has been a decrease in reliability. The new timetable requires more drivers and guards to operate, and covid-19 pressure are making it difficult to resource every train. WMT are examining options to address this.

## 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 Walsall to Birmingham via Sandwell (A34) and Birmingham to Birmingham Airport and Solihull (A45), with work being undertaken by TfWM and Local Authorities. During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Further engagement on the revised designs for the A34 route following consultation feedback;
- The Final Business Cases for the A34 and A45 schemes were approved by WMCA Board on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020;
- Detailed design work has been completed and early contractor involvement (ECI) has commenced; and
- There is ongoing work with potential operators for the schemes.

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

- Willenhall and Darlaston new stations
- Camp Hill line new stations (Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell)
- University station rebuild;
- Perry Barr station rebuild;

Feasibility and business case work is currently underway to create an improved integrated transport hub at Dudley Port, tying together rail, metro, bus, car, cycling and pedestrian access. This work is part-funded by Sandwell MBC.

Network Rail are actively progressing proposals to provide step-free access to Smethwick Rolfe Street through the provision of lifts. West Midlands Trains are also progressing plans to construct stabling sidings at Bescot to support the introduction of their new train fleets.

WMRE is actively engaging with Midlands Connect, DfT and Network Rail about accelerating the delivery of certain elements of the Midlands Rail Hub project, such as Snow Hill Platform 4, using the new Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline (RNEP) process which in future will be the process by which the DfT funds enhancement projects on the rail network.

## 6. Metro Delivery Programme

The Metro programme has been redefined into two main phases based on funding position and current project status.

<b>Project</b>	<b>Planned Opening</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	
Centenary Square Extension	Opened December 2019
Wolverhampton City Centre Extension	Spring 2021
Edgbaston Extension	December 2021
Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension	December 2023
<b>Phase 2</b>	
Birmingham Eastside Extension	2025
East Birmingham Solihull	2026

Work continues to progress all extension projects being undertaken by the Midland Metro Alliance (MMA). During the period, the following activity has been undertaken:

- Wolverhampton City Centre Extension – Works for Phases 1-3 are now complete. Phase 4 which will take the tram through to the newly built station is dependent on access to the site. According to the current construction programme MMA will not have access until February 2021 when the old station has been demolished, so delivery of the extension will be in the July 2021.
- Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Extension – Detailed design of this extension started in December, and construction phasing of the project is current being reviewed. Procurement of the rail corridor took longer than anticipate but has now been completed. The TWAO has been approved by Parliament but is subject to some special procedures that will delay full approval and CPO powers until around October. We have proceeded with getting access to land required in advance of having these powers. Utility works started in Spring in Dudley Town Centre to clear the route for the construction. Site compounds have been established and the first bridge demolition took place in August.
- Centenary Square Extension – Construction works were completed ahead of schedule and the section opened to passenger service on 12<sup>th</sup> December. There remain some associated works to complete, notably paving on Victoria Square, and a final decision on the arrangements for Paradise Circus will lead to some finishing works there.
- Edgbaston Extension – Work is now progressing at full pace, despite Covid-19 on all sections of the extension with track in place in all but a few short sections. We expect all major work on the highway to be complete by the end of 2020, with urban realm work and systems (overhead line, comms and signalling etc) to be completed in 2021. Opening remains on schedule for end 2021.
- Birmingham Eastside Extension (BEE) –The Transport and Works Act (TWA) Order for BEE, was issued in January 2020. The Full Business Case was approved by WMCA Board on 14th February 2020 and FBC devolved to TfWM by DfT. The intention is to construct the two ends of the scheme first; the delta junction at Bull Street and the Digbeth Town Centre, (to be completed before Commonwealth Games). The central section is subject to agreements with

HS2, and this will define the opening date of the extension. Currently anticipated opening date for the full extension is December 2025.

- East Birmingham to North Solihull Extension - TfWM is working with Government to gain further funding to develop a Full Business Case.
- The catenary free trams are already running on the Centenary Square extension and the last tram was modified in June 2020.
- Procurement contract for the new fleet from CAF was completed in October with a first phase of 21 trams, and options to extend the fleet for the East side extensions. These new trams are now in the final design approval stage and manufacturing of components has commenced. The first tram will arrive in Spring 2021 with 8 being delivered in time for the opening of the Edgbaston extension.

## **7. Metro Operations - Midland Metro Limited**

During the period MML has focused its activities on responding to the Covid-19 pandemic, prioritising the safety of both staff and customers. Following lockdown patronage fell by 86% and revenue by 94%. The timetable was reduced to around 50% normal capacity and for a period 40% of staff were furloughed as the operation adapted to changing business needs. As part of its response to Covid-19 MML put in place a number of measures to help keep everyone safe. Initially these included:

Enhanced cleaning – using viricidal disinfectants on trams and stops focusing on customer touchpoints.

- Automatic door opening at stops - reducing customer contact with surfaces.
- Encouraging customers to pay in advance (via Swift or the My Metro app) or to use contactless - reducing customer/conductor contact.
- Communicating key safety messages – working with Transport for West Midlands in delivering the Stay Safe, Stay Apart campaign on tram.
- Providing personal protective equipment for staff - including face masks and personal issue hand sanitiser bottles.
- Staff only zones on trams – keeping space behind the driver's cabs to help staff to socially distance.
- Redeployment of conductors, to at stop revenue collection – helping to maintain social distancing.
- Promoting staff welfare – keeping staff informed, promoting the Employee Assistance Programme and working with the Union to ensure the most vulnerable or those required to shield have the additional support as necessary.
- Understanding best practise – working with UK tram, TfWM and other transport groups to explore the best ways in which to manage the impacts of Covid-19.

As MML moved into the recovery phase additional measures have included:

- Travel demand management – monitoring capacity and adapting service to help with social distancing.
- Coordinating efforts with the Regional Transport Co-ordination Centre (RTCC) – to optimise safe capacity on the wider transport network.
- Publishing busiest travel times on the West Midlands Metro website and My Metro app - encouraging customers who can be flexible to re-time their journey to avoid busy times.

- Distributing face masks to customers – educating them on the changes in legislation whilst aiding with compliance.
- Introducing intent to travel – a function on the My Metro app enabling customers to register their travel plans, allowing MML to better understand and plan for future journeys.
- Launching a new flexible ticket range offering up to 20% off when compared with buying peak day tickets – including new 3 day and 4 day tickets which provide unlimited travel for the consecutive period of days and a new Flex and Save ticket which provides 10 days of unlimited travel to be used anytime up to 6 months.

Throughout the pandemic, MML has and continues to offer an essential service keeping people moving.

## **8. Active Travel**

- Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF)

On 9th May the Government announced that an 'Emergency Active Travel Fund' will fund local authorities across the country to help make it easier for people to use bikes to get around. An allocation of £250 million from the £2 billion investment in cycling and walking, previously announced at the March budget is to be made available immediately to support the delivery of temporary schemes such as pop up cycle lanes and widening pavements.

TfWM has been allocated £17.2m of EATF which will be distributed via two tranches using a light touch application process. Tranche 1 is £3.447m with applications closed 5 June 2020. DfT has stressed that measures need to be delivered within 8 weeks of receiving the funding, and these must involve a 'meaningful reallocation of road space'. TfWM have submitted a joint bid with the constituent local authorities.

A programme of schemes that includes cycle pop-up lanes, increased room for pedestrians on footways, modal filters and cycle parking has been included in the application to DfT. The programme also includes supporting measures to deliver interventions that support long term behaviour change. A communications and marketing package have also been included in the programme.

A decision for the Tranche 2 proposals is currently awaited. Additional funding was awarded to support a Travel Demand Management Programme for the return of schools as well as a grant received from the Department of Education to help strengthen the network and increase transport provision for the return of educational establishments.

The Tranche 1 programme in Sandwell has an indicative cost of £0.296m and includes the following schemes:

- Scheme 1: Oldbury Town Centre to NCRN81 (in Progress)
- Scheme 2: Smethwick Town Centre to Spon Lane (in progress)
- The following schemes have been proposed as part of the Sandwell's Tranche 2 programme (indicative cost of £1.4m):

- Blackheath Town Centre Active Travel Interventions – Reallocation of road space and widening of footway to create a new permanent off-road segregated two-way cycleway along the Blackheath bypass from the Oldbury Rd/Henderson Way junction, along the bypass on A4100 Henderson Way to the High St/John St junction.
  - Wednesbury Town Centre Active Travel Interventions - Reallocation of road space to provide a new segregated contraflow cycle lane with NCLD Cycle Lane Defenders within the town centre, new permanent footway sections, temporary widening of footways using barriers, new TTRO's and new signing and road marking scheme, decluttering of footways along various roads within the town centre to ensure wider footway space. New cycle parking at selected locations will also be provided.
  - Bearwood High Street Active Travel Interventions - High Street - adjoining Bearwood Road is Waterloo Road and on the northern side of the High Street is Hadley Stadium sports centre which hosts inclusive cycling projects. On this side of the High Street there will be a reallocation of road space (along Bearwood Rd/Waterloo Rd) to provide a new two-way segregated cycle route from Beaks Road to Hadley Stadium with a Tiger Crossing for cyclists.
  - A4123 Corridor (Dudley/Sandwell section) – this is a jointly promoted scheme by Dudley (DMBC) and Sandwell (SMBC) Councils.
- Community Cycle Clubs

In partnership with Cycling UK, 5 Community Cycle Clubs have been set up in Sandwell. All activities were suspended due to Covid-19 following government guidance, and the clubs are now slowly beginning to re-emerge, following strict guidance around social distancing.

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.

Sandwell Public health proudly delivered the Big Bike Revival Keyworkers Offer during the lockdown period in partnership with Cycling UK – offering long term bike loans and equipment to keyworkers. Two Love Your Bike Sessions were also held at Sandwell & Dudley Station with rail passengers and the community turning up for a free bike safety check, d-lock and bike security marking.

- Living Streets Walk to School Programme

Sandwell has 24 schools currently involved in the WOW challenge and all being well set to resume in September 2020. 3 schools (Abbey Infant, Abbey Junior and Ocker Hill Infant) were all due to launch after Easter but due to Covid-19 and the lockdown these launches were postponed and are due to happen sometime during the Autumn term.

The success behind the 2019 recruitment is due to great partnership work between Living Streets, the Sandwell Public Health Team and the Road Safety Department which have both been very proactive in signposting schools to WOW and making

introductions. Living Streets also work with the Black Country Consortium (Active Black Country) supporting their guidance on pupil or sport premium spending and approaching schools in areas of higher deprivation. The links made with Learning Communities has also been very positive and enabled links to be made to schools in a group setting with recommendations from involved head teachers too.

Centrally Living Streets stepped up and National Walking Month resources were produced with the fantastic #try20 campaign. This was then followed by weekly Primary School resources both for those children going to school and parents home schooling too.

As a consequence of many schools being closed during May it was decided to move Walk To School Week to October this year (from National Walk to School Month to International Walk to School Month) and so it will run for 5 days from week commencing Monday 5th October.

- West Midlands Bikeshare

TfWM has completed the re-procurement of a new bike share scheme for the West Midlands and have chosen a preferred supplier which has extensive experience of large complex schemes in the UK.

The scheme will consist of a minimum of 1,500 bikes across the 7 Local Authorities, with at least 10% of the fleet being e-bikes. There will be a trial in Sutton Coldfield by the end of 2020 with the full scheme rollout from March 2021. By the end of 2021 the whole scheme will be available to the public to use.

- Walking and Cycling Programme

£23.5m of Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) has been allocated to develop and deliver a cycling and walking infrastructure programme. The programme is coordinated by TfWM as part of the Walking and Cycling Programme.

As part of the TCF programme, funding has been allocated towards the development of the Phase 1 routes within the LCWIP. The local authorities are currently working on developing business cases and preliminary designs as part of this project. Part of this investment has been allocated as capital contributions as follows

Allocation	TCF Funding Contribution (Capital, £m)
Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Corridor Access Improvements at stops for cycling and walking	3.0

Additionally, a development funding contribution has been allocated as follows:

Scheme	Development Funding Contribution
Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro Corridor Access Improvements	£200,000

- Better Streets Community Fund

TfWM launched the Better Streets Community Fund in May 2019. The scheme enabled anyone in the West Midlands to submit their ideas for projects to improve their local area for cycling and walking. TfWM and Sandwell Council assessed the applications and 5 projects were selected to receive funding. These applications are:

Name of Project	Description of project	Progress to date
Friar Park Public Realm Improvements	Two applications for the Better Streets Community Fund were submitted within close proximity of each other asking for improvements near the Millennium Community Centre and Friar Park Primary School. This project will provide improvements at and between these two locations providing a safe and enjoyable space for local people to walk and cycle.	Consultation with applicants has taken place and designs for improvements have been developed. Delivery is on hold due to Covid-19 and EATF funding opportunity.
Friar Park Public Realm Improvements		
Smethwick Old Church and Dorothy Parkes Community Centre Community Centre Public Realm Improvements	This project will aim to improve the public space outside of Smethwick Old Church and Dorothy Parkes Community Centre by reducing traffic speed and making it easier for people to walk and cycle in their local community.	Consultation with applicants has taken place and designs for improvements have been developed. Delivery is on hold due to Covid-19 and EATF funding opportunity.
Access improvements to existing crossings	The Better Street Community Fund will contribute to improving the accessibility of an existing crossing for cyclists and those with mobility issues by providing small amount of dropped kerb. The crossing in Blackheath forms a part of an existing cycle route between Blackheath and Rowley Regis Train Station and this small improvement will help improve this route.	Consultation with applicant has taken place and delivery of the improvement took place in April 2020 improving access to Blackheath.
YMCA Cycle Parking	This project will provide public cycle parking outside of the YMCA in West Bromwich Town Centre allowing people attending the YMCA and the wider town centre to be able to park their bikes securely.	Consultation with applicants took place and delivery of 4 covered Sheffield cycle stands took place in April 2020.

- Workwise

TfWM's Employment Outreach Lead works with Job Centres across Sandwell to promote discounted travel to those gaining new employment. This approach has been successful and was extended to include libraries, local employers and training providers including Sandwell College. A popular discounted travel scheme is Workwise which offers 50% off selected tickets in the first three months of employment.

In line with recent engagement restrictions related to Covid-19, the Employment Outreach Lead is expanding promotion to include a portfolio of virtual advertising and engagement activity alongside non-virtual activity. This includes; online recruitment events, online jobs fairs and social media engagement tools as well as digital newsletters and information packs.

## 9. Safety and Security

The Safer Travel Partnership is a collaboration of organisations including TfWM, West Midlands and British Transport Police forces, Transport Operators and the 7 regional Local Authorities. They work together with the purpose of making the public transport network safer.

The Partnership is responsible for delivering the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner's 'Local Transport Policing Plan'. The key objectives of this plan for 2020/21 continue to be to reduce crime and improve passenger perception of personal safety.

Overall recorded public transport crime for the period 1st April to 31st August 2020 has reduced by 43% compared to the same period in 2019. This is based on the combined totals from all three modes of transport – Bus, Train and Metro. Bus related crime has seen a 36% reduction or over 400 fewer offences for the same period. On rail and metro these figures are 44% and 23% reductions in recorded crime respectively. This is important relative to the number of Sandwell Borough based train and metro stations.

Whilst these reductions are relative in terms of the pandemic and reflect reduced levels of services and patronage over the preceding months, the Safer Travel Partnership has planned and focused its attention on maintaining Government restrictions in the public's use of transport for the safe use of all users. The Safer Travel Police team have fully adopted the 4 E's approach advocated by the Police Chief Council to passengers adhering to social distancing and use of face masks;

1. Engage
2. Explain
3. Educate
4. Enforcement

Since Government legislation came into force in June 950 police directions to leave have been given by the Safer Travel Police team under 'Engage, Explain, Educate and Enforcement.' Only 6 of these have resulted in enforcement action and fixed penalty notices. The majority of the directions to leave have been made on bus – 71% followed by Metro – 20% and train – 9%.

One of the Safer Travel Police teams' recent focuses in terms of covid-19 compliance has been the return to school at peak morning and afternoon periods. Proactive work with Sandwell College working closely with their new 'meeters and greeters' has started to address increased issues of anti-social behaviour within the bus station at metro stops and within the Town Centre itself.

Furthermore, working alongside West Bromwich Town centre teams, Safer Travel have engaged and helped address issues of ongoing street drinkers within the bus station. This has resulted in one individual receiving a civil injunction to curtail his behaviour.

## Appendix 1 – Network Monitoring

Monitoring ensures TfWM understands 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 (2019/20)		
	Patronage	Punctuality	Satisfaction
Bus	247.6m 	No Update	85% 
Rail	59.1m 	96.2% (P2) 	79% 
Metro	8m 	99.7% 	87%

### - Bus

Overall bus patronage in the West Midlands has fallen in the year 2019/20 (April to March) by -5.6% to 247.6m compared to 2018/19 (262.2m). There have been decreases in both commercial patronage (-5.2%) and free concessionary travel (-7.1%). Current (July 2020) annualised bus patronage stands at 182.6m a -30% decrease compared to July (260.6m) with Covid-19 having a huge impact on usage. However, monthly bus patronage in July 2020 was +45% higher than in June 2020 as patronage steadily starts to grow.

Bus passenger satisfaction has generally seen a slight long-term increase in the last five years. The most recent survey (Autumn 2019) showed satisfaction at 85%. This is a +1% increase in general satisfaction since the Autumn 2018 survey.

### - Rail

Rail patronage continues to generally increase, with patronage at 59.1m in the 12 months to March 2020 compared to 58m for the same period the year before, an increase of +1.9%. This has been impacted by Covid-19, however as with bus patronage, rail patronage is starting to show an increase back to pre Covid-19 levels. Current rail patronage is approximately -70% of pre Covid-19 patronage.

Rail punctuality (trains arriving not more than 5 minutes late) has seen an increase. The latest punctuality for WMR (Period 5 (August) 2020/21) stands at 94%.

Satisfaction with rail services has fluctuated between 81% to 87%, since spring 2012. Autumn 2019 saw some of the worst satisfaction results, largely driven by the drop in punctuality following the May timetable, and the traincrew shortages in October of that year. Recent surveys show satisfaction to have increased to 79% (Spring 2020 survey) compared to 73% in Autumn 2019.

### - Metro

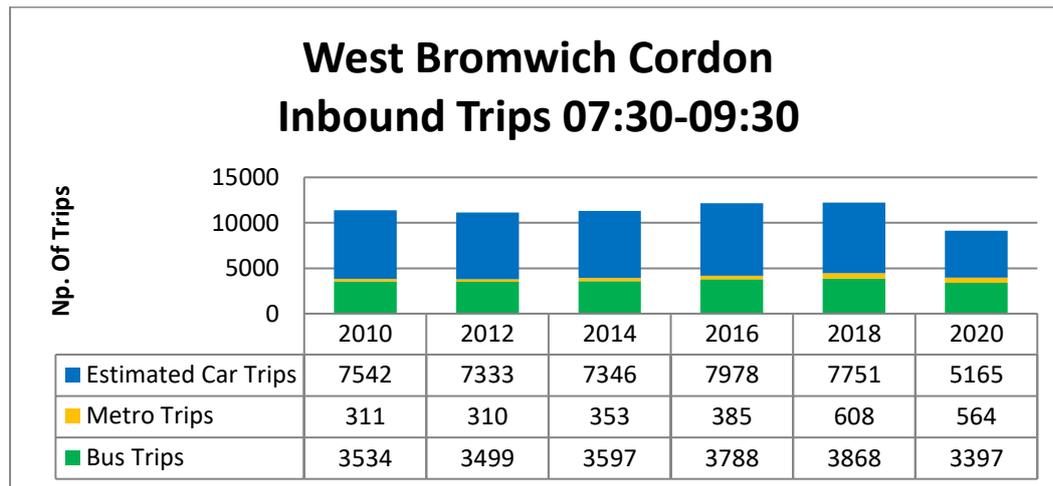
Metro patronage continues to increase and currently stands at 8m passengers during the year period April 2019 to March 2020 in comparison to 7m in the same period the previous year; an increase of +14.3%.

Fleet availability (i.e. proportion of rolling stock available as a percentage of the target number needed to run to timetable) stood at 99.7% in March 2020, an increase of +1.4% compared to March 2019.

There hasn't been a metro satisfaction survey undertaken since Autumn 2018.

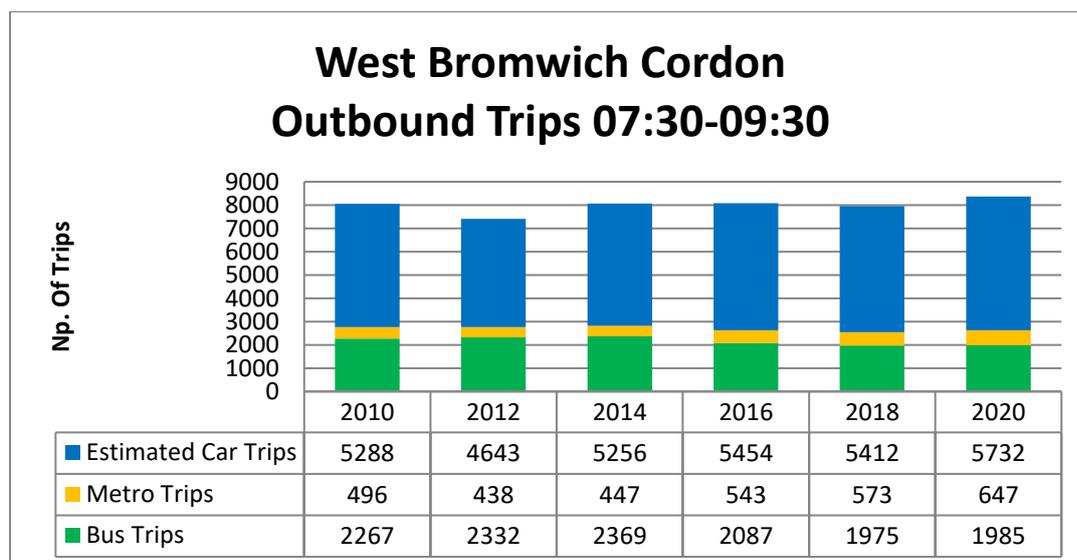
### Modal Share

A cordon survey around West Bromwich was undertaken in March 2020 – 2 weeks before lockdown. The results are summarised below.



Inbound AM Peak bus and metro trips have seen decreases of -12.2% and -7.2% respectively in 2020, compared to 2018. Car trips have decreased by -33.4% resulting in the public transport modal share being the highest ever at 43.4%. The total number of trips being made into West Bromwich town centre has decreased by -25.4% in 2020 at under 10,000 with Covid-19 having a clear impact on travel in March 2020.

When comparing 2020 data to forecasted data, bus trips are -14% lower than expected, metro trips are -5% less than expected, car trips are -35% lower and all trips are -27% less than what we would expect without Covid-19 being present.



The number of outbound trips made by bus and metro in the AM Peak has increased slightly by +0.5% and +12.9% respectively. Car trips have also increased (by +5.9%) suggesting that people travelled to West Bromwich town centre and spent less time there than they normally would, travelling entirely within the AM Peak, potentially due to the onset of lockdown due to Covid-19. Public transport modal share has decreased slightly from 32% to 31.5%.

The next West Bromwich Cordon Survey will be undertaken in March 2022.