

Birmingham City Council

City Council

7 November 2023



Subject: Lead Member Report: West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Delivery Committee

Report of: Cllr Mary Locke, Lead Member

Report Author: Richard Mayes, Bus Network and Performance Manager & Stephen Holloway, Partnership Coordinator (Transport for West Midlands)

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Transport Delivery Committee (TDC) was one of the thematic Boards/Committees under the formal WMCA Board until the end of the 2022-23 municipal year, and this report covers that period of time.
- 1.2 TDC provided political oversight and engagement on strategic transport priorities of the WMCA and its transport delivery arm, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). This included monitoring and challenging the delivery of TfWM capital programmes. The committee also had oversight of the operational activities of the WM Transport Authority and received regular updates and reports across the various portfolios. Members actively participated in liaison with partners, including bus, rail and Metro operators, and with passengers' and interest groups.
- 1.3 Councillor Mary Locke (Labour, Birmingham) was the BCC Lead Member for 2022-2023 municipal year. Councillor Richard Worrall (Labour, Walsall) became Chair of the WMCA TDC for the 2022-2023 municipal year, with Councillor Timothy Huxtable (Conservative, Birmingham) continuing as TDC Vice-chair and Councillor Mary Locke (Labour, Birmingham) joining as TDC Vice-chair.
- 1.4 All seven constituent authorities were represented on a population and political basis. Birmingham City Council was represented by the following councillors whose role has centred on ensuring that Birmingham achieves our deserved share of transport investment and network improvements as the West Midlands'

largest and most strategic District and the centre of the region's travel-to-work area.

1.5 The BCC representatives in 2022-23 were:

- Councillor Mary Locke (Labour) BCC Lead Member
- Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Labour)
- Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner OBE (Labour)
- Councillor Saddock Miah (Labour)
- Councillor Timothy Huxtable (Conservative)
- Councillor Robert Alden (Conservative)
- Councillor Zaker Choudhry (Liberal Democrat)

1.6 At its meeting on 9 June 2023, the WMCA Board agreed revised transport governance arrangements for the forthcoming year. These new arrangements included the amalgamation of the former TDC and Transport Scrutiny Sub Committee into the new Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee (TDOSC).

2 Recommendation(s)

2.1 That the report be noted.

3 Background

3.1 I am pleased to provide this Annual Report as Birmingham's Lead Member on the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee for 2022/2023 at the end of another very challenging year for the public and for everybody involved in the delivery of public transport services.

3.2 I would like to thank the TDC members for their work through 2022-2023 municipal year and I extend my thanks to those that have left committee. I would like to give special thanks to Cllr Richard Worrall, Chair of the TDC, who stood down from the role, coinciding with the change in structure.

3.3 I thank those members who are continuing to serve as part of the revised Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee (TDOSC), and I welcome those new members to this committee and Member Engagement Groups as they join me in carrying out our responsibilities to ensure that Birmingham, has its fair share of the Transport budget, capital schemes and operational attention, and that projects and activities that impact upon our city are delivered.

3.4 The year has been challenging once again, with patronage still not returning to pre-pandemic levels, changes in travel patterns and funding and our region has been impacted by industrial action on train and bus services. I would like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly within Birmingham City Council, TfWM and their transport user groups, and our transport partners, to maintain the transport network through the challenges.

3.5 We had tremendous success with the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, and I have been impressed by colleagues, partners and other stakeholders coming together to help deliver our network, but also to deliver funded public transport and clear transport networks for the event. This work helped deliver over 650,000 shuttle bus journeys and 28,000 cycle hires during the Games, support over 255,000 people travelling through Birmingham New Street station on one day, and more than 25,000 people using the new Perry Barr station facility. This success has been seen on the world stage and we must all be so proud of what we have achieved together in supporting this fantastic opportunity to showcase Birmingham and the West Midlands.

3.6 As Lead Member for Birmingham, I have:

- Been the voice of the passenger, putting passengers first, because services are vital for work, school and leisure.
- Followed up Members' and Birmingham residents' casework, with the focus being around bus services and bus infrastructure.
- Along with the other Birmingham TDC Members, tracked and championed projects and initiatives as they relate to Birmingham.
- Arranged for the distribution of updates to BCC Members.
- Joined with the BCC Leader and Cabinet Member in our work to promote the city's needs as the region's strategic focus, for instance at the PPF Member Engagement Group.

3.7 First of all, I will detail what the TDC has done since my report of November 2022, and I will then provide some key highlights.

4 The Committee's Business 2022-2023

4.1 The WMCA TDC held 6 meetings in 2022/23, The committee had 6 Lead Member Engagement Groups (LMEG) for 2022/23:

- Putting Passenger First – Councillor Mary Locke, Birmingham, Labour
- Air Quality, Congestion and Environmental Impact – Councillor Linda Bigham, Coventry, Labour
- Finance and Performance – Councillor Pervez Akhtar, Coventry, Labour
- Rail and Metro – Councillor Timothy Huxtable, Birmingham, Conservative
- Safe and Sustainable Travel – Councillor Robert Grinsell, Solihull, Conservative
- Sprint – Councillor Richard Worrall, Walsall, Labour

4.2 These groups enabled TDC Members to focus more closely on key TfWM areas of work than is the case in full committee meetings. Agendas and reports considered by the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee can be found at:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeeld=134>

4.3 The committee considered the standing items of financial monitoring and capital programme delivery monitoring for TfWM projects, the role of TDC being to review the financial delivery and rigour of TfWM and to track and champion the delivery of transport projects.

4.4 Items considered by the committee during 2022/2023 included:

- Transport Services Recovery (July, October, November)
- Rail Programme Update (October, January)
- New Rail Stations Study (March)
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (October)
- Enhanced Partnership Scheme (March)
- January 2023 Bus Service Changes (October, January)
- Metro Monitoring Delivery (October)
- Walking & Cycling Monitoring (October)
- Railway Station Ticket Office proposals (October, November)
- Threats to bus services posed by funding cuts (October, November)
- Network Resilience (November)
- Ring & Ride/West Midlands On Demand Co-mingling (November)
- West Midlands Cycle Hire (November)
- TfWM Drone Team (November)
- Park & Ride (November)
- £2 Fare Cap (January)
- Safer Travel Partnership (February)
- Transport Funding (February, March)

4.5 Minutes of the committee are submitted to the WMCA Board. The TDC Chair attended the WMCA Board meetings to present TDC meeting minutes and to comment on outcomes and on Transport items on the WMCA agenda.

5 Key Highlights in 2022/23

5.1 The committee provided input, influence and challenge to the delivery of a range of transport projects and programmes during the financial year. Key highlights included updates on transport services recovery, changes to bus service funding, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) development, Sprint, Rail and Metro Capital Projects and development of an Enhanced Partnership.

- 5.2 Updates regarding bus recovery funding and service provision included the revision of the Value for Money criteria to £4.10 within the wider Bus Access Standards to allow TfWM to support a higher number of bus services, and the network review in January 2023 to maintain 90% of mileage operated prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5.3 The committee was given regular overviews of the performance across the network relating to Bus, Metro and Rail. As the year progressed it was recognised that the network was seeing an increase in passenger numbers across the public transport network, and with a different profile to the pre-COVID patterns. There have been updates regarding the performance of service operated in terms of punctuality across the Rail and Bus network in relation to the previously discussed driver issues and ongoing industrial action.
- 5.4 2022 saw Transport for West Midlands deliver an award winning, world-class transport programme for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. Preparations saw the opening of the refurbished Perry Barr Rail Station, Phase 1 opening of University Station with widened platforms and the completion of Phase 1 of Sprint. During the games, we transported over 1.5m spectators, 40,000 workforce, all while keeping the residents of the West Midlands at the heart of what we do, by ensuring we minimised disruption to their daily lives through an enhanced Travel Demand Management and Traffic Management programme. Details of the post-Commonwealth Games press release are included in Appendix 1.
- 5.5 **Monitoring Capital Schemes**
- The Committee has monitored and sought to influence progress on large capital projects in Birmingham. Updates on these schemes are provided in Appendix 2:
1. Tracking large Rail projects with tight deadlines has been undertaken by both the full TDC and the Rail and Metro LMEG. Please see the update on University and Perry Barr Stations, and the Camp Hill lines, (together with updates regarding Great British Railways and Industrial Action) at 1 in Appendix 2.
 2. The committee and the Sprint LMEG have considered and input on the progress and delivery of the A34 and A45 Sprint schemes, including shelters and the Enhanced Partnership (See 2. In Appendix 2).
 3. The progress of the works on the Metro Extension to Edgbaston and Eastside has continued to be followed and examined at TDC meetings and by the Rail and Metro LMEG. Update at 3, Appendix 2.
 4. TDC Members and the Putting Passengers First LMEG have been briefed on the updated development of Cross-City bus routes. Find out more at 4, Appendix 2.
- 5.6 The Committee and/or Lead Members, have led on, and participated in, activities involving the public and interest groups, such as:

- Bus Passenger Champions
- West Midlands Pensioners' Convention
- Bus Users UK and WM

6 Considerations for 2023/24

6.1 Network Stability and Passenger Information provision remain at the forefront of delivery of the bus network, with work ongoing regarding network performance.

6.2 The West Midlands Bus Passenger's Charter has been launched, in connection with the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and sets out what passengers can expect from bus operators and local transport authorities in the area. The link to this can be found here:

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/gwxctgy1/bus-passenger-charter-v06-digital.pdf>

6.3 On 3rd July 2023, a "Bonfire of Bus Tickets" took place, which saw individual operator return and day ticketing being phased out, in favour of the multi-operator nBus ticket, valid on most operators in the West Midlands. This provides a benefit to passengers who use more than one operator or have a choice of operators, without the premium associated with the previous multi-operator ticket. More information is available here:

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/campaigns/any-bus-any-day-any-time/changes-to-bus-tickets-from-monday-3-july-2023/>

6.4 The Station Retail Reform Consultation, which involved the proposals regarding ticket offices, is currently ongoing and expected to report back shortly. Reference to this can be found in Appendix 2, 17-20.

6.5 Work is ongoing around the establishment of a new target operating model for Ring and Ride, as part of a wider service transformation. This includes the procurement process regarding an operator for the service, with a greater emphasis around providing the social value that we know underpins the service, and a much closer partnership approach between TfWM, the technology provider and the operator. It is anticipated that new contract requirements, based around this, will be implemented by the start of 2025.

7 Further Information

7.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority Annual Plan sets out what the WMCA will deliver during the financial year, and the links it makes to the range of regional policy, strategy and delivery plans that articulate the action the WMCA deliver and support to make further progress towards the vision of a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

7.2 The Annual Plan for 2023-2024 can be found here:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s11709/WMCA%202023-24%20Annual%20Business%20Plan%20230623.pdf>

7.3 Agendas and reports considered by the Transport Delivery Committee and all WMCA committees can be found here:

<https://governance.wmca.org.uk/mqListCommittees.aspx?bcr=1>

7.4 Please visit the following to report problems and views:

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/get-help/>

It will signpost you to public transport operators for all modes. Please scroll down all the boxes for directions for enquiries about stations and stops, ticketing, concessionary passes, safer travel issues etc. Please share the information with your constituents, and please let me know if I can be of help as I will be happy to follow up any issues.

8 Options considered and Recommended Proposal

8.1 There are no options to be considered.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this report.

10 Financial Implications

10.1 There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

11 Background Papers

11.1 There are no background papers for this report.

12 Appendices

12.1 Appendix 1 – Commonwealth Games Press Release – 10th August 2022

12.2 Appendix 2 – Progress on Large Capital Projects in Birmingham
(updated by the relevant project teams)

Appendix 1 - Commonwealth Games Press Release – 10th August 2022

Source: <https://www.wmca.org.uk/news/west-midlands-public-transport-hits-record-numbers-throughout-commonwealth-games/> (Published: Wednesday 10 Aug 2022)

West Midlands’ public transport hits record numbers throughout Commonwealth Games

Spectators, residents, and visitors to the West Midlands helped the region’s public transport network reach record numbers during the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.

Local train, tram, cycle, and bus travel all saw record breaking numbers across the eleven days as hundreds of thousands of sports fans made their way around the region.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), working with transport operators and local authorities, developed, delivered and coordinated transport services for spectators throughout the Games, including running some 600 shuttle buses to and from venues across the region.



Photo: Shuttle buses line up on Smallbrook Queensway

Records included:

- More than 650,000 spectator journeys on shuttle buses.
- Birmingham New Street recording its busiest day since opening, with over 255,000 passengers travelling through the station on Saturday August 6.

- The West Midlands Metro patronage doubling its pre-covid numbers.
- West Midlands Cycle Hire doubling the number of bike and e-bike rentals with 28,000 hires during the Commonwealth Games.
- 64,910 parking spaces being booked through the park and ride service across the region throughout the Games, serving approximately 179,800 spectators.

Thousands also made use of regular local bus, rail and tram services which was included with their spectator tickets and staff and volunteer accreditation.

These records were broken because all event ticket holders had public transport included in their ticket price as part of the Commonwealth Games Transport Plan. This was agreed by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board in June 2021 and helped to make Birmingham 2022 a greener Games.

The focus on public transport and shuttle buses meant that private car use and traffic congestion was kept to an absolute minimum throughout.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands and chair of the WMCA, said: “As we reflect on the phenomenal success of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, it’s only right that we take a moment to appreciate all the work that has been done to manage the record numbers of people visiting our region.

“It has been a remarkable team effort to get fans to and from sporting events right across the West Midlands so I’d like to say a huge thank you and well done to everyone involved in keeping the system moving.

“Thousands of volunteers have offered visitors a warm welcome to the West Midlands – pointing guests in the right direction as they navigated festivities – so congratulations to all of them on all they’ve done over the last couple of weeks.

“Beyond the volunteers, I’m extremely grateful to all the staff on our buses, trains, trams and car parks who have in their own unique way played a vital role in ensuring people made it to events across the region safely and on time.”

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, said: “The transport system has played a crucial part in what has been a fantastic Commonwealth Games for Birmingham and the West Midlands – a once in a lifetime event enjoyed by all.

“It is testament to the planning and delivery of our services that both public transport and our road network was by and large kept moving throughout the eleven days of action.

“It shows what can be achieved through affordable public transport and I hope that many of those who took the opportunity to try our buses, trains, trams and cycle hire will keep on using them, or use their cars a little less, and leave a real green legacy from these Games.”

Appendix 2 - Progress on Large Capital Projects in Birmingham

1. Rail Update

(provided by West Midlands Rail Executive Team)

University Station



1. Following the completion of the Stage 1 opening (for the Commonwealth Games), the position on Stage 2 has now been reviewed and monitored closely to ensure that a robust Stage 2 programme is in place. A baseline position for Stage 2 opening in Autumn 2023 has been adopted which is in line with best practice recommended by the National Audit Office and others.
2. Workshops has been held with key stakeholders and discussions are ongoing to agree a programme for completion. In terms of physical works, progress continues with the installation of wayfinding tactiles inside the pavilion buildings.
3. The Project was able to demonstrate compliance to the Independent Assessor on 6th September which received positive feedback, however, there are some elements of work to be completed to demonstrate full compliance.
4. Whilst station opening differs from what is set out in the FBC, we are confident that this will not detract from the long-term legacy of the station which will serve the West Midlands for decades to come, and the benefits that are already being delivered.

Perry Barr Station and Bus Interchange



5. Perry Barr Station opened on time and on budget in May 2022 and work continues to support the final handover of the station. This includes closing out the few remaining snagging items and settling the final account.

Camp Hill Line Connectivity



6. Construction on the Camp Hill Line continues to progress at pace with the current completion date for Dec 24 still being maintained.
7. A refresh of the Economic Case by Jacobs was carried out to bring it up to date in line with the updated DfT WebTAG guidance which takes into account post COVID

demand analysis. This has demonstrated that the scheme still offers very high value for money.

8. The project team is in continued negotiations with NR for increased possessions & access over weekend & evenings to try & improve on the programme.

December 2022 and May 2023 Timetable Changes

9. Significant timetable changes were implemented on the West Coast Main Line in December 2022, creating a regular 30-minute pattern service on the Birmingham to Coventry line. This included creating a half-hourly Birmingham International to Rugeley Trent Valley service which serves Lea Hall, Stechford and Adderley Park stations. The timetable structure has been designed to support the provision of a half-hourly Avanti West Coast fast service between Birmingham New St, Birmingham International, Coventry and London, supplemented by an hourly slower service that calls additionally at Rugby, Milton Keynes and Watford Junction. The full service of three trains per hour currently only operates at peak times, but WMRE is pressing for this to be introduced all day as soon as possible.
10. In May 2023 a new timetable was introduced on the Snow Hill lines which moved the timetable onto a regular 30-minute pattern removing some of the 40-minute gaps that previously existed at stations like Acocks Green and Hall Green. Small Heath and Tyseley stations also saw their service improve from two to three trains per hour. Performance on the Snow Hill lines has seen a big improvement following the introduction of the new timetable.
11. WMRE played a key role in developing both the December 2022 and May 2023 timetables, bringing together all the train operators and Network Rail in order to create a coherent overall service for passengers. WMRE will continue to work with all operators in the development of future timetables, recognising that the challenging industry financial position may mean that delivery of service improvements may be difficult to achieve in the short-term.

Great British Railways

12. Despite the Secretary of State's commitment to GBR at the Bradshaw Address in February, the government has been unable to commit to GBR legislation in the next King's Speech, due in autumn 2023, and instead there have been warnings that the session is "likely to be congested" and that, on GBR specifically, "much can be achieved without legislation". The government's stated position remains that it is committed to the formation of GBR and that it will bring forth the required legislation "when parliamentary time allows".

13. The Great British Railways Transition Team (GBRTT)'s planning assumption on the legislation has recently updated to an assumption that there will be no legislation in the next parliamentary session. It is therefore likely to be the case that there will be at least one "interim state" that the new GBR organisation will need to go through before it reaches its final form. The exact shape of this interim state is currently being worked through; timelines associated with this are also not known at present.
14. Despite the wider uncertainty, we continue to make progress on a partnership agreement between West Midlands Rail Executive and GBRTT. The beginning of August saw our Partnership Oversight Group (POG) established in shadow form. This will be the most senior joint forum between GBRTT and WMRE; it will enable joint oversight of the partnership as it develops to:
 - A. Deliver the Trailblazer Deeper Devolution Deal commitments;
 - B. Focus on early deliverables, that is tangible outcomes that the partnership can deliver in its early phases; and
 - C. Cover all required areas to make sure that WMRE's influence is enhanced and that increased local accountability is delivered for the West Midlands over its rail services

Industrial Action

15. Industrial action continues to feature across the UK rail network. The RMT (who primarily represent train guards) and ASLEF (who primarily represent train drivers) remain in dispute with the train operating companies over pay, terms and conditions and fears of redundancies.
16. As outlined, industrial action in recent months has impacted operational performance and slowed the roll out of planned improvements. These events have had a significant impact on rail services in the region with no services operating. This has been part of a co-ordinated national approach and impacted 14 train operators, including West Midlands Trains. Progress in resolving the dispute is unclear and may be further complicated by the industry-wide station retail reform proposals (which proposes changes to ways of working in/around ticket offices – see below), which is likely to be of particular interest the RMT and its members.

Station Retail Reform Consultation

17. In July individual train operators and their industry body the Rail Delivery Group announced a series of individual company consultations on proposals to close the majority of rail station ticket offices in England.
18. The consultation period ran until on 1 September, having been extended by five weeks from the original deadline of 26 July. Approximately 718,000 responses were received

by independent passenger watchdogs Passenger Focus and London TravelWatch, which is a record for a rail industry consultation (and potentially for any public policy consultation).

19. Transport Focus and London TravelWatch have been given an extension to the time available to them to analyse the consultation responses. Their conclusions are now expected by 31 October. They will publish the response to each train operator's proposals online, with an overview of the number of responses received, and the main issues raised in the consultation.
20. If either watchdog objects, the train operator in question can refer its proposal to the Secretary of State for a final decision. It is unclear from the guidance how long the Secretary of State will need to make any determination. WMRE are actively engaging with the DfT in an attempt to improve our visibility of the Department's Work Force Reform policy team.

HS2

21. On 4 October 2023 the Prime Minister announced the cancellation of HS2 north of the West Midlands with immediate effect. A separate briefing note has been provided, but the key points are:
 - HS2 Phase1 will be completed in full from:
 - both Euston (Central London) and Old Oak Common (Elizabeth Line connections)to
 - the West Midlands stations at Interchange (NEC/Airport/Arden Cross) and Curzon St as well as to the junction with the West Coast Main Line at Handsacre (north of Lichfield)
 - Euston HS2 Station has been reported to be still subject to securing private finance and a new development company, separate from HS2 Ltd, will manage now the delivery of Euston and aims to deliver 10,000 new homes surrounding the station
 - The other proposed sections of HS2 will be scrapped with immediate effect
 - HS2 Phase 2a (Handsacre to Crewe)
 - HS2 Phase 2b (Crewe to Manchester)
 - HS2 East (West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway and Midland Main Line)
 - In addition, all current safeguarding currently in place for these HS2 sections (primarily Phase 2a) will be removed and land purchased by HS2 Ltd will be resold

This will make it extremely difficult to ever extend HS2 in future should it be required

- Work on already announced on alternatives to previous scrapped sections of HS2 is also expected to be abandoned
 - Crewe to Wigan (HS2 West Coast Main Line connection towards Cumbria/Scotland)
 - East Midlands to Leeds/York (HS2 East Coast Main Line connection towards North East England)
- The remaining Phase 1 section of HS2 will have significantly reduced capacity because:
 - the number of HS2 platforms at Euston will be further reduced from 10 to 6 (with the remaining Euston site used to provide “1000s of new homes”)
 - the Handsacre Junction connection to the West Coast Main Line is only designed to cater for a small number of HS2 services from London to the Stafford/Stoke, the North West and Scotland
 - Handsacre is also located immediately to the south east of an existing capacity constrained junction at Colwich where the 4 WCML tracks diverge into two track sections toward Stafford and Stoke
 - plans for most HS2 services to the North West and Scotland (including from Birmingham Curzon Station) were dependent on the capacity provided by the HS2 sections to Crewe and Manchester

22. The principal outcomes of these changes for HS2 services are:

- Curzon and Interchange stations should get three trains per hour (up to 400m in length) to both Old Oak Common and London Euston
- A limited number of HS2 services (possibly up to 6 per hour - TBC) will operate from London to Manchester and other destinations in North West and Scotland
- These trains are likely to be restricted to 200m (with less capacity than the current Pendolino trains) unless platforms at existing stations can be extended
- There is unlikely to be any possibility of (or benefits from) HS2 services to the north from either of our two West Midlands stations as trains passing through Interchange will have no capacity, whilst there will be limited journey time savings (or capacity) for HS2 trains from Curzon station via Handsacre
- Stafford, Stoke-on-Trent and Macclesfield are also highly unlikely to get their dedicated HS2 service as the limited Handsacre Junction capacity is

likely to be prioritised for long distance services to Manchester, Liverpool and Scotland

23. As a result of the above there is likely to be:
- a. significant unused platform capacity at Interchange and Birmingham Curzon stations
 - b. no or very limited use for the “delta junction” chord connecting Birmingham Curzon to the HS2 line to Handsacre
 - c. a reduction in HS2 fleet size based at Washwood Heath maintenance site which could result in further descoping of these elements of HS2
24. The impacts of HS2 no longer releasing capacity on the West Coast Main line between the West Midlands and Crewe/Manchester (whilst also causing now causing additional congestion at Handsacre) have not been defined but are likely to include:
- no additional WCML freight services north of Birmingham
 - no additional local trains between
 - Birmingham – Wolverhampton
 - Birmingham – Walsall – Cannock – Stafford
 - no additional fast or semi-fast London trains at Lichfield, Tamworth or Nuneaton (including the proposed new Trent Valley line service via Coventry)
 - no/limited improvements to existing services between the West Midlands and Manchester/Liverpool/Scotland
 - more difficult to deliver new stations on WCML routes (e.g. Meecebrook)

Midlands Rail Hub (MRH)

25. Although a formal “Decision to Develop” the Full Business Case of Midlands Rail Hub “West and Central” is still awaited, the Prime Minister has announced that MRH will be completed in full with £1.75bn allocated as part of the new “Network North” proposals.
26. Details are still to emerge but, with HS2 East now scrapped, it is expected that the Birmingham to East Midlands part of MRH will revert to delivering service enhancements to Tamworth, Derby and Nottingham as well as to Nuneaton and Leicester.
27. To support the MRH project, WMRE/TfWM has undertaken studies in partnership with Birmingham City Council, Network Rail, DfT and Midlands Connect looking at the case for closing Bordesley station and potential mitigations for users. Closing

Bordesley station, which has one train per week apart from on football days at St Andrews, is an essential enabler to deliver the new Bordesley chord lines.

28. A public consultation exercise on the MRH project is likely to follow the recent funding announcement, and this will include reference to the need to close Bordesley station.

West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy

29. The final version of the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy has been published on the WMRE website alongside a summary report on the consultation. The publication was accompanied by a press release and emails to stakeholders. Reaction to the RIS has been positive and it now provides the basis for working with the rail industry over delivering on our strategic priorities.
30. However, our strategy (along with those of Network Rail and Midlands Connect) was predicated in large part on the assumption that the recently scrapped sections of HS2 would have been built.
31. Unless there is any further HS2 policy change, the RIS and similar rail strategies will need to be completely revised. In the meantime, WMRE is liaising with Network Rail, DfT and Midlands Connect to identify any urgent changes required to previous proposals which need to be addressed in the short term.

2. Sprint Update

(provided by TfWM Delivery Team)

About Sprint

Sprint is a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) scheme which will help reduce traffic congestion and give people an alternative to driving. It will make it easier to get the bus and reduce journey times. Sprint will also help us tackle climate change. We want our region to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2041. Sprint is part of our #WM2041 climate action plan.

General Update

The priority corridor links Walsall to Solihull and Birmingham Airport via Birmingham City Centre, along the A34 and A45. It will be delivered in two phases, with Phase 1 construction work being completed prior to the Commonwealth Games.

Phase 2 was included as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), with the Full Business Case being approved by WMCA Board in March 2022. Work on detailed design for Phase 2 continues with construction expected to commence in late 2023 subject to design approval from local authorities. Phase 2 has been split into 5 packages of work:

Package E – A34 (Birmingham and Sandwell)

Package F – A45/B425 Solihull

Package G – A34 Walsall

Package H – A45 Birmingham

Package J – Birmingham City Centre

Local engagement has been undertaken for each of these packages.

The A456 Hagley Road works are being led by the Midland Metro Alliance.

Shelters

All Phase 1 Sprint shelters have now been installed and are in use. 67 shelters have been delivered as part of this phase, and these include CCTV, enhanced real time information, and upgraded seating. Early user testing has shown a 98% satisfaction rate with the upgraded shelters.

A further 31 shelters are being delivered as part of Phase 2.

A34 Birmingham City Centre to Walsall

The main Phase 1 A34 construction works have been completed, this includes 4km of new bus lanes, signal upgrades, and traffic signal upgrades. These are already delivering journey time benefits for all bus services on the A34, with bus journey times reduced by up to 15% in peak times and variability reducing by 31%.

A45 Sprint to Solihull

The main Phase 1 A45 construction works have now been completed, this includes 7km of new bus lanes, signal upgrades, and traffic signal upgrades. There are already journey time benefits for all bus services on the A45, particularly the X1 and X2 which have had journey times reduced by up to 22% in peak times and variability reducing by 35%.

Operator and Enhanced Partnership

Bus services operating on the Sprint corridors are primarily commercial services usually operating without subsidy (excluding current COVID-19 specific challenges). An Enhanced Partnership Scheme has been 'made' that covers the corridor and requires enhanced standards of bus vehicle provision with more exacting requirements as years go by. It is expected that National Express West Midlands will be operating cross city services on the Walsall to Solihull route when the impact of Metro works in the Birmingham City Centre area is reduced.

3. Metro Works in Birmingham (provided by TfWM Metro Team)

Westside

In September 2023 we undertook some snagging works along Broad Street during full time closure, where there was no vehicle access, including public transport during this period. The pedestrian crossings were repaired with a brushed coat aggregate finish. Other works included, the installation of the OLE tails, EMC testing and cable testing. In collaboration with Birmingham City Council we were able to complete the installation of the ANPR cameras.

The red route TRO was successfully sealed on the 14 September 2023. The works on side streets along Broad Street are under a temporary traffic order and we are looking to go out to consultation in October 2023 to make the measures become permanent. We are in discussions with BCC about their plans to retain the bus diversion routes for some services and currently reviewing the designs and costs associated to this.

Eastside

Section 1

Lower Bull Street opened to buses at the end of July 2023. All construction works are now complete, including the installation of the rails. Handover walks have now been completed with BCC and minor snagging works to take place.

Traffic regulation discussions continue with BCC and MMA, looking to advertise and go to consultation with the TRO later this year. King's Parade demolition works have now been completed, backfilling of the site is now completed. Hoarding around the site remains in place.

Sections 2-4

We are continuing with our internal governance to carry out design review due to very high pressure on budgets, so any decisions will need to be balance the advantage they bring against cost implications. Dates for when the works will commence are still to be confirmed.

Utility works are continuing around the Clayton Hotel area, but we have encountered delays due human remains in this area. Other utility diversion works within the area are progressing and are likely to be completed by the end of the year 2023.

Meriden Street carriageway tie in works will be open in early October 2023 which will be a welcome relief for local businesses and residents in this area.

Section 5

All of the urban realm works on the north side is complete and the planters have been filled with soil. Footpath works have also now complete. the northern carriageway is now open to traffic and all the side roads on the north side will be opened up to traffic.

We are currently completing the installation of track drainage across Digbeth High Street on the south side, this will then be followed by the track installation. Urban realm works continue on the south and central reservation of the High Street. Works on Digbeth High Street are due to be completed by the end of 2023.

Operations

Throughout 2022/23 there have been a number of improvements to timetable with a 10-minute daytime headway introduced between Wolverhampton and Edgbaston Village just before Christmas 2022. Patronage numbers have improved further over the year. The 3 new stops opened as part of the Edgbaston Extension are now accounting for 9% of passenger journeys on the network. Throughout the year a new fleet of CAF trams with only 2 vehicles still to arrive. The introduction of this fleet has allowed us to continue the repair of the existing fleet, with works carried out at Dudley's Very Light Rail centre. A further tranche of vehicle repair works are planned to commence in November.

On the 17 September 2023 the Wolverhampton Extension opened with services now operating to 2 additional stops at Pipers Row and Wolverhampton station. A further timetable change is planned once works at Wolverhampton St. Georges are completed allowing both termini to be used. It is currently planned that following the re-opening of St. Georges there will be a 7/8minute headway on the section of route between The Royal and Edgbaston with a 15-minute service from each termini.

4. Birmingham's Cross-City Bus Programme (provided by TfWM Network Transformation Team)

This is an overview and update on the Birmingham Cross City Bus Priority Interventions currently being development and implemented by TfWM in partnership with Birmingham City Council and local Bus Operators.

Background

Buses are an affordable, accessible transport choice, with the ability to reduce congestion and improve air quality and bring economic benefits to the places they serve.

In the West Midlands, the Government, through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (CRSTS/A better deal for Bus Users), has provided over £90 million to fund prioritised bus priority measures that have been identified as necessary. The overall package will

benefit almost 90 million passenger journeys per year, providing approximately 25 km of new bus lanes, more bus only roads and enhancements to multiple junctions and many bus stops.

Cross City

Transport for West Midlands along with our transport colleagues within Sandwell, Dudley and Birmingham City Councils are working together on a number of proposed schemes that aim to open new and direct bus links in and around Birmingham City Centre. These interventions are designed to complement and further improve public transport connectivity with the Sprint (Bus Rapid Transit in the West Midlands), Metro and Rail networks.

Programme

Phase 1

- City Centre (Margaret Street, Newhall Street) – Works Ongoing
- Balsall Heath (Alcester Rd) – Q1 2023 – Works Completed

These projects have completed Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Consultation and have been constructed, or are in construction.

Phase 2

Anticipated Construction 2023/4

- Birmingham City Centre (Summer Hill) – Works scheduled commence early 2024

Potential early works on Washwood Heath Rd – To assist with HS2 works mitigation – early 2024.

Future Phases

Package 1 – City Centre

Future works are being planned for the City Centre [various stages of development, construction timing dependent on other schemes]

Package 2 – Longbridge to Hamstead via Pershore Rd

Developing and testing proposals, Outline Business Case in development - construction anticipated 2026.

Package 3 – Dudley to Druids Heath

Public Consultation for A435 improvements completed, design updates ongoing – construction anticipated 2025/6.

Public Consultation for A461/A4123 Burnt Tree Island (Dudley / Sandwell MBC) completed, design ongoing including integration with active travel schemes – construction anticipated 2024/2025.

Public Consultation for remaining package 3 elements (Dudley Rd, Cape Hill, Oldbury) expected Q4 2023/A1 2024. – construction anticipated 2025/6

Package 4 – Longbridge to Castle Vale via Bristol Rd

Public Consultation expected Q1 2024 – construction anticipated 2026

Package 5 – Harborne to Chelmsley Wood via Washwood Heath Rd

Public Consultation expected Q2 2024 – construction anticipated 2026

Package 6 – West Bromwich to Chelmsley Wood via the Meadway

Public Consultation expected Q1 2024 – construction anticipated 2026