

# Birmingham City Council

## City Council

1 November 2022



**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 (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) is one of the thematic Boards/Committees under the formal WMCA Board.
- 1.2 TDC provides political oversight and engagement on strategic transport priorities of the WMCA and its transport delivery arm, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). This includes monitoring and challenging the delivery of TfWM capital programmes. The committee also has oversight of the operational activities of the WM Transport Authority and receives regular updates and reports across the various portfolios. Members actively participate in liaison with partners, including bus, rail and Metro operators, and with passengers' and interest groups.
- 1.3 Councillor Kath Hartley (Labour, Birmingham) was the BCC Lead Member and Chair of the WMCA TDC for the 2021-2022 municipal year. Councillor Hartley stood down from these roles at the end of the 2021 municipal year. Councillor Mary Locke (Labour, Birmingham) became the BCC Lead Member role for 2022-2023 municipal year. TDC Vice-chairs for 2021-2022 were Councillor Richard Worrall (Labour, Walsall) and Councillor Timothy Huxtable (Conservative, Birmingham). 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 are 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 2021-22 were:

- Councillor Kath Hartley (Labour) BCC Lead Member
- Councillor Chaman Lal (Labour)
- Councillor Mohammed Fazal (Labour)
- Councillor Mohammed Idrees (Labour)
- Councillor Timothy Huxtable (Conservative)
- Councillor Robert Alden (Conservative)
- Councillor Ziaul Islam MBE (Labour)
- Councillor Morriam Jan (Liberal Democrat)

Councillor Mary Locke (Labour), Councillor Zaker Choudhry (Liberal Democratic), Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Labour), Councillor Narinder Kaur Kooner (Labour) and Councillor Saddock Miah (Labour) joined the committee for the 2022-2023 municipal year, replacing Councillor Chaman Lal, Councillor Mohammed Fazal, Councillor Mohammed Idrees, Councillor Ziaul Islam MBE and Councillor Morriam Jan.

## **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 new Lead Member on the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee at the end of another very difficult and challenging year for the public and for everybody involved in the delivery of public transport services.

3.2 I would, firstly, like to thank Councillor Kath Hartley (Labour) for her commitment and dedication to public transport in Birmingham and the West Midlands for over 18 years, most recently as Chair of the WMCA TDC and as Lead Member. She has been an excellent advisor and advocate for Public Transport, and a much-valued colleague and mentor. I believe that transport in Birmingham is ultimately in a better position as a result of her tireless devotion.

3.3 I would also like to thank the TDC members for their work through 2021-2022 municipal year and I extend my thanks to those that have left committee. I would also like to pay tribute to the late Councillor Mohammed Fazal who sadly passed away in March 2022, for his commitment to the TDC during his time on the

committee, and to the late Councillor Mohammed Azim, who sadly passed away in August 2022 and was involved with previous TfWM committees.

- 3.4 I thank those members who are continuing to serve on the TDC, and I welcome those new members to TDC as they join me in carrying out our responsibilities to ensure that Birmingham, as the region's largest and most strategic city, 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.
- 3.5 We have had a very challenging year as we have seen the changes to the Public Transport network as we emerged from the COVID-19 pandemic. Patronage has not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, and there have been numerous challenges in delivering the networks. I would like to thank all those who have worked tirelessly within Birmingham City Council, TfWM transport user groups and our transport partners to maintain and rebuild the transport network through the challenges.
- 3.6 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 Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. 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.
- 3.7 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, overwhelmingly around bus services and infrastructure and Covid safety issues.
  - 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.
- 3.8 First of all, I will detail what the TDC has been doing since Councillor Hartley's report of September 2021, and I will then provide some key highlights.

## **4 The Committee's Business 2021-2022**

4.1 The WMCA TDC held 6 meetings in 2021/22, the meetings were held on-line via Microsoft Teams because of the Covid-19 pandemic until July 2021, when we started hybrid meetings, with numbers of attendees initially limited because of room restrictions at WMCA, Summer Lane.

4.2 The committee had 6 Lead Member Engagement Groups (LMEG) for 2021/22:

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

The groups enable TDC Members to focus more closely on key TfWM areas of work than is the case in full committee meetings. The LMRG's initially met via Teams and then moved to hybrid and in-person meetings from Autumn 2021.

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. This has been especially important in the Covid-19 emergency with its impacts on normal business and critical capital projects, over and above the pre-existing risk factors.

4.4 Items considered by the committee during 2021/22 included:

- Covid Recovery (July, Sept, Nov, Jan)
- Rail Business including new station projects (July)
- Bus Business including infrastructure (July, Sept)
- WM Cycling Charter Updates (July, Sept)
- Active Travel Fund Schemes update (July)
- West Midlands Railway – Direct Award (National Rail Contract) (July, Jan)
- Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail (July, Jan)
- Sprint schemes – current A34 and A45 and upcoming A456 Hagley Rd (July)
- West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan (Sept)

- Metro Operations Monitoring (Sept, Nov)
- Swift Delivery Monitoring (Sept, Nov)
- National Express Travel Shop closures (Sept)
- Metro Zonal Ticketing (Nov)
- Zero Emission Bus Regional Area scheme (ZEBRA) (Nov, Jan)
- New Rail stations (Jan)
- Metro Operations Monitoring (Sept)
- Birmingham Cross-city bus project (Jan)
- West Midlands Bus Alliance (Jan)
- West Midlands Bus Partnership Services (Jan)
- Bus Driver Shortages (Jan)
- Tendered Bus Services (Jan)
- Bus Stop Infrastructure (Jan)
- ENV (Green-roofed) shelters (Jan)
- Park & Ride report (Jan)
- Demand Responsive Transport Coventry area trial (Jan)
- Safer Travel and Emergency Planning (Jan)
- Implementation of Bus Byelaws (Jan)
- AQPS and Enhanced Partnership (Jan)
- Ring and Ride (Jan)
- Commonwealth Games 2022 Transport Plan (Jan)
- Coventry Electric Bus City (Jan)
- Rail Freight Update (Jan)
- Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands – LTP engagement (Mar)
- University and Perry Barr Transport Interchanges (Mar)
- Bus Funding Update (Mar)
- TfWM Directorate Plan (Mar)

4.5 The Covid pandemic prevented planned and new site visits, network tours, attendance at the UK Bus Summit etc, from taking place.

- 4.6 Minutes of the committee are submitted to the WMCA Board. The TDC Chair attends 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 2021/22**

- 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 Covid-19 recovery, changes to bus service funding, the Commonwealth Games Transport Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) development, Sprint, Rail and Metro Capital Projects and development of an Enhanced Partnership

- 5.2 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. 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.

- 5.3 Updates regarding bus recovery funding have also been provided, including information relating to a formal confirmation of a further six months funding for Bus until October 2022, which also included additional funding for the West Midlands for support to the region during the Commonwealth Games.

- 5.4 The committee received regular updates on the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games Transport Plan (GTP). The GTP has been produced by Transport for West Midlands, in close collaboration with Birmingham City Council and the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee. There has also been continued close working with Local Authorities and key transport partners including Department for Transport, West Midlands Police and other host Local Authority venue partners The Commonwealth Games Transport Plan can be found here: <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/30vhr1zh/games-transport-plan-january-2022.pdf>

- 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 1:

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 1.
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 1).

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 1.
  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 1.
- 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 2022/23**

- 6.1 West Midlands bus fares are to be frozen at current levels until 2025 under a new plan agreed with operators to assist new and existing passengers with the cost of living. This means that people will be able to hop on and off the region's buses all day for the same price they would have paid in 2013 – currently £4.20 for a multi-operator day ticket.
- 6.2 From 1 January 2023, there will be a number of changes to bus services across the West Midlands. Many services will not be affected and will continue to operate as they do now. Some may see changes to timetables, routes and route numbers. A number of bus services will no longer be operating. These changes follow a number of bus routes being taken off by commercial bus operators. This is partly due to Government funding during the Covid-19 pandemic coming to an end, but also due to fewer people travelling than pre-Covid and the increased costs of running the bus services.

## **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 Transport Budget and Annual Plan is in Appendix A of the reports below:  
2021-2022 <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s5244/Report.pdf>  
2022-2023 <https://governance.wmca.org.uk/documents/s6530/Report.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/mgListCommittees.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 [West Midlands Police and Crime Plan 2021-2025](#)

## **12 Appendices**

12.1 Appendix 1 – Progress on Large Capital Projects in Birmingham.



## Appendix 1- Progress on Large Capital Projects in Birmingham

### 1. West Midlands Rail Programme update - Birmingham Projects

Safety performance across the Programme remains strong with a good rate of close call reporting across our projects.

Our collaborative approach to delivery was recognised in the National Rail Innovation Awards where we were winners of the 'Cross Industry Partnership' award.

#### University Station



- i. In July 2022 we successfully entered into service new, wider platforms with full length canopies, and new public realm to accommodate queuing. This was critical to enabling the safe use of University Station during the Games and, as with Perry Barr, we were delighted to play a part in the successful delivery of such a major international event.
- ii. The opening of this scope followed the decision in January 2022 to adopt a two-stage strategy for the delivery of University Station, in order to ensure that the station would be in a fit state for the Commonwealth Games. This also means that passengers are already enjoying substantial benefits from the platforms and canopies.
- iii. The delivery of Stage 1 was achieved despite wider economic and industry conditions which have posed significant challenges to delivery of capital projects, due to the availability of materials and other resources and which has had an impact on the wider project

- iv. Following the completion of the Stage 1 opening we reviewed the position on Stage 2 to ensure that we had a robust Stage 2 programme which could be delivered in the context of these wider challenges.
- v. We have now adopted a baseline position of Stage 2 opening in Spring 2023. Adopting a range for opening is in line with best practice recommended by the National Audit Office and others.
- vi. Whilst this is later than the August 2022 date 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**



- i. Perry Barr Station opened on time and on budget in May 2022.
- ii. The bus interchange opened shortly thereafter, in July 2022, in time for the Commonwealth Games. Perry Barr Transport Interchange as a whole played a key role in supporting the very successful transport strategy for the Games and we were pleased to see the successful performance on the new infrastructure.
- iii. Work is continuing on activities to support the final handover of the station, including legal agreements with Birmingham City Council and a number of technical issues raised by Network Rail.
- iv. As part of the close out of this project we are working to capture lessons learned that can be applied to future projects. This includes recognising successes

such as the collaboration with Network Rail which delivered platform improvements alongside the original scope.

### **Camp Hill Line Connectivity**

- i. We continue to target completion of the Camp Hill stations by the end of 2023.
- ii. Work is underway to set up sites and undertake early enabling works, with significant devegetation works planned to start in late October.
- iii. One of the key milestones in delivery is a nine-day rail blockade in February 2023. This is important to enable the delivery of substantial civil engineering activity. We are currently working closely with Network Rail to ensure that this can successfully be achieved.
- iv. To support delivery, we have also completed a peer review with Network Rail's Centre of Excellence which has engaged with partners across the programme. We believe we are one of the first non-Network Rail schemes to be reviewed in this way. We anticipate that this will help to identify both areas of improvement, and to highlight good practice that we will seek to repeat.

### **Great British Railways**

- i. Birmingham has been listed as one of six towns and cities shortlisted for to be the headquarters of Great British Railways (GBR). The other finalists are Newcastle, Derby, Crewe, Doncaster, and York. In late summer GBR held a non-binding public vote was held in parallel to the ministerial visits. The result of this vote will be used to measure the level of public support for each location and will be considered as part of final decision making. According to GBR, an announcement on the winning bidder will be made 'later in 2022'.
- ii. West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) are working with the GBR Transition Team (GBRTT) on plans for a future partnership between the two organisations. This would take as its starting point the existing powers over local rail held by WMRE. Talks are progressing, albeit slowly due to GBRTT needing to seek a renewed mandate following the changes in ministers at DfT.

- iii. The launch date for the partnership is linked to the wider GBR programme. On 19 October the Transport Secretary announced that the legislation needed to establish GBR would occur during the 23/24 parliamentary session, meaning that GBR is unlikely to be fully mobilised until 2025.

## **Industrial action and rail service delivery**

- i. It has been an eventful summer for rail service delivery across the region, with industrial action, extreme weather, major engineering works, and the Commonwealth Games all having an impact on the customer experience.
- ii. The Games were largely a success for the railways. Planning was coordinated by the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration (the rail equivalent of the Bus Alliance). The rebuilt Perry Barr station coped well with the spectator and workforce demand, whilst the expanded platforms at University proved invaluable. Staff were deployed in strength and customers welcomed the Games themed giveaways. The timetable was delivered for the most part, with a cable theft at Tyseley on 3 August the single most disruptive incident.
- iii. However, the underlying fragility of some operators' traincrew resources was exposed during the Games, with negative consequences for rail users. Avanti West Coast suffered many cancellations throughout the Games, after seeing a reduction in volunteers for Rest Day Work and overtime (something that has persisted into autumn).
- iv. WMT were one of three West Midlands train companies affected by strike action by the ASLEF union on Saturday 30 July (day 3 of the Games), the others being Chiltern Railways and CrossCountry Trains. Due to the several events taking place at the NEC that day, WMT managed to operate a shuttle service between Birmingham New Street and Birmingham International to help manage demand. This was crewed by driver managers. No other WMT, CrossCountry Trains or Chiltern Railways services were able to operate. TfWM implemented a contingency operation to mitigate the impact of the industrial action on games spectators.
- v. The 30 July was one of many days of strike action held to date by the RMT, ASLEF and TSSA unions. All three unions are in dispute with Network Rail and the train companies over pay, terms and conditions and fear of compulsory redundancies. At this time, it is unclear as to how these national disputes will be resolved.
- vi. July and August experienced some of the hottest weather on record. The extreme temperatures resulted in tracks buckling, overhead power wires sagging, and signals failing. In anticipation of disruption the rail industry had amended timetables and discouraged travel.

## **2. Sprint Update**

### **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. Phase 1 construction work was 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 Summer 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 will be undertaken for each of these packages before Spring 2023.

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. Overall, 67 shelters have been delivered, 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 will be delivered as part of Phase 2.

### **A34 Birmingham City Centre to Walsall**

The main Phase 1 A34 construction works have now complete, 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 complete, 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 Digbeth is reduced.

### 3. Metro Works in Birmingham

#### Westside

The Edgbaston extension was opened in July, just before the CWG. It has been a great success from a passenger point of view, with around 8% of all journeys starting from one of the 3 new stops. We anticipate that once the operational service can be stabilised after tram repairs and strikes are behind us, that this will provide a huge benefit for those living, working or going out in this sector of the City. Operationally there have been some issues with private hire cars and taxis stopping on Broad Street and blocking trams as they pick up or drop off. This may take a little time to settle down, but some short-term strengthening of enforcement measures may be necessary.

We do have some residual works to complete. The crossing on Black Sabbath bridge had to be replaced. This is now complete, taking advantage of the recent closure of Broad Street. The works on side streets along Broad Street are under a temporary traffic order which is now out to consultation to become permanent, and we are in discussions with BCC about their plans to retain the bus diversion routes for some services. Midland Metro Alliance have provided designs and costs, but the work may well be carried out by others. We also await decisions on Paradise Circus, but imagine that as the Alliance will no longer be working in this area, that that too will be carried out by others.

#### Eastside

After the CWG pause, works have continued strongly on the two sections under construction: Section 1 on Lower Bull Street, and Section 5 on Digbeth High Street.

On **Section 1** as we were not able to deliver the tracks in advance of the Games, we have switched our phasing to allow for the demolition of King's Parade block. Hoarding is now in place and works started. They will be fully complete in March 2023. This will enable other Section 2 works to proceed.

Whilst the hoarding is in place, taxis have moved from Dale End to Lower Bull St. The sooner they can return to Dale End the sooner we can get track installed and buses moving up Lower Bull St.

On **Section 5** almost all the high-quality urban realm on the north side is complete and the planters are starting to be filled with soil. On October 28th the new northern carriageway will be open to traffic and all the side roads on the north side will be opened up to traffic. This will be a welcome relief for local businesses and residents.

We have completed the track installation across Digbeth High Street, ready to start works on the south side, and means that once the current STW diversion works near Allison St are complete (planned for 18th November) the new carriageway along Digbeth High St will be open in both directions.

For **Sections 2-4** we have started a 10-week design review and finalisation period with BCC officers. This process will not be easy as there are conflicting design wishes and of course very high pressure on budgets, so any decisions will need to be balance the advantage they bring against cost implications.

In addition, we have the agreed with HS2 the access date for the Alliance to start construction 'under' the Curzon St viaduct. This will be January 2026, meaning that the full route will not open until 2027. We are investigating the interest and technical feasibility of opening a short section just to the Clayton Hotel in 2024.

## **Operations**

Tram operations have been maintained at a reduced level due to the repairs needed to the tram fleet. During the Games, despite the reduced fleet we actually carried greater numbers of passengers than before Covid – with one Saturday recording 200% of pre-Covid levels.

We had hoped to increase tram frequency in October as we had sufficient new trams and repaired trams to do so. Unfortunately, the strikes mean this was not possible.

In the first strike days we have managed to put out a sustainable 15-minute service from Wolverhampton to Bull Street, with an additional queue busting tram. Unfortunately, we do not have enough staff to increase this yet – either with greater frequency or extending to the full route. If, and when, we are able to do so with staff returning to work, we will do so. We have offered to go to ACAS to resolve the dispute

In October the first 2 trams needing repairs will go to Dudley VLR centre for repair by the manufacturer. This will hopefully lead to the last stage of tram repairs.



#### **4. Birmingham's Cross-City Bus Programme**

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, via the Better Deal for Bus Users, has provided over £20 million to fund the first tranche of prioritised bus priority measures that have been identified as necessary.

The overall package will benefit almost 90 million passenger journeys per year, providing 5 km of new bus only roads, 8 junction upgrades, 5 km of new bus lanes and 16 enhanced waiting facilities

The elements of the wider programme not included in phases 1 & 2 detailed in this note will be included in the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) submission to DfT in October.

##### **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**

Anticipated construction 2021/2022 – Q2 2023

- City Centre (Margaret Street, Snow Hill, Newhall Street)
- Balsall Heath (Alcester Rd) – Q1 2023

Public consultation and briefings to Cabinet Members, Ward Councillors and BID organisations have been undertaken. This has allowed progression of the above schemes to achieve Full Business Case Approval through Birmingham City Council's Governance process.

These projects are now awaiting Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) Consultation. It is important to note that Birmingham City Council resource for undertaking TRO Consultation is currently limited due to priority works centred around projects such as

Metro/Commonwealth Games. Further work is being undertaken to identify where TfWM can support and assist.

## **Phase 2**

### **Anticipated Construction 2023/4**

- Kings Heath (Alcester Road South)
- Birmingham City (Dudley Road, Summer Hill, Suffolk Street)
- Burnt Tree Island
- Cape Hill

The proposals are currently within the feasibility stages that includes traffic studies and surveys.

The survey results will provide us with a basis to draft the best design to consult on. Once the survey data is back, the ambition is to progress the draft designs public consultation in October 2021.

Business Cases are now being produced for further routes identified in the BSIP.