

Bus Service Improvement Plan

2024

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Section 1: Our Bus Vision

“A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission public transport system providing inclusive travel for all citizens across the West Midlands. With excellent customer service and simple payment and ticketing options, customers will be able to make easy and safe door-to-door journeys, benefiting from new innovative transport solutions that meets the needs of a modern and diverse 21st Century economy, reducing the reliance on private single occupancy car journeys.”

This prospectus sets out the West Midlands Combined Authority’s (WMCA) Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – to be delivered through our award-winning West Midlands Bus Alliance with Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), our local bus operators, safer travel partnership and our constituent Local Authorities.

The West Midlands is currently seeing one of the largest planned investments in fixed-line public transport infrastructure anywhere in the world, with £160 million on our first Sprint Bus Rapid Transit route and £1.05 billion through our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). This is in addition to HS2, which includes two new stations for our region. Ensuring buses are at the heart of an expanding integrated network will be critical and will boost the current bus ridership in support of the region’s economic development.



This BSIP sets out our plans for continued investment to level up the West Midlands.



We will have **Better Buses** to cut carbon dependency and be the fastest to a 100% zero emission bus fleet.



We will create **Better Journeys** to tackle congestion with a committed 14 km increase in bus priority, and a vision nearly 100km more, speeding up buses and making them reliable as part of a new cross-city and cross-regional bus network.



We have removed complication in ticketing to deliver **Better Fares**, simplifying our ticket range and keeping some of the lowest bus fares in England. We will jointly promote this passenger led growth and drive innovation with the introduction of an independent ticket sales team and contactless capping across the network.



We will expand our **Real Time Information** offering and provision of enhanced passenger information using smart phone technology and improving at stop passenger information at all bus stops in the West Midlands through innovative technology.



We will expand Our team of **Transport Safety Officers** to ensure that it is **Safe** to catch the bus on the network.

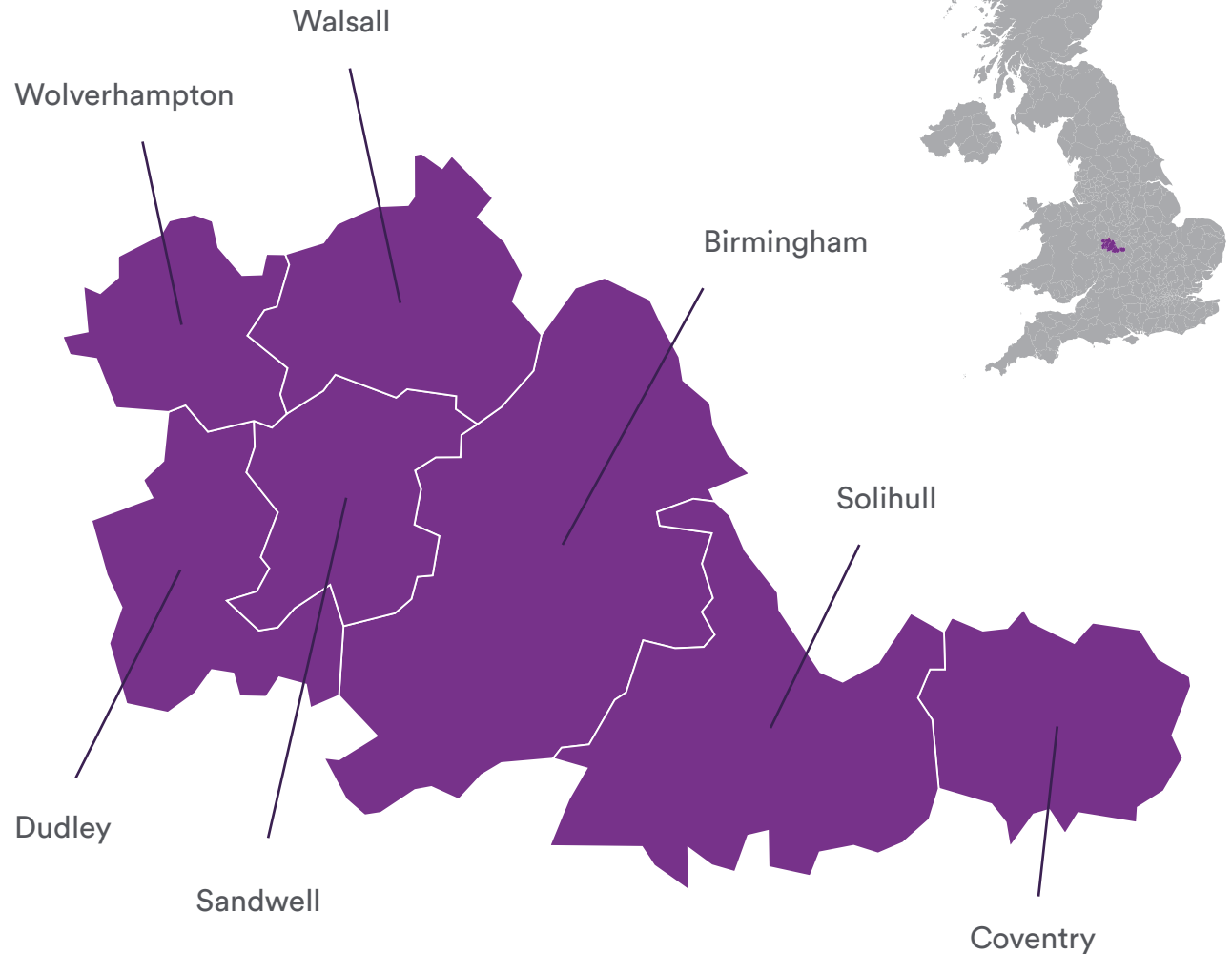
BSIP investment in the West Midlands, will provide a blueprint for how integrated urban transport systems should function and support inclusive economic growth and productivity. We are in a unique position to deliver this.

Economic context and the importance of Bus

This West Midlands BSIP covers the area of the WMCA, as defined in the WMCA Constitution. The WMCA as geographically defined is made up of the 7 constituent local authority areas of:

- Birmingham City Council
- Coventry City Council
- Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- The City of Wolverhampton Council

The WMCA has responsibility for working with the constituent local authorities to make the region a better place and is best placed to make the right decisions for the region and this area.



- The largest Mayoral Combined Authority in the country
- Home to over 3 million residents
- Supporting 92,335 businesses which employ 1.3 million people
- £76.3 billion GVA per annum
- 2.5% annual growth between 2010 – 2018
- 33% of residents are aged under 19
- 161,000 additional people by 2035
- 1700,00 additional homes by 2040
- Buses carried 4 of every 5 trips by public transport in the region pre-Covid
- Investing in buses in the West Midlands is an investment in levelling up our economy
- Buses are the integrator of our transport network and working collaboratively for a single integrated transport system is essential for the whole network to succeed.

Buses are crucial for those who lack access to a private vehicle, those on the lowest incomes, and for those living in the most deprived communities. The West Midlands

has some of the most deprived wards in England (19% of the West Midlands sits in the 10% most deprived areas in the UK) and circa 25% of residents do not have access to a car, with this increasing to 40% in some of our most deprived communities.

Strong transport connectivity is vital to the economic prosperity of our region, supporting the productivity and growth of our key strategic sectors, as well as providing our most deprived communities with improved access to economic opportunities.

- Largest bus network in England (outside London)
- 232 million boardings in 2023/2024
- Over 300 bus routes
- 2,000 buses
- 12 managed bus stations

The region's bus network has an indisputable, but often undervalued, role in our transport system. It reaches every corner of our region, providing an essential mobility service to access employment, education, leisure, and other key facilities as well as providing integration with other transport. Buses are the modern-day workhorse of our public transport system performing a key role in

serving low demand areas in the region and for specialised travel demand patterns from socially excluded groups.

Economic modelling research undertaken by Steer, on behalf of TfWM, found that the economic impact of the bus network in the West Midlands has a financial benefit of £288.6m per annum, showing its importance as an employer and investor in the local, regional, and national economy. Above and beyond this it is considered that the induced and catalytic impacts produce an additional financial impact of bus of up to £885.1m per annum. The same analysis shows that up to 17,500 jobs would be impacted by reduced bus connectivity.

Buses are going to be increasingly integral to supporting the local economy and achieving wider policy goals such as decarbonisation and supporting behavioural change. Bus will play a key role in supporting access to jobs, promoting inclusive economic growth, levelling up the region and helping to achieve #WM2041 environmental goals.

The bus network is flexible enough to adapt comparatively quickly to changing travel patterns and drive a change in travel demand, providing critical connections to jobs, housing and education, to Build Back Better.

Alignment with vision and policy

The West Midlands is well-placed to capitalise on the economic opportunity presented by further investment in our bus network through the BSIP and other funding programmes.

We have been developing a series of long-term strategic plans setting out our ambitions for sustainable and inclusive growth. These policy documents – including our Local Transport Plan (LTP), Strategic Vision for Bus, and #WM2041 goals – complement and build upon the wider bus policy agenda of Government as detailed in “Bus Back Better”.

National Bus Strategy for England “Bus Back Better” objectives are:

- **More frequent**, ‘turn-up-and-go’ services on major urban routes and feeder or demand-responsive services to lower density places.
- **Faster and more reliable services**, with bus priority wherever necessary and where there is room.

- **Cheaper**, with more low, flat fares in towns and cities, lower point-to-point fares elsewhere, and more daily price capping everywhere.
- **More Comprehensive**, with overprovision on a few corridors reduced to boost provision elsewhere and better services in the evenings and weekends, not necessarily with conventional buses.
- **Easier to understand**, with simpler routes, common numbering, co-ordinated timetable change dates, good publicity, and comprehensive, accurate information online.
- **Easier to use**, with common tickets, passes and daily capping across all operators, simpler fares, contactless payment and protection of bus stations.
- **Better integration with other modes and each other**, including more bus-rail interchange and integration and inter-bus transfers.
- **Better to ride in**, with comfortable, high specification, modern buses.

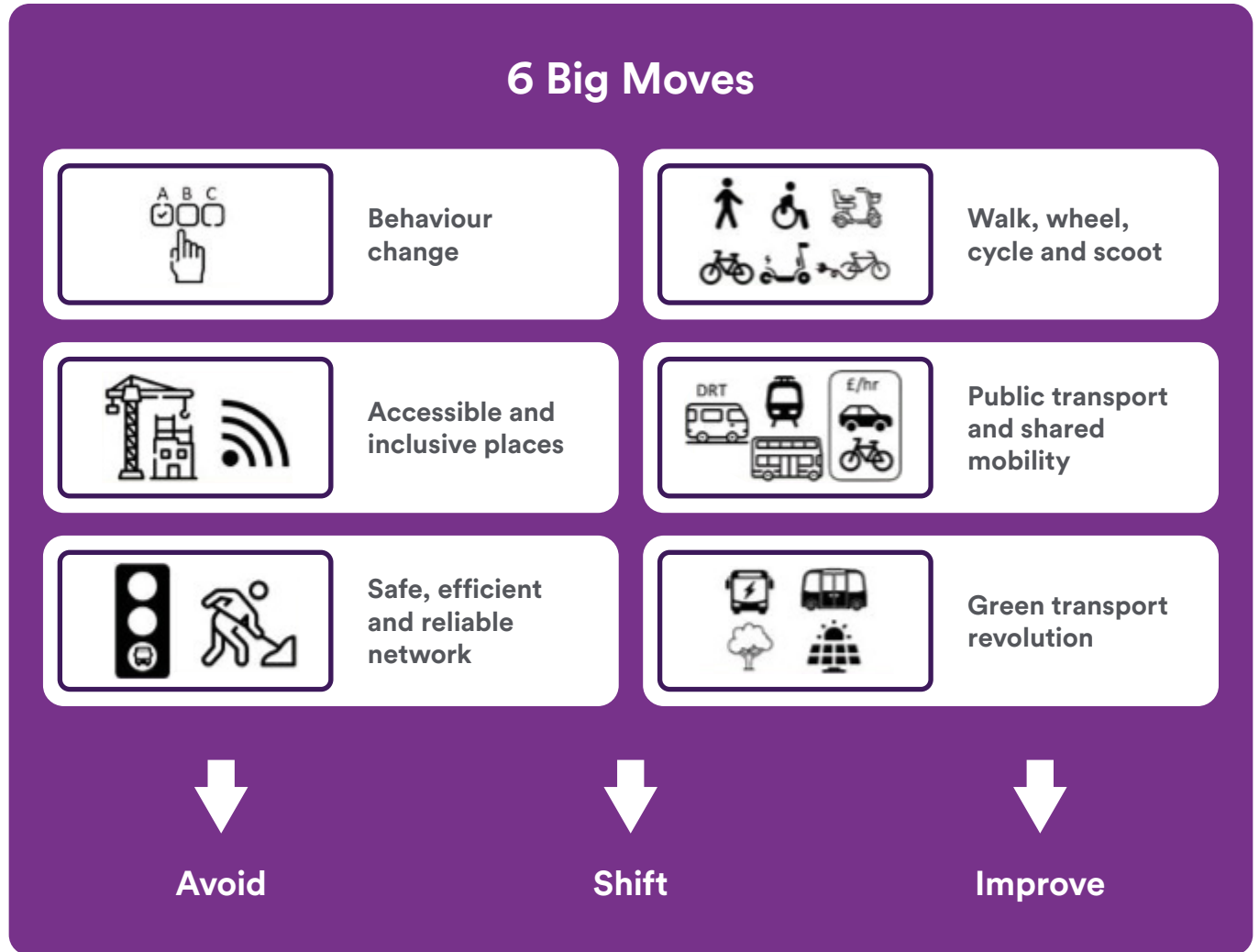
- **Greener, zero emission buses** (of carbon at the tailpipe)
- **Accessible and Inclusive network by design**, not only bus vehicles but bus stations, bus stops and access routes to bus stops.
- **Innovative, harnessing entrepreneurship to constantly strive for a better product.**
- **A safe mode of transport which is seen as safe**, addressing issues of personal safety and security on board and at stops as well as driver and vehicle safety standards.

The West Midlands BSIP, the regions Local Transport Plan and other policy directives is aligned to delivering these objectives.

Planning for the future: 'Reimagining transport in the West Midlands' Green Paper

Local Transport Plan - Core Strategy and Big Moves - The recently adopted West Midlands LTP Core Strategy proposes a new vision for travel in the West Midlands where people can thrive without having to drive or own a car. Through the 6 Big Moves, the LTP aims to create a fairer, greener, healthier, happier and more prosperous West Midlands, which is better connected and delivers on our #WM2041 carbon reduction pledges. The Big Moves also relate to the avoid, shift, improve framework of mobility and three key outcomes of Reduce traffic, improve accessibility and electrify the transport network.

Public Transport and Shared Mobility is the Big Move that sets out key roles for bus services and how best to deliver improvement. The ambition is to create a high quality and affordable public transport system of integrated networks (including fixed public transport services and demand responsive and shared services) linked by accessible and secure interchanges and promoted and branded as a single system.



The West Midlands seeks an integrated public transport and shared mobility system that plays its full and proper part in achieving a 45-minute region and 15 minute neighbourhoods without the need to use a car. To achieve this, the West Midlands will aim for a high quality integrated public transport system and complementary shared mobility services. The series of networks, integrated as one overall system, will help us improve performance against these success factors.

The Local Transport Plan governs all the region's proposed transport investment programmes. It is the policy building block to ensure that we deliver a single integrated transport programme for the West Midlands.

It also underpins the Deeper Devolution Deal finalised in 2023 and the Bus Delivery Options assessment being developed. The devolution deal provides a windfall in excess of £1.5 billion to level up the region, plus additional commitments such as the devolution of the Bus Service Operators Grant (BSOG). Devolution of payment of BSOG and long-term funding through the Single Settlement provides additional opportunities for WMCA to support the bus network and other public transport policies. The current timeline for the BSOG to be reformed and devolved for all services within the WMCA boundary is expected to be 2025.

The Deeper Devolution Deal also provided the WMCA with responsibilities for tackling anti-social behaviour on buses and the opportunity to develop a Sandbox use case for demand responsive transport services.

As a part of the Single Settlement funding, the CRSTS programmes are delivering integrated transport investment for the region. This will ensure our BSIP investment delivers for our region and key national priorities for economic growth and productivity, levelling-up and decarbonisation.

For some years transport funding has been subject to quick turn-around competitive and relatively small funding national funding pots. CRSTS, especially when viewed alongside Active Travel and Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, provides an opportunity to plan funded improvements to the transport system in a more integrated way over a more realistic delivery period. This will also aid resource planning, skills development, and retention of key delivery staff for all Local Authorities, as well as alignment with other key policy areas such as housing, environment and skills.

#WM2041

#WM2041 is our action plan for decarbonising the West Midlands in response to the pressing climate emergency and the ambition for the region to be carbon neutral by 2041. It calls for substantial investment of the order of £40bn over 21 years (2020-2041) and a 10-point strategy for decarbonising the region.

This BSIP will support several key pillars of this strategy, including encouraging modal shift from private vehicles to bus, reducing congestion and therefore emissions from idling vehicles, and decarbonising the bus fleet.



TfWM Vision for Bus

The objectives in this BSIP reflect the priorities set out in the Transport for West Midlands; Vision for Bus (VfB) which was published in 2018. The ambitious VfB was developed to ensure the delivery of a world-class integrated transport system, allowing convenient travel across the region by public transport that is affordable and accessible for all and reduces congestion on our roads. These objectives link directly to the National Bus Strategy, emerging LTP and wider City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) investment programme to underpin the policy direction for our BSIP.

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The Vision for Bus objectives:

1. Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
2. Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.
3. Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network.
4. Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options, including full capping, providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
5. Younger people supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
6. Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
7. World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
8. Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions.
9. UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving areas most affected by poor air quality.

Challenges in achieving our Vision for Bus

We have identified the critical challenges in terms of decarbonisation, congestion on a complex network and complicated ticketing. We want to tackle these and other challenges to deliver Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares. Only by doing this will we meet the long-term travel demands of passengers and increase patronage.

Through the strong Bus Alliance and Enhanced Partnership agreement with service providers, we were beginning to achieve increases in bus patronage to address the years of decline (falling by 2% year-on-year in the previous 10 years) before the pandemic hit in 2019/20. But there were challenges even before Covid; we have seen changing behaviour patterns (preferences to travel by car), increasing cost of bus fares relative to motoring costs, and declining service coverage (in part because of declining bus speeds) impact bus boardings.

Key external challenges impacting bus;

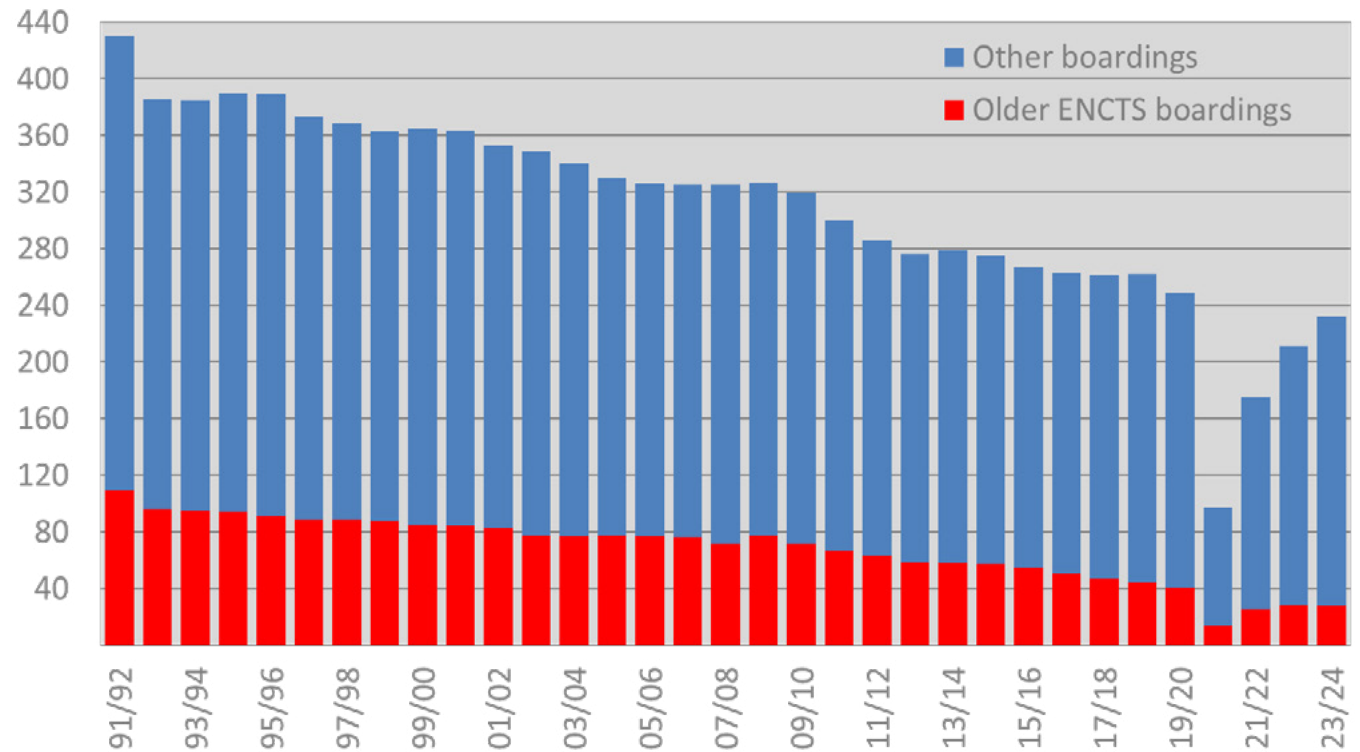
- A growing reliance on car travel - resulting in congestion and slower bus speeds.

- Loss of road-space to parking, re-development (especially in strategic centres), and other sustainable modes
- The decline in ENCTS trips, as the last generations of women who never drove are replaced by those that always have. Car driving license holders among more elderly residents (70 years and above) has increased dramatically across the UK, increasing from 33% in 1994 to 73% in 2022. Concessionary bus boarding has reduced from around 100 million in the 1990s to less than 30 million in 2022.
- Trips lost to telecoms; work from home, online deliveries, banking, healthcare, and other services moving online requiring fewer trips to be made. This has a negative impact on bus ridership but does support wider LTP objective of reducing overall traffic and vehicle kilometres.
- Rising bus fares relative to overall prices and to the costs of motoring
- Rising bus operating costs
- Shortages of drivers, engineering staff and other personnel to plan, administer and deliver bus services.
- Land-use changes leading to journeys being more dispersed.
- Accessibility and equality barriers

Growing Reliance on Cars

Despite our region's efforts to invest in sustainable transport alternatives, car mileage has significantly increased (by 6 billion miles) across the West Midlands over the last 25 years. The reliance on car travel not only results in congestion, poor air quality and negative consequences for our environment, but also contributes to declining health outcomes more broadly in the region by reducing the share of walking, cycling and public transport.

A preference for private vehicles over public transport is one of the key barriers for bus in the region. Car usage (measured by kilometres driven in the UK) increased by 15% between 1991 and 2017, whilst total bus kilometres operated in the WMCA region decreased by 3% during the same period. Car ownership in the West Midlands has also grown by around 1% per annum.

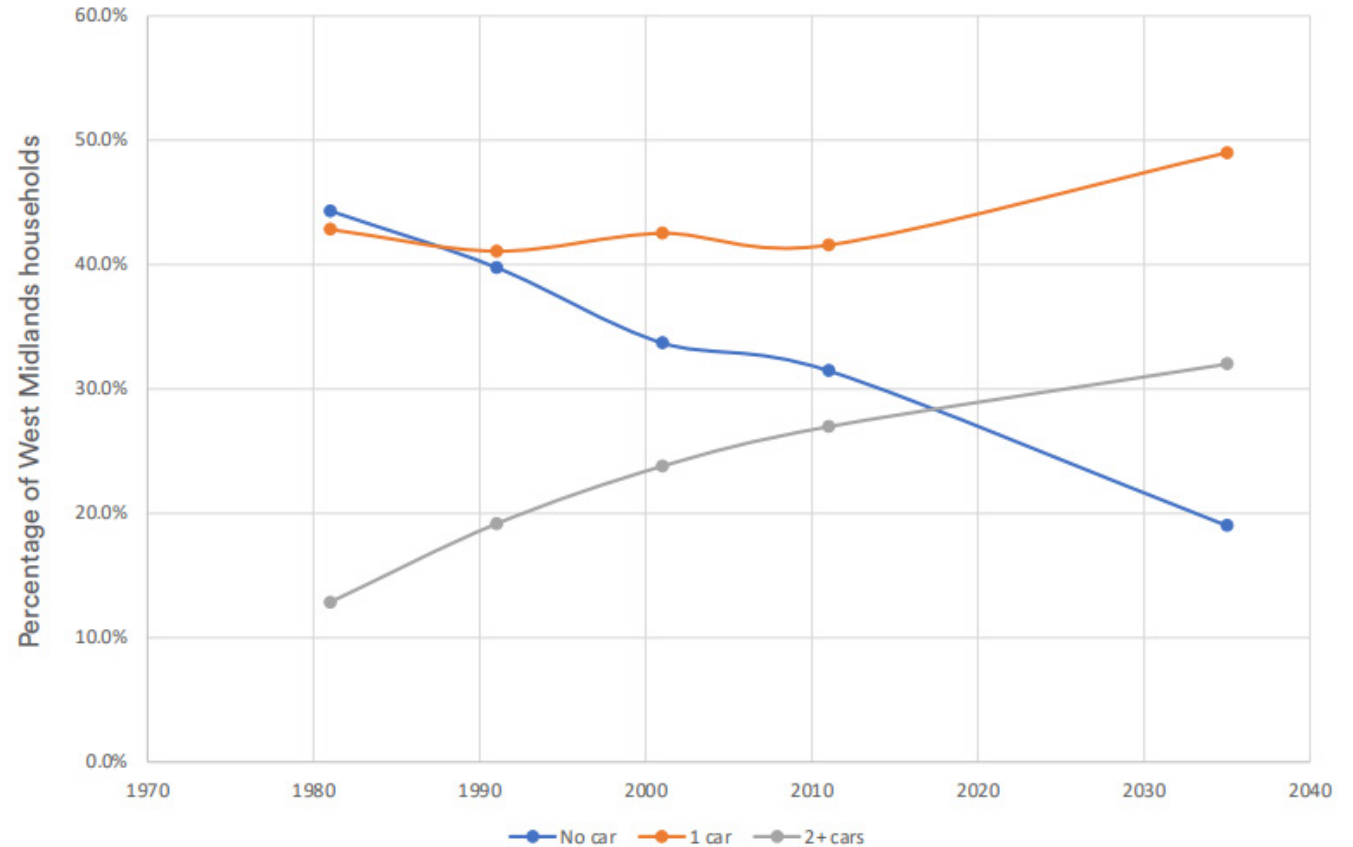


Increased car ownership and usage

Car ownership has vastly increased, with the West Midlands Combined Authority area being one of the highest regions for car ownership in England. The total number of cars and cars per household has been increasing steadily but around 1 in 4 households in the region have no access to a car. While these represent a key group of existing and potential bus users, there is also a need to encourage ridership from dedicated car users. Increasing car ownership is a key barrier to creating a more inclusive West Midlands and without intervention we will lock in car dependency and the challenges that come with it and more people will continue to be excluded.

Once people have invested in a car or vehicle, they are in essence, incentivised to use it as much as possible. The costs of individual journeys are often unknown/difficult to identify with the additional costs of motoring including fuel, vehicle excise duty and insurance less apparent at the point of use.

Without the significant investment proposed in our public transport network (starting with bus) and our ambitious measures to promote behavioural change and targeted measures aimed at managing demand, these historic trends of car ownership are set to increase over the next 20 years.



Source: Census and PRISM

Car driving licence holders among more elderly residents (70 years and above) has increased dramatically across the UK, increasing from 33% in 1994 to 73% in 2022. This increase correlates with a large decrease in concession/ ENCTS boardings of which, older persons are the majority. Concessionary bus boarding has reduced from around 100 million in the 1990s to less than 30 million in 2022.

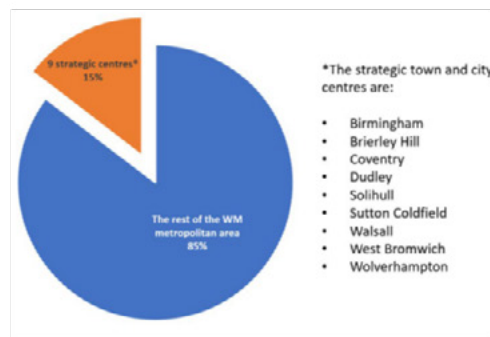
Continued long-term trends towards greater car ownership contribute to a reduction in bus demand and revenue which, combined with real increases in bus operating costs, ultimately result in either a smaller bus network and/or requiring significant increases in public sector funding for bus services. There are still lasting impacts from reduced bus ridership during the pandemic, showing that a reduction in demand can severely threaten the network.

Local people feel they are heavily reliant on their car with 94% saying they enjoy the independence car ownership gives to them and 87% claiming their current lifestyle requires them to own a car or van. This demonstrates the extent to which the scale and intensity of car ownership has become embedded in people’s lives and perceptions of travel.

While public transport is a popular choice for accessing our strategic centres, private car is by far the most popular choice for travel across the wider region. Most travel is not to or from our centres, even in the peak travel periods. There is also a perception that the car is the only transport option for certain journeys, and this is something we’d like to change.

Car accounts for most travel, except to particular centres

Destinations of car trips made in the morning peak



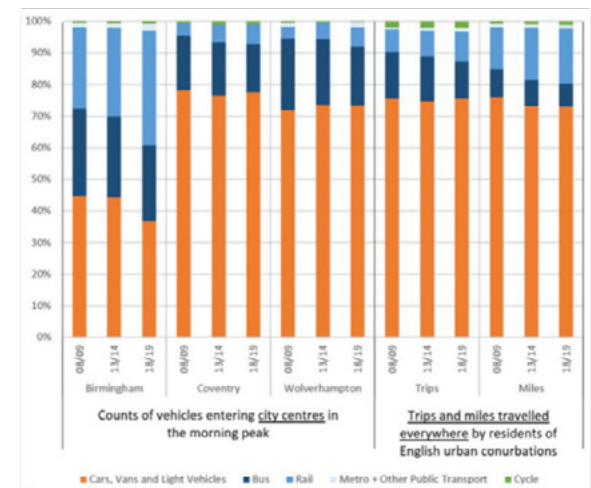
Source: PRISM

Most travel is not to or from our centres, even in the peaks.

While public transport has remained a popular choice for accessing some of our big city centres, the car is king for travel across the wider region.

For those who do use public transport, train is popular for accessing some big city centres and longer distance travel, but bus is used most frequently overall.

Comparing mode shares to/from centres with mode share for all travel



Source: TfWM Cordon Counts and National Travel Survey (DfT)



Lower cost of car use and parking

On both a regional and national scale bus fares have dramatically increased compared to motoring costs which have remained comparatively level with the median household disposable income. This has resulted in public transport being viewed as the 'more expensive' way to travel compared to driving in the region.

The real-term cost of travelling by bus has significantly increased over the last two decades nationally. Between 2005 and 2022, bus fares in English Metropolitan regions increased by approximately 30% in real terms. Bus fares were highest in 2020 at 40% above 2005 levels, but because of the introduction of the £2 bus fare; the real-term price of bus fares has reduced by around 10% since 2020.

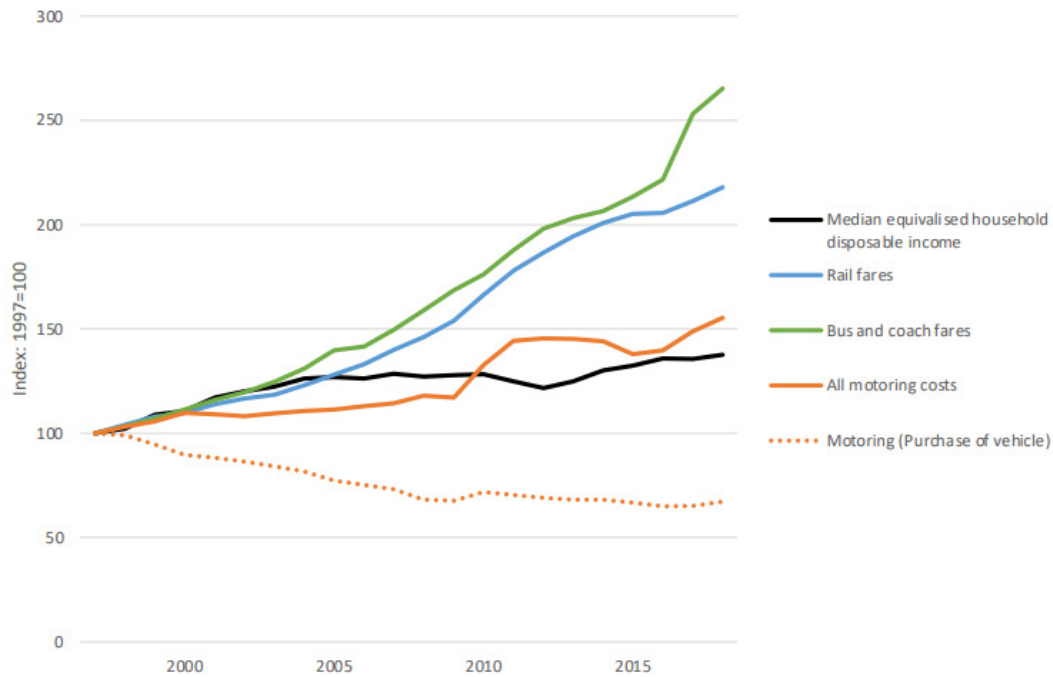
Parking costs can also aggravate this issue, with free car parking compounding the perceived cost effectiveness of driving, leading to fewer people opting for public transport.

On-street parking, and conflicts with vehicles loading/unloading, also take up significant road space (most cars are parked for over 90% of the time) and so are major obstacles to providing a fast and affordable bus service.

The West Midlands recently adopted Local Transport Plan acknowledges the need to reduce the reliance on cars, and that this will also reduce the demand for car parking. The Transport Plan includes travel demand measures to steer how people choose to travel more sustainably, including road space reallocation for bus priority, reduced pavement parking, low traffic neighbourhoods. These measures are also echoed in regional transport plans in Birmingham, the Black Country, Coventry, and Solihull.

Parking will be used to manage demand for travel by car through availability, pricing and restrictions. We know local centres with strong parking controls promote higher bus use.

Even with free parking measures in town centres, transport prices on the whole have risen in recent years due to the cost-of-living crisis. Rising fuel and insurance costs are driving up the cost of car ownership, while public transport providers have also increased the price of tickets. The average family spends 8-10% of household budget on transport. It is often cheaper to drive than use train or bus. The LTP aims to reduce the cost of bus tickets, as well as simplify the ticket offering so that it is more accessible for people to use the bus.



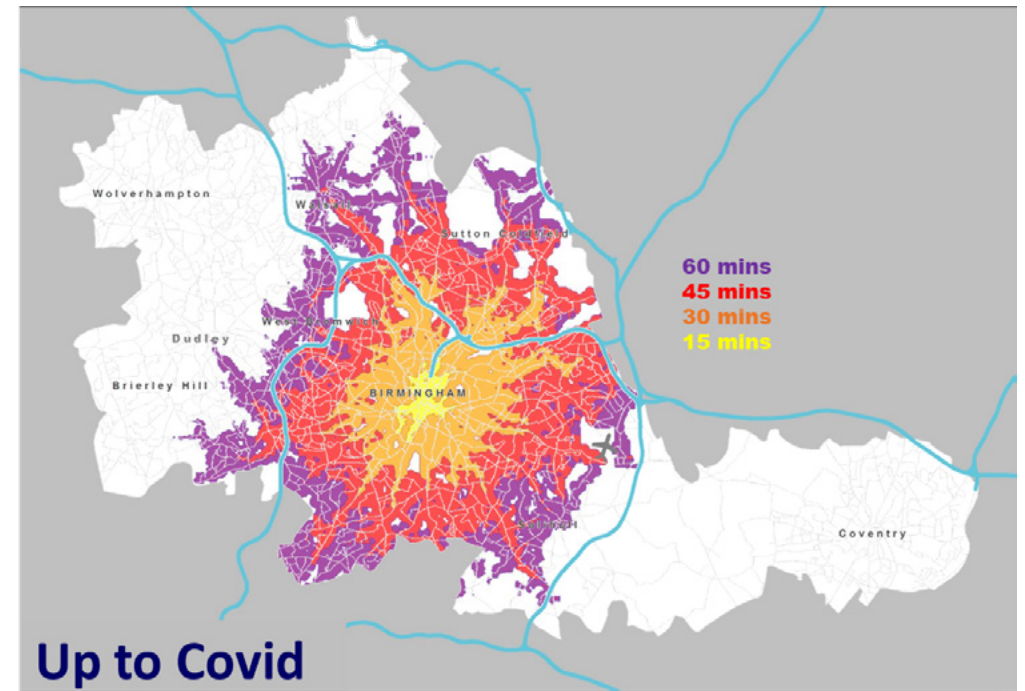
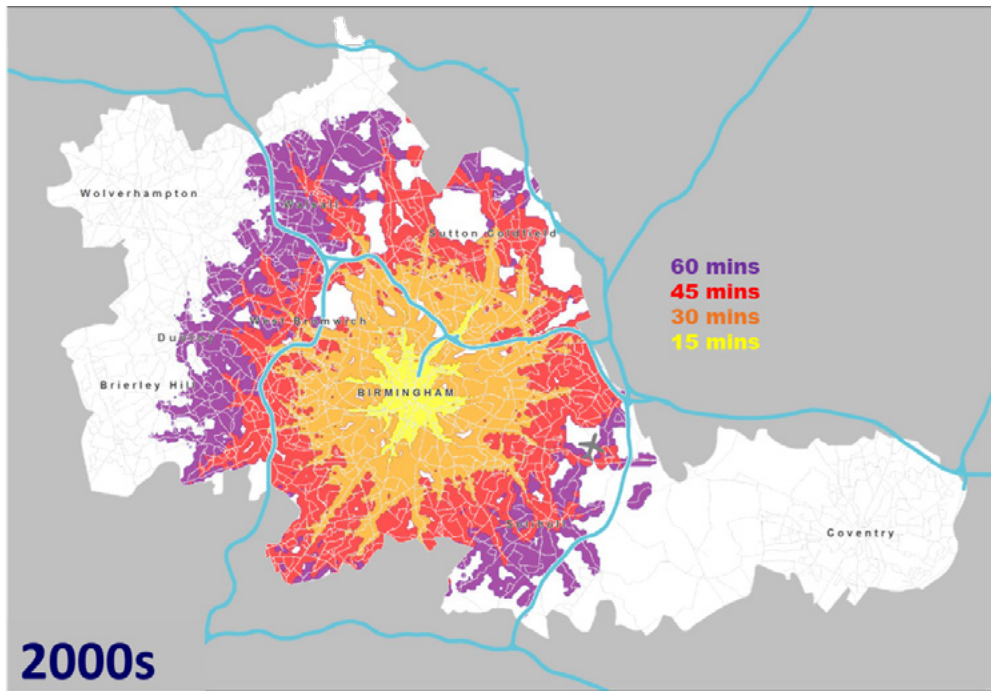
Source: Transport Statistics Great Britain (DfT) and ONS



Congestion leading to declining bus speeds

The increase in private car trips and high levels of on-street parking has led to increased congestion on our roads, and a long-term trend of slowing bus journeys and reduced reliability, further pushing up bus operating costs that in some instances leads to a reduction in service provision to passengers.

Timetabled bus travel times to Birmingham city centre



In the decade up to Covid, around 200,000 fewer people are within an hour's timetabled bus journey time of Birmingham city centre compared to 2008.

Birmingham Bus Survey, 2019 showed:

- 80% strongly agreed or agreed that bus journeys take too long.
- 78% strongly agreed or agreed that they preferred to travel in another way.
- 73% strongly agreed or agreed that bus services are unreliable.

The experience as a user of the network can be poor due to the wide variability of journey times, cancellations and other service issues. Pre-pandemic work by industry group Greener Journeys showed journey times had increased by 50% and bus speeds had fallen by about a third over the past 50 years, due to range of factors, but the increase in traffic levels being a primary contributor. With record-breaking traffic volumes, bus speeds in recent times have been down 1% year-on-year. And the same Greener Journeys research suggests every 1% drop in bus speed means a 1% drop in bus travel.

The accuracy of real time information displays at stops and stations, the inadequacy of information and announcements about

disruptions coupled with how the network is managed during periods of disruption is a constant source of frustration and anxiety for many. Slower bus speeds leading to increased journey time, reduced reliability and punctuality are ultimately resulting in fewer passengers. With fewer passengers, service levels begin to drop leading to lower frequency and reduced coverage causing additional loss in patronage. This effect is known as the 'spiral of decline'.

Land-use changes

Changes in land use and the segregation of services have led to journeys being more dispersed. As a result, people have increasingly turned to their cars as these destinations may not be well-served by bus. Examples of this can be seen in the rise of out-of-town supermarkets and shopping centres with large, often free, car parks and limited or no bus. The LTP Core Strategy prioritises transport-oriented developments that better incorporate public transport infrastructure and incentivise bus use.

Without investment to strengthen and expand our bus network, car use will become increasingly entrenched part of people's lives making it difficult to then create a behavioural shift towards sustainable transport choices.

Accessibility and equality barriers

For some members of society accessing public transport is extremely challenging, and it is often those who heavily rely on public transport who are most affected by accessibility barriers. A national report has shown that funding reductions, and the prioritisation of car and train over bus, has also led to increasing inaccessibility with fewer people able to reach essential services, employment, education, and social interaction.

Within the West Midlands one in five disabled people have reported facing a significant barrier in accessing public transport because of their condition. Women, single parents, care leavers, children, those on low income, unemployed and young adults can also often feel excluded from public transport due to accessibility issues. And these demographics are also among the groups with low car ownership. Physical, emotional, financial and digital barriers must all be considered, as accessibility issues are unique for every individual. This inclusivity must cover not only the bus vehicles themselves, but the shelter and station infrastructure, real time information, and the behaviour of staff on the network. The system as a whole should cater to a variety of needs, so that everyone can access the bus.

The Equality Act 2010 covers certain protected characteristics and ensures that they are not discriminated against. However, for some, fear of discrimination can be a major hinderance for using public transport. Ensuring no individual feels uncomfortable or scared to use the bus system due to their personal characteristics is something that must be addressed.

Whilst the transport system in the West Midlands is on the whole very safe, there are still issues to be addressed. Importantly a key concern for people when thinking about using public transport is that they feel unsafe or have concerns about anti-social behaviour. However, concerns about hygiene and health i.e. people's concern about exposure to Covid and use of public transport has reduced significantly as an issue for people.

As a result of home working, improved telecommunications and other technological advances, there has been a reduced need for multiple trips to meet daily needs and increase connectivity for people with a wide variety of accessibility needs. This has resulted in the average number of trips per person to fall by 20% over the past 20 years, which has impacted the demand for bus travel.

Demographics of a bus user

- 78% are from white ethnic backgrounds
- 61% are female
- 53% live in a household without a car
- 21% black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- 39% students
- 37% of 16–18-year-olds are from black and minority ethnic backgrounds
- Bus users typically from a family with children who struggle to make ends meet or elderly people who mostly live along in social or private housing.



Customer perceptions and how we compare

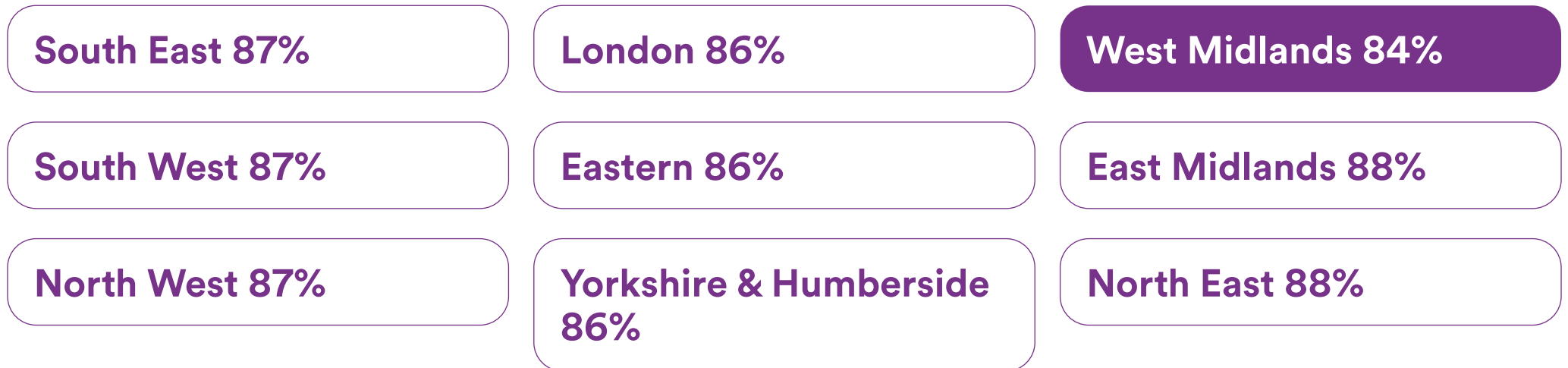
Overall customer satisfaction with bus in the West Midlands is 82%. With so many people within the West Midlands relying on the bus network, and a major aspect of our new LTP Core Strategy being to shift people's travel behaviours to more sustainable modes, the BSIP offers huge scope to make the necessary changes and improvements to our bus services to both retain and enhance bus patronage and passenger satisfaction levels. Our BSIP aims to compare our region against the highest levels of customer satisfaction

and capitalise on the opportunity to deliver Better Buses, create Better Journeys and have Better Fares to make bold targets for, and improve customer satisfaction.

The coverage of the public transport network is at risk, worsening accessibility as the availability, suitability and viability of public transport and shared transport services across the region are facing significant challenges. This is further exacerbated by poor interchanges and a lack of good

first/last mile integration across different modes. A lack of frequency, reliability and connectivity greatly impacts the customer perceptions of the region's bus services. 52% of bus users expressed some dissatisfaction. "Bus service unreliable/ not turning up on time" comprised 78% of all main reasons for this dissatisfaction .

West Midlands v other areas (Bus User Survey 2023)



2023 TfWM bus market research (Savanta)

TfWM commissioned surveys of businesses and employees relating to their bus use. A relating to asking 252 bus users “who said bus was their main mode of transport to work, would do the following if their existing service was lost” responded: -

- 33% said they would switch to car based travel.
- 22% said they would use a different bus service.
- 14% said they would give up their current job/look for another job.
- 13% said they would walk or cycle instead.
- 6% said they would work from home.
- 61% said it would be difficult or very difficult to make alternative arrangements if their bus service become unavailable.
- 60% felt their journey would take longer, at an average additional time of just under 22 minutes. 55% felt their alternative journey would be more expensive.



Acknowledging the continued uncertainty in the long term



This BSIP comes at a time of significant and prolonged uncertainty in local transport. We face all the changes and challenges for bus previously described, but also must look ahead to anticipate the impacts of new technologies, like automation and electrification, the impacts of new ways of working, and of paying for and sharing mobility.

Future economic, environmental and social challenges are not confined to bus or transport in general. How other sectors deal with these may have as much effect on the demand for travel, and cost of providing it, as any actions within the transport system.

The longer-term implications of the pandemic on work, health, and lifestyle trends are still not clear. For example, the level of working from home for some workers, for some days of the week, has stayed higher levels than pre-covid, but it is difficult to precisely forecast how much of this will be ongoing in 5 and 10 years time and beyond. The pandemic and other factors has also impacted supply chains and economic

systems, bringing in uncertainty around project costs due to continued inflation.

The LTP Core Strategy and Big Moves set out the needs of all our modes to support an integrated transport system. As an integrated and funded bus investment programme we are confident that we will meet the ambitions for passenger demand recovery set out in the National Bus Strategy. Single Settlement with government (including CRSTS and other bus funding programmes) will work to address the uncertainty in long-term budgetary pressures. We are acutely aware that if the future proves more challenging at first, our planned improvements will be vital in maintaining an attractive and sustainable offer for bus travel.

Section 2: Current Offer to Bus Passengers

Local Operators

Bus is the primary mode of public transport for West Midlands residents with a market share of 80% of all public transport trips.

There are 16 operators which provide the bus services in the West Midlands. National Express West Midlands (NXWM) – has the largest market share, accounting for 92% of scheduled commercial kilometres in 2024. Diamond Bus operate 5% of scheduled commercial kilometres, whilst Stagecoach Midlands, Arriva Midlands, Travel Express and Banga Buses operating the remaining commercial mileage.

The other 10 operators are small to medium enterprises providing TfWM, and/or neighbouring authorities, tendered services.

The majority of service kilometres are operated commercially (87%) and the rest (13%) require public subsidy through the Transport Levy to operate.

WMCA financial support for bus

TfWM/the WMCA is largely funded by a transport levy from the Districts of £119.4m. Approximately 40% of the levy funds the statutory English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), offering free bus travel for those who qualify. TfWM also provides a discretionary child concessionary fare scheme (with a 2024/25 budget of approximately £6.5m), funds accessible bus services (with a 2024/25 budget of £6.8m) and subsidised bus services (with a 24/25 budget of £24.4m).

TfWM issues tenders for subsidised bus services which are not provided on a commercial basis but cover socially necessary services which tend to run at historically quiet times. TfWM currently hold a total of 159 contracts supporting 219 routes. Of these, 96 are standard contracts and 63 are de-minimis agreements. Approximately 8.4 million passenger journeys were undertaken on subsidised bus services in 2019/20. The cost of operating subsidised bus services has been increasing.

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
£8.4m	£9.7m	£9.8m	£11.2m	£13.4m	£14.2m

With effect from July 2023 TfWM/the WMCA reached agreement with the commercial bus operators in the West Midlands for a network support package to provide additional funding to support the bus network until December 2024. Without this funding, operators had confirmed that 40% of the commercial network was at risk of being cut.

This agreement, followed on from the previous support packages that were in place during and after the covid pandemic. The West Midlands Network Support package ensured a number of passenger benefits would be realised for the duration of the funding period which included commitments to retain the existing network of bus services and service frequencies with the objective to provide a period of network stability to facilitate passenger growth and achieve the full potential of the BSIP Phase 1 program.

Key corridors and the network

The current bus service mileage in the West Midlands is 88% of what it was before the pandemic, through the Network Support package agreed with operators this will be maintained to at least the end of December 2024.

Despite this reduction, the West Midlands has a comprehensive bus network with a significant number of services on the core radial routes already operating on a turn up and go level of frequency.

The core network is made up of the key routes in the region that connect the main commercial centres and local communities. This core network operates 7 days a week and has long operating hours, with lower frequencies in the early morning and in the evening. Substantive weekday service starts at 0430hrs and the last weekday service ending at 0030hrs. A small number of services operate largely through the night supporting key employment sites and the regions night time economy.

The geographical coverage of the bus network is extensive, with 61% of the built-up area within 400m of a stop with a weekday daytime service of at least 6 buses an hour and increasing to 91% within 800m. There

are, gaps in the geographic coverage of this turn-up-and-go core network, especially in the Black Country, and Solihull where demand is spread between multiple local centres or in the case of Solihull population density is lower.

Underpinning the core network is a series of local services which provide essential links to local commercial centres, employment & education, leisure and the core bus, metro or rail networks. These services typically run at a lower frequency than the core network and operate over a shorter period of the day based upon commercial demand, but still play an essential role in connecting our communities.

The current bus network has been developed in partnership with and by commercial operators over time to meet existing levels of demand and travel patterns.

To meet the needs of changing travel patterns and commercial pressures TfWM are working closely with bus operators to ensure the bus network can meet the needs of the region. A West Midlands wide network review and service optimisation process is currently taking place in partnership between TfWM and local bus operators. The review considers

the challenges and risks around the increase in the cost of operating the network but also considers the opportunities around BSIP phase 3 funding, the changing needs of an evolving region and optimising the resource available. The revised network is due to launch in January 2025.

The West Midlands bus network also includes vitally important accessible transport services such as Ring and Ride and community transport services. Accessible transport performs an essential service for individuals who find it difficult to use conventional public transport due to ill health and/or a disability.

The West Midlands Ring and Ride Service operates in all parts of the region with the exception of Coventry. The service operates 7 days a week providing a fully accessible and supported door-to-door transport service within defined zones. The service is intended for eligible individuals to access essential services and facilities.

In Coventry a trial Demand Responsive Transport service (which incorporates the Ring & Ride Service), which operates without any restrictions on usage, is in operation. Named West Midlands on Demand the service operates in all parts of the Coventry City Council area, and part of Solihull. The service is providing some vital learnings into how similar services can play an important

part of a co-ordinated multi-modal network. Funding has been secured to maintain the service until April 2025.

The Community Transport Sector is working in partnership with TfWM, WMCA and wider partners to delivery community-based support in otherwise vacant commercial units at 3 key TfWM bus stations around the conurbation. Initially established through the DfT's Tackling Loneliness with Transport Initiative, the service has continued to provide a warm safe space for local residents, public transport passengers, drivers etc.. The centres also offer access to other support such as homelessness, loneliness, debt advice, addiction advice and access to training and employment.

The core business of the Community Transport sector is to remove transport barriers and provide community solutions to meet unmet transport needs. They are essential to break down exclusion and help people with mobility needs to access health services, education and social opportunities. It is recognised that longer term investment and commitment to enable increased capacity is required to meet this demand as the cost and availability of transport is affecting the ability for individuals to access these services.



Bus priority and Bus Rapid Transit

Increasing bus priority is a key area of opportunity. Transport is fundamental to our region's economic growth, but congestion on our roads remains a challenge to our ambitions. In deprived areas where there is a greater dependency on buses to access education and work opportunities, congestion disproportionately impacts upon bus users, increasing journey times and reducing potential job catchments. These factors ultimately create barriers to people and communities most in need of change and restrict inclusive economic growth.

Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to see a decline in patronage and higher operating costs. Congestion makes journey times unreliable due to significant differences in the timetabled promise and the actual journey. Congestion also slows down the average speeds of buses, increasing operating costs and meaning that less people can access locations in a reasonable journey time. Bus speeds have been falling by around 1% annually. These factors not only make bus a less attractive option to existing and potential customers, but also pushes them into choosing private vehicles for journeys, which adds to congestion.

We currently have 65km of bus lane across the West Midlands. We have begun tackling the issue of congestion holding back the bus network.

Over £100m has been invested to make bus journeys easier and quicker with more bus lanes, tackling congestion hotspots and seeing patronage increases.

- £9.2m highway upgrades and new Platinum buses across the West Midlands = +14% patronage increase
- £4.7m Lode Lane Bus Priority, Solihull = +11% patronage increase
- £0.8m Harborne Road Bus Lane, Birmingham = +4% patronage increase
- £88m Sprint Phase 1 (A34 and A45 Walsall to Solihull) = 20% quicker journey times.

Our first Sprint bus rapid transit route is already providing dependable, shorter journey times for customers.

More needs to be done – when Sprint is fully delivered it will provide direct cross-city region services between the Black Country,

north and the west of Birmingham, Solihull, and links into the wider transport network. This route will be a blueprint for other services to tackle congestion and deliver Better Journeys.

We are also planning additional investment in Sprint Phase 2 (A45 and A34) through our City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and a host of other improvements on other corridors.

Fares and ticketing

TfWM has the largest and most comprehensive smart ticket solution in the UK outside of London and the largest multi-operator ticketing scheme (when measured on sales and revenue).



In July 2024, TfWM, in collaboration with local bus operators, went through a radical simplification of bus ticketing, providing five key customer ticketing propositions via its multi-operator’s bus scheme “@bus”. The five include:

- 1-day
- 3-day (capping only)
- 1-week
- 4-week
- Direct Debit

Meeting the BSIP requirement to deliver **Better Fares**, simplifying our ticket range and keeping the lowest bus fares in England. The complexity of the bus ticketing landscape was known as a barrier to travel in the region. Evidenced from passenger surveys in the West Midlands, where many customers reported concern and uncertainty regarding information on the cost of bus tickets. With customers only being able to access any bus and the full network at a premium. This premium has now been removed, and customers can any access any bus in the

region for the cost of just £4.50 a day or £17 a week, some of the lowest bus fares in the country.

In addition to this simplification, TfWM are also delivering an incentive programme to encourage local people to travel by bus for the first time. The scheme is based on behaviour change research and offers free travel to first time users in the region or those who have been previously excluded from purchasing public transport due to structural issues like, unemployment or other vulnerabilities, such as a language barrier. The goal is to encourage users to try bus and create new travel habits centred around bus, to create long term fare paying passengers, sustaining the bus network for years to come. As well as meeting the inclusive economic growth and productivity requirements of the BSIP, and the Better Journeys element by encouraging people to leave their cars behind for bus, reducing congestion. The scheme launched to the public in January 2024 and has driven over 100,000 trips on the bus network in the West Midlands.

TfWM has an ITSO account-based ticketing solution, Swift Go, available offering best value daily, 3-day and 7-day contactless

capping. Contactless payment is also available across all operators; however, the current offer solution is still sub-optimal. Contactless is currently not available between operators' preventing customers from benefitting from the best price ticketing.

TfWM are uniquely placed to deliver a multi-operator and multi-modal contactless payment solution that will ensure best value capped fares for customers when travelling on various modes of public transport throughout the region and the wider country. This solution will require significant funding in order to be implemented – our recent CRSTS prospectus included £20m to fund a back-office payment system that aggregates contactless payments across all operators and modes of transport.

The project is progressing well, technical requirements have now been drafted and approved working alongside Project Coral (a conglomerate of Bus/Train Operators) and will be utilised throughout procurement. Discussions are ongoing to assess, agree and document a suitable management case to enable TfWM and Project Coral to work together both during the procuring and development of the solution and then further into its deployment.

The Project Team have been consistently engaging with external parties to provide regular updates and understand a roadmap for usage of the solution once available, at time of writing 50 further Local Authorities have shown a desire to utilise the contactless capping solution when ready.



Customer Information & Infrastructure

The presentation of the local bus network as a single system – and providing connections and co-ordination with other modes – is one of our greatest areas of opportunity to “Inform, Reassure and Inspire”.

- 11,876 bus stops and shelters
- 13.6 stops per km sq (highest bus stop density in Europe)
- 1,740 real-time information (RTI) displays

We continue to make an impact to customers through our Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) which manages disruption communications and integration across bus, rail, roads and metro, but have a continuous improvement philosophy to ensure customers can make the best choices about journey choices now and in the future. Key personnel from National Express’ network management team are also base in the RTCC to improve the two way flow of data and information.

Our shelters have been designed to be “accessible for all” including wheelchair spaces, tactile paving and information being provided at the optimum height and size. These features were incorporated by

working closely with our Equalities team and passenger groups.

The TfWM website offers customers travel information for all operators. There is also consistent branding being rolled out across bus stop infrastructure.

Our Transforming RTI project has created a platform which allows us to better monitor the performance of buses in real time (supporting the operation of the RTCC), as well as being able to use historic data to plan for the future and provide significantly improved information to customers, including information about cancelled trips where we are made aware by bus operators.

We have undertaken research to continue to improve the experience of bus travel for customers and to entice potential customers. We have been considering how the functional activities we undertake (e.g. ticketing, information, safer travel, network planning, marketing etc.) relate to emotional response in customers, and determined that the most important thing for passengers is that they feel safe, supported, in control and ultimately have trust. Following from this, we considered activities that we

undertake that support positive change towards these emotional responses (ease of paying, consistent user experience, better journey times, inspiring people to consider bus, reliable/accurate journey information, integration between bus and other modes). Whilst all of these things are essential, following a recent survey where only 69% of respondents felt the information provided at bus stops was good/very good, it was determined that our immediate focus and where there could be impactful change were around:

‘inspire people to confidently consider and use bus’ and ‘put passengers in control with reliably accurate Real Time information’. Note that by ‘Real Time Information’ this is broader than just our real time passenger information system, but information pertaining to all aspects of their journey through various trusted channels.

Branding

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is the overarching brand for public transport in the area encompassing the bus, tram and rail networks.



**Transport for
West Midlands**

The TfWM branding ensures consistent messaging across the different modes of transport and improves customer experience by providing unmistakable, simple signage and creating smoother journeys. The TfWM brand was developed in order to promote a single integrated transport system.

To ensure customer experience is at its best, it is imperative that branding is consistent and removes confusion to support easier and Better Journeys. While this does occur across the different modes of transport, the TfWM bus network branding is still having to exist alongside individual operator branding. Individual operators still have autonomy over their own branding and communications.

As a result, bus network communications are not provided from a centralised source and therefore the messages being provided can be diluted or lost, which can have a domino-effect on customer experience and satisfaction. The ambitions of Bus Back Better allow us to improve our information output, underpin and develop our brand and significantly enhance the overall passenger experience.

There is a clear opportunity here to streamline the branding and communication across the West Midlands bus network to align one brand which will considerably increase the clarity and quality of information to the customer and improving perception of the Network, to feel like a whole system.

We need to brand and promote the bus network more effectively, so there is much more intuitive understanding of the integrated nature of the public transport system (including ticketing/fare structures) serving the West Midlands, a transport network with the tiers of core, local and supporting bus, more specialised bus services, integrating with the backbone of Sprint Bus Rapid Transit, metro and rail – all joined up with clear roles to form one integrated network.

Branding provides a clear opportunity to remove confusion and build on a 'one network' vision which supports Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares across an integrated transport system.

Modern buses and decarbonisation

WMCA has demonstrated a strong commitment to limit the impact of climate change, through #WM2041 which sets out our actions and the principles that underpin them. We have set a target for the West Midlands to be carbon neutral by 2041 – an ambitious target that will support the delivery of the Government’s national target to be carbon neutral by 2050, while ensuring no-one is left behind. For bus decarbonisation we have already delivered, or committed to, the following:

- Coventry as the UK’s first all-electric bus city by the end of 2025, having already invested £125 million in new buses since 2015
- 159 electric double deck vehicles with a further 184 on order or in preparation.
- 20 hydrogen double deck vehicles
- 5 re-powered electric buses for zero emission
- Work with Government to best deploy the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding award to the CA

- Adapt the existing fleet where appropriate technology exists to reduce carbon emissions and/or harmful pollutants.

The West Midlands bus fleet is currently around 2,000 buses strong, with a mix of double deck, single deck and minibus vehicles operating local bus services. The average fleet age is 11 years. We are clear we need to take further action to limit the impact of climate change by investing in more zero emission buses and prepare for the changes we cannot prevent. We are committed to transitioning our entire fleet to zero-emission buses as quickly as possible subject to the availability of funding.



Customer focus

In line with other improvements to the bus network, a new bus passenger charter has been agreed by TfWM and all bus operators to create a step change in expectation and experience. The bus passenger charter sets standards and provides strong commitments that are specific and measurable, driving continuous improvement. Early engagement with customer representatives has provided the basis for the development of this new bus passenger charter. Launched in 2023, this builds on the original West Midlands Bus Alliance customer charter published in 2019.

TfWM will publish 6-monthly progress reports against the measurements within the charter, using a range of media. The charter will be reviewed and updated annually to drive continuous improvement.

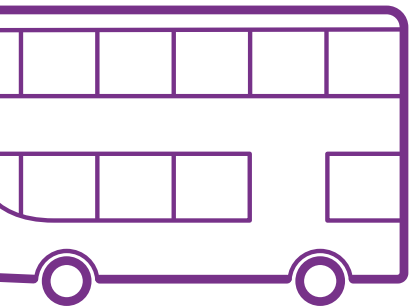
The charter will be promoted on every bus providing qualifying services and on operators' websites. Operators will assist in the monitoring of the impact of the charter and assist TfWM in reviewing and setting improved standards within the charter each year.

One key area that the charter focuses on is driver training, particularly customer service and disability awareness. This builds on the

work that TfWM have done in the past with National Express to develop a training DVD for drivers that highlights experiences from a range of individuals with different disabilities in order to help drivers better understand how they can support customers with different needs when using the bus network

Passenger safety

The West Midlands has one of the safest public transport networks in the UK. The crime rate on the bus network has seen a downward trend over the last decade of over 60%. This continued to be the case this year and the 23/24 bus crime figures for the transport network in the West Midlands were down 18.8% meaning 974 fewer victims of crime.



The latest Transport Focus survey published March 2024 reported that 74% of respondents were satisfied with their level of personal safety while on the bus. Although these metrics are positive, there is always room for improvement as the safety of our customers is of paramount importance to us.

The value of passengers feeling safe cannot be underestimated. DfT figures suggest there would be 11.5% more public transport journeys made if passengers felt safer, which for the West Midlands would equate to an increase of around 30 million journeys, helping reduce congestion and keep people moving.

TfWM and local bus operators have been proactive in addressing customer safety in partnership with the West Midlands Police and British Transport Police through the Safer Travel Plan, which introduced measures focusing on reducing crime and anti-social behaviour on public transport across the region. The overall objectives of the Safer Travel Plan are to:

- **Increase customer trust and confidence** in the Safer Travel Police through improved engagement ensuring that information is published about progress to address passenger concerns.
- **Continue to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and offending** by using long-term problem-solving methods and by tackling anti-social behaviour and low-level nuisance, taking every opportunity to involve and communicate with passengers.
- **Improve passenger satisfaction in services** by listening to passengers and dealing with the issues that matter most.
- **Support repeat victims of crime** through a multi-agency safeguarding approach focusing on the Threat, Risk and Harm to those individuals

- **Increase the understanding of passengers' needs and concerns** by listening to and working with passengers to identify needs and understand how partner agencies can continually improve services
- **Keep passengers informed about policing on public transport** by keeping passengers informed about the work that is going on in local areas that affect local communities, listening to views and learning from them.

To date the partnership has successfully seen an 11% reduction in sexual offences and robberies on buses as well as reductions in theft and criminal damage. The partnership also has a dedicated Anti-Social Behaviour Team and currently runs a 'See Something Say Something' campaign where anonymous witnesses can report crime and nuisance behaviour on the bus network. In July 2021, two WMCA leaders were chosen by Government to lead on efforts to tackle violence against women and girls on transport. WMCA interim chief executive Laura Shoaf and TfWM interim managing director Anne Shaw are a part of the UK's first Violence Against Women and Girls Transport Champions. As part of a current Department

of Transport Anti-Social Behaviour Pilot we have employed 3 Transport Safety Officers to focus on Violence against Women and Girls.



Section 3: Improvements Programme to 2024 - 25

TfWM / WMCA and partners has an ambitious delivery and development program for bus improvements for 2024 / 2025 financial year. These improvements are across multiple funding streams, inclusive of DfT BSIP Phase 1 funding and the provisionally allocated BSIP Phase 3 funding, and seek to deliver the vision, aspirations and targets described in this Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The table below provides a high level summary of the work plan for 2024 / 2025 for confirmed projects benefitting existing and potential bus passengers and operations;



Project	Funding allocation	Funding initiative	Description
Bus Priority Delivery Programme	£58m	CRSTS 1 - Sprint Phase	Currently planning for construction commencement Mid 2024. - Scheme includes circa 4KM additional bus lanes and associated bus priority infrastructure.
Bus Priority Delivery Program	£0.3	CRSTS1 - Cross City PK5 early works	Circa 800m bus lane on Washwood Heath Rd (HS2 works mitigation)
Bus Priority Delivery Program	£0.3	Better Deal for Bus Users - Cross City Package 1 (Summer Hill)	Circa 1Km bus lanes on Summer Hill Road – City Centre
Bus Priority Development Program	£5m	CRSTS / Better Deal for Bus Users - Development of Cross City Bus Schemes to FBC for construction up to March 2027	Cross City Package 1 City Centre remaining measures Cross City Package 2 Longbridge to Hamstead Cross City Package 3 Dudley to Druids Heath Cross City 4 Longbridge to Castle Vale Cross City Package 5 Harborne to East Birmingham Cross City Package 6 West Bromwich to Chelmsley Wood
Bus Priority Development Program	£1m	BSIP Phase 1	Initial corridor sifting and prioritisation exercise underway leading to Programme Business Case and individual scheme OBCs (for scheme delivery post March 2027).
Enhanced Bus Service Provision	£10.8m	BSIP Phase 1	Utilising BSIP Phase 1 funding, we will continue to provide subsidy for bus services implemented to seek transformation of the bus network to deliver the objectives of BSIP. This subsidy is across 13 services on 9 corridors across the region. The services are continuing to grow with current patronage at 98K trips per 4-week period / 1.3million trips per annum.

Project	Funding allocation	Funding initiative	Description
Bus Network Support	£101m	<p>£40m – BSIP Phase 1 over 3 yrs</p> <p>£22m – Devolved BSOG+ over 2 yrs</p> <p>£19m – TfWM Reserves over 2 yrs</p> <p>£24m – TfWM Subsidised service support (levy funded in 2024/25)</p>	<p>With the end of BRG funding in July 2023 local bus operators had indicated that 40% of the current network was at risk of no longer being commercially sustainable.</p> <p>TfWM have negotiated a grant with operators to maintain the current level of service to the end of December 2024. DfT have provided further support for operators, devolved to TfWM, through BSOG+ which is covered under the same Terms and Conditions.</p> <p>Some funding support has been retained to aid the transition to an optimised transitional network from January 2025.</p> <p>TfWM will maintain subsidy support for the provision of services which are deemed to be socially necessary but not commercially sustainable.</p>
Discretionary Concessionary Fares Travel Scheme	£6.5m	Levy funding for Child Concessions	We will continue to provide additional, local discretionary elements to the statutory National English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) including ½ fare on West Midlands on Demand Services, free travel for local residents on trams and trains after 0930; ½ price travel for under 16's and ½ price travel for 16-18 year olds.

Project	Funding allocation	Funding initiative	Description
Bus Network Performance Management	£3.2m	BSIP Phase 1	<p>We have implemented a system to allow the real time tracking of all buses on the network, allow for querying of historic data to improve future reliability and punctuality and identify congestion hotspots, provide journey cancellation information to passengers utilising an app.</p> <p>In 2024 / 2025 we will implement the co-location of the network management teams of commercial bus operators in to the WMCA Regional Transport Coordination Centre RTCC. This will ensure; instantaneous access to real time multi-modal network performance data; ability to make collective decisions on network mitigation; improve ability and speed to inform passengers;</p>
EP Delivery – Local Transport Authority Costs	£1.0m	BSIP Phase 1	LTA staff costs for delivery and monitoring

Project	Funding allocation	Funding initiative	Description
Passenger led recovery programme	£23.3m	BSIP Phase 1	Building on the work undertaken earlier in the program to significantly simplify the bus ticketing and fares in the region, we will continue to deliver a comprehensive passenger incentive programme to provide bespoke discounted and free travel offers that both encourage people to return to public transport whilst also generating new users. This will be supported with the introduction of an independent, dedicated, combined ticket sales team.
Customer Charter and performance monitoring	£0.22m	BSIP Phase 1 – total funding shown	We will continue to inform passengers of the Bus Passenger Charter, monitor delivery of the expected standards and report progress to passengers and stakeholders.
Provision of additional safety and security staff	£0.7m	BSIP Phase 1 – total funding shown	We will maintain the team of Transport Safety Officers on the West Midlands Bus network to support passengers and operators with low-level nuisance, disorder and anti-social behaviour targeting routes and locations based on reports received from transport staff or the general public.

The table below provides details of the proposed schemes to be delivered utilising Phase 3 BSIP funding from the DfT, 12 months from when the funding is confirmed, or indicated;

Proposed BSIP Phase 3

Project	Funding allocation (BSIP Phase 3) - £M	Proposal (subject to DfT approval)
Pilot – Bus Priority at Traffic Signals	£0.18	<p>We will work in partnership with Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council to pilot Bus Priority at key signalised junctions on the Coventry – Bedworth – Nuneaton corridor using intelligent technology linked to the buses real time location. The system will seek to give greater priority to traffic movements supporting the flow of late running buses. At peak times there is currently a bus every 4 minutes on this corridor, across 2 operators providing. Benefit will be measured in journey time savings, improvement in reliability and punctuality, passenger growth and cost savings / revenue increase for operators.</p> <p>We will additionally seek to review and amend the phase 1 signal amendments on the Sprint Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridor to ensure they are optimised to changing traffic conditions and continuing to give benefit for the passengers using these corridors.</p>
Transport Safety Officers	£0.35	<p>We will increase the number of Transport Safety Officers by 6 additional personnel to further improve the perception and safety and security of passenger using the integrated bus network. Funding will be targeted at providing more officers on bus services at un-staffed bus interchanges including Birmingham City Centre, Sutton Coldfield, Solihull Town Centre and Rail Station Interchange, Chelmsley Wood and Bearwood Bus Station. Benefit will be measured through recorded reductions in crime on the bus network and perception of safety for passengers through customer satisfaction surveys.</p>

Project	Funding allocation (BSIP Phase 3) - £M	Proposal (subject to DfT approval)
Marketing and Engagement	£1.50	<p>We will work in partnership with Local Bus Operators and stakeholders to implement a comprehensive and sustained marketing campaign, to increase awareness amongst hard-to-reach groups and encourage modal shift to bus promoting and encouraging use of scheme delivered using BSIP and other Government funded initiatives.</p> <p>The principal objectives are to grow patronage to support the passenger led recovery of the sector, tackle localised air quality issues and the impacts of congestion.</p> <p>We will seek to grow passenger numbers by over 1m during the period of the funding.</p> <p>This project sits alongside the Bonfire of Bus Tickets; ticketing simplification and passenger led recovery scheme from Phase 1.</p>
West Midlands on Demand	£0.39	<p>We will extend the inclusive West Midlands on Demand DRT service in Coventry, to continue to deliver the 'co-mingled' service providing a fully accessible door to door transport service to those that require it and a DRT service for all residents and visitors to the area.</p> <p>The project will seek to retain the existing service following the end to section 106 contribution funding via Coventry City Council and funding from Warwick University. The longer-term delivery of the service will be considered as part of the implementation of the new Target Operating Model for DRT / R&R services in the region from April 2025.</p> <p>Additional capacity enhancement will be delivered during 24/25 utilising s.106 funding through a recently opened grocery superstore in the City.</p>

Project	Funding allocation (BSIP Phase 3) - £M	Proposal (subject to DfT approval)
Demand Responsive Transport, Ring & Ride, Community Transport capacity enhancements	£0.48 (to end of March 2026)	<p>This BSIP seeks to integrate Community Transport (CT), Ring and Ride (R&R) and Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) services in to the wider integrated public transport network. The existing R&R and DRT services are tailored to provide travel for individuals. These services are not currently designed and do not have the capacity to provide travel to group sessions designed for citizens with specific needs or requiring support such as Age Concern, Community Support Groups, Stroke Recovery & Rehabilitation, mental health support networks etc.</p> <p>Due to the cost of transport a number of these groups are no longer meeting and supporting these citizens. Whilst we can provide travel for individuals to these group activities, we can't guarantee it due to the limited capacity and demand responsive nature of existing services.</p> <p>We will provide dedicated additional capacity through our 3rd Sector partners to meet this demand to March 2026.</p> <p>Benefit will be measured through reviewing passenger numbers service availability and sustainability / re-introduction of group activities.</p>
Passenger Information (Static Information)	£0.63	<p>Market research with existing and potential passengers has identified that bus passenger information and all contact points including displays at stops and interchanges around the region could be further enhanced to provide more accessible and easier to understand information. This includes timetable information, onward travel information including wayfinding, fare information, availability of local services etc.</p> <p>We will develop, pilot and roll-out static information to explore options for what can be provided on the core network, at bus stations and key interchanges.</p>
Passenger Information (Real Time Everywhere)	£0.38	<p>The Transforming Real Time Information (RTI) program has included the ability to provide RTI for every bus stop in the region. This information can be readily accessed from smart mobile devices by following a QR code displayed at every stop. This project will develop a proposal through engagement with passengers to optimise the visibility and availability at each of the 12,500 bus stops in the region and roll out the preferred method of delivery.</p>

Project	Funding allocation (BSIP Phase 3) - £M	Proposal (subject to DfT approval)
Independent Ticket Sales Team	£1.00	<p>Utilising BSIP Phase 1 funding support we have undertaken a ‘bonfire of bus tickets’ in the region to simplify fares and ticketing for passengers. We have also implemented targeted ticketing incentives to citizens to encourage use of bus, aid accessibility, grow opportunity and encourage modal shift etc. The incentivisation will encourage sustained passenger led recovery and growth. TfWM and Bus Operators, including National Express, have dedicated teams who are seeking to grow sales and encourage use of the network. Utilising BSIP Phase 3 funding we will combine these teams with the objectives;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To deliver some independence to retailing – this is particularly important now given the bonfire of tickets. ● To combine forces with NXWM BSIP team to ensure we get the best coordinated effort. ● To share and grow collective knowledge of the Sales functions. ● To provide the Sales Team with new opportunities – new ticket types (@Train for example) and MaaS so they can maximise their output and grown new commission streams for us. ● To encourage greater take up of Swift to grow the customer base and patronage. ● To improve the technologies to make it easier and more efficient for the sales teams. ● To update scheme documentation to reflect changes providing clarity to operators and clear path for the sales team.
Monitoring, Market Research and Evaluation	£0.10	Reporting resource to align with reporting requirements of the BSIP Phase 3.
Bus Network Support and Transformation	£11.6 (to end March 2026)	With Local Bus Operators and Stakeholders we will collectively develop enhancements to the local bus network to deliver the outcomes of the West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan. Additionally, we will continue to work with operators through the network review process to establish the financial sustainability of the current network and seek to ensure the network is optimised and deliverable using the available funding. Areas under consideration include simplified services, increases in service frequency and extensions to the operating day.

Addressing Bus Driver and Other Key Staff Shortages

Like many other regions across the country the West Midlands Bus Network has been impacted by driver shortages on both the fixed route network and also demand responsive flexible services. This led to a decline in the performance and reliability of services with cancellations at short notice. The Bus Alliance understands the impact this has had on passenger confidence and trust in the network and are continuing to resolve this issue.

We would work closely with the Government on how the Bus Centre of Excellence is working to build skills and capacity within the bus sector. This would assist with the development and migration of skills into local authorities which would reflect the changing landscape of bus operations, which include bus franchising.

Drivers tell us that retention is not just about being suitably paid and their conditions but also issues they face when driving. Such issues regularly raised include experiencing anti-social behaviour, tackling fare evasion, congestion issues leading to poor reliability, punctuality and journey speeds and support on the network.

We have implemented and will maintain a process to allow drivers to report congestion hotspots on routes which will be verified using vehicle data and reported to the respective local highways Authority for intervention.

We have implemented a ‘tasking’ process to allow for targeted deployment of the Transport Safety Officers (TSOs) to address issues of anti-social behaviour and fare evasion. Operators have implemented systems to allow drivers to report issues on the network for intervention.

Through the West Midlands Bus Alliance and the Bus Operators Panel we will;

- Identify depots with vacancies and seek to work collectively on targeted and enhanced recruitment in addition to the continuous activity. This will include driving and engineering staff and the wider staff base to deliver bus services in the region.
- National Express will support the Sector-based Work Academy Programme (SWAPs) with Birmingham Metropolitan College and Job Centre Plus (JCP).

- We will continue to work with the Department for Work and Pensions and JCP to promote careers in the sector at all levels. National Express have recently worked with DWP to create a film encouraging new drivers into the industry.
- With the support of the West Midlands Combined Authority, National Express are working in partnership with Telford College, a local training provider and JCP Wolverhampton to deliver a ‘Into Employment’ programme for college leavers specifically focused at apprenticeships in engineering and other roles in the sector.
- Support local job fairs and other recruitment events.

Transport Skills Academy

The TfWM Transport Skills Academy (TSA) commissioned a Skills Insight Report to determine the challenges facing the sector and identify ways we can address them. For bus, the research clearly sets out the need for a more diverse workforce than current. There is a need to tackle gender (19% females in transport sector), ethnicity (14.5% of the workforce are from non-white backgrounds in transport sector), age (0.7% in the transport sector is aged 16-20 years) and skills shortages to remain competitive and deliver on the organisation's key priorities for the next 10 years.

The TSA working on behalf of the West Midlands Bus Alliance and the wider transport sector has identified the skills structure and priorities for meeting needs going forward in its current form. New policies and operating models will mean that a skills development plan is identified to support existing staff developing new skills, training new staff, and building a future workforce through our apprenticeship and graduate programmes.

The Transport Skills Academy is working with schools, colleges, and universities to offer work experience to young people in out

Integrated Transport Services directorate to become familiar with and aware of a range of occupations that exists, such as Customer Experience, Contract and Commercial Management, Project Management, Swift ticketing, Bus Stations and Health and Safety to name a few. This programme is increasing interest in opportunities for young people through our apprenticeship and graduate programmes to 'grow our own' from across the West Midlands. Last year we engaged with 1,600 young people and this is set to grow for 24/25.

Where shortages exist, we change our approach and work with our regional partners to support recruitment and consider a more targeted campaign aimed at the chosen occupation. An example of this being National Express targeting female drivers to encourage diversity and close gaps in bus driver positions using a Sector Based Work Academy Approach with Birmingham Metropolitan College, Telford College and GTG Training working with DWP offices to increase applications by using the Bus Simulator which saw an increase of 80% of applications from learners wanting to progress into the sector. Targeting our bus stations and depots where skills gaps and

shortages exist we can work with DWP contacts to actively recruit and re-train those currently unemployed and actively seeking employment into jobs such as drivers, engineering and customer services roles. Alongside this approach, using Apprenticeship recruitment to support young people into routes such as engineering/maintenance, customer services and driver roles would ensure an appropriate qualification route is used to support the establishment of a skilled workforce in the West Midlands.

Our development within the Transport Skills Academy is enhancing our skills, supporting our future growth and learning needs and helping us to retain and progress our staff into the next generation of workers.

Section 4: Ambitions and Proposals for 2025 and beyond.

This section of the West Midlands BSIP sets out our ambitions and proposals for improvements for the period after 2025 through to 2030. This will be further developed and informed through future and periodic refresh of this document. Delivery of the aspirations in this chapter are subject to available funding whilst recognising WMCA is in receipt of City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) funding to 2027 and Government is committed to providing further funding through the Network North program to 2028/2029 although the quantum and associated Terms and Conditions are not yet known.

TfWM has a proud history of working in partnership with bus operators and our constituent Local Authorities to deliver improvements to services in the region. We were the first urban Transport Authority to enter an Enhanced Partnership and all of the commitments within this BSIP are designed to be deliverable within this Enhanced Partnership, or future iterations thereof.

In 2023, the Combined Authority Board commissioned a Full Assessment of powers available under the Bus Services Act 2017 to determine whether our BSIP objectives could be better delivered through Franchising. This Assessment is due to report back to the Combined Authority Board later in 2024, when it will be determined whether to proceed with external Audit and consultation. After this, if there is a decision to Franchise it is unlikely franchised services will be operational before 2027, given the time it will take to design and procure contracts and mobilise the market.

The initiatives within this BSIP are therefore designed to be implemented through partnership, however the Franchise Assessment is considering how wider bus policy objectives, to which the commitments within this document contribute, might be delivered more effectively under Franchising. This decision on the future direction of travel and the impact on the regions ambitions and proposals will be reflected in future revisions of the BSIP.



Network Design and Integration

Bus network planning and improvements to bus services; service level and network coverage.



BSIP Theme; Better Journeys

CRSTS investment themes

- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities
- Supporting inclusive growth

We aspire to:

- deliver enhanced frequencies on over 110 services to support better customer accessibility to the network and provide passenger growth.
- significantly expand the new Cross city and cross regional network of bus services supporting over half a million people to new journey opportunities, connecting communities, and better integration with metro and rail.
- set minimum service levels and review our network in full from January 2024 in preparation for the conclusion and outcome of the Full Franchising Assessment which is due in September 2024
- invest in a package of new additional Demand Responsive Transport services and operating model to feed the integrated bus, metro and rail network from April 2025
- The West Midlands Bus Alliance aims to connect every resident to every job in the region within 90 minutes by public transport by 2030 working with the Metro Alliance and the Rail Alliance.

The West Midlands Bus Alliance will deliver an enhanced bus network that provides connections that people need for better access to life changing opportunities and essential services including existing and future skills, jobs, retail and leisure.

We will achieve this by delivering a core network of turn up and go services with enhanced frequencies which is easy for passengers to understand and navigate. This core network will be fed by a network of local and supporting services.

The core network will build on the delivery of cross city services, to link bus services to all parts of our central areas as well as the surrounding suburbs. These cross-city and cross-region services will significantly increase the number of people with direct cross-regional links to more places, and improved connection to metro and rail.

The network will be numbered to remove any duplication of service numbers in local areas to provide greater clarity for passengers.

The core network will be supported with comprehensive bus priority measures, improved waiting facilities including a new £multi-million bus interchange in Dudley due to open in Autumn 2025 and a new bus interchange to serve the education quarter in Birmingham and the HS2 Curzon Station

due to open in September 2024, branding, information and integrated ticketing. It is envisaged this investment coupled with the stated frequency levels will give this core network the best chance to be sustainable and expand in the medium term.

The bus network has been designed around key principles of guaranteed service levels at different times of day including enhancements during the evenings and Sundays, across different categories of the core network, and the local and supported network.

Having maintained a stable network for the Commonwealth Games in July 2022 when the eyes of the World will be on the region, we will undertake a review of the entire network to deliver these principles with operators and other partners. This network will provide the foundation on which we can build to deliver the aspirations of the National Bus Strategy.

The network will be delivered in partnership with and between operators to ensure that resource levels are appropriate for the level of demand and to enhance service provision and prevent scaling back to only the most commercial routes.

The Covid-19 pandemic has meant there are a greater number of services that are no longer commercially viable but that will be essential in delivering our aspirations and those of the

National Bus Strategy. There will need to be more services supported by TfWM through the BSIP to deliver these aspirations. TfWM will seek to adopt registrations powers for bus services in the region and explore other options within our Enhanced Partnership to prevent any reduction of the network.

We will deliver a bus network which is better integrated with other modes, including walking, cycling, metro and local rail, to provide seamless and reliable travel choices.

This will include physical integration at key interchanges as well as ensuring that buses meet the times of trams and trains and most significantly, the first and last journeys. This will encourage seamless interchange between bus and other modes and seek to solve the first / last mile conundrum.

Points of interchange will be designed for customer ease to move seamlessly between active and sustainable travel modes, supporting the Bus Alliance objective to connect every resident with every job in the region within 90 minutes by public transport.

We will work to ensure that service changes are minimised and coordinated such that passengers can build their trust and journey patterns around a stable multi-modal network.

Community Transport

We will continue to trial new and innovative forms of public transport underpinning a multi-modal transport system. Demand responsive transport services, incorporating Ring & Ride and other Community Transport services, will provide feeder services into the core bus and fixed metro and rail networks.

Community Transport operators are an active part of the Bus Alliance and provide a number of specialist services to support people with specific requirements and to meet a very local need. We will seek to give Community Transport services a mainstream identity within the wider bus network.

In April 2025 we will implement a New Target Operating Model for Ring & Ride to deliver a modernised more reliable and customer focused service for users with greater availability.

Cross Boundary Services

The towns and cities of the West Midlands are destinations for many journeys starting outside of the transport authority's boundaries, and the opposite is also true. In establishing this BSIP we have engaged with our local neighbouring authority partners to understand how our respective BSIPs come together and support each other. We will continue with this engagement as we collectively finalise our network and go forward to ensure that any network aspirations provide continuity across boundaries and do not stop at any administrative borders.

Bus Performance and Reliability

Bus performance and service reliability is a big driver of customer satisfaction and use. Currently services are managed independently by individual operators and with differing results, even on corridors where operators run together and sometimes in partnership.

Through our BSIP (and supported by the EP) we need to coordinate this network management by bringing together operators and local highway authorities to ensure headways are managed and network resilience is maintained across the network and between operators. We will look at protecting the core network from unplanned disruption to ensure reliable services. We propose to implement and coordinate technologies and people into a single system to work alongside the already established Regional Transport Coordination Centre to achieve this.

We will work collectively to further improve enforcement of Bus Lanes, parking and other traffic offences on the network to ensure maximum effectiveness for bus priority investment and benefit for passengers and operators.

Increases in bus priority and Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Bus priority; delivering faster and more reliable services on priority routes / corridors.

 **BSIP Theme; Better Journeys**

CRSTS investment themes

- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities
- Supporting inclusive growth

We Will

- introduce an additional 14km of bus lanes across the region. This will provide the foundation for our Bus Rapid Transit plans.
- provide an additional £300m in economic benefits through the delivery of bus priority and better connecting our communities and towns across the region.
- develop a wider bus priority programme across the region ready for delivery beyond 2027 to further speed up buses and make them more reliable and dependable.

Buses will be given greater priority through a step-change in investment and road space re-allocation to ensure bus priority infrastructure and the network supports the anticipated scale and shape of growth across the region.

Our BSIP will deliver a significant increase in the length of bus lanes, with 14km of new bus lanes up to 2027;

- Birmingham City Centre – Northfield – Longbridge / BCR 4.4
- Birmingham City Centre – Castle Vale (2027) / BCR 2.0
- Hamstead – Longbridge (2027) / BCR 2.5
- Harborne – Castle Bromwich (2027) / BCR 3.1
- West Bromwich – East Birmingham (2027) / BCR 1.5
- Sprint Phase 2 (2025)

Other Active Travel and Public Transport Schemes being developed for delivery by March 2027 are:

- A461 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
- Bus, Cycle and Walk Access - Darlaston and Willenhall Train Stations
- A454 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
- A41 Moxley Iron Park to Walsall Town Centre Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
- A4123 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
- A449 Walk, Cycle and Bus Corridor
- Wolverhampton City Centre Movement - Walk, Cycle and Bus Package

These schemes will provide bus priority facilities within them benefiting the overall bus passenger experience.

The network for greater bus priority, through more bus lanes where there is congestion and space along high frequency routes, will provide the foundation for a larger bus rapid transit network in the future.

We will integrate delivery with our Local Walking and Cycling Investment Plans

(LCWIP) where complementary and improve physical access to less accessible transport interchanges (e.g.Olton Station).

Beyond 2027, and where the opportunity presents itself, we will provide Better Journeys through the expansion of more bus priority across the region to speed up buses and improve reliability on more services as part of the core network. We will continue to develop and deliver new schemes above that detailed above and we have an ambitious program which has identified up to 92 km of additional bus lanes and multiple other interventions.

Achieving a modal shift through our Sprint Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network

Sprint is our planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network that will offer a similar level of service and comfort to a tram. It will operate on the highway like a bus with a limited stop service and dedicated bus lanes on key corridors.

Sprint will enable greater accessibility and quicker, more reliable journey times, helping the region to increase productivity whilst decreasing congestion on the region's roads. It provides the opportunity to encourage a greater modal shift from private cars with

its enhanced level of service and comfort. It will link residential and employment areas. It will also connect to HS2 and new tram extensions.

Strengthening the KRN approach

The West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN) is a 605km network of key highways across the West Midlands, defined in consultation with constituent local authorities and neighbouring highway authorities. Our KRN is a diverse network serving a range of travel demands and functioning across a range of place types with different characteristics that carries more people on buses than cars on the KRN each day.

As we look forward, there is a need to take a strategic view on the competing pressures across the KRN corridors to deliver optimum solutions from a variety of road-based modes that will help us achieve the emerging LTP Green Paper outcomes, and national policy objectives for bus and active travel as well as decarbonisation of the transport system. The LTP will offer an opportunity to clearly define the role of the KRN, along with policies and measures to ensure that it is developed and well-managed.

Improvements to Fares and Ticketing



BSIP Theme; Better Fares

“CRSTS Themes”

- Making behaviour change easy
- Connecting our places
- Supporting inclusive growth

We Will

- Build on the amazing work we have already done with the delivery of 1 day, 3 day and weekly capping to enable those using their bank card across multi-operator services to achieve the same capping benefits.

TfWM and its partner bus operators will deliver a revolution in its fares and ticketing. This will be delivered through simpler, easier and cheaper fares, targeted incentives, that will set the West Midlands above all other areas in the UK in terms of access to, and payment for public transport.

Simpler

We will replace the thousands of ticket options with a streamlined and cheaper set of just 6 ticket types that will be accepted on all operators’ services with aligned pricing. This will include single, day and season tickets making it much easier for customers to understand which ticket offers them best value.

For the first time, TfWM and its partners will be able to promote the price of tickets throughout all its retail channels This will remove the information barrier that restricts usage.

Easier

We will make it easier than ever before to pay for bus travel. We will deliver a contactless solution so that customers can achieve a best value cap when using their bank card across operators’ services.

TfWM will also continue to develop and promote its Swift Go solution which will become a vital component of its passenger incentive programme.

Cheaper

The interventions will change fares and ticketing in the West Midlands. Customers will be able to use their tickets on all operators’ service at no added cost.

Retail Proposal

Ticket retailing will be aligned to ensure both consistency and efficiency. TfWM, in partnership with local bus operators, will take over the retail network to ensure that customers can access the tickets they need, where and when they need them. This will see a hybrid of physical and digital channels that are customer optimised and

efficient to also ensure value for money for bus operators.

Marketing Proposal

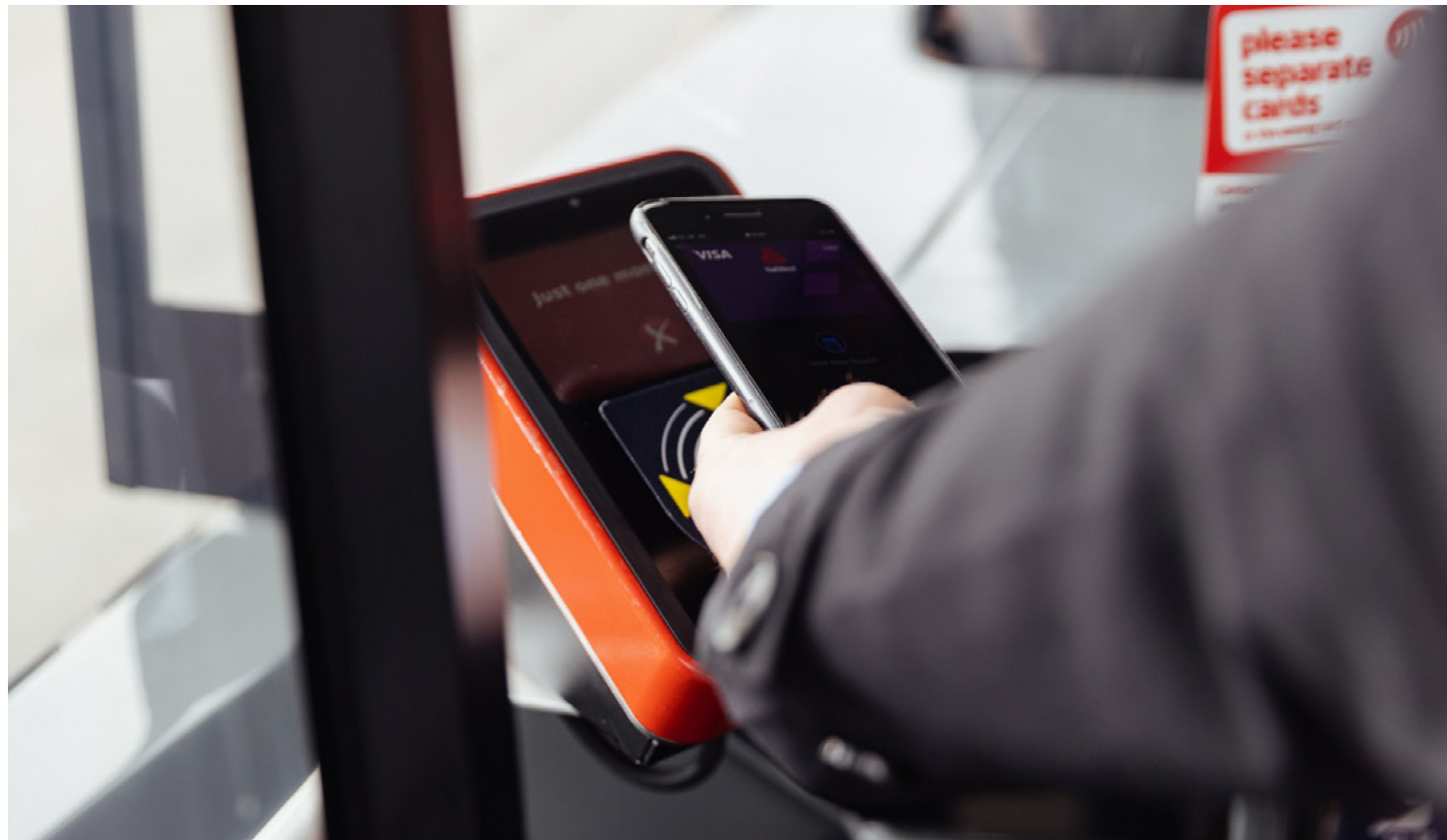
Marketing will be aligned, with TfWM and local bus operators working together to ensure that customers are fully informed on local bus services. This new approach will see a guarantee of 0.5% of ticket sales revenue allocated to marketing activity.

Ticket Discounting

As part of the launch of the new simplified ticket range, TfWM will support all operators in maintaining discounted ticketing to ensure customer best value across the complete product range and sustaining a real term reduction in ticket prices for customers across all operator services.

Passenger Incentive Programme

TfWM will work with bus operators to deliver a comprehensive passenger incentive programme that will use data to provide bespoke discounted and free travel offers that both encourage people to return to public transport whilst also generating new users



Improvements to the bus passenger experience.

Improved bus stops, bus stations and interchanges.

Improved bus information and network identity.



BSIP Theme; Better journeys

CRSTS investment themes

- Making behaviour change easy.
- Connecting our places
- Creating resilient networks and communities

We Will:

- Transform multi-modal information across the network and bring about effective and enhanced disruption information across all bus services to match that of rail and Metro.
- Provide Real Time Information screens, or virtual Real Time via smart phone to every stop across the region.
- Make our bus infrastructure cleaner, and greener and provide new enhanced branded infrastructure at all key centres across our network.
- Publish statistics on the performance of our bus network to build confidence in its use to promote growth in patronage.
- Deliver a new bus interchange in Dudley in Autumn 2025 significantly improving bus passenger experience, connectivity to other modes and supporting the wider economic development of Dudley.
- Deliver a new bus interchange on Moor Street Queensway, Birmingham to improve access to Birmingham's education quarter, connectivity to the West Midlands Metro and in preparation for the opening of the HS2 Curzon station.

Our ambition is to “Inform, Reassure and Inspire” the customer experience by providing higher-quality, and wider reaching information that is accessible to all.

Building on our current provision of bus information, and recognising a decrease in customer satisfaction in this area, we will deliver enhanced integrated information, including timetable information, onward travel information, wayfinding, fare information and availability of local services etc. so that the customer can make more informed decisions regarding their journey and feel safe, supported, in control and have trust

We will continue to work in partnership with operators of other modes to deliver improved multi-modal information at all interchanges and managed bus stations on printed and digital platforms.

Access to real time journey information will be provided at all stops across the network, via “virtual” displays, such as through a QR code or NFC tag, ensuring information is accessible for those with disabilities. We will continue to support electronic information screens at locations, focussed on the core network.

We will provide useful, up-to-date and accurate digital information that can assist customers along their journey, either via our network platforms or customer’s mobile devices, giving them greater confidence to use the system and potentially assisting with onward travel.

We will continue to deliver information through a variety of channels including at the point of getting on the bus as well as onboard the vehicle itself, to ensure that smartphone ownership is not a barrier to information.

We will support travel demand management through information and deliver systems, software and processes that support the RTCC. This will include enhanced disruption information and tools to give customers more information as to why and what alternatives are available, and support operational management of the network to improve bus performance and use.

We will continue to deliver our local TfWM branding across the network and support the vision of a core network that is easily recognised and contributes to a good customer experience. We will continue to work with our local bus operators to retain successful existing brands. Streamlined local branding, marketing and communications will improve the clarity and quality of

customer information. This will ensure a more intuitive understanding of a single integrated public transport system across Bus, Sprint, Metro and Rail.

We will make our transport assets cleaner, greener and accessible for all. Bus shelters, interchanges and our managed bus stations are the “shop window” for new customers. We will ensure that these facilities across the core network are enhanced and branded to attract new users and encourage modal shift.

We will work with local authorities to enhance the public realm around bus stops to ensure that the locality is safe and provides a positive stepping off point to improve the overall bus journey. This will be focused at areas of highest footfall such as planned schemes for Wolverhampton City Centre, Moor Street Queensway; Birmingham City Centre and Coventry City Centre.

We will enhance our current marketing strategies and promote and provide sustainable travel information that promote the benefits of sustainable transport compared to driving.

We will publish statistics on the performance of the bus network to tell a “good story” through information outputs, particularly focussing on reliability.

Accessibility, inclusiveness, personal safety, and security



BSIP Theme; Better Buses, Better Journeys

CRSTS investment themes

- Healthy streets and spaces
- Making behaviour change easy.
- Creating resilient networks and communities

We aspire to:

- Deliver targeted campaigns that focus on education and intervention to reduce offences.
- Roll out CCTV at key locations for enhanced staff and public safety.
- Improve lighting at bus stations, stops and interchanges.
- Increase our presence and patrols on the network
- Review the safety of our fleet and put in place a strategy to bring about improvements in safety for passengers and all other road users.

It is imperative that the Safer Travel Partnership (our collaboration with West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and Transport for West Midlands) gives passengers confidence as they use the bus. It is important that the safety and security of customers is considered from the 'whole journey experience' point of view. Increasing security measures at stops and interchanges is as important as improving key routes to those stops and interchanges.

Feedback has shown the primary interventions that are requested and needed in this area, and it is these interventions, along with key linked deliverables within the Safer Travel Plan, that have informed the actions to be taken. This fits well with the Violence Against Women and Girls strategy being developed locally by the Police and Crime Commissioner, to address concerns, where transport has been highlighted as a place where women and girls feel less safe.

Targeted campaigns that focus on education and intervention

Young people are more likely to be victims of crime and focus on education and intervention needs to be considered in this space. Research shows that education can reduce the offences that young people are exposed to. We plan to deliver this through the Education Officer engaging with a minimum of 30,000 young people and women per year on education programmes.

The roll out of CCTV at key locations

Technology has also proved to be an extremely cost-effective tool in relation to both staff and public safety on the transport networks. In a CCTV-rich environment, the opportunities for evidence gathering and real-time interventions and incident reporting are clear. This will be delivered by installing remote access CCTV to over 50 shelters & upgrade to HD CCTV on 11 routes.

Improved lighting at stations, stops and interchanges

Well-illuminated areas tend to improve people's perception of safety and lower their fear of crime. Upgrading lighting and reducing dark spaces will deliver this improvement.

Increased patrols

All demographics favour an increase in capable guardianship on the network, with all cohorts seeing this as their preferred top intervention in making them feel safer. We plan to add 9 more TSO's onto the network delivering 18,720 additional hours per year.



Implementing the Bus Passenger Charter



BSIP Themes; Better Buses, Better Journeys

CRSTS investment themes

- Making behaviour change easy

We Will

- give passengers in our region a stronger voice
- ensure passengers can easily have their say and that they feel listened to
- work with partners to act quickly if things go wrong
- promote an environment in which feedback is actively encouraged and used positively improve the customer experience

The Customer Charter

We will continue to deliver and further develop a single Bus Passenger Charter for the region that gives customers information about what they can expect from the bus service in the West Midlands, including tangible outputs, and how to complain where expectations are not met.

The Charter will:

- Confirm the geographical scope of the bus service
- Explain the responsibilities of TfWM and the bus operators
- Set the standards that passengers can expect to receive with regards to punctuality, vehicle cleanliness, service distribution, information standards and accessibility of buses and bus infrastructure
- Include details of inclusive transport provision and specific customer support arrangements for disabled people

- Offer help when things go wrong by signposting sources of support, and summarise the complaint handling process
- Provide reimbursement of travel expenses should the last journey on any bus service not operate.

Passenger Engagement Opportunities

The Bus Charter and related standards will be partially informed by customers through engagement with passenger representatives and advocacy groups. We will ensure passengers have a range of ongoing opportunities through which to engage with TfWM and the bus operators.

Mechanisms for redress

We will ensure our Bus Passenger Charter is easy to understand through engagement with passenger representatives and advocacy groups, including those with insights into accessibility and equality barriers. We will make it easy for all passengers to provide feedback and ensure that processes are in place to put things right if they go wrong. Giving passengers a stronger voice will support improvements in overall satisfaction.

Driver Training Programmes

We will also work closely with operators to improve staff engagement and customer satisfaction and standards, through enhanced driver training programmes.



Improvements to the Bus Fleet



**BSIP Theme;
Better Buses**

CRSTS investment themes

- Making behaviour change easy
- Delivering a green revolution
- Supporting inclusive growth

We aspire to:

- Achieve a 100% zero-emission bus fleet 2036.
- Deliver 600 zero emission buses by 2026.
- Deliver a flagship articulated fleet for the Sprint bus rapid transit network.
- Set vehicle standards with enhanced levels of accessibility, safety and amenity.

WMCA will continue to move to a 100% zero-emission fleet as quickly as possible by; supporting the rollout of more new electric buses, continuing to work with industry to expand the deployment of hydrogen buses and targeted use of re-powering buses to make the best use of existing assets. Our current pathway to eliminate bus exhaust emissions would see all buses in the region zero emission by 2036. In addition to the average rolling investment in our 2,000 strong fleet of around £25m, funding of around £29m per year on top of our BSIP ask would be required to meeting this target.

Our current roadmap for zero emission buses:

- National Express purchased last non-zero emission bus – 2019.
- First 29 battery electric double deck buses – 2020
- First 20 hydrogen double deck buses – 2021
- First 5 electric re-powered buses – 2021
- Coventry’s all-electric bus city – 2025

- UK's first battery electric articulated bus rapid transit fleet – 2026
- All WMCA subsidised bus services zero emission target – 2036

Alongside our zero emission ambitions, we have sought to address the immediate issue of poor air quality caused by bus through our retrofit programmes – fitting over 1,000 buses with the technology in the last 3 years.

The investment in new vehicles will act as a springboard to deliver enhanced passenger features. Alongside meeting the highest standards of accessibility on new vehicles we will ensure new buses are comfortable, attractive and include passenger amenities such as charging and Wi-Fi to help make bus travel a compelling proposition.

Through collaboration with operators, passenger information on existing buses can also be improved. In 2020, we completed a successful project to retrofit on-board next-stop audio and visual information to existing buses. We aspire to expand this across the rest of the existing bus fleet to make buses accessible for all.

Safety for passengers and all other road users is a critical part of bus services. We will seek to develop a Bus Safety Standard for the West Midlands that addresses all aspects

of passenger physical and personal safety as well as vehicle design and technologies. These standards will be developed through close collaboration with passenger groups, operators, vehicle manufacturers, and compatriot LTAs via Urban Transport Group.

Our fleet for Ring & Ride and demand responsive transport is a target for investment in next year. We will use available funding to provide high-quality and accessible vehicles and beginning to trial the use of zero emission vehicles on these services.



Longer-term transformation of the bus network



**BSIP Themes;
Better Buses,
Better Journeys,
Better Fares**



CRSTS investment themes

- Healthy streets and spaces
- Making behaviour change easy
- Creating resilient networks and communities

We will

- Develop an ongoing pipeline of costed proposals to evolve the integration and transformation of the bus network through enhanced services, more bus priority and better passenger infrastructure.
- Work with local authorities to continue exploring complementary measures to support public transport network growth including parking controls, better prioritisation of bus, and capital investment in bus-based Park and Ride.

The delivery of this BSIP forms the latest stage of an ongoing transformation of bus services and transport investment in the West Midlands. Buses have to act as the critical component in a major network of integrated sustainable and active travel.

This BSIP sets out the ambition to 2025 but the West Midlands intends to keep up this ambition and prepare for the next stages once this initial investment programme is implemented.

TfWM is currently undertaking an analysis of how integration between modes can be further improved as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Transport Plan. This work, titled 'Project Fuse', will further consider global best practice for the essential elements of integrated transport services.

As well as traditional approaches, this will consider future technology such as 5G communication systems to ensure the transport network is managed more efficiently and effectively, and passengers are kept well informed of the choices available to

them and encouraged and incentivise active and sustainable travel.

TfWM has a proud history of working in partnership with bus operators and our constituent Local Authorities to deliver improvements to services in the region. We were the first urban Transport Authority to enter into an Enhanced Partnership and all of the commitments within this BSIP are designed to be deliverable within this Enhanced Partnership, or future iterations thereof.

In 2023, the Combined Authority Board commissioned a Full Assessment of powers available under the Bus Services Act 2017 to determine whether our BSIP objectives could be better delivered through Franchising. This Assessment is due to report back to the Combined Authority Board later in 2024, when it will be determined whether to proceed with external Audit and consultation. After this, if there is a decision to Franchise it is unlikely franchised services will be operational before 2027, given the time it will take to design and procure contracts and mobilise the market.

The initiatives within this BSIP are therefore designed to be implemented through partnership, however the Franchise Assessment is considering how wider bus

policy objectives, to which the commitments within this document contribute, might be delivered more effectively under Franchising.



Section 5: Targets, Performance Monitoring and Reporting.

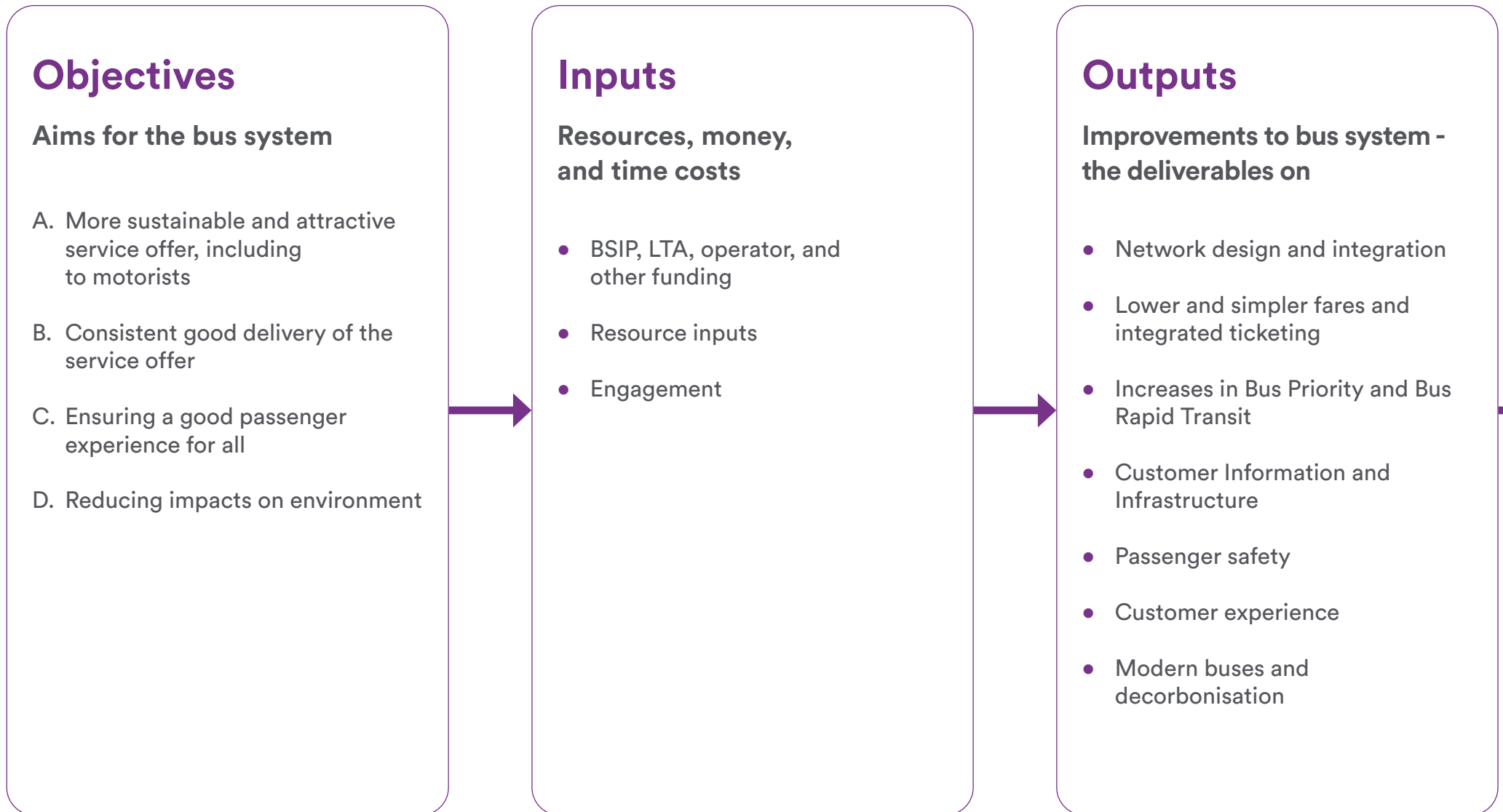
Key objectives for our BSIP

We have drawn all the challenges and opportunities discussed into four objectives, that have informed the development of our BSIP – Better Buses, Better Journeys, Better Fares. They reflect the NBS, VfB, and LTP ‘Motives for Change’.

A logic map summarised below links these objectives to the ultimate positive long-term impacts for our region. It also shows the shorter-term outcomes for the transport system which form the basis for our BSIP investment programme – the deliverable outputs are described in Part C with outputs linked to our six CRSTS investment themes.

- A: More sustainable and attractive service offer, including to motorists (Better Journeys, Better Fares)
 - to retain, regain and attract new trips; via a stable, legible, better-integrated network, at optimal frequencies for the entire day and week, with excellent value cross-operator/mode ticketing
- B: Consistent, good delivery of the service offer (Better Journeys)
 - reliably faster, and more punctual services, via more and better bus priority, with improved arrangements for performance and network management
- C: Ensuring a good passenger experience for all (Better Journeys, Better Buses)
 - raising passenger satisfaction, with marketable improvements to; vehicles and also where possible; facilities, branding and information, and safety and personal security – with a whole-system passenger charter to ensure these standards are met
- D: Reducing environmental impacts (Better Buses)
 - cutting carbon, and the other emissions that worsen air quality and damage health, with a move to zero emission buses

Midlands BSIP – Headline Logic Map



Outcomes

near-term effects on transport system

- Faster timetabled bus journeys across more of our area
- More reliable bus journeys
- More affordable bus travel
- Faster growth in bus trips with operators other than the largest
- Better bus journey quality
- Improved personal security perceptions of, and fewer events
- Fewer health and safety events
- Fewer passenger complaints not satisfactorily resolved
- Reduced emissions from bus
- Lower bus operating costs
- Higher passenger satisfaction
- More bus trips retained, regained, and attracted
- More bus trips by younger people
- More bus trips by older and disabled people
- More bus users are former car users
- Increased multi-modal/active travel (walking and cycling)
- Fewer car trips, especially to centres

Impacts

long-term wider benefits

- Better jobs/services take-up - levelling-up and SEP progress
- A growing younger population is supported
- Reduced living costs - reduced social exclusion
- Higher productivity and growth with fast Covid recovery
- Reduced traffic miles and congestion
- Reduced car dependence, new option values
- More sustainable places and communities
- A more sustainable local transport industry
- Reduced crime and fear or crime
- Better community physical and mental health and safety
- Improved air quality
- Carbon emissions reduced and progress on #WM2041

Targets and Monitoring

We have been monitoring those outcomes shown using the targets in the table below – which, in addition to the four mandatory NBS areas, include targets in four additional areas linked most closely to local challenges with our current bus offer.

Monitoring subject	To monitor outcomes	Metric	Baseline, either of		Latest data available*	Targets by year		Outputs contributing most to outcomes monitored by headline targets
			19/20	20/21		24/25	29/30	
1. Passenger numbers and growth (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faster growth in trips with operators other than largest • More bus trips retained, regained, attracted, and • by younger people, and • older and disabled people 	Growth in boardings (millions) overall	248		232 (end FY 23-24)	268	295	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network Design & Integration • Lower, Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing • Increases in Bus Priority & BRT • Customer Information & Infrastructure • Passenger Safety • Customer Experience • Modern Buses & Decarbonisation

Monitoring subject	To monitor outcomes	Metric	Baseline, either of		Latest data available*	Targets by year		Outputs contributing most to outcomes monitored by headline targets
			19/20	20/21		24/25	29/30	
2. Journey time and network access (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster timetabled bus journeys across more of our area 	Bus speeds kph (MF 0700-1100), network overall		16.8	16.4	17.2 or +2.5%	17.8 or +6.0%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Increases in Bus Priority & BRT
		Bus speeds kph (MF 0700-1100), strategic centres		15.7 to 18.4	13.9 to 18.1	16.4 to 18.6 or +4.0% to +1.0%	17.0 to 19.2 or +8.0% to +4.0%	
3. Reliability improvements (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More reliable journeys 	Punctuality (MF 0700-1100), network overall	85%		82%	95%	>95%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increases in Bus Priority & BRT
		Punctuality (MF 0700-1100), each strategic centre	80% to 89%		75% To 80%	95%	>95%	

Monitoring subject	To monitor outcomes	Metric	Baseline, either of		Latest data available*	Targets by year		Outputs contributing most to outcomes monitored by headline targets
			19/20	20/21		24/25	29/30	
4. Average passenger satisfaction (mandatory)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better journey quality Fewer complaints not resolved Higher satisfaction (for all, and older, younger, and disabled people) 	Average passenger satisfaction with service overall		85%	82% (TTABS)	89%	93%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Lower, Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Customer Information & Infrastructure Passenger Safety Customer Experience Modern Buses & Decarbonisation
5. Affordability (additional)	More affordable travel	Average fare p/km (in baseline prices)	23.2p		20.2p	22.5p	21.4p	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lower & Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing
6. Safety and personal security (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved personal security perceptions, and fewer events 	Slips, trips, & falls per million boards (five-year average)	0.14		0.19	0.13	0.12	Passenger Safety
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fewer health and safety (H&S) events 	Crime rate per million boards		26	20 to 21	18	8	

Monitoring subject	To monitor outcomes	Metric	Baseline, either of		Latest data available*	Targets by year		Outputs contributing most to outcomes monitored by headline targets
			19/20	20/21		24/25	29/30	
7. Carbon and other bus emissions (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced emissions from bus Lower bus operating costs 	Annual GHG saving (ktCO2e) over diesel buses		5	11.5 (95% of the fleet now Euro VI or better, 12% is ZE)	60	90	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Modern Buses & Decarbonisation
8. Mode shift (additional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More passengers former car users Increased multi-modal/active travel Fewer car trips, esp. to centres 	Car mode share to strategic centres	68% New data made this 65%, then 62%		70% or 73% (depends on data used)	66%	61%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network Design & Integration Lower, Simpler Fares & Integrated Ticketing Increases in Bus Priority & BRT Customer Information & Infrastructure

*Data from Jan-24 monitoring report, unless stated otherwise

Setting outcome targets

Choosing targets for these outcomes began with the four mandatory target subjects in guidance: passenger growth (primary to DfT), journey times, reliability, and satisfaction.

But reviewing supplementary Transport Focus guidance, and work on the current bus offer and challenges for passengers (and non-users), the partnership added four additional target subjects. Guidance also asked for targets able to be monitored with existing stable data sources, and a review of other current and past targets was carried out too.

Target baseline dates depended on data availability, and Covid impacts – it made more sense sometimes to compare with a pre-Covid baseline. Meanwhile target levels had to meet NBS and local ambitions and commitments and be able to drive improvements – but also have regard to evidence on effects of outputs being delivered, and recognise effects beyond Partnership control, and background trends too.

They also needed to take account of the way that different outputs areas would contribute to outcome targets, and avoid risks around double-counting, but also recognise the challenge if all outcomes could not be delivered together in line with the BSIP. Unfortunately, target-setting did not envisage the scale of challenge from both the smaller amount of BSIP funding available compared to the 2021 plan, and the impacts on our Covid recovery of the global situation on the cost of living (on the passenger side) and cost of operations (on the Partnership side).

But if the external environment improves, and there is a supportive local policy environment for bus, as evidenced by the full franchising assessment now underway, and CRSTS funds for schemes with BSIP synergies, then our overall objectives BSIP are still live, with hope for more progress by the first BSIP target year of 24/25 – with some commentary on progress to date for each target in the table summarised below:

1 Passenger numbers and growth

Difficulties that have persisted since Covid like the national driver shortage and operating costs, together with the reduced funding compared to the 2021 plan, have limited delivery of outputs that were to drive our outcome targets, including this one. But overall bus boardings have grown, from a low of 98m boardings in the twelve months to March 2021, the current figure is 232, a recovery of 94% of the baseline, and each of the last few months have seen demand one or two million boardings higher than in the same month the previous year. If that trend continues, together with efforts to deploy BSIP and other funding on delivery of planned outputs, we would still see the 24/25 target reached before the end of the 2025 calendar year.

2 Journey time and network access

Road traffic has increased significantly since the end of the pandemic. DfT statistics (TRA8901) for the West Midlands metropolitan area record that although overall vehicle miles fell just over 20% in 2020 compared to 2019, they grew by almost 10% between 2020 and 2021, and almost the same amount again between 2021 and 2022, bringing total traffic levels to within 5% of those seen pre-Covid. More recent DfT statistics (TRA2501) suggest traffic has now approximately returned to pre-Covid levels. This backdrop of rising traffic levels must be the main reason for the drop in overall speeds to 2% below baseline levels – and note the fall was against a challenging baseline of 20/21, when traffic was lighter in lockdown. Progress towards the target is still expected if the post-Covid recovery in general traffic is now plateauing, and as BSIP and CRSTS funds begin delivering better infrastructure, and services.

3 Reliability improvements

Bus punctuality has also not kept pace with targets, but in relation to the increase in bus use, and road traffic levels since then, this is perhaps unsurprising, although 24/25 targets now appear extremely stretching.

4 Average passenger satisfaction

In 2020, TfWM switched from the Transport Focus Bus Passenger Survey (BPS) to its own Travel Trends and Behaviours Survey (TTABS) for monitoring bus passenger satisfaction, as the BPS was suspended by the pandemic. The BPS baseline had been 85% (using the final pre-Covid survey), but the TTABS figure in its first full year was 78%, giving an alternative baseline which implied a more stretching target, and current satisfaction exceeds that, with higher satisfaction ratings still around personal security, although scores for punctuality were much lower, reflecting the challenges on BSIP targets in that area.

5 Affordability

Positive progress has been made in this target, reflecting the delivery of key ‘Lower, Simpler Fares and Integrated Ticketing’ output promises. These complemented the July 2021 reduction of most fares to 2013 levels, making them the lowest in England, although from July 2023, operators increased fares by 12.5%, in part reflecting higher operating costs. Fares remain among the lowest in the UK, however, and inflation after the baseline year means many customers will not have seen any significant real-terms fare increase since then – meanwhile they have benefitted from a significant simplification of the ticket range, and the ability to use tickets across all bus operators following the removal of the price premium on the multi-bus operator ticket, giving them better value for money and saving them time too. Overall, affordability appears to be on track for the 24/25 target.

6 Safety and personal security

Despite challenges in other areas, there has been no lack of attention to performance on outcomes in these area – in line with commitments in the new passenger charter.

On health and safety events, our bus station estate remains our reporting focus. The number of slips, trips, and falls (STFs) at bus stations has risen as passengers returned, but most STFs recorded result from individual factors (e.g. age, medical condition, inattention) rather than fault with our infrastructure or undertakings. The rate has increased too, but the five-year average takes account of the relative infrequency of events recorded, even with the impact of the improved reporting system from February 2022 which means more STFs are captured for attention by our frontline staff (and which may justify an uplift to the baseline).

Meanwhile the number of recorded crimes on the network has fallen, at the same time as growth in bus boardings, so the rate has fallen too – we are on track for the 24/25 target of 18, reflecting progress on outputs like more Transport Safety Officers joining the team (and note the higher satisfaction scores for personal security in TTABS).

7 Carbon and other bus emissions

Linked to WMCA wider net zero commitments, the BSIP has an outcome target on fleet carbon emissions, and is committed to a zero-emission bus fleet by 2030 with at least 750 ZEBs by 2025. This is supported by two DfT funded projects: Coventry Electric Bus City (CEBC), which will see all buses travelling in and through Coventry converted to ZEB operation by 2025 and Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA), which will see 124 hydrogen fuel cell and battery electric buses introduced by 2026. As part of EPS V002, which was made and became binding from 24th November 2022, from 1st May 2023 all bus operators who operate services within the EPS area will have to provide services with vehicles that have a minimum Euro VI emission standard. This should reduce the level of nitrous oxide (NOx) and fine particulate matter (PM2.5/10) emissions which affect local air quality and contribute to significant health issues such as asthma, heart disease, and lung cancer.

7 Mode shift

Given the challenges faced by buses since the BSIP was submitted, and until more of the envisaged BSIP outputs can be delivered to make services more attractive to motorists, significant progress might not have been expected on this target. And adding together numbers from weekday peak (0730-0930) biennial traffic cordon counts at each of our strategic centres, the proportion of motorised trips entering in the weekday morning peak (0730-0930) by car and other private vehicles in fact increased from 65% in 2019 and 2020 combined, to 73% in 2020 and 2021 combined, and the share of trips by public transport fell. But although the share of car trips by car to strategic centres rose from 2019 to 2021, their number did not – trips overall were depressed by the pandemic. And bus trips fell less than trips by other public transport modes, so there is hope the longer-term target is still realistic even if 24/25 now looks stretching. If BSIP or other funding can progress on our planned outputs, much of the planned growth in bus use would likely be to strategic centres – pre-pandemic, our data showed almost three-quarters of bus trips were to or from a strategic centre and improving the attractiveness of bus relative to car can be especially effective for trips to strategic centres, where motorists often face the most difficult and costly car parking, and face/create the worst congestion.



BSIP Funding

Our BSIP funding ask to March 2025 is £662 million.

If provided in full, it would leverage a further investment of £406m of local and private sector contributions that we could raise on the back of this investment for Better Buses, Better Journeys and Better Fares.

Our BSIP prospectus contains our ask for bus priority to develop the largest network of cross-city and cross-regional services ever developed, which underpins all of the other asks to Bus Back Better and build trust and confidence in our bus network.

Our BSIP investment complements our wider £1.05 billion City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). Our CRSTS prospectus identified complementary ‘bus’ funding for some of our key priorities for bus

rapid transit, simpler ticketing, enhanced public transport interchanges and demand-responsive network enhancements.

There is no duplication between the two. Together, they set out the need for over £1 billion for bus investment in the West Midlands. Both investment asks are aligned and provide strong synergies that, if nationally backed, would generate a real chance for levelling up of the West Midlands economy and “Building Back Better”



Making it happen at pace

The West Midlands has led the way on making positive change for bus through public-private partnerships, delivering over £500m of bus improvements through the West Midlands Bus Alliance since late 2015.



The award-winning West Midlands Bus Alliance is made up of local bus operators, local highway authorities, Transport for West Midlands, Confederation of Passenger Transport, Transport Focus and Bus Users UK. A Bus Alliance Board is responsible for setting objectives, overseeing work programmes and making sure work gets done and performance improves. The Bus Alliance Board is accountable to the WMCA Board. This has become the benchmark for public-private partnerships for bus services in the UK.

We have a proven delivery track record spanning several decades. The skills, processes and mechanisms we have in place have been refined and strengthened over many successfully delivered small and large-scale capital projects.

Our project experience includes delivering the first part of our Bus Rapid Transit network – Sprint, cross city Bus Priority Program and world class multi-modal interchanges. It is critical that additional funding is secured and maintained to retain our local experience and expertise so that we can continue our bus service improvements to “Bus Back Better”.

Sustained investment and delivery at pace will be accomplished through our existing West Midlands Bus Alliance and associated Enhanced Partnership delivery model. As the BSIP is published, our Bus Alliance governance will be reviewed, alongside necessary updates to our existing EP. There is no end date to the BSIP – it will be reviewed at least annually through the Bus Alliance to ensure alignment with the emerging LTP and any other relevant national or regional plans.

Through delivery, if the BSIP vision and outcomes cannot be delivered in partnership, franchising is identified as a mechanism to which LTA’s can turn to deliver the BSIP. TfWM is undertaking an assessment of the wider bus service reform options available through the Bus Services Act 2017. This ongoing assessment includes bus franchising options and will detail how the BSIP vision could be pursued and delivered using the 2017 Act.

Section 6: DfT BSIP Overview Table

Summary Information

Name of Local Authority or Authorities

West Midlands Combined Authority (Transport for West Midlands)

Enhanced Partnership(s) and/or Franchising Scheme(s) covered by the BSIP:

West Midlands Enhanced Partnership

Date of Publication

12th June 2024

Web address (URL) of the published BSIP:

[West Midlands Bus Service Improvement Plan | Transport for West Midlands \(tfwm.org.uk\)](https://www.tfwm.org.uk)

Improvements Programme to 2025

