

Strategic Vision for Bus



Transport for
West Midlands



Contents

Foreword	p3
Executive summary	p4
Introduction	p5-8
The importance of bus in the West Midlands	p9-10
Challenges to bus	p11-13
Our bus intervention to date	p14-16
Opportunities presented by the bus	p17-19
Vision for bus	p20-22
Making the vision happen	p23



Andy Street
Mayor of the West Midlands



Roger Lawrence
Leader - City of Wolverhampton Council
Portfolio Holder - Transport WMCA

The West Midlands Combined Authority is working to deliver a transport system that the region will be proud of. One which allows people to prosper by connecting our communities to opportunities in employment, education, housing and leisure.

Public transport is essential for inclusive growth in the region, and the bus is central to the public transport offering with 4 out of 5 public transport journeys taken by bus. Through the West Midlands Bus Alliance we have worked collaboratively with bus operators, local authorities and other partners to invest in improvements to the West Midlands bus network, improving fares, passenger experience, vehicle emissions and network performance.

However the bus network is facing serious challenges. Congestion is decreasing the reliability and accessibility of the bus, whilst negative perceptions act as a barrier to a greater uptake in bus usage.

As a Mayoral Combined Authority we have new powers that could greatly influence the future of the network. Furthermore, technological innovations provide the potential to deliver a smarter network with integration between other modes of travel. We have the opportunity to deliver a bus network in the region that works for everyone, and decreases the need for private car trips which in turn helps to improve air quality in the region. These factors are key to achieving our Inclusive Growth agenda.

Setting our vision for the bus is necessary to enable us to assess the options and opportunities presented to us now and in the future. The vision will set the benchmark for what we want from the bus in the West Midlands, which will form a vital part of our world-class integrated transport system.

The West Midlands has strong growth ambitions to improve productivity and the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the region. The opening of HS2, 2021 Coventry City of Culture and the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games will be once in a lifetime opportunities to transform the region and drive investment.

Transport is key to this economic growth, but congestion on our roads remains a challenge to our ambitions. Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is supporting local authority partners and investing in developing a world-class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient travel across the region and will reduce the need for private car journeys on our already congested roads. The bus plays a vital role in this system carrying significantly more passenger than any other mode per annum, with the widest network coverage across the region.

The bus carries 4 out of 5 public transport trips in our region and remains the most important, adaptable and flexible mode. It is crucial to define its purpose in the region's integrated transport system to help the bus reach its potential.

Setting a vision for bus in the West Midlands will enable the region to develop its vital role and strive towards ensuring that the mode can thrive, supporting and connecting major rail and Metro investment, connecting communities and towns, and helping to build a healthier, happier, better connected and more prosperous region.

“

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all 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.

”

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has set out an ambitious plan for growth in its Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) to transform the regional economy. By 2030, the SEP plans for:



500,000
new jobs



20,000
more businesses



16,000
additional hectares
of employment land



215,000
additional homes

The SEP sets the overarching vision for the region. This will be delivered through an aspirational and robust programme to accelerate improvements in productivity and the quality of life for everyone in the region. The SEP recognises that an efficient and resilient transport system will underpin future economic success, by connecting communities to opportunities, and by connecting businesses to markets.

Movement for Growth, the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan, sets out an ambitious plan to greatly improve the transport system to support economic growth and regeneration, new development and housing, and improve air quality, the environment and social inclusion. A 10-year delivery plan accompanies Movement for Growth, outlining key supporting transport projects that will deliver many of these outcomes over the coming decade.

Transport is fundamental to economic development and growth to enable the region to thrive and ensure we deliver on our Local Industrial Strategy, Housing Deal and Public Service Reform. Bus is a vital component to this as it directly supports access to the labour market, and allows people to access education, employment and services.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), the transport arm of the WMCA, has developed a Vision for Bus to ensure the delivery of a world-class integrated transport system, which allows convenient travel across the region by public transport that is affordable and accessible for all and reduces congestion on our roads.

TfWM's move towards of an integrated transport system is epitomised through the new West Midlands Transport brand, which brings a single identity to the public transport system in the West Midlands, with each mode having its own distinctive livery. Offering an integrated transport system is key for delivering genuine choice in the way people travel around the region, with car travel not having to be the default choice for travel.

Within the existing West Midlands public transport offering, buses play a fundamental role in supporting travel and accessibility. Whilst the bus network is facing certain challenges, including falling patronage and declining speeds, it remains the most popular and important mode of public transport in the region. This vision will help to develop the network for bus to ensure it continues to effectively serve the region, and can adapt and embrace innovation and opportunities to meet current and future travel demand and patterns.

Helping to overcome the region's strategic challenges as outlined in the SEP, with transport interventions:

1

Supporting an accessible network

Addressing transport barriers (accessibility, availability and affordability) for excluded groups

2

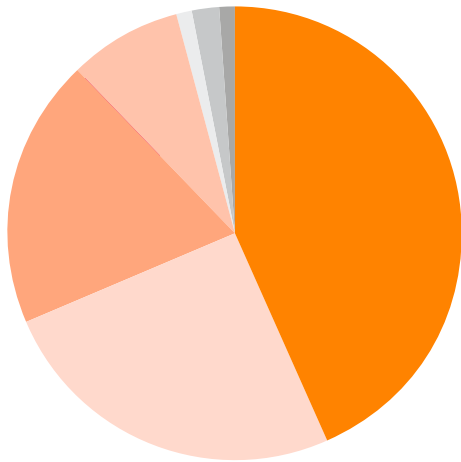
Delivering support that connects people to key employment and skills opportunities

Ensuring growth is inclusive by helping the most vulnerable and isolated groups share in prosperity

3

Ensuring alignment with the Public Service Reform agenda

Targeting interventions which secure better for less from public services, improving the life chances and the health and wellbeing of communities



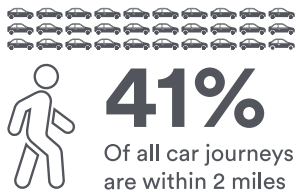
NTS data on average annual (main mode) trips per West Midlands metropolitan area resident (2015-2017)

- Drive (43%)
- Walk (19%)
- Rail and Metro (1%)
- Cycle (1%)
- Lift (25%)
- Bus (8%)
- Taxi (2%)

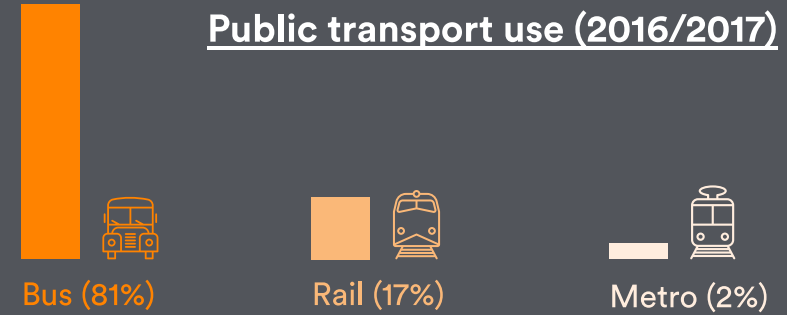


216,000

Fewer people are within a 45 minute bus journey time of Birmingham city centre compared to 2008 because of congestion



Public transport use (2016/2017)

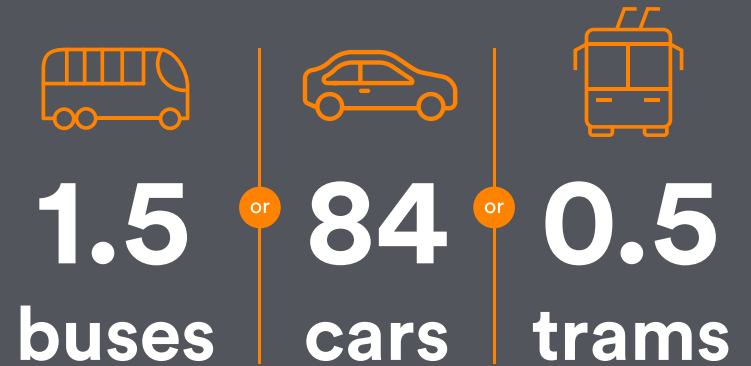
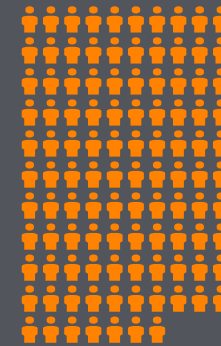


A growing region

Between now and 2035, our region will grow every day, by:

100 people

Which is the equivalent of filling an extra...





Bus passenger satisfaction at **88%**

Largest commercially operated bus network in the UK with **75 million vehicle miles**



90%

of the urban area of the West Midlands within 400 metres of a bus stop



Bus punctuality at

82%

We fund 6.8million vehicle miles of socially necessary services and 850,000 Ring & Ride journeys each year



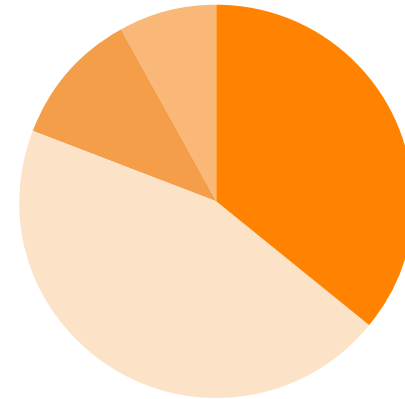
We manage 12 bus stations, maintain almost 12,000 bus stops and 1,750 RTI displays

Over 50%

of students are frequent bus users and depend on the bus to get to their education or training



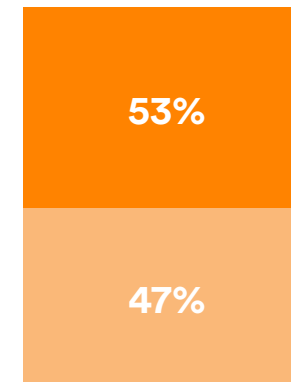
Journey Purpose by Bus 2018



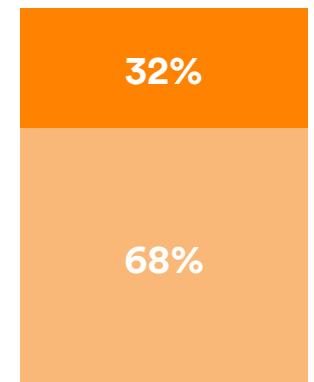
- Work (36%)
- Shopping/Leisure (45%)
- Education (11%)
- Personal Business (8%)

Car ownership in the West Midlands

- No car in household
- Car in household



Bus users



All West Midlands

THE IMPORTANCE OF BUS IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

The region's bus network has an indisputable, but often undervalued, role in powering the region's economy. It reaches every corner of our conurbation, providing an essential mobility service to access employment, education and leisure. It is the backbone of the region's public transport system.

Whereas rail and Metro patronage is growing, bus is seeing a patronage decline. However, buses still carry over three times more passengers a year than Metro and rail combined, with over 257 million passenger journeys in 2017/18.

Despite continued falling bus patronage in the region, it provides the widest and densest network of travel options for distances that are too long to walk or cycle, with 90% of urban areas within 400 metres of a bus stop.

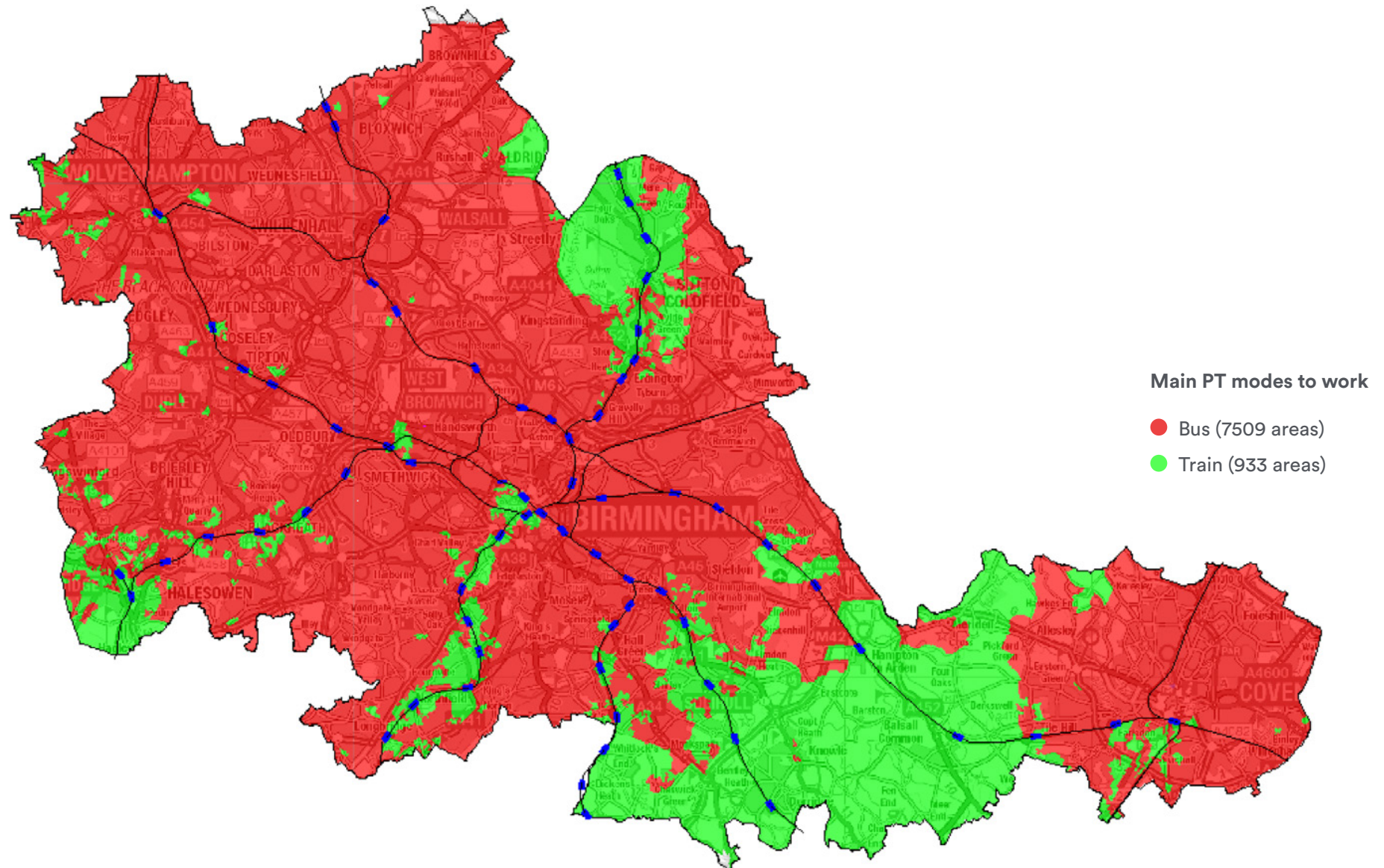
The flexibility of the bus network also makes buses the perfect means of providing public transport options in areas of growth, changing travel demand and new housing, supporting the West Midlands Housing Deal and Local Industrial Strategy. This means that buses are central to supporting regeneration, inclusive growth and social integration. Where there may not be a case for investing in permanent rail and light rail infrastructure, new bus infrastructure can be planned to connect new communities and support housing and jobs growth.

Buses should be treated as infrastructure. Bus infrastructure is essential to our lives and work. Having modern and accessible bus infrastructure throughout the region is fundamental to our future inclusive growth and long-term productivity. Treating buses as infrastructure means considering all aspects of bus; new vehicles; new and enhanced bus services; new bus infrastructure including highway measures; at-stop infrastructure and walking infrastructure to bus; as well as data, technology and passenger information.

We can do more for bus. Challenges, such as congestion, are restricting the mode's ability to reach its potential; whilst ongoing interventions have helped improve conditions to a certain degree, there are further opportunities to explore that can improve how we link up people and markets to attract investment and significantly improve the overall product of bus.



Main public transport mode used to access work (train/bus) (with rail network, based on LSOA areas)



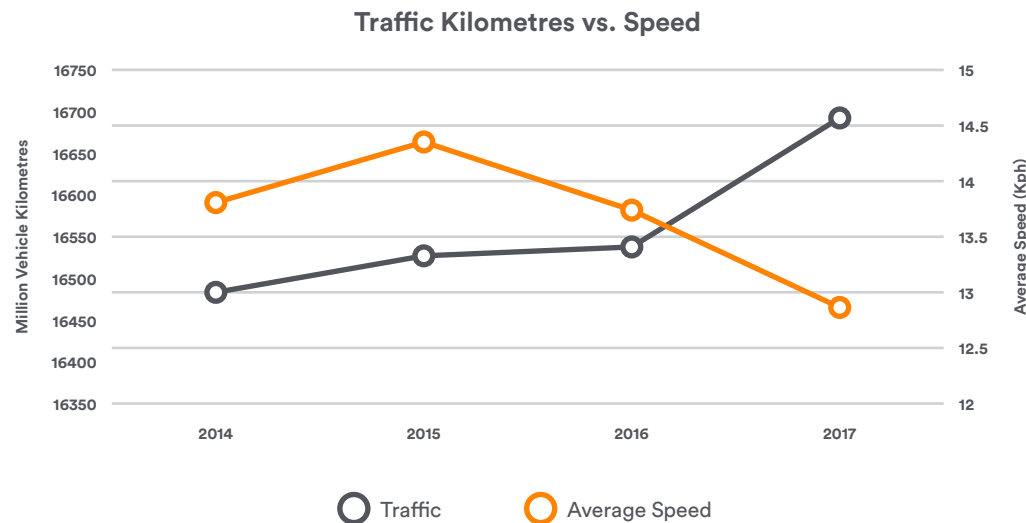
There are a number of challenges that buses face in the West Midlands, restraining its ability to be as reliable, accessible, well-used and affordable as possible.

The Congestion Challenge

The West Midlands economy has seen sustained growth in recent years, increasing faster than the national economy to make the region a national leader in attracting inward investment. This continued economic success means that travel demand has also grown rapidly, with 2016 seeing record levels of traffic on the region’s roads. With record levels of traffic comes record levels of congestion and as a result, bus speeds are reducing.

Congestion, if not managed properly, will continue to have direct costs to people and businesses; increasing business costs, affecting productivity and reducing accessibility to labour markets. Congestion also has a significant impact on the environment, accounting for 65% of nitrogen dioxide emissions along with increased noise pollution.

Congestion is set to worsen in the region as a result of major infrastructure projects such as HS2, 2022 Commonwealth Games and Metro construction, along with increased travel demand from population growth.



Congestion and the bus network

Without addressing major sources of congestion, buses will continue to suffer delays, variability in journey times and declining attractiveness. Congestion causes:

Journey Time Variability

Congestion is causing journey times to become less reliable, with journey time variations often much different to timetabled promises.

Decreasing accessibility

Congestion is slowing average bus speeds, meaning that accessibility is decreasing. As a result, less people can access locations in a reasonable journey time.

Decreasing attractiveness of bus

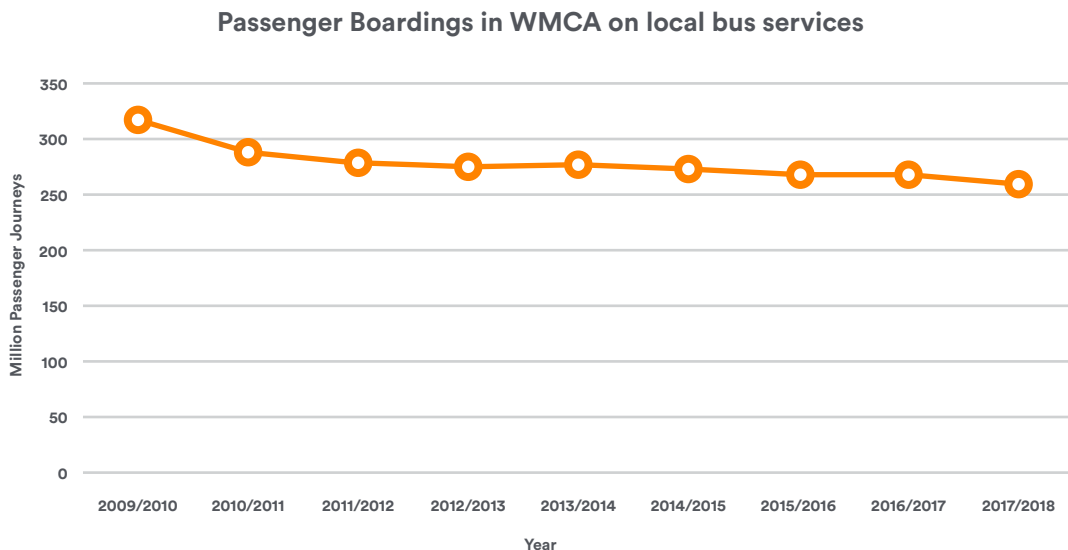
With increasing journey time variability and decreasing accessibility, buses are at risk of further patronage decline if people decide they cannot rely on the bus network.

The congestion challenge has also created existential threats to bus services in the region, where a continual reduction in speeds creates a cycle of fewer passengers leading to more car trips and creating more congestion.

Declining Patronage

Passenger journeys on the local West Midlands bus network have been declining, but at a lower rate than nationwide trends.

This has contributed to a reduction in network coverage within the West Midlands. In some areas we are no longer meeting our policy objectives on access to a bus service.



Vehicle Kilometres
Reduced by
approx. 2% a
year since 2000

Bus Fares
Increasing at
approx. 2% a year in
real terms since 2000

Air Quality

Poor air quality poses a great challenge to the region, contributing to almost 1,500 premature deaths per year. In all seven districts in the region, nitrogen dioxide (NO2) and/or particular matter concentration thresholds are exceeded (relative to EU limits).

Transport, particularly single occupancy private cars, is a major contributor to pollution. Increased congestion in turn causes further pollution due to standing traffic, a situation that the bus system contributes too. The bus sector has consequently been a focus area for tackling poor local air quality. This will have a significant impact due to the size of the operation, as there are currently around 2,100 buses operating in West Midlands across 23 operators, with just over a fifth of the bus fleet consisting of Euro III buses.

Social Inequality

The West Midlands social inequality gap is growing with more people now living in poverty and receiving low incomes.

Vulnerable groups however rely significantly on the bus network, but issues including affordability, accessibility and availability of bus services can act as major barriers to people accessing key opportunities like employment and training. As the bus network is impacted, the most vulnerable people are further disadvantaged. This in turn further contributes to a decline in their quality of life, widening the social inequality gap.

Bus passenger feedback allows us to monitor the performance of the bus network in the West Midlands. The Bus Passenger Survey in spring 2018 showed:



88%
Overall journey satisfaction



86%
Journey time satisfaction



76%
Punctuality satisfaction



67%
Value for money



Perception vs. Reality

There are many preconceived ideas around using the bus that act as a barrier to its usage.

A 'Demystifying the Bus Network' study was commissioned by TfWM to investigate perceived and actual barriers to bus travel with new and unfamiliar bus users. It compared their preconceived perceptions of the bus with actual perceptions of the bus once they had undertaken an accompanied bus journey.

Negative perceptions before undertaking a journey:

- Uncertainty on cost and payment method
- Safety
- Attitude and driving style of bus drivers
- Practicality of travelling with children on the bus
- Comfort
- Journey times

Feelings after undertaking a journey:

- Pleasantly surprised with cleanliness and physical comfort of the bus
- Buying a ticket (online and on-board) was more difficult than expected

These findings demonstrate that there are a number of improvements which need to take place in order to overcome negative and unfounded perceptions of bus travel.

TfWM has influenced the bus network in the West Midlands to improve service delivery in the region. This includes the creation of the West Midlands Bus Alliance, a Congestion Management Plan, Bus Alliance Network Development Plans, West Midlands Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan and other local bus enhancements on key corridors.

West Midlands Bus Alliance

Established in 2015, the West Midlands Bus Alliance brings together TfWM, bus operators, local councils and other partners to collaboratively deliver high levels of passenger satisfaction and drive forward investment in our bus services. The partnership is committed to making bus travel in the West Midlands cleaner, greener, safer and faster.

The Alliance challenges all partners to meet improved standards on key issues such as vehicle emissions, network performance, branding, punctuality and fares representing an investment of £150m.

Bus Alliance Key Achievements: 2015-18

Over £40m

invested by operators in Euro VI buses since 2015

Over £10m

invested to tackle bus congestion on the highways since 2016

105,000

16-18 year olds eligible for half-price travel, contactless ticketing and the introduction of nBus low fare zones, making bus travel more affordable

3 Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes (AQPS) and 2 Partnership routes to drive up bus service and vehicle standards and Network Development Plans to shape local networks in support of inclusive economic growth

The bold new West Midlands Transport brand has been brought to life with the first branded buses in operation

The Safer Travel Partnership (STP) has reduced overall recorded crime and funding has been allocated to expand the use of Vemotion technology, which allows for the transmission of 'live' CCTV from buses

TfWM's Congestion Management Plan (CMP) has been created to help tackle congestion in the region. Whilst there is no single solution for alleviating congestion, there are many smaller interventions that together will combine to make a big difference. The CMP is built on three core pillars:

- **Increasing capacity**
- **Improving efficiency**
- **Managing demand**

As congestion is having a detrimental impact on bus speeds, the CMP will provide vital relief, helping to improve bus speed and reliability in the region. By aligning the Vision for Bus with the CMP, buses will play a credible and active role in the CMP by offering an accessible transport alternative to the car. The better the bus network and service offering, the more compelling it will be as an alternative for private car use, thereby reducing congestion.



CASE STUDY OF SUCCESS: LODE LANE ROUTE ENHANCEMENT

Lode Lane is a key corridor in providing access to over 20,000 job roles in Solihull Town Centre and at Jaguar Land Rover, as well as wider access to Birmingham Airport, the NEC and the UK Central Hub. Lode Lane is one of the busiest bus corridors in the region, generating a bus every two minutes during peak periods which carry more people into Solihull Town Centre during mornings than in cars.

The Council worked collaboratively with Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, TfWM and National Express West Midlands to deliver a comprehensive route intervention between Jaguar Land Rover and Solihull Town Centre, including new bus lanes and bus priority at junctions. Furthermore, National Express West Midlands invested over £2 million in upgrading existing bus fleets. Critically, the scheme was delivered by maximising existing road space with no loss of service to general traffic.

The scheme opened in October 2016 and has achieved a 45% reduction in bus journey times in the morning peak hour into Solihull Town Centre. Bus patronage has increased by 11%, and there is now an enhanced environment for pedestrians and cyclists.



In the short-term buses are flexible enough to adapt to changing travel patterns and can accommodate rapid increases in travel demand. In the medium to long term buses can catalyse benefit realisation of more strategic mass-transit through improved interchange and integration, thereby improving connectivity between jobs, housing and education.

Inclusive Growth

At the heart of the SEP sits an ambitious skills agenda to ensure that all can benefit from economic growth. Bridging the skills gap will however need a spatial focus on those communities with high levels of worklessness. These areas typically see people in or at risk of poverty and have low levels of car ownership where people are reliant on the bus to access education and work opportunities. In these areas 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 the inclusive growth of the region.

The bus is therefore vital in achieving inclusive growth in the region and WMCA's Local Industrial Strategy. By increasing the accessibility, speed and affordability of buses we enable greater access to education and employment opportunities, strengthening our economic success and productivity.



Achieving a modal shift through service quality and innovation in bus

Sprint is a planned bus rapid transit scheme 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 major high volume routes.

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.

Accommodating Travel Demand

Although the bus network has experienced challenges associated with falling patronage, reduced accessibility and increasing costs, we have started to see more people travelling by bus. On a number of key routes, investment in new vehicles, lower fares and journey time improvements has attracted increased travel demand on bus, particularly among young people.

With an estimated 500,000 additional jobs, and 215,000 additional homes by 2030, there is huge potential for more people to use the bus to facilitate the expected growth in transport demand, and design a network to cater to this employment and housing growth across the region. New routes will be planned to connect new and existing communities with jobs to support our new housing through the West Midlands Housing Deal and Local Industrial Strategy.

Network Resilience

The region is undergoing a period of considerable growth and investment, but there are imminent challenges resulting from the concurrent construction programmes of the SEP, HS2, Highways England's Motorway upgrades and the 2026 Delivery Plan.

The ability for buses to accommodate rapid increases in travel demand will be an essential tool for mitigating these challenges. However, the CMP acknowledges that congestion will increase in the short-term from the wider array of construction schemes.

A greater uptake in public transport usage will be beneficial in mitigating this; with bus being the most flexible, accessible and affordable mode of public transport across the region.

Buses must also be protected from further disruption, and resilience strategies around bus will be key to protecting bus users from negative impacts of construction.

Air Quality

Putting bus at the centre of our approach to air quality is the quickest and most cost-effective solution to tackling this challenge. Through committed bus retrofit programmes, new vehicle procurement and the introduction of Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes setting minimum vehicle emission standards, the emission standards of the bus fleet is expected to significantly improve with an aspiration to have all buses at least Euro VI by the end of 2020.

With the proposed introduction of Birmingham's Clean Air Zone, the bus will be an essential tool in ensuring that people can still travel to and from the city centre.

Continual innovation in bus fuel technology presents opportunities to further improve fuel efficiency and emissions from the bus network, including zero emission vehicles, which will further help accelerate air quality improvements in the region.

Ticketing

The West Midlands has the largest smart ticketing scheme in the UK outside London (Swift), accepted on buses and trams and on the train for direct debit customers (with plans to roll out the full range of Swift onto rail, including Pay As-You-Go).

Swift provides tailored discounts and offers, supporting behaviour change. There is an opportunity to expand its capabilities to make multi-modal travel easier and cheaper. Work is underway to improve the customer experience through improved digital channels, contactless payments and further roll out of fare capping.

Safety

The Safer Travel Partnership, which was launched in 2006 and includes West Midlands Police, British Transport Police and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), has helped cut crime on the network by 70% over the last eight years. There is now just one offence in every 60,000 bus journeys.

While crime on the buses is actually low, witnessing anti-social behaviour can undermine people's sense of security and safety that can lead to an unfounded fear of crime. This can result in people choosing not to go by bus and that means more congestion and pollution. No one should have to put up with bad behaviour which is why officers and bus inspectors will continue to operate a zero tolerance approach to bad behaviour, utilising advancements in technology, to take firm and effective action whenever it is encountered. This, along with advancements to vehicle safety provides the opportunity to further change the negative perception of safety on bus travel.

Transport Innovation

There are technological and digital opportunities that have the potential to revolutionise local bus travel in the UK's first Future Mobility Area. Demand Responsive Transport and Mobility as a Service (MaaS) both offer the potential for changing the way in which people travel in the region.

The data revolution presents an opportunity to change the way we consume data and access information. With 5G, there is an opportunity to deliver enhancements such as real time journey information to passengers, smart payment methods across all modes and access to live CCTV streams to increase passenger safety.

Opportunities to shape the network

As a Combined Authority WMCA and TfWM have powers that can influence the bus network in the West Midlands. Along with powers around the Key Route Network, bus lane enforcement, and safety and security, the Bus Services Act 2017 provides new powers which can allow a greater degree of influence on the local bus network. TfWM will explore how these powers can be used to achieve our vision for bus in the West Midlands.

Integration with other modes

There is an opportunity to ensure that buses link seamlessly with metro, rail and Sprint routes, to facilitate easy multi-modal travel and local, regional and national travel. This is fundamental for creating an integrated transport system in order to move away from a reliance on cars in the region. Switching between modes will be easier and cheaper through our integrated ticketing systems and further enhancements to Swift, the region's smart travel card.





Without widespread uplift in the use of public transport, the region's growth ambitions set out in the SEP will be severely impeded as congestion continues to grow, eventually choking inward investment in jobs and discouraging people from living in the region. At the heart of this approach is recognition that road space is a scarce commodity, where an increasing emphasis on people-moving capacity instead of moving-motor-vehicle capacity will be required to ensure everyone can benefit from growth.

There is often a trade-off between bus having to provide an essential mobility service, whilst simultaneously offering a service which competes

with more direct modes of transport such as the private car. The bus however continues to be the most accessible and affordable mode of public transport across the region, and opportunities exist to exploit the many benefits that the mode has towards achieving the wider WMCA goals such as inclusive growth, increased productivity and improved air quality.

Decreasing speeds and reliability from road congestion is especially suppressing the potential of the bus network in supporting the region's ambitions. Buses need to be given greater priority through a step-change in investment to ensure bus infrastructure and the network supports the

anticipated scale and shape of growth across the region. Whilst our interventions to date have been beneficial, new opportunities exist that have the potential to further enhance the mode's offering across the region and overcome the major challenges faced.

Before we can assess these opportunities available for overcoming the challenges faced by bus however, we need to establish our fundamental vision for bus in the West Midlands. With an established vision, we can then assess what options will be most effective for achieving it.

“

A world-class integrated, reliable, zero emission transport system providing inclusive travel for all 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.

”

1. **UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.** We will improve our natural environment by continuing to work with local bus operators and the diverse supply chain to accelerate the transition to zero emission vehicles across the region; to achieve the cleanest bus fleet in any Metropolitan area of the UK and utilising new clean technology to grow zero emission travel and the movement of people.
2. **Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network.** We will provide one transport system where customers can move easily and conveniently between modes and travel on an integrated bus network, supported by new and innovative forms of bus travel and connecting Sprint and all other modes of public transport. The basis of this integrated bus network will be a simple, core turn up and go frequency network, supported by local bus services providing network coverage.
3. **Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options including full capping providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.** We will provide an integrated and multimodal payment solution that uses the latest digital technology to make it easier and quicker than ever before to access the bus network. The payment technology will be valid across all operators and will remove the complexity of fares planning through intelligent capping that provides best value without the customers needing prior knowledge of fares. It will also provide access to the wider integrated transport system and will be supported by a Fares and Payment Strategy.
4. **Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.** We will plan for long-term inclusive economic growth by treating bus as the infrastructure in a place-based approach on growth corridors and at specific sites; bringing together the right bus infrastructure (i.e. highways, services, data and technology) with housing, jobs and skills to enable more people and places to achieve economic success, attract investment and support long-term productivity.
5. **Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions.** We are committed to creating a safer transport network for all passengers in the West Midlands and will continue the Safer Travel Partnership with West Midlands Police and British Transport Police, with the aim of preventing and reducing crime on the bus network. We will ensure bus vehicle, at-stop and interchange safety and accessibility standards, so the bus network meets the needs of all customers at all times, regardless of any impaired mobility, ultimately transforming the perception of bus travel.
6. **Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.** We will manage the network with the Regional Transport Control Centre (RTCC) that provides a coordinating umbrella across all modes and transport partners, for how we manage daily network operations, planned construction and sporting events and incident responses to keep people moving and the West Midlands open for business. Alongside the RTCC, there will be investment in the sensor technology to improve the efficiency and management of the local road network and monitoring of performance on the Key Route Network (KRN).
7. **World-leading customer information utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.** We will be the first 5G ready region in the UK, trialling new high-speed connectivity and technology for improved customer information and network management, as well as making our buses and bus infrastructure safer using artificial intelligence (AI), and building on our success as the UK's first Future Mobility Area to trial and demonstrate new modes of transport, services and technologies, like Mobility as a Service (MaaS).
8. **Younger people supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.** We will aim to ensure that everyone has the same access to transport and that everyone can travel easily, confidently and without extra cost. In particular, we will develop an offer for young people accessing jobs and training opportunities as well as supporting other excluded groups with barriers. This will involve designing and delivering services in a genuinely inclusive way with recognition to all vulnerable groups. We will also ensure future transport technologies are designed in an inclusive way to open up new opportunities for currently excluded groups.
9. **Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.** We will improve the network by providing the right local bus infrastructure to build the connections that people need for improved access to existing skills, jobs and leisure for all our communities and networks at any time of the day. This will build on the delivery of Sprint and our existing bus delivery programme commitments and Network Development Plans to deliver improved bus journey times and services; as well as working with private sector partners to trial new and innovative forms of public transport and underpinning a multi-modal transport system.

Short Term Priorities

Small scale local highway schemes, focussed on 'quick win' measures at traffic black spots, can realise noticeable reductions in congestion quickly and cheaply. This could include traffic signal optimisation, lining/ kerbing changes and/ or traffic regulation orders. There is also an opportunity to work alongside the development of Sprint to bring forward measures that are of low complexity and which could deliver early benefits to the bus network.

Optimising Existing Assets

Much of the region's highway infrastructure for buses and passenger facilities has been in operation for a considerable period. In this time there have been changes in traffic characteristics, highways layouts, travel patterns and bus services. It is proposed that we review all existing bus priority schemes and passenger facilities in the region to ensure they are still working for all road users and passengers.

Governance

WMCA will investigate the powers available through the Bus Services Act 2017 to understand the benefits and disbenefits of the options available for delivering bus services.

In addition, we will continue to seek investment and further devolution of powers from Government which will assist in our plans to deliver a bus network that works for everyone in the region.

Bus Alliance

Through the Bus Alliance we will continue to work with bus operators and other partners in the region to ensure that bus improvements are made, and ensure the delivery of existing commitments in the West Midlands Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan and Bus Alliance Network Development Plans.

Delivering an Integrated System

TfWM will continue to explore how smart technology, transport innovation, data and 5G can be exploited in the UK's first Future Mobility Area to deliver an integrated transport system in the region.

Delivering smart payment technology, real time passenger information and integrated fare structures are an essential part of seamless modal integration. Furthermore, Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has the potential to greatly influence the travel behaviours of people in the West Midlands, and TfWM will continue to assess how best we can utilise the innovative software platform in our Future Mobility Area. New modes such as Sprint and Demand Responsive Transport can help transform and complement the conventional bus, and we will explore how to best exploit the benefits.

Looking to the Future

We will continue to measure the success of the bus network and keep our options open in seeking the best opportunities to deliver our regional vision. This will be supported by a delivery plan.

We will regularly review our policies to ensure we can deliver on our pledges.



Transport for
West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands

Building a healthier, happier, better connected
and more prosperous West Midlands.

16 Summer Lane, Birmingham, B19 3SD | 0345 303 6760

To request a copy of this document in a different format, please get in touch.