

## Putting Passengers First

The views of the travelling public and how to improve the passenger experience were the subject of an inaugural Centro conference. Nearly 100 delegates attended the first Putting Passengers First Conference, meeting transport operators. Centro officers and councillors and taking part in public transport workshops. Among the delegates were the Passenger Champions, a volunteer scheme set up by Centro last year. The Champions are 70 regular users of public transport who help make Centro aware of issues on the network as they occur and undertaking surveys.

## Plans for April 2014 to March 2015

### Bus

Centro will work to develop new partnership agreements in Dudley, Wolverhampton and Walsall to encourage operators to further invest in the network, deliver better quality and improve bus links. Work will continue to improve public transport access to Merry Hill Shopping Centre by redeveloping the bus interchange at nearby Cradley Heath Railway Station.

Investment will continue in high quality bus stops, with plans for improved waiting facilities and information systems in Coventry, Wolverhampton and Solihull. Centro is looking to support this work through the development of Statutory Quality Partnerships ensuring that only bus operators meeting agreed quality standards can use the facilities.

Quality improvements will continue across the region with a significant number of new buses planned, initiatives to improve vehicle cleanliness and to make bus journey times more reliable by working with local councils to improve parking enforcement and traffic management on bus routes.

### Rail

Major changes are planned during 2014/15 as part of the Birmingham New Street Station redevelopment. Additional escalators will be installed and the new Grand Central shopping centre will open. The project is scheduled for completion later in 2015.

Plans are in place for the expansion of Park & Ride sites at Kings Norton, Four Oaks and Stourbridge Junction stations.

A project to increase the frequency of trains on the Redditch-branch is expected to be completed by Network Rail in late 2014. Following this, Centro expects to complete construction of a new station for Bromsgrove in 2015, with an increased service frequency after electrification of the line in 2016.

If you would like this leaflet in a form more suited to your needs, please call 0121 214 7214 or e-mail [customerrelations@centro.org.uk](mailto:customerrelations@centro.org.uk) Centro produces this leaflet to give you a summary of the work it does to improve all aspects of public transport. To find out more about the work Centro does in the West Midlands, including new projects and public consultations please visit our website.

Centro will continue to work with Network Rail, London Midland and local authority partners on schemes to electrify and deliver journey time improvements on the Chase Line between Rugeley, Walsall and Birmingham. The electrification scheme is expected to be delivered in December 2017, bringing environmental and efficiency benefits.

Centro will continue to explore other key rail projects in line with the economic needs and priorities of the region, including options for improving capacity on the Snow Hill Lines and further investment in stations.

Centro will continue to work with the Government and regional partners to develop plans for greater influence over local rail services in the region from the end of the London Midland franchise in June 2017.

### Metro

Work on the Metro depot extension at Wednesbury will be completed. This will see a new testing and commissioning shed, an expanded maintenance shed, new office accommodation and further sidings for the tram vehicles come into use.

In Birmingham City Centre track has already been laid in the Bull Street stop area and works have begun on Stephenson Street and Corporation Street.

Before the track is laid at the junction of Bull Street and Corporation Street major work on the foundations needs to be undertaken in the area of the old subway to get the levels right around the curve.

The platform will be built on Corporation Street, Bull Street and Stephenson Street with the new street furniture being the last installation prior to opening in 2015.

### Sustainability

Centro and District partners will continue to lead the low carbon transport agenda to support West Midlands' carbon reduction targets.

An integrated package of improvements will be installed, including Real Time Information. The Smart Network, Smarter Choices programme, funded by the Local Sustainable Transport Fund, will continue promoting public transport alternatives to residents, businesses and employees, encouraging commuters to switch to other modes of transport including, bus, rail, Metro, walking and cycling.



# Bus



# Train



# Information about public transport expenditure

Issue 12 • April 2014  
[www.centro.org.uk](http://www.centro.org.uk)

## in the West Midlands



[www.centro.org.uk](http://www.centro.org.uk)

Responsible for the delivery of public transport and more than 327 million passenger journeys a year in the West Midlands, Centro aims to create a world class public transport network delivered by a best in class organisation. As the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority, we represent the seven Metropolitan District Councils: Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

In partnership with the Districts, Centro is working to ensure that the 2.7 million people who live and work in the region benefit from an effective transport system that meets the economic and environmental needs of the West Midlands, as well as providing access to jobs, finding innovative ways to help reduce congestion and offering seamless connectivity for people and goods to UK and overseas markets.

There are 27 democratically elected councillors from the Districts who guide the policies and work of Centro. Centro manages 12 bus stations and provides over 12,600 passenger stops, including many shelters and interchanges. Passenger information is found at all these, along with Real Time Information (RTI) displays at over 1,700 stops showing when your next bus will arrive. RTI is also found at all local rail stations and Metro stops.

Centro oversees the English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS), covering the national bus network. For West Midlands residents this is extended to the rail and Metro network where we provide discounted and free travel for people who have reached the age of entitlement, blind and disabled people and for children at a combined cost of £77.8 million. There are over 506,000 ENCTS concessionary card holders who made 66.1m journeys in 2012-13.

We work in partnership with private transport companies and the seven metropolitan districts to promote public transport projects. We also subsidise socially necessary bus services at a cost of £8.6m.

Ring and Ride, primarily funded by Centro, is the main demand-responsive transport service for people in the West Midlands with limited mobility. In 2012/13 130 buses provided 1.3m trips a year for over 23,000 registered users.

## Developments last year: April 2013 to March 2014

### Bus

The ground-breaking Partnership Plus agreement between Centro and National Express saw a commitment from the operator to over £60 million of investment in the bus network, including the delivery of over 300 brand new buses and measures to improve the perceptions of safety and security, vehicle cleanliness and passenger information.

Centro worked with bus operators, Birmingham and Walsall Councils to improve services in north Birmingham and Sutton Coldfield, providing more frequent services, new links to employment sites, as well as improved information, new shelters and Real Time Information displays.

Working with Arriva in the Black Country, improved services have been provided. Brand new buses were launched between Walsall and Darlaston with an

improved service and faster improved links connecting Oldbury, Great Bridge, Tipton and Wolverhampton.

In partnership with Diamond Bus and Solihull Council the Signature network in Solihull was relaunched following extensive consultation. New links provide passengers with faster, more frequent services on eco-friendly hybrid diesel-electric buses.

Centro worked closely with Birmingham City Council and bus operators to ensure that the City Centre continued to operate 'business as usual' during the closure of the A38 tunnels in the summer, ensuring disruption was kept to a minimum.

Work continued to improve Coventry City Centre in partnership with Coventry City Council, with changes to the bus stops in Trinity Street providing a better waiting environment and making it easier for passengers to board buses.

### Rail

The first phase of the redeveloped Birmingham New Street Station opened, while the old station concourse closed on the same date to enable rebuilding of the remaining two-thirds of the station.

A refreshed partnership agreement was signed with London Midland and rail passengers now benefit from a package of station improvements including enhanced passenger information systems, additional ticket machines and CCTV.

Three new park and ride projects were completed at Longbridge, Yardley Wood and Rowley Regis, increasing to nearly 8,000 the total number of free park and ride spaces provided by Centro, while new secure Cycle-Hubs have been opened at Selly Oak and Stourbridge Junction with more planned.

Additional later-evening and daytime off-peak trains were introduced between Birmingham and Stratford-upon-Avon, as part of a funding package between Centro and Warwickshire County Council for an initial three-year period.

In partnership with local authorities and Central Government, Centro has been working to develop proposals for the devolution of rail services in the region. This proposal could see responsibility for specification and management of rail services devolved to a locally accountable body, which could then let a contract to a train operating company for services in the region.

### Metro

The Metro Forward agreement was signed between Centro and National Express Midland Metro (NXMM). It ensures NXMM will continue to invest in the system on Centro's behalf, including the opening of the extension in Birmingham City Centre.

The agreement will also see a joint taskforce introduce many initiatives to benefit passengers, as well as driving forward quality improvements, such as more driver and conductor training. Centro ordered a new fleet of 20 trams to enter service in 2014 and be introduced on the Birmingham City Centre extension when it opens. They will be fully low-floor, longer, have two wheelchair spaces and a capacity of 200. They will have air conditioning and enhanced information systems.

Work to extend Midland Metro into Birmingham City Centre continues. When the extension opens in 2015, it will greatly improve links between the Black Country and central Birmingham via the national rail network at the redeveloped New Street station.

The Transport and Works Act Application to allow construction of the route from Stephenson Street to Centenary Square has now been submitted to the Department for Transport for approval.

### Crime Reduction

Passengers are now able to report anti-social behaviour over the internet with the launch of a pioneering mobile phone app. The See Something, Say Something app was unveiled by the Safer Travel Partnership and already many customers have downloaded it to their phones.

Passengers witnessing anti-social behaviour such as smoking on public transport simply open up the app and upload details of what they have seen. It is the first of its kind in the UK, having been successfully used in the USA and is already attracting interest from other authorities such as Transport for London. Once a user sends details of an incident, an officer will get back in touch and gather further information to build a picture or pattern of anti-social behaviour which can then be targeted appropriately.

### Sustainability

Dozens of the region's biggest employers signed up to a free scheme to shrink their carbon footprint by helping employees travel in greener ways. Centro and the seven West Midlands councils are supporting businesses with grants of up to £10,000 to help staff take greener forms of travel to work as part of its Smart Network, Smarter Choices project. Grants will be provided to match money invested by organisations choosing to install green travel equipment such as secure bicycle storage or real time information screens.

Centro's Net Budget Spending £138.7m	2013/14	2014/15
	£m	£m
Concessions for elderly and disabled people	59.5	57.6
Accessible Transport (Ring & Ride Services and Other Concessions)	28.6	26.3
Subsidised Bus Services	8.6	8.3
Rail Service Provision	0.2	0.3
Operational Expenditure	20.6	19.0
Financing Costs	28.5	27.2
Total Expenditure	146.0	138.7

Centro's Budget Funding	2013/14	2014/15
	£m	£m
Levy	145.5	138.7
Use of Reserves	0.5	0.0
Total Funding	146.0	138.7

Public Transport Investment Programme £52.7m	2013/14	2014/15
	£m	£m
West Midlands Wide Initiatives	5.0	5.0
Bus	8.1	8.2
Rail	5.4	9.2
Rapid Transit	39.9	29.9
Other	0.7	0.4
Total	59.1	52.7

Levy £138.7m	Population	Levy £m	%
Birmingham	1,085,417	54.5	39.3%
Coventry	323,132	16.2	11.7%
Dudley	313,589	15.7	11.4%
Sandwell	311,304	15.6	11.3%
Solihull	207,380	10.4	7.5%
Walsall	270,924	13.6	9.8%
Wolverhampton	250,970	12.6	9.1%
Total	2,762,716	138.7	100.0%

This is equal to a gross levy (before tax) of £50.20 for each resident. Individual councils receive a central government grant towards these costs.

Capital Investment Funding	2013/14	2014/15
	£m	£m
Grants	39.4	27.5
Borrowing	17.8	25.2
Centro Resources	1.9	-
Total	59.1	52.7