

INFORMATION ABOUT PUBLIC TRANSPORT EXPENDITURE IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

Issue 14 - April 2016

Responsible for the delivery of public transport and more than 331 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. We represent the seven Metropolitan District Councils of Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

In partnership with the Districts, Centro is working to ensure that the 2.8 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.

At present, transport in the West Midlands is primarily overseen by the Integrated Transport Authority (WMITA), with Centro implementing projects on the ground for the Transport Delivery Committee (TDC), alongside highway, cycling and walking projects delivered by the councils as highway authorities.

Centro is the delivery arm of the WMITA and TDC, tasked with delivering major capital transport and revenue schemes funded through the LEPs such as improving the rail, Metro and bus services which people use every day, as well as working to improve cycling and walking connections and access for all. To do this, Centro works together with West Midlands' local authority partners, bus operators, train operators, the operator of Midland Metro, as well as a range of other partners

However, later this year, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) comes into being and will be the umbrella organisation under which the current WMITA and Centro will be amalgamated.

The WMCA will comprise the seven existing Metropolitan councils and the adjoining five local authorities and three LEPs, all working together bring more powers from central Government to the West Midlands, where our locally elected politicians know what is best for the region. The Leaders of the seven Metropolitan councils of the West Midlands believe a Combined Authority – where every council works in equal partnership alongside the LEPs – will establish a robust framework to deliver the co-ordinated decision-making needed for modern economic governance.

Until the advent of the Combined Authority, there are 19 democratically elected councillors from the Districts who guide the policies and work of Centro. Centro manages 12 bus stations and provides 12,000 passenger stops, including many shelters and interchanges. Passenger information is found at all these, along with Real Time Information (RTI) displays at over 1,850 stops showing when your next bus will arrive. RTI is also found at all local rail stations and all Metro stops.

Centro oversees the National Travel Concessionary Scheme for West Midlands' residents, with 510,000 registered card holders who made 64.1 million journeys in 2014-15.

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 £7.6 million.

Ring and Ride, primarily funded by Centro, is the main demand-responsive transport service for people in the West Midlands with limited mobility. 112 buses provide over 900,000 trips a year for over 18,000 registered users.

Developments last year: April 2015 to March 2016

Bus

Centro developed and implemented a new Bus Alliance to encourage further investment in the bus network, increase standards and improve bus links. The Alliance brings together bus operators, councils and private sector partners to ensure that services are attractive and meeting the needs of local communities.

A successful bid to the Government's Clean Vehicle Technology Fund saw the installation of exhaust traps on buses in Coventry which are helping to improve air quality in the city.

Investment in high-quality bus stops continued. This has included new facilities at Cradley Heath, Darlaston, Solihull town centre, Wolverhampton City Centre and Coventry Rail Station. Centro has also worked in partnership with the University of Warwick and University Hospital in Coventry to develop new bus interchanges on these sites.

Brand new luxury 'Platinum' buses have been introduced by National Express as part of their partnership commitment with Centro on routes across the region and work has continued with local councils to make bus journey times more reliable through schemes targeted at reducing congestion.

Centro has been working closely with Birmingham City Council to ensure that bus services have been able to operate reliably into the city during the A38 tunnels closures in 2015 and throughout the redevelopment of Paradise Circus.

Further 24 hour routes have been introduced and a comprehensive network of services was once again operated on Boxing Day, with growing demand from passengers.

Rail

New Street Station opened in September 2015. The new station concourse is around three times the size of the previous one, providing a lighter, brighter, more pleasant environment for passengers. Crucially, the larger concourse provides capacity for expected passenger growth.

Centro worked with Coventry City Council and Warwickshire County Council to deliver two new stations between Coventry and Nuneaton, at Coventry Arena and Bermuda Park as the first stage of a project to improve services on the line. These stations came into operation in January 2016.

Centro continued to work with Network Rail, London Midland and local authority partners on a scheme to electrify and deliver journey time improvements on the Chase Line between Rugeley, Walsall and Birmingham, expected to be delivered in December 2017. Electrification of the Cross City line to Bromsgrove is well underway and due to be completed by mid-2017.

The expansion of the Four Oaks station Park and Ride facility was completed in December 2015 delivering 75 five additional spaces, while Centro continued to explore other key rail projects in line with the economic needs and priorities of our region, including further investment in stations.

Working in partnership with local authorities from the surrounding region, West Midlands Rail Ltd has been established with the aim of increasing our influence over local rail services in the region. West Midlands Rail is now working closely with the Department for Transport on the specification for the rail franchise that will replace London Midland in 2017.

Metro

Construction of Midland Metro in Birmingham City Centre continued throughout the year with all the rail being installed by November. Stops continued to be built at Bull Street, Corporation Street and Stephenson Street (to serve Grand Central and New Street station). The introduction of a new fleet of trams saw the capacity along the route increase by a third and the new vehicles are low-floor and fully accessible.

The works at the Metro depot were completed, including the extension to the engineering shed to accommodate the new vehicles, further stabling sidings and a new testing and commissioning shed all became operational. Consultation on a new Park and Ride site at Bradley Lane took place and a planning application was submitted to the local authority.

Design development continued following consultation on routes through Eastside and Transport and Works Acts were submitted to the Department for Transport for routes to Centenary Square and Wolverhampton rail station.

The Snow Hill station stop closed in October, allowing works to connect the new city centre route to the existing route to take place, while the new stop in Bull Street opened in December. In November The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh visited Birmingham, naming a tram after former Centro Chairman Angus Adams in a ceremony at the Bull Street stop.

Technology

The roll-out of 100 new Swift Collectors brought the latest ticketing technology together with one of the UK's most advanced smartcards, giving more passengers easier access to topping up their Swift cards. More products were added to Swift, including Pay As You Go on most buses and Midland Metro, and all nBus passes moved to Swift. More products will be added during the year.

Meanwhile, the introduction of the myswiftcard.com website, Android mobile App and a dedicated Twitter account ensured Swift became readily available to even more customers.

Real Time Information (RTI) displays continued to be improved and upgraded, increasing the accuracy of journey time details.

How we spend the Levy money

Budget £125.8m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Concessions for Elderly and Disabled People	56.0	53.6
Accessible Transport (Ring & Ride Services and Other Concessions)	26.0	24.1
Subsidised Bus Services	7.6	7.6
Bus Services, Infrastructure & Information	9.6	10.0
Rail Services	2.4	2.3
ITA & Centro Services	4.6	4.8
Financing Costs	25.2	23.4
Total Expenditure	131.4	125.8
Use of Reserves	-	(1.0)
Levy	131.4	124.8

Levy 124.8m	Population	Levy £m	%
Birmingham	1,101,360	49.0	39.2%
Coventry	337,428	15.0	12.0%
Dudley	315,799	14.0	11.2%
Sandwell	316,719	14.1	11.3%
Solihull	209,890	9.3	7.5%
Walsall	274,173	12.2	9.8%
Wolverhampton	252,987	11.2	9.0%
Total	2,808,356	124.8	100.0%

This is equal to a gross levy (before tax) of £44.45 for each resident. Individual councils receive a central government grant towards these costs.

Public Transport Investment Programme	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Bus	1.7	1.5
Rail	6.3	7.5
Rapid Transit	34.3	22.6
Other	0.1	0.1
Total	42.4	31.7

Capital Investment Funding	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Grants	22.0	23.9
Borrowing	20.4	5.4
3 rd Party/Private	0	2.4
Total	42.4	31.7

Plans this year: April 2016 to March 2017

Bus

Delivery of the Bus Alliance will continue, with bus operators committing to the delivery of many more new high-specification buses. To support this, Centro will be working with local councils to identify the key locations where buses are delayed aiming to address these to improve service punctuality.

Following another successful bid to the Government's Clean Vehicle Technology Fund another 150 buses will be equipped with exhaust traps. This will make the amongst the cleanest vehicles on the road and they will be targeted on routes with poorest air quality.

Network Development Plans will be developed across the region to ensure that the bus network is able to support wider economic growth proposals. Centro will also be leading the development of 'Statutory Quality Partnership' proposals which will help mean only buses that meet agreed quality and environmental standards are able to use facilities in the main district centres.

Rail

Centro will continue working with Worcestershire County Council to complete the construction of a new station for Bromsgrove, due to be operational in spring 2016. This will facilitate an increased train service frequency after electrification of the line in 2017.

Centro will work with London Midland to refresh the Partnership agreement following the award of London Midland's new franchise to October 2017. This will ensure that passenger benefits continue to be delivered ahead of the refranchising of the London Midland and Virgin West Coast businesses.

Plans are also being developed to deck the current car park facility at Longbridge Station.

West Midlands Rail will be continuing to work closely with the Department for Transport to specify what is required from the operator of West Midlands local rail services, and will play a role in evaluating the bids. Following award of the franchise to the successful bidder, West Midlands Rail expects to play a lead role in overseeing the performance of the new operator.

Metro

With the route open to Grand Central the remaining works to complete the city centre extension will be completed and the new stop at Snow Hill will be opened. Centro will be forming an Alliance with designers and constructors to put together a team which will together over the next ten years to develop and build the Metro extensions with preparations being made by the Alliance for the future extensions of Metro.

Works on the Centenary Square and Wolverhampton City Centre routes to move the utilities pipes and cables out of the path of the Metro will continue this year to help facilitate the construction of these routes. Business cases for the extensions to Eastside and Hagley Road will be submitted to the DfT for approval.

As part of the future extensions we will be investigating areas where we can run without overhead electric cables whilst we will start works on completing the fit out of the trams so that they are ready to run on the 'wire free' section of the Centenary Square extension. Subject to planning approval and funding we will be looking to continue the project to build a Park and Ride site at Bradley Lane.

Technology

Centro will harness developments in technology, allowing service disruption announcements to go through one central system. Once details are received from operators, passengers then receive updates on the web, via mobile and from social media, with Real Time Information displays and digital screens also being used.

A brand new Network West Midlands website will provide highly detailed travel and ticketing information, personalised for the individual. A whole new look will give a fully-integrated user experience across all devices and platforms, making networkwestmidlands.com an evolving, key tool for all public transport information in the West Midlands. There will be more multi-modal, Real Time Information on the new website, which will be launched during 2016.

Social media will continue to grow, with our Twitter and Facebook presence offering passengers travel information quicker, along with offers, promotions and news.



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If you would like this leaflet in a form more suited to your needs, please call 0345 303 6760 or e-mail 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.org.uk

