



Transport Delivery Committee

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| Date | 11 June 2018 |
| Report Title | West Midlands Stations Alliance Update |
| Accountable Director | Malcolm Holmes, Director of Rail |
| Accountable employee(s) | Toby Rackliff, Strategic Lead, Rail Policy (West Midlands Rail) |
| Report has been reviewed by | Councillor Roger Horton – Lead Member Rail and Metro |

Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

The Transport Delivery Committee is recommended:

1. To note the recent progress with developing the West Midlands Stations Alliance concept between Network Rail, West Midlands Railway and the West Midlands Rail partnership of local authorities;
2. To note the progress with the Pilot Stations master Planning work which has been undertaken at local stations on the Stour Valley and Chase Lines.;
3. To note the proposed next steps for the West Midlands Stations Alliance and Station Master Planning workstream;

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update regarding recent progress with developing the West Midlands Stations Alliance concept between Network Rail, West Midlands Railway and the West Midlands Rail partnership of local authorities (which includes WMCA and its constituent authorities).

2.0 Background: What are the issues we are trying address

- 2.1 The West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA) concept seeks to address issues of:
 - **lack of co-ordination between the various parties responsible for station assets**
 - **insufficient incentives to invest in significant station enhancements**

- 2.2 With a couple of exceptions **Network Rail own all stations** in the West Midlands and are funded by Government to maintain these station assets in their 2004 condition.
- 2.3 Similarly, as the **Station Facility Owner, the operator** is only contractually obliged to maintain the status quo. Whilst there is a “Residual Value” mechanism in place which seeks to incentivise the train operator to invest in longer term station improvements, the application of this mechanism has arguably been driven by largely commercial considerations.
- 2.4 This asset management approach does not generally consider the passenger experience nor recognise the full potential role that stations could play as community assets.
- 2.5 **Transport for West Midlands**, which, uniquely, is responsible for the majority of station car parks in the metropolitan area, has consistently invested heavily in these assets over recent decades. However, such investment has not generally been co-ordinated with station maintenance and renewal work undertaken by either Network Rail or the Train Operator.
- 2.6 It has therefore become clear that the current asset management processes do not facilitate a coherent long term plan to enhance stations (or even undertake maintenance on a co-ordinated basis) as the incentives are fractured and unclear.
- 2.7 Any substantial enhancements to station facilities are therefore generally only progressed on a case by case basis and require wholly separate funding and approvals processes from that of asset maintenance.

3.0 Why we have adopted the West Midlands Stations Alliance (WMSA) Concept

- 3.1 Prior to deciding on a “Stations Alliance” approach the West Midlands Rail (WMR) partnership had considered around 20 other different models of station ownership and management.
- 3.2 However, it was eventually concluded that it would be possible to achieve WMR’s objectives for stations, within the current station asset management and financial arrangements, alongside the establishment of a formal tri-partite agreement between WMR, Network Rail and the Train Operator.



- 3.3 This Alliance approach, crucially, leaves the operational responsibilities and risks of station asset management with Network Rail and the train operator.
- 3.4 TfWM and individual WMCA authroities are not a formal members of WMSA, but have close involvement with the alliance through WMR's membership.

4.0 WMSA Vision, Objectives and Governance

- 4.1 Network Rail, West Midlands Rail Ltd and West Midlands Trains have jointly developed the West Midlands Stations Alliance concept, a **Heads of Terms**, and a shared vision that:

We will develop stations as quality, accessible, gateways between communities and the railway, supporting the changing needs of our passengers, residents and visitors.

Stations in the West Midlands will be community assets, supporting the wellbeing and development of the areas they serve.

- 4.2 The strategic objectives of the West Midlands Stations Alliance will be to develop and ensure delivery of projects which:

- ***Secure a long term enhancement of the stations consistent with the Vision***
- ***Support the values of the “West Midlands Railway” brand***
- ***Support economic regeneration of the areas served by the Stations***
- ***Promote efficiency and reduction in whole life costs where achievable***

- 4.3 The formal **WMSA Agreement** will be signed in late Spring 2018 with governance arrangements that should provide suitable incentives on all parties to engage productively and honour their commitments and obligations.
- 4.4 A senior ‘**Alliance Board**’ will oversee the work of WMSA and a **West Midlands Stations Alliance Manager** (jointly funded by the three partners) being recruited, one of whose key responsibilities will be to secure funding for projects and consideration is being given to also supporting a couple of graduate posts to assist future Station Master Planning work.

5.0 WMSA Station Master Planning Pilot

- 5.1 Although only operating in “shadow” form, WMSA has already been progressing a Pilot **Station Master Planning** exercise for stations for the short, medium and long term.
- 5.2 The pilot project (funded principally by the Black Country and Stoke and Staffordshire LEPs) seeks to test the WMSA approach at local stations on two rail corridors:
 - the “Stour Valley Line” between Wolverhampton and Birmingham
 - the Cannock “Chase line” between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall

5.3 The pilot has considered all the local stations on each route, with WMSA partners and the respective WMR member authorities jointly selecting two prioritised stations on each route for more detailed Master Planning consideration.

5.4 The agreed prioritised stations were:

- Sandwell and Dudley, Dudley Port, Cannock and Rugeley Trent Valley

5.5 The Station Master Planning pilot work is still being finalised but some initial outputs will be shared with TDC in the presentation at this meeting.

5.6 A further tranche of Station Master Planning work is now being considered by WMSA partners and WMR constituent authorities building on the lessons learned from the initial pilot project.

6.0 WMSA Process Streamlining

6.1 Further work is also being undertaken on options for: **streamlining internal and external processes** which could reduce costs and speed up project delivery.

6.2 The initial objective is to reduce the timescales required for three key processes (currently being determined) by 25% by the end of December 2018.

7.0 Financial implications

7.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this update report. The West Midlands Stations Alliance is jointly resourced by the three WMSA partners, Network Rail, West Midlands Railway and West Midlands Rail. West Midlands Rail is funded by annual contributions from the Department for Transport and West Midlands Rail Member local authorities.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 There are no legal implications arising in relation to the West Midlands Combined Authority with regards to this report.

9.0 Equalities implications

9.1 Equality implications are being considered by WMSA partners as part of the West Midlands Station Alliance approach. Key accessibility design standards will be adopted and disability groups will be consulted as part of future design processes

10.0 Other implications – Not applicable

11.0 Schedule of background papers – Not applicable