



Name of meeting: Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date: 9 September 2024

Report title: Rapid Transit Corridor Studies

Responsible Director: Anne Shaw, Executive Director, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM)

Report author: Sandeep Shingadia, Director of Strategic Partnerships & Integration (TfWM)

Key Decision? No

Is the ability for the Combined Authority to make a decision internally reliant on Constituent or Non-Constituent Councils making a formal decision first?

Yes No

Public/private report: Public

- 1. Decision/s Recommended**
 - 1.1 Discuss the update and progress on the development of the West Midlands Rapid Transit Priority Corridors and associated work programme.
- 2. Voting Requirements**
 - 2.1 A majority of voting members, in attendance in the meeting room and indicating their preference, are required to vote in favour of any recommendation/proposition for it to become a decision of the Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- 3. Executive Summary**
 - 3.1 To update the Committee on the status and next steps of the rapid transit corridor studies within the West Midlands.
- 4. Matters for Consideration**
 - 4.1 The West Midlands Local Transport Plan Core Strategy sets out a vision for a 45-minute region of 15-minute neighbourhoods where people can thrive without a driving licence and the need to own an expensive vehicle.
 - 4.2 To help achieve this vision, the draft LTP Public Transport and Shared Mobility Big Move identifies a West Midlands public transport system which is made up of three network tiers. These are:

- A Regional Rail and Metro network (with all 10 West Midlands strategic centres served).
- A Core network (mostly core “turn up and go” frequency bus (eg cross-city bus), with rapid transit lines for high volume corridors).
- A Secondary bus network (lower frequency bus and Demand Responsive Transport, providing comprehensive network coverage).

4.3 These networks will all be underpinned by common and integrated branding, ticketing, promotion, passenger information and high-quality interchanges.

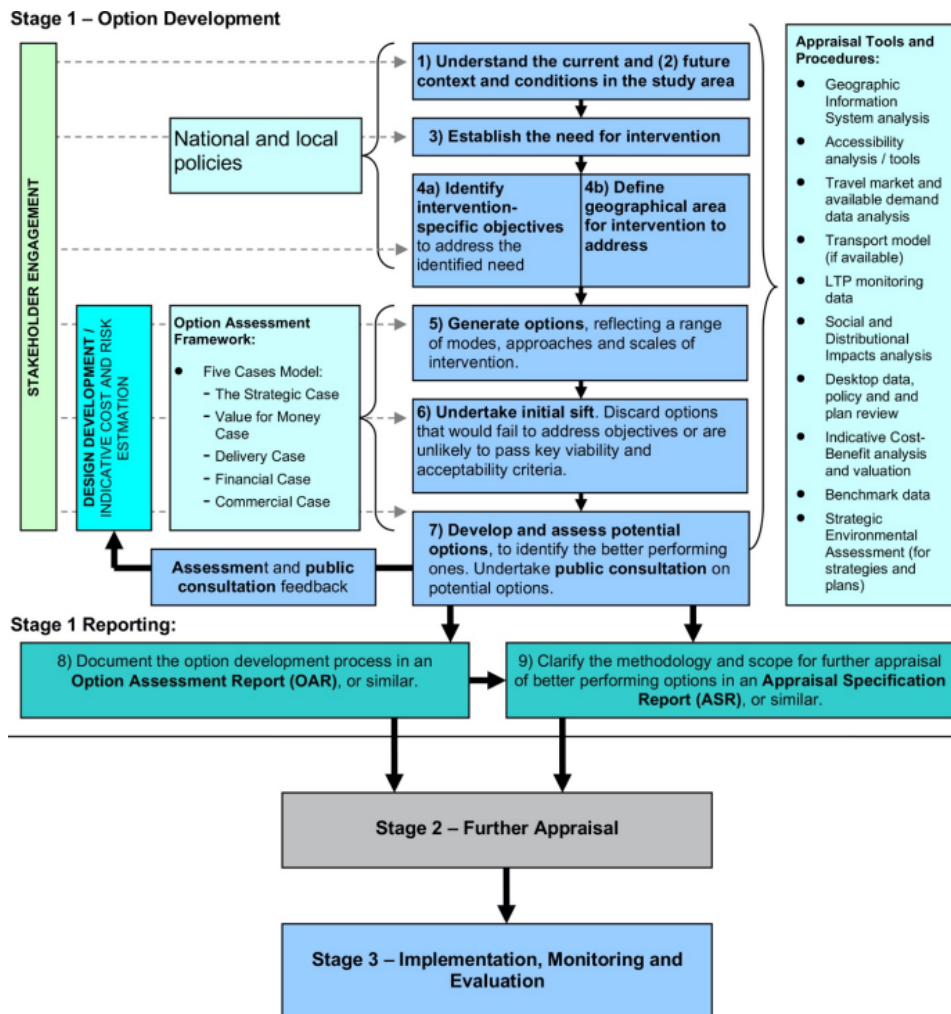
4.4 A key element of this integrated system is the development of rapid transit lines for the core networks high volume corridors and development of the regional rail and metro network. This report sets out current development of rapid transit in the West Midlands this context. Detailed plans for tram and tram-style bus routes across the region are being drawn up.

4.5 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is looking at the options for a number of high priority corridors across the Metropolitan Area.

4.6 The detailed investigation of the options for these routes and building of business cases are the key first steps in the process to fund and build major new transport schemes. They will form a key part of a network of high capacity, turn-up-and-go public transport schemes across the region.

4.7 TfWM, which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), has already secured £2.6 billion funding for transport investment between 2027 and 2032 under the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) from Government.

4.8 The studies being carried out are taking a mode agnostic approach to building a Strategic Outline Case (SOC) with appraisal of the corridors following DfT guidance as illustrated below:

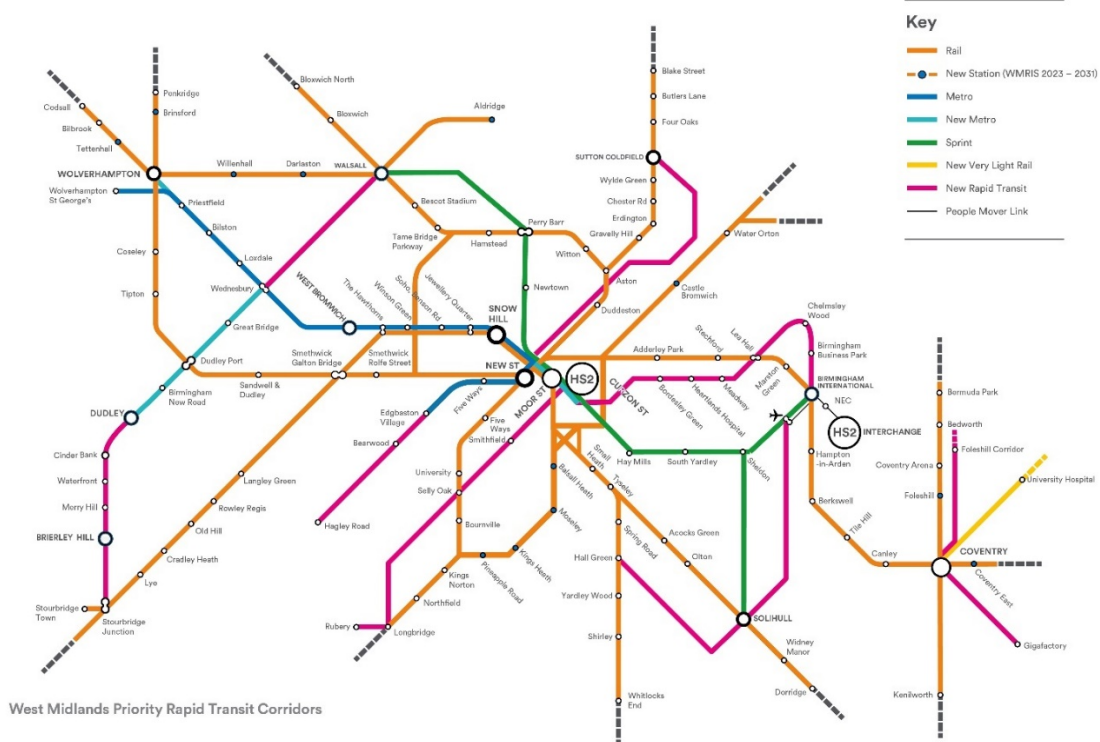


4.9 In tandem with these studies, the ground-breaking Very Light Rail technology, which could substantially reduce both the construction cost and timescales for Metro systems, is being progressed in the region with the construction of a demonstration track in Coventry city centre planned for later this year.

4.10 These and the ongoing development of the cross-city rapid bus route network are part of TfWM’s plans to decarbonise our transport by offering people sustainable, convenient and affordable alternatives to the private car for their journeys. Some of the cross-city bus routes could be upgraded to a full Sprint or Metro route as demand increases.

5. What options have been considered and what is the evidence telling us about them?

5.1 This new rapid transit network is included in the region’s emerging Local Transport Plan, which sets out the priorities for transport investment and development over the next two decades as illustrated below:



16/1/23

5.2 The priority rapid transit corridors are:

- A38 Birmingham – Sutton Coldfield
- Birmingham – Heartlands Hospital - East Birmingham – Solihull – Birmingham Airport
- Birmingham – Bearwood - Hagley Road – Halesowen
- Walsall – Brierley Hill – Stourbridge, (incorporating Dudley – Brierley Hill)
- Birmingham – Longbridge – Rubery (incorporating a potential Birmingham – Smithfield phase)
- Coventry – Foleshill Corridor
- Hall Green – Solihull – UKC Hub
- Coventry – Gigafactory Corridor

5.3 Longer term proposals are:

- Hagley Road – Dudley (A4123 corridor)
- Birmingham – Hall Green
- Wolverhampton – New Cross Hospital
- Wolverhampton – i54
- Coventry – Binley
- Coventry – Eastern Green – Tile Hill
- Coventry – University of Warwick

5.4 The status and expected timescales of the rapid transit corridor studies that are currently in development and being funded (via CRSTS) are illustrated below (Note Submission of Strategic Outline Case (SOC) to WMCA Single Assurance Framework (SAF) and further development of Outline Business Case (OBC) following this will be subject to relevant TfWM/WMCA Governance approvals):

East Birmingham North Solihull	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • WMCA SAF submission • OBC development 	<p>May 2024 Jun 2024 Sep 2024 – Nov 2026</p>
Hagley Road to Halesowen	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement completion • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • WMCA SAF submission • OBC development 	<p>Apr 2024 Feb 2025 March 2025 Apr 2025 – Jan 2027</p>
Birmingham to Longbridge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement completion • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • WMCA SAF submission • OBC development 	<p>Feb 2024 Feb 2025 March 2025 Apr 2025 – Jan 2027</p>
Walsall to Stourbridge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement completion • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • WMCA SAF submission • OBC development 	<p>Jul 2024 March 2025 April 2025 Apr 2025 – Jan 2027</p>
Hall Green – Solihull – UKC Hub (Phased)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement completion • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • Business Justification Case Submission 	<p>Sep 2024 Mar 2025 Jul 2025</p>
Coventry – Gigafactory Corridor	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procurement completion • Options Appraisal / SOC completion • WMCA SAF submission • OBC development 	<p>Nov 2024 May 2025 July 2025 Sep 2025 – Mar 2027</p>

5.5 Delivery of the above schemes will be dependent on funding availability in CRSTS 2 and successful completion of business cases.

6. Reasons for recommending preferred option

6.1 At this stage, the work is being undertaken on a number of priority corridors utilising the options assessment approach as set out in Section 4.

7. Implications and Considerations

Priority:	Contribution:
Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan	Supports delivery of Local Transport Plan rapid transit priorities.
Promote inclusive economic growth in every corner of the region	The rapid transit corridors support a number of connectivity and accessibility

Priority:	Contribution:
	improvements that enable sustainable journeys providing access to opportunity and encouraging inward investment within other programmes of activity. These investments also address the decarbonisation of the transport system either directly or by transferring some journeys from private car to public transport including active travel.
Ensure everyone has the opportunity to benefit	As above
Connect our communities by delivering transport and unlocking housing and regeneration schemes	As above
Reduce carbon emissions to net zero and enhance the environment	As above
Secure new powers and resources from central government	N/A
Develop our organisation and our role as a good regional partner	The report updates TDOSC members on progress by WMCA/TfWM with Local Authorities as on improved cross-partner working in the region as rapid transit network grows. The report deals with priority corridors that will improve connectivity across the wider West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in line with the principles set out in the Local Transport Plan.

8. Internal Consultation and Scrutiny:

8.1 The contents of this report have been considered through the Transport for West Midlands Planning Group.

9. External Consultation and Scrutiny:

9.1 No external consultation or scrutiny undertaken at this stage given the early nature of the work being undertaken as part of the corridor studies.

10. Financial implications:

10.1 An allocation of £600k CRSTS1 funding was approved by WMCA Board in January 2023, with subsequent DfT approvals being received by September 2023 which is supporting the mass transit corridor studies for East Birmingham North Solihull, Longbridge and Walsall to Stourbridge. To July 2024, circa £123.5K has been spent project life to date primarily on the EBNS corridor feasibility studies. This is the only spend to date on rapid transit thus far, with future spend per the approvals outlined below remaining to go.

10.2 Hagley Road has £400k allocated via CRSTS which was approved in October 2023.

- 10.3 Hall Green – Solihull – UKC Hub has £200k allocated via the Investment Programme which approved in May 2023.
- 10.4 Coventry to Gigafactory has £125k allocated via the CRSTS Capacity Fund which was approved in May 2024.

11. Legal implications:

- 11.1 Under the Transport Works Act 1992/2017 Bus Services Act there are powers conferred for the WMCA to develop strategies/policy to improve bus services and light rail.
- 11.2 Where WMCA takes any decisions of this nature it must consider the consequences and impact of its proposed decisions for service users and service providers and take account of any relevant government guidance in addition to the established public law principles relating to decision making so that all relevant considerations are considered.
- 11.3 WMCA may need to respond to any complaints from affected service users/stakeholders as well as FOIA requests about the policy aims/service provision and its development going forward.
- 11.4 Legal will also support with any subsequent Procurement activity on a case by case basis.

12. Programme Assurance and Appraisal implications:

- 12.1 Assurance and Appraisal reviews will be undertaken as appropriate for each corridor study and corresponding business case.

13. Risk implications, including Risk Appetite:

- 13.1 Risk registers will be developed for each of the corridor studies as part of the business cases. These will be actively monitored.

14. Procurement Implications:

- 14.1 WMCA in its capacity as a Contracting Authority will undertake a compliant and transparent procurement exercise with full regard to the Public Contract Regulations (PCR) 2015 (as amended). Where a tender route utilises Transport Planning Frameworks, any Call Off documentation produced will be in accordance with the prescribed framework processes, and in accordance with PCR Regulation 33 (Frameworks as amended).

15. Equality implications:

- 15.1 There are significant implications for the general public as a consequence of this work and it is recommended that a full Equity impact assessment should be conducted for each of the corridors. This is to ensure the equity of those with protected characteristics as per the Equality Act 2010.
- 15.2 It is critical that inclusive engagement and consultation is performed to understand how it is likely to affect people from a broad range of groups and protected characteristics during and after construction – with enough time to take on board comments and consider appropriately.
- 15.3 During construction it is imperative that those with disabilities such as visual

impairments can still safely navigate the transport network. It is recommended that Inclusive Mobility guidance is applied.

16. Inclusive Growth Implications:

16.1 Rapid transit schemes, which will be delivered in line with the Local Transport Plan's priorities, will support inclusive growth objectives by:

- Enabling wider labour markets;
- Providing access to skills, education and training;
- Unlocking high value growth clusters;
- Supporting regeneration and place making initiatives.

17. Local Authority Impact:

17.1 The rapid transit corridor studies are being undertaken with relevant constituent Local Authorities.

18. List of appendices referred to:

18.1 None

19. Background papers used to compile this report:

19.1 None

20. List of Other Relevant Documents

20.1 None