

## Transport Delivery Committee

<b>Date</b>	8 June 2020
<b>Report title</b>	Park & Ride update report
<b>Accountable Chief Executive/TfWM Director</b>	Pete Bond, Director of Integrated Network Services
<b>Accountable Employee</b>	Babs Spooner, Head of Park & Ride
<b>Report has been considered by</b>	Transport Delivery Committee Lead Members

### Recommendation(s) for action or decision:

### Transport Delivery Committee is recommended to:

#### Note the contents of this report

#### 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This report provides an update on Park & Ride matters within the West Midlands Combined Authority Area and the impacts of Covid-19 (Coronavirus) on car park operations and development.

#### 2. Background

- 2.1 Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) currently operates 9,000 Park & Ride spaces on the region's public transport network. These are located in 65 car parks serving 39 railway stations and five Metro stops.
- 2.2 Prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, all Park & Ride sites were generally full on a weekday by 8am with the exception of Bescot Stadium.
- 2.3 As a result of this high demand, there is a focus by TfWM in conjunction with the West Midlands local authorities on expanding Park & Ride at the locations that will be most beneficial to the region strategically, economically and, fundamentally, for our customers and communities. Further detail on how we are taking this work forward is provided in section 4 of this report.

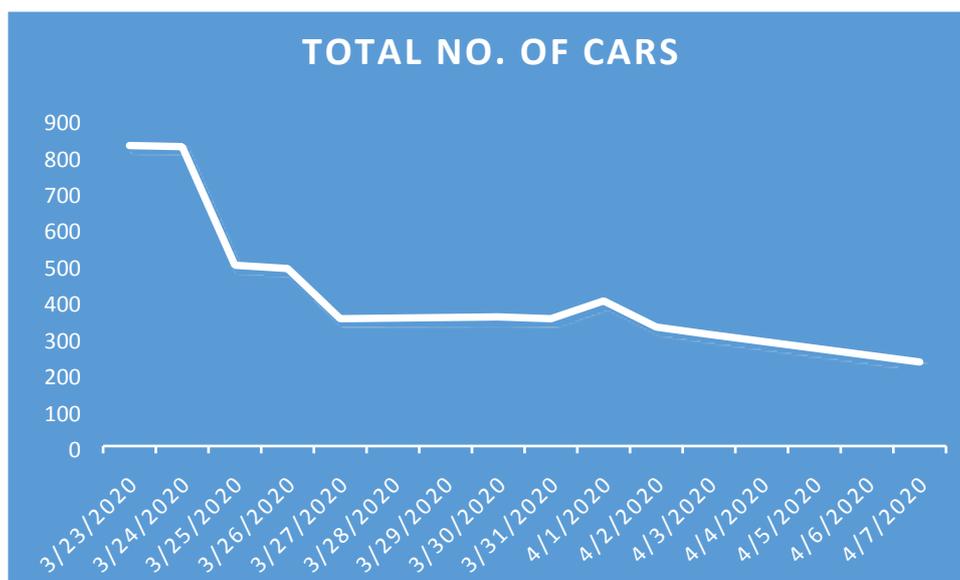
- 2.4 With regards to Park & Ride usage *prior* to the impacts of Coronavirus, as an average across the network:
- One third of people drive to Park & Ride sites from within a mile of their location;
  - One third of people drive to Park & Ride sites from 1-2 miles away from their location;
  - 97% of people driving to Park & Ride are making a single occupancy car journeys;
  - 81% of Park & Ride users are commuters travelling for work with 73% travelling to central Birmingham;
  - 22% of parking at railway stations/Metro stops is on street; and
  - One in nine people do not travel to their nearest station/stop.
- 2.5 Park & Ride currently costs the West Midlands Combined Authority £2.4m per year in operational costs. This is predicted to rise to £3.2m over the next five years if expansion aspirations are realised.

### 3. Impact of Coronavirus on Park & Ride

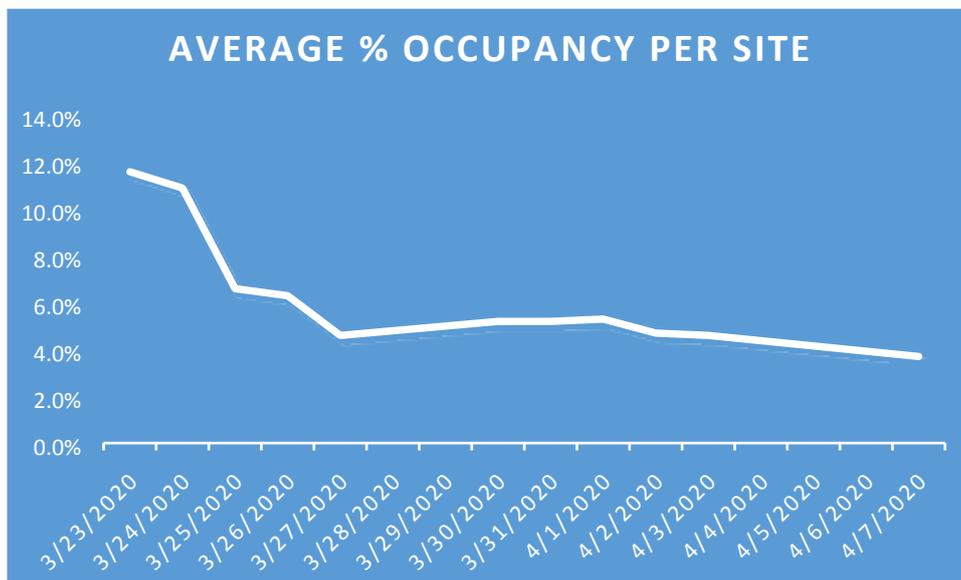
#### Park & Ride usage

- 3.1 Following the announcement on the evening of 23 March 2020 of a national lockdown in response to Coronavirus, the occupancy of Park & Ride sites has significantly reduced. Figure 1 below shows the total number of cars parked within Park & Ride car parks in the 10 days following the announcement of lockdown, and figure 2 shows the average % occupancy of Park & Ride car parks during the same period. This is out of 9,000 spaces which are normally close to or at 100% capacity.

Figure 1 – Total number of cars parked at Park & Ride sites from 23 March 2020 to 7 April 2020

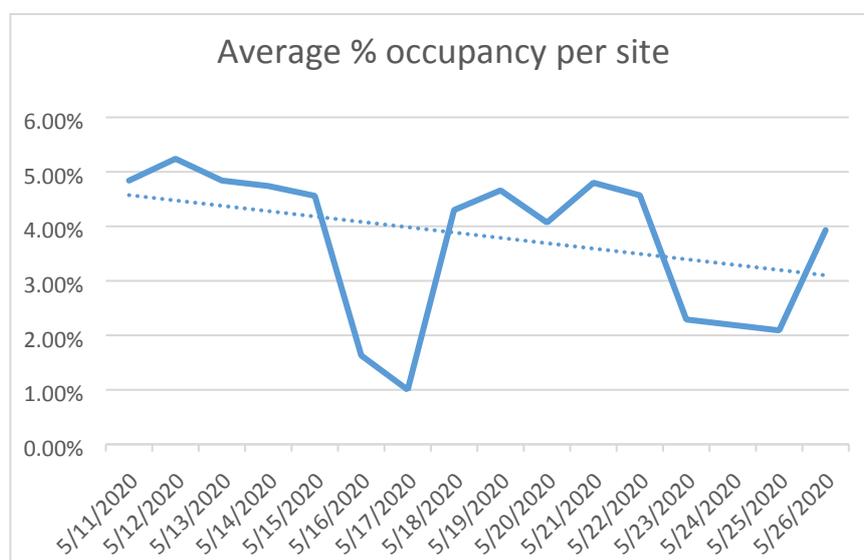


**Figure 2 – Average % occupancy of Park & Ride sites from 23 March 2020 to 7 April 2020**



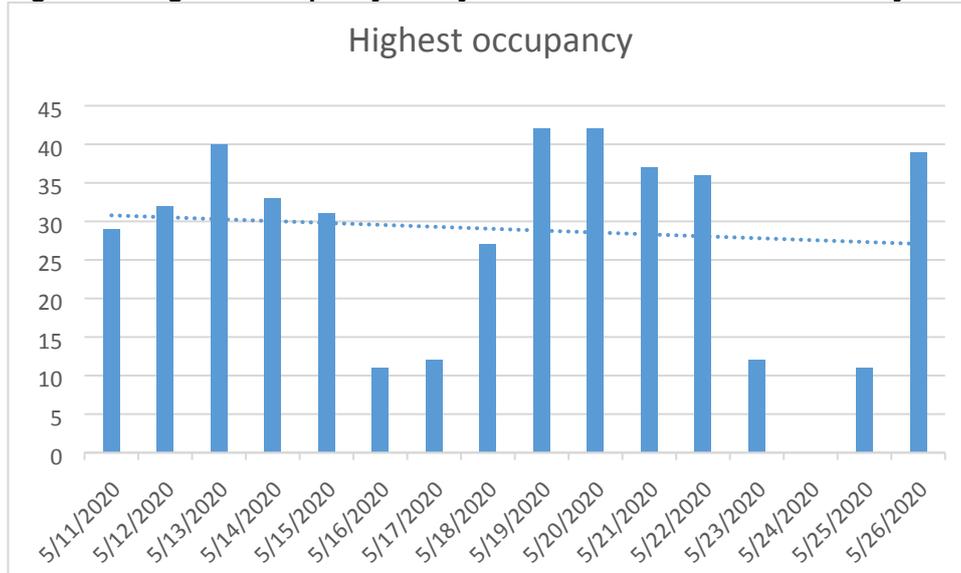
- 3.2 As the charts above demonstrate, following an initial drop in the few days following the lockdown announcement, there was a consistently low occupancy rate of Park & Ride sites of below 5%.
- 3.3 Following the announcement on 10 May 2020 that lockdown rules were being relaxed to allow more people to travel to work (albeit avoiding public transport where possible), Park & Ride occupancy has been monitored on a daily basis to understand the impact.
- 3.4 During w/c 11 May 2020, car park counts at every site were undertaken at 09:00. So far, there has been no significant increase in Park & Ride usage with occupancy generally being below 5% as demonstrated on figure 3 below.

**Figure 3 – Average % occupancy of Park & Ride sites since 11 May 2020**



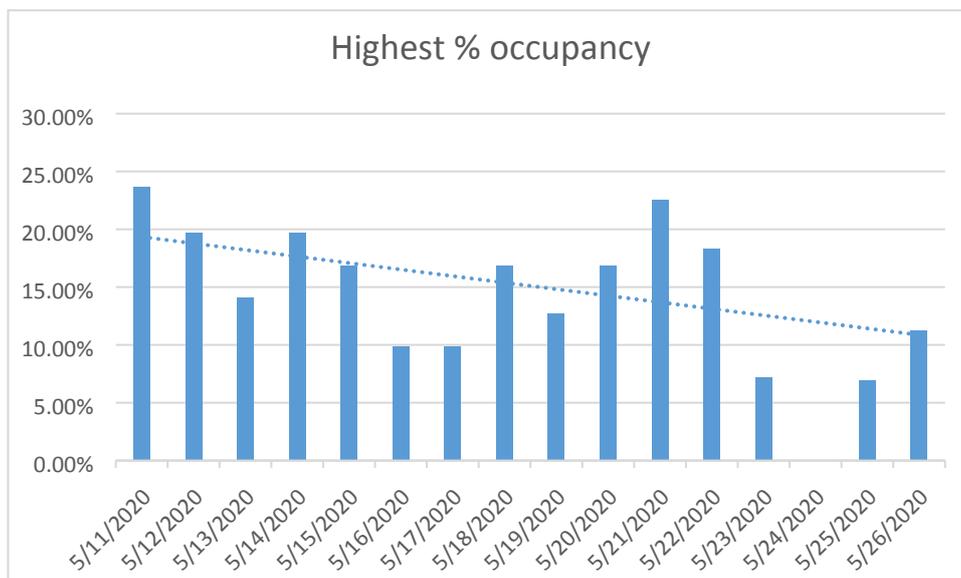
3.5 The highest number of cars in any one car park since 11 May was 42 as demonstrated in figure 4. This was at Stourbridge Junction, which is likely to be reflective of the capacity of the car park (1069 spaces) and its proximity to the West Midlands county border. Occupancy of Stourbridge Junction has not exceeded 4% and so there are unlikely to be any key risks or issues relating to social distancing.

**Figure 4 – Highest occupancy of any Park & Ride site since w/c 11 May 2020**



3.6 Highest % occupancy is around 20%, reflected on figure 5 below, and seems to be focussed on the two Solihull based stations at Olton and Shirley. Anecdotally we have been told some residents may be using Shirley for parking. Olton is adjacent to a shopping area which may account for its occupancy levels.

**Figure 5 – Highest % occupancy of any Park & Ride site since w/c 11 May 2020**



- 3.7 We will continue to closely monitor Park & Ride usage in the coming weeks and months and seek to identify sites where percentage occupancy is becoming high, with consideration of measures to manage impacts on social distancing made on a case by case basis.

### **Save a Space**

- 3.8 Charging for the parking bay reservation service Save a Space was successfully introduced on 02 March 2020 with no issues reported. However, throughout the coronavirus pandemic there has been no usage of the service due to the high availability of free car parking across the network at railway stations and Metro stops throughout the day. A revised monitoring and review programme for the service will be set out once there is more clarity on the usage of Park & Ride as lockdown restrictions are further relaxed.

### **Longbridge Park & Ride delivery**

- 3.9 TfWM officers have been working alongside Principal Contractor Bourne Parking Ltd. to continue the delivery of the new 620 space strategic Park & Ride facility at Longbridge.
- 3.10 Bourne has worked in adherence to Government guidance on safe working practices and social distancing on site throughout the coronavirus lockdown. Despite some impacts to programme due to the availability of some suppliers and contractors, Bourne was able to complete its contracted works on site on 11 May 2020, only two weeks behind programme. Handover of the site from Bourne to TfWM was concluded on Thursday 14 May 2020. Some images are provided in Appendix A.
- 3.11 There are some additional works remaining before the car park can be opened, primarily those being led by WMCA including the provision of telecommunications and power to the site by BT and WPD respectively. Both of these utility providers are only undertaking essential services works during the current lockdown situation. We are liaising closely with them to understand when they can return to site to complete their connections.
- 3.12 The decision not to install the payment equipment at present has been made to ensure the site is free from more costly assets and so that once installed it can be connected to the main, permanent power supply. Therefore this work will also have to be undertaken at an appropriate time prior to the car park opening. Other items to be completed include a small amount of internal painting, het production and installation of signage and identified snagging works.
- 3.13 The site has currently been secured until such a time as we can return to site to complete the outstanding works. During this time we have implemented a number of security measures to protect the car park including:
- The site is cordoned off from the public with perimeter fencing and locked gates;
  - Live CCTV monitoring including motion detection is in place so that any activity on the site is immediately flagged up to the CCTV control room;
  - An arrangement is in place with security firm MAN Commercial to visit the site as requested by the CCTV control room; and
  - MAN Commercial are undertaking daily visits to check the site and boundary fencing.

3.14 A decision on when to open the car park will be made based upon:

- The timescales required for the remaining car park works to be undertaken once lockdown restrictions allow (a programme has been developed indicating a 4 week period required to complete all works following WPD works); and
- When the final planning conditions can be discharged.

We will also consider:

- The occupancy of neighbouring Park & Ride sites to determine local demand; and
- Any changes to messaging around discouraging people to use public transport.

At present, the earliest opportunity to open the car park is July 2020, however this will be determined by the above factors.

### **Park & Ride development work**

3.15 Development of Park & Ride schemes has been progressing during the Coronavirus pandemic. There has been limited impact of lockdown on this work, it mainly being:

- Consultants conducting development work and demand modelling have been less available; and
- Some surveys required to understand the impacts of the schemes and inform the planning process e.g. traffic counts and ecological assessments cannot be undertaken at present due to data being unrepresentative or due to the need for people to be within a 2m distance to conduct the work.

We have been working with the consultants to mitigate against these impacts, for example sourcing historical traffic count data. We are hopeful that the impact on scheme development will be minimal, the main risk being the potential implications on the planning application for the A34 Park & Ride scheme.

3.16 However, as part of the capital programme review in the light of the coronavirus financial impacts, the schemes currently undergoing development and design will be re-evaluated to ensure that they are still priority schemes and can be delivered affordably and effectively despite additional constraints and financial dynamics linked to coronavirus.

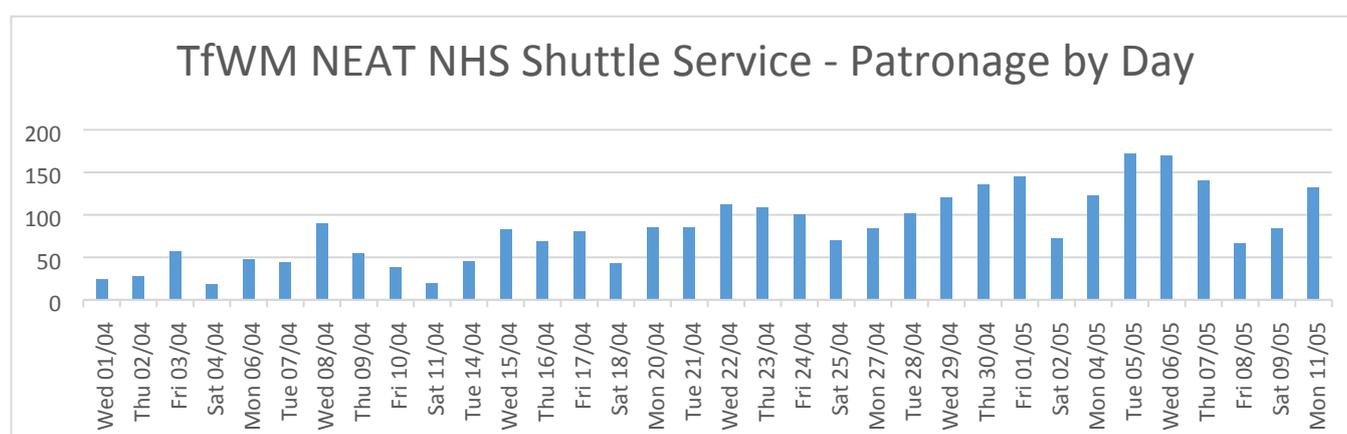
### **NHS Park & Ride shuttle services**

3.17 Park & Ride sites have also been utilised during the coronavirus pandemic as a base for shuttle bus services for NHS staff.

3.18 Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020 TfWM has been working with National Express Accessible Transport (NEAT) to repurpose Ring & Ride vehicles as shuttles and a demand responsive service for NHS workers between 07:00 and 22:00, Monday to Saturday.

- 3.19 In addition to other transport hubs and interchanges TfWM P&R sites have been key locations from which these services have been operating, enabling NHS staff a safe, monitored space to park, and a reliable service to connect them to selected NHS site.
- 3.20 The main P&R sites that have been used for this shuttle service are Stourbridge Junction, Wednesbury Parkway, Sutton Coldfield with services operating from Selly Oak, Northfield Chester Road Lea Hall and Marston Green on a demand responsive basis.
- 3.21 By 14<sup>th</sup> May the services had carried over 3200 passengers, although the exact number of staff parking at the P&R sites in unknown. Figure 6 shows shuttle service usage from the launch on 1 April 2020 to 11 May 2020.

**Figure 6 – Highest % occupancy of Park & Ride sites from 1 April 2020 – 11 May 2020**



#### 4. Park & Ride development

- 4.1 As referenced in points 3.12 and 3.13 of this report, work has been continuing to develop and deliver a number of Park & Ride expansions or delivery of new sites across the network. Work is being undertaken carefully to minimise potentially abortive costs in light of the capital programme review.
- 4.2 A summary of sites where work is continuing is provided in **Table 1** below. Additionally a summary of other sites that are being considered in the context of the emerging strategy and development framework in **Table 2**.

**Table 1 – Ongoing Car Park Expansion projects (in alphabetical order)**

<p>A34 / M6 Junction 7 (Sprint)</p>	<p>In conjunction with the Sprint development team, TfWM is developing a scheme for a Park &amp; Ride site on the A34 Sprint corridor, close to junction 7 of the M6, to act as an intercept for cars heading to Birmingham and Walsall. Two potential sites have been identified for a Park &amp; Ride facility, and negotiations are ongoing with the landowners regarding land acquisition. Initial conversations have also taken place with Walsall MBC with regards to potential planning implications of the scheme identifying a number of hurdles to be overcome including traffic impacts, land designation and ecological factors. Survey work is being conducted where feasible to understand more about these issues to ensure we can enter the formal planning process with appropriate suggested mitigations. This scheme is currently unfunded, however the A34 Park &amp; Ride Steering Group is working on a funding strategy for the scheme which may include charging alongside loan or grant funding.</p>
<p>Bradley Lane (Metro)</p>	<p>The new 196 space car park at Bradley Lane was opened to customers in early February. There are some minor outstanding snagging works to be undertaken as would be expected on a scheme of this nature. Further to this, TfWM is required to reinstate the football pitches on the adjacent land. Work will commence once Covid-19 restrictions allow.</p>
<p>Longbridge (Rail)</p>	<p>Work on the new 620 space car park is substantially complete, with handover taking place from principle contractor Bourne to TfWM on 14 May 2020. There are some outstanding works remaining that cannot be undertaken with the current Coronavirus restrictions including provision of the main power and telecommunications services. We are working with WPD and BT respectively to understand timescales for this work. Installation, testing and commissioning of the payment equipment and signage is also outstanding. A date for opening the car park will be agreed based upon when this work can be complete and planning conditions can be discharged.</p>

<p>Tile Hill (Rail)</p>	<p>A project is continuing to be developed as part of HS2 connectivity package for Coventry and Warwickshire, in partnership with Coventry City Council, to increase the current provision of 347 spaces at Tile Hill station. Two potential plots of land have been identified and designs produced for both. A confirmation on land availability is now required so a decision can be made on which site to progress with. A Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) has been drafted, with work to progress to Outline Business Case (OBC) due to commence shortly. Further development funding has been allocated to the scheme so that it can be progressed to the planning stage. This scheme is currently unfunded, however business case work will consider a funding strategy for the scheme which may include charging alongside loan or grant funding similar to the model used at Longbridge.</p>
<p>Whitlocks End (Rail)</p>	<p>An initial design has been produced to deliver a 271 space addition to the current 324 space car park at surface level. This incorporates land previously acquired by TfWM that is directly adjacent to the existing P&amp;R site. Work is being undertaken to prepare the planning documentation to allow for a planning application to be submitted. A meeting is due to be held with Solihull MBC officers to inform this process, ensuring we understand the key issues and constraints of the scheme and reflect these in the planning documentation alongside appropriate suggested mitigations. As with A34 and Tile Hill, this scheme is currently unfunded, however business case work will consider a funding strategy for the scheme which may include charging alongside loan or grant funding similar to the model used at Longbridge.</p>

**Table 2 – Car Park Expansion projects to be taken forward in the context of the emerging strategy (in alphabetical order)**

<p>Coseley</p>	<p>Parking provision at Coseley has been a long standing issue due to its location serving a wide area and its rail service provision being higher than nearby railway stations. TfWM, in partnership with Dudley MBC, is currently looking at short and medium term options to improve parking provision at the station. With regards to short term opportunities, this could include deals with local landowners for temporary car parking provision. For the medium term, we are looking for land opportunities near to the station which could be available for rental or purchase to enable us to provide a larger parking facility.</p>
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<p>Dudley Port (Rail &amp; Metro)</p>	<p>Opportunities to improve parking provision at Dudley Port are being considered as part of the Dudley Port Integrated Transport Hub study which is looking at the integration of rail and Metro at this location and also seeking to improve access by all modes including bus, walking, cycling and car. The scheme is being looked at alongside wider plans to transform the railway station to improve customer experience, rail services and capacity. We are currently in the process of appointing a consultant to undertake a feasibility study for this package of works.</p>
<p>Quinton M5 Junction 3</p>	<p>The Park &amp; Ride strategy has highlighted an area in the vicinity of the M5 Junction 3 at Quinton as a key strategic location for a Park &amp; Ride facility both in terms of intercepting journeys from both within and outside of the region, and to serve large areas of south Dudley and Birmingham which don't currently have good access to rail and rapid transit. An initial piece of work will be commenced shortly to understand what, if any, land opportunities exist in the area for a Park &amp; Ride facility. It is envisaged that a Park &amp; Ride in this area will be served by Sprint.</p>
<p>Minworth A38</p>	<p>A small amount of development funding has been allocated by Midlands Connect to facilitate a piece of work to look at the feasibility of a Park &amp; Ride at Minworth along the A38 corridor. This is due to its location close to the edge of the conurbation in a key strategic area for traffic interception, as well as serving large areas of residential, commercial and industrial land without easy access to the rail or rapid transit network. It would also benefit significant housing and commercial development taking place nearby at Langley and Peddimore. Initial conversations have taken place with the consultant that has undertaken the wider development work for Midlands Connect Park &amp; Ride opportunities to discuss undertaking demand modelling work for the scheme. A process to identify potential plots of land for rental or purchase is also due to commence imminently. The Park &amp; Ride would be served by Sprint/express bus services.</p>
<p>Sandwell and Dudley (Rail)</p>	<p>A number of outline options have been produced that could increase the parking provision at Sandwell and Dudley station from the current 372 standard spaces, up to as many as 1100 spaces, through a variety of decked solutions. The scope of this project is being considered, in conjunction with the Park &amp; Ride Strategy and local highway implications, in order to ascertain any desired or appropriate level of expansion, and whether development costs can be off-set by charging for use of any enhanced facility. A steering group is being established to investigate this scheme further.</p>

Tame Bridge Parkway (Rail)	An area of land has been identified adjacent to the current site which could be used to deliver a car park expansion. Further to this, the car park layout on the existing site could be optimised. The Park & Ride team and Scheme Development team at TfWM is working alongside the Homes & Development team to look at a wider access package to the site to improve sustainable access from a large housing development taking place nearby.
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- 4.4 TfWM's Park & Ride team is also feeding into the design and development process for the car parks at the new railway stations at Willenhall and Darlaston.
- 4.5 Following on from the approval of the Park & Ride policies and principles, work is ongoing to identify other potential locations for Park & Ride which meet the criteria set out. Focus will be given to sites that play a key role in intercepting traffic and/or serve regional catchments which otherwise do not have good sustainable access to rail and rapid transit.
- 4.4 Furthermore sites will be required to meet other key criteria (except in exceptional circumstances) including:
- Sites should not be within three miles of Birmingham;
  - Sites should be served by rail and/or rapid transit service with a frequency of more than two services per hour;
  - Sites should not have more than 50% of people currently driving from within one mile; and
  - Sites should be able to support a car park of greater than 100 spaces.
- 4.5 Locations for Park & Ride will be identified on this basis in partnership with local authority colleagues. A prioritisation exercise will then be conducted to deduce which sites should be focussed on for immediate design and feasibility development. The prioritisation process will consider:
- Strategic fit
  - Deliverability and affordability
  - Transport investment benefits
  - Local considerations
- 4.6 Shortlisted sites will be developed to SOBC stage ready for funding opportunities. Financial modelling will also be undertaken to understand the business case if users are charged to park at the facility under a similar arrangement to Longbridge, where revenue from car park charging is being used to offset the construction and operational costs.
- 5. Commonwealth Games**
- 5.1 Work continues to take place in partnership with Commonwealth Games partners, to identify potential Park & Ride locations for the event.

- 5.2 TfWM is currently awaiting more detail on the events schedule for the games which will inform the best locations for Park & Ride alongside the size of facility that will be required.
- 5.3 The Park & Ride being developed on A34 is considered to be a potential location that could be used for Commonwealth Games Park & Ride, being on the main corridor to the Alexander Stadium as well as on a key artery into Birmingham city centre. The facility is being designed with this in mind.

## **6. Lease / rental reviews**

- 6.1 As lease and rent reviews present themselves, TfWM will continue to work to maintain its existing Park & Ride portfolio, subject to assessment of value for money including the cost of maintaining and operating the sites.
- 6.2 Nearly all of TfWM's Park & Ride sites remain free of charge to users, however there has been an increase in lease and operational costs at a number of locations. Consideration will need to be given regarding sites where cost increases render the car park poor value for money as to the future of that site, including potential withdrawal and exploration of other funding opportunities.
- 6.3 A number of leases with Network Rail are due to expire in March 2022. TfWM has commenced conversations with Network Rail on the renewal of these leases. A number of leases that are in place with Network Rail are complex and restrictive and we are hoping that the renewal process will allow for some simplification and consistency, in particular with regards to customer experience and the potential to generate income.
- 6.4 Initial discussions between TfWM and Network Rail have been positive, with potential options around revenue generation from sites, from any commercial activities, being reinvested in rail and access to rail including Park & Ride.

## **7.0 Operational cost challenges of Park & Ride**

- 7.1 The operational costs of Park & Ride remain a key financial challenge for TfWM. Park & Ride is currently subsidised through the WMCA transport levy and the Integrated Transport Block at an estimated cost of £2.4m per annum. This is set to increase to £3.2m per annum by 2024/25 due to expansion aspirations and increases in operational costs.
- 7.2 The Park & Ride Policies and Principles report, approved by WMCA Board in March 2019, sets out the details for the funding, management and development of Park & Ride, including exploring a charging/booking system to see if we can move towards a more sustainable approach to funding Park & Ride provision and improving customer experience. More details on this are available in table 3 below.

**Table 3 – Policies for Funding, Managing and Developing Park & Ride.**

Funding park and ride	Managing park and ride	Developing park and ride
<p>Any proposals for new or expanded park and ride schemes would generally be expected to be financially self-sustaining beyond the initial construction costs (including measures required beyond the boundary of the site such as on-street controls).</p> <p>Decommissioning of park and ride sites will be considered where rail and rapid transit network coverage provides residents in the area with viable and realistic alternatives to accessing the public transport network by non-car means; and there is no significant strategic transport access value provided by the site.</p> <p>Park and ride assets owned or operated by WMCA will be supported by commercial strategies which seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the cost of park and ride;</li> <li>• Raise revenue to cover the cost of park and ride, including by means of charging; and</li> <li>• Enable services supported by the WMCA Transport Levy to be as financially self-sustaining as possible.</li> </ul> <p>Unless there are compelling wider benefits or commensurate savings the proportion of the WMCA Transport Levy budget allocated to the operation of park and ride will not be increased.</p>	<p>Wherever practicable at park and ride assets owned or operated by WMCA, measures will be introduced that aim to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the proportion of users that drive short distances to use park and ride;</li> <li>• Increase occupancy of cars travelling to park and ride.</li> <li>• Reduce the need for users to arrive very early in order to secure a space;</li> <li>• Manage any directly associated surrounding on-street parking that has a significant adverse traffic management or community impact;</li> <li>• Reduce adverse travel market distortions such as rail-heading at park and ride sites where it abstracts demand from better placed transport interchange nodes.</li> </ul> <p>Where practicable, charging and booking measures will be considered as a high priority to achieve the above aims.</p>	<p>Where the private sector is unlikely to invest, WMCA will pro-actively promote park and ride sites with viable business cases in the metropolitan area that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides access to metropolitan/regional services to the West Midlands' well-connected strategic urban centres and/or intercity services to other key UK cities; and</li> <li>• Intercept longer distance traffic in-bound into the metropolitan area and/or serve local catchments.</li> </ul> <p>Development of additional park and ride capacity will be favoured in locations where it offers the earliest feasible opportunity to beneficially abstract car trips from the urban road network.</p> <p>Unless there is compelling strategic reason which supports the better operation of the transport system, developing park and ride will not generally be supported:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In congested urban centres.</li> <li>• Within 3 miles of Birmingham City Centre.</li> </ul> <p>There will be a general presumption against the development of park and ride that precludes alternative land uses in the long term and where there is a clear local ambition to use the land for more productive purposes.</p>

**7.3 A review exploring charging and booking has commenced considering a wide range of factors including:**

- Whether introducing a charging / booking regime for Park & Ride could manage usage and improve customer experience for people who currently cannot get a parking space if they do not arrive early in the morning peak;
- Whether introducing a charging / booking regime for Park & Ride could promote more sustainable travel to Park & Ride and discourage some of the high numbers of short, single occupancy car trips currently undertaken;
- If a charge were applied, what level would be realistic in not creating a barrier to usage for those who do not have another feasible option for accessing rail and rapid transit;
- If a charge were applied, what level would not have a significant negative impact on demand;
- What a payment process for the customer would look like, ensuring provision of easy to use, seamless processes including use of Swift;
- The costs required to roll out a charging regime across TfWM Park & Ride;
- What approach would be taken in rolling out a charging regime across TfWM Park & Ride for example whether this would need to be phased;
- The amount of revenue required to cover capital and revenue costs associated with the payment process and wider operational costs;
- A process for ring-fencing a proportion of revenue raised for reinvestment in the public transport network;

- An understanding of the positive and negative impacts Park & Ride charges could have on surrounding areas plus potential mitigation costs; and
- How booking/space reservation could improve the user experience at Park & Ride sites.

7.4 A new post has been recruited to – Head of Network Transformation – which will further support the development of this work stream.

7.5 Further updates will be provided as work on this area continues.

## **8. Financial Implications**

8.1 The scheme developments and lease reviews outlined in this report will be reflected in the financial forecast. The financial impact of the Covid-19 is being tracked and the forecast in June will be updated to reflect this.

## **9. Legal Implications**

9.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report

## **10. Impact on Delivery of Strategic Transport Plan**

No comments

## **11. Equalities Implications**

11.1 New park and ride sites will need to meet key access standards in line with BS8 301. Moreover, an equality impact assessment of the charging proposals at an early options development stage will help ensure any equality concerns are appropriately addressed.

## **12. Inclusive Growth Implications**

No comments

## **13. Geographical Area of Report's Implications**

No comments

## **14. Other Implications**

No comments

## **15. Schedule of Background Papers**

None

## **Appendix A – Images of Longbridge's new Strategic Multi-Storey Park & Ride**



**Top floor view towards stair and lift core**



**Panorama of top floor**



**View of one of the intermediate floors towards the stair and lift core**



**View towards car park entrance from Devon Way**



**View of west elevation from outside The Factory on Longbridge Lane**



**Panorama of front façade of the car park from Longbridge Lane**



**View of east elevation from Longbridge Lane**