



Transport Delivery Committee

Date	9 October 2017
Report Title	Park and Ride Update
Accountable Director	Steve McAleavy, Interim Director of Transport Services
Accountable employee(s)	Peter Sargant, Head of 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 current status of development for Park and Ride Expansion schemes;
2. To note and support the significant amount of activity that is underway on how Park and Ride is developed and delivered;
3. To note that broader policy decisions on Park and Ride Charging will be an issue for WMCA Board at the appropriate time;
4. To agree that the charging arrangements that exist at Sutton Coldfield should be reviewed as outlined in Paragraph 5.28.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update relating to the delivery and development of Park and Ride sites in the TfWM are since the committee considered the previous report on 3 April 2017.

2.0 Background

Current Park and Ride Provision

2.1 As outlined in the previous report, Park and Ride delivery is a key activity for TfWM with nearly 9,000 spaces provided at 38 rail stations, 3 metro stops and 1 bus site. There are also nearly 4,000 spaces provided by other rail operators, principally Virgin Trains. Table 1 shows the sites provided by TfWM inside the TfWM area.

Table 1 – Park and Ride Sites Provided by TfWM

Rail Line	Number of Stations	Number of Car Parks	% stations with car park	Number of Spaces	Number of TfWM Car Parks	Number of TfWM Spaces	Average spaces per car park
Wolverhampton	6	5	83%	1443	4	631	158
Stourbridge	10	8	80%	2418	8	2418	302
Cross City North	10	5	50%	1041	5	1041	208
Cross City South	7	4	57%	1061	4	1061	265
Dorridge/Solihull	8	5	63%	1185	5	1073	215
Shirley	7	5	71%	688	4	675	169
Rugeley/Walsall	8	3	38%	375	2	349	175
Coventry	10	8	80%	3862	6	839	140
TOTAL	66	43	65%	12073	38	8087	213
Metro	23	3		367	3	367	122
Bus		1		400	1	400	
GRAND TOTAL				12840	42	8854	

2.2 In addition to the TfWM area Park and Ride sites, TfWM is also responsible for the provision of the car parking at Bromsgrove station (359 spaces).

2.3 Park and Ride has been a huge success story for the TfWM area with virtually all car parks filled to capacity every day. As such Park and Ride has made a major contribution to reducing car journeys into city centres and supporting growth in usage on the public transport network, particularly the rail network.

2.4 The success of Park and Ride has led to challenges including:

- The need to operate an enforcement regime to ensure that drivers park only in marked bays
- Problems of on-street parking around stations with over-subscribed car parks (and indeed at stations with no car parks)
- Poor customer satisfaction with car parking provision due to difficulties in finding a space
- Inability of potential public transport users to access the network, particularly during the off-peak.

- A major cost to TfWM of circa £2.4 million per annum (around £300 per space) to operate car parks

Future Pressures

2.5 The delivery and operation of Park and Ride is subject to a number of future pressures:

- Network resilience arising from major highway and HS2 investment programmes will create significant capacity pressures on the highway network, requiring expanded and improved public transport options to encourage modal shift
- The affordability of operating both existing Park and Ride sites and any future expanded sites within increasingly constrained budget – noting that the majority of sites are free for users
- Rail usage is anticipated to continue to grow strongly – driven by jobs growth in Birmingham City Centre, population growth and continued modal shift from both car and bus.
- The new West Midlands rail franchise will deliver a significant improvements in rail services including a major capacity uplift in 2021 and new rolling stock on many routes – this will drive further rail growth and improving P&R access to the rail network will be essential in supporting this.
- Changes in customer expectations and requirements and the development of new technologies
- Increasing local political issues associated with on-street parking around rail stations
- Development of new Metro and Sprint routes with opportunities for P&R
- The impact of Clean Air Zones in the West Midlands and the requirement to find alternative means of travel to the car into our main towns and cities

2.6 As a result of these issues there is a need to rapidly expand the capacity of Park and Ride sites across the whole network in a way that is affordable and sustainable.

2.7 TfWM has therefore initiated a number of workstreams which are looking at:

- Projects to expand existing P&R sites
- Projects to initiate new P&R sites
- New approaches to the way that TfWM delivers and operates Park and Ride sites.

2.8 To help inform these workstreams, a workshop was held with both internal and external partners in March which explored various themes relating to Park and Ride.

2.9 A number of internal TfWM workshops have also been held looking at P&R delivery options and customer requirements.

2.10 Given the scale of the challenge, TfWM has been exploring all options relating to the delivery of Park and Ride and is not ruling out any options at this stage. It is recognised that some proposals would require changes in policy (for both park and ride and wider policies) and these would be sought where needed. The future affordability of delivering, expanding and operating Park and Ride sites in particular may require an active review of the policy of not charging users of P&R sites.

3.0 Car Park Expansion Workstreams

3.1 TfWM is progressing a number of projects to expand a number of sites that have initially been identified as priorities (initially through the 2015 Task and Finish Review process and re-affirmed in the April update report)

3.2 These projects are shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2 – Car Park Expansion projects

Bradley Lane (Metro)	New 196 space car park entering delivery phase in 2018 following resolution of mineworking issues
Tipton	New 108 space extension onto land currently owned by Sandwell MBC. Planning permission has been granted and negotiations are being held with Sandwell re costs associated with land.
Whitlocks End	New 271 space expansion onto existing TfWM land. Public consultation has occurred and TfWM is reviewing issues associated with the expansion with both Solihull and Worcestershire councils. Project development stalled but now being re-started.
Longbridge	TfWM currently tendering for a decked car park solution on site of existing car park. Proposal is for two deck (+268 spaces) with potential to expand to up to 5 decks (+622 spaces). £1.8M Local Growth Funding has been allocated and any shortfall will need to be funded from other sources.
Sandwell and Dudley	Project being initiated with TfWM project processes. Initial assessments of potential sites around station have been undertaken and opportunities for 3 rd party providers being actively looked at.
Tile Hill	Project being actively developed as part of HS2 connectivity package for Coventry and Warwickshire. Consultants are actively developing options for expansion with three options currently under consideration.

Tame Bridge Parkway	Project being initiated within TfWM project processes. Initial land investigation activity is being undertaken. Currently awaiting development resources to progress.
Hall Green	Discussions have been held with landowner regarding the availability of additional land to allow the creation of a significantly larger car park.

3.3 TfWM has undertaken a high-level prioritisation exercise to identify which further sites need to be investigated for expansion. This has been based on a distance/frequency matrix that prioritises stations that are further from Birmingham city centre and have a higher frequency rail services over stations that are near to Birmingham with low frequency services. This approach has identified the following stations as being a high priority for active investigation for expansion:

- Coseley
- Stourbridge Junction
- Cradley Heath
- Rowley Regis
- Blake Street
- Four Oaks
- Sutton Coldfield

3.4 Other stations are also likely to have strong pressures for expansion and where development opportunities arise these will be investigated as appropriate.

3.5 At Sutton Coldfield, expanding the car park will be explored as part of the wider HS2 Connectivity Package project to enhance the station and interchange arrangements.

3.6 At Lea Hall we will also be investigating whether use can be made of the currently largely unused bus interchange facility to provide additional parking.

3.7 TfWM is also looking at the potential for single-level temporary decked car parks to provide additional capacity at some locations. London Midland have used this solution at Tamworth and a number of their other stations.

3.8 In addition to the expansion workstreams, TfWM has also been undertaking investment in renewing assets at Park and Ride sites as part of the capital programme. This has included:

- Resurfacing (£1.4m at 17 sites 2015-2017)
- Lighting upgrades (£0.8m at 43 sites 2013-2017)
- CCTV (£0.6m at 25 sites 2015-2017)
- Park & Ride Upgrades (£0.2m at 33 sites 2015-2017)

4.0 New Park and Ride schemes

- 4.1** In addition to the expansion schemes noted in **Table 2**, and discussed in the previous section, TfWM has been actively engaging with potential commercial providers of parking regarding opportunities to provide new privately operated car parks adjacent to rail stations to complement the current oversubscribed free TfWM car parks. Locations where opportunities for private commercial car parks are being investigated include Spring Road, Rowley Regis, Canley and Sandwell & Dudley.
- 4.2** At Cradley Heath there is already a privately operated car park adjacent to the station providing overflow parking for the oversubscribed TfWM car park. While this car park does not comply with our standards, it is providing a useful function and its existence demonstrates that there is a commercial market for providing car parking to serve rail stations at no cost to the taxpayer and there is a willingness for rail users to pay for parking.
- 4.3** TfWM is actively encouraging private providers to investigate options such as these where a direct passenger benefit can be provided at no cost to taxpayers. TfWM will advise passengers of the availability of third-party parking where they meet minimum standards of provision (e.g. surfacing, lighting, security etc) and promote them alongside other station access options as appropriate.
- 4.4** TfWM is also looking at the provision of Park and Ride on both the Metro and Sprint networks as part of the development work being undertaken for these projects. Any future strategy for Park and Ride on these networks will need to complement the existing Park and Ride sites and also consider any new approaches to the delivery of Park and Ride as discussed below.

5.0 Park and Ride Delivery Workstreams

- 5.1** In addition to the specific projects to expand Park and Ride, TfWM is also undertaking a review as to how Park and Ride sites are delivered.
- 5.2** This comprises of various separate but complementary workstreams as discussed below.

Survey Work

- 5.3** Throughout the autumn TfWM is carrying out a comprehensive set of surveys across nearly all rail stations to understand how people access each station. This will give us an understanding of where people travel from, how they get to the station and where they park (if car users). This will give us a good understanding of the users of TfWM area rail stations and give us more information to help inform decisions that we may need to take regarding priorities for expansion, charging or improving access arrangements more widely.
- 5.4** We are also looking to repeat the Park and Ride Users Survey that was last undertaken in 2012 where we will specifically ask users of our car parks about their customer experience and priorities for improvement. This again will help us take decisions about how we want to change the way we deliver park and ride.

Car park enforcement

5.5 TfWM continues to actively enforce considerate parking at our park and ride sites with users parking outside lined bays being liable to a penalty charge. This scheme which has now been in place for 3 years is operated by Vehicle Control Services Ltd (VCS) and is working well with relatively few operational issues occurring. It is budgeted as cost neutral to TfWM overall with the Parking Charge Notice income received funding the enforcement activity taking place with the contract being flexible where enforcement activity can be scaled up and down at relatively short notice to respond to the level of incidents taking place. Any minor surpluses in income that result are re-invested into improving the overall Park & Ride infrastructure. It is proposed to continue with this arrangement on an on-going basis, although it may need to be reviewed as part of any wider review of delivery arrangements.

Private sector partnership

5.6 We are exploring the potential for private sector car parking companies to help support TfWM in the delivery of both its existing park and ride sites and any new and expanded sites. We are therefore undertaking a market engagement process to understand the potential ways that a stronger relationship with private parking providers can help us deliver park and ride. This could potentially create the opportunity for a much more rapid expansion of park and ride sites than TfWM alone could deliver, along with better value options for the taxpayer. A market engagement day is therefore being planned for November.

5.7 Initial conversations already suggest that there would be interest from the market for supporting TfWM in the delivery of Park and Ride. A clear specification and commercial structure for a new delivery model will need to be developed if this is to be taken forward, recognising the need to protect customers' interests.

Park and Ride Charging

5.8 As part of this work with private sector providers, TfWM will need to review the current policy of providing free parking for users. This policy has been highly successful in driving growth in rail usage, modal shift and creating well used park and ride assets. The free parking policy does, however, create a number of issues including:

- The cost to TfWM and taxpayers is significant and means that funding for expanding park and ride capacity or other transport projects may not be available
- It could impact on the business case and viability of delivering new Park and Ride sites across the region.
- There is little incentive for people who live within walking distance of a station to walk rather than drive (or indeed for people to cycle or use bus to access a station)

- Demand cannot be managed to ensure capacity is available for off-peak users. This is currently a cause of customer dissatisfaction with TfWM regularly receiving complaints from passengers who have been unable to park.
- 5.9** It is recognised that any change in policy on charging will be politically sensitive, and possible wider impacts for on-street parking would need to be recognised. However, many P&R sites already have issues with on-street parking due to the current capacity pressures, and putting in charging at an appropriate level may assist in freeing up capacity for late peak/off-peak users who currently have no option but to park on-street. Income from charging would also create a revenue stream which could be used to support a faster expansion of park and ride capacity than would otherwise be possible. This needs to be balanced with the impact of parking charging on on-service revenue and usage, and the implications this may have on modal share and the wider West Midlands objectives.
- 5.10** It should be remembered that car park charges are already in place at Sutton Coldfield (TfWM), Bromsgrove (TfWM), Solihull (Chiltern/TfWM), Dorridge (Chiltern), Coventry (Virgin Trains), Birmingham International (Virgin Trains) and Wolverhampton (currently Virgin Trains).
- 5.11** Any change in policy on charging would also need to reflect wider changes that are occurring regarding transport ticketing. A roll-out of smart-ticketing on Swift across the rail network is proposed as part of the new rail franchise and this would create the potential for any future parking charge to be integrated within the same smart ticket as the rail ticket, as well as Metro and Sprint. Having a seamless payment process in place, such as by using Swift, will be important if a decision is taken to implement charging.
- 5.12** Any decision on this issue would need to be taken by the WMCA Board at the appropriate time.

Development of new Park and Ride sites on Sprint Network

- 5.13** Alongside development work for Sprint, there is an opportunity to consider the introduction of Park and Ride on the Sprint network. By exploring the new opportunities an evolving rapid transit network provides, P&R associated with Sprint and Metro services could encourage a shift from car to public transport, improving the regions network resilience, and improving air quality.
- 5.14** Similar road based park and ride solutions have been delivered elsewhere including the Leigh Guided Busway in Manchester which is looking to expand its Park and Ride provision, and Leeds which has also recently expanded its road based Park and Ride offer due to the success of the pre-existing sites. In the Leeds example sites are located close to the motorway network allowing users to park easily before encountering congestion on the way into Leeds and saving the cost of city centre parking.
- 5.15** TfWM commissioned a demand led exercise in April 2017, to establish the optimum locations for P&R on the Sprint network. Overlaid with data demonstrating levels of congestion on the Key Route Network, this exercise provides a list of recommendations for each corridor, and demonstrates where P&R can provide the greatest impact. The resultant report is still to be finalised.

5.16 Based on the output of the draft report, the scope for a subsequent exercise to further this work consider land opportunities, land values, and other implications including land use policies, is currently being drafted.

Park and Ride Standards and Terms & Conditions

5.17 TfWM provides high quality car parks for its customers including help points, real-time CCTV monitoring, generous aisle widths, etc. We need to review standards and consider what facilities we should be providing in relation to electric charge points, car share bays, etc. In general a principle of maximising the capacity for standard car users as part of the design of car parks will be adopted, however it is recognised that some space may need to be reserved for electric cars or other users if other policy objectives are to be encouraged.

5.18 At most of our Park and Ride sites the reserved bays for Blue Badge holders are usually under-used. We follow government guidance in providing 5% of spaces for Blue Badge holders even though this is generally far in excess of the actual demand for such spaces. This results in complaints from regular users about spaces (which are 50% larger than normal bays) being empty while the rest of the car park is full. It also means that taxpayers are funding the provision of assets that are never used.

5.19 TfWM is currently collecting data on the usage of Blue Badge bays in order to understand what the actual requirement is for these spaces. We will then be seeking derogations from the DfT to reduce the capacity of these spaces to reflect the maximum observed demand at each individual site. This will include a commitment to reinstate Blue Badge spaces in the event of the demand increasing so that there is no detrimental impact on the ability of Blue Badge holders to use the rail network.

5.20 We will also be reviewing the wider Terms and Conditions for users – covering issues such as use by non-rail users, long-term stays, etc.

Lease Review

5.21 Around half of our park and ride sites are on land leased from Network Rail and the franchise operator (currently London Midland). We are separately reviewing the covenants contained within these leases as some are very restrictive in nature and prevent us from being able to carry out any commercial activity at these sites. This means that we are not able to raise any revenue from advertising, charging or any other activity without the agreement of Network Rail or the franchisee at certain of our sites. Dialogue is underway with Network Rail to understand on what basis they may be willing to release us from these restrictive conditions.

Save a Space Trial

5.22 As previously advised to TDC members, TfWM is taking part in the Innovate UK ‘Innovation in Urban Spaces Contest’ through which we are working with a start-up developer called Accelogress who have developed an app which allows rail passengers to book a parking space in a “Save a Space” trial. This was proposed at four trial sites (Sutton Coldfield, Longbridge, Rowley Regis and Tile Hill) where

we were looking for volunteers to sign up to a 3-month trial period where they will have the ability to reserve and pre-book a specially designated parking space.

5.23 There have been considerable technical challenges in delivering the car park counting aspects of the trial using ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) technology. We are now looking to progress the trial with only the space reservation aspect enabled (and not the real time monitoring of car park usage feature which used the ANPR). It is currently anticipated that the trial will operate during the November to February period and we will shortly be calling on a small number of volunteers at the four stations to sign up to take part. Following the trial we will consider the lessons learnt and use this to inform our future approach.

Sutton Coldfield

5.24 Sutton Coldfield station is unique among the car parks directly operated by TfWM in that it levies a small charge to discourage use of the site by town centre users. The charge has been set at £1.30 for over 20 years, with a 50% refund available upon purchase of a rail ticket from the booking office. Season ticket holders park for free.

5.25 The charging is operated by the use of a staffing operative (provided within the overall contract operated by Vehicle Control Services Ltd that includes Considerate Parking enforcement) who collects cash at the entrance. A trial of the use of PAYG Swift is also being rolled out to allow payment to be taken using a portable Swiftcard reader (as used on Metro). It is also one of the locations involved in the Save-a-Space trial.

5.26 The revenue collected from the charge covers the majority (but not all) of the costs associated of collecting it. Given that the charge has not been changed for many years it is now very out of step with other town centre car parks in Sutton Coldfield and the car park suffers from overcrowding in the same way as our free sites. Any non-rail users paying £1.30 a day to park are also taking business away from the council run car parks – the car park on Station Street next to the station currently charges £4.50 a day to park.

5.27 The use of the booking office to give refunds is a practice that West Midlands Trains may also wish to review as part of the new franchise.

5.28 Given these issues, and bearing in mind the consideration that is being given more broadly to charging, it is appropriate that TfWM now reviews the charging level at Sutton Coldfield. Subject to consultation with Birmingham City Council and Sutton Coldfield Town Council, it is therefore proposed to increase the charge to a more appropriate level at this location and review the discounts given to rail ticket holders.

6.0 Encouraging other access options

6.1 TfWM recognises that improving other access options to stations and stops is also important and at many stations walking or other access modes are more important than Park and Ride. In parallel with the P&R workstreams TfWM is therefore pursuing a number of other initiatives to improve access to the public transport network. This includes work such as:

- Improving bus/rail interchange through the new rail franchise, the West Midlands Stations Alliance and initiatives with bus operators;
- Improving cycle facilities at stations – both through the new rail franchise and specific TfWM projects;
- Working with partner authorities to improve walking routes to stations.

6.2 Any proposals to improve Park and Ride therefore need to be considered as part of wider plans to improve the access to the network.

7.0 Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 TfWM recognises that its Park and Ride sites can have a significant impact on local residents and is an issue that local authorities and local councillors have a keen interest in. Any changes to the way that TfWM delivers Park and Ride at its sites also needs to bear in mind what wider car parking policies are in place across each district council area.

7.2 Park and Ride policy within the TfWM area also needs to be influenced by policy in the wider commuter area, recognising that travel behaviour can be affected by both the availability of car parking and charging policy at stations in the wider area.

7.3 We will therefore continue to actively engage with the multiple stakeholders involved in Park and Ride as we continue to review our approach to delivery and priorities for expansion.

8.0 Financial implications

8.1 The provision of Park and Ride has considerable financial implications for TfWM. Operating Park and Ride sites currently costs over £2.4 million per annum. Any expansion in provision could have the potential to increase these costs further. Therefore any associated on-going revenue impacts of Park and Ride will need careful consideration as we take forward plans to expand provision.

8.2 In terms of further expansion and developments the TfWM capital budget alone will be insufficient to deliver all our aspirations and therefore there will be a need to explore all funding opportunities if a wider programme of schemes is to be delivered. This will include looking at charging to raise revenue in order to fund capital borrowing.

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 Any development or expansion proposal for P & R sites will be subject to due diligence in terms of providing a comprehensive appraisal of land ownership status and to establish any requirements necessary in respect to consents and approvals needed for development. Any necessary property agreements, including transfers and leases, will also need to be negotiated and entered into and the appropriate timeframes for completion of these elements of work will need to be factored into the projects going forward.

9.2 Any changes resulting from our negotiations with Network Rail and the franchisee relating to the covenants contained within certain car park leases may also drive

legal costs and processes that will need to be factored into budgets and project timescales.

- 9.3** All necessary commercial agreements to undertake works will need to be entered into in line with all contract and procurement requirements.

10.0 Equalities implications

- 10.1** All TfWM car parks currently confirm to DfT Guidance on the design of stations in relation to the Equalities Act. We will continue to design to these standards for new park and ride sites, although TfWM will look to seek derogations to the number of Blue Badge spaces provided at stations where there is clear, sustained evidence of over-provision.

- 11.0 Other implications** – Not applicable

12.0 Schedule of background papers

Transport Delivery Committee, 3 April 2017 – Park and Ride Update

Transport Delivery Committee, 23 March 2015 – Park and Ride Task and Finish Review