

# Public consultation

## Proposals to transform bus services in the West Midlands



Transport for  
West Midlands





## Transforming bus services in the West Midlands

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is responsible for making transport “happen”. We are accountable for delivering improvements in transport across the region, to create a happier, healthier, better connected and more prosperous West Midlands.

The Bus Services Act 2017 offers us new powers and opportunities to bring together local authorities and bus operators in an Enhanced Partnership (EP) to develop a coordinated approach to improving bus travel in the West Midlands. This will help all partners involved in the EP to achieve the ambition to deliver a world-class integrated transport system which is clean, safe and affordable. More information about the act itself is available on the consultation webpage [www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)

The Enhanced Partnership is formed by a Plan and a Scheme. The EP Plan sets out our overall vision to improve bus services. This is accompanied by the EP Scheme which sets out how we aim to achieve this vision along the A34 (north) Walsall – Birmingham City Centre, the A45 and Lode Lane Corridors, from Birmingham Airport / Solihull – Birmingham City Centre.

### **We would like to hear your views on the proposed Enhanced Partnership, Plan and Scheme.**

This document summarises the proposals, or you can find a copy of the full Enhanced Partnership Plan and Enhanced Partnership Scheme by visiting the consultation webpage [www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)

**We will be running a 10-week consultation from Monday 6 July 2020. All responses must be received by 11.59pm on Sunday 13 September 2020.**

Further information about the consultation process and how to take part can be found in the ‘**Have your say**’ section of this document.

The EP Scheme follows some of the bus corridors that are included within the proposed Sprint programme, which will deliver a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service. Work on the first stages of the project is due to commence in the second half of 2020. For more information about proposed infrastructure improvements related to the delivery of Sprint, please go to [www.tfwm.org.uk/development/sprint/](http://www.tfwm.org.uk/development/sprint/)

## Why change?

The EP will see all partners invest in bus improvements to support the delivery of a world class integrated transport system that will allow seamless, convenient and more reliable journeys by public transport, and help to reduce journeys made by car.

Buses are key to the provision of public transport in the region, with around 4 out of 5 public transport journeys taken by bus. Between April 2018 and the end of March 2019, 267 million journeys were made using bus services across the region – the equivalent of 71.5 million vehicle miles. The West Midlands has the largest commercially operated bus network in Western Europe.

Given the importance of bus travel to the region's society and economy, better bus services are vital to achieving inclusive growth in the West Midlands.

Unemployed residents and those on low incomes are much more reliant on bus services and as a result, improvements to bus travel are essential to tackling transport inequalities.

## Our Enhanced Partnership (EP)

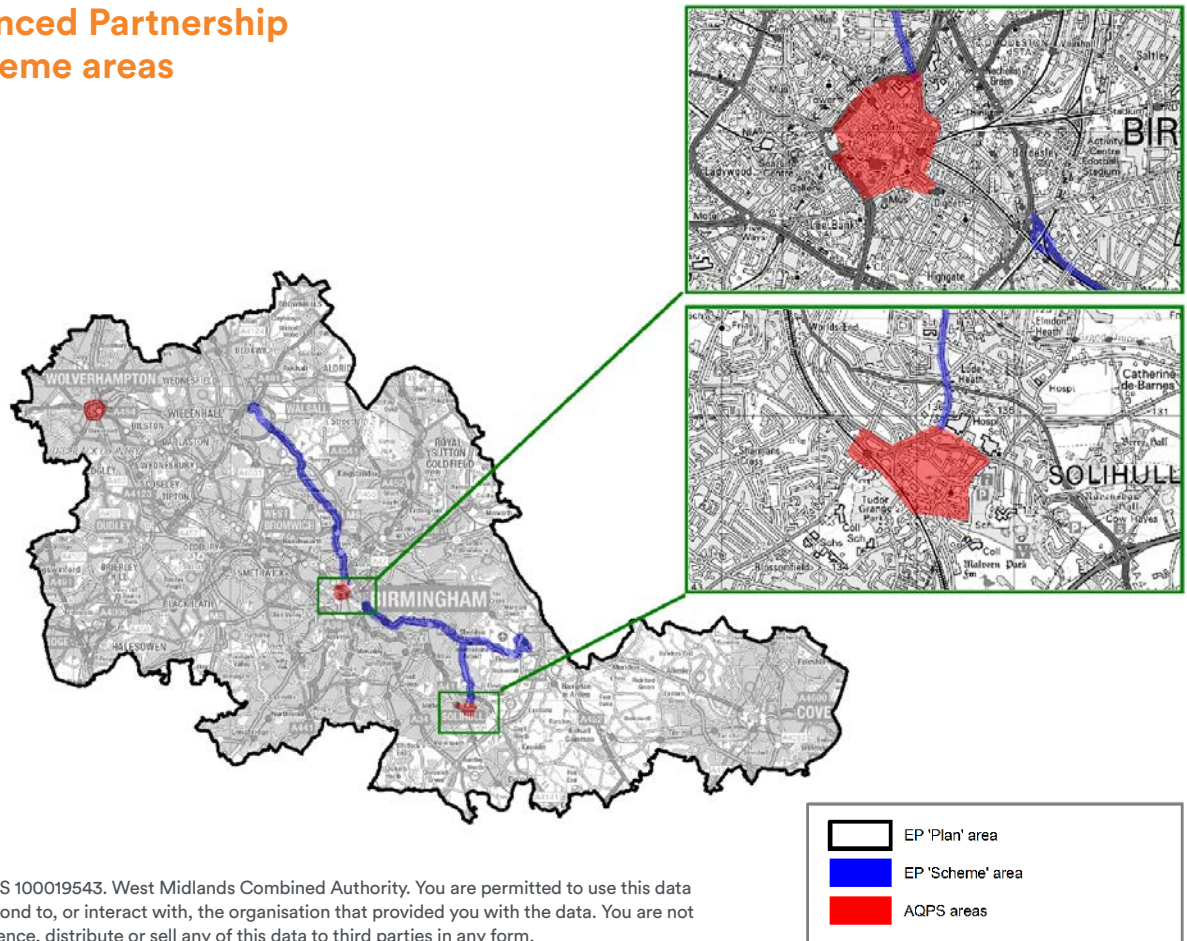
An EP is a formal agreement between local transport authorities and local bus operators to work together to improve local bus services. It provides a legally binding commitment on all parties that will ensure delivery of our vision for better bus travel, setting the standard across the West Midlands.

Whilst significant progress in improving bus services is being achieved through the Bus Alliance and the existing Advanced Quality Partnership Schemes in place in central Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Solihull, these schemes do not cover the whole of the West Midlands. The EP Plan provides the strategic vision across the West Midlands, adopting the objectives from our Strategic Vision for Bus<sup>1</sup>, with the EP Scheme ensuring the delivery of specific improvements to transform bus travel.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/38969/final-strategic-vision-for-bus.pdf>



## Map of Enhanced Partnership Plan and Scheme areas



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## How was the EP Plan and Scheme developed?

In June 2019, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) gave approval for TfWM to proceed with the development of the EP Plan (or vision for improvement) and Scheme (the actions to be taken to deliver the vision).

The EP Plan and Scheme have been developed with the agreement of participating partners (TfWM, the seven local authorities and local bus operators) as well as other key stakeholders, including passenger groups, industry and business.

Further information on the EP Plan and Scheme documents can be found by visiting the consultation webpage [www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)

## The EP Plan

The EP Plan sets out our overall vision to improve bus services in the region, building on the 9 objectives set out in TfWM's Strategic Vision for Bus:

1. UK leading low emission bus fleet with zero emission corridors serving the most affected areas of air quality.
2. Fully integrated bus network including local demand responsive and rapid transit services supporting rail, coach and Metro interchange as one network.
3. Simple, convenient and easy to use payment options including full capping providing a network which is value for money and affordable for customers.
4. Fewer private car journeys by making bus the mode of choice and creating better access to jobs and long-term change.
5. Creating a safe, secure and accessible mode for all and tackling long held barriers and perceptions.
6. Accountable network performance management – tackling issues causing congestion and reliability problems.
7. World-leading customer information, utilising 5G and all available technologies and platforms.
8. All younger people under 25 supported by discounted travel, as well as addressing barriers for excluded groups.
9. Evolve a network to support the 24/7 thriving economy, connecting people to new and developing destinations and attractions.



Travelodge



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## The EP Scheme - A34 (north), A45 and Lode Lane Corridor improvements

The EP Scheme provides the framework to improve and deliver better bus travel in the scheme area. The first Scheme put forward will set minimum standards for the delivery of bus services along the A34 (north), A45 and Lode Lane Corridors, forming part of our integrated transport network. More schemes may be brought forward under the EP Plan in the coming years, if it is necessary to formally agree bus improvements for an area.

This EP Scheme involves the delivery of facilities and measures to provide better bus travel, alongside improved bus service standards. These corridors will run from:

- **A34 (north):** Walsall to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Commonwealth Games Athletes Village and Games venue The Alexander Stadium at Perry Barr).
- **A45 and Lode Lane:** Birmingham Airport and Solihull to Birmingham City Centre (passing the Games venues at the NEC).

We have developed this Scheme as a priority to help facilitate the transport element of the 2022 Commonwealth Games. This will see significant investment both in vehicle standards (by operators) and infrastructure (by authorities), as well as complementary supporting measures (by the authorities).

Delivered by TfWM and the local highway authorities, the EP Scheme includes many new bus lanes, 77 enhanced bus stops and improvements to traffic signal priority. The Scheme will set minimum standards for 52 existing bus services and the 320 buses that serve these routes, covering approximately 550 miles across the West Midlands. Any new routes introduced into the Scheme area will also need to meet these standards.



Due to begin in 2021, this Scheme aims to deliver the following improvements in collaboration with bus operators and authorities:

- Investment in bus priority facilities and bus stop upgrades, providing pleasant waiting environments and real-time information that will provide reassurance to passengers, on the next bus arrival.
- A safer and more enjoyable travel experience including minimum standards for buses to ensure a high quality. This will include CCTV, Wi-Fi, USB charging points, audio/visual next stop announcements, provision of induction hearing loops at every wheelchair space and priority seat, and integrated travel information onboard, enabling passengers to link journeys with other transport modes.
- Setting of minimum vehicle specifications for emission standards that will help improve air quality in the region and provide a roadmap towards a zero-emission fleet.
- Contactless payment options available for every operator. Continued availability of operators ticketing products, as well as network-wide multi-operator tickets, enabling passengers to easily interchange between services within the scheme area without payment of a separate fare.
- Provision of better integrated bus services which will help support the shift towards use of more sustainable forms of transport, reducing the need for private car trips.
- More joined-up maintenance of infrastructure and traffic enforcement at roads, bus stops and traffic signals.
- Better managed and a more joined-up response to highway disruption such as roadworks.
- Improved sharing of bus performance data.

## Benefits of the EP Scheme

Investment in bus priority infrastructure and bus measures will provide a more enjoyable, more reliable and safer travel experience relative to current bus provision, with the improvement of bus journey times. The EP Scheme improvements will help to support a greater use of bus services – encouraging people to use bus in place of private transport. This proposed EP Scheme runs through some of the most deprived areas of the region, with 11 of the 14 areas served being in the 50% most deprived in the West Midlands. The EP will help to tackle transport inequalities in the region.

Reducing bus emissions is an important and vital part of the programme to improve people's health and quality of life by cleaning up the air in the West Midlands. Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, and West Midlands Bus Alliance have committed to create the cleanest bus fleet in the UK, outside of London.

In addition to setting standards for electric/zero emission buses, encouraging people to use bus services instead of private vehicles will also help improve air quality in the region by reducing congestion.

The EP Scheme will ensure clear accountability of partners to deliver, maintain and manage better bus services that is more binding than traditional partnerships, to ensure a better passenger experience.

Whilst improvements are made to the network we will work together with partners to manage disruption and keep this to a minimum.

The EP Plan and Scheme are available from the consultation webpage and provides more detailed information on the objectives and the expected benefits of the scheme.  
[www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)

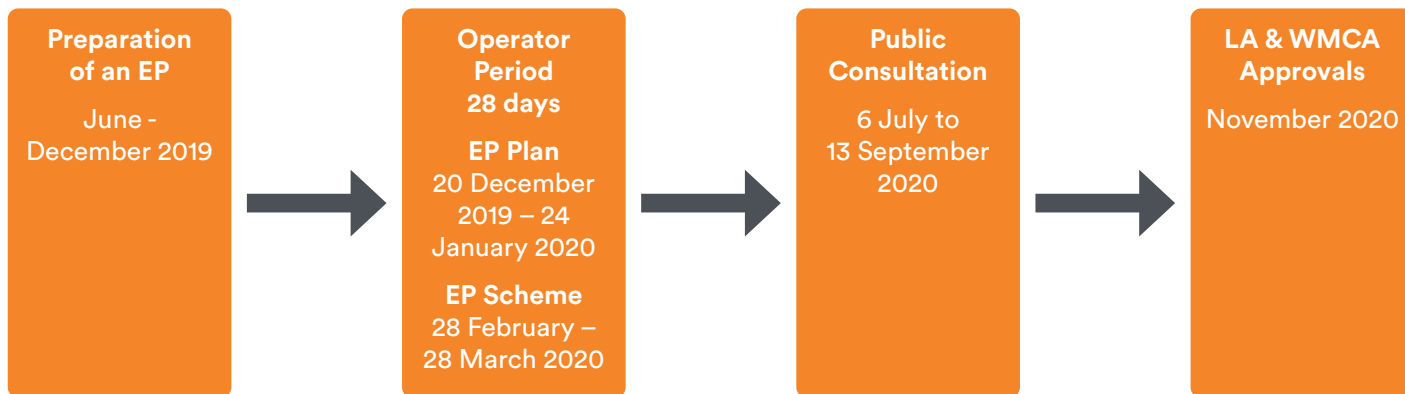


## Next steps

Once the consultation closes on Sunday 13 September 2020, we will carefully consider all feedback received and prepare a consultation report. This report will summarise the key themes and note how your responses have been used to inform the final EP Plan and EP Scheme. The report will be published on the TfWM website.

The EP Partners, including operators, will consider how the proposed EP Plan and Scheme need to change to reflect suggestions made in this consultation. If changes are made to the EP Plan and/or Scheme, the EP will be subject to another operator period, for a minimum 28 days. Once agreed, the EP Plan and EP Scheme will go to the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee for approval. The EP Plan and EP Scheme will

then be made by the WMCA and the local authorities. The figure below provides our current timeline for the making of the Enhanced Partnership.





## Have your say

Our public consultation will run between Monday 6 July to Sunday 13 September 2020. **All responses must be received by 11.59pm Sunday 13 September 2020.**

There are a number of ways for you to comment on our proposals during the consultation period:

- **Online:**

[www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)  
and completing the questionnaire

- **By email:**

[EPConsultation@tfwm.org.uk](mailto:EPConsultation@tfwm.org.uk)

- **By post:** Request a printed copy of the questionnaire and Business Reply envelope by contacting TfWM

To support the environment, we encourage you to respond using the online questionnaire if you can.

Printed copies of this consultation booklet, questionnaire and business reply envelope are available by request from Transport for West Midlands.

For digital copies of all consultation materials and further details please visit the consultation webpage [www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk](http://www.EPConsultation.tfwm.org.uk)

**To request a copy of these documents  
in a different format please contact  
Transport for West Midlands.**

**Phone: 0345 303 6760**

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**This consultation will close on  
Sunday 13 September 2020**



Transport for  
**West Midlands**