

JULY 2020

Birmingham Bus Statement

Supporting Recovery



Introduction



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Recognising the urgent need to support buses at the current time, this Bus Statement restates our commitment to bus as a major strand of our transport policy and sets out how Birmingham City Council is supporting this mode of travel.

Buses are essential to daily mobility; they provide our residents and workers access to jobs and vital services including health and education. At the beginning of the year, I set out my commitment to public transport in the Birmingham Transport Plan. This message was echoed in the Emergency Birmingham Transport Plan.

Buses are the primary public transport mode for moving people around our city and are essential in supporting a green recovery following Covid-19. They are a vital tool in the difficult tasks of solving congestion, air quality and our climate crisis.

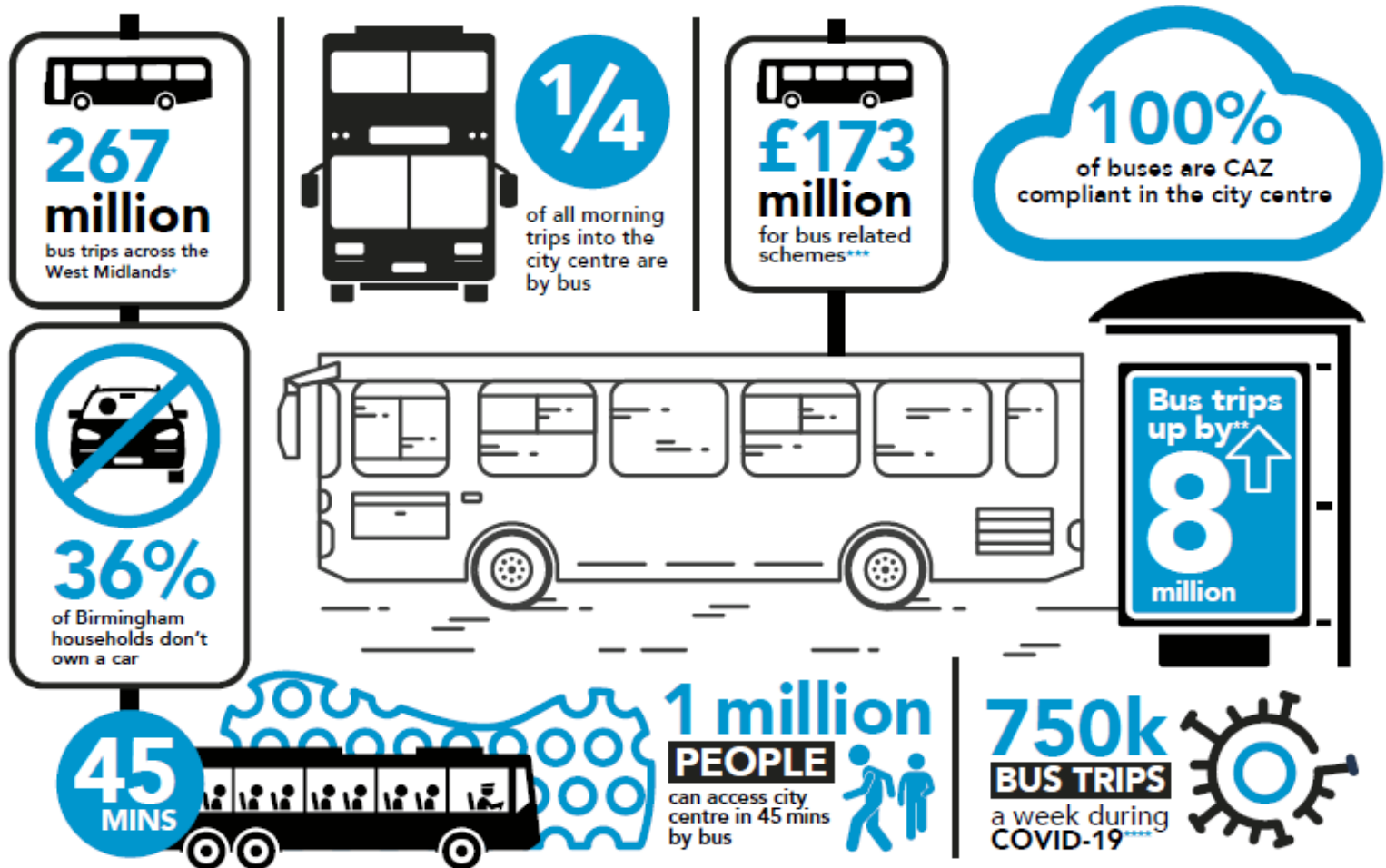
The 2019 Birmingham Bus Survey received 6,500 responses and showed our citizens' passion for improving bus travel. We will help to ensure that bus services are maintained and supported in the short term to provide a service for those that depend on them. We will also promote the requirement for bus passengers to wear face coverings on public transport, and communicate other important public health guidance. Longer term, we will help bus travel to regrow into an efficient, attractive mode and connect more people to employment opportunities. We will work with bus operators and partners to support programmes of work that help connect people with education, training and employment and to provide affordable fares. I will lobby government for bus passes and travel concessions to form part of schemes to support and create jobs and access to training. We will continue to reallocate space on the highway, and upgrade interchanges, to improve the convenience and reliability of services as part of an integrated transport network for Birmingham.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank bus operators, bus drivers and other public transport staff for the commitment they have shown during this pandemic. They have worked on the frontline, maintaining a vital service and ensuring other key workers can get to work – Birmingham says thank you.

Birmingham Bus Statement

Bus travel provides the backbone of our city's transport system and is the only mode available to many of our workers and residents. The 2019 Draft Birmingham Transport Plan (BTP) sets out how we will reduce car dependency and deliver the public transport improvements that will deliver a better environment and inclusive growth for the residents of Birmingham.

Our commitment to buses is restated in the 2020 Emergency Birmingham Transport Plan (EBTP), which sets out the aspiration for a low carbon, clean air recovery from COVID-19. The Council recognises that safe and efficient public transport services must be maintained in the short term for those who need them, and public transport must be enabled to regrow into an efficient, attractive mode of transport once it is safer for more people to travel this way.



Role of Buses to Access Employment, Education and Retail

Buses are Birmingham's most heavily used mode of public transport, providing cost effective travel and access to locations citywide. After years of decline, passenger numbers had increased before the Covid-19 pandemic. Patronage in the West Midlands grew by nearly 8 million trips between 2017/18 and 2018/19, with a total of 267million trips in 2018/19. At the same time, the use of local bus services fell across England as a whole.

Bus remains a key mode for access to education and training, with thousands of school, college and university students and apprentices using scheduled, as well as specialised, services. For access into the city centre, almost one quarter of all trips in the morning peak (7.30-9.30am) are by bus (2019 cordon survey). Two thirds of people rely on the bus to access leisure and retail in Birmingham city centre (2019 leisure/shopper survey).

Workwise travel support provided by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) offers eligible jobseekers including apprentices 50% off the full-cost price of most selected West Midlands Network, National Express buses and Metro travel passes for up to 3 months when starting a new job. People can also apply if they are increasing their working hours to 16 or more per week.

Land Use and Planning to Support Buses

The Birmingham Development Plan (BDP) supports the development of sustainable transport systems and highlights the importance of bus as a mode of public transport in Birmingham. The BDP sets accessibility standards for new development and promotes the efficient use of land through density standards. People living in more densely developed places are less likely to use a car particularly where they can access high quality transport. Improving access to public transport will help create more sustainable places that make the most of the land we have available and reduce impact on the environment.

Large new developments may also be expected to make contributions towards public transport improvements within the immediate vicinity of a development site to mitigate any identified impacts on the transport network and to align with accessibility standards. The new City Council Design Guide will stress the importance of designing new developments which support access to public transport.

An updated Parking Supplementary Planning Document has been consulted on and will replace existing parking standards for new developments. It sets out a sustainable parking strategy for the city, taking a balanced approach to meeting demand for parking and promoting sustainable travel.

Prioritising Space for Buses

The BTP outlines proposals for the reallocation of road space and a move away from single occupancy private cars to support the delivery of a public transport system fit for a global city. Key delivery components include the phased delivery of a bus and Sprint rapid transit network, including more bus priority (bus lanes and bus gates). The reintroduction of cross city buses, with accompanying priority infrastructure, will reduce bus mileage in the city core, reduce pressure on kerb space and provide improved penetration and accessibility by bus in the city centre.

Appendix 1 summarises the range of current projects and demonstrates the Council's continued support for bus travel in the city. Future plans for west and south Birmingham are also set out in the [Network Development Plan](#).

In addition to the projects in Appendix 1, the City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) are investigating the potential for cross-city bus services to join up all corners of the city.

The BTP introduced the concept of City Centre Traffic Cells. This supports fast and reliable journey times for buses and aligns with the cross-city bus and Clean Air Zone plans. Through trips by private vehicle will be restricted and rerouted around the city centre. Some measures are being brought forward as part of the EBTP and Emergency Active Travel Fund including road closures with filtered permeability, bus lanes and bus gates. The City Council is also leading on measures to provide more space for bus passengers, accommodate changes to bus loading and install social distancing markings around bus stops in areas of high footfall.

Network Management

Our role in leading local transport resilience groups for Perry Barr, Westside Metro and the City Centre, in partnership with TfWM and bus operators, ensures that we are well prepared to plan for and manage disruption, as we deliver many of the investments in our City.

Bus lanes keep our city moving, giving priority to buses so they can avoid congestion. This improves bus service reliability and reduces journey times for passengers. We enforce bus lanes and bus only roads as we are committed to improving bus travel in Birmingham, reducing the number of cars on our roads and making the city's air cleaner.

Parking management is important for supporting bus reliability and new parking control schemes and parking enforcement around bus stops and along key bus routes will be prioritised to ensure that illegal or inconsiderate parking/loading does not impede bus journeys.

Air Quality and Carbon Reduction

In 2019 the Council unanimously voted to declare a climate emergency with a commitment to achieve carbon neutrality as a city. The introduction of Birmingham's Clean Air Zone in 2021 will reinforce our commitment to becoming a zero emissions city. Working with TfWM and bus operators we have improved the local bus fleet and will move towards a zero emissions fleet.

Twenty hydrogen-fuelled buses will be introduced on key routes. COVID-19 has delayed this project, but it is hoped vehicle testing will commence from June 2021. Aligned to this is the ongoing work of developing the hydrogen re-fuelling station at Tyseley Energy Park.

West Midlands Bus Alliance

Birmingham City Council is an active partner in the West Midland Bus Alliance, working closely with TfWM, bus operators, passenger groups and businesses to promote improvements to bus travel. The Leader, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment and the councillor as Chair of the WMCA Transport Delivery Committee are all members of the Bus Alliance Board, to oversee the implementation of improvements for bus. The Bus Alliance has been driving improvements to bus travel and we will continue to work with TfWM in delivering the WMCA's Strategic Vision for Bus across the region. Birmingham supports plans for an Enhanced Partnership which [TfWM is currently consulting on](#) (ends 13th September 2020). This proposes a formal agreement between local transport authorities and local bus operators across the West Midlands to work together to improve bus services.

Promoting Bus Use and Improving the Passenger Experience

The 2019 Birmingham Bus Survey received 6,500 responses and showed that local people were concerned about the cost of bus travel, poor passenger experience and reliability of services. In recent years, the Bus Alliance has brought forward significant improvements by TfWM and bus operators. This includes providing discounted fares and simplifying ticketing, for example the extension of the half price travel offer to all 16-18 year olds, University and QE Hospital short hop tickets and contactless solutions. Operators are also upgrading the local bus fleet, offering a more comfortable ride with free wi-fi for passengers. Birmingham City Council will work closely in partnership with TfWM and bus operators to promote improvements to bus travel and plan for the regrowth of bus travel in the city.

Appendix 1: Birmingham City Council and TfWM Capital Schemes Benefiting Buses

BCC Led Schemes			
Scheme Name	Scheme Description	Scheme Value	Start/End Dates
Clean Air Hydrogen Bus Pilot	The CAHB pilot project is set to 'kick start' the hydrogen market as a zero-emission fuel, with the procurement and deployment of 20 hydrogen buses, as the largest users of hydrogen fuel.	£11m	In procurement.
CAZ Early Measures	The Early Measures programme provides a package of measures across six projects, identified as deliverable in a timely manner and offering a significant contribution towards improving Birmingham's air quality. The six projects are; Network Signing Strategy, Variable Message Signs, Bus Priority Measures, Traffic Signal Upgrades, Air Quality Monitoring and Bus Stop Infrastructure.	£1.5m	Phase 1 on site. Phase 2 in procurement.
CAZ Implementation	Installation of ANPR Cameras and Signs	£8.9m	Onsite
Moor Street Queensway Bus Gate Scheme	The MSQ Bus Gate scheme will deliver a 'bus, cycle and hackney carriage only' restriction in both directions in a section of MSQ, with associated minor construction works, new signage and enforcement cameras.	£0.043m	Start August 2020. End September 2020.
A41 Soho Road BID Highway, Connect & Plan	Development of a delivery strategy based on the A41 Soho Road framework (2015), highway and connectivity proposals. The strategy will seek to encourage inclusive economic growth along the Soho Road corridor within, and adjacent to, the BID area by delivering connectivity and public realm improvements.	£0.045m	Development Stage
Bus Lane Enforcement Phase 2	Bus lane enforcement scheme to expand enforcement capacity to current bus lanes that are not actively enforced. Installation of twenty-six new bus lane enforcement cameras and their associated infrastructure (lineage, signs and back office solution) and modifications to any existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) to allow enforcement to take place at various locations across the city to protect existing bus priority measures where contraventions are occurring and impact on bus reliability and journey time.	£0.595m	Late 2020
Dudley Road (A457)	Proposals are to widen the existing substandard lane carriageway to provide wider lanes allowing traffic to flow freely together with realignment of junctions. This would provide Junction improvements, new footways construction, improve accessibility by including provision for shared/ segregated cycling, additional controlled pedestrian crossings to improve safety, reduce congestion and improve network capacity.	£28.148m	Scheme being reviewed to maximise potential. Update expected late summer 2020.
Journey Reliability Improvement Growth Areas	Revalidation of SCOOT signal control systems, implementation of MOVA control to give freight and public transportation priority, and installation of selective vehicle detection at 5 sites. 1) A38 (S) Bristol Road - Selly Oak Station 2) A38 (S) Bristol Road - Sir Herbert Austin Way 3) A38 (S) Bristol Road - Bell Lane - Church Road 4) A38 (S) Bristol Road - Frankley Beeches Road 5) A38 (S) Bristol Road - Great Stone Road	£0.7m	Start September/October 2020. End January/February 2021.

TfWM Led Schemes			
Scheme Name	Scheme Description	Scheme Value	Start/End Dates
Sprint Birmingham to Airport (A45)	Delivery of Phase 1 of highway works to provide enhanced bus priority in readiness for Sprint and the CWG, between Birmingham City Centre, Sheldon and towards Birmingham Airport/Solihull.	£55.4m	Start October 2020. End March 2022.
Sprint Birmingham to Walsall (A34)	Delivery of Phase 1 of highway works to provide enhanced bus priority in readiness for Sprint and the CWG, between Birmingham City Centre, Scott Arms and Walsall	£32.4m	Start October 2020. End March 2022.
Cross city bus priority: Druids Heath - Dudley	Bus priority measures between Druids Heath and Dudley along the A435 and A457.	£13.7m	Preliminary Design Stage
Cross city bus priority: City Centre	New bus lanes, bus gates, junction upgrades and improved passenger environments in Birmingham city centre.	£9.6m (£4.225m BCC contribution)	Start September 2020
Queen Elizabeth Hospital Bus Priority (New Fosse Way)	Delivering bus priority at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) as part of the National Productivity Investment Fund programme.	£0.285m	Autumn/Winter 2020
Swift App and Clean Air Zone Mobility Credits	Residents will be incentivised through a payment of £2,000 to give up their car if it is not compliant with the Clean Air Zone. The £2,000 will be made available as Mobility Credits through the Swift App where customers can use it to purchase travel on public transport and eventually other modes such as cycling, eScooters, taxis and car share schemes	£0.4m	Quarter 1 2021
Sprint Hagley Road	Proposed early works for utility diversions and highway improvements in and around the future Edgbaston Metro Terminus.	£7.85m	Works start to be confirmed
Sprint Sutton to Birmingham via Langley	Delivery of Phase 1 of highway works to provide enhanced bus priority between Birmingham City Centre, Langley and Sutton	-	For delivery after 2022
Alcester Road Bus Priority	Delivery of a revitalisation of bus priority between the Ring Road and Moseley.	£2.5m (£0.5m BCC contribution)	Scheme being reviewed
Harborne Road – Road Safety Improvements	Road safety improvements along Harborne Road`	£0.275m (£0.168m BCC contribution)	Scheme being reviewed

Clean Air Zone Early Measures Scheme & Implementation Fund Activity Breakdown

Scheme Name	Scheme Description	Scheme Value	Start/End Dates
Bus Lane Enforcement	Installation of ANPR camera	£0.176m	Throughout 2020
Bus Priority Measures Tranche 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Widening of Bus Lane on Bristol Street slip road. Enhanced carriageway marking on Pershore Road / Middleway roundabout.	£0.099m	Throughout 2020
Bus Priority Measures Tranche 2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus Only section east bound Upper Dean Street; supported by bus lanes on Pershore Street on the approach to the junction. Smallbrook Queensway – bus lane and enhance bus priority measures. Coventry Road – outbound bus lane from Digbeth to Bordesley Circus. Ban turn from Digbeth into Rea Street except for buses. 	£0.396m	Throughout 2020
Bus Priority Measures Tranche 2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hockley Hill Corridor. Inbound bus lane peak time 07:00-10:00 16:00-19:00. Amendments to waiting, loading and parking restrictions to support bus lane and commercial activities.	£0.307m	Throughout 2020
Traffic Signal Upgrade Tranche 1 & 2	Re-establishing SCOOT or MOVA and Vehicle Actuation on the traffic signals on: Digbeth High Street & St Chads.	£0.390m	Throughout 2020
Additional Measures	Re-configure the Great Lister Street/Dartmouth Middleway/ Lister Street junction to improve traffic flows on the Middleway whilst allowing bus priority across the junction between Great Lister Street and Lister Street.	£0.250m	Throughout 2020
Additional Measures	Bus lanes on Suffolk Street slip roads – tied up with Paradise proposals.	£0.050m	Throughout 2020
Additional Measures	Revalidate the traffic signals at Summer Lane, New John Street and Dartmouth Circus	£0.079m	Throughout 2020
Implementation Fund and Early Measures	Measures to support public transport	£2.156m	TBC