



## The West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP 2006)



## Unlocking investment, delivering a 21st Century transport system

This is a critical time for transport in the West Midlands. The region is implementing a programme of renewal, investment and modernisation of the local transport network. We will submit our final Local Transport Plan (LTP), which covers the period 2006/07 – 2010/11, in March 2006. This is your chance to have a final say on the provisional plan that we submitted to the DfT in July so that we can refine it before final submission. We would also like your views on key transport issues (see attached questions).

## West Midlands' transport at the crossroads

The West Midlands is at the heart of UK plc's road and rail network, and is home to some of the biggest names in industry, retail and business. We have a vibrant economy with growing retail and services sectors, alongside our traditional manufacturing and freight industries.

But congestion is costing our region £2.5 billion a year. There are 2.5 million people who need to travel to work and get on with their everyday lives. Business needs to move goods around the region, and depends on the transport network to get customers to stores and services.

The West Midlands is facing a major transport challenge. As well as increasing congestion, our railways lack capacity and bus use is declining. Our transport infrastructure is under strain. In the future, it will have to cope with a projected 13% increase in trips (240m per year), and 15% increase in car trips (165m per year). Congestion at peak times is forecast to increase 25-35%. If we do nothing this will seriously undermine our competitiveness and cost the region even more in delays.

## The route to a better future - The Local Transport Plan 2006

The West Midlands has introduced some radical innovations; a Metro system with over 98% reliability, Bus Showcase routes with passenger numbers on these routes rising and bucking the general downward trend, and the first network of Red Routes outside London. We are also improving traffic management systems and park and ride facilities and working with the business community to secure 'quick win' road improvements to deliver efficiencies now. Smarter choices are already being adopted as people become aware through TravelWise initiatives of better ways to get around the region.

But we need to do much more, and the Local Transport Plan (LTP) is the critical means of securing vital future investment.

The LTP envisages a West Midlands with thriving sustainable communities that have attractive urban centres with high quality public transport, where people want to live and business can invest and grow. Our roads will be safer, our air cleaner, and walking and cycling will be more common. Above all, people will have a better quality of life through improved local transport.

## The Transport Innovation Fund (TIF)

Tackling congestion is a key priority for the West Midlands. Doing nothing is not an option if we are to avoid gridlock in the future.

As part of the LTP, the Department for Transport (DfT) requires submissions on new and innovative approaches to tackling congestion. The Government's new Transport Innovation Fund will provide funds to test out new congestion-busting measures. The West Midlands submitted a bid for the TIF in October and is competing against other areas of the country for these funds. This TIF bid sets out our plan for a feasibility study to look at congestion and options for tackling congestion, including road pricing.

In making a bid for the TIF, the West Midlands has been clear that any scheme must:

- Improve and not detract from the region's competitiveness
- Provide appropriate transport alternatives
- Go hand in hand with significant funding for reinvestment in transport in the West Midlands
- Fully utilise the knowledge base of the West Midlands in taking any initiatives forward

The Secretary of State is due to decide on allocating initial TIF funds by the end of 2005.

## Consulting with Stakeholders

This is the final stage of consultation on the LTP. The plan agreed by the seven West Midlands Metropolitan Authorities – Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall and Wolverhampton – and the Passenger Transport Authority will be submitted to the DfT in March 2006.

We have consulted with stakeholders on the development of this LTP at key stages. The final LTP will also reflect the two sub-regional studies that have been undertaken for the Black Country and Coventry/Solihull/Warwickshire plus the emerging growth proposals for Birmingham.

We are also consulting on the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) that was carried out over the summer. The SEA is a statutory obligation, and informs the environmental aspects of the LTP. Stakeholders may want to digest the SEA before considering the provisional LTP and comment on both in a single response.

The SEA can be viewed at [www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk](http://www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk). Hard copies are of limited availability but can be requested by contacting us at the address below.

## One West Midlands

The West Midlands is committed to an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders on transport issues. There is growing consensus about the importance of transport to the future prosperity and health of the West Midlands. The success of the LTP, and of the TIF bid, will be crucial to deliver the transport improvements we all want to see. The alternative is that the West Midlands faces continuing under-investment and major transport problems in the future.

## Further information & consultation deadline

The full LTP can be viewed and commented on at [www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk](http://www.westmidlandsltp.gov.uk).

Please submit your responses to the LTP and attached questions by Friday 9th December.

For any other information contact the West Midlands CEPDG Core Support Team by e-mail at [cepogcoresupport@centro.org.uk](mailto:cepogcoresupport@centro.org.uk) or by telephone on 0121 214 7350.