

West Midlands

BUS ALLIANCE

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WHAT IS THE WEST MIDLANDS BUS ALLIANCE

In the West Midlands, we have a proud history of delivering better bus services through partnership. Every year over a quarter of a billion journeys are made by bus in the region and passenger satisfaction with services has increased by 7% since 2012.

Through the Transforming Bus Travel programme, over £100m of investment has been delivered in improving services for passengers through partnership initiatives with bus operators. This has resulted in a more modern fleet with lower emissions, the UK's most advanced smart card ticketing system outside London through Swift, the largest real-time passenger information system outside the

capital and much improved perceptions of personal security.

The formation of the West Midlands Combined Authority provides an exciting opportunity to advance this partnership to a new level, ensuring that bus companies not only provide a network that enables excellent connectivity and supports the development of the region's economy, but also that the region's highways authorities recognise their role in supporting this by providing a road network that enables fast, punctual bus journeys to operate.

To achieve this, a new Alliance Board has been established that consists of representatives from the region's bus

operators, the Combined Authority, council highways and transportation departments, Local Enterprise Partnerships, the Safer Travel Partnership, influential councillors and Transport Focus.

Alliance Board members are responsible for identifying what the region's buses need to deliver and then putting policies and funding streams in place for this to be achieved. The first meeting of the Board took place at the end of 2015 and in March 2016 the Board identified seven key actions which we will work together to deliver by 2020.

TICKETING

We will deliver fare capping and contactless payment on all of the region's bus services by 2020.

There is a wide array of tickets available for bus passengers in the region. Individual bus companies have their own ticket products, but there are various multi-operator, multi-modal ticketing options all covering different geographical areas and different time periods. Some may argue this provides good value and consumer choice, but in reality many passengers tell us they are confused about which is the best ticket to buy and the uncertainty about prices and how to pay can put people of travelling by bus.

This shouldn't be the case. Alliance partners want bus travel to be as easy and intuitive as possible -which is why we are committed to delivering fare capping and contactless payment on all of the region's bus services by 2020.

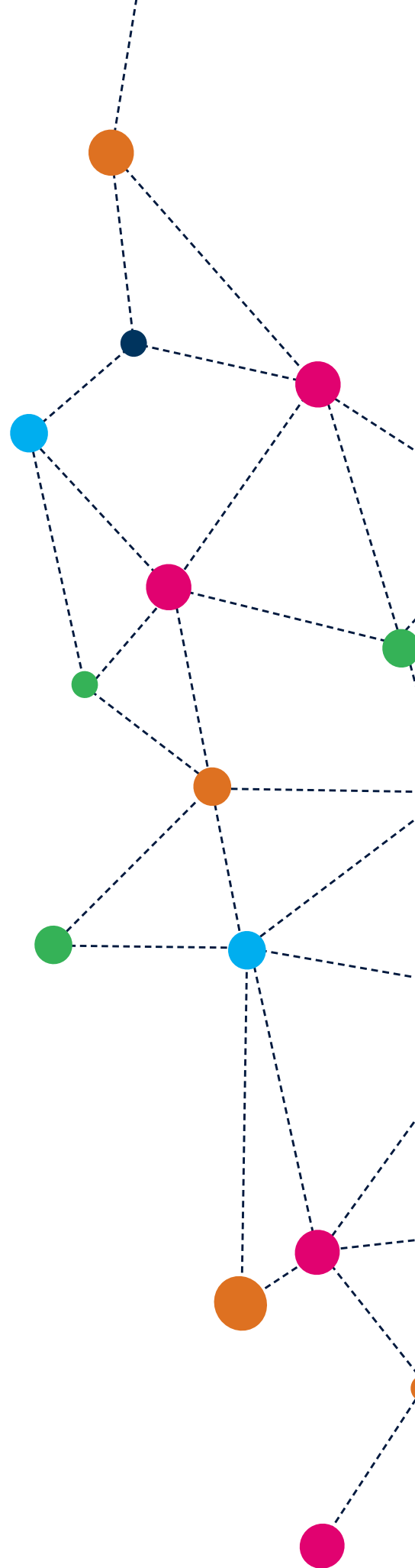
SWIFT

Over the last few years smart card ticketing in the region has expanded rapidly. In 2008 Centro purchased ticket machines so that all operators became smartcard ready. This enabled every concessionary pass holder to be issued with smart a card and provided the platform to develop

Swift; the region's smartcard bus ticketing solution. More and more ticketing products are being added to the Swift line, starting with bus season tickets, pay-as-you-go products and this has now been expanded to cover the regions train and tram services. But this is just the start. Customers still need to work out what the best ticket is for their journey and ensure that their card remains topped with valid products or credit. The commitment to fare capping means that a customer will not need to work out what the best product is for them, the system will instead calculate the best priced ticket for the journeys they have made and only charge that amount. Beyond this the commitment to contactless payment means that by 2020 customers can do away with their smart cards entirely and use contactless debit or credit cards instead.

CASHLESS TRAVEL?

Whilst fully embracing technology and progressing new and innovative payment methods, we also recognise that for many customers the ability to pay cash fares will remain important. There are no plans to abolish cash on the region's buses.



AIR QUALITY

All buses operating in the West Midlands will be Euro V, Euro VI or better by 2020

Poor air quality is a major issue in the West Midlands. Much of the region is designated an Air Quality Management Area and it is estimated that road transport emissions from exposure to fine particles account for around 1,460 premature deaths in the West Midlands ("Estimating Local Mortality Burdens Associated with Particulate Air Pollution", Public Health England, 2014).

Buses can play a key role in addressing this. By encouraging more people on to the bus we can reduce the number of vehicles on the road – a bus carrying 30 people will emit a lot less pollution than the same people all travelling individually in cars. However, to have the greatest impact we need our buses to be as clean as they can be. Alliance partners are committed to ensure that all buses operating in the West Midlands are a minimum of Euro V by 2020.

OPERATOR INVESTMENT

Through the Bus Alliance, operators are making significant commitments to clean up their fleets. National Express have committed to purchase over 300 new Euro VI micro hybrids before 2020 to replace many of their older buses; they have halved emissions from their fleet in the last five years and these will halve again between now and 2020. Stagecoach has committed to invest £7.5m so that all of their buses in the region will be Euro V by 2020 and a number of smaller operators, including Diamond, Johnsons, Claribels and Central Buses continue to invest in brand new vehicles for the West Midlands.

STATUTORY QUALITY PARTNERSHIP SCHEMES

The delivery of a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) in Birmingham City Centre enabled standards to be set to limit emissions from buses entering the area. While this has been successful in raising standards, the Alliance will do more, including extending the area, increasing standards and developing new schemes covering other local centres. The Alliance is very much a partnership with all bus companies committed to support the objectives, although it is important that the Alliance uses tools such as SQPS to protect investment by operators and ensure that anyone wishing to run buses in environmentally sensitive areas is required to meet the same standards.

SUCCESSFUL BIDS

Centro and bus companies have already been working closely in partnership to bid for funds to support technology to reduce emissions:

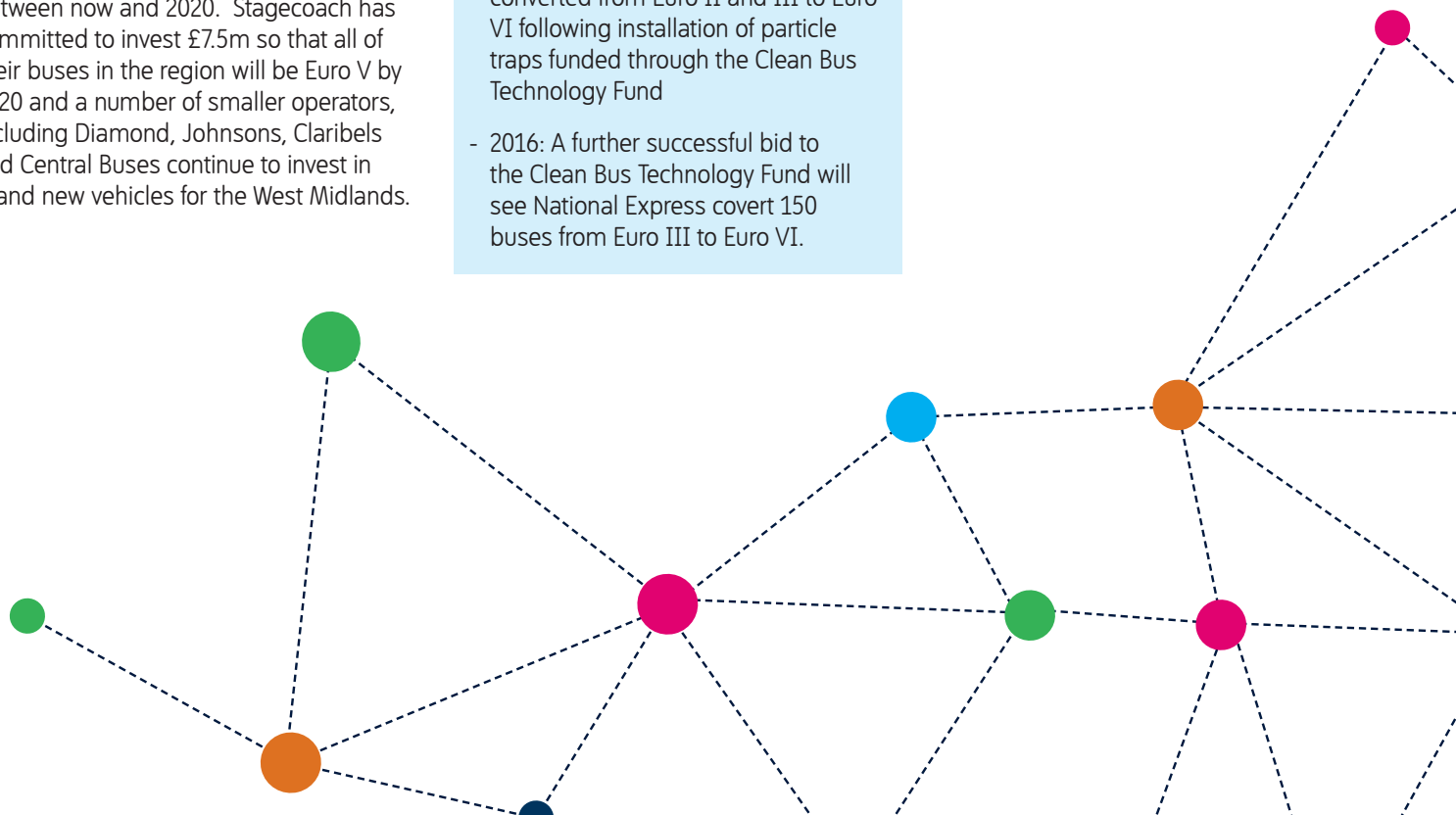
- 2011/12: 49 diesel electric hybrids delivered by Diamond and NXWM through the Government's Green Bus Fund
- 2015: 21 Travel De Courcey buses converted from Euro II and III to Euro VI following installation of particle traps funded through the Clean Bus Technology Fund
- 2016: A further successful bid to the Clean Bus Technology Fund will see National Express convert 150 buses from Euro III to Euro VI.

ZERO EMISSIONS

The Alliance will also progress initiatives to deliver more zero emission buses to the region, building on the success of the electric buses operated by Travel De Courcey in Coventry. We have bid to OLEV for funding to deliver 50 electric buses to the region, which could be the start of much wider roll-out. Birmingham City Council is also co-ordinating a programme with Alliance partners exploring the feasibility of hydrogen powered buses.

LOW EMISSION BUS DELIVERY PLAN

As more and more low emission vehicles are delivered by bus operators, it is important that these are focussed on routes that have the poorest air quality and therefore where the vehicles have the biggest impact. The Alliance has developed a Low Emission Bus Delivery Plan which identifies where the key air quality hot spots are across the region, what opportunities and constraints there are for bus companies (e.g. depot locations) and these can be assessed to ensure the right solutions are applied to the right places.





OPEN DATA

An open data approach will be adopted for all non-commercially sensitive data

All data relating to timetables, fares, punctuality and reliability will be made freely available. This helps us to identify how networks can be developed and services improved, for example by making the case for road schemes that can

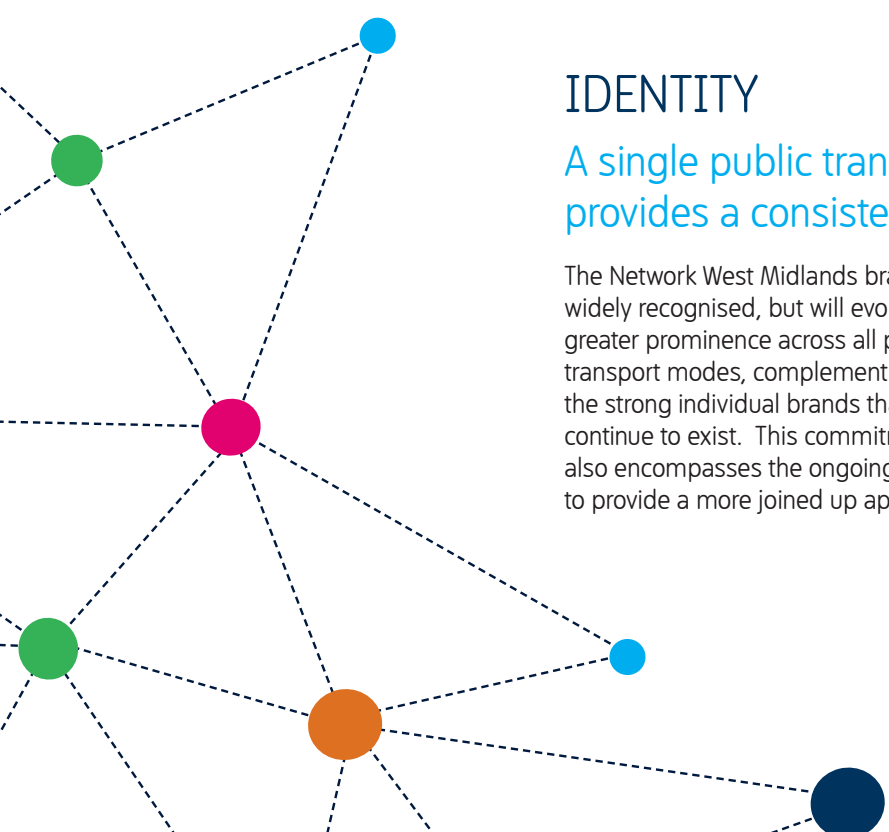
improve punctuality. This approach will also enable apps and other information systems to be developed either by Alliance partners or other parties to ensure tailored information is available for customers, regardless of who operates the service.

IDENTITY

A single public transport identity will be developed that provides a consistent, clear message for customers.

The Network West Midlands brand is widely recognised, but will evolve to greater prominence across all public transport modes, complementing the strong individual brands that will continue to exist. This commitment also encompasses the ongoing work to provide a more joined up approach

to delivering services across different organisations - a customer shouldn't be confused about who is responsible for different aspects of their journey experience - they should expect a clear, consistent response addressing their concerns through a single, understandable point of contact.





PUNCTUALITY

A reduction in delay minutes will be achieved across the Key Route Network

This aligns with highways authorities' commitments to reduce delays and is one of the most important factors for passengers. Rather than setting a global target for reducing delays there should be a focus on the areas that will have the biggest impact on meeting wider policy objectives. To achieve this we will seek external funding, such as from the Local Growth Fund.

NETWORK DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Network Development Plans will be in place across the whole region, and wider Combined Authority area as required.

The population of the West Midlands is set to grow by almost half a million people by 2035. Ensuring that there are plans in place to develop the bus network as populations grow, land use changes and new developments are built is crucial to ensure that bus services can support economic growth in the region, maintain excellent accessibility and prevent congestion. Bus companies, local councils and other stakeholders will work with the Combined Authority to prepare Network Development Plans which will ensure there is a structured, data-led approach in place to deal with these challenges.





SAFETY AND SECURITY

Funding for the Safer Travel Partnership will be maintained with dedicated resources and clear governance structures developed.

The Safer Travel Partnership has been immensely successful in reducing anti-social behaviour, crime and the perception of crime on public transport services in the West Midlands. Passenger satisfaction with safety on board has improved by over 10% in the last five years (Transport Focus). The collaborative approach between bus operators, local authorities, West Midlands Police and British Transport Police is unique within the

industry and we are committed to maintain this and strengthen the partnership further.

The award winning CCTV control centre allows footage from bus stations, rail stations and on board buses to be viewed from a single place and this is expanding to include footage from some of the West Midlands district councils' own public realm systems.



