
West Midlands Bus Alliance

Walsall and Wolverhampton
Network Development Plan
2019 - 2026



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Network Development Plans

The West Midlands has evolved considerably in recent years and so have the ways in which people choose to travel around the region – how they get to work and where they work, as new commercial and business centres have been built.

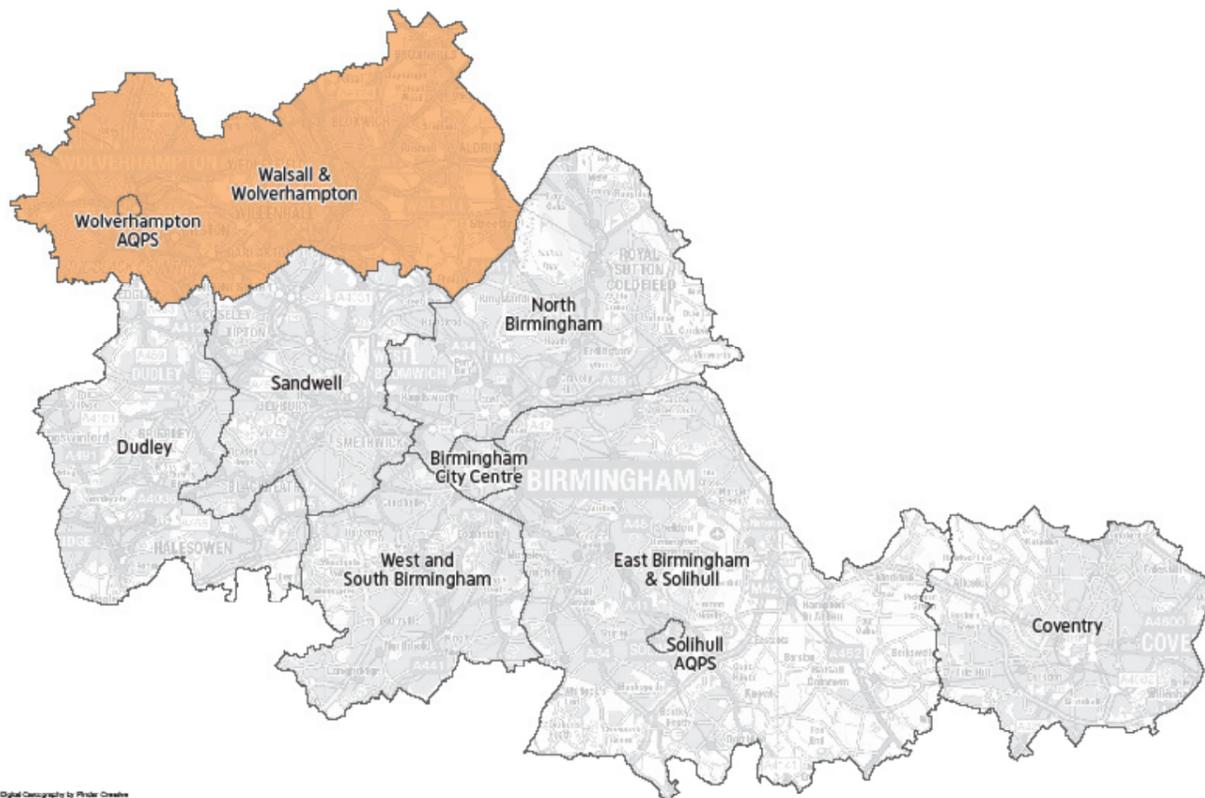
Many more people now live in new housing developments which need excellent bus links to get them to places of employment, shopping centres, hospitals and leisure facilities. The next few years will also see even more growth and opportunities.

As the West Midlands Bus Alliance, we recognise that as the region undergoes unprecedented development, a bus network that meets the needs and aspirations of passengers is crucial and we are committed to providing customers with services fit for the 21st Century.

Our Bus Alliance Network Development Plans (NDPs) will be rolled out across the region and reviewed annually, so that we ensure that the current and future bus network meets local needs and has the flexibility to adapt to forecasted growth and change.

These plans have been produced through close partnership working between the West Midlands Bus Alliance partners of bus operators, local highway authorities, the West Midlands Combined Authority and other stakeholders, who have all made extremely valuable contributions to ensure we are delivering positive change to the traveling public.

It is crucial to have a plan in place to improve the bus network as populations grow, land uses change and new developments are planned and built. It ensures that the bus network continues to support economic growth in the area, maintains excellent connectivity and prevents congestion. Where significant service changes are considered or infrastructure delivery is developed, they will be subject to the appropriate public consultation.



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What does this mean for me?

Delivering the Walsall and Wolverhampton Network Development Plan (NDP) will support positive change so that bus continues to play a crucial role for the lives of local people and in the inclusive growth of Wolverhampton city centre, Walsall town centre and the wider area and region. Working together, the Bus Alliance will deliver local bus improvements that ensure the current and future needs of the local population and businesses are met and bus travel is truly transformed in Walsall and Wolverhampton.



More environmentally-friendly buses operating in the area



Better passenger facilities and connections



Increased bus mode share into the key centres and reduced congestion



Making it easier and more pleasant to travel by bus locally in the borough

What we are proposing



Improving air quality by introducing more low-emission Euro VI vehicles



Improving facilities for passengers, with real-time information for all operators displayed and improved stop infrastructure.



Reliable services for passengers by improving bus journey reliability.



Working with all partners to shape and invest in the Sandwell bus network to support inclusive economic growth and the local



Better interchanges with a refurbished Walsall town centre bus interchange and multi-modal interchange between rail, bus and metro in Wolverhampton city centre.

Walsall & Wolverhampton

Walsall and Wolverhampton form half the Black Country region, taking along its history and heritage into a prosperous future.

Home to many well-known strategic businesses including, Assa Abloy, Blakemores, HomeServe, Jaguar Land Rover, Marstons, Poundland, RAC and South Staffordshire PLC. The boroughs offer further development potential, with two of the three Black Countries Enterprise Zones (Darlaston Enterprise Zone and Wolverhampton North).

Wolverhampton, one of the top ten growing economies in the UK, is enjoying record levels of private and public investment with £3.7 billion pounds injected into regeneration projects citywide. With 1000s of new homes planned, including 600 at Wolverhampton Canalside, adjacent to the £150 million transport hub regeneration programme (the Interchange), which is currently being delivered to connect metro, rail and bus in the heart of the city centre.

In Walsall, further housing will be delivered at the Waterfront, providing residents with access to the town's centre. Alongside these strategic centre projects, the centres of Bilston, Goscote and Willenhall will provide further housing options for local people.

Walsall and Wolverhampton are also places to learn and enjoy leisure time. The University of Wolverhampton has campuses across the two boroughs, and is expanding with the development of the former Springfield Brewery site to a centre of excellence for construction and the built environment. A mix of parks, shops, restaurants, bars, football and music venues give need for residents and visitors to travel to the area each weekend.

541,219

COMBINED POPULATION

30,000

JOBS ACROSS THE TWO AREAS

£150 million

TRANSPORT HUB REGENERATION PROGRAMME (WOLVERHAMPTON INTERCHANGE)

£3.7 billion

REGENERATION INVESTMENT IN WOLVERHAMPTON



Buses in Walsall and Wolverhampton

Buses play an undeniably crucial role in the growth of the local economy and lives of people in both Wolverhampton and Walsall. There are 101 bus services run by 9 operators, covering 18.6 million bus vehicles miles and 1.5 million vehicle hours of operation each year. These bus services can be accessed by over 1 million people within 400m of a service to, from or within the local area. The average peak period speed for buses across the area is 17 km per hour. To ensure high quality bus services, it is important bus travel times across the city and borough are reliable.

To support sustainable growth there will need to be a step change in bus provision and the quality of public transport in the city. This is to address declining bus speed and transform the role and perception of bus travel into and around the city centre to make it more attractive and easier to use.

Wolverhampton city centre sees over 6.5 million bus boardings each year, including 2 million through the bus station. This is the highest number of boardings in one location outside of Birmingham city centre. Walsall similarly has a high bus passenger footfall, with 6 million bus boardings in the town centre, across its St Paul's bus station and Bradford Place interchange. There is also a bus station in Bilston Town Centre, providing access into the local centre.

The bus mode share into the strategic centre of Walsall is the highest of any of the region's centre at 31% in the morning peak - a strong platform for bus to build upon. The bus mode share into Wolverhampton city centre is not as high, at only 20% and has been declining in recent years; but is higher than other Black Country strategic centres, and does provide a positive base to further grow the bus network in the city and wider region.

Bus needs to be treated as infrastructure. Recognising the importance of bus as an integrated part of the area and its development in supporting inclusive growth. New development must be sufficiently compact or dense to generate demand that will support high-frequency bus services with long-term viability. The layout of streets and paths in new development must facilitate direct and efficient bus operation, with direct and pleasant walking

routes to passenger interchange and stops. Bus infrastructure and design must be integrated into the urban fabric, aided by the set of spatial planning policies that cascade logically from the city and borough plans to development management regimes and delivery.

101

BUS SERVICES

37 million

PASSENGERS TRAVEL ON THE LOCAL WALSALL AND WOLVERHAMPTON NETWORK EACH YEAR

31%

BUS MODE SHARE TO WALSALL CITY CENTRE EACH WEEKDAY MORNING

9

BUS OPERATORS

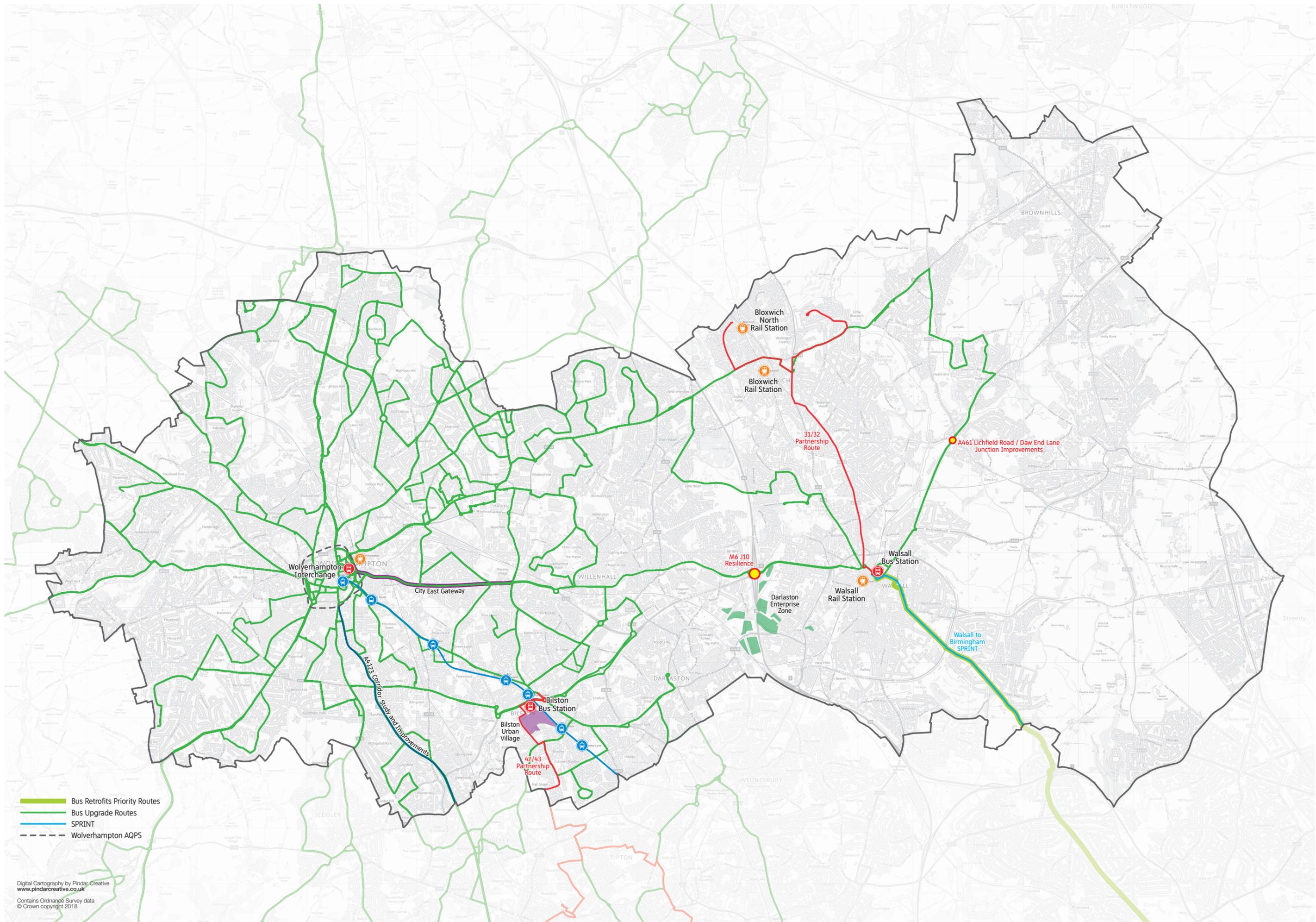
OVER

4 million

BOARDINGS AT WALSALL BUS STATION

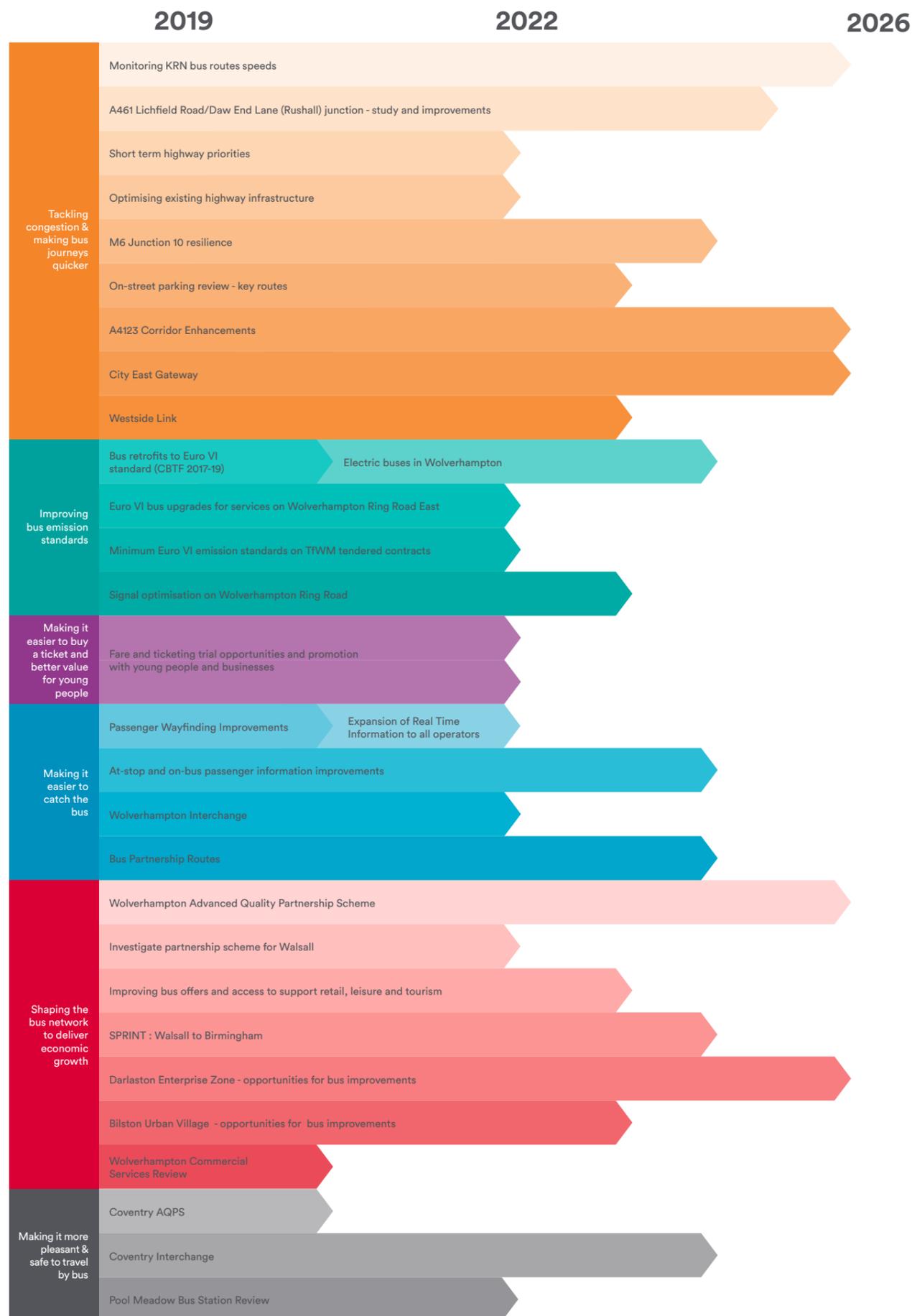
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TFWM MANAGED BUS STATIONS



- Bus Retrofits Priority Routes
- Bus Upgrade Routes
- SPRINT
- Wolverhampton AQPS

Delivery Plan



Making it happen

The Bus Alliance is committed to transforming bus travel in Walsall and Wolverhampton and across the West Midlands. We will create change for the better both now and through our ambitions for the future.

Adoption of this Walsall and Wolverhampton NDP by the partners in the Bus Alliance, City of Wolverhampton Council and Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council, further sets out the commitment of all partners to work together to achieve the best outcomes for bus travel in the area and West Midlands.

The speed at which we can deliver improvements identified in this NDP will depend on funding available and we will take every opportunity to secure new investment, whilst reviewing delivery annually as new priorities and challenges arise. Having a clear plan for investment in bus travel ensures that all partners are able to deliver improvements in bus for the benefit of passengers.



West Midlands Bus Alliance

In the West Midlands, we have a proud history of delivering better bus services through partnership. The West Midlands Bus Alliance, the first of its kind in the UK, brings together bus operators, local councils, and other partners to work together to deliver high levels of passenger satisfaction and drive forward improvements in our bus services. Our focus is on making bus travel in the West Midlands cleaner, greener, safer and faster.

Our objectives are:



Tackling congestion and making bus journeys quicker



Improving bus emission standards



Making it easier to catch the bus



Making it more pleasant and safe to travel by bus



Shaping the bus network to deliver economic growth



Making it easier to buy a ticket and better value