

Bilston Road Task and Finish Group

Response to recommendations

Following the recent assessment of the Bilston Road project via the Bilston Road Task and Finish Group the following recommendations were made, please see below a response to these recommendations from West Midland Metro and the Midland Metro Alliance.

Recommendation 1

Midland Metro Alliance & Transport for West Midlands should ensure that stakeholder engagement plans are developed at the earliest practicable stage of a project and that they are monitored and updated throughout the project lifecycle to ensure that effective two way communication is established and maintained.

Response

Stakeholder engagement plans are in place for all planned extensions and the effectiveness of these are regularly monitored through the project boards which involve key stakeholders, for example, Dudley and Sandwell MBCs on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill extension.

Recommendation 2

Transport for West Midlands, Midland Metro Alliance and local highway authorities should work together to assess the benefits and impacts of more intensive, shorter periods of disruption arising from complete road closures for future Metro construction and maintenance works.

Response

We will always aim to strike a balance between more intensive shorter periods of disruption, and maintaining access where required for all affected parties. The lessons learnt from Bilston Road have been applied to the planning of traffic management for the Centenary Square, Edgbaston and Wolverhampton projects and will be applied to the other schemes as they move into construction.

Recommendation 3

Midland Metro Alliance should ensure that site staff are trained in the standards of behaviour expected when dealing with the public, and stakeholders and Midland Metro Alliance should ensure that staff behaviour is monitored on a regular basis.

Response

All site operatives are health and safety inducted and made aware that we are working in a sensitive area adjacent to local businesses, residents and passing public. The site induction includes the standard of behaviour we expect from operatives representing the Midland Metro Alliance and Owner. Regular “toolbox



talks” are arranged to remind operatives how to “be a good neighbour” and be aware of their actions bearing in mind public perception.

Recommendation 4

Midland Metro Alliance should establish a dedicated stakeholder team, focussed on ensuring engagement is established and maintained throughout the lifecycle of future Metro projects.

Response

MMA has implemented a Stakeholder Liaison Team and a dedicated Stakeholder Liaison Officer (SLO) is allocated to each project. The SLO regularly conducts face to face visits, provide project news and updates and literature including their contact name, mobile and email details and listens to the issues and concerns of stakeholders ensuring these are fed back to and addressed by the Engineering Teams.

Recommendation 5

Midland Metro Alliance should ensure traffic marshals are trained to assist road users and are provided with up-to-date information to pass to customers and suppliers seeking to access businesses affected by major Metro traffic management installations.

Response

The MMA employ local staff and provide them with as much information about the works as possible and all traffic marshals are made aware of the diversions in place as part of the Traffic Management Team. Traffic Marshals are also provided with a variety of literature regarding the works that they can use to assist road users affected by the traffic management.

Traffic Management Marshals will in future be trained as Alliance Ambassadors who will be more involved with supporting stakeholders. The Alliance Ambassadors will be able to assist both members of the public and provide valuable information to stakeholders who are affected by the construction works. The Considerate Constructors Scheme (CCS) operative’s handout cards, which include the CCS Code of Practice, and an induction form to sign to comply to the scheme, due to Midland Metro Alliance registering with the scheme, has been rolled out. Regular toolbox talks such as “be a good neighbour,” and other relevant toolbox talks related to working with the public continue to be held.

Project briefings will be provided to assist with the most current information, with additional support and assistance provided by Stakeholder Liaison Officers who also work closely with businesses and the public.

Recommendation 6

Midland Metro Alliance should work with local highway authorities to ensure the impacts of future Metro temporary traffic management installations are assessed,



and that appropriate mitigations are agreed as part of the highway approvals process.

Response

Working closely with the Local Authority transport teams is essential in the projects we undertake. Traffic management arrangements can only be installed once approved by the Local Authority following consultation.

Local authorities are fully consulted on all traffic management installations ensuring all local business are liaised with and that a detailed traffic management design is submitted and approved. Mitigation measures are agreed in advance of temporary traffic management being implemented and the impact of traffic management is subject to regular review with adjustments being made to address any unforeseen impacts.

Recommendation 7

Midland Metro Alliance should ensure that the positive actions taken on Bilston Road are captured and incorporated into stakeholder engagement plans for future Metro works.

Response

We continue to incorporate positive actions, issues raised and general lessons learnt into reviews. Engagement Plans, Implementation Plans and Mapping Plans are regularly updated and reviewed. The Tractivity system is used to record stakeholder comments and feedback as well as consultation, information details and correspondence distributed with all relevant supporting documents uploaded.

Recommendation 8

Midland Metro Alliance should ensure that systems are implemented to maintain a comprehensive audit trail of contacts with, and the supply of information to, businesses.

Response

MMA has procured Tractivity to provide a comprehensive database of all contact with businesses and this is now used to record project engagement activity.

Recommendation 9

The financial assistance package was launched on 12 March 2019 supported by a package of communications material agreed with the scheme administrator. This information will be updated and reviewed in light of business feedback. For further information please view: www.metroalliance.co.uk/businesssupport



Response

A specific communications plan is ready for the launch of the financial assistance package in March. This communications plan has been done in collaboration with the scheme administrator to ensure all necessary arrangements are captured.

Recommendation 10

Transport for West Midlands should be asked to consider the technical feasibility and business case for the provision of an additional Metro stop on Bilston Road.

Response

Transport for West Midlands will investigate the feasibility and business case for this additional stop in consultation with City of Wolverhampton as local Planning & Highway Authority.

Recommendation 11

The cost of providing business support and financial assistance under the scheme described at paragraph 2 should be built into future Metro project costs.

Response

The costs of the financial assistance package and business support as agreed by the WMCA Board in September 2017 have been factored in to future Metro extensions budget.

Recognising that the package of support is for the construction of new schemes, if any individual council would like to request and fund the Independent Assessor to consider application of the financial assistance package to Metro asset replacement schemes that cause significant disruption to the road network, that would be considered. Retrospective application in this manner would need to be undertaken in a one off, time limited manner in respect of works undertaken since June 2016 subject to funding being available for those firms that have demonstrated eligibility.