

SEASON'S GREETINGS

WMCA AT THE HEART OF THE BUDGET

WMCA has secured a second devolution deal with government, announced in the budget, confirming more devolved powers and crucial housing and transport cash.

The deal includes £6m to drive an ambitious building programme for 200,000 new homes and another £5m to expand construction skills across the West Midlands.

Building on the region's existing strengths in the automotive sector, the deal also boosts our role as a global centre for new technologies like electric and driverless cars, further supported by the announcement of £80m for a new battery research

and development institute at the University of Warwick.

Highlights include:

- £250m for transport infrastructure, earmarked for the extension of the Midland Metro from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill
- Creation of a digital hub in Birmingham as part of the TechNation programme and a share of a £2m ultra-fast broadband pilot for Coventry and Warwickshire
- Housing First pilot in the West Midlands - a new approach to tackling rough sleeping in the region
- Funding opportunities for cycle

infrastructure to raise levels of cycling across the region to 5% by 2023

- Funding to develop a business case to create a Regional Integrated Control Centre to improve transport resilience
- Continuing support for the Mental Health Commission's Thrive West Midlands programme

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "This second devolution deal is another important step in empowering our region, giving us more tools to create and sustain growth that benefits everyone."



METRO WEDNESBURY TO
BRIERLEY HILL

£250m
FUNDING

17 STOPS
11km LONG

40min
FROM HS2



Follow us on

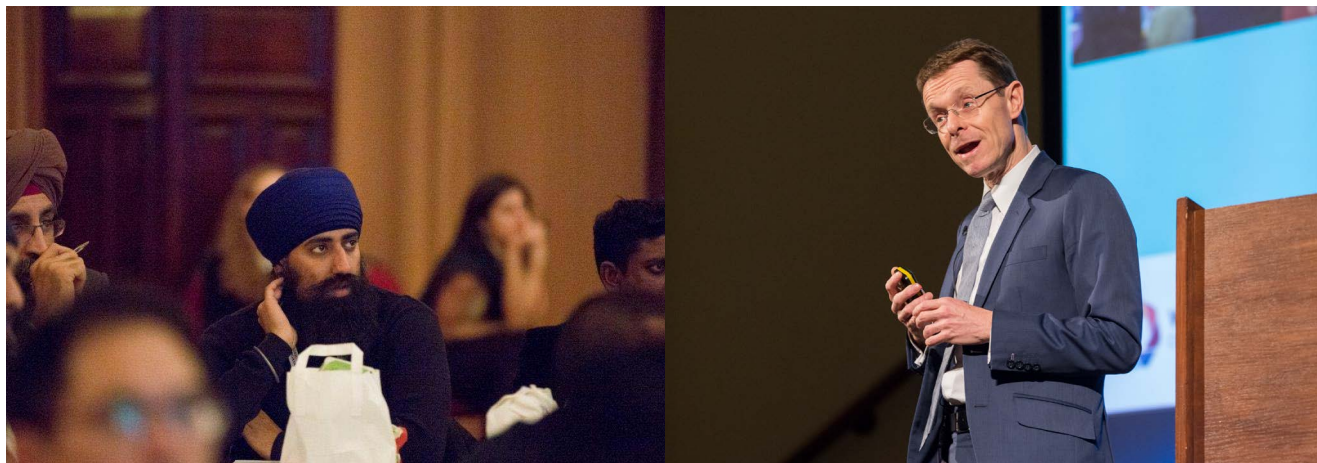


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MAYORAL UPDATE

THE MAYORS' FAITH CONFERENCE



More than 400 people attended the first Faith Conference, at the University of Birmingham - one of the Mayor's 10 pledges.

The event's aim was to find ways to work together across faith groups to unlock the potential of young people, reduce health inequalities and create cohesive, discrimination-free communities.

The conference saw presentations from Jean Templeton OBE, chair of the Mayor's homelessness task force, Anita Bhalla OBE, chair of the Mayor's Leadership Commission, David Jamieson, the Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands, and Bishop of Birmingham the Right Reverend David Urquhart.

The Mayor said: "Faith communities and associated charities form one of the greatest sources of strength, vitality and resilience in our community.

"The message I have received loud and clear from this conference is that the interests of that community is at the forefront of all that they do. My job now is to progress what has been discussed into ways of moving forward in these areas."

The event was live streamed on twitter with 460 views and at its peak was trending second nationally with support from Theresa May herself:



INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY LAUNCH

Business leaders joined the WMCA in welcoming the government's Industrial Strategy as a springboard for the region's exceptional strengths. Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street and the chairs of the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) said the Industrial Strategy was a platform for the Midlands to develop their own local programme.

The Mayor said: "We welcome the launch and will work together to develop a local industrial strategy

for the West Midlands that signals a step change in collaboration across business, government and society."

This national announcement sets the context for the WMCA's next steps, recognising that those best placed to drive forward local economies are those who live, work and do business there.

TRANSPORT NEWS

£250M GOVERNMENT INVESTMENT SIGNALS GO-AHEAD FOR MIDLAND METRO EXTENSION



Prime Minister Theresa May was in the West Midlands as news broke of £250m government funding for transport infrastructure.

The money, from the Transforming Cities Fund, signalled the go-ahead for the long-anticipated Midland Metro extension from Wednesbury to Brierley Hill.

Mayor Andy Street confirmed the WMCA would use it to extend the tram route from Wednesbury through Dudley town centre to the DY5 Enterprise Zone at Brierley Hill,

linking both towns to the rail network for the first time since the 1960s.

Cllr Roger Lawrence, WMCA lead member for transport, said: "Once complete this extension will provide huge regeneration opportunities and put hundreds of thousands of people within easy reach of HS2 and all the economic opportunities that brings."

Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of Dudley Council, said: "This is a real game changer for Dudley – the Metro is vital to the town and the borough's economy. "

WEST MIDLANDS RAIL ROLLS OUT



A new era of rail travel offering passengers more frequent services, better trains and extra seats was ushered in this week as management of the West Midlands network was put into local hands.

The new franchise, West Midlands Rail (WMR) will be managed jointly by a consortium of 16 local councils,

in close collaboration with the Department for Transport (DfT).

It will bring a near £1 billion investment into the local network over the next eight years. Set to run until March 2026, providing more services and space for passengers while stimulating and supporting economic growth across the region.

Cllr Roger Lawrence, chair of WMR and leader of City of Wolverhampton Council, said: "This is a watershed moment for our region's rail network and it will bring many improvements for passengers over the coming months and years."

WEST MIDLANDS FIRE SERVICE TEAMS UP WITH SAFER TRAVEL PARTNERSHIP

A ground-breaking scheme teaching young people the error of their ways rather than putting them before the courts has got firefighters on board.

West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) has joined West Midlands Safer Travel Partnership's Restorative

Justice programme and their work is already seeing results.

The scheme cuts re-offending by identifying youngsters who engage in low-level anti-social behaviour, such as vandalism. Rather than being prosecuted, they put right some of

the damage they have caused.

Restorative Justice was launched by Safer Travel in 2015. In 2016, 46 young people aged between 10 and 18 completed the programme. Only two of them went on to re-offend elsewhere.

LATEST

WEST MIDLANDS ON THE MOVE



Coventry taxi drivers were enthusiastic about new human power station by their rank at Coventry Railway Station.

Mayor Andy Street teamed up with former Olympian David Moorcroft to launch the WMCA physical activity strategy [West Midlands On The Move](#) at Coventry railway station last month.

David, the Coventry-born former Olympic middle and long distance runner and ex-chief executive of UK Athletics, joined the Mayor, WMCA and Coventry City Council staff to demonstrate a 'human power station'.

He said: "This scheme is a fantastic idea as the West Midlands suffers from some of the lowest levels of physical activity in the country.

"There are many reasons for this, so it's great to see the Mayor and leaders of the councils in the West Midlands working together to try and tackle it and get people active."

The exercise bikes generate electricity – so commuters can charge mobiles while getting a work-out.

Cab drivers at the station were already queuing up for a go on the bikes and said they would like to see more.

Taxi driver Tara Heer said: "It's great for us, so much better than sitting in cars all day – this is brilliant. It's good to see the Mayor here promoting this and I think we need more – in the summer it is going to be packed."

The WMCA produced the physical activity strategy as part of its wellbeing agenda, to promote the benefits of physical activity and promote its wide ranging social and economic benefits.

LEADING THE MIDLANDS

The 2017 Birmingham Post Power 250 list has been published showing the most powerful and influential people in the West Midlands.

WMCA and TfWM feature prominently, with Mayor Andy Street and Chief Executive Deborah Cadman highlighted, alongside other leadership team members and many of the leaders of our constituent authorities. You can see the full list [here](#)

CHANGE INTO ACTION



An alternative giving campaign to help people sleeping rough in Birmingham has been launched by the WMCA in partnership with Birmingham City Council.

Change Into Action is an alternative giving scheme being piloted across Birmingham with the potential to expand across the region. Its aim is to support specialist charities and street teams already working to change the circumstances of rough sleepers.

COVENTRY WIN BID



Huge congratulations to Coventry as they won the race to be crowned UK City of Culture for 2021. Their journey continues #ThisisCoventry