

Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension

**Evidence Given on Behalf of the Applicant: WMCA
Scheme Overview
Summary Proof of Evidence
Peter Adams**



Transport and Works Act 1992

The Transport and Works

(Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2004

1. Introduction

Qualifications and Experience

- 1.1 My name is Peter David Adams. I am an independent transport consultant and, until 30 September 2018, was Head of Metro Development for West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).
- 1.2 I am a Chartered Engineer, being a Member of the Institution of Civil Engineers and of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation.
- 1.3 I managed the development and implementation of Midland Metro extensions from 2004 to 2018.
- 1.4 Prior to 30 September 2018 I led WMCA's Metro Development Team in the development of a programme of Midland Metro extension projects in Birmingham and the Black Country, including the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Extension (WBHE), and oversaw the processes leading up to the submission of the Draft Order and negotiations with objectors.

Scope of Evidence

- 1.5 My evidence covers the strategic context of the project, the existing Midland Metro tram network, existing transport facilities and development potential within the project corridor, the evolution and development of the project, a description of the proposals, the benefits of the project, how it will be funded and delivered, the strategic support for the project, the strategic, financial, commercial and management case elements of the business case and WMCA's response to objectors to the Order.
- 1.6 I deal in my evidence with the following matters in the Statement of Matters issued by the Secretary of State for Transport, [GEN 3]:-
- 1 Justification for the Proposed Order,
 - 2 Alternatives to Compulsory Acquisition,
 - 3 The anticipated benefits of the scheme,
 - 5a The Case for use of Compulsory Powers,
 - 5c Funding, and
 - 6 Changes to the Proposed Order

- 1.7 I also deal with the Commercial, Management and Financial Cases of the project Business Case.

Witness Declaration

- 1.8 The evidence I shall give is true, given in good faith and represents my professional opinion regarding the merits of the Order proposal and I have carried out my assessment in accordance with the Code of Professional Conduct of the Institution of Civil Engineers.

2. Strategic Context

- 2.1 The WBHE is entirely in line with National, Regional and Local Planning, Transport and Economic Policies, being specifically supported by the in Policy TRAN1 (Priorities for the Development of the Transport Network) of the Black Country Core Strategy [WBHE/E23].

3. The Existing Tram System

- 3.1 The Midland Metro tram network is a successful, popular and expanding system currently linking Wolverhampton and Birmingham city centres. Funding is in place to continue the momentum of expansion created by the extension in 2016 to Grand Central, which saw an increase in patronage from 5 to 7.5 million passengers per annum. A ten-year delivery programme is planned to deliver further extensions to Edgbaston, Wolverhampton Railway Station, Eastside, Brierley Hill and Birmingham Airport as well as the WBHE.

4. Existing Economic Conditions and Transport Provision in the WBHE Corridor

- 4.1 Social deprivation and unemployment are high in the Black Country compared with national benchmarks. There is considerable scope for development to take place to overcome these difficulties, but major employment and residential developments, both in the WBHE corridor and that facilitated by the proposed HS2, need to be highly accessible by rapid transit in order to maximise their potential.
- 4.2 Public Transport within this part of the Black Country is a key constraint. With no existing direct rail link from Brierley Hill or Dudley, bus and car usage are higher than the national average and the area has not shared the benefits of the significant growth in rail patronage over recent years in the West Midlands.

5. Evolution of the Scheme

5.1 The scheme has been the subject of lengthy development and full consideration has been given the views of the public and frontagers through extensive public consultation over many years. Transport and Works Act powers were sought in 2003 and granted in 2005 and the works powers and outline planning permission have been implemented. Having obtained Government funding for a large proportion of the project costs, WMCA is now seeking to refresh the Compulsory Purchase powers through the Proposed Order in order to implement the project.

6. The Scheme Proposals

6.1 The WBHE has been developed to address this area's deficiencies in the Black Country's public transport offer. It is an 11km extension of the existing Metro network from Line 1 at Great Western Street, running along the former South Staffordshire Railway corridor to Castle Hill, Dudley, where it will run on-street to serve Dudley town centre, linking with buses at Dudley Interchange and other locations, and rail at Dudley Port.

6.2 Re-joining the former railway corridor near Cinder Bank it will run to Merry Hill, leaving the railway corridor at Canal Street to serve the Waterfront and Merry Hill Shopping Centre before terminating in Little Cottage Street in Brierley Hill town centre.

6.3 It will connect Dudley and Brierley Hill to the proposed HS2 Curzon Street station, to the wider Birmingham City Centre area and to the Black Country strategic centres of Wolverhampton and West Bromwich by linking to the expanding Midland Metro network.

7. Need for the Scheme and its Benefits

7.1 The WBHE will stimulate regeneration in the corridor and provide a vital and reliable link to and from central Birmingham and the HS2 terminus at Curzon Street, as well as the Black Country strategic centres of Wolverhampton and West Bromwich. The scheme delivers significant transport benefits and when appraised in accordance with the Department for Transport's assessment methodology delivers a Net Present Value of £275 million with a benefit to cost ratio of 2.27:1, as set out in the Economic Case [WBHE/D7].

7.2 A report by independent consultants Lichfield [WBHE/D28] concluded that the WBHE would significantly accelerate the annual delivery of new homes and commercial floorspace leading to more jobs and increasing economic output. It would also increase both council tax and business rates receipts.

8. Delivery

8.1 The Funding Statement [WBHE/A6] describes WMCA's proposals for funding the costs of implementing the WBHE and estimates the outturn cost for the WBHE, including forecast inflation, to be £343.6 million. This assumes construction of the WBHE is completed, in its entirety, by October 2023.

8.2 Funding of £250 million from the new Transforming Cities Fund was allocated to WMCA by the Government on 20 November 2017, including the Government funding requested for the WBHE. This was confirmed within the second West Midlands Devolution Deal announced on 23 November [WBHE/D2]. The WMCA Board approved the allocation of £207 million of this funding to the WBHE project on 8 December 2017 [WBHE/B15].

8.3 BCLEP funding of £400,000 has already been provided and expended on early stage scheme development.

8.4 A WMCA contribution of £103.0m is funded as part of the HS2 Connectivity Package [WBHE/E19].

8.5 The £33.2 million of "Other Funding" required is expected to be provided by third party funding. Funding contributions are being sought from a number of third parties.

8.6 Should third party funding not fully meet expectations, or costs rise above those in the Funding Statement [WBHE/A6], WMCA would utilise prudential borrowing, funded from the West Midlands Metro cash flows.

8.7 WMCA has procured the Midland Metro Alliance and therefore a strong project team, with a co-located team of owner, designer and contractor non-owner participant staff, bringing together world-wide expertise in a truly collaborative environment and with the skills and experience necessary, stands ready to deliver all aspects of the project.

8.8 A "third-generation" tram fleet will be required to be procured to serve the Eastside, Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and other West Midlands Metro extensions. This procurement is now in progress as part of the schedule for the project/programme, with tram supply options within an overall contract being timed to supply tested and commissioned trams in time to undertake testing and commissioning of this extension.

9. Support for the Scheme

9.1 Support has been received in respect of WMCA's application for Government funding from the Black Country Local Economic Partnership [WBHE/D39], local developers Portersfield [WBHE/D40] and Dudley College [WBHE/D41], and for the Proposed Order from Dudley Council [WBHE/F1], the Association of Black Country Local Authorities [WBHE/F2], Dudley Zoological Gardens [WBHE/F3] and Dudley Canal and Tunnel Trust [WBHE/F4].

10. Statement of Matters

10.1 The issues raised in the Secretary of State's Statement of Matters [GEN 3] have been covered within WMCA's witnesses Proofs of Evidence.

11. Response to Objectors

11.1 At the time of writing this Proof of Evidence there are 11 objectors to the order remaining. I respond to these points in detail in my main Proof of Evidence [APP/P1.1].

12. Conclusion

12.1 The need for the land and rights proposed to be acquired has been fully justified.

12.2 Funding is available and the project is ready to proceed, and I urge the Inspector to recommend the powers applied for.