

£6.9 billion local transport revolution to be announced in Budget and Spending Review

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A £6.9 billion local transport revolution to level up commutes and journey times across England's cities is expected to be announced by the Chancellor at this week's Budget and Spending Review.

Rishi Sunak is set to pump £5.7 billion into sustainable transport settlements for city regions to boost productivity through train and station upgrades and the expansion of tram networks in cities outside of London.

He will also announce £1.2 billion of new funding to transform bus services, as part of the £3 billion committed by the Prime Minister. This will deliver Transport for London-style improvements to speed up journey times, simplify fares and increase the number of services outside of the capital.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said: "Great cities need great transport and that is why we're investing billions to improve connections in our city regions as we level up opportunities across the country.

"There is no reason why somebody working in the North and Midlands should have to wait several times longer for their bus or train to arrive in the morning compared to a commuter in the capital.

“This transport revolution will help redress that imbalance as we modernise our local transport networks so they are fit for our great cities and those people who live and work in them.”

As part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, funding will be allocated for projects in Greater Manchester (£1.07billion), West Yorkshire (£830 million), South Yorkshire (£570 million), West Midlands (£1.05 billion), Tees Valley (£310 million), West of England (£540 million) and Liverpool City Region (£710 million).

This will enable projects such as cutting-edge carriages for Greater Manchester’s Metrolink, an expansion of tram networks in South Yorkshire and the West Midlands, and battery packs for Merseyrail trains to extend its network.

As part of the Prime Minister’s £3 billion commitment to transform bus services across the country, the Spending Review will include a new, dedicated £1.2 billion programme to improve infrastructure, fares and services outside of London. Places will be selected in the coming months to benefit from this investment.

This funding will deliver integrated fares and ticketing, so that bus users can enjoy simpler, cheaper fares like those enjoyed already by passengers in London. As well as additional services across the weekdays, weekends and evenings, and ambitious new bus priority measures to speed up journeys on busy roads.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: “We’re absolutely committed to building back better and boosting regional economies right across the country, and these investments are a clear example of how we’re doing that.

“Modernising our transport network sits at the heart of our levelling up agenda. This funding will serve as a catalyst for the regeneration of towns and cities by improving infrastructure and ensuring more people have better access to jobs and education.”

The Devolved Governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will receive additional funding through the Barnett formula because of this investment for England – this will be outlined in full at the Spending Review.

Responding to the announcement, Darren Caplan, Chief Executive of the Railway Industry Association (RIA), commented: “Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced this weekend that he intends to invest in rail schemes in the North and the Midlands, including Greater Manchester’s Metrolink tram-train vehicles, the West Midlands Metro extension, new and renovated stations in Liverpool and Runcorn as well as an interchange project at St Helens, South Yorkshire’s Supertram and an upgrading of Darlington and Middlesbrough train stations, and improving rail links in the Tees Valley region. Assuming this is new money and not from existing budget allocations, it is good news.

“Regional and city transport systems across the UK have a pivotal role to play in driving the economic recovery post Coronavirus, as well as boosting productivity and growth in the long run. We look forward to seeing the full details in the Comprehensive Spending Review on Wednesday 27 October.”

West Midlands secures over £1bn funding to drive a green transport revolution

The bid set out how funding would:

- Support early planning and development work on four new Metro extensions in Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton
- Be used to build new rail stations and bus interchanges at Solihull, Sutton Coldfield and Aldridge and;
- Support the roll out of the revolutionary Very Light Rail network in Coventry.

This funding will cover five years from April 2022 and over the next few weeks Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the WMCA, will work with the DfT, local councils and transport industry partners to develop a detailed plan for investment.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: “I am absolutely delighted that our ambition has paid off and we’ve secured more than £1billion of Government investment to continue our transport revolution here in the West Midlands.

“It is the largest single transport sum we have ever received, and I know the team cannot wait to press on and start getting diggers in the ground on some truly game-changing schemes.

“From more Metro lines and train stations, to new bus routes and EV charging points, this cash will help us to continue to build a clean, green transport network that connects communities and tackles the climate emergency.”

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: “The people and communities of the West Midlands must be at the heart of the government’s levelling up agenda and, of course, we would have liked to have seen more funding for our ambitions for the region.

“That said, it will nevertheless help us make a real difference to our communities, as we work on better connections to improve access to jobs and attract further investment.

“Projects like the extension of our Metro network will also encourage more people to leave their cars at home, improving the air we breathe and we’re committed to making this funding work for the people of this region.”

South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority welcomes £570 million transport investment for region

Mayor of South Yorkshire Dan Jarvis has welcomed a Treasury announcement confirming the Government has backed the **Mayoral Combined Authority’s bid** for transformative investment in the region’s transport network.

It will see £570 million spent in the region, helping deliver major improvements to the region’s bus, rail and active travel network and the renewal of Supertram.

Mayor of South Yorkshire Dan Jarvis: “South Yorkshire deserves and needs a world-class transport network. I’ve fought hard to secure the transformative investment we need for South Yorkshire and repeatedly

called on ministers to match my ambitions.

“That message has finally been heard by Government. The money we have secured will get South Yorkshire moving and help deliver a public transport revolution – benefitting all parts of our region and making public transport the first choice for travel.

“Passengers in South Yorkshire will benefit from faster bus services, upgraded shelters and stops, better rail stations and a massive expansion in high-quality walking and cycle routes.

“I want a stronger, greener, fairer South Yorkshire and this settlement marks a big step forward on that journey.”

Peter Kennan, Co-Chair of the Transport & Environment Board, South Yorkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), said: “This is a massive boost for South Yorkshire’s transport network and our economy. Businesses in our region have been loud and clear in expressing the need for better transport links, and I’m pleased the strength of the bid put forward by the Mayor, Mayoral Combined Authority and LEP has been recognised by ministers.

“The investment will help drive our recovery from the pandemic, boost our productivity, open up new development opportunities and attract more investment, and allow local people and visitors to make the most of the fantastic assets we have here in South Yorkshire.”

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