

NEWS RELEASE



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GOOD NEWS FOR REGIONS COMMUTERS

TODAY'S announcement by the Secretary of State for Transport, Ruth Kelly, sets out plans to remove the 'bottleneck' at New Street Station in Birmingham, this has been warmly welcomed by West Midlands Regional Transport Partnership.

The Government's Rail White Paper, 'Delivering a Sustainable Railway' states that by 2014 some lines require additional capacity and this means new infrastructure. This includes Birmingham New Street and a number of relatively modest schemes including Wolverhampton and Stratford-on-Avon.

It also makes provision for 300 new carriages to address the rapid growth in demand, in cities such as Birmingham.

The White Paper also identifies issues beyond 2014 and states the demand in the London-Birmingham-Manchester corridor might need additional interventions.

Cllr Roger Phillips, Chair of the West Midlands Regional Transport Partnership said: "This is excellent news - the West Midlands is growing and we need a sustainable railway that supports sustainable growth. Providing more commuters with the opportunity to travel by train is good for the environment, the economy and society as a whole.

This announcement paves the way for a Regional investment package to deliver the

Gateway project - including some £134m from the Regional Funding Allocation and a further £120 from Advantage West Midlands, Birmingham City Council and Centro.

To make sure this is a real success story the Government must make sure that we get more trains, longer platforms and more park and ride across the whole of the West Midlands.”

- ENDS -

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Notes to editors:

1. The West Midlands Regional Assembly ('the Assembly') represents a wide range of democratic, social and economic interests throughout the West Midlands region.
2. The Assembly's membership consists of 100 nominated representatives, with 68 members representing the local authority, 16 representing the business sector and 16 representing other economic and social partners.
3. The Assembly provides a platform for organisations to consider matters of common concern including: regional planning, transport, economic prosperity, sustainability, culture and Europe. It also supports regional policy forums and task groups on social inclusion, faith, housing, life long learning/skills, health, rural and community safety/crime reduction.
4. The Assembly works in partnership with Advantage West Midlands (AWM) the regional development agency (RDA), the Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Regional Action West Midlands (RAWM) the West Midlands Local Government Association (WMLGA) and other regional and local organisations from across the West Midlands region.
5. The Assembly is the Regional Planning Body, and is also responsible for scrutinising the operation of the region's RDA, Advantage West Midlands.
6. For further information, visit our website www.wmra.gov.uk
7. The Independent Performance Assessment was undertaken by the National Audit Office as part of an examination of all 8 English Regional Development Agencies at the request of the Department of Trade and Industry.
8. The final report can be downloaded from Advantage West Midlands' website www.advantagewm.co.uk