STATIONS AS PLACES
Opportunity Prospectus
Integration, Community and Delivery: a Masterplan for Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street stations

SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE AND SMETHWICK ROLFE STREET STATIONS
MARCH 2020
FOREWORD

Introducing the concept of Stations as Places
The Stations as Places programme aims to promote local railway stations as community ‘hubs’ rather than simply access points onto the rail network. The vision is to develop local railway stations as an asset highly valued within the community, contributing to economic growth and acting as a hub for creativity, heritage and social amenity.

The Vision
“We will develop stations as quality gateways between communities and the railway, supporting the changing needs of our passengers, residents and visitors. Stations in the West Midlands will be community assets, supporting the wellbeing and development of the areas they serve through involving local community and business.”
West Midlands Station Alliance (WMSA) Mission Statement

What does the prospectus do for the Smethwick stations?
There is an important role for the railways to play in both the economic and social regeneration of the local areas which our stations serve. This Opportunity Prospectus sets out the economic, social and geographic landscape of the area around our station and highlights some of the opportunities for commercial development, partnership working, inward investment and community regeneration. We have included a profile of Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street stations in this document and looked at different types of activity neighbouring our stations, from local businesses providing facilities to the travelling public, local authorities using existing assets in different ways, businesses looking for investment opportunities and the impact of new development in the surrounding area.

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Get in touch and keep up to date

You can email 
saps@wmre.org.uk and one of the team will get back to you!

You can also follow progress on Stations as Places at:
www.wmre.org.uk/stationsalliance
Why ‘Stations as Places’ for Smethwick?

Who are the West Midlands Station Alliance?
WMSA is a formal alliancing arrangement between industry partners with a common vision and forward plan, including infrastructure owner Network Rail, station facilities owner West Midlands Trains (WMT) and local government West Midlands Rail Executive. The role of the WMSA is to facilitate Stations as Places by bringing together various stakeholders to work together in partnership; ensuring that the Stations as Places vision and local aspirations are shared between the stakeholders, the infrastructure owner - the station facilities owner - and the Local Government.

Why Smethwick Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street Stations has been selected?
Both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations work together to provide important access for commuters and visitors to the town. The stations have an important role to play in the economic growth of the town through opening up Smethwick to the large workforce within the West Midlands region, enabling the Smethwick communities to access employment, education and training across the region and to support a growth in Smethwick. Individually Smethwick Galton Bridge has been selected due to its role as a key interchange between local, regional and national services. Smethwick Rolfe Street has been selected as a key commuter station for the local community, but also because of its strategic location to access key sites such as the Sandwell Aquatics Centre, for the Commonwealth Games, and the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital.

The drivers for developing this location
Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations are used by over 1.4 million passengers per year (entries and exits). At Smethwick Galton Bridge there are further opportunities to better facilitate interchanges between services, where there were almost 600,000 connections made in 2019. At Smethwick Rolfe Street there is a real opportunity to support future development as well as the legacy of investment and interest in the area, such as attracting people to the area, visiting the Sandwell Aquatics Centre after the Commonwealth Games.

Both stations would benefit from work to improve the passenger experience, particularly for those with lower mobility and requiring assistance. The stations will benefit from improved maintenance and investment in facilities; with some improvements already planned, not least Network Rail’s Access for All works at Smethwick Rolfe Street.

The Prospectus
This Prospectus sets out the headline opportunities for both stations in Smethwick; including interchanges between services at Smethwick Galton Bridge, community integration, improvements to the passenger environment and promoting Smethwick’s industrial heritage. The flow chart on the right shows how we are delivering Stations as Places to Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations.
Bringing our Partners together

Our stakeholders really matter to us. Whether it’s a major developer building new homes in reach of the station or an individual customer that needs to be able to make an easy journey to a hospital appointment using a combination of train and bus, the Stations as Places team wants to hear views from stakeholders and customers. Our inclusive consultation approach ensures we cover the 4 dimensions of:

COMMUNITY
A railway station is often a great asset to a community, but a community can also be a great asset to a railway station.

The two Stations in Smethwick are already clearly both valuable community assets which need to be cared for now and in the future. There is room to grow the community’s involvement particularly at Smethwick Rolfe Street, where the community already plays an important role in improving the passenger experience; through floral displays, tidying the station and platforms, and the vibrant mural on Platform 1. At Smethwick Galton Bridge, there is an opportunity to engage with key workplace neighbours, namely DPD as a significant local employer, and the Canal and River Trust as ‘custodians’ of the Birmingham Mainline Canal, which provides a key green access corridor to the station.

SOCIAL VALUE
An important objective of Stations as Places it to provide a long-term legacy by establishing integration and community involvement as the heart of the Smethwick Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street stations.

This will involve the community taking a level of ownership of the stations and passing this onto the future generations to keep each station a valuable part of the local community. Of course, Network Rail, West Midlands Trains and the Local Government will also have an important role in the legacy of the station and that is why partnership working between the community and these organisations is so important. Some railway stations are ideally suited for some areas and not at all for others.

LOCAL PERSPECTIVE
To help shape the future of the Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations to the needs and requirements of the local community, involving the community in the planning process is critical. The travel survey can establish how and when people travel to and from the stations, but community involvement helps to make a station a more attractive and valuable community asset. Stations as Places aims to establish strong links between the station management and businesses, the community and other local stakeholders; ensuring that the voice of the community is heard.

LEGACY
Transforming a railway station from a ‘passenger thoroughfare’ into a genuine community asset will have a positive impact on the local community.

Residents and businesses are more likely to take ownership of their local station if it is a pleasant and safe place to be, meets their needs and represents local people and heritage. A railway station as a valued community hub can offer a real contribution to improving social inclusion and mental wellbeing; from promoting inclusivity through membership of a ‘friends of’ group or simply making waiting as a part of a morning commute more pleasant. Most importantly, an integrated station shows that people care and that they have something to be proud of.
KEY FACTS

**Smethwick Galton Bridge**
- Opened in 1995 as part of the Jewellery Line Scheme, effectively replacing the Smethwick West Railway Station (formerly Smethwick Junction Station), on the Birmingham Snow Hill to Stourbridge line which had been in operation since 1867.
- The station was designed to show the colours of local pottery, and from the platforms the actual Galton Bridge can be seen crossing the Birmingham Mainline Canal.

**Smethwick Rolfe Street**
- The station was opened in 1852 by the Birmingham, Wolverhampton, & Stour Valley Railway Company.
- In 1985, pupils from Parkside Junior School created a mural for Platform 1 under the direction of artist Jeremy Waygood as part of the Birmingham to Wolverhampton Corridor Initiative. In June 2017, the mural was removed and replaced by one created by students from Sandwell College under the direction of artist Steve Field.

FACILITIES OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>Smethwick Galton Bridge</th>
<th>Smethwick Rolfe Street</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staffed Ticket Office</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Automatic Ticket machines</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help Point</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waiting Room</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Platform Shelters</td>
<td>Yes (partially)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Toilets</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refreshments Kiosk or Vending machine</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Information Screens</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step-free access</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portable Ramp for Train Boarding</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

STATION TYPOLOGY

**Smethwick Galton Bridge**
- **Local Gateway and Strategic Interchange** - serves small town, local centres and local interchanges
  - Serves major employment sites in Smethwick and neighbouring areas
  - Provides connections to local bus services
  - Serves nearby residential communities
  - Acts as a key interchange between the Snow Hill Line, and both regional and local destinations between Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street.

**Smethwick Rolfe Street**
- **Local Gateway** - serves small town, local centres and local interchanges
  - Serves Smethwick Town Centre, and neighbouring areas
  - Provides connections to local bus services
  - Serves nearby residential communities
  - Acts as a gateway to the railway to serve local destinations between Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are no public parking facilities at either Smethwick Galton Bridge or Smethwick Rolfe Street station, with local connectivity provided by walking, cycling and bus routes.
About the station

LEASE PLANS

Land within the blue line boundary is leased by Network Rail to West Midlands Trains. West Midlands Trains is required to meet lease holder conditions on behalf of the landlord, Network Rail. This comprises of maintenance and enhancements to station areas, including the station buildings, platforms and facilities.

Above: Smethwick Galton Bridge
Left: Smethwick Rolfe Street
The new Sandwell Aquatics Centre in Smethwick (1.7km from Smethwick Galton Bridge and 1.9km from Smethwick Rolfe Street) which will host the diving and swimming events for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games is under construction. The benefits to Sandwell include the creation of local jobs and investment in the community through the businesses supplying goods and services for the build, as well as taking on apprentices. The facility is due to open in 2022 for the Commonwealth Games, and following the games converted for public use as a leisure centre in 2023.

West Bromwich Albion Football Club (WBAFC) just under 1.5km from both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street (although The Hawthorns is the closest and official station). WBAFC provides a large sporting centre for the local area. Beyond the football team, the Clubs charitable foundation (The Albion Foundation) provides a wide range of community engagement work including in education.

Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, located 2km from Smethwick Rolfe Street will provide state-of-the-art treatment and care for patients from Sandwell and across the region. Due to open in 2022, the 670-bed hospital will provide a catalyst for regeneration, provide thousands of jobs and improve the health of local people. The Hospital is said to become the civic heart of the area and a point of pride for the community. The distance between Smethwick Rolfe Street and the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital requires connecting bus services.

### Public Transport, Walking and Cycling Access

**Smethwick Galton Bridge**
- Step-free access via the platform lifts (refurbishment of lifts scheduled completion July 2020)
- Bus stops outside in both directions within 50 metres for the 80 and 87 services
- 1 open access cycle storage (circa 20 spaces, average 15% occupancy)
- No Taxi rank, or drop off pick up space

**Smethwick Rolfe Street**
- No taxi ranks or drop off/pick up space
- Bus stops outside in both directions within 20 metres; number 58 and 89, and 100meters for; 54, 80, 78 Platinum, 841 and X18
- Cycle storage within the station (circa 4 spaces, average 50% occupancy)

At both stations the Birmingham Mainline Canal, provides a key walking and cycling route to local areas, with National Cycle Route 81 passing through Smethwick along the tow path.

### Crime and Safety Figures

Local Crime statistics highlights a drop in registered crime of around 7% between 2018 and 2019 at Smethwick Galton Bridge, with an average of 34 recorded incidences per month, of which 40-50% include violent crime including sex related offences.

Local Crime at Smethwick Rolfe Street shows a rise in crime of 14% between 2018 and 2019. The types of crime recorded are much more varied, and include theft, burglary, criminal damage, drugs, vehicle offences showing a much broader issue with crime.

### Annual Passenger Footfall

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Smethwick Galton Bridge</th>
<th>Smethwick Rolfe Street</th>
<th>Smethwick Galton Bridge interchange</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2017/18</td>
<td>707,950</td>
<td>528,208</td>
<td>No data available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018/19</td>
<td>806,784</td>
<td>625,052</td>
<td>587,287</td>
</tr>
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Source: Office of Rail and Road (ORR)
Estimates of Station Usage 2018-19
Survey Results

**JOURNEY PURPOSE**

Do you use the train for; (Select all that apply)

- Commuting
- Education
- Leisure
- Business
- Visiting friends or relatives
- Tourists

Above: Passengers interviewed at Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street were predominantly using the rail as a mode of commuting to and from work, or for business activities. Leisure activities (such as shopping) also saw a significant response rate.

**ACCESS AND FREQUENCY OF USE**

Left: The mode share of accessing the two stations show the walking and cycling account for 62.5% of mode share. 62.5% of passengers also use the station 5 days per week, with most passengers travelling at least 2-3 times per week.

**SERVICES TO BIRMINGHAM CITY CENTRE**

Below: Passenger responses show an even split between passengers using both the high and low level services into Birmingham New Street or Birmingham Snow Hill – with most passengers stating that they get the next service, akin to ‘turn up and go’ use.

**TICKET PURCHASING**

Left: Passengers using Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street, use station ticked offices infrequently – with web, app or tickets purchased through work accounting for the majority of ticket purchases. One third of tickets bought at ticket offices is however a significant proportion.

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16 surveys were completed via online and social media portals. Due to the restrictions and safeguarding of passengers and staff put in place during the Covid-19 Pandemic, it has not been possible to carry out the follow up face-to-face survey engagement to date. This section of the Prospectus will be updated with additional survey responses as soon as we are able to carry out additional surveys.
SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE (LOW LEVEL)

- Up to 6 trains per hour to Birmingham New Street with an average wait between trains of only 9 minutes
- Up to 6 trains per hour to Wolverhampton
- Up to 2 trains per hour provided by London Northwestern Railway service between Liverpool and London Euston via Wolverhampton and Birmingham New Street
- 2 trains per hour direct connection to Birmingham International
- One train per hour Transport for Wales service between Birmingham International and Shrewsbury – with direct connections (alternating hours) to Pwllheli (North Wales) and Aberystwyth.
- 1 train per hour during the off-peak periods to Wolverhampton and Crewe

SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE (HIGH LEVEL)

- Up to 7 trains per hour to Birmingham Snow Hill with an average wait between trains of only 9 minutes
- Direct Chiltern Railways services to / from London Marylebone during AM peak and evenings

SMETHWICK ROLFE STREET

- 2 trains per hour daytime to Wolverhampton
- 2 trains per hour daytime to Walsall via Birmingham New Street, with one continuing to Rugeley Trent Valley
- West Midlands Trains are the sole operator.
Station Layout

SMETHWICK GALTON STREET
High Level

SMETHWICK ROLFE STREET

Key:
- Access Lift
- Ticket Office
- Waiting Room
- Cycle Parking
- Accessible WC
Physical Improvements

- Both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations require improvements to help the interchange of pedestrians, buses, cycles and taxis in order to promote sustainable and active last mile travel to the stations. For example, signposting, footway and crossing improvement to optimise the connection between the two Stations and the town centre and community.

- Smethwick Galton Bridge - currently pedestrian access is via the ticket office and bridges, then via steps or lifts. The ticket office and the platform requires aesthetic/appearance improvements and clearer signage is needed between the Higher and Lower level platforms, especially to aid interchanging passengers. This could include footway marking such as colour coordinated lines leading to the other platforms. Smethwick Rolfe Street would benefit from disabled access to the platform level, which is currently reached by stairs on either side.

- To improve the safety at the stations and their desirability as a place to be, lower-cost and/or aesthetic initiatives such as improved lighting and signage, redecoration, replacement or upgrading of platform furniture would be beneficial (and achievable in the short/medium term). The provision of customer toilets at Smethwick Rolfe Street and the refurbishment of toilets at Smethwick Galton Bridge would improve the attractiveness of the stations as places to be – especially for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Operational improvements

- Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations both serve the local community of Smethwick. The operation of services from the stations are however, different. Smethwick Galton Bridge offers good connections to, and between, multiple national, regional and local routes - but only local services at Smethwick Rolfe Street. In May 2019, timetable improvements were introduced for West Midlands Trains to provide direct access to Walsall and Rugeley Trent Valley, from Rolfe Street, removing the need to interchange at Birmingham New Street.

Integration

- For the benefits of the community and its Stations, it is fundamental to promote access to all modes of transport (e.g. connectivity with the local buses), to consider planned development in the surrounding area and to promote activities in and around Smethwick. Whereas real time train information is provided at both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street Stations, for the bus stop interchanges, there is no real time bus information at either location, limiting the effectiveness of any interchange. Furthermore, wayfinding around the station, key routes such as National Cycle Route 81, or local hubs, would benefit both cyclists and pedestrians.
**The Headline Opportunities**

**THE SURROUNDING AREA**

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**Wider connectivity improvements to the station**

Improving links around the two Stations will help to facilitate and encourage additional patronage. For example, improvements to the wayfinding and pedestrian routes, crossings, and footways will support access, and attractive planting will enhance the look and feel of the area.

**Last Mile Journey Making**

Linking the Stations to the community: Pedestrian routes within the ‘last mile’ of the station are variable in quality and accessibility. Notably, pedestrian accessibility is impacted by the lack of wayfinding to local points of interest, and by the low levels of footway maintenance and aesthetics:

- Improved wayfinding to and from the station – including the creation of an access guide and map for all pedestrian groups, and different modes of travel. Wayfinding is particularly important for pedestrian trips to forthcoming key local sites including the Sandwell Aquatics Centre and Midland Metropolitan University Hospital.

- Ensure that there is clear signage directing passengers towards connecting bus services to the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, and ensure that bus services are timed to support interchange or run at a high enough frequency to facilitate ‘turn up and go’ interchange.

- Improvement in footway condition and drainage, especially to local retail areas and employment – such as the Midland Metropolitan University Hospital – and enhance the quality of the pedestrian environment within the last mile of the station and its immediate vicinity.

- To support improved rail integration with proposed developments in the local area, such as discounted admissions to the aquatics center for people who access it by rail.
Surrounding land use activities

- Smethwick has a rich industrial heritage with a number of significant historical features including the Fox Henderson Company which made the steel framework for the Crystal Palace and was founded by Charles Fox, whose inventions included the first patented railway points.
- The Smethwick Engine – the world’s oldest steam engine (c.1779), now in the Birmingham Science Museum. Celebrating the heritage, is the Galton Valley Canal Heritage Centre and Galton Valley Canal Museum alongside the BCN Main Line canals.
- The area is now well known for multiculturalism, with the Kamia Masjid Mosque, Holy Trinity Church and Smethwick Gurdwara – with the respective communities heavily involved in public work in the area.
- Creating an identity linked to the industrial heritage of Smethwick would provide the opportunity to link the stations to the local heritage and to incorporate this into a quality renovation of stations facilities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council have developed Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs), identifying key opportunities to develop local pedestrian and cycling networks and improve access for the local community, including to/from the railway stations.
The station masterplan focuses on the station itself and the opportunities for integration with the station's immediate vicinity. Enhanced walking, cycling and bus interchange will make a significant difference to how the station feels. There are also opportunities to enhance existing station facilities to improve passenger experience and integration between rail services and the surrounding area. Appropriate management of car parking will aim to alleviate existing capacity issues with existing facilities, whilst better connectivity to other transport modes will serve to reduce demand on parking spaces.

**Potential Station Neighbours**
Smethwick Galton Bridge station is surrounded by a mixture of residential and commercial developments. Key potential station neighbours have been identified as follows:
- DPD Group Depot
- Warley Superstore

1. Crossing improvements outside the station, to include better access/interchange to buses, and improve safety
2. Improve bus stops to include real time displays, seating and additional shelter space
3. Improve local wayfinding to the canal towpath, and local attractions, and highlight Galton Bridge as a key access route for cycle and walking (especially to key employment site DPD)
4. Employ station/platform assistants to help with mobility and accessibility needs, provide customer information and wayfinding within the station (to support interchanges) and provide litter picking
5. Expand existing waiting rooms
6. Investigate commercial opportunity for a mobile tea and coffee ‘cart’ seller in the station to provide refreshments
7. Investigate station planting and volunteer groups
8. Clean the upper level glass windows on the platform to give better views of the Galton Bridge
10. Multi-lingual signage, as proposed at Smethwick Rolfe Street, to reflect the diversity in the local community.
1. Customer toilets within the Station building
2. Lift access to platform 1 and 2, via the overbridge providing step free access
3. Improved crossings to access public transport, and improved crossings between the station and Smethwick Town Centre
4. Multi-lingual signage, as proposed at Smethwick Rolfe Street, to reflect the diversity in the local community.
5. Better wayfinding and signage to local attractions and the canal towpath

6. Return 'Black Horse' sculptures to the station, originally designed by Kevin Atherton in 1987 to be placed on the railway between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.
7. Local Bus stops to have real-time information at the stops, and where space, to have improved shelters to encourage public transport interchange
8. Alternate access to Smethwick town centre by a new entrance giving a vista toward the town
9. Improved cycle parking on both platforms

DID YOU KNOW?

Multi-lingual signage has been proposed at both stations. Of Smethwick residents, 10.3% speak Panjabi as their first language with 2.1% Urdu, & 1.2% Polish.

Potential Station Neighbours

Smethwick Rolfe Street station is surrounded by a mixture of residential and commercial developments, offering multiple business neighbours:

- Lloyds Bank
- Smethwick Guru Nanak Gurdwara
- Blue Gates Hotel
- Smethwick Library
- Holy Trinity Church
- Smethwick Job Centre
The Commonwealth Games represents an opportunity to use sport and activity to engage with local residents on active travel, and using their local railway to connect to other leisure activities in the West Midlands.

Stations as Places is also about promoting wider connectivity to existing communities, businesses, local centres and future development sites. The 'Last Mile' concept plan considers other land uses in the surrounding area and what the priorities should be in terms of integration of sustainable transport modes and station facilities. Key local stakeholders have been identified through initial consultation and auditing of the local area. Engagement will focus on improving access to rail services and how Stations as Place can unlock development potential and enhance existing connectivity for residents and the local economy.

Work with local residents to tackle ‘fly-parking’ of people from outside Smethwick using residential streets as a ‘park and ride’ for rail.

Improve interconnectivity between rail and bus to support last mile commuting to the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, in line with SMBC’s LCWIP schemes.

Provide step free access at Smethwick Rolfe Street, to unlock equal access to jobs and leisure opportunities for local residents, and to link with the Parasport activities of the Commonwealth Games.

Promote local heritage, and excellent active travel routes, using the Birmingham Canal.

Employee Engagement at DPD (and other employers) to promote the use of rail for their commute where possible, or to use the key walking and cycling routes over Galton Bridge.
“I would like to get involved in planning/future changes in the station. I will also encourage the congregation at GNG to use more public transport.”

Jaswinder Singh (Guru Nanak Gurdwara)

Thanks to our key stakeholders who had their say...

- Smethwick Youth Community Centre
- Guru Nanak Gurdwana
- West Midlands Rail Executive
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- Canal and River Trust
- Abrahamic Foundation
- West Midlands Trains

Key themes from our stakeholders...

- Key Issues at both stations include; improvement to ticket office and waiting facilities at both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street – these include new or improved customer toilet facilities, refreshment carts and improved signage. Platform assistance staffing, litter-picking and volunteer gardening would enhance the overall feeling of safety and care.

- Both stations require improvements on last mile connectivity, especially to key sites, such as the Sandwell Aquatic Centre and the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital

- Step free access at Smethwick Rolfe Street is a crucial requirement to allow for disabled and elderly members of the community to use the station without difficulty. This could also be coupled with a new station entrance which provides views towards Smethwick Town Centre.

- Smethwick Galton Bridge is a key station for access to the DPD site, engagement with existing staff, improved wayfinding and enhanced pedestrian and cycle access to the site would encourage staff to use rail for the commute.

- Use of heritage walks and improved wayfinding/signage to better connections between rail services and the local canal network
THE ASPIRATION - the place we want it to be

What the LOCAL AUTHORITY has to say about the stations

“Combined Smethwick Rolfe Street and Smethwick Galton Bridge have over a million visitors a year. While relatively small stations they have strategic importance in the locations they serve. Smethwick Galton Bridge provides an interchange between two lines and Smethwick Rolfe Street is the nearest station to serve the new Midland Metropolitan Hospital.

Furthermore they are the nearest stations to the new Aquatic Centre which is being built for the commonwealth games. As such we are keen to see walking routes to and from key destinations improved as well as step-free access provided at Rolfe Street.”

Becky Willson, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

What the OTHER STAKEHOLDERS have to say about the stations

“Canal & River Trust are glad to be working with West Midlands Trains to promote stations as places. 1.75 million people in urban areas of the region live within a mile of their local canal and number of canals are within a short distance of the many of the regions train stations, meaning that people can use canal towpaths to complete the beginning or final part of their journeys on foot or bicycle.”

Richard Preston, Canal and River Trust

"The Smethwick stations are really important to us in access and inclusion terms. From ensuring that the Prospectus for Smethwick Rolfe Street supports the timely introduction of new lifts ahead of the Commonwealth Games, through to the strategic interchange role of Smethwick Galton Bridge, the action plan evidence has been vital in understanding customer needs.

Building on the immediate waymarking and signage improvements put in place at Smethwick Galton Bridge, the Prospectus has helped us not only look at access arrangements within the station but also look at improved pedestrian, cycling and public transport connectivity beyond the station. We’re delighted to be a key part of this process and to be able to harness the views of the local community.”

Jon Harris, Integrated Transport, Accessibility and Development Manager, West Midlands Trains
Making the Stations a better place

How to get more efficient use of the station

Smethwick Galton Bridge

Initial responses from passenger surveys indicate that local cycling public transport and walking connections need to be improved. This provides a real opportunity to enhance user experiences, and for rail to become a key mode for commuting to other parts of the West Midlands.

Over the next 5 years, improvements in the provision of information will significantly improve the passenger experience. This includes Digital Customer Information Screens (DCIS) which will show the carriage numbers and relay more detailed information to the passenger.

Smethwick Rolfe Street

Install cycle parking facilities (with shelter) to provide cycle access to rail at Smethwick Rolfe Street station.

Managing car parking demand

There is no car parking provision at either of the Smethwick Stations. Smethwick Rolfe Street is well connected to Smethwick Town Centre (where there is parking for local shops) and access to local bus routes.

Public Transport

Improvements to the bus shelters at Smethwick Galton Bridge, and installation of shelters at Smethwick Rolfe Street, to include real-time information display screens would benefit interchange options and access to the local community and housing.

Pedestrian Access

Smethwick Galton Bridge

Access to the station from the A457 Oldbury Road, is adequate for the current users as the station with well maintained footways; however, the immediate area around the station has low level of natural surveillance, and many areas of scrubland littered with detritus. This route would benefit from improved landscaping and visible CCTV. The grade 1 listed Victorian ‘Galton Bridge’, and which is now closed to traffic, is identified as part of the Sandwell Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan network. The original road surface and pavements are both poor and require updating to properly integrate to the surrounding network. This will also improve the drainage of the surfaces.

Wayfinding from Smethwick Galton Bridge to Smethwick Town Centre/ Rolfe Street requires improvement as there is currently no crossing facilities for pedestrian on the north side of the A457 roundabout with the A4252 Telford Way. Wayfinding should be combined with junction and crossing improvements on the southern side of the A457 Oldbury Road and Tollhouse Way, with particular focus at Fenton Street.

Smethwick Rolfe Street

The footway, crossings and landscaping immediately outside the ticket office, on the B4135 Rolfe Street, would benefit from improvement. In its current format the station is obscured by foliage and access is restricted by a car dominant design. The crossing over the A457 Tollhouse Way, requires significant improvement to increase the pedestrian refuges, as this will be a key access route to the new Aquatics Centre. Currently there are four separately phased crossings which impede pedestrian access. There is currently no wayfinding outside the station. This should be introduced with directions to key local areas such as the town centre, but also the Aquatics Centre and the forthcoming Midlands Metropolitan University Hospital.

These challenges offer scope for walking and cycling improvements to improve accessibility to the station: footpath resurfacing, signage, lighting along footways and underpasses. Community artworks could also add aesthetic value and increase the feeling of community ambience.
Making the Station a better place
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - SMETHWICK GALTON BRIDGE

Short Term
• Continue to encourage community volunteers to deliver flowering vegetation in planters and borders, community artwork and murals
• Renovate waiting rooms, shelters and station over-bridge environments
• Install automatic defibrillators
• Signpost to Bus Interchanges
• Signposting indicating availability of welfare facilities
• Installation of bus maps & live bus departure digital screens
• Ensure all timetable displays and racks in the ticket halls are functioning and stocked
• Install litter bins, especially at the lower level platforms and outside the main entrance, to discourage littering
• Aesthetic and cleanliness improvements to the immediate areas around station entrances
• Personalised travel planning with key employers such as DPD to increase rail mode share of employees
• Locate West Midlands Rail mobile accessibility staff to provide a viable presence and support interchanging passengers
• Celebrate Diwali, Festival of Light and Bonfire Night using Galton Bridge as a focus point

Medium Term
• More seating provided for passengers
• Provide a consistent and visible level of CCTV in the waiting rooms, and around the station area to deter littering and antisocial behavior
• Wifi at station - continuous free wifi between trains and the stations (for London Northwestern and West Midland trains only)
• Mobile coffee offer (coffee on cart or platform)

Long Term
• Install a station canopy at lower level platforms
• Improve pedestrian and cycle access between Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street, to allow alternative route options (to Snow Hill or New Street), for local, regional and national train services.
• Secure legacy value from the Commonwealth Games by maintaining sustainable access to and from local communities and the aquatics centre
Making the Station a better place
DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY - SMETHWICK ROLFE STREET

Short Term
• Continue to encourage community volunteers to deliver flowering vegetation in planters and borders, community artwork and murals
• Renovate waiting rooms, shelters and station over-bridge environments
• Install automatic defibrillators
• Installation of bus maps & live bus departure digital screens
• Ensure all timetable displays and racks in the ticket halls are functioning and stocked
• Promote the existing Public art, and look to expand the use of public art to the local area
• Signpost to Bus Interchanges
• Aesthetic and cleanliness improvements to the immediate areas around station entrances
• Agree a discount card with a local coffee shop, as an alternative to refreshments within the station
• Provide personalised travel planning for new housing developments in the area

Medium Term
• More seating for passengers
• Provide a consistent and visible level of CCTV in the waiting rooms, and around the station area to deter littering and antisocial behavior
• Wifi at station - continuous free wifi between trains and the stations (for London Northwestern and West Midland trains only)
• Mobile coffee offer (coffee on cart or platform) at both stations
• Install station lifts to all platforms as set out in the Access for All Bid. This should be done in time for the Commonwealth Games, and include improved wayfinding for disabled passengers from the ticket hall
• Investigate toilet options at Rolfe Street, especially for the Commonwealth Games

Long Term
• Improve pedestrian and cycle access between Galton Bridge and Rolfe Street, to allow alternative route options (to Snow Hill or New Street), for local, regional and national train services.
• Secure legacy value from the Commonwealth Games by maintaining sustainable access to and from local communities and the aquatics centre
OPPORTUNITIES for INVESTMENT

The Stations as Places Prospectus should act as a means of providing an evidence base which can attract funding opportunities and implement quick-win initiatives and measures. To achieve this, continuous stakeholder involvement and collaboration is crucial to develop relationships within the communities that the Stourbridge stations serve.

OPTIONS FOR DELIVERY

Section 106
Section 106 funding can be secured when a third-party development relates to the station (in planning terms).

External Funding
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- Transport for West Midlands
- West Midland Trains
- Network Rail
- Sandwell MBC
- Black Country LEP
- Growth Company Funding – Think Sandwell
- Canal and River Trust
- Active Travel Funding e.g. WMCA’s Better Streets
- Commonwealth Games Legacy Funding

Match Funding
Access for All (AfA) funding is a key part of the Government’s Inclusive Transport Strategy to improve the accessibility of Great Britain’s railway. This funding is specifically targeted at providing improvements at stations which can enable more disabled people to access the rail network.

Commercial Revenue
Currently there are no commercial arrangements, but there is potential for a fixed or mobile coffee kiosk at both stations, especially for the AM peak commute and interchange times.

Third Party Funding
- West Midlands Train’s Combined Station Improvement Programme (CSIP). Investment in Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street railway stations include new Digital Customer Information Screens and CCTV facilities

Cycle Rail
As result of the Cycle Rail Fund awarding in 2019, it was announced an extra 2,300 cycle spaces to be built at 48 stations across England, enabling commuters to cycle directly to the station and lock-up their bike securely.

The Cycle Rail Programme has already tripled the number of cycle parking spaces at more than 500 stations, bringing the total to over 80,000. The Cycle Rail programme is a great opportunity to get funding to improve cycling facilities and security around railway stations.

Easy Wins

Community and Volunteering resources
The Smethwick Abrahamic Foundations is a community-based organisation which brings the local muslim population together with other faiths to improve their community.

The group assisted in the regeneration of Smethwick Rolfe Street station garden. They have formed the first adoption group with local grower Janet Cartwright, who has worked in local park and gardens since the 1960’s.
**ACTION PLAN**

**Making the station a better place - achieving mode change**

### Smethwick Galton Bridge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employee Engagement at DPD (and other employers) to promote the use of rail for their commute where possible, or to use the key walking and cycling routes over Galton Bridge.</td>
<td>WMT, SMBC, DPD</td>
<td>Short term, and then ongoing with new starters.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth Games; engage with local residents on active travel, and using their local railway to connect to other leisure in the West Midlands</td>
<td>SMBC, Commonwealth Games Organisation Committee, WMT</td>
<td>Short term, with legacy work in the medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve interconnectivity between rail and bus to support last mile commuting to the new Midland Metropolitan University Hospital, including upgraded shelters and Realtime passenger information.</td>
<td>SMBC, Sandwell &amp; West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust, National Express Buses, Green Bus</td>
<td>Short term to Medium Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employ Station Assistants to support interchange and customer service at Smethwick Galton Bridge, and investigate the procurement of a Coffee Cart</td>
<td>WMT</td>
<td>Short to Medium term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide step free access at Smethwick Rolfe Street, and improve road crossings outside the station to provide a ‘gateway’ to Smethwick</td>
<td>DfT, WMT</td>
<td>Medium to Long term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with local residents to tackle ‘fly-parking’ of people from outside Smethwick using residential streets as a ‘park and ride’ for rail.</td>
<td>SMBC, Residents</td>
<td>Medium to Long term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Smethwick Rolfe Street

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years 0 to 5: 10% growth in passenger numbers</td>
<td>SMBC, Residents, Developers, SMBC</td>
<td>Year 0: Adoption of station by local community group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 0 to 2: Deliver Access for All improvements</td>
<td>DfT, WMT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 0 to 5: Use station as catalyst for land assembly through constructive dialogue with station neighbours, property owners, developers and SMBC</td>
<td>DfT, WMT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years 0 to 2: Deliver customer experience improvements to support environment and ease of interchange</td>
<td>WMT, SMBC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TARGETS**

- The Action Plan provides a focus for the Stations as Place prospectus for Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street, and acts as a tool against which the community can measure the success of plans and in improving local access to the railway. Both Smethwick Galton Bridge and Smethwick Rolfe Street enjoy favourable locations in terms of local walking catchments for residents and to employment sites; the absence of parking at the stations means improving active travel access is vital for the Smethwick Community.

- With no significant changes to access options – for example no parking expansions proposed – the key metric for measuring the success of Prospectus will be in seeing enhanced passenger numbers, and improved user satisfaction scores which will be measured against baseline surveys.
Railways bring people together and there is a powerful historic sense of pride in the railways in the UK. Stations began life as beacons of hope and revival for local communities and when stations are places of welcome, happier & more passengers ensue.

The Stations as Places initiative is designed be open to all.

We really want to engage with organisations of different shapes and sizes. We’d love to hear from developers and their consultant teams about how we can work more closely with you to connect with your development schemes, especially if you are needing people to take the train to ease pressure of the road network and make your development proposals work effectively.

But we’d also love to hear from shopkeepers and other local businesses, from social enterprises and residents groups, and from organisations supporting disabled people and others needing accessibility support. So how to get involved?

You can email saps@wmre.org.uk and one of the team will get back to you!

Contact us if you would like to
• Give us feedback about this Prospectus
• Flag up an opportunity with your proposed development
• Talk to us about how your organisation can get involved

You can also follow progress on
Stations as Places at
www.wmre.org.uk/stationsalliance