

TRANSPORT CAMPAIGN

GET THE MIDLANDS MOVING





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The Black Country sits at the very heart of the UK, providing an essential route for road and rail traffic from every part of the country, as well as being home to an incredibly diverse business base selling products and services to every corner of the globe. Transport and logistics are essential parts of the Black Country's DNA and with this in mind, the Black Country Chamber of Commerce is launching a new campaign to support businesses to help improve transport and infrastructure across the region. This is a business led initiative, and is based on close dialogue with local businesses and strategic partners, and clear economic evidence. The Chamber has a long history of representing local businesses, gathering tangible examples from the local business community and taking them to Government and key decision makers to help deal with any potential issues – so we look forward to working with businesses of every shape and size in the coming months on this most important of policy areas.

Corin Crane, Chief Executive of the Black Country Chamber of Commerce, added: “The West Midlands is the heart of the UK, linking north and south, and the Black Country is essential to the success of the region. We produce vital products that are then distributed across the UK and the world, so a first-class transport and infrastructure base is key to the prosperity of the region. As a Chamber, we are taking action, and have identified some main areas where we believe we can help to influence change or raise the profile of the issue so that the Black Country can be competitive on an international scale. This is now the time for you to get involved in the debate and make a difference.”



Excellent and integrated transport infrastructure is the key to exploiting the growth potential of the Black Country. It is fundamental to the success of the West Midlands Combined Region. Free-flowing road traffic is crucially important for the effective transport of goods. Efficient connections to Birmingham Airport and HS2 are essential for the region to benefit from the new opportunities presented by their co-ordinated development. Our Transport Strategy is designed to ensure a proper focus on these priorities. It will represent the rightful expectations of Black Country businesses in determining the operating environment that will enable them to maximise the contribution to regional and national success that they are fully capable of. Please give this campaign your absolute support.”

Colin Leighfield

Director of B.E. Wedge (Holdings) Ltd.

Moving forwards, five main areas have been identified for the campaign that the Black Country Chamber of Commerce would like to see action on:



Equal investment compared to other regions;



Better usage of the M6 Toll;



Greater investment in/and use of local broadband infrastructure;



Support for HGV driver recruitment;



Increased capacity for Birmingham Airport.

TOTAL TRANSPORT PUBLIC EXPENDITURE PER CAPITA

£600

LONDON

£514

SCOTLAND

£236

WEST MIDLANDS



EQUAL INVESTMENT

Given the critical part that the Midlands plays in the productivity of the UK, for too long it has not been able to secure its fair share of investment in infrastructure. Total transport public expenditure per capita in the West Midlands was £236 in 2015, compared to London of £600 and Scotland of £514. In terms of total transport capital expenditure over the decade 2004-14, this translates into a shortfall for the Midlands (population 10.4 million) of £15 billion compared to London (population 8.7 million), and a shortfall for the West Midlands (population 5.8 million) of over £5 billion compared to Scotland (population 5.4 billion) during the same period.

M6 TOLL

As a Chamber, we see the M6 Toll Road as a key part of the solution to the congestion in the West Midlands and we will support Midland Expressway to ensure we get the most effective use of the Toll road, including during critical times such as emergencies, road closures and major roadworks.

By 2040, road congestion in the West Midlands will cost £10 billion a year in lost time, and the freight industry £2.2 billion unless action is taken. Almost every business we speak to in the Black Country mentions congestion and movement of goods as one of their key issues. Therefore, we desperately need to make better use of the M6 Toll in ways that may help avoid the critical delays that will become commonplace once improvements to the M6 and M5 take place in the coming years.

By 2040
road congestion in the
West Midlands will cost
£10 billion
a year in lost time.

SOUTH KOREA 1ST
 AVERAGE DOWNLOAD SPEED OF
29MBPS

UK 19TH
 AVERAGE DOWNLOAD SPEED OF
14.9MBPS



**AVERAGE
 AGE OF
 HGV DRIVERS IS
 OVER 50**

GERMANY
FRANKFURT AIRPORT
2.3M TONNES

LEIPZIG AIRPORT
1M TONNES

FRANKFURT AIRPORT
800K TONNES

UK
HEATHROW AIRPORT
1.5M TONNES

BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

The way we manufacture and move goods across the globe is changing at an astonishing pace through the use of ground breaking technologies. Whether that is through the use of autonomous vehicles and HGV Convoys or with 3D Printing. Black Country businesses are ready for these new challenges but want to make sure we have the infrastructure and broadband speeds needed to do this. We are calling for download speeds to be significantly enhanced to at least 30Mbps and are looking to raise awareness of the potential compatibility issues of upgrading to IPv6. This is important to businesses as connectivity is becoming increasingly vital, and as a region we need to make sure our digital infrastructure is suited to the needs of modern day operations and processes.

Broadband will also have an impact on transport strategy, with it increasingly becoming a core component for facilitating the regional, national and international competitiveness of the sector. In those areas that have fast broadband, often take-up by businesses is very low and data on the broadband rollout in the Black Country mirrors concerns that the national scheme is falling behind schedule and lagging behind global competitors. Globally, the UK is ranked 19th and has an average download speed of 14.9Mbps, compared to global leader South Korea, which averages download speeds of 29Mbps.

HGV DRIVER RECRUITMENT

HGV driver shortages are an issue that is having a genuine impact on local logistics and distribution businesses, and that is building traction as something that is beginning to hold the economy back. Training costs are between £2500 and £3500 and receives no government subsidy, whilst employers are unwilling to pay this as they often lose drivers as soon as they are qualified and individuals see it as too big a sum to invest in themselves. The average age of drivers is now close to

55, predominantly male and a conservative guess is that post-Brexit there may be fewer foreign drivers on the roads and slower times through ports making trips longer. Moving forwards, the Black Country Chamber of Commerce will be working with businesses to highlight the number of jobs that are available throughout the area in the sector, and we will proactively seek opportunities to offer incentives that will potentially help to support this skills gap.

BIRMINGHAM AIRPORT

Businesses across the region see the expansion of Birmingham Airport as a key factor in the growth of the Midlands Economy. If the airport is given the opportunity to expand it will release large amounts of employment land and create thousands of jobs with the potential to double the size of its current capacity of 25 million by 2050. HS2 will also give our region an enormous opportunity to develop an integrated transport network that supports the continued growth of our region's connectivity and aids travellers by road, rail and air.

The Black Country Chamber of Commerce will support this expansion as optimising the capacity of Birmingham Airport is key to the future economic development of the region, as well as the UK as a whole.



Black Country Chamber of Commerce don't want to just talk about these issues but want to provide a solution:



Equal investment with regards to funding

More investment committed to the region to increase prosperity.



M6 Toll usage

To support Midland Expressway to ensure we get the most effective use of the Toll road, including during critical times such as emergencies, road closures and major roadworks.



Investment in broadband

Faster broadband and quicker installation to ensure businesses remain competitive in an increasingly digital economy.



Support for HGV driver recruitment

To seek funding to highlight vacancies and train people to help solve the regional shortage of HGV Drivers.



Increased capacity for Birmingham Airport

Increase the number of visitors to Birmingham Airport to make the region more attractive for inward investment and bring more visitors to the area.

GET INVOLVED

So how can you get involved in our Get the Midlands Moving Campaign? We will have an array of activity over the next 18 months, below are just a few of the things that we will be doing during this time:

- In July 2017, the Black Country Chamber of Commerce held a launch event to officially mark the start of our Get the Midlands Moving Campaign, which served as a high profile event that outlined the initial plan moving forwards with key speakers in attendance.
- Other events will also be held throughout the course of the campaign, from MP and Ministerial visits to those focused upon our aforementioned key campaign areas.
- The Spring 2017 edition of Prosper magazine, our quarterly print publication, also had a transport feature that went in depth on some of the main areas covered in this campaign.
- We will be running a monthly email bulletin which you can sign up to and ensure that you remain up-to-date on key events and information relating to transport and infrastructure.
- There will also be the opportunity to engage with the new West Midlands Mayor and talk through the current issues effecting your business, and how they will be working to support the development of the region during their tenure.
- We will be meeting with key stakeholders to make sure that they are aware of the business voice, whilst working to influence key decision makers. Some of these will include businesses in attendance, as well as MPs and councillors.
- Nationally, we will be working with British Chambers of Commerce so that we can influence the work they are doing around transport and infrastructure.
- There will also be updates on how to get involved in the supply chain opportunities for key projects such as HS2.
- High profile visits such as to Westminster will be arranged, so that businesses can get directly in front of key people.
- Feedback from our members is of the utmost importance and we will be asking for you to share your experiences at our upcoming events, as well as via surveys or emails, so please make sure you get involved and influence the policy agenda moving forward.
- In addition, local and national press opportunities will help us to increase the profile of the issues that Black Country businesses are having with regards to transport and infrastructure across the area.

As a Chamber, we understand that there are many other transport and infrastructure issues that are affecting you as a business, and we will have a Transport Policy Group that will be picking these up and making sure that we are covering as much as possible.

To get involved call 0330 024 0820, email website@blackcountrychamber.co.uk or visit www.blackcountrychamber.co.uk/transport



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