

**Tim Weller**

**Comment**

BRITAIN'S BIGGEST TRANSPORT BLUNDER EVER!

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This is the 120 Kms Worcester to Derby Mainline which is unused but is 80% ready to take trains on the 56 Kms middle, Black Country and south Staffordshire section. The Worcester and Derby sections ARE used.

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The trams duplicate/replace buses and, as in Broad Street Birmingham, mean that buses have to take a longer route to the north to allow the more glitzy and glamorous tram to takeover that city thoroughfare.

Our Black Country Railway is the bypass mainline that Birmingham has needed for years. This is because the BBC's reporter, Peter Plisner has found that it remains "one of the worst railway congestion bottlenecks in the UK."

Meanwhile, we all sit in unnecessarily slow motorway and main road traffic jams in our cars because the nearby mainline railway is ready and waiting but is unused!

The shuttle tram line will make it quite impossible for commuter, regional, national and freight trains to return at a time of growing overcrowding on our trains and traffic jams on our roads and motorways.

Later, this century, the trams will be replaced by tram trains. This is the "future rail service" briefly mentioned in the latest report from Phil Hewitt, Programme Director of the MMA. However, the tram train is still a tram. It looks like a tram, it will need to stop at every one of the 17 tram stops just like a tram and is, therefore, a tram. It will be unsuitable for even a fast commuter/regional service, let alone a possible national railway service. The tram train simply means that it will be able to run on the heavy rail tracks that are in place, rusting away, on certain sections of the unused 30 Kms that has no freight trains. Better just to use them for freight and passenger trains.

Trams and tram trains are, therefore, not putting to best use the UK's easily reinstated and **only** mothballed, mainline railway. Every bridge, viaduct and tunnel have already been built for every motorway and dual carriageway to cross the railway line.

Short sightedness, tunnel vision and nibble sized ambitions wreck the completion of Derby to Devon via Dudley and Burton on Trent to Bristol via Brierley Hill. Yet, the full length of 120 Kms was well used for exactly these journeys, for 100 years, until the 1960s.

Tim Weller

12 March 2019

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robustly justifies every kind of expenditure from spending £1 billion of public money on 14 Kms of tramline to duplicate a bus route in Edinburgh in 2014;

to spending nearly the same but, this time, private money on the M6 Toll for 43 Kms in 2003;

to splashing out £17.6 billion of public money on 117 Kms Crossrail;

to justify spending £44,000 per metre to extend your £1 billion tram line to Newhaven to replace buses;

to justify spending £42,000 per metre to convert our ready made, but they forgot the trains and stations, 120 Kms mainline "of national strategic significance" into a piddling little shuttle tram line on two short, middle sections, totalling 6.7 Kms.

"The latest work to refine the scheme and the efficiencies to be developed within the Midland Metro Alliance give a good level of confidence that the project can be delivered within the current funding envelope (SELF: of £44,000 per metre, times 11 Kms. Eleven times the cost per kilometre of the second attempt at returning trains between Wolverhampton and Walsall. The first attempt was a failure last decade!)."

"the scheme has a benefit to cost ratio of 2.03:1."

Every business case comes up with a great Cost Benefit Ratio that compels massive expenditure, eg to dismantle/destroy the tram network and to rebuild it on the road and railway networks a few decades later. This is called high Value for Money when it is 2.03:1. In other words, you double your money. Therefore, whatever you pay up front, you get more than double that back in destroying yet another urban and intercity railway line, in the case of trams taking over the UK's one and only mothballed mainline.

"As part of the arrangements for the transfer of part of the abandoned South Staffordshire rail corridor (SELF: anachronistic, out of date, inaccurate name DfT now call 'The Black Country Railway') to Metro an agreement with Network Rail is being negotiated to ensure passive provision is made within the Metro works for future rail service use of the route. Implementation of future rail services will be subject to consultation between Network Rail and WMCA and appropriate powers and funding being secured."

All this, when there is never a business case to cut public spending on the Police, the NHS/social care or education to pay for all this largesse. "Don't worry your little head over it all, Tim. You know that you will get back double whatever the final cost is because cost benefit analysis tells us so. It is another of Mrs May's magic money tree tricks."

The money is always found for the flash, the glamorous, the most prestigious projects to hasten Attenborough's "collapse of civilisations" and "the extinction of much of the natural world" warnings from COP24 in Poland in December 2018.

8 March 2019

## Edinburgh Conservative Gp OPPOSES their tram extension. WHY NOT OURS?

Thank you for email regarding the Edinburgh Trams. Myself and the Conservative Group have consistently opposed the completion of the tramline to Newhaven. Kind regards, Graham Hutchison

The first section was completed at a cost (as you indicate) of £55.43m/km. The proposed cost of the extension is £87.01m per km **before overruns** and before the 'lessons learned' enquiry by Lord Hardie has reported. Cameron Rose Conservative Councillor, Southside & Newington ward 4 March 2019

Thank you Tim. Noted - the Conservative Group won't be supporting the extension as we consider it too expensive and not the most pressing transport need in the city at the current time and that better investment in road space, buses and park and ride would serve more of the population and address the congestion from inward commuting giving more people the opportunity not to drive by providing reliable alternatives. Regards Jo Mowat 4 March 2019

Isn't it funny - every business case is called robust;  
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to spending nearly the same but, private money on the M6 Toll for 43 Kms in 2003;  
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Every business case comes up with a great Cost Benefit Ratio that compels massive expenditure, eg to dismantle/destroy the tram network and to rebuild it on the road and railway networks a few decades later. This is called high Value for Money when it is 2.03:1. In other words, you double your money. Therefore, whatever you pay up front, you get more than double that back in destroying yet another urban and intercity railway line, in the case of trams taking over the UK's one and only mothballed mainline.

Deborah Cadman, Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority, replied to my e-mail, in which I gave practical suggestions for reversing the decline in bus use, with this:

"Whilst the bus network is facing certain challenges, including falling patronage and declining speeds, it remains the most popular and important mode of public transport in the region."

Yet, she is spending £1.518 BILLION to 2026 on only 31.7 Kms of trams taking over mainly bus routes but also 6.7 Kms of the half used, 120 Kms Black Country Railway "of national strategic significance" (letter to myself from the DfT and Network Rail, dated 8 March 2018). These are trams duplicating and even replacing buses and, also preventing forever the return of commuter and regional trains to a half used, nationally important railway.

## Common misunderstandings over Metro trams

To be fair this isn't my area of understanding. If I get elected, I don't believe this will be a subject I will be invited to contribute towards.

**Because the vast majority are oblivious to the phenomenal cost of trams to replace buses and trains and to push buses out and to turn our local mainline railway into a piddling little shuttle tram line, a test track, a trail of trees and a cycle-walkway. If the money can't be used to get Network Rail and TfWM/WMCA to FINISH the railway with the forgotten trains and stations, then the money should go to offset years of cuts to the Police, NHS/social care, education.**

Trams of course seem to be very much part of WM combined authority vision.

**Because they have been improperly influenced by vested interests. The national tram promotion group is in the same building as TfWM/WMCA that have easily been influenced to go for trams instead of the more obvious and sensible measures to reduce urban congestion and air pollution. Earlier this decade, three top people in UK Tram Ltd were also top people in Centro. Complicity + collusion = corruption.**

And since their introduction they have been very popular as a form of rapid transport.

**PTA/Centro got the money in the 1990s by declaring (exaggerating/lying) that passenger numbers would be 15 to 20 million every year. Only with the extension, that misses out Snow Hill and goes straight to Grand Central Shopping Centre did it rise to 6 million a year. They got the money because the sole reason for the extension was to connect Snow Hill with Grand Central - NOT to bypass Snow Hill as has been shown to be the true objective!**

They have become the WM version of the Tube.

**Yes. The WM version of putting Tube trains on the Eurostar, HS1 line to Paris, in the case of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill extension. Pretty idiotic! They have more money than sense.**

Rail is an alternative means of transport and reintroducing the historic lines is an infrastructure cost that perhaps should be argued in addition to rapid light transport, from memory the Wolverhampton segment utilised a fair amount of former rail infrastructure.

**Please read my:**

 [THE TRAGEDY OF TRAMS WRECKING OUR RAILWAY NETWORK](#)

and,

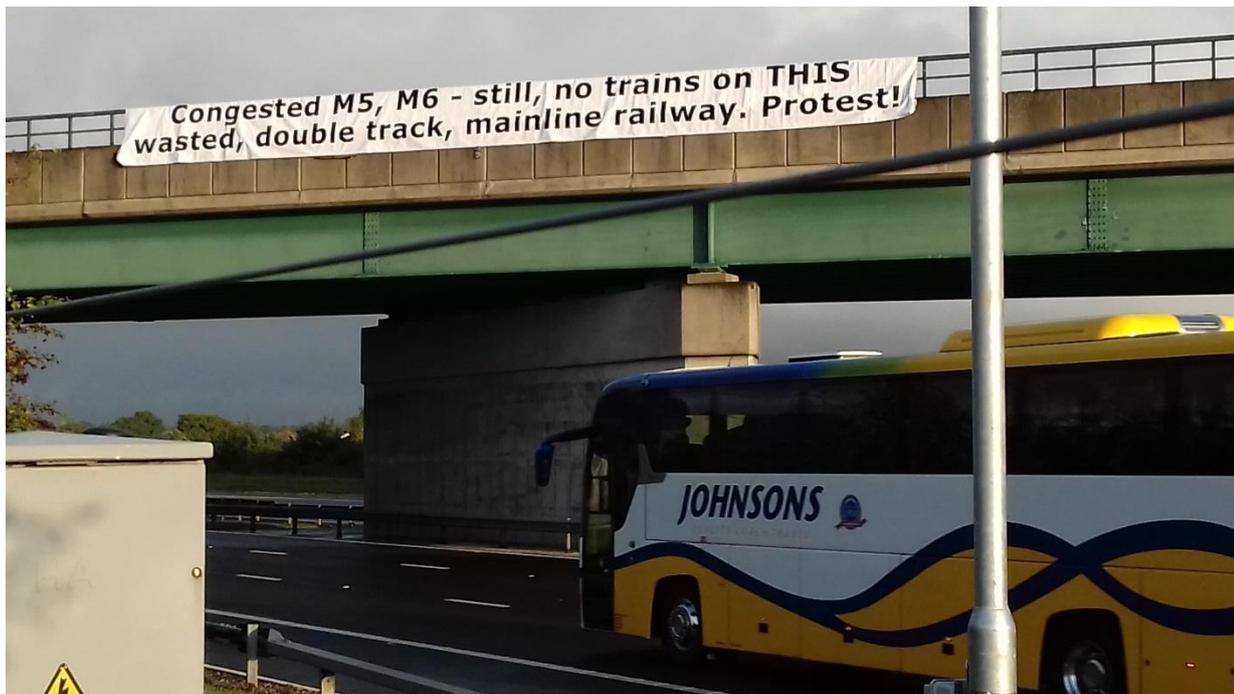
 [Railfuture's full map.pdf](#)

 [Railfuture text 01.pdf](#)

 [Railfuture text 02.pdf](#)

Thanks for responding. I am a fan of trams, although I don't like the cheap and nasty hard, plastic seats on our Metro trams! If the 1950s was today, I would be insisting that the authorities should NOT dismantle the tram network for diesel buses. Simply modernise the trams instead of destroying them. Wise and sensible expenditure. Like my proposals for seeing a sea change in social attitudes towards bus/bike commuting instead of car commuting to free up the road space for essential business vehicle users. My family has started!

M6 toll banner



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