

**NEWS**

# Why the West Midlands is preparing for a CAR-FREE future

Cities need to plan for a transport system without private cars says Andy Street

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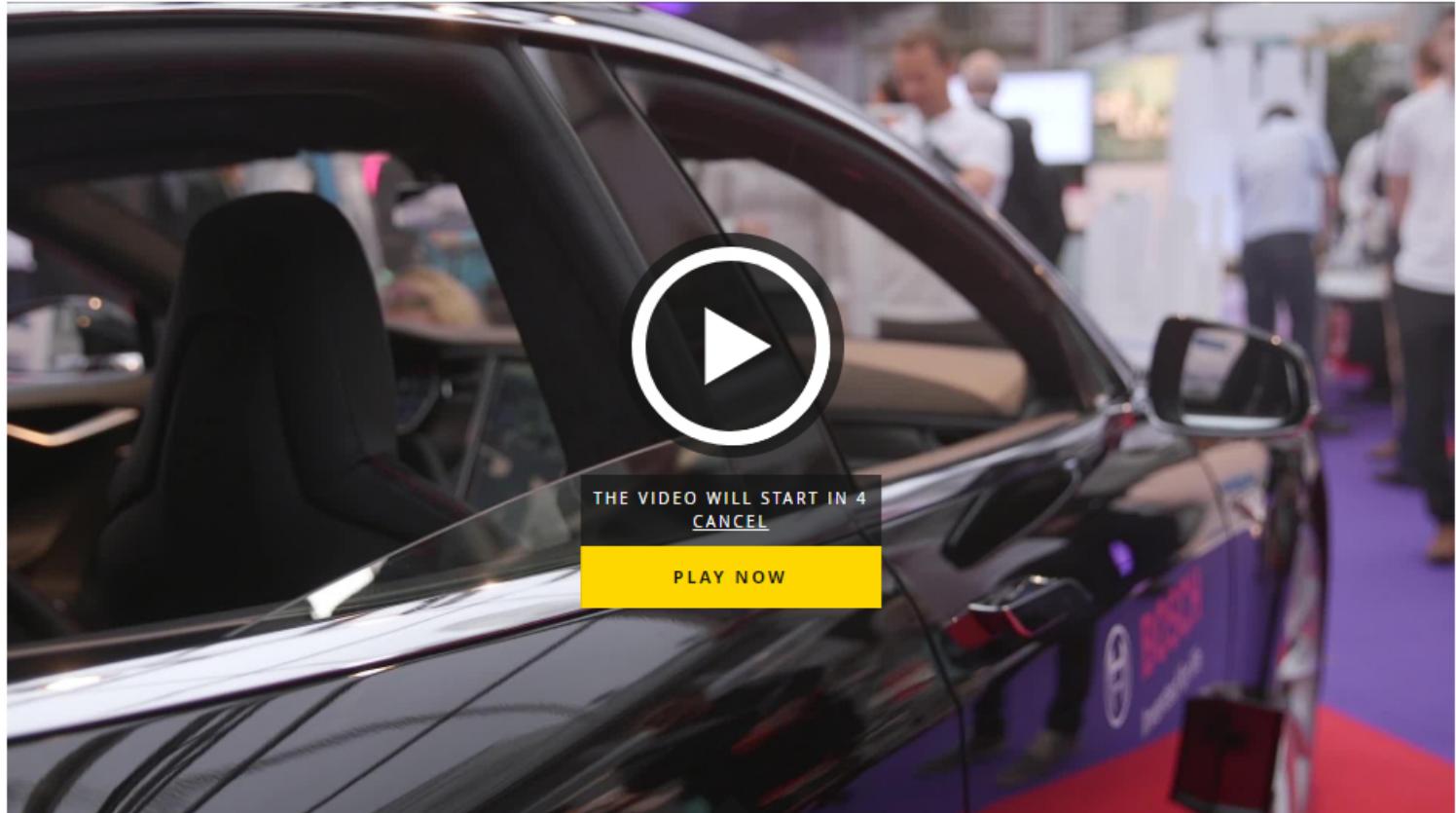
By [Neil Elkes](#)

16:44, 17 OCT 2017

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West Midlands Mayor Andy Street has urged colleagues to prepare their cities for a car free future.

With driverless cars under development, the rise of cab and car share [apps like uber](#) and digital innovation offering more remote working opportunities, it is predicted that people will be less reliant on car ownership in future.

The chronic impact of pollution on health is also forcing cities to reduce car congestion.

**Mr Street said** cities like Birmingham should be looking to provide less support and road infrastructure for cars.



A driverless car during testing at the headquarters of motor industry research organisation MIRA at Nuneaton.

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"It's the technology of yesteryear," he said, "We've got to think about the new technology."

"We have to think about how we make the current road system fit for that future technology, rather than expanding the road network."

He admitted his comments may not be popular in some areas but warned that cities need to be [prepared for the advances](#).

And the West Midlands is currently bidding to be a trial area for driverless cars and is positioning itself as [a centre for research](#) into both driverless and low carbon vehicle technology.



**Combined authority mayors Andy Street, Andy Burnham and Sadiq Khan meet up at Birmingham's New St Station.** (Image: Birmingham Mail)

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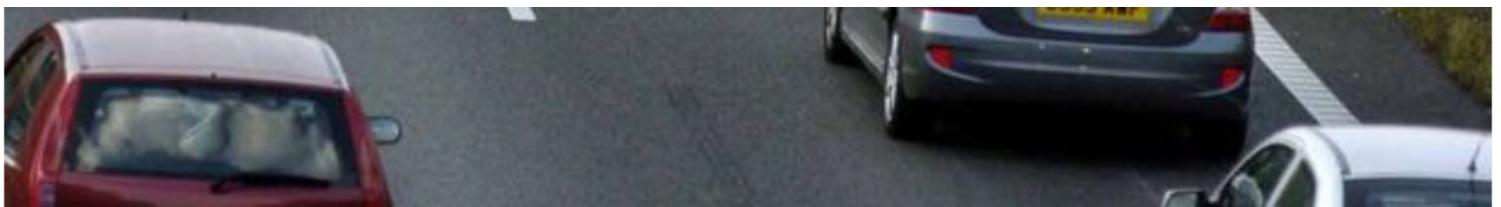
He was speaking on a panel alongside four fellow metro mayors including London's Sadiq Khan and Greater Manchester's Andy Burnham.

Mayor Khan also argued for longer term planning rather than the four or five year election cycles which often lead politicians to make decisions in pursuit of short-term headlines.

He highlighted London's Crossrail 1 project which was planned under former mayor Ken Livingstone, built under Boris Johnson and due to open next year.

And also called the car pollution and the premature deaths it causes the biggest issue facing cities.





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The mayors were speaking at an event hosted by the National Infrastructure Commission - a thinktank set up to lobby Government and set out plans to improve the country's transport, broadband, skills, housing and economic growth over the next 30 years.

They are particularly looking at measures to tackle congestion, including investment in rail, trams and cycling, and investment in electric vehicle technology.

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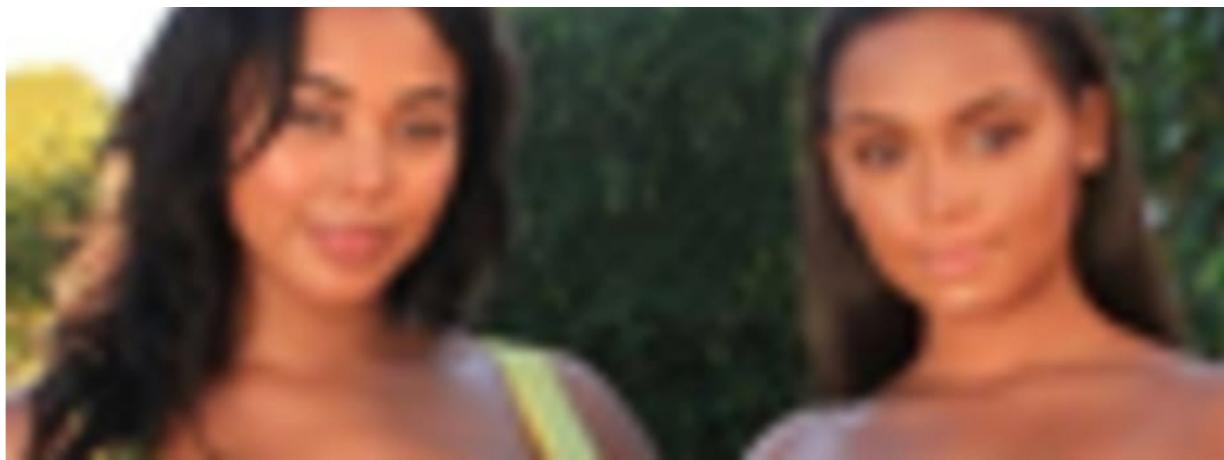
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**Spike1999**

353 DAYS AGO

It's not going to happen in Greater Birmingham, they'll always be cars, they'll be pollution free though in the near future.

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**HopeC**

357 DAYS AGO

This is just stupid. No more needs to be said.

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**TarquinFarquar**

357 DAYS AGO

Without commercial vehicles, we will starve and cities will become mere ghost towns. People love their cars and love driving their cars. I love cars too. My car is my mobile sitting room. The powers that be have been trying to lever us out of private car ownership as far back as the 1960s to my recollection. The leverage back then was the magic wand of swinging socialist taxes. But hey-ho, times change and taxation didn't work and now it's the environment we have to save. Any old excuse will do just to get us out of our cars and onto the buses. The problem with public transport is the general public and their nasty habits. My

passport to freedom and personal liberty is my car keys.

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**Razz2**

357 DAYS AGO

nothing to do with the environment. All to do with making money. Cars are a trial and once it works it will be rolled out to lorries worldwide. The big transport companies will save millions in driver wages, even if the tech will be expensive in the short.

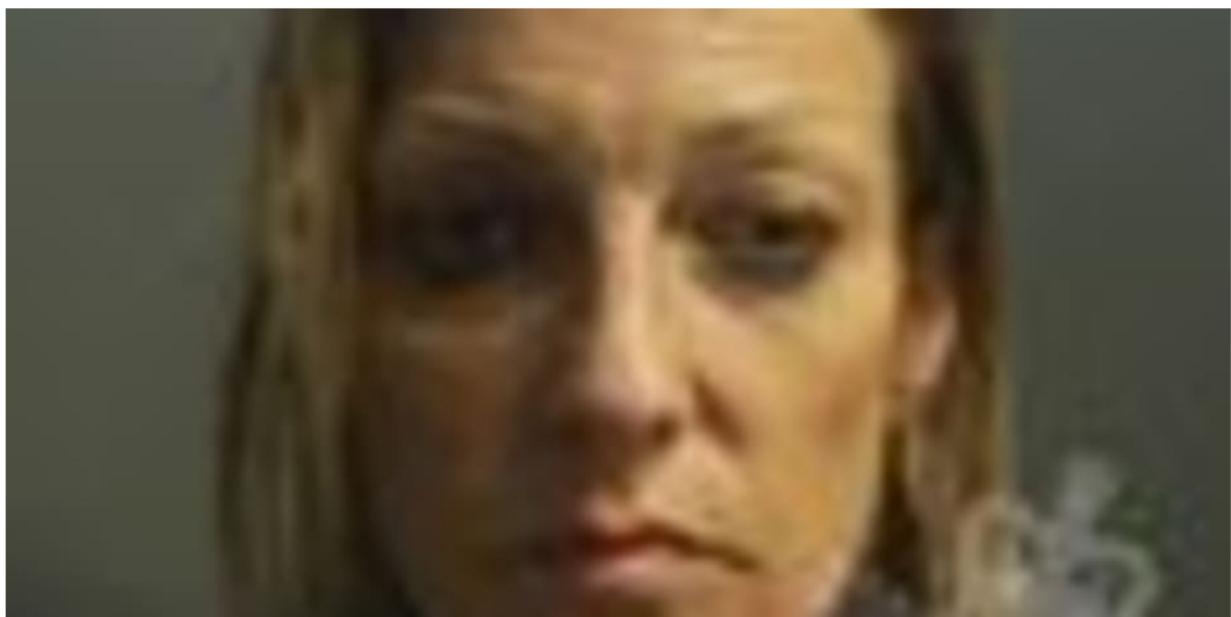
It will cause millions of job losses but hopefully we will have managed to survive on mars by then.

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Liverpool Echo



Donna Buckley had links to Merseyside drug gangs and made thousands from dealing hard drugs

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