

# Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 1 30 NOVEMBER 2018

## Welcome

Welcome to 'Connecting Sandwell & Dudley', a newsletter designed to keep those working and living in the area up-to-date on the progress of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension.



## At a glance

Length of route: 11km

Proposed Tram Stops: 17

Including:

- Great Bridge
- Dudley Port
- Sedgley Road East
- Dudley Town Centre
- Waterfront
- Merry Hill
- Brierley Hill



## Who is in the Midland Metro Alliance?

West Midlands Combined Authority, the design consortium of Egis, Tony Gee and Pell Frischmann and contractor Colas Rail (supported by their sub-alliance partners Colas Limited, Barhale, Bouygues UK and Auctus Management Group) came together to form the alliance in July 2016.

The aim of the Midland Metro Alliance is to help deliver a lasting legacy, aiding social and economic regeneration across the region.

The West Midlands Combined Authority has embarked upon an ambitious plan to regenerate the region and provide new opportunities for residents and businesses. Central to this plan is the extension of the West Midlands Metro network, which will increase in size by 2026, providing high quality, safe and dependable tram travel across the West Midlands.

The Midland Metro Alliance is working on behalf of Transport for West Midlands to develop, design and construct five new extensions, including the eagerly anticipated Wednesbury to Brierley Hill route.

You can learn more about how a Metro extension is built by watching our short video at <https://vimeo.com/282978259>.



## Preparatory works for Metro extension completed

The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension is an 11km route which will run from Wednesbury Great Western Street Metro stop to Dudley Town Centre before terminating in Brierley Hill.

As a significant part of the route is along a disused railway corridor, much of the

preparatory work to date has taken place out of sight. However, on Monday 29 October works got underway in Dudley Town Centre meaning more residents and businesses became aware that Metro is coming.

Next year work will be required to upgrade and divert utility services (gas, water, electricity and telecom, for example) in advance of full construction commencing. In order for these works to occur, the Midland Metro Alliance needed to confirm the location of existing services through several small excavations across Dudley Town Centre. These works were expected to take place for four weeks.

On Wednesday 7 November, this significant step forward for the project was welcomed by Dudley MBC Councillor Keiran Casey, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise and Councillor David Hosell, Sandwell Council's Cabinet Member for Highways & Environment.

Speaking at the time, Councillor Keiran Casey said: "The start of these works along the route is excellent news for the project and shows the progress the scheme is making. People can now see that this much-anticipated extension is moving closer to delivery. This project will provide a significant boost to our local economy, as well as providing benefits to residents across the region by making it easier for them to get to jobs, as well as easily accessing the national and international rail network with travel times estimated at being approximately 40 minutes from Dudley Town Centre to Birmingham City Centre."

Councillor David Hosell added: "The improved transport links will create huge opportunities for jobs, education and tourism in Sandwell and Dudley, allowing speedy and sustainable travel between this part of the Black Country and both Birmingham and Wolverhampton."

The preparatory works taking place in Dudley Town Centre completed on schedule on Wednesday 21 November 2018.

Ian Collins, Project Director for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension said: "We are pleased to have successfully carried out further investigative works in Dudley Town Centre. Information gathered from these works will inform our designs. We have recently completed initial designs for the route and are now looking forward to progressing these into detailed solutions and commencing physical works on site during 2019/20."



How can I get further information?

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## Further preconstruction surveys completed

The Midland Metro Alliance has successfully executed a programme of preconstruction investigation works to inform design solutions.

Works to date include extensive site clearance, invasive weed control, ground and structural investigations, drainage surveys, topographical surveys and ground penetrating radar surveys.

These investigations all feed into the route design to help us develop the most affordable and buildable solutions.

In addition, extensive liaison has taken place with the many other proposed developments in Dudley Town Centre to help ensure the designs complement each other, and the construction schedules are coordinated.

Utility diversions are expected to commence in Dudley Town Centre during 2019, in advance of work commencing elsewhere in 2020.

## Passion for all things Metro at Parkhead Canal Festival

On the weekend of Saturday 29 and Sunday 30 September, the Midland Metro Alliance attended the Parkhead Canal Festival as a headline sponsor. The bi-annual festival is organised jointly by the Worcester, Birmingham and Droitwich Canals Society and The Dudley Canal & Tunnel Trust.

Parkhead Viaduct is an integral part of the route between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill and, as such, the Engagement Team of the Midland Metro Alliance, wanted to be out and about meeting people from the area. Attendees were overwhelmingly positive about the extension and excited to learn that the viaduct would be a functional structure in the area again.

Members of the public also gave their thoughts on why they were excited for the Metro route through video testimonials. You can view the thoughts of these local people by visiting and liking Midland Metro Alliance's Facebook page.



## Award win for providing career opportunities for Black Country talent

The Midland Metro Alliance was awarded with the Employer of the Year award at the Talent Match Black Country awards which took place recently in Wolverhampton.

The honour recognises the alliance's commitment to ensure local people benefit from the extension of the West Midlands Metro through employment and training opportunities provided.

Rose Rees, Training and Development Manager for the Midland Metro Alliance, who picked up the award on behalf of the MMA, said: "We believe that an important route to maintain a strong, knowledgeable and sustainable workforce is to invest in it. The work that the Midland Metro Alliance is doing, including helping to provide careers guidance, training opportunities and more formal schemes like apprenticeships and graduate opportunities are important ways to secure the future talent that our industry needs. We are delighted to have been recognised for this work."



## Supporting local remembrance ceremony

Michael Watson, Project Manager for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension attended the Dudley Town Centre Remembrance Service on Sunday 11 November to lay a wreath on behalf of the Midland Metro Alliance and pay his respects in marking the centenary of the Armistice.

Service men and women, along with local community groups, paraded through the town centre before a poignant service where the two-minute silence was observed at the cenotaph, in Coronation Gardens.



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