

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 2 APRIL 2019

Welcome

Welcome to 'Connecting Sandwell & Dudley', a quarterly 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.

Final green light for Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro funding

Funding for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension has been given the green light as the West Midlands Combined Authority board gave the final go-ahead to finance the 11km light rail scheme.

The highly anticipated project will link Sandwell & Dudley with Birmingham, Wolverhampton and the national rail network.

Work will start later this year on the scheme which is projected to aid massive benefits for Sandwell and Dudley over the next 25 years, including:

- An increase in economic output in Dudley from £14.4bn to £28bn – almost double
- A 250% increase in the construction each year of badly needed new homes – including affordable homes
- A 35% increase in the amount of commercial floor space brought to market each year
- A 29% increase in permanent jobs

It will also offer employers a much wider pool of labour while helping in our efforts to provide cleaner air by making it easier for people to leave their cars at home.

The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill route is being planned, designed and delivered by the Midland Metro Alliance, on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the WMCA and has support from Sandwell and Dudley Councils. It is just one of many exciting projects being investigated in the area. For example, TfWM has started a feasibility study to investigate what mode of transport will best link Brierley Hill to Stourbridge – whether that be rail, light rail, Metro or bus – to further improve connectivity in the borough.

Meanwhile, a public enquiry into the Metro route has been concluded. Opening on Tuesday 19 March 2019 at the Village Hotel in Dudley, the inquiry lasted just one day.

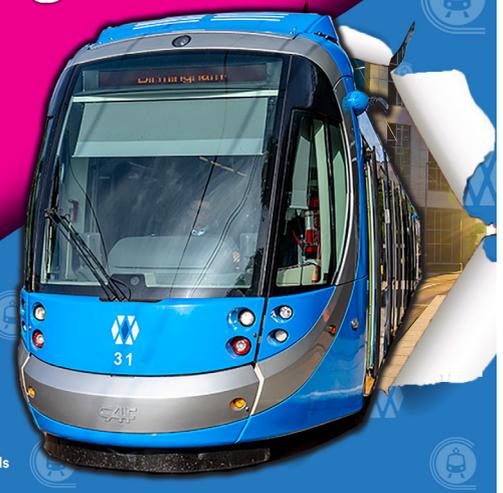
Preliminary construction for the route is expected to begin in late summer.

Metro is coming...

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 Midland Metro Alliance

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 Midland Metro Alliance



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Construction Chat: The Wednesbury Great Western Street Delta Junction

The proposed route will join the existing West Midlands Metro service next to the Great Western Street stop, which is adjacent to the current depot.

Linking the extension to the live tracks will be a complicated part of construction. The link to the current network will involve a structure called a Delta Junction.

This structure will lift the new tramway some 8m from the old railway corridor to join the existing Metro Line One and will enable trams to operate seamlessly between Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Brierley Hill.

The industrial heritage of the Black Country means the construction of this major piece of infrastructure is particularly challenging. Before construction starts we will need to identify all of the old structures and mineworkings in the area and make sure that these are managed so that they don't delay the works. At the same time, the area is in constant use as an access road to the depot. Any design solution will need to take these factors into account.

In order to ensure the ground conditions are acceptable for construction to begin, borehole surveys have been carried out to a depth of 40m. We will shortly commence further studies to a depth of 80m, using these results to feed into our final design, and inform our construction methodology.

We currently anticipate construction on the Delta Junction to begin towards the end of 2019.

Metro drivers learn about new routes

A group of new starters at West Midlands Metro visited the Midland Metro Alliance recently to find out all about the extension projects planned across the West Midlands, including the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension.

The visit gave the group insight into the timescales and benefits of each extension as well as the alliance's work to transform the West Midlands by building the best-integrated transport system for the future.

It was an opportunity for new members of the operations team to better understand the new routes that they will be working on in the future.

Metro goes to Cannes

The Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension is just one example of investment and regeneration in the region. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council discussed this project as well as other investment opportunities in the borough during MIPIM, an international property event, which was held in Cannes on March 12-15.

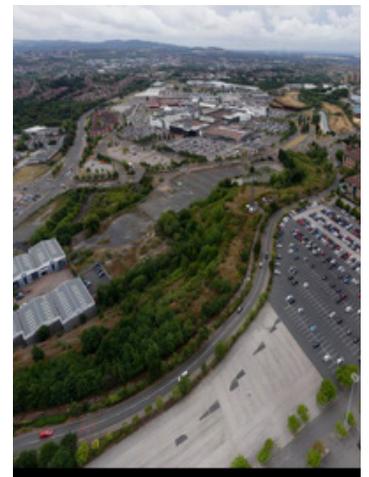
Drone Surveys

As part of our initial investigations into the route, we commissioned a drone survey along the entirety of the proposed extension.

The type of drone survey carried out enabled our design team to create 3D modelling along the length of the route, which helps with the design process. While the drone was travelling along the route, we also had some 360-degree images taken. As you can see, they are pretty spectacular.



Aerial shot of Tipton Road/Castlegate area taken from foot of Castle Hill



Aerial shot of Merry Hill taken above Waterfront car park

Place Disability Consultation Group

On Thursday 24 January 2019 representatives from the Midland Metro Alliance attended the quarterly meeting of Dudley Council's Place Disability Consultation Group.

The meeting is a chance for Dudley Council to consult with members from a local registered charity, Access in Dudley, about issues concerning access for disabled people in relation to, among other things, construction projects in the area.

During the meeting, Duncan Hutchinson, Design Interface Manager, and Tom Bissell, Stakeholder Liaison Officer, carried out a short presentation about the scheme, before answering questions the group had about accessibility.



Inclusivity And Access For All



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