



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Westside WEEKLY

ISSUE 88 20 MARCH - 26 MARCH 2020

Welcome

'Westside Weekly' is a newsletter designed to keep those working and living in the area up-to-date on the progress of the Birmingham Westside Metro extension, which is being designed and delivered by the Midland Metro Alliance on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).



Getting Around

We appreciate that everyone will have a different journey; the following is to assist you to plan ahead:

Five Ways underpass is closed to traffic until 2021 as works continue for phase two of the Birmingham Westside extension. The roundabout, which runs above the underpass, will remain open as usual throughout the closure as will pedestrian and cyclist access through the Five Ways concourse

Bus services 9, 10, 12, 12A, 13, 13A, 126, X8, X10 will not stop along Broad Street until spring 2020. Services 23 and 24 have also been diverted travelling out of the city. Cars, taxis and delivery vehicles will be able to access Broad Street between Sheepcote Street and Gas Street

There is no vehicular access to Broad Street from Bridge Street (access is to frontages only)

There will be a temporary closure at the junction of Sheepcote Street and Broad Street on Monday 23 March for utility works

From Monday 23 March until Sunday 29 March further utility works will be carried out at the junction of Granville Street

We recommend that you allow extra time for your journeys and use real time travel information to plan ahead. Use public transport if you can or consider re-timing your trips if possible.

For travel advice, visit: <https://www.networkwestmidlands.com/campaigns/keep-moving/or> follow @wmroads on Twitter.

Metro extension work this week

Hyatt Regency to O Bar

This week, stone has been installed which will provide a stable base for the first stage of concrete to be poured in the coming days. Utility works involving a voltage power crossing have been completed to allow the team to safely install the base of the track.

Jurys Inn to Sainsbury's

Stage one concrete has been poured in the area outside of Sainsbury's which will ensure the area is ready for ducting and track work. Works on the ducting and tram stop foundations are expected to begin shortly.

Lee Longlands to Cineworld

Excavations have taken place for the groundwork on which the track will be laid. These works have taken place up to Cineworld. Meanwhile more ducting work has continued into the footpath for both tram stops after hoarding were moved to allow these works to take place. Drainage works have also been carried out in this section since the last issue.

Cineworld to Morrisons

Progress has continued to move forward this week with more concrete poured for the Edgbaston bound line, concrete shoulder for the Wolverhampton line and the splitter island outside Morrisons. Work has also taken place on the drainage system for the tram and kerbs have been installed on the new splitter island.

Morrisons to 54 Hagley Road

This week, trial holes for the overhead line foundations and to assess the depth and orientation of the existing utility services have taken place.

Support for businesses

Local support organisations have been sharing advice to help businesses during these uncertain times.

The Birmingham Chamber of Commerce is among those who have shared its commitment to keep businesses trading during the Covid-19 crisis.

Paul Faulkner, CEO of the chamber, said they would be doing everything they could to support local businesses, adding they would be lobbying government 'to ensure that everything is in place to keep businesses moving'.

The chamber has produced materials for members about coronavirus including advice for businesses and their workforce.

Meanwhile, Westside BID has shared advice on the financial assistance available for small businesses to help them survive these times. You can read their blog here: <http://westsidebid.co.uk/2020/03/17/what-every-small-business-owner-on-westside-needs-to-know-about-coronavirus/>

The government has also pledged its support for businesses and has set out a package of measures, which include: statutory sick pay relief package for SMEs; a 12-month business rates holiday for all retail, hospitality and leisure businesses in England and with (Continued overleaf)



Drive to deliver schemes continues through Covid-19 crisis

We wanted to take a moment to update the local community on how we are responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

This is a challenging time for all and we are monitoring the situation closely as it continues to evolve. We have heightened measures on site and in our offices in order to ensure the welfare of our employees.

The Metro team including partners from Birmingham City Council and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) have continued with a drive to deliver the extensions for Birmingham and are working to ensure that the city is ready for when we come out of the current crisis.

We are committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of our teams and will continue to follow official advice and guidelines from the government accordingly.



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For further information or to view past issues of the newsletter please visit:
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businesses in these sectors able to get a grant of £25,000 if their rateable value is between £15,000 and £51,000. More information on the government's support during Covid-19 can be found here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-employers-and-businesses-about-covid-19/covid-19-support-for-businesses>



Working to keep public transport moving

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) has vowed to focus on keeping safe, clean, and functioning public transport available for those that need it amidst the continuing outbreak of coronavirus.

TfWM is concentrating all its attention on keeping public transport running for those that rely on it.

Despite a significant drop in use and the obvious staffing challenges due to the virus, transport bosses are committed to making sure services for key workers and those who rely on public transport to reach health, community, and educational facilities are still operational.

TfWM, which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), has strengthened its cleaning services to help tackle the spread of the virus, and is working with operators on their cleaning procedures and schedules to make sure the public transport services that do run are safe and clean.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "Although the Government has been clear that people should avoid public transport and work from home where possible, for many this is simply not an option – particularly key workers who are doing the most phenomenal job on the front line.

I have therefore instructed all TfWM staff to focus their attention on keeping public transport functioning, and making sure those services that do run are safe and clean. Through the RTCC and our strong working relationship with operators, I am confident we will be able to continue to run public transport services so long as the Government allows. TfWM is well equipped for a situation like this, and I want to reassure the public that staff are doing all they can to keep the West Midlands moving."

Cllr Ian Ward, the WMCA's portfolio lead for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: "...TfWM is working with operators, local authorities, and the Government to make sure we continue to provide services for those who need it most, and that those services that do run are safe and clean."

Payment support for public transport users

To help public transport users who travel using Transport for West Midlands or Swift travel passes, the team are advising that users are able to pause their direct debit if they are working from home as part of ongoing social distancing efforts.

Customers are asked to cancel payments directly with banks and that they do not need to get in contact with the Transport for West Midlands or Swift teams directly. When customers are ready to resume they should then make contact directly within the next six months.

Students learn more about construction

Students from the West Midlands visited our head offices to learn about the different career opportunities within the construction industry.

The year 12 pupils got a chance to see first-hand the construction currently underway along Broad Street before being tasked with designing their own tram stop.

They then delivered a presentation to staff showcasing their own tram stop designs which were based on information they had learned throughout the week.

The students and their teachers hailed the week as a success.



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Peak time travel pass restrictions lifted to help older people get to the shops during the coronavirus outbreak

Peak time restrictions on concessionary tram and bus passes will be lifted during the early morning rush hour to make it easier for the region's older citizens and disabled people to get their shopping.

It follows the decision by leading supermarkets to open early, or set aside the first hour of business exclusively for older clients and those most vulnerable to Covid-19.

Travel under the English National Concessionary Pass (ENCTS) is normally only valid for journeys taken after 9.30am.

Now Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), has joined forces with bus operators, including National Express to allow free travel before 9.30am for concessionary pass holders who have not yet self-isolated. The 9.30am restriction has also been lifted on the West Midlands Metro tram system, which is owned by the WMCA.

The change is effective from Thursday, 19th March and will continue until further notice.



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