



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 11 JUNE 2021

Welcome

Welcome to 'Connecting Sandwell & Dudley', a regular publication designed to keep those working and living in the area up-to-date on the progress of the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension which we're building on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).



Getting Around

As work continues to prepare the site for track-laying, one-way traffic restrictions remain in place on Castle Hill in Dudley with vehicles travelling in the direction of Castlegate island only with clearly marked diversion routes in place to direct traffic.

Castle Hill, Dudley

One-way traffic management
in place

From 8 March 2021

Plan ahead



Plan ahead:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

The overflow car park at Dudley Port Railway Station remains closed to allow heavy goods access to the railway corridor where the Metro is being constructed.

The main Park and Ride car park, include provision for disabled and car sharing bays, remains open throughout construction for the Metro.

Cycle storage provision remains in place at Dudley Port and the station is regularly serviced by bus services, too.

Dudley Port Park & Ride

Overflow closure

From Monday 24 August

Plan ahead



Plan ahead:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

First new bridge installed for Metro extension

Local residents of Eagle Lane in Tipton had a front row seat for the installation of the first new structure for the eagerly anticipated Metro extension.

Sections of the Tame Valley, Walsall and Old Main Line Canal were closed periodically in autumn and winter to allow for the demolition of aging bridges. This first new bridge was installed over the Walsall Canal and has been made to meet the needs of a modern tramway.

The purpose-built structure, made-up of two 54-ton pieces, is one of a number of new bridges which will be installed in coming months for the project and was lowered into place on the evening of 11 May by a 750 ton-crane. The installation took place at night to minimise disruption to those using the towpath and waterway now that lockdown restrictions are easing, and more people are using the area for leisure and exercise.



Ian Collins, Project Director at the Midland Metro Alliance, recognised the team's efforts. He explained: "Much of the activity to complete designs, remove the old structure and fabricate a new one has taken place during the pandemic. Some really fantastic work has taken place during some really challenging times. On behalf of whole organisation I would like to thank everyone involved who has helped us safely get to this point, whilst continuing to minimise disruption wherever possible."



Adnan Saif, Regional Director for the Canal & River Trust in the West Midlands, added: "I know that many in the local area have found a new appreciation for our amazing and historic canal network when visiting them for daily exercise during lockdown. I have no doubt that the Metro will bring even more visitors to our waterways in a sustainable way, and I thank the team for completing the improvement works so swiftly so that people can continue to enjoy these outdoor spaces with summer on the horizon."

Following the installation of this bridge, similar activities will take place later this summer at the Tame Valley Canal and Old Main Line Canal in Tipton with localised overnight closures to the towpath and waterway. Further information will be shared in due course and made available at www.metroalliance.co.uk.



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Construction continues along Castle Hill in Dudley and throughout the former railway corridor in Sandwell

Throughout the past two months, construction and preliminary activities, including utility upgrades and diversions, have continued across Sandwell and Dudley with work for the Metro becoming much more visible in some areas, like Dudley town centre where branded mesh has reminded passers-by that Castle Hill will shortly be transformed as part of the tramway.

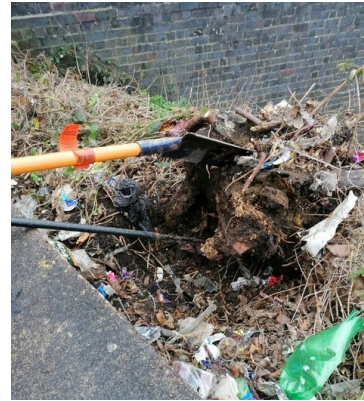
Across much of Sandwell, work to assess the locations of historic mine shafts continue. Equipment is used to investigate the ground conditions and any mineshafts found are filled in allowing work to continue safely.

Speaking of recent activity, Andy Jacques, Senior Delivery Manager, said: "It's great that people are seeing that work is well-and-truly underway for the Metro now in areas like Dudley – we've seen more people heading out and about following recent relaxations of Covid-19 restrictions coming to have a look at the works as they also visit Dudley Castle and Zoo. However, there's so much activity which takes place out-of-sight, too, particularly in Sandwell where a lot of the recent work has been underground."

Grace Hayward, Assistant Delivery Manager, added: "To date, the team have assessed eight areas along the railway corridor, finding evidence of three former mines, which given the area's industrial past, is to be expected. These are filled in, making the area safe for us to work in and for the tramway to being constructed and operated."



Corridor clean-up from "fly-tipped" waste



Part of the work to build the tramway has seen the construction team work to remove redundant railway assets from the site of the former South Staffordshire Railway corridor which makes up a large proportion of the route. As reported in previous editions of Connecting Sandwell & Dudley, some of these assets, including old railway tracks and sleepers were donated to the Severn Valley Heritage Railway to aid their refurbishment programme.

However, in recent weeks, the team have spent considerable time clearing rubbish which has been fly-tipped in along the old railway site prior to construction taking place. The team estimate that they have had to dispose of more than 180 tonnes of fly-tipped waste in this area. As well as meaning staff are needing to complete these duties in addition to their scheduled works, some of the waste can cause health hazards, particularly if there are rusted or sharp metal objects to be disposed of.

Fly-tipping can be dangerous, pollute land and waterways and costs significant amounts of money to clear away. Local authorities work to tackle this and in Sandwell, where the railway corridor is located, you will be issued with a £400 fixed penalty notice if you are caught fly-tipping.

Metro Covid rules reminder as customers return



With more daily traveling taking place with Covid-19 restrictions easing, members of the West Midlands Metro team have been out and about on the network across Birmingham, Sandwell and Wolverhampton reminding customers to wear a face covering.

Vicki Bennett, Metro Customer Service Manager, explained: "Since the statutory requirement was introduced as one of measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we've seen the vast majority of customers following the rules. Metro is also urging customers to continue social distancing whenever possible and reminding them of its online tools to help them plan their journey – including an online 'heat map' that's colour coded to highlight when trams are likely to be quieter."



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First new trams delivered for expansion of West Midlands Metro Lines

West Midlands Metro has taken delivery of the first of eight new state-of-the-art trams arriving this year ahead of the expansion of the region's network.



The third generation Urbos tram has been shipped from the factory in Zaragoza, Spain and arrived at the Metro depot in Wednesbury on a huge 40m lorry, driven under escort. The vehicle, which weighs 45.5 tonnes, was then carefully lowered down a specially built ramp onto the track.

The eight trams, manufactured to order by CAF, are arriving in the West Midlands over the next few months and the first five will be put into service later this year. They will, in the future, also serve the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill route with a further 13 vehicles will be delivered by 2023.



Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street said: "These are incredibly exciting times for the Metro in the West Midlands, as we undergo a huge expansion of the network after decades of under investment. With diggers in the ground on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill extension, it is clear we are going to need significantly more trams in service as we attract more and more people onto the Metro. Not only are our trams a quick and easy alternative to the car, but they're also far more environmentally friendly, helping to reduce air pollution and tackle the climate emergency."

Councillor Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport added: "Investment in public transport like this is a vital part of our work to reduce the region's carbon footprint as well as supporting the region's economic recovery after Covid by better connecting more people to more places for both work and leisure."

Ian takes to the airwaves for a WBHE update on Black Country Radio Extra

Last week, Ian Collins, Project Director for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension, took part in a pre-recorded interview for a new radio show due to be broadcast on Black Country Radio Extra.

Ian was joined by Look Up Brierley Hill presenter Frank Chamberlain, Steve Bridgewater from Brierley Hill markets and James Challis from Brierley Hill Civic in the radio studio at the Waterfront. The panel discussed how the Metro will attract investment and regeneration to the area and improve its connectivity with the wider region. James and Ian also considered what opportunities the Metro may bring for the area's evening entertainment and night time economy.

Speaking about the interview, Ian, said: "It was great to be able to join Frank, Steve and James to chat about our exciting project and share what progress had already been made to bring the Metro to Brierley Hill. It was clear that so many people are excited for the tramway to arrive in the town and can see the considerable benefits it will bring"

You are able to listen to Ian on Black Country Radio Extra's radio and digital channels this June.

Customers travelling on Metro between Wolverhampton and Birmingham urged to plan their journeys as improvement works set to begin

Between Saturday 29 May to Sunday 6 June (inclusive), trams will not operate between Wednesbury Parkway in Sandwell and Wolverhampton St George's as working will be being carried out to demolish Arthur Street bridge in Bilston.

Find out more, including information about replacement bus services, by visiting: <https://westmidlandsmetro.com/using-the-metro/service-status/>



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