



Transport for
West Midlands



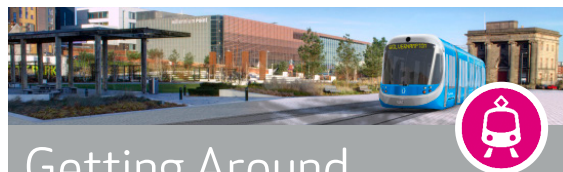
Midland
Metro Alliance

Eastside EDITION

ISSUE 2 JUNE 2021

Welcome

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



Getting Around

As works get underway on Lower Bull Street from Sunday 6 June West Midlands Bus services, which all currently call at the Lower Bull Street interchange, will be diverted to nearby bus stops in the city centre.

From early-July, lane restrictions will be in place on Digbeth High Street as Metro and street scene improvements begin in this area. Those travelling through the area should plan their journeys and allow extra time.

If you do need to use public transport during this time, you can get the latest updates on bus, train or tram services by visiting: wmnetwork.co.uk/networkoverview

The busiest times to travel are varying as Covid-19 measures change. Please check with public transport operators before any essential travel.

Spades set to hit the ground for new Metro extension to Digbeth

Construction will get underway for the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension when spades hit the ground on Lower Bull Street on Sunday 6 June as preparatory work gets underway.

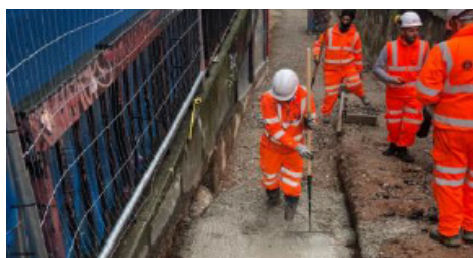
This next phase of works, which will begin with the completion of the remaining utility upgrades and diversions, will mean that Lower Bull Street will close to all vehicular traffic. Pedestrian and business access will be maintained at all times and buses serving Lower Bull Street will be diverted to city-centre stops nearby.

As the project moves forward, further works will be carried out in the summer to connect the new tracks with the existing line at Bull Street ahead of passenger services opening for the Birmingham Westside Metro extension to Edgbaston later this year. West Midlands Metro (WMM) services will terminate at Bull Street tram stop in the city centre later this summer while these works are carried out and further details will be confirmed over the coming months.



Maria Ion, Project Director at the Midland Metro Alliance, said: "That we are now gearing up to start main construction on the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension signals a really important step forward in the project and I am excited to see these works get underway. There will be some unavoidable disruption while these works take place, but we will continue to work closely with our partners Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands and West Midlands Metro to minimise this, wherever possible."

Metro services are set to return to their regular terminus before autumn 2021 as testing and commissioning work is set to begin for the Birmingham Westside Metro extension to Edgbaston. The work in Lower Bull Street will be completed by spring 2022.



Midland Metro Alliance has been working with partners to keep those in the local area informed of these planned activities, including writing to all schools, university and colleges in Birmingham to help students plan their journeys during term times.

Anne Shaw, Director of Network Resilience for TfWM, said: "With recent milestones in the roadmap out of lockdown, we have seen more people using public transport again, which is great to see. We are asking that, with this in mind, the travelling public to continue to plan their journeys using real-time information. Throughout construction activities around Birmingham, public transport continues to serve the city centre and additional stops have been provided where necessary."



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Preparatory work completed in Eastside as Metro works ramp-up

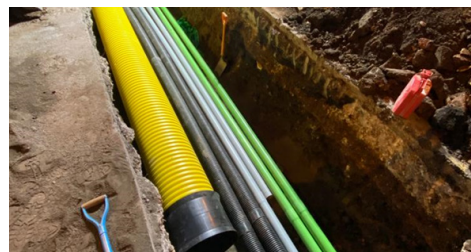
A variety of pre-construction activities have been taking place across the east of Birmingham City Centre and Digbeth in advance of main construction beginning in these areas shortly.

The Construction Team have been busy in Lower Bull Street and surrounding areas completing a variety of surveys, including noise and vibration monitoring, assessments of basements and drainage surveys. Similarly, there have been some foundation surveys for areas where overhead line equipment poles will be installed as the route starts to take shape.

Marta Gasch, Project Manager, said: "Although construction will become much more visible across the city from early June, the team has been busy throughout April and May undertaking enabling works and essential surveys which validate our construction schedule.

Our colleagues in the design team have also been working to complete detailed design for the scheme, including the complex tramway delta junction which will allow West Midlands Metro services to travel in up to six different directions."

Mosin Khurshid, Head of Utilities, added: "Throughout the last few months we've been working with utility providers to progress the upgrade and diversion of a number of buried services near to where we will be building the tramway. It's fantastic that work in these areas is on-schedule to complete shortly which will enable our colleagues to begin main construction."



More than £15m funding boost for Digbeth High Street with Metro works to get underway in July

The revival of Birmingham's 'creative quarter' has taken another step as the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) allocated £15.4 million from its Enterprise Zone Investment Plan (EZIP) to Birmingham City Council to redevelop Digbeth High Street. An additional £272,000 is being also being provided by the Council for the works.

Commencing in July 2021, the scheme will transform Digbeth High Street into an attractive, pedestrian-friendly space.

The work will be completed as part of construction for the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension and is being designed and delivered by the Midland Metro Alliance on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM). The public realm designs have seen the Metro tracks realigned to allow for wider pavements, better cycle routes and increased cycle parking along the corridor. These enhancements will make the area more attractive for pedestrians and residents, increasing footfall, supporting future commercial investment and growth in local businesses.

To enable a central reservation to be built, lane restrictions will be in place from when the work begins in July 2021. Every effort will be made to minimise impacts on traffic and reduce any disturbance as far as possible, and travel advice will be provided by TfWM and transport operators.

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 ready for the opening of extensions to the network in Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres. They will, in the future, also serve the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension to Digbeth and a further 13 vehicles will be delivered by 2023.



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New plans from Birmingham City Council for Paradise prioritise public transport and active travel

The newly-unveiled Paradise Public Transport Improvement Scheme looks to respond to the city's air pollution challenges by prioritising the road for buses, trams, hackney carriages and bicycles.

Paradise Circus, renamed Lyon Queensway, was initially closed to through traffic in September 2018, in order to facilitate phase one of the Birmingham Westside Metro extension to the current Library terminus and the Paradise redevelopment.

The road is within the city's Clean Air Zone, which launched on 1 June and is being introduced as part of Birmingham's commitment to improve air quality by reducing the volume of polluting vehicles entering the city.

Birmingham City Council's Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Waseem Zaffar, said: "I am absolutely committed to de-carbonising transport, reducing air pollution and improving travel and transport across the city. For the health of our citizens we simply cannot continue to have the number of high polluting private vehicles travelling through this

area as they were previously. Transforming the city centre is one of the big moves outlined in the draft Birmingham Transport Plan. Fewer cars and more people travelling by bus, tram or train means less congestion and better air quality for everybody. To achieve this vision, we must ensure that public transport is constantly improving to make journeys quicker, easier and more reliable."

Birmingham City Council are proposing to reopen part of Lyon Queensway to buses, taxis and cycles only, and create a new access road between the two A38 slip roads over the main A38 route. This will allow the Metro to operate efficiently and the new cross-city bus routes to have priority over other transport modes.

These changes will still assist people in accessing the Paradise development and other key locations, as:

- All traffic will continue to be able to use the tunnel beneath the Paradise development for through trips on the A38;
- Local traffic will be able to use the A38 (from the south) to access Holliday Street, buildings in the Paradise development, Town Hall and Swallow Street;
- Local traffic will be able to use the A38 (from the north) to access buildings in the north part of the Paradise development.
- Local traffic will be able to use the Middleway (B4135 Summer Hill Road) to access Cambridge Street and Paradise car park; and

omBuses and taxis will be able to use Lyon Queensway, accesses from the A38, Centenary Square (Broad Street), Sandpits/Parade and Brunel Street.

A simple U-turn facility will be built by Midland Metro Alliance, working on behalf of the Council, between the two Suffolk Street (A38) slip roads to allow access for public transport and local access to the area for local business and residents. This would also be restricted to:

- bus services, hackney carriages, cycles;
- Paradise access 1 and 2 traffic (including Town Hall);
- Holliday St traffic that can't exit under canal bridge; and
- Arena Dandara servicing access (located on the slip road).

The proposed loop allows tram priority as well as access for Paradise traffic whilst mitigating against excessive queuing on the slip roads and across the new tram tracks. Further details on the construction will be shared in the coming weeks.

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 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."

initiative, it's our shared ambition to utilise new technologies to improve services for passengers across the region. This collaboration has enabled us to use the advances in 5G technology to monitor the tram network in real-time."



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 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://westlandsmetro.com/using-the-metro/service-status/>



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