



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 12 OCTOBER 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.

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

The main Park and Ride car park, including 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 served by buses, too.

There will be lane restriction at The Embankment, Brierley Hill to accommodate overnight works from Monday 11 October until Wednesday 27 October from 9pm to 6am. This is to facilitate the installation of a retaining wall.

A lane closure is currently in place at Waterfront Way until Wednesday 27 October to allow for Utility diversion work.

There will be an off-peak lane restriction on Duncan Edwards Way from the end of October until early November.

Those who need to travel are being advised to plan ahead and leave more time for journeys.



Dudley motorists urged to plan journeys as Metro works on Duncan Edwards Way set to ramp-up

Motorists and public transport users in Dudley borough are being asked to plan their journeys with real-time information as preliminary construction activity for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension is set to get underway along Duncan Edwards Way.

From the end of October to early November, there will

be an off-peak lane restriction in place on the carriageway allowing the team to safely work in the area. Road users are being advised to plan ahead using real-time information and live updates provided by West Midlands Roads to help keep the travelling public moving.

Early works for the game-changing Metro route got underway in the summer with de-vegetation activity along parts of the busy by-pass. These works are expected to increase along Duncan Edwards Way later in 2021 and early next year with plans in place to ensure traffic flow in both directions along the A461 at all-times.

Councillor Simon Phipps, Dudley Council Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Enterprise, said: "These are exciting years for our borough as a number of multi-million-pound projects progress through development and into delivery, including Metro works already well underway on Castle Hill. We're currently delivering £1 billion worth of investment including a new leisure centre, very light rail innovation centre, a university campus and much more. Along with the Metro work that is set to be very visible along Duncan Edwards Way, we really are seeing a glimpse of what's to come over the next few years. These schemes will not only change the landscape of Dudley but also lead to more opportunities for people in terms of jobs, training and connectivity, but we need those in the area to heed the important travel advice of our partners so they can keep moving as the construction progresses".

The construction activity for the Metro is being planned in phases to minimise disruption on the transport network. Initially, activity will involve off-peak and localised lane restrictions, with some limited speed restrictions as the MMA's construction team works in the carriageway.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) is committed to investing in the Metro and along with game-changing new tram lines, which will transform public transport in the West Midlands, has also committed to ensuring that the region is able to keep moving through investment in real-time information systems. Central to this is the state-of-the art Regional Transport Coordination Centre (RTCC) which feeds accurate and swiftly changing travel information straight to those using the transport network via West Midlands Roads online channels. It now has more than 35,000 followers across Facebook and Twitter following its launch in December 2019.

Mark Corbin, Director for Network Resilience for TfWM, said: "The social media accounts for West Midlands Roads have quickly established themselves as a trusted source of travel advice for road users. With the necessary need for Metro construction work along Duncan Edwards Way to be fairly agile, we know that West Midlands Roads will also be valuable in helping to manage disruption as this key investment programme continues to be delivered."

Users can follow West Midlands Roads on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

Duncan Edwards Way

Off-peak lane restriction

From late October to early November 2021

Plan ahead



West
Midlands
Network

Plan ahead:
www.metroalliance.co.uk



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Castle Hill works on the right track as one section of road surface fully removed ahead of first concrete pours

Progress continues to move forward along Castle Hill following the removal of the road surface.

The team are now carrying out works to backfill the area and lay the sub-base for the road in completed sections.



Construction activity will progress further over the coming weeks and months with the completion of drainage and ducting installation and the laying of the first piece of track for the route, which will mark a significant milestone.

Meanwhile, the team have continued with the surveying of historic mineshaft locations to identify any strengthening works required and the demolition of the Victoria Steelworks building has also been completed.



Works are also set to start next week on the removal of the old rail along the stretch of track that services Tata Steel.



Sonny Hudson, Delivery Manager, explained: "Ground investigation works were completed earlier in the summer and we will very shortly begin to remove the old track followed by the installation of track and drainage on a new alignment. Further works will then take place to facilitate the new tram tracks."



Elsewhere, the team have made a meaningful start on works to strengthen the historic Parkhead Viaduct with works to install scaffolding currently underway.



Charlotte Parker, Construction Manager, said: "Once complete the scaffold will provide access for a number of packages including brickwork repairs, grouting of the piers, pattress plate refurbishment and the installation of tie-bars."

The installation of the railway bridge in Coneygree Road is also moving at pace with the bridge deck set to be installed in the coming weeks.

Weekend construction reminder for those working in Sandwell

Although we aim to personally remind those living or owning businesses close to our worksites of any planned construction activities taking place nearby, we wanted to issue a general reminder that, as construction ramps up for the largest light rail project underway in the UK, our team may need to work at weekends from time-to-time.

TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1	2	3	4	5
7	8	9	10	11	12
14	15	16	17	18	19
21	22	23	24	25	26

Tom Bissell, Stakeholder Liaison Officer for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension, said: "We have agreements in place with Sandwell Council which allow our team to complete activity between 7:00am and 1:00pm on Saturdays. We will not need to do this all of the time and as a Considerate Constructor we work hard to minimise the noise and disruption our works cause".

New group of apprentices given a start on construction career journey

New apprentices have joined the alliance to work on Metro construction projects across the West Midlands.



The eight-strong group include seven apprentices specialising in light rail construction and another who will be helping keep the project organised in a business administration role. They will primarily work on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension over the next two years.

They will join two Quantity Surveying apprentices (Evans Addae and Finn Brittle) who joined the team in August.

Elsewhere, Sophie Yardley joined the alliance in September as Digital Marketing Assistant. Along with day-to-day duties, including graphic design, website management and social media monitoring, Sophie will be completing a level three apprenticeship in Digital Marketing and Communications.

Project Director, Ian, inspires future generation

Ian Collins, who heads up the Metro extension from Sandwell to Dudley, has helped to inspire the future generation to consider a career in construction.



The Project Director talked to students at Thomas Telford UTC in the Black Country last month about how rail and construction sectors need new talent to bring innovation, fresh ideas and perspectives into the industry.

During the presentation, Ian spoke to the students about the importance of reflecting the diversity of our community as well as some of the opportunities available for young people.

You can listen to others at the MMA talk about opportunities in the construction and light rail sectors by visiting the dedicated career's advice hub, Connecting Futures at www.metroalliance.co.uk/connecting-futures.



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Sustainbulletin: Did you know that the MMA has a dedicated sustainability team?

Sustainability is a core value for all at the Midland Metro Alliance and we're committed to designing and building the Metro in a sustainable way, whilst leaving a green legacy the region can be proud of.



Constructing a tramline in an urban setting invites many environmental issues. There are legal and social obligations to minimise construction noise, dampen down dust, and manage waste produced, in addition to making sure we minimise disruption to local businesses, residential neighbours and members of public getting around the city centre.

To assist in meeting these obligations, the MMA employs a dedicated sustainability team. Our Sustainability Team holds monthly meetings with the Design Team to identify opportunities to incorporate efficiency ideas into the tram designs; for example, designing smart tramlines that are more efficient and which avoid wastage in energy utilisation. The team also regularly work with construction colleagues ensuring that we use materials that are less damaging to nature, as well as sharing opportunities to recover and recycle some items.

The knowledgeable team also work to promote environmentalism to staff in back-office roles, regularly hosting briefings and events which inform how alliance team members can lower their carbon footprint by considering switching to energy providers which provide electricity via renewable sources, for example.

You can find out more about our green ethos, by visiting: <https://metroalliance.co.uk/sustainability>.

Metro wins big at light rail 'oscar' putting West Midlands tramway investment on the map

Metro development and operations teams in the West Midlands are celebrating after being recognised with a number of prestigious accolades at the annual Global Light Rail Awards.

The awards, presented on Wednesday 6 October at an in-person ceremony in London for the first time since 2019, celebrates and rewards the most outstanding contributors to the Light Rail industry from across the globe.

The Midland Metro Alliance was chosen as winners in two categories including:

- Outstanding Engineering Achievement recognising the complexity of the design and delivery of work currently underway in Birmingham City Centre on a Delta Junction allowing trams to travel in six different directions between Digbeth, Edgbaston and the Black Country. This achievement was chosen ahead of engineering marvels submitted by firms in Doha, Tenerife and California;
- Rising Star of the Year – recognising the expertise of the MMA's Project Manager, Marta Gasch Bielsa, who is leading the Metro extension project which allow passengers from the Black Country to travel easily to Digbeth by tram.

There were celebrations for Metro operations, too, with Midland Metro Limited (MML), the operator of West Midlands Metro, being highly commended in the 'Most Improved System' category.



News from TfWM: Plans for £2bn investment in tram, rail, bus and cycling set out in Government funding bid

The West Midlands Metro network will be further extended in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton and Birmingham under a wide-ranging plan to revolutionise transport across the region.

Further investment would see rail stations opened, new rapid bus services launched, lower fares, more zero-emission vehicles, a very light rail line in Coventry and miles of safe cycling routes created to support the region's economic growth and its #wm2041 net-zero carbon targets.

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Board approved bids to the Government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) fund and Bus Service Improvement Plan fund in September which, topped up with local funds, could secure investment of up to £2 billion over the next five years.

This includes £280 million towards both improvements to the existing West Midlands Metro network and for the design and detailed planning work for the next series of extensions:

- Brierley Hill to Stourbridge
- Wednesbury to Walsall along the disused railway line
- Hagley Road, Birmingham and Sandwell
- Wolverhampton city centre to New Cross Hospital

Further information about the CRSTS bid is available at tinyurl.com/9te76dt8.



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