



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Eastside EDITION

ISSUE 6 NOVEMBER 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

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

As progress on Lower Bull Street, West Midlands Bus services are diverted to nearby bus stops in the city centre.

Lane restrictions 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.

Before West Midlands Metro can resume services to Library, there are further checks and driver familiarisation which need to take place. Between then and now, you may see trams running through to Library while these final steps are taken, but these will be running 'out of service'.

Customers should visit <https://westmidlandsmetro.com/using-the-metro/service-status/>.

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.

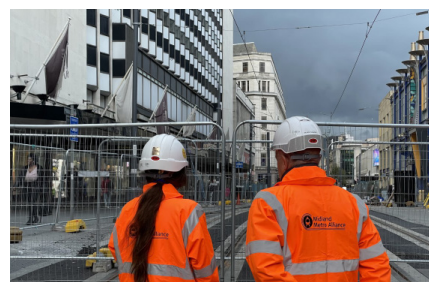
Metro services return to Library terminus following completion of future-proofing works

Essential maintenance and upgrades along the tramway on Corporation Street have been completed.

The works, which got underway towards the end of July, were carried out as part of a commitment by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) to invest in game-changing new lines along with ensuring that the existing route also sees similar investment.

The Midland Metro Alliance handed back the tramway to Midland Metro Limited on Friday 29 October.

Speaking at a site visit earlier this month (as pictured below), Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "The team from Midland Metro Alliance have been working solidly since the summer to complete this essential activity as soon as possible, and I want to thank them for their hard work in ensuring this work was completed on time and to a high standard. I'm sure all in the city centre will be pleased to see the West Midlands Metro back in the heart of Birmingham, meaning people can get out and about more easily and enjoy what is on offer as we look forward to the festive season."



This complex engineering project has seen more than 300 people employed, many of them local to the West Midlands. The works involved breaking out the road and existing rail before innovative pre-cast concrete bases were installed to hold the new tracks.

The replacement rails were then laid and welded into place after which the remaining concrete and road surface were installed and the traffic, tram signalling and overhead lines reinstated.

Stephen Christopher, Construction Director at Midland Metro Alliance, said: "A total of 75,000 working hours were recorded as we worked during the day and night to complete this important project. We would like to thank the local community for their patience and understanding since work got underway in the summer."

As well as replacing track on Corporation Street, the team at Midland Metro Alliance, which is designing, planning and building extensions to the Metro on behalf of TfWM, also commenced work on the installation of a complex delta junction on Lower Bull Street. This will eventually allow passenger services to travel along multiple routes in the Black Country and east and west Birmingham. This complex part of the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension won the Outstanding Engineering Achievement category at the annual Global Light Rail awards earlier this month, eclipsing similar projects in California, Qatar and Spain (see page 2 for more details).

For more information about West Midlands Metro services customers should visit www.westmidlandsmetro.com.



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Successful tram test on Corporation Street's new track

As the Midland Metro Alliance prepared to hand back Corporation Street to the tramway operator (more info on page one) dynamic testing took place between Bull Street and Stephenson Street.

Activities, which were tested with two trams, included checks on the switch and crossing alignment and the tram's interaction with the overhead line equipment. Later in the testing programme similar activities took place at the operational speeds that trams travel in the city centre. As part of crucial safety testing, traffic signals were also tested. At night, we ensured the Traffic Signalling at Bull Street Junction was up and running. All of the required tests were completed successfully allowing the tramway to be handed back to Midland Metro Limited on Friday 29 October.

Paul Georges, Testing and Manager, said: "This is just one of the crucial testing phases which I've been involved with at the MMA and this legacy of knowledge with the team and I really helped us in completing these important pre-handover activities with great efficiency. The testing, like the project itself, was a great example of how we all work together to achieve one goal for the good of the city."



Upcoming maintenance work on West Midlands Metro services

Metro services are terminating at different stops along the Birmingham and Wolverhampton ends of the line to allow for essential works to take place.

From 10pm on Monday to Thursdays until 2 December trams are operating between Wolverhampton St George's and Handsworth Booth Street only as works take place to upgrade the overhead line near to the Jewellery Quarter.

Works are also underway to replace track at Bilston Central and The Crescent stops, which will mean some disruption to tram services during two consecutive weekends in November:

From the start of service on Saturday 13 November until the end of service on Sunday 14 November, and the start of service on Saturday 20 November and the end of service on Sunday 21 November, there will be no services between Wednesbury Parkway and Wolverhampton St George's tram stops

Metro tickets and passes will be accepted on trains and buses serving the effected routes while a shuttle bus will also be available between some stops.

Further information can be found at <https://westmidlandsmetro.com/using-the-metro/service-status/>.

Project wins big at light rail 'Oscars'

The Birmingham Eastside Metro extension scooped a prestigious accolade at the annual Global Light Rail Awards.

The project won the Outstanding Engineering Achievement gong for the complex design and delivery of the delta junction in Lower Bull Street, which will allow 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.

Marta Gasch, Project Manager, was also chosen as Rising Star of the Year for her work on the project and the value she brings to the teams and stakeholders she works with.

Peter Cushing, Director of Midland Metro Alliance, said: "Winning the Outstanding Engineering Achievement award is an excellent accolade for all aspects of this massive project – from our designers, to the team on the ground who are building this impressive piece of equipment. We were thrilled to see Marta, our Project Manager for this project, recognised too as a Rising Star in our industry. It is a truly deserved appreciation and highlights the fantastic diversity which is present in our sector."

The Global Light Rail Awards celebrates and rewards the most outstanding contributors to the Light Rail industry from across the globe and there were also celebrations for Metro operations. Midland Metro Limited (MML), the operator of West Midlands Metro, which was 'Highly Commended' in the hotly contested Most Improved System, Rising Star of the Year and Employee of the Year categories.

For more information on the awards, you can visit the [ceremony's website](#).



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Progress continues across sections

The team have continued to move forward with construction activity along the route.

Excavation works to locate services have been carried out along Lower Bull Street with this activity almost complete. Works to remove the road service have also continued.

Along Digbeth High Street, more work has taken place to remove the road surface and concrete foundation and is expected to be completed in the coming days. Meanwhile, excavation for the drainage gullies are also underway.



West Midlands
Combined Authority

Expert advice for women seeking careers in construction

Hundreds of female job seekers looking for new opportunities in the construction industry received expert advice and support at a specialised job fair.

With women making up only one in ten of the total construction workforce and just one in 100 of frontline workers, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is looking to fill that gap by issuing a rallying cry to boost numbers within the industry.

Those who attended the job fair were able to learn more about opportunities that are available for women and had a chance to speak to a collection of employers and training providers to help them learn how to land their ideal role.

The WMCA is also funding a wide range of free training courses for people looking to enter the construction sector. The scheme directly links into employers with guaranteed job interviews at the end of the course. All courses guarantee a CSCS card as a minimum but can also include specific site and competence cards and tickets for various roles within the sector.

For more information, please visit https://beta.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/productivity-and-skills/construction/?_ga=2.255649288.1066836361.1635153296-1110913732.1634557890



Christmas spirit heads to Colmore Business District

The festive spirit officially arrives in Colmore Business District on 17 November with the switch on of over 150 Christmas light features and the opening of Christmas in Cathedral Square.

The switch on starts at 6.30pm and will include light features such as a tree standing at 9m in the grounds of Birmingham Cathedral.

Running 17 November – 19 December, Christmas in Cathedral Square features over 40 craft, gift, food and drink stalls.

Michele Wilby, CEO of Colmore BID said: "Our light switch on events are always popular with the local community, but this year's event is our biggest yet as we combine it with the opening of our festive market."



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