



Transport for  
West Midlands



Midland  
Metro Alliance

# Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 14 MAY 2022

## 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 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.

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



## Concrete pour on Castle Hill marks Black Country Metro extension progress

Another milestone for the Black Country Metro extension was recently celebrated with a concrete pour taking place on Castle Hill in Dudley.

The activity took more than eight hours to complete and with six loads of concrete, equating to 42m<sup>3</sup>, used for the pour. It is the second major landmark to be reached for the project in the first few months of 2022 following the laying of track on one half of the busy thoroughfare in February, signalling a clear sign that the main construction in this area is progressing well.



Works taking place on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), began in Dudley town centre in 2020, firstly upgrading and diverting utilities in the area before beginning more visible construction in spring 2021. Continued activity will be present on Castle Hill throughout 2022 as construction switches to the other side of the road.

Anne Shaw, Executive Director of TfWM, said: "A lot of hard work has been undertaken here in Dudley to help deliver an interchange scheme that the town deserves, and it is fantastic to see the work for the Metro extension moving forward."

Balvinder Heran, Deputy Chief Executive for Dudley Council, added: "It is good news for those living in the borough to see progress. Not only will this extension further improve public transport services for those living and working in Dudley, but it also means that residents will be able to travel more easily across the West Midlands."

Commenting on the recent activity, Tom Maplethorpe, MMA Project Director, said: "It was brilliant to celebrate a real-step forward for this project with the concrete pour in Dudley and a similar pour for a structure in Sandwell. The team at both sites continue to work extremely hard to deliver this extension and I am sure that those in both Sandwell and Dudley will be excited to see the continued progress."



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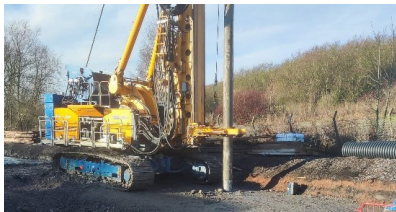
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## Delta Junction Concrete Pour

Team members working on the beginning of the Metro route in Wednesbury marked another milestone recently with progress made towards completing the Delta Junction near the Great Western Street tram stop.

Works have been undertaken to lay the foundations of the junction and included a large-scale concrete pour.

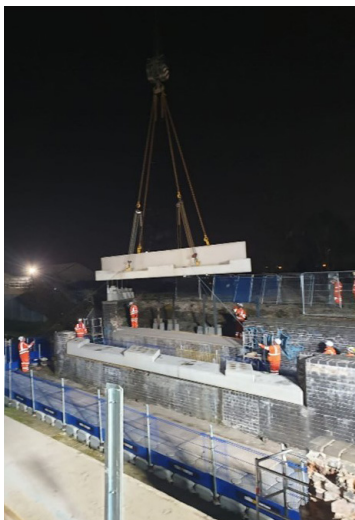
Grace Hayward, Assistant Delivery Manager on the WBHE project said "Completing the concrete pour for the entry point of this new route is a great achievement and signals that our works are going well."



## Tame Valley Canal Bridge completed

Last month, the construction team successfully installed a new purpose-built bridge over the Tame Valley Canal. It is one of a number of new bridges that has been installed for the Black Country Metro extension in the last year.

Stephen Christopher, Operations Director said "Installing this bridge is another milestone reached for the much-anticipated extension. We are extremely careful when it comes to working with or near to historical structures and endeavour to have a finished project which is sensitive to the area around it."



## Fly-through released of complex track piece for Metro

A computer-generated fly-through released by designers at Midland Metro Alliance gives a glimpse into the network which West Midlands Metro will become in coming years.

The footage shows the complex delta junction near the Wednesbury depot which is in the early stages of construction and illustrates how the new tracks will interact with the existing line one.

Detailed design for this section of the route has been ongoing since late 2019, whilst preliminary construction for the raised structure, which will join existing tracks to new ones to be installed in the railway corridor, began in November last year.

Matthew Niblock, BIM Manager at the Midland Metro Alliance, said: "We're really excited to be able to share an early vision of how this key part of the route will work. My colleagues and I have been busy throughout the global pandemic working on the design for the route. Whilst the final version has been progressed to allow construction to begin, we knew that those in the area would be interested to see this technical look at the delta junction."

## MMA supports outreach event in Dudley

The MMA's stakeholder engagement team supported Dudley Council to hold an information session for residents and local businesses on future construction activity planned for May and June, on Bourne Street near the town centre.

Tom Bissell, Stakeholder Liaison Officer, said: "It was great to speak with a number of local people about work that we have scheduled in the area. We had written to them, in partnership with Dudley Council, to explain a bit more about plans for work which will be taking place over the next six weeks but recognised that those living or working in the area might have some additional questions. I also wanted to take the time to thank Fairy Tales Day Nursery who provided space for the event along with everyone who took the time to attend."



## MMA's head of safety makes an address at UoB

Earlier this week, John Ellison, Head of SHEQ, presented an insightful talk on the importance of safety culture here at the MMA as part of a rail safety and infrastructure event organised by Rail Business Daily and University of Birmingham.



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## Repair works on a Victorian viaduct commence

Works to strengthen the Victorian Parkhead Viaduct in Dudley are now underway. In recent weeks the Black Country Metro extension team have installed an encapsulated scaffold to the structure to enable access for firming works.

The next stage of works will see the viaduct strengthened by repointing, stitching and re-casing the brickwork. This will be followed by grouting the 7th piers and installing new tie bars.

Charlotte Parker, Construction Manager said "The current edifice of the Parkhead Viaduct was completed in 1880. Working on a historical building presents certain challenges but is also a real privilege. At the MMA we want to help preserve our region's industrial heritage as well as build for the future. I look forward to sharing further updates about this important project."

Once the brickwork repairs and strengthening works have been completed the team will excavate the top of the viaduct and fit a concrete trough, drainage and ducting routes before being able to install the trackform.



## Midland Metro Alliance helps inspire next generation

Students got their future careers on the right track when they designed their very own Metro extension as part of a project led by the MMA.

The year 12 pupils from Thomas Telford University Technical College (TTUTC) put their studies to the test and demonstrated their technical and design skills during the employer project, which involved them designing a tramway for a city environment.

Following presentations of their work, staff from the alliance judged the groups on various aspects of their design, including the route, sustainability and cost considerations.

It is the third time the Midland Metro Alliance has delivered the programme at the Wolverhampton School and among this year's judging panel were former TTUTC pupils, Finley Brittle and Evans Addae, who are now completing a level six apprenticeship in quantity surveying at the University of Wolverhampton. They successfully took part in the project themselves in 2019.



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## New track installed near former Round Oak works.

New track has been laid to replace a section of the historic railway line near to the former site of the Round Oak Steel Works in Brierley Hill.

To make room for the new Metro line, clearance works took place ahead of important investigations to assess the condition of the coal seams located deep underground.

Following this, and before the new track could be laid, extensive ground improvements were made as the old rail bed was laid on an ash material – a practice commonly used in the early 1900s.

With preparations completed the new track was installed and aligned, whilst the old buffer stop was refurbished and mile posts were installed alongside the track.



## A snapshot of Metro extension progress around Dudley

Keen shutterbug and alliance driver Peter Smith has shared progress photos of the ongoing works for the Metro.

Peter enjoys capturing images of the construction activities in his spare time and recently snapped photos of track and ground preparation activities currently underway.

Speaking about his love of photography, Peter said: "I do like to take the time to celebrate the work which is taking place in Dudley. I know colleagues in the communications team can't always get to site, so it's great that I can share progress shots with them so they can be seen by the public."




**We're digging for  
Dudley- come join us!**

Take a look at our current opportunities:  
<https://metroalliance.co.uk/careers/>



## Full £1.3 billion West Midlands transport investment programme confirmed

The Department for Transport (DfT) has confirmed a £1.05 billion grant to transform road, bus, rail, tram, cycling and walking infrastructure across to the West Midlands.

The City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) money, topped up with local funding, will deliver £1.3 billion investment over the next five years.

The funding confirmation means work on these can now start. The projects are:

£24 million to seek sites for, plan and deliver a network of 10 electric vehicle charging stations across the West Midlands

£43 million to extend the West Midlands Metro depot at Wednesbury to service the region's growing tram fleet and network – including the extension to Dudley in 2024.

£17 million to replace and upgrade the Metro power supply on the existing Wolverhampton to Birmingham line for the first time since it opened 22 years ago.

£56 million to deliver phase two of the Sprint bus priority corridor with more bus lanes and junction upgrades along the full route between Solihull and Walsall. Phase one along the A34 and A45 in Birmingham is nearing completion.

The grant includes funding for the development of new bus lanes and priority routes. Around £254 million will go directly towards schemes which enable active travel, the collective name for cycling and walking.



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