



Transport for  
West Midlands



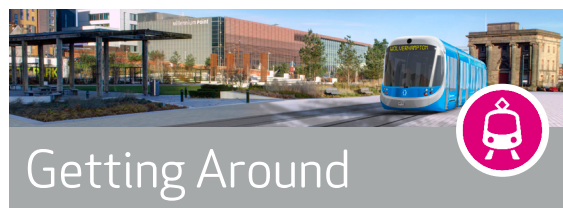
Midland  
Metro Alliance

# Eastside EDITION

ISSUE 8 JUNE 2022

## 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.

There are changes to Metro services while work is carried out to on track replacement works and activity to tie-in the existing track to the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension. For more info on services, please visit [www.westmidlandsmetro.com](http://www.westmidlandsmetro.com).

**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](http://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.**

## Building demolished to make way for new tramway

A recently vacated college building in Digbeth has been demolished as works to extend the Metro extension continue to progress.

Timelapse footage has captured the team removing part of the Hartwell's building to allow trams to travel down Meriden Street and on to Digbeth High Street when the route opens for passenger service.



The safe completion of the demolition, which got underway in April, marks another step forward in the project following the installation of paving in the area in recent weeks.

David Hardman, Interim Deputy Chair, Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) said: "In the last decade, the Enterprise Zone Investment Plan (EZIP) has helped drive the transformation of Birmingham's city centre. This latest milestone highlights the progress our partners have made in delivering the Birmingham Eastside Metro Extension project which received £15.4 million Enterprise Zone funding. When complete, it will improve local connectivity into the new HS2 Curzon Street station whilst also creating a better environment for walkers, cyclists and public transport users."

The team are now busy removing concrete on the site, with these works expected to be completed in the coming days.

Maria Ion, Project Director at the Midland Metro Alliance, said: "As you can see from the timelapse footage, the part demolition of the Hartwells Building is the culmination of lots of hard work from a dedicated team. Construction in a vibrant part of the city is complex and not without its challenges. As such, there is a need to approach tasks in a steady fashion and adhere to the highest standards of health and safety."

You can view the timelapse footage of the demolition, here <https://vimeo.com/723695847/cae8e646ac>.

## Have your say

Residents and businesses are being invited to a focus session to help shape the MMA's communication material for the future.

The focus session will be an opportunity for you to look at our communications, including the Eastside Edition newsletter, in detail and provide constructive feedback to the Communications Team on what works, what doesn't and how we can improve.

The sessions will be held at the Friends of the Earth community hub in Allison Street, Digbeth on Tuesday 5 July from 1pm until 5pm and Thursday 7 July between 9am and 1pm.

If you would like to take part, please email [communications@metroalliance.co.uk](mailto:communications@metroalliance.co.uk) to confirm your attendance.



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## Digbeth takes shape with new paving

If you have visited Digbeth High Street in recent weeks you will have noticed new paving that has been installed in the area.

Plans to give Birmingham's 'creative quarter' a fresh look and feel, in addition to the tram extension, are now starting to take shape.

The new surface has been installed from Fancy Fabrics to The Kerryman pub and over the coming months, much of the northern side of Digbeth High Street will be finished, with the new carriageway, kerb lines and some areas of urban realm completed. This upgrade of the street scene is being completed by the MMA on behalf of Birmingham City Council and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

Progress has also continued on the other side of Birmingham with the installation of a new bus shelter on Corporation Street, while paving and kerbing works in this section have also progressed.

Construction of the planters on Lower Bull Street has continued to move forward with the installation of steel reinforcement and the pouring of concrete.



## Operative praised for assisting pedestrian

An operative has been praised for going the extra mile while assisting a visually impaired man on Digbeth High Street.

Charlie Collis came to the pedestrian's aid without "hesitation" after the man stopped to ask directions to the nearest bus stop.

He assisted the man by walking him to the stop while giving verbal directions and has been praised on social media for his kind actions.

Laura Creaven, who witnessed the selfless act, said: "A blind person and their dog were walking ahead of me and asked the worker for directions. He expertly assisted them to the stop, offering his arm and giving verbal observations."

She added: "He offered to help straight away, no hesitation, and knew what to do. Appreciate it's not the main reason they're there but they're knowledgeable and keen to help when called on."

It is the second time MMA operatives have been praised for assisting members of the public after Simon Dicken and Aaron Lynch helped save a man's life earlier this year while working on Lower Bull Street

Maria Ion, Project Director, said: "It is fantastic to see our workers assisting members of the public in this way. It is important for us to support residents and visitors in the communities that we are constructing. Well done Charlie for going that extra mile to lend a helping hand."



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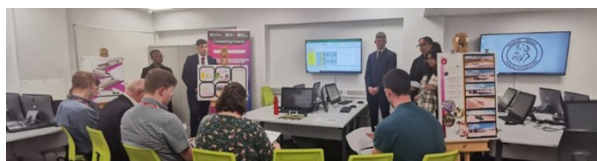
## Helping to inspire the next generation

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 Midland Metro Alliance.

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 three-month 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 delivered the programme at the Black Country School and among this year's judging panel were former TTUTC pupils, Finn Brittle and Evans Addae, who are now employed by the alliance and are completing a level six apprenticeship in surveying. They successfully took part in the project themselves in 2019.

Award trophies were presented to the students in a number of categories, including best design and most sustainable.



## Apprentices celebrate halfway milestone

Apprentices at the Midland Metro Alliance are celebrating a major step forward in their career after reaching the halfway point of their course.

Last autumn the alliance welcomed a cohort of new apprentices who work across its projects in office and on-site roles.

Six of the trainees are employed as track construction operative apprentices and are currently studying towards a bespoke light rail qualification which was developed by the MMA and leading organisations in the light rail industry in 2018.

To celebrate the success of the current cohort of tramway construction apprentices, the MMA has released a video, edited by fellow Digital Marketing apprentice Sophie Yardley, on their journey so far. You can view this video here: <https://vimeo.com/721364405>



## Supporting Women in Rail

Our Project Director helped celebrate the importance of diversity and inclusion during a special event to mark Women in Rail's 10th anniversary.

Maria Ion attended the charity's Embracing our Uniqueness to Create Winning Teams event which was the first in a series of special events being held to celebrate 10 years of the Women in Rail charity.

The organisation has delivered a platform to help stop women from feeling isolated in the rail industry since its inception in 2012.



## The big screen comes to The Square

The Square Shopping Centre is hosting a large TV screen to showcase major events this summer.

The screen, which is now in situ, is currently showing Wimbledon, while the Games will be screened later in July. The screen will be in place until Wednesday 17 August, with activities running daily throughout the sporting events.

There will also be an open-air cinema of family favourites to enjoy throughout the summer holidays.

Production company, Local TV: Birmingham, in partnership with MMA, has filmed a feature on the screen and upcoming activities which will be aired in the coming days.

For further information, visit <https://www.thesquashoppingcentre.co.uk/>



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## Help us showcase your business during construction

Did you know our Digital Marketing Assistant is available to visit Eastside businesses to discuss the marketing support we provide?

The MMA is continuing to boost its marketing support for independent businesses in the area and we aim to showcase a variety of what makes the Eastside of Birmingham special.

If you'd like to discuss marketing support please contact: [communications@metroalliance.co.uk](mailto:communications@metroalliance.co.uk)



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## Quicker journeys and more reliable bus services on A34 and A45 in Birmingham following completion of Sprint's first phase

Buses using the A34 and A45 in Birmingham can bypass traffic jams to offer passengers quicker journeys and more reliable services.

It follows the completion of dedicated bus lanes and junction upgrades from Walsall to Birmingham city centre along the A34 and from Birmingham Airport to the city centre along the A45.

The £88 million project, developed and delivered by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), has also seen 76 new enhanced bus shelters, each including CCTV, installed along the entire route from Walsall to Solihull via Birmingham.

All buses using these routes, accounting for approximately 20 million trips a year, will benefit from quicker and more predictable services – cutting average journey times by 20 per cent along the A45.

And the new larger Sprint shelters have already proved a hit, achieving a 98% satisfaction rate in a passenger survey last month.

Among the first to benefit from the infrastructure will be special shuttle bus services for visitors attending Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games events at Alexander Stadium, the NEC and Birmingham city centre.

Funding for the £88m first phase of the project included contributions of £42 million from the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) investment fund and £35 million from the Department for Transport.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "Buses have been a real success story here in the West Midlands, and I am delighted we are continuing to invest substantially in the network with the first phase of our new Sprint plans now complete."

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, added: "These new Sprint bus priority measures mean that passengers will not only save time on their journeys but, with more predictable timetables, spend less time waiting at bus stops."

The Sprint phase 1 construction was commended in the Environmental and Sustainability category of the Chartered Institution of Highways and Transportation (CIHT) Awards last month.



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