



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

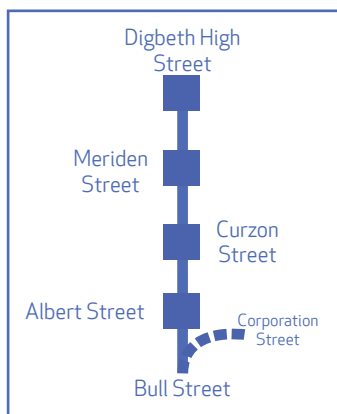
Eastside EDITION

ISSUE 12 FEBRUARY 2023

Welcome

Welcome to 'Eastside Edition', a 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).

When complete, four new tram stops will connect passengers from the existing Metro line at Bull Street to High Street Deritend in Digbeth, via Curzon Street Station, helping to connect more of the region to high-speed rail services.



Getting Around



For the latest information, advice and live info on the region's roads follow the @wmroads Twitter feed and for wider transport updates follow @transportforwm.

ICYMI: A round up of construction activity from the previous issue

Urban realm works were completed on Digbeth High Street and the road reopened.

Construction commenced on the coach station side of Digbeth High Street and is ongoing.

A significant concrete pour took place on Lower Bull Street ahead of track laying commencing

Wayfinding maps were installed on Digbeth High Street.

! What you need to know

With the ever-changing pace of the construction activity that is underway for the Eastside extension, here is a snapshot of important information that you need to know; some of which is covered in more detail for you throughout the newsletter.

Lower Bull Street area

- The first section of track has been laid in this section;
- Nearby, in Dale End, the external structure of the Kings Parade building has started to be removed, too;
- If you are driving in the area you will need to follow a clearly-signed diversion route via Carrs Lane, while pedestrian access is maintained at all times;
- Disabled bays on Albert Street have been suspended and the nearest provision for blue-badge holders is on Dale End and High Street.

You can read all more about all of these updates via progress updates on page two.

Moor Street Queensway, Park Street and Albert Street areas

- Works continue to upgrade and divert utilities in the area outside the Clayton Hotel;
- At times there may be localised footpath closures whilst the work is underway;
- We will continue to work closely with partners at Birmingham City Council and Transport for West Midlands, as well as local stakeholders, to minimise disruption where possible.

Digbeth High Street

- All vehicular traffic heading in and out of the city is now using the new carriageway, with one lane of single line traffic in each direction;
- All of the side streets are open to vehicular traffic, with the exception of Meriden Street where further construction work is scheduled;
- Our activity continues on the coach station side of the high street as we convert the existing carriageway into the new tramway.

This is our first issue of 2023 and I look forward to catching up with you over the coming months. Remember, you can reach out for more bespoke support via the details below.

Shervorne Brown, your dedicated Stakeholder Liaison Officer.



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Kings Parade demolition takes step closer with removal of external structure

The demolition of the Kings Parade building to make way for the Eastside route has moved a step closer to completion with works now underway to remove the external structure.

The site in Dale End, which was home to McDonalds before it closed in 2021, is being removed to allow trams to travel from Bull Street to Digbeth High Street.

The demolition activity got underway in October 2022 and since then the team made considerable progress. The internal fabric of the building has been completely stripped down during the autumn allowing the team to move on to the external structure.

The ongoing tramway works on Digbeth High Street at one end of the extension and Lower Bull Street at the other are due to be completed later this year leaving these streets clear of main Metro works and cordons. Despite the MMA's best efforts, work on the final central section of the line is unlikely to commence until 2026 owing to HS2's work on Curzon Street Station.

As a result TfWM and the MMA are investigating a proposal to open a temporary tram stop next to the Clayton Hotel to better serve both Moor Street Railway Station and Birmingham City University campus until the full extension opens.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, visited the site to see first-hand the progress that has been made.

Mr Street said: "The removal of this well-known building is a clear sign that the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension is continuing to progress and I'm delighted that the demolition is moving along at pace. As well as making way for the new Metro route, the removal of Kings Parade will also pave the way for the regeneration of this area of the city centre making it more attractive to visitors, investors and local residents alike. We're pursuing options to get part of the line open as soon as possible so we can secure a convenient tram stop – linking Metro to Moor Street Station. Despite short term challenges, we must keep our eyes on the prize and remember that the ultimate destination here is a vastly improved public transport offering for local people to enjoy for many years to come."

The complex demolition is due to be completed in the summer ahead of track laying commencing later in the year. Track laid in Dale End will link the existing Metro line whilst also being the spur which takes the route eastward to Digbeth.

Hamish Falconer, Project Manager, said: "The team have been busy gutting the entire of the inside of the building over the last few months and it is great that these works have now been completed."



First section of rail installed in Lower Bull Street

If you have been out and about in the Lower Bull Street area you may have noticed the vast progress that has been made on the scheme.

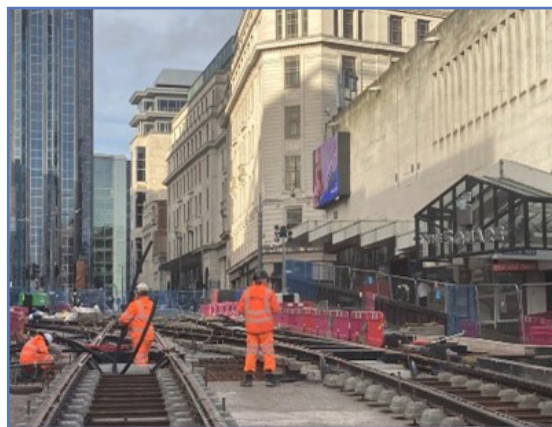
The first section of track has now been installed following a successful concrete pour in December which formed the base for the rail and sleepers.

The team spent more than 330 hours successfully installing the first pieces of rail for the delta junction, which will allow trams to travel in six different directions between Digbeth, Edgbaston and the Black Country, with these works expected to continue over the coming months.

It is not the first track milestone to be achieved for the project as it comes just four months after 45 metres of rail was installed at the junction of Meriden Street and Digbeth High Street in the autumn.

Michael Anderson, Metro Programme Director at Transport for West Midlands, said: "This latest milestone highlights the progress the team at the MMA are making on the Birmingham Eastside Metro extension – one of the major projects we are delivering to enhance public transport and ensure more people across the West Midlands have an easy connection to the forthcoming HS2 Curzon Street station."

Maria Ion, Project Director, added: "The installation of track on Lower Bull Street is not only a great achievement but a pivotal moment for the project. A total of 80 metres of track has been installed along the Wolverhampton to Digbeth route, and 50 metres along the Edgbaston to Digbeth line. The team have worked hard to reach this milestone and I am delighted that those visiting the area can start to see significant progress being made. Work will be ongoing in both Lower Bull Street and Digbeth High Street throughout the year and we will continue to work closely with partners to minimise any disruption wherever possible."



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Project scores big in Considerate Constructors audit

The Birmingham Eastside team are celebrating after being awarded an 'excellent' rating from the Considerate Constructors Scheme.

Following a recent inspection, the project was rated excellent for its respect to the community, care for the environment and support for the workforce, allowing the team to pick up a score of 43 out of 45.

The inspectors were particularly impressed with the team's recycling efforts, which currently stands at 97 per cent, its 'positive ethos' in relation to waste management and energy usage and the 'high standard' of facilities provided for staff.

The respect shown to the community during construction was rated highly with recognition given for how local stakeholders are kept informed via advanced notices, website updates and the *Eastside Edition* newsletter.

The report also commended the projects previous award wins, which have included the Outstanding Engineering Achievement title picked up at the Global Light Rail Awards in 2021 for the complex delta junction.

Maria Ion, Project Director, said: "Well done to all those who have worked extremely hard behind the scenes to allow us to achieve this status. This excellent rating shows just how committed we are to building a sustainable means of transport and making a positive impact on the community and the environment"



Students make tree-mendous use of donated bark

With sustainability being at the heart of everything we do, our team recently donated a number of tree barks to students in the West Midlands.

The logs have since been upcycled into benches for the forest gardens at South Staffordshire College in Staffordshire and Dovecotes Primary School in Wolverhampton.

Francesca De Petris, Sustainability Manager, said: "Sustainability is one of our core values and it's fantastic that these tree barks have been put to good use."



Recent progress

Lower Bull Street area

Paving works opposite the Square Peg pub and along Lower Bull Street have been completed. Meanwhile, sleepers and bearers have been connected to the new track with concrete set to be poured in the coming days. The team have also started to install street furniture, including bins, bollards, benches, cycle stands and street lighting, on Corporation Street and Upper Bull Street. Railings and wall cladding will also be installed outside Ladbroke's and the Sk:n clinic.



Digbeth High Street

More progress has been made on the installation of paving, including resin footpaths, on the Custard Factory side of the high street, while the road surface continues to be removed and cleared from the coach station side. An eight-week programme to plant trees and shrubs has also commenced and all bus shelters have now been installed.



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Construction apprentices showcased during national event

In recognition of a looming skills gap within the construction and rail industries, we shone a light on accessible apprenticeship careers to celebrate National Apprenticeship Week 2023 which took place during the first full week of February.

Throughout the five-day initiative the Midland Metro Alliance (MMA) showcased its apprentices, both past and present, T-Level students and commitment to life-long education.

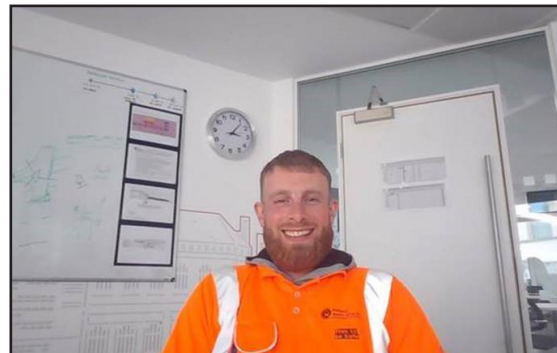
Since forming in 2016, the MMA has worked closely with schools and colleges in the West Midlands to raise awareness of the span of roles within construction and light rail.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "A key part of my mayoral mission is to ensure local people right across our region have the skills they need to succeed. Apprenticeships are central to that mission - offering a clear route into work including in our booming construction sector. It's wonderful to see the success of the apprentices at the Midland Metro Alliance - building up their skills whilst working on some of our region's largest infrastructure projects."

In a further bid to help fill the skills and labour gap, the alliance brought employers together from the UK's Light Rail industry to design a level two apprenticeship specifically for the sector, which was approved in 2019.

Rose Rees, Head of Engagement and Skills for the MMA, explains more: "There is no denying that the construction industry is facing a skills shortage, with an aging workforce and growing demand for a youthful influence, so we recognised that something needed to be done. It was important to us to design an inclusive apprenticeship accessible for candidates without previous academic qualifications."

The content created for National Apprenticeship Week 2023 is available to view on the MMA's online careers platform, [Connecting Futures](#).



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News from TfWM:

Work started on £43m West Midlands Metro depot expansion as more new trams arrive

Work is now underway on the expansion of the West Midlands Metro depot at Wednesbury to accommodate the increased fleet of trams.

New extensions to the line in Birmingham and Wolverhampton city centres and a new line to Dudley town centre - currently under construction - means that more trams are required to operate on the growing network and more capacity needed to store and maintain them.

So regional transport bosses have launched a £43 million redevelopment of the Metro depot site in Potters Lane.

The on-site capacity will be more than doubled to accommodate the growing fleet of state-of-the-art Metro vehicles and allow them to manoeuvre around the yard.

The development also includes extended and updated workshop and maintenance facilities, a tram wash, a new operations centre and staff facilities to accommodate a growing workforce. An estimated 150 new jobs will be created as a result of the expansion of the network and depot.

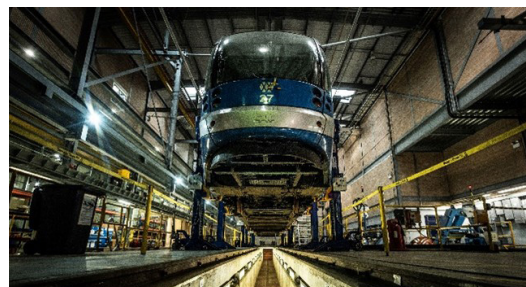
In 2019 the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) placed an order for 21 new CAF Urbos 3 trams, doubling the fleet. Of these, eleven have already been delivered and the remainder are due to arrive later this year ahead of completion of the extension between Wednesbury and Dudley in 2024.

Growing the Metro network will improve access to rapid public transport services, linking more communities to job and leisure opportunities as well as reducing car use and traffic congestion.

The depot development is being led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of WMCA, owner of the Metro system. Construction is being carried out by the Midland Metro Alliance. The project is funded from the City Region Sustainable Funding Settlement awarded to the West Midlands last year.

Construction is now underway with space being cleared to expand the yard and track, as well as provide a direct track link to the new extension towards Dudley.

Next to the depot work is well advanced on the construction of the junction which will link the existing line between Birmingham and Wolverhampton to the new line, phase one of which will take services to Dudley town centre. With phase two to Brierley Hill to follow later.



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