



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 19 30 MAY 2023



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).

This highly-anticipated project will be delivered in two phases. The first will see trams travel 6.5km through Sandwell to Dudley town centre serving a new terminus at Flood Street, providing convenient interchanges with local bus and rail services. In the second phase, the tramway will extend a further 4.4km to Brierley Hill with funding solutions currently being sought to allow construction to begin at the earliest opportunity.



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.

In brief: Progress highlights in the last year

A selection of the key works undertaken on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension in the last nine months or so.

July - August: Construction activity is completed on one side of Castle Hill, with activity switched to the opposite side of the street shortly afterwards. In Sandwell, concrete pours take place and works continue to progress for the Sedgley Road tram stop (see right).

September - November: Along with activity in Castle Hill, work continued in Flood Street to create a new carriageway with a new asphalt surface laid during the period. Elsewhere, a localised road closure began in Tipton, as the construction team began to install the penultimate bridge for phase one of the route.

December - February: The last weld for the track along Castle Hill was celebrated in December with the road resurfaced and reopened to two-way traffic shortly after.

March - April: A number of large concrete pours were achieved for the project in the Wednesbury area, specifically for the structure which is being constructed to connect the existing line to the new route. Our team also celebrated excellent results in both the Considerate Constructor's Scheme and the TopSite accreditation.

① What you need to know...

Since we last updated you on progress for the much-anticipated Metro scheme, there's been considerable progress across both Sandwell and Dudley boroughs. In a rush? We've summarised the main points of the newsletter on this page (and a lot of the things covered here are expanded upon throughout the newsletter).

Wednesbury and Tipton

Alongside the work to take the tramway from Sandwell to Dudley, we're also upgrading the West Midlands Metro depot in Wednesbury. Since the last issue works have progressed with temporary tram washes installed and mineshaft works ongoing. Meanwhile, across Sandwell, work has continued to construct the framework and foundations for future tram stops for the route. There's further detail, and images, on both topics over the page.

Dudley town centre

There's been a lot of recent progress in Dudley town centre, too. Works to construct the traffic splitter at the bottom of Castle Hill have wrapped up and some of the street scene improvements, such as new lighting columns are now in place, too.

Our team have also been really busy at nearby Flood Street, which is the terminus for phase one of the scheme, and there's recently been some traffic flow changes in the town centre to facilitate our works. You can find out more about what's been going on in Dudley on page three.

Welcoming the PM and getting to know the people behind the business in Dudley...

Much earlier in the spring, we welcomed the Prime Minister who came to check out progress on the works in Dudley town centre. There's more on Rishi Sunak's visit later in the issue.

Speaking of the town centre, if you've been following us on social media lately, you'll know that we've been shining a light on the many independent businesses in Dudley's Churchill Shopping centre. You can find out more about our "behind the business" mini-series and catch up with past episodes over on page four.

Finally, our *Construction Corner* feature this month, where we aim to give a bit more detail on a particular aspect of our works, is on dust mitigation. You can read about that on page three.

We'll have the next edition of *Connecting Sandwell & Dudley* out in July, but remember, you can also stay up to date at any time by following us on social media accounts listed below.

Kind regards,

Tom Bissell,

Your Stakeholder Liaison Manager



How can I get further
information?

For further information or to view past issues of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

[company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 19 30 MAY 2023

Wednesbury activity sees depot expansion progress and continued work on delta junction structure

As highlighted in last month's *Connecting Sandwell & Dudley*, another massive project that our team are delivering alongside extending the tramway to Dudley town centre, is to expand and upgrade the current tram depot in Wednesbury ensuring it continues to be able to meet the needs of the extended network.

Since the last issue, contractors working on behalf of the alliance, have been working to install temporary tram wash facilities which will allow the current fleet to continue to be serviced as we provide new facilities within a different area of the depot footprint.

In addition, probing works have been taking place recognising the area's industrial heritage and to ensure that the area is safe to construct on. If you're interested, you can learn a bit more about what is involved in mineshaft remediation activity via our "Construction Corner" feature in issue 17 of *Connecting Sandwell & Dudley* available from our website.

At the nearby delta junction, which is being constructed to link the current line with the new route to Dudley, works have continued to re-enforce the massive structure which is being constructed to link the two Metro lines.



Tram stops taking shape in Sandwell

Tram stops which are being built in the Sandwell area are beginning to take shape.

The foundations for the tram stop are now being installed at Sedgley Road while the retaining wall for the tram stop in Great Bridge is also near completion.

Ben Hands, Construction Manager, said: "Unlike the work taking place in Dudley, so much of the work in Sandwell is taking place away from the public view so it's great to be able to share some progress shots as we start building the all-important tram stops."



How can I get further information?

For further information or to view past issues of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

 [company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)



Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 19 30 MAY 2023

Construction Corner – How we work to mitigate dust during our works

Along with increased noise, one of the impacts of significant construction activity is a rise in dust – particularly during summer months or when the weather is dry.

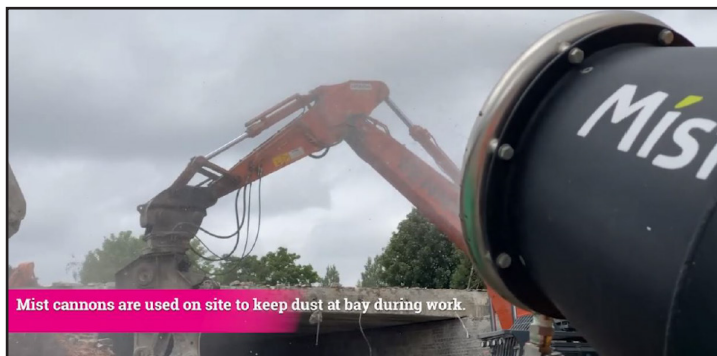
Whether we are a site operative, a member of public passing by, or a resident living or working within the project area, dust may affect us. It can get into our eyes and nostrils, could impact the quality of air we breathe in, and can settle on people's properties and cars.

As a Considerate Constructor, we have an obligation to minimise dust during works. Our Construction Code of Practice (required by our Transport and Works Act Order allowing us to work) contains commitments to minimise dust during the construction of the tram scheme, in the same way we work to mitigate noise and vibration.

Based on ways of working developed across all of our worksites in the West Midlands, our teams working across sites delivering the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension have in place a well-coordinated approach to suppress dust across all work sections. Our Sustainability Team have assisted the Delivery Team ensuring that a water bowser is present to dampen down dust generated.

We also train our teams on the impact dust can have via toolbox talks on dust suppression, and how other behaviours, such as driving site vehicles at lower speeds, can also minimise the spread of dust.

Should you have any further comments or suggestions on how we can improve further, please get in contact with your dedicated stakeholder liaison team at communications@metroalliance.co.uk.



Mist cannons are used on site to keep dust at bay during work.

Finishing activity on Castle Hill wraps up

Over in Dudley town centre, Castle Hill re-opened to two-way traffic much earlier in the year, with localised night works taking place to install street scene improvements and also to construct a traffic splitter island towards the bottom of the busy throughfare.

Since our last issue, new lighting columns have been installed across the street and the initial construction activity for the splitter island has been wrapped up too, with finishing works, including paving, to shortly be completed.

Meanwhile at nearby Flood and King Streets, kerbing and installation of tactile paving has been completed. The works have been progressing well in this area leading to some traffic changes to allow activity to move to a new phase. You can read more about these below.



Keep moving at King Street as works switch

Earlier last week, motorists traveling along King Street in Dudley town centre began being diverted on to Flood Street as works continue for the Metro route.

The localised traffic changes, which are anticipated to last until the autumn, enable our team to commence drainage and track laying works.

Throughout the planned activity access to frontages on King Street West and the service yard for the Churchill Shopping centre are maintained and motorists are being asked to follow a clearly-signed diversion route and allow extra time to complete their journeys during peak times.

King Street
Change to traffic flow
From Monday 22 May

Plan ahead





Plan ahead:
www.metroalliance.co.uk



How can I get further information?

For further information or to view past issues of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

 [company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)



Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 19 30 MAY 2023

Get to know the people behind the businesses at Churchill Centre

Throughout the spring we've been shining a light on the people behind the businesses in The Churchill Shopping Centre in Dudley Town Centre.

The popular spot is close to our work site in the Black Country town and has a variety of shops, cafes and restaurants and we teamed up with Local TV Birmingham to get to know the people behind the businesses which are all open as usual as our works are ongoing.

We've commissioned a four-part series (with the final episode due to release in the first week of June) featuring local and independent businesses including Little Italy Menswear, Memories Florist, The Pet Pantry and more. These have been played on Local TV in the West Midlands and are also available on our Facebook and Twitter accounts.



Charity visit encourages staff to break the stigma of mental health

In an effort to educate and support our staff on mental health and wellbeing, we welcomed advocates from the Construction Industry Helpline to share their first-hand experiences and help break the stigma.

Lee Anderson and Robert Muldoon, who both work in the construction industry, spoke to site operatives about their personal journeys and how they have overcome mental health issues whilst working on similar construction projects.

Office for National Statistics data shows that people working in construction are three times more likely to take their own lives than those in other industries, while every working day two construction workers are lost to suicide in the UK and Ireland.

The visit was part of the charity's Make it Visible Tour which involved teams visiting frontline trades across the country to promote the crucial support services it provides.

Lee said: "Thank you to the Midland Metro Alliance for hosting us and making us feel welcome. The engagement from the guys on site was great. Sharing our stories helps to start the conversation, which helps to break down the stigma many of us face on a daily basis."

You can find out more about the Construction Industry Helpline and the support it provides to construction workers and their families, here: <https://www.constructionindustryhelpline.com/>



Prime Minister visits Dudley construction site to see progress for route

It's not every day that you get to meet the Prime Minister and some of the WBHE team got to do just that when Rishi Sunak swapped Downing Street for Dudley.

During a whistlestop tour of the town, the Prime Minister stopped off at Castle Hill and met our Project Director, Tom Maplethorpe, to chat about the current progress for phase one of the scheme.

Tom said: "It was great to welcome Rishi Sunak on to our site and talk to him about all the fantastic work that has been achieved on the project so far. He seemed very interested in the many benefits this extension will bring to the region. It was also fantastic for him to meet some of the site operatives who are working extremely hard to keep the project on track."

The visit coincided with the Government pledging more devolutionary powers to the Combined Authority as well as an additional £60 million which is expected to act as a springboard for delivery of the Metro extension between Dudley town centre and Brierley Hill, subject to approval of further funding by the WMCA Board. You can read more about this on page xx.



How can I get further information?

For further information or to view past issues of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

 [company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)



Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 19 30 MAY 2023

Construction competition launched for Black Country students

Students attending Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) schools have been invited to take part in a design and construction competition where the young people are asked to design and build a bug hotel or to share their designs for a tram stop.

The activity, which will run throughout the spring and early summer, aims to develop young people's collaborative and creative skills while highlighting important topics like biodiversity and sustainability. The workstream also promotes light rail and construction as inclusive sectors for people of all academic levels and backgrounds.

Rose Rees, Head of Engagement & Skills at the alliance, said: "Everyone young person has the right to live a happy, healthy and productive life and I'm grateful to so many of my colleagues, and our partners at Black Country Consortium, who are giving up their time to help support this initiative."

Scott Worton, Assistant Head at The Brades Lodge in Oldbury, added: "I'm really pleased that the MMA are supporting local SEND and AP schools in this way; It's often a segment of the educational world which is forgotten. Every child has a talent and a drive to be a productive member of society and It's fantastic that our young people will be competing in this spring competition."

Judging for the competition, which launched in Mid-April, is set to take place in early July.



First tram runs on new Metro route as testing and commissioning gets underway

Metro passengers will soon be able to get to new stops in Wolverhampton following the successful completion of the first phase of testing for the city's new route.

Trams made their way from The Royal tram stop on the current network to the end of the new line at Wolverhampton's revitalised railway station during three nights of initial testing.

Further trials, set to begin in coming weeks, will see trams running across the route in preparation for the much-anticipated launch of passenger services.

Peter Cushing, Alliance Director, said: "It is fantastic that the first tram has now travelled along new tracks in Wolverhampton. This shows just how close we are to handing the route over to the operator for further testing and familiarisation. The first tram test has proved a success and I would like to thank the team who have worked incredibly hard to reach this important phase in the project."

Once the route is open to the public later, services will call at two additional tram stops at Wolverhampton Station and on Pipers Row connecting Metro with heavy rail and bus services helping to make multi-modal journeys faster and more accessible.



Midland Metro Alliance celebrates Earth Day by highlighting sustainability initiatives

The Midland Metro Alliance recently highlighted its longstanding commitment to protecting the environment as it celebrated Earth Day.

Marking the international initiative, held on 22 April, the alliance noted contributions it continues to make to through the implementation of a number of carbon initiatives above and beyond contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions by building a sustainable public transport scheme.

Within the past twelve months, the alliance has switched to renewable fuels being used across all of its sites and machinery, saving an estimated 1,982 tonnes of tCO2e which is the equivalent of a diesel car driving the circumference of the earth almost 300 times. And as reported in previous editions of Connecting Sandwell and Dudley, carbon reducing concrete was used on significant activity for the route. This low-carbon fibre reinforcement concrete is a by-product of the manufacturing process for iron and steel and includes 50 per cent Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag (GBBFS), a compound which allows less traditional concrete without a compromise on quality.

Francesca DePetris, Sustainability Manager, said: "There's an incorrect view that construction must be inherently damaging for the environment. Here at the Midland Metro Alliance, our vision for sustainability is to be a global pioneer in sustainable practices through bold decision making. We put sustainability at the heart of everything we do and this project is not just about putting spades in the ground but supporting the communities across the West Midlands. There is still so much more we can do as an industry for both ourselves and our environment and we will continue to strive to add responsible and sustainable practices wherever we can."

In a further commitment to reducing its carbon footprint, all of the MMA's sites are now lit using solar energy with site cabins also running on the renewable resource. It is not just the construction activity where the alliance is helping to improve the environment as local biodiversity has also been protected, including recently building a bespoke badger sett to protect the animal's safety and wellbeing after the creatures were discovered close to the construction site.

Peter Cushing, Alliance Director, said: "We have already made such a significant difference in terms of the amount of carbon saved. As we celebrated Earth Day we pledge to minimise the impact we have on our local communities by ensuring we contribute towards reducing local air pollution."



**How can I get further
information?**

For further information or to view past issues
of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

 [company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)



Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY



Transport for
West Midlands

First meeting for 'green' citizens' panel

The first meeting has taken place of the West Midlands Combined Authority's (WMCA) newly formed Greener Together Citizens' Panel.

These community representatives from across the region will help the WMCA get a better understanding of the key environmental and energy challenges residents are facing, such as air quality and energy efficiency, and put forward their ideas on how to overcome them. Members include a full-time mother, a make-up artist, an NHS worker, a university student, and a health and wellbeing consultant.

In the coming months they will meet with regional experts in climate change and the environment and share their views and lived experiences as an important contribution to the 'greener' work the WMCA and its partners are already doing to create a sustainable and net zero carbon future for everyone.

The WMCA has a long-term commitment to the environment. The Natural Environment Plan sets out what needs to be done to enhance biodiversity, protect endangered species, and improve access to green spaces and waterways in support of the #WM2041 target of becoming a net zero region within the next 20 years.

Free Carbon Literacy Training is supporting residents to reduce their carbon footprint, and the Greener Together Forum regularly brings together people and organisations to share knowledge and collaborate in support of the environment.

Anyone interested in signing up for Carbon Literacy Training and attending the next Greener Together Forum meeting in June can register at www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/environment-and-energy/.



New powers and £1.5bn investment to level up the West Midlands

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) has negotiated a new Deeper Devolution Deal securing wide ranging new powers and a budget windfall in excess of £1.5 billion to level up the region.

Under the Deeper Devolution Deal – announced by Government in the Spring Budget – the WMCA has secured new and significant longer-term funding agreements including 100% business rates retention for ten years, worth £450 million.

It has also been confirmed the West Midlands will, from the next spending review, have a departmental-style arrangement with a single pot of funding negotiated with Government. This will give local leaders control over spending on devolved areas. This financial certainty will enable local authorities and the WMCA to better plan and fund transformative investment in our region to create a fairer, greener and better-connected West Midlands.

On transport infrastructure, there is a welcome future funding commitment for round two of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements, which will come online in 2027 and support major projects such as an expansion of the Metro network, new railway stations, and more dedicated bus and cycle lanes.

There is good news in the immediate term as well, with an additional £60 million which is expected to act as a springboard for delivery of the Metro extension between Dudley town centre and Brierley Hill, subject to approval of further funding by the WMCA Board.



**How can I get further
information?**

For further information or to view past issues
of the newsletter please visit:
www.metroalliance.co.uk

or email:
communications@metroalliance.co.uk

Alternatively, you can follow:

 [company/midland-metro-alliance](https://www.linkedin.com/company/midland-metro-alliance)
 [@midlandtram](https://twitter.com/midlandtram)
 [Midland Metro Alliance](https://www.facebook.com/MidlandMetroAlliance)
 [@midlandmetroalliance](https://www.instagram.com/midlandmetroalliance)