



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

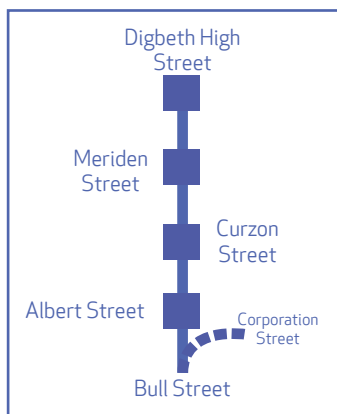
Eastside EDITION

ISSUE 16 NOV 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

Lower Bull Street reopened to buses and fencing was removed to reveal the new plants

Digbeth businesses were in the spotlight

Construction donations featured in street art exhibition

What you need to know

As progress for the Eastside Metro extension continues to move at pace, here are some snippets of important information that you might find useful. These are also covered in more detail throughout the newsletter, so, if you have more time read on to find out more.

Lower Bull Street area

- All construction has been completed and this section of the route has been handed over to Transport for West Midlands.

Moor Street Queensway, Park Street and Albert Street areas

- We are still progressing works to upgrade and divert utilities outside the Clayton Hotel
- There may be times when localised footpath closures are implemented whilst the work is underway.
- In nearby Dale End, preparation works are taking place ready for further construction activities in the coming months.

Digbeth High Street

- Our activity continues on the coach station side of the high street as we work to complete the new tramway.
- To allow these works to progress, a section of New Bartholomew Street (at its junction with Coventry Street), is closed to allow for further works to upgrade and divert the utilities in the area.
- Further work to complete some of the newly laid track has taken place. See page two for more.

These works are ever changing as progress continues on the project but we endeavor to keep you notified of any important changes. Remember, you can always get the latest information from the project, including photos and video progress updates, from our social media sites listed at the bottom of the page.

If you do have any questions in the meantime or would like to find out more about how the project is progressing then please don't hesitate to get in touch with me on the details below.

Tom Bissell, your dedicated Stakeholder Liaison Manager.



How can I get further information?

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Recent progress

Lower Bull Street

Construction in this section has now been completed. All the street furniture, including seating, has been installed. Pedestrians can now enjoy a larger and newly planted greenery.



Digbeth High Street

Work is underway on the High Street to install three new bus stops, while paving works are progressing, with works outside the Irish Centre set to be completed in the coming days.

Track work will continue with second stage concrete set to be poured on some of the newly laid rail from Mill Lane to Rea Street and from the switch and crossing (which will allow the tram to move tracks) to the Rea Bridge.

Stone preparation works have also taken place outside the Coach Station ready for the first set of concrete to be poured.



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Digbeth team uses largest pump in the UK to complete pour

It was all hands on deck as the largest pump in the UK arrived in Digbeth for the latest concrete pour on the High Street.

The 65-metre pump allowed the Eastside team to pour over 95 cubic metres of concrete on to tracks recently installed near to the Custard Factory.

Anthony Ralph, Track Supervisor, tells more in this short video.



Celebrating our cultural diversity during National Inclusion Week

We're proud of the cultural diversity within our workplace and to celebrate it our Eastside team enjoyed a special event aimed at raising awareness of equity, diversity and inclusion.

The event was held at our Oxford Street compound to mark National Inclusion Week, which aims to highlight the importance of inclusion in the workplace.

Staff celebrated by cooking and sharing dishes that hold a special cultural significance to them, while talks were also given on the important subject.



MMA celebrates Global Light Rail awards nod

In the last issue we told you that we had been shortlisted in the Global Light Rail Awards for the support we provide to local businesses – and we can now announce that we were highly commended for our initiatives.

We received the nod in the Best Customer Initiative category at the awards, dubbed the 'light rail Oscars', recognising our work in keeping stakeholders up to date on the Metro extension schemes, including the Eastside route. The award also recognised our collaborative work with our broadcast partners Local TV, to showcase some of the area's businesses, including Nortons, Hennessy's and the businesses within The Square.

The celebrations didn't end there as Hamish Falconer, Project Manager for the Eastside route, was highly commended in the Rising Star category, which shines a spotlight on the future talent within the light rail industry.

"I am delighted to have been highly commended in the Rising Star category at this year's Global Light Rail Awards. It's an honour to be presented with such a prestigious recognition."

Hamish Falconer, Project Manager

Hamish is also in the running for a similar accolade at the Building the Future Awards which celebrate young professionals in the construction industry. They are due to take place later this month.

"So much effort goes into keeping residents, businesses and the general public informed about our works with additional efforts undertaken to highlight that businesses, in particular, are open as usual. It is fantastic that this has been recognised by our industry at this year's Global Light Rail Awards."

Antony Lowbridge-Ellis, Head of Communications



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Blooming lovely! What a difference a touch of green makes

The new plants are starting to make a difference to Digbeth's High Street now that they have bloomed.

The shrubs, which were planted earlier in the summer, have settled into their new space; growing significantly over the last few months.

They can now be enjoyed in all their green glory by visitors and residents alike following the removal of the protective fencing.

Those visiting the High Street are being reminded to continue to be mindful of the planted area by sticking to the designated pedestrian walkways.

"It's fantastic to see the greenery that was planted earlier this year growing so well in their new Digbeth home. Green infrastructure such as this is so important to the environment as it helps promote biodiversity, remove particulate matter from the air and creates a sense of place. The new plants have certainly helped to transform the area."

Francesca DePetrìs, Sustainability Manager



Grads back commitment to reducing carbon footprint

As part of our commitment to reducing our carbon footprint during construction graduates working on the scheme will be exploring innovative solutions to help tackle climate change.

Ebrahim Khatri, Anthony Carter and Elliott Rockell will focus on carbon accounting for the dedicated corporate responsibility project they are required to complete as part of Colas Rail's graduate programme. They will collaborate to propose and put forward a system which will improve the way MMA monitors the carbon cost of materials and resources used on the Eastside extension.

Meanwhile, graduates Zaid Bangee and Ed Rymer will be focusing on working with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to help find ways to contribute to a cleaner Digbeth area.

"Carbon accounting offers a data-driven approach to measure, manage, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The urgency of addressing climate change cannot be overstated. As we witness the alarming consequences of global warming, the need for effective and comprehensive measures to reduce carbon emissions has become apparent. We hope after conducting trials we can put through a software that can tackle the issues associated with climate change"

Ebrahim Khatri

"It's so important for us to utilise new and emerging technologies as we work to reduce the environmental impact of designing and building the tramway. I am so proud of our graduates for recognising the significance of carbon reduction and look forward to working with them on this important project."

Maria Ion, Project Director



Staff roll up their sleeves in aid of charity

Green-fingered volunteers helped spruce up gardens at Acorns Children's Hospice.

The group of 14, which included 10 site operatives from the Eastside project, spent the day removing weeds, installing paving and clearing lawns to help revamp the all-important outdoor space in Birmingham.

The hospice team couldn't be happier with the results. A spokesperson said: "Our regular volunteers were so impressed with how hard the whole team worked all day. The gardens look fabulous."



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Plans brought forward to open first section of Birmingham Eastside Metro extension

A temporary Metro terminus will be installed next to Moor Street Queensway to accelerate delivery of tram services to the east of Birmingham city centre.

The full line to Digbeth is to open later than planned because construction work on the tram track through Curzon Street Station cannot begin until HS2 have handed over the site – which is not expected to be until 2026 at the earliest.

So regional transport bosses are now set to approve plans for a temporary stop and terminus, to open in 2025/26, which will offer seamless links between the tram and train and bus services at Moor Street Station and the Bus Mall, as well as offer a convenient stop for Birmingham City University and Millennium Point.

By this time West Midlands Metro service will have been extended as far as Dudley town centre helping connect more parts of the region via fast and frequent tram services.

Investment in Metro is part of the region's plans to encourage more use of sustainable public transport to cut traffic congestion and meet our #WM2041 target for a net zero carbon region within two decades.

The works will include a temporary stop outside the Clayton Hotel and infrastructure to allow trams to switch tracks at the terminus.



Funded by
UK Government

Free energy assessment

Decarbonisation Net Zero Programme

in affiliation with
Business Energy Advice Service



POWERED BY
LEVELLING
UP

Free energy assessments for SMEs

The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) is offering over 4,000 free energy assessments to small businesses across the West Midlands.

Businesses will receive tailored recommendations for reducing their energy use which will help drive down costs.

On completion of an assessment businesses can apply for grants of between £1,000 - £100,000 to implement their energy efficiency recommendations.

You can find out more and register for an assessment here: <https://orlo.uk/KosQM>



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Project Director shares alliancing best practice in Finland

The MMA's Project Director headed to Finland to share best practice at an infrastructure event.

Maria Ion spoke at the Sense of Infrastructure conference to share what we have learned while designing and delivering light rail extensions on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM).

The conference spot came in between two collaborative articles published by the organisers Destia in **August** and **October**, highlighting the impact of the West Midlands tramway expansion and what Finland's capital might learn from the UK's second city.

"It was an honour and an absolute pleasure to have the opportunity to share the experience of the MMA in expanding light rail infrastructure in the West Midlands."

Maria Ion, Project Director



Prestigious education accolade

Our Head of Engagement and Skills has been recognised for her work in inspiring the next generation into careers in construction at the prestigious Institution of Civil Engineers West Midlands Awards.

Rose Rees scooped the Bob Dunn Award for her tireless efforts to promote construction as an inclusive industry to schools and colleges across the region. The Award is presented in memory of the late Bob Dunn, who made an outstanding contribution to the promotion of civil engineering in the West Midlands.



See you in 2024

This will be our last issue of Eastside Edition for 2023. We're set to return with issue 17 in January but until then, we'd like to take this time to wish all of our readers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

You can continue to keep up to date on the project via our social channels, which can be found at the bottom of the page.



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