On 30th May 2016 the extension of the route to Grand Central Opened

Following the extensive highway works in Birmingham City Centre over a 3 year period, business's and retailers welcomed the site of trams being tested for a number of weeks in April 2016. The first trams heading towards Grand Central down Corporation Street was watched by many pedestrians. The immediate effect of seeing these sleek vehicles gliding through the streets gives the whole city a European vibe.

The Midland Metro services is now operating to Birmingham’s New Street station and enables passengers to transfer easily from the train to the more tram. During the peak times there is a 6 minute frequency.

The future is bright for the Midland Metro over the next 10 years the network is set to expand to include routes along Broad Street to Edgbaston, out to Eastside along Digbeth High Street, to Wolverhampton Railway Station and eventually Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and possibly all the way out to the Airport.

If you would like any further information about the Metro please visit our web site at metroalliance.co.uk

USEFUL INFORMATION

- Each tram is **33 metres long**
- Width **2.65 metres**
- Capacity **210 people** (54 seats)
- Accessibility completely low floor, **2 wheelchair spaces 6 doors**
- Km’s travelled per week is **37,301**
- Increased patronage since opening to Grand Central
- **26 stops**
- **22 km** length of route
The Existing Tram Network

The Midland Metro opened to the public in May 1999, with the original tram line largely following the Great Western railway route from Wolverhampton to Birmingham that was closed after the Beeching Cuts in 1964. Trams leave the former railway alignment at Priestfield, running on street along Bilston Road to a final stop at Wolverhampton St Georges.

Midland Metro is a popular commuter route and has established very high levels of reliability and punctuality. The route is an environmentally friendly electrically powered system.

Midland Metro links key areas along a busy transport corridor serving local centres on the way. Passenger satisfaction surveys confirm that our passengers see the tram as a speedy reliable form of public transport.

The extension which was completed by Balfour Beatty, and opened during May 2016. This development enables passengers to travel into the heart of Birmingham’s retail and business districts.

All of our 26 stops on the route are fully accessible, and the network serves vibrant and developing centres along the route including, Handsworth, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Bilston. All stops are well lit and are monitored by closed circuit television (CCTV). We have also worked with local authorities to ensure clear signage to and from our stops.

There are direct links via a help point intercom with the control room.

The Hawthorns stop serves the West Bromwich Football Stadium which is just a 5min walk. On Match days trams carry a number of supporters, bringing great economic benefit to the region.

Park and Ride facilities along the Midland Metro Routes enable passengers to easily catch a tram to complete their forward journey. 550 free car parking spaces, are located at four stops on the Metro line between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, namely The Hawthorns, Wednesbury Parkway, Black Lake and Priestfield. Plans are also being developed for a new Park and Ride at Bradley Lane.

With such huge benefits to the tram evident to key local stakeholders, funding was sought and gained to extend the tram in to Birmingham City Centre. The strong business case for this demonstrated how it is much more convenient for interchange for passengers to be able to get the tram right into the heart of the city, and to connect with the major rail hub at New Street station. This hugely improves accessibility to the rail network for many communities in the Black Country, with residents in West Bromwich able to be in the heart of the city within 20 minutes.

This extension required extensive highway works to be undertaken in Birmingham City Centre over a three year period. The first phase of this was the opening of Bull Street station as a temporary terminus during 2015, described by a Councillor as the first time we’ve seen trams operating into the city centre since 1954, clearly a momentous occasion for the city.

After a significant amount of work, local businesses were able to welcome the sight of the first trams operating along Corporation Street to Grand Central during April 2016. These trials were watched keenly by pedestrians, many of whom were asking numerous questions and demonstrating a clear interest in what the Metro has to offer for them.

One immediate impact of trams running through the city streets is to give the city much more of a European vibe, based as they are on shared space between pedestrians and public transport vehicles. A significant amount of work has been done to improve public familiarity with trams to ensure that risk of conflict between pedestrians and trams is minimised.

The extension of the route to Grand Central, serving Birmingham New Street station opened on 30 May 2016 and this makes interchange between Midland Metro and the national rail network much more seamless, not to mention improving the opportunities for residents of the Black Country to easily access the services and retail that Birmingham city centre has to offer. The route currently has a 6 minute frequency during peak times, ensuring that accessibility for passengers is high, and even off peak, services operate frequently and into the very late evening.

We are working to fit cutting edge battery technology to all Midland Metro trams. This will enable our Urbos 3 fleet to operate without the need for overhead line equipment to power them. This will be a first for the UK, but is in place in Bordeaux, and being developed elsewhere. This technology will enable trams to run without the need for overhead lines. This gives us great benefit, for example in architecturally sensitive areas or where it would be too expensive to install overhead power connections to existing building works. This technology will be ready for when the extension from Birmingham New Street to Centenary Square begin running in 2019.

During 2015-16, a total of 5.2 million passengers used the network between Birmingham and Wolverhampton. This is expected to rise significantly as the system continues to expand and serve more areas, and as interchange with other modes of public transport is greatly improved.