



Transport for
West Midlands



Midland
Metro Alliance

Connecting SANDWELL & DUDLEY

ISSUE 20 SEPTEMBER 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 strategy for this phase now agreed.

① What you need to know...

Here's a quick snapshot of some of the important information we think you need to know since our last edition, including project progress across Sandwell and Dudley, updates from our partners and some great news about phase two of the scheme.

If you want some more detailed information – read on as it's covered in the coming pages.

Wednesbury and the depot

The massive delta junction, which will allow the new route to connect with the existing line one, is seeing tremendous progress in Sandwell.

Alongside this activity, works to upgrade the Wednesbury depot are moving forward, too. You can find out more on both on [page two](#).

Dudley town centre

During the summer our team took delivery of more than 860 tonnes of steel for phase one of the route. You can read more about this, and how it fits in the Mayor of the West Midlands' pledge to use more British steel on [page three](#).

The rails are already being installed in Dudley town centre, specifically in the Flood Street area which will be the terminus for phase one of the route. There's more on this on [page two](#).

Funding strategy agreed for phase two of the extension to Brierley Hill...

Earlier in the summer, the West Midlands Combined Authority board approved a funding strategy for phase two of the route will see the tramway extended further to Brierley Hill at Merry Hill Waterfront.

Our colleagues at Transport for West Midlands and Dudley Council remain committed to continuing the extension further into Brierley Hill when additional funding becomes available.

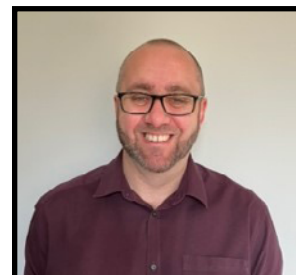
There's also been new images released showing what Dudley's new £24 million town centre interchange will look. You can see these, and find out more, over on [page four](#).

Don't forget, for the latest updates on progress for both phases of the route, you can stay up to date at any time by following us on Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram and now Threads, too, using the information listed below. You can also get in touch, too, via these platforms or the email address below.

Kind regards,

Tom Bissell,

Your dedicated Stakeholder Liaison Manager



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.

April – July: Tram stops started to take shape across Sandwell and the terminus of phase one of the route, in Dudley, started to see track laid following the delivery of more than 860 tonnes of steel rails. The Prime minister also visited our worksite in Dudley to see progress after pledging an additional £60m for the scheme.

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.

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.



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Delta and Depot progress

It's been a busy summer for our colleagues working in Sandwell!

Most recently, on our project to expand and future proof the existing West Midlands Metro depot in Wednesbury, the team have been completing drainage and ducting works in the southeast area of the site in Potters Lane and have been preparing for the construction of a retaining wall.



Changes have also been made to the existing depot building too in advance of updates to the exterior with an external staircase removed towards the end of last month.

Meanwhile, progress for the purpose-built structure which will connect the new extension to the current line one has been swift over the summer period with the structure almost completed.



You can follow the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill team over the last eleven months as they got to work building the massive structure which will help connect more of Sandwell to Dudley through the forthcoming Metro extension. Timelapse footage of the build so far has been released and you can view by scanning the QR code below: <https://tinyurl.com/4haj8n6y>



Track laying in Dudley town centre reaches King Street

It's not only Sandwell which has seen massive summer of delivery progress with the end of phase one of the route in Dudley town centre really take shape in recent weeks.

Track laying got underway in Flood Street (you can read more about the delivery of British steel for the route in the story on the next page) and this has now reached Flood Street's junction with King Street where construction has been ongoing since late spring. Elsewhere in King Street, more of the site has been prepared for track laying with kerbing installed with tram stop construction activity underway outside of Churchill Shopping Centre.



King Street businesses open as usual

Please note, activity already underway at the King Street / Flood Street junction (described on previous pages) will be extended.

Traffic arrangements currently in place will continue until December to allow for the work to be completed safely and due to a delay in relevant materials arriving at site.

Traffic will continue to flow in both directions along King Street East, before being diverted onto Flood Street. Access to all frontages on King Street West, and the service yard for Churchill Shopping Centre, will continue to be maintained at all times.

There's a variety of independently run businesses in the area who are all open as usual as we're continuing to build the Metro in the area.



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Mayor of the West Midlands pledges to buy British steel as rails for Metro scheme arrive

The Mayor of the West Midlands, Andy Street, has signed up to the UK steel charter, in a historic move to promote UK-made steel in the region and support the economy.

As the first metro Mayor in the UK to sign the charter, Mayor Street said that there were "lots of opportunities" for West Midlands-based firms to purchase domestic steel and has called for firms to commit themselves "wherever possible" to UK steel jobs.

His pledge comes after the Metro Midland Alliance received an order of 860 tonnes of UK-made steel which will be used in the expansion of the Metro line between Wednesbury and Brierley Hill.

Colleagues recently visited British Steel's manufacturing facilities in Scunthorpe to review and approve the manufacturing processes and product quality for the more than 21,000 metres of 39E1 flat bottom which have been successfully manufactured and delivered to the project.



Safe storage and handling of such a huge quantity of rail is a challenge, but all rails were delivered during the summer and these have begun to be installed in Flood Street in Dudley Town Centre in the past few weeks.

"By signing the UK Steel Charter, we're signalling our commitment to back British steel supporting well paid and highly skilled manufacturing jobs and training opportunities that will benefit local people right across our region. This initiative can help to increase the amount of high-quality steel manufactured in Britain and increase the supply of British made steel contributing to key West Midlands projects. I very much hope our decision will encourage others to follow suit – impacting positively on the supply chain, our region and indeed the wider UK economy in the months and years ahead."

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands



Dudley's fantastic attractions offer some great days out this autumn...

During the summer, the fantastic Black Country Living Museum expanded and opened it's 1940s to 1960s street offering new stories and opportunities to learn about the region's existing past.

We caught up with the team at the museum to learn more about these new experiences and why there's never been a better time to step back in time with a visit to the Dudley landmark.

And for the animal enthusiasts out there, don't miss out on Dudley Zoo's efforts to inspire visitors on caring for animals and conservation.

Find out more on both attractions and get inspired for a fun autumn afternoon out using our handy video: <https://tinyurl.com/2p8dp8xx>



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Learn more about how we source products for Metro route

Have you ever wondered how we source products, resources and services for building the Metro? If so, you've got a chance to learn more!

Throughout August we shone a spotlight on our talented procurement team, including Rachael and Jatinder who specifically work to support the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill delivery team.

You can hear the duo talking about their role in this short video:

<https://tinyurl.com/2d7pv2kf>



Alliance in the running for prestigious gong

The MMA's initiatives to support businesses during construction will be in the spotlight at this year's Global Light Rail Awards.

We have been nominated in the Best Customer Initiative category for our work in keeping stakeholders up to date on the Metro extension schemes as well as the support we provide, in collaboration with our broadcast partners Local TV, to showcase some of the region's businesses.

The awards, which are the light rail industry's highest profile ceremony and take place in early October, recognise the excellence of organisations in working in both the development of future Metro schemes, day-to-day operations and the future-proofing of existing routes.



New images released showing how Dudley's £24 million transport interchange is set to look

New artists impressions have been released showing how Dudley's new £24 million bus and Metro interchange will look. The building will connect Metro and bus journeys together for people visiting and travelling through the town.

The interchange is set to replace the current bus station in the town centre and work on the new structure may begin as soon as winter 2023. During construction activity, temporary bus stops will be provided in the town centre to maintain provision of services.

Funded largely through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement – formerly the Transforming Cities Fund – the project is part of the local authority's ambitious £1bn regeneration programme for the borough.

To see more images of the interchange, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/2zt2a3yv>

"The current bus station in Dudley is one of the most well-used in the region, but is tired and no longer fit for purpose. These new pictures show what a transformation this new interchange will bring – a clean, attractive, modern new space to help people get around the borough and the region. We hope to see work start in the winter and it is a key part of our £1 billion regeneration programme to change the skyline of Dudley forever and make it a more attractive place to work, live, and visit."

**Councillor Patrick Harley, leader of
Dudley Council**



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New West Midlands Metro extension to Wolverhampton Railway Station opens on Sunday

Passenger tram services on the new West Midlands Metro extension in Wolverhampton City Centre are set to begin from this Sunday, 17 September.

The £50 million extension creates two new tram stops at Pipers Row and Wolverhampton Railway Station, offering seamless connections to bus and train services helping to create a major public transport hub for the city.

It means passenger services will be restored to the city centre following the completion of driver familiarisation – the final stage in testing and preparing the new extension.

The development has been led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), working with construction and design partner Midland Metro Alliance, operator Midland Metro Ltd and the City of Wolverhampton Council.



Services are expected to return to the current St Georges terminus later this autumn after the team from the Midland Metro Alliance completes systems integration activities and street scene improvements there over the coming weeks. Once opened, services will alternate between St Georges, which serves the shopping district, and Wolverhampton Railway Station. This means trams will run in and out of Wolverhampton every seven to eight minutes throughout the day.

New £2.4m sustainable transport hub to pave the way for Dudley Port station revamp

Proposals to upgrade one of the West Midlands' most outdated railway stations are being worked up as part of a £2.4 million scheme to improve passenger experience, access and transport links.

Plans are now under development to create a Dudley Port Interchange Hub to make the railway station more welcoming, connect to the new Metro and further enhance road, bus, cycling and walking links, supporting the wider regeneration of the area.

The funding will also be used to kick off development of the business case for the full redevelopment of Dudley Port Railway Station – currently one of the region's busiest without step-free access. This would then be used to lever in the substantial funding required to deliver a full redevelopment.

The interchange is set to include:

- New lift and stair access from the Metro stop to the station entrance - being delivered as part of the Metro extension
- Improved walking routes between bus, tram and rail
- A much-improved walkway from Park Lane East to the station, including removal of steps on the existing footbridge
- Enhanced lighting and CCTV coverage
- Improved walking and cycling links from nearby residential areas
- Improved landscaping, public spaces and passenger information signs transforming the environment of Station Drive
- Enhanced live travel information boards for bus, rail and Metro
- Electric vehicle charging points



These works are due to be completed by the end of 2024. A second phase of works, due for delivery by March 2027, will see additional high-quality walking and cycling links to the station.



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