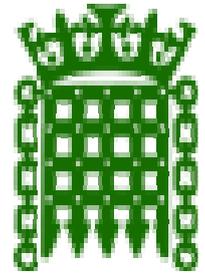


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All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

"The past we inherit, the future we build"
Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration



All systems go for Midland Metro to New Street station



Press release

24.04.2016

The Midland Metro is set to run to New Street station in Birmingham city centre from May 22. Trams will begin operating a full passenger service on the extension between Snow Hill station and New Street station via Bull Street and Corporation Street.

The development comes following electrical safety checks and test runs in the early hours of Sunday morning by Centro, the delivery arm of the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority.

This meeting by invitation only, where MPs, Stakeholders etc., within the Light Rail industry and invited members of the Public will have a chance to discuss debate and raise questions concerning Light Rail & Trams.

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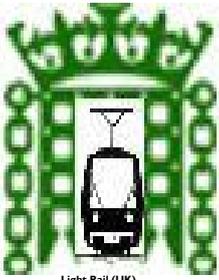
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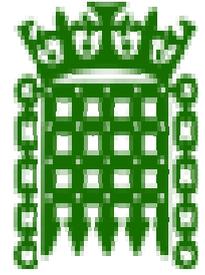


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The Midland Metro makes a successful test run along Corporation Street in Birmingham city centre. The results are now being reviewed by Centro and Network Rail and, subject to any last minute issues being identified which would set the date back, on-street driver training will commence ahead of a full service beginning on May 22.

Centro's Midland Metro programme director Phil Hewitt said: "This was the last big hurdle to overcome. "Now that we have completed these crucial trials we are in the final preparations to start services down to New Street and Grand Central, with all the benefits that will bring to Birmingham city centre and the wider West Midlands economy."

Ben Ackroyd, director of Midland Metro, which operates the tram on behalf of Centro, said: "This is great news for passengers.

"Our Midland Metro drivers are keen to start running the trams all the way down to New Street. They have been already learning the route on our simulator in the depot at Wednesbury.

"In the next few weeks, the public will see our drivers out in the training tram, getting ready to carry passengers on May 22."

Centro was given the green light in February by Network Rail to take possession of New Street station over this weekend to run stringent testing of electrical systems along the new route.

This was to ensure the Metro's systems do not interfere with those controlling trains using New Street and vice versa.

There then followed a series of test runs by a tram between Bull Street and Stephenson Street, starting off at walking pace then gradually getting faster until it was running at normal operational speed.

Trams returned to the streets of Birmingham for the first time in more than 60 years last December when the Metro started running to the new stop in Bull Street.

Work began on the 1.2km scheme (0.6 miles) in 2012 and it was originally scheduled to open by December 2015.

The extension is part of a £128 million project which has seen the introduction of a new fleet of 21 Urbos 3 trams, a refurbished depot at Wednesbury and a new stop at Snow Hill station.

It is expected to boost the West Midlands economy by more than £50 million a year and create 1,300 new jobs.

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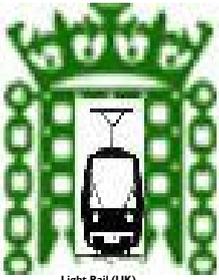
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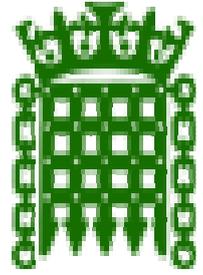
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The Midland Metro runs between Birmingham and Wolverhampton, serving locations such as the Jewellery Quarter, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Bilston, and will deliver more than three million people a year directly into the heart of Birmingham's main shopping district.

Meanwhile work has already begun on extending the route on from New Street Station to Centenary Square with services expected to start running in 2019. Another extension through Wolverhampton city centre to the bus and railway stations is also expected to be completed in 2019.

Funding has also been earmarked to take trams further along Broad Street, past Five Ways and on to Edgbaston.

The route of another extension through Digbeth has also been finalised, running from Bull Street via Albert Street and on to the forthcoming HS2 high speed rail station at Curzon Street. From there it would go along New Canal Street and Meriden Street into High Street Deritend, stopping at Digbeth Coach Station and the Custard Factory.

It is anticipated the line could be open by 2023.

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