

# **Next phase of Digbeth tram extension begins**

The next phase of the West Midlands Metro extension in Birmingham city centre has begun as preparations begin to lay track in Digbeth.

The Eastside extension will connect the district with the HS2 station in Curzon Street and the business district at Bull Street via four new stops.

After months of infrastructure work on creating new pavements, cycle lanes and reshaping the northern side of Digbeth High Street, construction activity will now switch to the opposite side of the busy thoroughfare.

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All traffic travelling in and out of the city will now use the new carriageway laid as part of the overall scheme, with the opposite side of the road adjacent to the coach station to be

changed into a segregated tramway and pedestrian and public boulevard.

Construction for the extension has been ongoing on the Custard Factory side of Digbeth High Street and surrounding side streets since spades hit the ground in summer 2021.

There has also been work on utility upgrades, diversions, the installation of the first section of rail and the demolition of the Hartwell building.

The project has not been without controversy though as businesses have complained about the impact of the work on their trade with one, bar and barbershop Stag in the Custard Factory, [describing the works as “hell” after closing down.](#)

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Michael Anderson, metro programme director at Transport for

West Midlands, said: “It is great to see construction on the Eastside extension moving in the right direction.

“As with most construction projects of this kind, it has not come without its challenges but the completion of the main urban realm activity marks a new and exciting phase of this ambitious scheme and welcome improvement for business and residents in the area with a new and open aspect to Digbeth High Street.

“It means that the team can start to prepare for track to be laid on the opposite side of the High Street which is when the extension will really start to take shape.

“This project will be a game-changer for those living, working and visiting the Eastside of the city as its links with HS2 will help improve connectivity in the Digbeth area as well as to other parts of the region.”

Following the completion of the main urban realm works, all significant fencing on the northern side of High Street has now been removed while side streets have reopened, except Meriden Street where further construction activity including track laying will take place.

Other works have been taking place elsewhere as part of the Eastside extension in Lower Bull Street and Dale End, including the [demolition of the old McDonald's building to make way for the new track.](#)

Rose Rees, head of engagement and skills at Midland Metro Alliance, added: “We understand that our works can cause disruption to nearby businesses and I would like to thank them all for their patience and understanding. Our dedicated stakeholder liaison officer for the route will continue to have a presence in the area and will be on hand to provide support where needed.”

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