

Coventry Very Light Rail major milestone

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Coventry Very Light Rail has taken a significant step forward with the completion of the construction of a test site for its unique track system at the Council's Whitley Depot facility.

By installing a short section of track at Whitley Depot, the team will be able to measure its performance under extreme conditions. Vibration sensors that take measurements 10 times a second have been installed at locations along the track, and weight-in-motion sensors will weigh vehicles while they move across the track.

This data will be collected for a year and fed into a 'digital twin' computer model, allowing the Council's innovation partners, WMG at the University of Warwick, to evaluate the performance of the track over time.

Councillor Jim O'Boyle, cabinet member for jobs, regeneration and climate change, said: "The tracks we've installed here at Whitley Depot represent hundreds of hours of innovation that have taken place right here in Coventry. They were designed from day one to minimise disruption to people and businesses, and we're excited to see their strength demonstrated in a real-world environment. Our own Council road team laid them too - which is great and supports our aim of ensuring CVLR creates and safeguards jobs in our city.

"Transport innovation has the opportunity to really support a zero carbon economy and Coventry is leading the green industrial revolution. Not only will we be the UK's first all-electric bus city, we have already

installed more electric vehicle charge points than anywhere outside London, and we're investing in new fully segregated cycleways to give more people greener options to move about our city."

Alongside a zero emission, battery powered vehicle, the Coventry Very Light Rail project has developed an innovative new track which is much thinner than tracks used in existing light rail systems, while being just as strong. This means it can be laid just 30cm deep into the surface of the road, reducing the need to divert pipes and cables, which can add significant cost and time delays to light rail projects.

The Whitley Depot track test site is part of a comprehensive range of testing planned to demonstrate the longevity of this track. A length of track has been laid at the University of Warwick to test installation, and we will soon be installing our track at the Very Light Rail National Innovation Centre in Dudley to test the Coventry Very Light Rail vehicle on the track for the first time.

Photo credit: Coventry City Council