

Early construction of prototype innovative light rail vehicle for the City of Coventry

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The Coventry Very Light Rail (VLR) is an innovative light rail system which will be battery powered, lightweight and rail-based.

In March 2019 a [3D simulation of the vehicle was released](#), and even with COVID-19 lockdowns, the vehicle build is progressing on schedule at NP Aerospace in Coventry.

On the 25th November Coventry City Councillor Jim O'Boyle, Coventry Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, took the opportunity to see how the construction of the prototype, developed by engineers at WMG, University of Warwick for the City of Coventry is progressing.

WMG, University of Warwick have been working with TDI (Transport Design International) to deliver the novel very light rail vehicle, which as demonstrated in the photos is swiftly reaching completion with the driver's desk and other sub systems now in place. The vehicle is expected to be finished in February 2021 ready for testing at the new rail innovation centre in Dudley.

Dr James Meredith, from WMG at the University of Warwick comments: "WMG are delighted that the

vehicle build is running on plan in spite of COVID-19. The project is an excellent showcase for UK engineering and manufacturing with over 70 % UK content. We look forward to testing the vehicle in 2021 alongside the innovative low cost trackform we are developing in parallel.”

Cllr Jim O’Boyle, Coventry Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration, said: “It is very exciting to see the VLR prototype take shape and for the project to take another big step towards becoming a reality.

“VLR will make a massive difference to our city, revolutionising travel and helping the environment. It will help keep our city at the forefront of the new transport industry and help us to attract new firms and jobs to take the city forward. It also helps cement our position at the centre of the green revolution with work such as UK Battery Innovation Centre.

“There has been some amazing work by all the project partners in some very difficult times and I can’t wait to see the next stages and watch it come out of the design rooms and on to our city’s streets.”

Darren Smith, Head of TDI comments: “TDI are extremely pleased with the progress to date on the project and are looking forward to delivering the vehicle to our client in early 2021, so that it can begin its testing phase at the new VLRIC in Dudley. The teams involved in the delivery process across our full supply chain have worked tremendously hard, under difficult circumstances this year and I would like to thank them all for their efforts.”

James Kempston, CEO NP Aerospace, comments: “It’s great to see the progress that has been made on the Very Light Rail project at our facility in Coventry at a time when all businesses are feeling the pressure of the pandemic. The platform will offer significant benefits for local people and the wider economy and we are honoured to have been selected to be part of the project. The team have worked very hard to ensure a high level of build quality and we are looking forward to the final release of the vehicle early next year. It is also very encouraging to be part of a development which will have a significant environmental impact.”

Photo credit: Mark Radford Photography

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