

# First tram runs on new Metro route as testing and commissioning underway in Wolverhampton

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A tram travelled along Pipers Row and Railway Drive for the first time last night as testing for the Wolverhampton City Centre Metro extension got underway.

Flanked by a team of engineers, the tram made its way from The Royal tram stop on the current network, through Pipers Row to the end of the new line at Wolverhampton's revitalised railway station, marking the start of testing and commissioning of the newly laid track.

Further trials will now see trams running across the route over the coming weeks in preparation for the much-anticipated launch of passenger services later this June.

Peter Cushing, director of the Midland Metro Alliance (MMA), which is designing and delivering the extension on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), said: "It is fantastic that the first tram has now travelled along new tracks in Wolverhampton. This shows just how close we are to handing the route over to the operator for further testing and familiarisation. The first tram test has proved a success and I would

like to thank the team who have worked incredibly hard to reach this important phase in the project.”

The Wolverhampton City Centre Metro extension has been constructed in phases by the Midland Metro Alliance as part of the Wolverhampton Interchange Project. The initial phase of activity in Pipers Row wrapped up in 2019 and construction in Railway Drive got underway following the complete re-build of the city’s railway station in 2021.

Once the route is open to the public later this spring, services will call at two additional tram stops at Wolverhampton Station and on Pipers Row connecting Metro with heavy rail and bus services helping to make multi-modal journeys faster and more accessible.

As well as providing the opportunity for the vital testing of tracks, signals and other infrastructure, the extensive testing programme also allows people to get used to trams travelling at low speeds in new areas of the city centre ahead of services opening to the public.

Paul Georges, Testing and Commissioning Manager at MMA, said: “Testing and commissioning is an important phase which involves running out of service trams, from a walking pace up to operational speed, along the newly installed track, allowing engineers to complete a series of tests in a working environment, making sure the new infrastructure is both safe and reliable. I am delighted that we have now reached this essential phase in the project.”

Midland Metro Alliance and West Midlands Metro have also released a series of safety videos as tram movements intensify ahead of the opening.

The videos, which feature city ambassadors from the Enjoy Wolverhampton Business Improvement district, illustrate simple tips to keep people living, working or visiting the city centre safely as trams begin moving in new areas. Videos feature topics including advice for cyclists and to keep alert when using mobile phones or headphones close to the tramway, as well as reminding the travelling public of the correct way to cross Metro tracks.

The videos will appear on local television station, Local TV, and are available on the Midland Metro Alliance website. The companies will also be sharing snippets from the footage across social media.

Accompanying safety postcards have also been distributed to travel shops, offices and businesses in the city centre by the alliance’s Stakeholder Liaison Officers ahead of trams becoming much more visible along new areas of the route.

Antony Lowbridge-Ellis, head of communications at the Midland Metro Alliance, said: “Trams travel across city streets all across the world and it’s a really safe method of public transport. With the Wolverhampton City Centre Metro extension preparing to open, trams will be moving more regularly in places they previously haven’t as the testing programme continues. Ahead of the route opening later in the spring it is important for people to stay alert by following the tips in the videos.”

For any further information about the testing programme, including the video content and any traffic or pedestrian changes following construction completion, please visit: [www.metroalliance.co.uk](http://www.metroalliance.co.uk).

*Photo credit: Midland Metro Alliance*