

# Midland Metro Alliance celebrates Earth Day by highlighting sustainability initiatives

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The Midland Metro Alliance is highlighting its longstanding commitment to helping improve the environment as it celebrates Earth Day.

To mark the international initiative, which is held on 22 April annually, the Midland Metro Alliance (MMA) is celebrating the contributions it has made to sustaining and improving the planet through the implementation of a number of carbon initiatives.

The alliance, which is building a number of tram extensions across the region on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), has committed to reducing its carbon footprint during construction to help protect the environment and maintain biodiversity.

It is already contributing to the reduction of CO2 emissions by building a sustainable mode of transport, helping to reduce the negative impacts on the environment by improving air quality and reducing atmospheric pollution. The Metro extensions will also allow more people to use this mode of transport for day-to-day travel, further reducing congestion, while helping to achieve a modal shift from private car use.

Its efforts to help improve the environment have seen renewable fuels being used to power all of its sites and machinery, saving an estimated 1,982 tonnes of tCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2022; the equivalent of the emissions a diesel car would produce when travelling the circumference of the earth almost 300 times.

Earlier this year, carbon reducing concrete was used on significant concrete pours for the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill and Birmingham Eastside Metro extensions. This low-carbon fibre reinforcement concrete is a by-product of the manufacturing process for iron and steel and includes 50 per cent Ground Granulated Blast Furnace Slag (GBBFS), a compound which allows less traditional concrete without a compromise on quality.

Francesca DePetris, Sustainability Manager, said: “There’s an incorrect view that construction must be inherently damaging for the environment. Here at the Midland Metro Alliance, our vision for sustainability is to be a global pioneer in sustainable practices through bold decision making. We put sustainability at the heart of everything we do and this project is not just about putting spades in the ground but supporting the communities across the West Midlands. There is still so much more we can do as an industry for both ourselves and our environment and we will continue to strive to add responsible and sustainable practices wherever we can.”

In a further commitment to reducing its carbon footprint, all of the MMA’s sites are now lit using solar energy with site cabins also running on the renewable resource. It is not just the construction activity where the alliance is helping to improve the environment as the recent planting of new greenery, including trees, plants and shrubs, along Digbeth High Street will also contribute to a greener Birmingham.

The theme of Earth Day 2022 is Invest in Our Planet and this important topic within sustainability is also being considered in the MMA’s construction output. Local biodiversity has been protected in a number of ways during construction, including recently building a bespoke badger sett to protect the animal’s safety and wellbeing after the creatures were discovered close to the construction site.

Peter Cushing, Alliance Director, said: “We have already made such a significant difference in terms of the amount of carbon saved. To celebrate Earth Day we pledge to continue to minimise the impact we have on our local communities by ensuring we contribute towards reducing local air pollution.”

*Photo credit: Midland Metro Alliance*