

# MP meets Pre Metro to help progress the Dudley Dasher scheme

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Pre Metro, the operators of the Stourbridge Shuttle, have met with Dudley South MP, Mike Wood, to discuss the next steps for financing the Dudley Dasher.

The proposed passenger service between Stourbridge and Brierley Hill is still one of the major priorities for the Pre Metro team, and the local train operator is hoping to announce a breakthrough with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) soon.

During the meeting, the Dudley South MP reaffirmed his support for Pre Metro's proposal and said he would help the team meet with WMCA Leader Andy Street. Pre Metro hope that Street, who previously visited Pre Metro during the 2021 Mayoral Elections, will support the project's research with financing from the City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme (CRSTS).

Pre Metro has said about £70,000 would fund the research to prove the viability of the Dasher, establish the expected number of passengers and outline the work required to segregate the line.

Pre Metro's operations director, Steve Jasper, said: "Whilst this is a small amount of the CRSTS, it

establishes the foundations for an affordable and logical integration of rail, connecting Stourbridge to the Dudley to Brierley Hill Metro extension.”

“This scheme is but one of the many building blocks we will need to meet the continuing demand for new, quality homes, services, and jobs. We believe it will help the region meet those future challenges. With our current patronage beginning to hit previous levels within Stourbridge, now is the time to plan for further growth.”

The Dasher would utilise one of the two existing heavy rail lines between Stourbridge and the Round Oak Steel Works to provide a dedicated passenger service that would help customers access places like Amblecote, Brettell Lane, Merry Hill and Brierley Hill town centre.

Dudley South MP, Mike Wood, said: “Work on the Wednesbury to Brierley Hill Metro extension is now firmly underway, so I think it’s only sensible that we work with partners such as Pre Metro to identify ways of further expanding the local Light Rail network to better connect our towns.

“Connecting Brierley Hill and Stourbridge using the Dasher would help people get around the local area – relieving some of the pressure off our busy roads and potentially offering a further boost to our towns. This would be good for local people and good for the local economy.”

With the Midland Metro linking Brierley Hill from the Dudley side, the link would provide connectivity from mainline heavy rail services at Stourbridge Junction through to Light Rail Metro services at Brierley Hill.

The Pre Metro team is already engaging with vehicle manufacturers, the West Midlands Rail Executive and Network Rail, saying it believes the project will be proven a quick-win scheme and hopes services can be operational within a two-year time frame.