

## The Stourbridge Dasher now looking for alternative funding opportunities.

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A proposed passenger service between Stourbridge and Brierley Hill is now looking for alternative funding.

Proposed by local train operating company Pre Metro, The Stourbridge Dasher had sought support from the Department for Transport's (DfT's) '*Restoring Your Railway*' scheme. However, the DfT determined that the service was suitable for local funding sources rather than the national '*Restoring Your Railway*' campaign.

The '*Dasher*' looks to use a low-cost light rail vehicle, offering a value-for-money passenger service which takes advantage of existing railway infrastructure. It could also see new station stops added at Brierley Hill and at the Waterfront to provide passengers with easier access to office complexes and hospitality businesses.

Recent surveys and studies carried out by Oakham Research and Pre Metro said 87% of locals were in favour of the proposed service being introduced to the line.

Having now received feedback from the Government's Department for Transport, the service was deemed

to be compelling, with strong links in the local and regional context.

Managing director at Pre Metro, Phil Evans, said: “We’ve proved VLR to be the most reliable, frequent, and value for money option for short passenger services – and schemes like ours will truly fulfil the aim of creating accessibility across Dudley.

“In light of the recent ‘Restoring Your Railway’ results, we want to let local residents know that the proposed passenger service between Stourbridge and Brierley Hill is still one of our major priorities.

“We would like to thank the DfT for their consideration and feedback of the project. We also want to thank Stourbridge MP Suzanne Webb for her continued support for the bid and for our existing Stourbridge Shuttle operations.

“We will now reevaluate our funding plans and establish the next steps for this project with feedback from our supporters and local policy makers.”

The local train operating company says it is determined to push forward with their objective to connect Stourbridge to Brierley Hill, with the support of MPs Suzanne Webb and Mike Wood.

The next steps have yet to be announced, but Pre Metro will now likely look for support from the West Midlands Combined Authority to support feasibility studies and establish a business case for the ‘Dasher’.

*Image credit: Pre Metro*