

# West Midlands dominate light rail 'Oscars' with eleven nominations

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Metro development and operations in the West Midlands are in the worldwide spotlight after it was announced that the region's expanding tram network has picked up eleven nominations from the judging panel of the 2021 Global Light Rail Awards.

The awards, which are the industry's highest profile ceremony, recognise the excellence of organisations in working in both the development of future Metro schemes, day-to-day operations and the future-proofing of existing routes.

The Midland Metro Alliance (MMA), which is planning and delivering a number of tramway extensions on behalf of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), is recognised in five categories, including:

- Significant Safety Initiative – for the continued development and use of a safety “close call” app, designed to keep workers working on the extension projects safe;
- Outstanding Engineering Achievement – recognising the complexity of the design and delivery of work currently underway in Birmingham City Centre on a ‘Delta Junction’ allowing trams to travel in six different directions;
- Team of the Year – for the workers who have helped keep the Birmingham Westside Metro extension to Edgbaston, which has been primarily built during the national lockdowns;
- Project of the Year – again, recognising the delivery of the second phase of the Birmingham Westside route which is on schedule to open at the end of this year.

There were celebrations for Metro operations, too, with Midland Metro Limited (MML), the operator of West Midlands Metro, chosen as finalists in six categories, including the coveted ‘Operator of the Year’ and ‘Most Improved System’.

It is also in the running for:

- Best Customer Initiative for its response to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Technical Innovation of the Year following the introduction of the world’s first 5G connected tram
- Employee of the Year – Crew Supervisor Dan Jordan

Sophie Allison, Metro Commercial Director, commented: “It is fantastic to see West Midlands Metro represented in so many award categories, and a reflection of all the hard work and dedication of our team over the past twelve months. In the face of many challenges resulting from the coronavirus pandemic, they’ve worked tirelessly towards our aim of delivering a safe and secure, reliable and sustainable service for the thousands of people who rely on us every day.”

In all, Midland Metro Alliance and Midland Metro Limited were nominated in ten of the 16 categories shortlisting entries, with the close partners only competing against each other in one category, *Rising Star of the Year*, which sees MMA’s Birmingham Eastside Metro extension Project Manager, Marta Gasch Bielsa, and MML’s Management Information System (AMIS) Implementation Lead, Andrew Leville, both picked as finalists.

Michael Anderson, TfWM’s Metro Programme Director, added: “The region’s Metro is definitely in the spotlight at our industry’s ‘Oscars’. It is a great honour as the Global Light Rail Awards is an important event that celebrates excellence the tramway operation and development across the world. Alongside some fantastic technical achievements for innovations like 5G and work which is underway to turn our line into a fully-fledged network, we’re delighted that our route which will open later this year is shortlisted, too, but especially pleased that people have been recognised in a number of individual and team categories, too, along with the important work to keep both our staff, and the public safe, in two separate entries recognising safety.”

The Global Light Rail Awards 2021 will be taking place on Wednesday 6 October in London. For more information on the awards, you can visit the [ceremony’s website](#).

*Photo credit: Midland Metro Alliance*