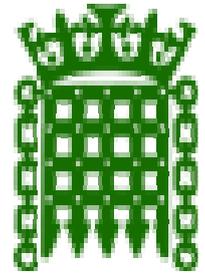


Light Rail (UK)

All Party Parliamentary Light Rail Group

House of Commons London SW1A 0AA

"The past we inherit, the future we build"
Trams – Catalysts for Jobs, Renewal & Regeneration



West Midlands ultra light rail link bids for EU funding



01.06.15

A bid for £13.9m of EU money has been launched to help fund a new ultra light rail link in the West Midlands.

RTM previously reported on the plans to create a new ultra light rail service between Dudley and Sandwell. It would transport passengers from Dudley Port station in Tipton to the site of Dudley's former station at the bottom of Castle Hill, close to Dudley Zoo and the Black Country Living Museum. There are also plans to then extend the light rail service towards Dudley bus station.

The total cost of the project, which is being developed jointly by Dudley Council and WMG (Warwick Manufacturing Group) at the University of Warwick, is £27.8m. A bid for £13.9m has been made to the European Regional Development Fund, which would join £4.5m already secured through the Local Growth Fund.

The rest of the cost is to be met by private investment.

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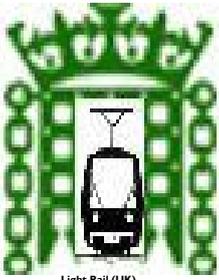
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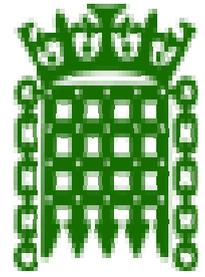


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WVG wants to use the scheme as a pilot to trial the next generation of very light rail vehicles. The group won funding last year as part of the Revolution Very Light Rail (VLR) Consortium to develop ultra light rail vehicles under the Enabling Innovation Team's (now FutureRailway) Radical Train competition.

The project includes a new multi-storey National Centre For Development of Very Light Rail Technology at the new station. Around 45 people would work at the site, overseeing the trial service and developing the technology.

It's hoped the passenger service could open within the next five years.

CLlr Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for regeneration, told the Express and Star: "We have now made a bid for £13.9m of funding through the European Regional Development Fund to fund half of the estimated £27.8m it will cost to make our exciting Very Light Rail innovation centre a reality.

"If successful, this money would supplement the £4.5m already offered through the Local Growth Fund which will leave us with £9.4m to find from third party private sector investors.

"The ERDF aspect of the scheme would support the creation of an innovation centre for this new technology while the wider scheme will also help bring Dudley back onto the national rail network by connecting the town back to Dudley Port."

The plan would see two new tracks laid down on a disused freight line from Dudley Port to the town. The first will be used for the passenger service, the second will be used by the group to develop the ultra light rail vehicles.

The group and council have secured support from Centro, the Black Country Living Museum and Dudley Zoo.

Dudley station was closed to passengers around 60 years ago and the line to Dudley Port was then used as a freight line until the 1980s before being mothballed.

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