

## Dudley Metro Line Error Won't Cost Local Taxpayers

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An engineering error along the West Midlands Metro extension in Dudley will not require funding from local council taxpayers to fix, officials confirmed.

The issue arose near the Very Light Rail (VLR) National Innovation Centre, where rail tracks were incorrectly installed. Once the temporary road surface was removed, it became clear

that the tracks were at the wrong level, posing a potential risk to the Metro line's progress. The estimated repair cost is £350,000.

Dudley Council had initially approved a contribution of £100,000 toward the repair. However, councillors were recently informed that the full amount will now be covered by alternative funding sources. This decision was revealed during a meeting of the Communities and Growth Scrutiny Committee on July 21.

Nick McGurk, group director of communities and growth at Dudley Council, confirmed that the funding will be provided through the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), a government-backed grant aimed at improving regional transport infrastructure.

He explained: "The combined authority reviewed a funding line for Dudley Metro interface works, which included the VLR service road issue, and determined CRSTS funding would cover the costs."

Committee member Councillor Steve Edwards asked how such a mistake had occurred. Mr McGurk responded that the cause remained unclear: "In this industry, when works are carried out years apart, mistakes do happen. I don't know any specific reason why this occurred."

Despite the oversight, officials reassured residents that it would not delay phase one of the Metro line extension, which is scheduled for completion in autumn 2025. This phase will connect Dudley with the existing line between Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

Once completed, attention will turn to phase two, which will extend the Metro line to the Merry Hill Centre, one of the region's major retail destinations.

The repair will be completed using ring-fenced transport funds and will not draw from Dudley Council's core budget, relieving pressure on local taxpayers and allowing the broader Metro expansion to stay on track.