

## Clegg Wins £16m Dudley Very Light Rail Centre Contract



Clegg Construction has won the job to build a national innovation and test centre in Dudley to develop the next generation of Very Light Rail coaches. The proposed centre will be located at Castle Hill in Dudley.

The project will put Dudley at the forefront of developing ways to reduce the weight and cost of railcars and track for a cheaper alternative to heavy rail and traditional 'Metro' urban transport systems. In August the project attracted funding from Government allowing the project to proceed after several years in waiting in the sidings.

An engineering innovation centre, which will be built at the site of the old Dudley Train Station in Castlehill, got the planning green light more than two years ago. Facilities will include a triple-height engineering hall, research laboratories, conference and seminar rooms, and offices for 45 people, alongside more public areas, including exhibition spaces, a café and an auditorium. There will also be a 2km test track along a disused railway line and platforms.



This project aims to deliver all of the benefits of trams but at a cost of £10m per km, compared with an average of £50m per km for a traditional tram solution. Very Light Rail could put the old rail routes in towns and cities back into service at a fraction of the cost of heavier rail alternatives.

The project is being overseen by the Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council and Warwick Manufacturing Group of the University of Warwick. Researchers from the University of Warwick have worked up early concept design of what a very light rail system in Coventry could look like. As part of their plans, the researchers are hoping to demonstrate their vehicles in spring at the Dudley very light rail innovation centre.



*University of Warwick vision of a system for Coventry*

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