



Plans have been drawn up to link Dudley once again to the main line network at Dudley Port, as part of a major research initiative. Dudley Council is working with the Warwick Manufacturing Group [part of the University of Warwick, and one of the world's leading research groups] to build the National Centre for Development of Very Light Rail Technology on the site of Dudley's original station, which closed in 1964. One track will be used for a shuttle service to Dudley Port, whilst the other is used for testing tram-trains. Dudley Port already has a free Centro car park at Low Level, built to keep planning permission from expiring for the tram extension from Wednesbury to Merry Hill. It's a 240 metre climb with 26 steps to main line trains at High Level. This link will need improving. At the Dudley end, the tram stop [above, with access from a footbridge between Tipton Road and the zoo] will be good for the Black Country Living Museum and the Zoo, but the rails need to go up the hill to the town. CfR's main concern is that compatibility for heavy freight must be maintained. Much depends on success in getting EU and government grants.

Words: Keith Flinders. Image: Cullinan Studio

CAMPAIGNING NEWS

Campaign for Rail has made the case to Network Rail for electrifying the Goods lines south from Longbridge. The Up Goods runs from Barnt Green all the way to Longbridge and the Down Goods from Longbridge for a mile to Cofton. When the wires reach Bromsgrove, there will be six CrossCity trains an hour each way. The potential for delay to them, or them delaying long distance services is great with only the Main lines wired. At present, the Goods lines are not signalled for passenger trains, but resignalling will soon change that.

Our suggestion has now gone into the Long Term Planning Process for evaluation of costs and benefits, with consultation expected in August.

Keith Flinders