

BLACK COUNTRY LIVING MUSEUM

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DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Rt. Hon. Chris Grayling MP
Secretary of State for Transport
c/o Transport & Works Act Orders Unit
Department for Transport
Zone 1/14-18, Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

13 March 2019

Dear Secretary of State

OUR SUPPORT FOR THE WEDNESBURY TO BRIERLEY HILL METRO EXTENSION

I am delighted to have an opportunity to express the Museum's wholehearted support for this extension to the Metro, ahead of the Inquiry due to open on 19 March 2019 in Dudley.

Earlier in the planning stages, the Museum made, what I understand, was an important contribution to the business case for this 11km extension, and the positive impacts identified at that time are sustained. Specifically for the Museum we see the beneficial impacts as being: (a) providing, for the first time, a realistic and more environmentally sustainable alternative – for visitors, but also staff - to the current overwhelming use of private vehicles and the strain this puts on parking provision, and (b) supporting our continued business growth (mainly as a visitor attraction, but also as a significant employer) in an area with multiple deprivation challenges, by providing a quicker, inexpensive and more convenient link to Greater Birmingham, and other markets in the UK linked by existing rail and Metro routes and in time, by HS2.

So pleased are we at the prospect of welcoming the Metro, we took a strategic decision (as part of a £25m development commencing June 2019) to re-orientate the visitor entrance of the Museum southwards, from the east, in order that we face its arrival in Dudley. This capital development is an example of an investment decision (including from the Black Country LEP and National Lottery Heritage Fund) given more confidence by the planned arrival of the Metro.

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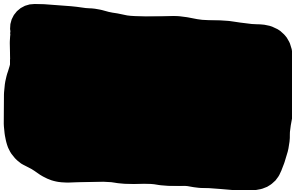
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By way of reference, the Museum (one of only 5 large open-air museums in the UK) supports its own revenue costs, free of public subsidy; employs 265 people, attracts 355,000 visitors each year and has an annual turnover of £8m.

Finally, I want to give a vote of confidence in the Metro Team. Over the last 18 months the Museum has maintained a regular and very productive relationship, to the point where we now feel we are partners in its development and that our futures are linked.

If I can be of further assistance to the decision-making process, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Andrew Lovett.

Andrew Lovett
Director & Chief Executive