

Bank branch of Northern Line re-opened by the mayor

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The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has re-opened the Bank branch of the Northern line after a 17-week planned closure.

The closure enabled around 550 construction staff to work around the clock to finish constructing a brand-new Northern line tunnel and passenger concourse at Bank Underground station. A new, wider southbound Northern line platform has also opened at Bank station – all key parts of this vital capacity upgrade project. Transport for London (TfL) also completed work on three new passageways, which will make moving around the station quicker and easier for Northern line customers.

Bank station will see its capacity increased by 40 per cent when upgrade work finishes later this year, with improvements still to come including step-free access to the Northern line, improved access to the DLR platforms, two new moving walkways, 12 new escalators and two new lifts. There will also be more direct routes within the station and a new station entrance on Cannon Street. These improvements to Bank station will support the recovery, growth and success of the City of London, addressing long-standing capacity issues and making journeys through Bank quicker, easier, and more comfortable when fully complete.

Around 650 train drivers and more than 100 station staff have taken part in exercises to familiarise themselves with the new tunnel and vastly improved station layout. Northern line customers using Bank station from today should follow the new signage and directions from London Underground staff.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: "Today marks the first in a series of transport milestones for our city. The Northern line has fully reopened to customers, on-schedule and to budget, after the successful completion of the latest phase of vital upgrade works at Bank station.

"Bank Station is at the heart of the city and these improvements are the first step towards a modern, accessible, easy to navigate station fit for the twenty-first century.

"We are at a pivotal moment in London's recovery, and it's clearer than ever the critical role TfL plays in boosting our economy. It is time that the Government finally accepts that a properly funded transport network in London is an issue of great national importance. Ministers must commit to a long-term funding deal that will protect the capital's world class transport network and support jobs and growth in London and across the whole country."

Stuart Harvey, Chief Capital Officer at Transport for London, said: "From today, Northern line customers at Bank station are able to use a new, 5m wide southbound platform and spacious concourse. The old layout was very constrained, leading to frequent congestion, but Northern line customers will now be able to make their journeys much more quickly and easily. I'd like to thank our customers for their patience while the Bank branch of the Northern line was closed, which was essential in enabling us to complete this work. Our construction teams were totally focused throughout the planned closure, which was in place for 120 days, on fully re-opening the Northern line on time. The countdown is now on for finishing the rest of this complex major upgrade later this year, transforming Bank into a modern, flagship station, fit to serve one of the world's most important financial districts."

Work that has been completed at Bank station during the closure period includes:

- Completing the excavation of the remaining 100m of new railway tunnel and lining it with sprayed concrete, in addition to the 1.5km that had already been tunnelled
- Connecting the new southbound Northern line tunnel to the existing railway
- Conversion of the former southbound Northern line platform, which was built more than 100 years ago, into a new, spacious customer concourse
- Installing the remaining 185m of track in the tunnels, in addition to the 490m that had already been laid prior to the closure
- Installation, testing and commissioning of all the signalling systems needed to operate trains into the new southbound platform
- Fitting out all areas of the new station, including installing over 1,400m² of terrazzo tile flooring and more than 1,000 wall panels
- The installation, testing and commissioning of a new station communication and fire system along with new and improved lighting and signage throughout all the new station areas

The next phase of works at Bank station will now turn to the key interchange connections which includes

the three new escalators linking the Northern line to the DLR, and the two new moving walkways and three new escalators connecting the Northern and Central lines. Bank already has 15 escalators so will have 27 escalators once the works are complete, the largest number on the Tube network.

Wayfinding at Bank station is being improved to make it easier and more intuitive to navigate around the station. Improvements include installing new signage and contrast cladding between interchange corridors and platforms. A new platform hump has been installed on the northbound Northern line platform and the newly constructed southbound Northern line platform has been raised to provide level access between the train and the platform.

Shravan Joshi, City of London Corporation Planning and Transportation Committee Chairman, said: "Today's re-opening of the Northern line's Bank branch is fantastic news for the Square Mile as our sustainable recovery from the pandemic continues with offices thriving alongside our cultural, retail and hospitality scene. It is encouraging to see commuter numbers continuing to pick up pace, demonstrating the City's enduring power as a world-leading place to do business, as well as an attractive place to invest, work, live, learn and visit. We very much look forward to the completion of the transformation of Bank station which will see this vital City commuter hub renewed and made more accessible for workers, residents and visitors."

Andrew Corrigan, General Manager, The Royal Exchange, said: "The Royal Exchange team is delighted that the Bank branch of the Northern line has re-opened today, and customers will benefit from the upgrades to Bank station as well. It has been exciting to see workers, residents and visitors enjoying the City once again after the lockdown restrictions, and this will make their journeys easier. The Royal Exchange is one of London's most iconic buildings, located in the heart of the City, and home to some of the world's most coveted brands that embody quality, style and heritage, so we are pleased that these upgrades will allow us to welcome more people through our doors to enjoy the landmark building."

This re-opening comes at a pivotal moment for London's recovery from the pandemic. Midweek Tube ridership is regularly reaching around 70 percent of pre-pandemic levels, with Thursday 12 May seeing the highest ridership since the start of the pandemic with 2.97m journeys made on the Tube. Tube ridership at stations defined as 'City' stations – including Bank – are now seeing ridership at 55-60 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, up from around 33 per cent in January. Weekend Tube ridership is around 85 per cent of pre-pandemic levels with around 2.3m journeys now made on Saturdays and nearly 2m on Sundays.

During the closure of the Bank branch of the Northern line, essential work was also carried out at other stations including London Bridge, Borough and Elephant & Castle so that future disruption to customers would be minimised. This included work on lifts and escalators, as well as refurbishment work at Borough, and enabling works for the future Elephant & Castle station upgrade.