

Boost for Birmingham rail users as first passenger train in 80 years runs on Camp Hill line

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The reopening of a former railway line in south Birmingham moved a step closer after a local passenger train travelled the route for the first time in nearly 80 years.

The Camp Hill line has been closed to passengers since 1941 but plans, drawn up by West Midlands Mayor Andy Street, are in place to open the line up again with new stations at Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell.

And these plans moved a step closer this morning when a West Midlands Railway (WMR) train, carrying the Mayor, WMR's customer experience director Jonny Wiseman and other representatives from across the rail industry, travelled along the line.

The train followed the route of what would be the re-opened line, pausing at the Moseley, Kings Heath, and Hazelwell sites before arriving into Kings Norton – and later returning to Birmingham New Street. The purpose of this inspection train was to explore how new passenger services on the Camp Hill line would work.

West Midlands Mayor Andy Street said: “I am delighted we are pressing ahead with plans to reopen the Camp Hill line to passengers, and it was great to be on the first passenger train to travel on the line in nearly 80 years.

“This line, which also represents another step forward in my 20-year transport plan for the West Midlands, will provide residents in South Birmingham with easier and faster connections to get to the places they need to go, whilst also offering people a real alternative to the car – helping to ease congestion and improve the air we breathe.”

Today’s inspection train comes as plans for the three new stations progress.

Kings Heath and Hazelwell stations have already been granted planning permission, with the application for Moseley due to be submitted imminently. The Government has already pledged £15million to help build the three stations, which will be led by Transport for the West Midlands and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) in partnership with Network Rail and WMR’s parent company West Midlands Trains.

Jonny Wiseman, customer experience director for WMR, which will run the services on the Camp Hill line, said: “This is an exciting and visionary plan to transform local train services for our customers in the south of Birmingham. We are working closely with WMRE, Network Rail and the Mayor in order to turn this vision into reality.

“Passengers set to benefit from the quicker route along the Camp Hill line can also look forward to travelling on the brand new train fleet we are introducing as part of our £1billion investment into the rail network.”