

# Bristol Temple Meads becomes hotspot of passenger innovation

October 18, 2022



Passengers at Bristol Temple Meads station are about to take part in a multi-million pound trial programme designed to upgrade their travelling experience.

The station is set to become the UK's first 'Station Innovation Zone', a hot spot of technologies, all aimed at perfecting the process of getting from A to B.

The project is being overseen via a partnership between [Connected Places Catapult](#), the UK's innovation accelerator for cities, transport, and place leadership, and [Network Rail](#). The organisations have selected a variety of start-ups, all with solutions that help smooth various aspects of the passenger experience.

There will be smarter ticketing solutions, clearer accessibility with better wayfinding apps, using AI to improve people flow, and even designing better facilities using human-centred design principles.

The Catapult is directing millions of pounds of [Innovate UK](#) funding into the five-year programme, which will pioneer the approach and plans are in place to roll out the model to other stations as it succeeds.

Applications are now open for start-ups with ideas that could be trialled in the Station Innovation Zone. [You can find out more here](#). Passengers are likely to see the first trials beginning early next year.

This announcement of the Station Innovation Zone follows the Government's levelling-up announcement of £95m for the Bristol Temple Quarter regeneration programme and the Catapult funding will complement the ongoing revitalisation of the station. Around £60m of the funding from Government will enable improvements in and around Bristol Temple Meads Station, including three new entrances to the station, as well as infrastructure works and new public spaces nearby.

The [University of Bristol](#) is developing its presence in Temple Quarter near the station, recently opening the Temple Quarter Research Hub, housing the Bristol Digital Futures Institute with a large scale data-centre and a sector agnostic digital twin.

Francis McGarry, Network Rail's Wales & Western investment director said: "We're delighted to be partnering with Connected Places Catapult on this new programme which will provide SMEs with crucial funding opportunities and Network Rail with new, innovative ideas on how to further enhance the experience of our passengers.

"We are committed to developing Bristol Temple Meads into a world class transport hub for the benefit of our passengers, the city of Bristol and wider West of England region, so it is fitting Bristol Temple Meads has been chosen as the UK's first Station Innovation Zone."

Indro Mukerjee, CEO, Innovate UK said: "Innovate UK is strongly committed to partnerships to deliver future transport systems that are connected, accessible, sustainable, and safe. So, we see this partnership between our Connected Places Catapult and Network Rail as an important step to support delivery of passenger technology for the future."

Nicola Yates, CEO, Connected Places Catapult, said: "Innovation is tough in any industry and rail is especially hard because of the number of assessments and permissions required. The net effect is that it takes too much time and costs too much for most small businesses to engage. Partnering with Network Rail to create a multi-year Station Innovation Zone in Bristol's vibrant Temple Quarter will enable us to support numerous small companies in navigating these challenges and benefit passengers' experience of the station."

Marvin Rees, Mayor of Bristol, said: "We are delighted that Connected Places Catapult and Innovate UK have chosen Bristol Temple Meads as the country's first Station Innovation Zone. Temple Meads is at the heart of Temple Quarter, and the innovation funding from the Catapult, combined with recent funding of £95million Bristol secured from Government, matches our commitment to making Temple Meads and its surrounding area a world-class gateway to the city region. This is an exciting new chapter for Brunel's iconic train station as we prepare for new sustainable homes, quality jobs and inclusive opportunities in Bristol."

Professor Dimitra Simeonidou, co-director of Bristol Digital Futures Institute, said: "Bristol Digital Futures institute is a cross-disciplinary research institute driving digital innovation with a focus on inclusion, prosperity and sustainability. We look forward to working with Connected Places Catapult on the Station Innovation Zone to transform the way digital technologies are created, deployed and consumed by transport hubs such as our own railway station at Temple Meads."