

# Full steam ahead for Camp Hill line to reopen as final budget approved

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West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) leaders have approved the final £20 million slice of funding to get the Camp Hill Rail line in Birmingham reopened.

The approval of the WMCA Board means that the £61 million project to reopen Moseley, Kings Heath and Hazelwell stations is fully funded and on track to reopen to passengers in 2023.

Work has already started in Moseley where the station site is being cleared ready for full construction to begin later in the year.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the WMCA, is leading the project which will offer the residents of south Birmingham a more environmentally friendly alternative to the car and traffic jams on Alcester Road for their city centre commute.

These Camp Hill line stations closed to passengers during the Second World War and the line is currently only used by freight or through services. It means that commuters from Hazellwell station in Stirchley for example will have a 14 minute journey into the city centre by rail compared to a peak time journey by car

of up to 45 minutes.

WMCA is providing £36 million towards the cost, with £20 million from the Department for Transport, confirmed in the budget earlier this month, and the remaining £5 million from Birmingham City Council's clean air zone fund.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "The people of Moseley, Kings Heath and Stirchley have waited decades for the return of passenger services on the Camp Hill line, and today we have taken a major step towards making that happen.

"With all the funding fully agreed we can now get on with the fun part, getting work started and getting these three stations built and opened to the public. Preparatory work is already underway, and construction of the stations will be starting later this year.

"A reopened Camp Hill line will offer a quick and convenient alternative to the car for people's journeys into Birmingham city centre, as well as access to the wider regional and national transport network."

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: "Building great infrastructure is part of our wider agenda to level up all parts of the UK. With our investment in these three stations, alongside two others in Willenhall and Darlaston, we're delivering a bright future for passengers across the West Midlands."

Cllr Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio holder for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council said: "Reopening the Camp Hill line is vital for our plans to reduce traffic congestion, improve the air we breathe and meet the climate change challenge.

"This is good news for Birmingham and aligns with the City Council's environmental ambitions, so I'm proud that we're contributing to funding a project that's part of the wider investment in rail, Metro tram, bus and cycling infrastructure to reduce car use and the region's carbon footprint.

"As well as better connecting our suburbs to the city centre and beyond, reopening the line will be the catalyst for further regeneration and investment in the Moseley, Kings Heath and Stirchley areas."

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) are working with rail industry partners including Network Rail and West Midlands Trains on the development of the new stations.

Investment in public transport is also key in supporting the region's #WM2041 ambition to become a carbon neutral region within the next 20 years.

*Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands*