

Jamaicans visit Birmingham to find out more about reinstating former railway stations

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Academics advising the Jamaican government on plans to reinstate its disused railway network have visited Birmingham on a fact-finding mission to meet rail industry experts and view progress on the construction of new stations.

The team from the University of Technology, Jamaica are collaborating with the [Ministry of Transport and Mining](#) to restore the island's previous network, which includes plans to upgrade Kingston Railway Station and a three-and-a-half mile route through the city. The station has been mothballed since services stopped in 1992.

Last year they formed a [transatlantic partnership](#) with the University of Birmingham's (UoB) Centre for Railway Research and Education to gain expert advice on the latest construction methods and technologies to deliver an efficient zero-carbon rail line. Restoration of this historic station and line will help the island capital reduce traffic congestion, improve mobility and boost tourism.

During a three-day trip to Birmingham, the team were keen to view work to restore parts of our region's network and take a closer look at the [£61 million Camp Hill line](#) project being led by Transport for West

Midlands (TfWM) and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE).

While the Jamaica railway plans are still very much on the drawing board, work is already underway on the construction of three stations on the Camp Hill Line in south Birmingham – restoring passenger rail services to Mosely Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road for the first time in more than 80 years.

The School of Engineering at Utech Jamaica has been at the centre of engineering education in the country for almost six decades. It has provided Jamaica, the Caribbean and the world with high-performance engineers who have gone on to make significant contributions in a variety of sectors.

Oneil Josephs, head of the School of Engineering, said: “This strategic technical rail tour of Birmingham is an opportunity to build on the Government of Jamaica’s intention to rehabilitate rail in the country.

“This partnership with the University of Birmingham is what the country needs to find a rail solution to the broader transport challenges we face and provide the basis for development across the sector. We look forward to the positive outcomes of this UK tour and our continued partnership with the UoB.

“Seeing the development of new stations here in Birmingham and how passenger services are coming back after decades, gives us the encouragement to achieve a similar outcome in Jamaica.”

Liam Brooker, project sponsor for the WMRE and TfWM, said: “Restoring railway stations and improving public transport in our towns and cities will better connect our communities, reduce reliance on private cars and cut traffic jams, helping us meet the climate challenge and support economic growth.

“Although Kingston and Birmingham are far apart, we have the common aim of benefitting our citizens by investing in rail. We are making great progress on building our new stations and we were delighted to share our experience with our guests and take the opportunity to learn from their reflections.”

Prof Clive Roberts, director of the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education at the University of Birmingham, said: “We are proud to host our Jamaican colleagues in Birmingham and to share our knowledge and experience with them.

“At the Birmingham Centre for Railway Research and Education we seek to find ways to share our research and innovation activities with the global rail industry, and this collaboration is an excellent example of that.”

The group also visited [University Station](#) where the new buildings are currently being fitted out ready to open this autumn. Construction of the Camp Hill Line and University Stations is being carried out by Volkerfitzpatrick on behalf of TfWM.

Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands