

Plans to open Black Country railway stations take another step forward

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Planning applications for two railway stations on the Walsall to Wolverhampton line have been handed in, marking another milestone on the project to restore passenger services to this part of the Black Country.

The new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall will offer communities vastly improved connections to Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham New Street when they open.

They will also act as a catalyst for much needed housing, industrial and commercial development along the rail line.

The original stations in Darlaston and Willenhall closed in 1965 and only through trains have used the line since then.

The project is being led by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), and the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) working in close collaboration with the Department for Transport, Network Rail, West Midlands Railway, Walsall Council and the City of Wolverhampton Council.

The planning applications have been submitted to Walsall Council.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said: "I am delighted that our plans to reopen Darlaston and

Willenhall stations has moved another significant step closer with the submission of these planning applications.

“These Black Country communities deserve access to easier and faster rail connections to Wolverhampton, Walsall and Birmingham and the wider transport network. The new stations will also help to drive significant investment in jobs and housing along the Walsall to Wolverhampton corridor.

“I look forward to seeing the plans evolve and progress as we gear up for construction on site next year.”

Cllr Ian Ward, leader of Birmingham City Council and WMCA portfolio holder for transport said: “These Black Country stations are just one part of our plans to transform rail service and public transport across the West Midlands.

“We are making great progress with reopening the Camp Hill line in Birmingham to passenger services, creating better rail, tram and bus connections with the planned HS2 stations and working to bring more services, more capacity and better facilities across the region’s rail network.”

This follows successful public consultation last year which demonstrated strong local support for the plans to get these stations built and open.

Both stations will have bridge links, with lift access, between platforms and shelters for waiting passengers and cycle storage racks.

Darlaston will have a 300 long-stay car park. There will also be parking provided at Willenhall. A public consultation last year found 93 per cent of people rated the proposed designs as good or very good.

Photo credit: Transport for West Midlands