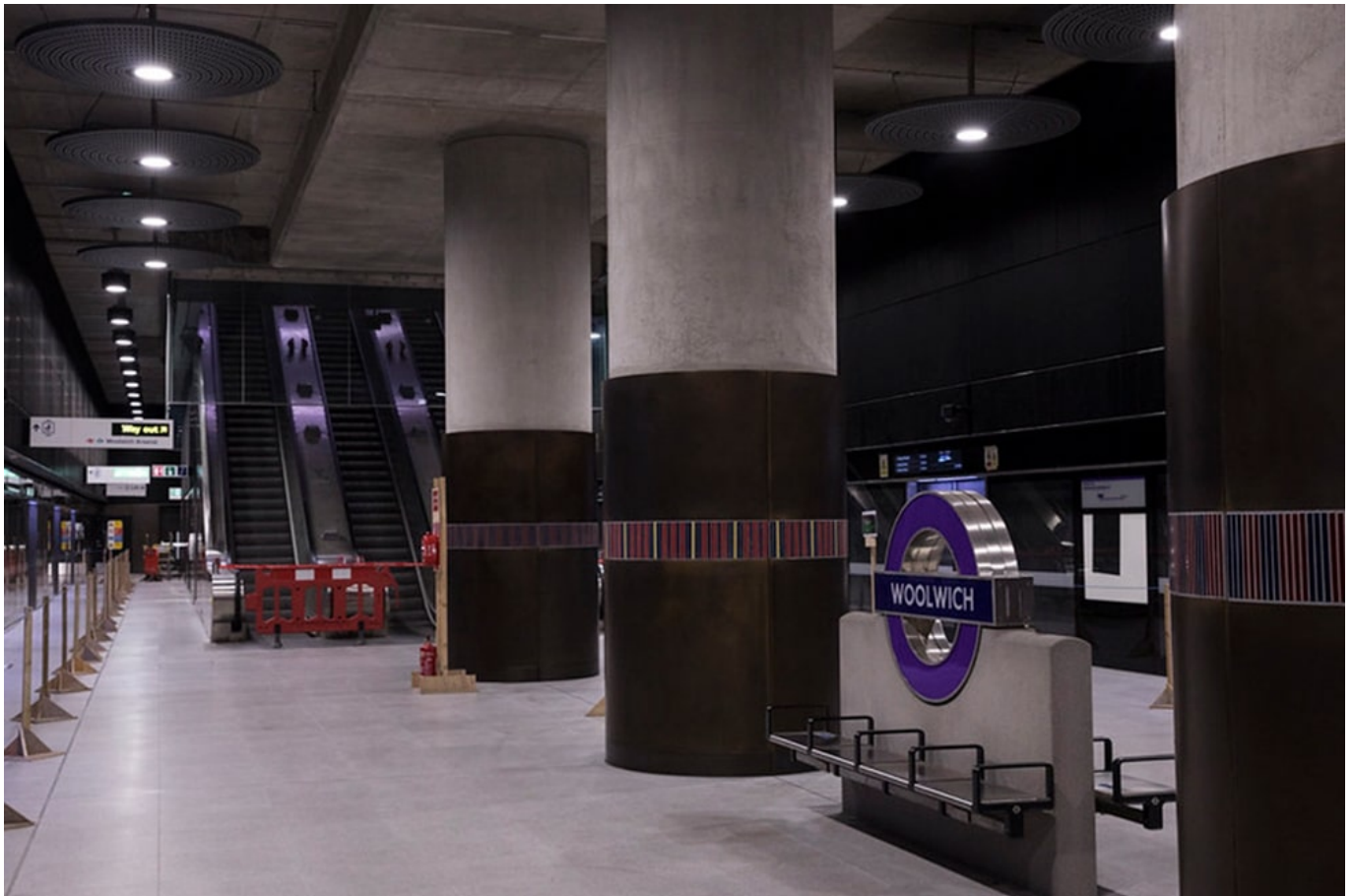


Woolwich Elizabeth line station transfers from Crossrail to Transport for London

June 25, 2021



Woolwich Elizabeth line station has been officially transferred to Transport for London (TfL), who will operate the Elizabeth line.

Extensive testing and commissioning of systems has been finalised in advance of Trial Operations beginning later this year. Trial Operations is the final phase of testing involving trials to ensure the safety and reliability of the railway for public use. This includes real-time testing of scenarios including evacuations of trains and stations before opening the Elizabeth line. The contractor, Balfour Beatty, will continue demobilisation from the site.

This is the fourth of the new Elizabeth line stations to be transferred over to TfL, alongside Custom House, Farringdon and Tottenham Court Road stations. TfL will be responsible for the station as the Infrastructure Manager.

The Elizabeth line will help transform life and travel in southeast London by dramatically improving transport links to the City and the West End, supporting wider regeneration, creating jobs and business opportunities and providing a huge economic boost.

The station was built at the historic site of the Royal Arsenal in Woolwich and was initially a dockyard established by King Henry VIII. It became increasingly important as an arsenal and ordnance factory in the 17th century, housing a military academy and Royal Laboratory, as well as a new brass gun foundry designed by Sir John Vanbrugh in the early 18th century, which remains there to this day. The Royal Arsenal expanded rapidly in the mid to late 19th century, reaching its peak in the First World War when 80,000 people worked on the site, many of whom were women.

Today, the new station is a key part of a new development on the Royal Arsenal site which includes 3,750 new homes as well as new cultural, heritage, commercial and leisure facilities.

Mark Wild, Crossrail Chief Executive, said: "I am delighted that Woolwich station has been handed over to Transport for London. Woolwich is a beautiful station, surrounded by rich history which has been brilliantly captured by all those working on the station build. I am proud of everyone who has worked so hard to get this magnificent new railway station over the line."

Howard Smith, Elizabeth line Chief Operating Officer, said: "Woolwich station transferring to TfL is a testament to hard work and co-operation between us and the Crossrail team ahead of the Elizabeth line opening. My operations and maintenance teams will now be working to prepare Woolwich for Trial Operations. When the Elizabeth line opens the station will be a real gateway for southeast London and will be well connected to the TfL network, including local buses."

Cllr Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Royal Borough of Greenwich, said: "This is a huge moment for Woolwich and I'm delighted that we have moved another step closer to opening the Elizabeth line, which will be transformational for communities not just in Woolwich but across Greenwich. This is also a moment to reflect on the role that the Council has played in securing the station at Woolwich and I'd like to place on record today my thanks to everyone who has been a part of this incredible journey."

Andy Lambden, Balfour Beatty Project Director, said: "This is an incredible milestone for both Balfour Beatty and Crossrail – one that signifies another step towards the official opening of the long-awaited, iconic, Elizabeth line. Testament to our unrivalled expertise from across the Group, we are delighted to have safely and successfully delivered a station which will transform travel across southeast London, whilst also supporting economic growth in the area through new employment and business opportunities."

Karl Whiteman, Divisional Managing Director for Berkeley East Thames, said: "Securing an Elizabeth line station for Woolwich was a huge achievement, and we're proud to have worked with the Royal Borough of Greenwich, TfL and the Government to deliver this valuable transport link. This is another fantastic milestone for the revival of Royal Arsenal Riverside, which has transformed into a really beautiful, welcoming and completely unique part of the city."

Entry to the station will be from a single 30-metre-wide bronze clad portal, which opens out onto Dial Arch Square, a green space, flanked with a series of Grade I and II listed buildings. In addition to enhancing the experience in and out of the station, the urban realm design also helps connect the station with the wider town centre.

Linking the station to its remarkable history, the two major facades depict a contemporary representation of the bronze memorial plaques that were minted here during the First World War. The black steel cladding which makes up the facades incorporates images of Britannia and the Lion which had originally featured on the bronze plaques. The 'Dead Man's Penny', as they came to be known, were ceremonial coins given to the families of soldiers who gave their lives in the Great War. More than one million of these plaques were cast at the Royal Arsenal. In 2019 Crossrail also revealed a memorial 'Dead Man's Penny' plaque, outside the station.

Photo credit: Crossrail