

Birmingham to receive £72 million in government funding for vital transport link

- government protects tens of thousands of daily journeys in region with £72 million investment in Tame Valley Viaduct
- scheme will prevent link from closing and support other local initiatives – boosting the region's economy
- works due to start in 2022 with structure remaining open to traffic throughout

Birmingham will benefit from £72 million in government funding for essential maintenance work on a vital road link between the city centre and the M6, providing a huge boost to the local economy and ensuring the region continues to build back better from the pandemic.

Following years of use and carrying 80,000 vehicles a day in and out of Birmingham city centre – including 900 buses and roughly 8,000 heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) – the Tame Valley Viaduct, which forms the northern section of the Aston Expressway, is starting to show signs of deterioration.

This significant, multimillion-pound investment by the government will ensure the link remains open for years to come. Maintaining the link's future will also support and uphold access to other initiatives in the region, including the Birmingham City Centre Enterprise Zone, HS2 Curzon Street rail station and the Food Hub in Witton.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

This viaduct is the lifeblood of Birmingham, carrying tens of thousands of vehicles in and out of the city centre every single day and connecting it to the surrounding motorways and the rest of the country.

We recognise its importance and that's why we're investing such a significant amount of money – £72 million – to safeguard the future of the structure and keep local supply chains and public transport services running smoothly.

This is further good news for the region following our Integrated Rail Plan, which will see quicker and easier journeys between Nottingham and Birmingham. We'll continue to level up transport across the country, support local economies and build back better.

Without government funding, the viaduct is expected to need weight and width restrictions within a few years and, over time, the link could potentially

face full closure.

Proposals involve major strengthening and refurbishment works on the viaduct, ensuring it can continue to carry heavy vehicles. It will remain open to traffic throughout the duration of works.

Councillor Waseem Zaffar, Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment at Birmingham City Council, said:

This is a significant investment into a key piece of our city's highways infrastructure.

If we are to ensure people can move around the city as easily as possible and help business flourish, it is vital we carry out projects like this.

This work will ensure the viaduct plays a key part in our transport network for many years to come and help prevent the need for even more significant works in future.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands and chair of the West Midlands Combined Authority, said:

The Tame Valley Viaduct is a vital part of our regional road network, but one that urgently needs some work. The 80,000 vehicles a day it carries is far more than what it was designed for when it opened in the early 1970s and so I am delighted that, thanks to the government putting this cash on the table, we can now press on and get this essential maintenance work done.

We are making a huge effort to encourage people to use public transport across the West Midlands, but people who rely on the car cannot be ignored and roads such as the Aston Expressway remain a critical part of our region's infrastructure.

There are also plans to apply a protective anti-corrosion paint system to the structure alongside other general refurbishments, preserving the longevity of the viaduct and minimising the need for future work.

The scheme is set to be carried out in 2022 and will take almost 5 years to complete.

The total costs of the scheme come to £93.46 million with the remaining funding coming from Birmingham City Council and the Local Growth Fund.

Today's (15 December 2021) announcement comes following last month's announcement of the [biggest ever public investment – £96 billion – in Britain's rail network](#).

Journeys across HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail, both from London and across

the Pennines, will be faster, more frequent and reliable under the government's [Integrated Rail Plan](#) over the next couple of decades – including shorter journeys between Leeds and Manchester, Nottingham and Birmingham, and London and Sheffield.