

Major Birmingham University station upgrade will boost economy and improve journeys for passengers

- £12 million government investment to kick-start design and build of upgrade to Birmingham University station later this year, providing extra capacity for the Commonwealth Games in 2022
- £56 million project will include a larger, modern station, enhanced passenger facilities and direct access into the University of Birmingham campus
- investment will leave a lasting legacy beyond the games, helping better connect people with opportunities in the future

The arrival of the Commonwealth Games will be matched with a major upgrade to Birmingham's University station, Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris announced today (22 July 2020), as he unveiled £12 million of government investment to help ease congestion, boost the economy and make existing journeys more reliable for thousands of passengers.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), is leading a consortium including the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City Council, Network Rail, West Midlands Trains and the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP to fund the project to redevelop and expand the station and provide additional passenger capacity in time for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

The £56 million project will deliver a larger, modern station and enhanced facilities including more lifts, a ticket office, shop and public toilets, helping to give competitors and sports fans an experience to remember.

Opened in 1978, University Station in Birmingham was designed to serve 500,000 passengers per year but now, over 40 years later, this has increased to almost 4 million people – with demand expected to rise further in the coming years.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

Birmingham has the privilege of welcoming our Commonwealth friends from around the world in 2022 and so we are delivering a station that will be a worthy gateway to the Games for athletes and fans alike.

And, long after the games have gone, passengers will arrive into a modern station that provides better connections and makes journeys easier and more reliable.

This station development demonstrates our ambition to build great

infrastructure for the future that will transform travel for those who use it and is just part of our wider agenda to level up all parts of the UK.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

This funding from the Department for Transport (DfT) means we have taken another major step towards building a new University station ready for the Commonwealth Games in 2022.

Over the last decade or so we have seen huge growth in both the university campus and the hospital site, making University one of the busiest railway stations on our network. Because of this, it is clear that the station is becoming increasingly not fit for purpose and the latest funding announced by the DfT today will help us take another step towards delivering a new University Station.

Councillor Ian Ward, WMCA portfolio lead for transport and leader of Birmingham City Council, said:

This new station will not only provide a magnificent gateway to Birmingham for those visitors coming for the Commonwealth Games, but for the many more who pass through here day in, day out.

Getting more people onto trains across the region is one of the key elements of our work to reduce traffic congestion and reliance on the car, as we improve our air quality and progress towards a zero-carbon economy.

The contracts for the detailed design and build of the scheme will be awarded later this summer, with works starting in the autumn. The station will be ready to welcome the Commonwealth Games' athletes and spectators and be fully open later in 2022.

Today's announcement comes as development work gets underway with Network Rail to roll out digital signalling on further routes including sections of the West Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and Anglia, from 2026, leading to safer, more reliable and more resilient railways.

The government announced last month that £12 million is being invested in fitting out 33 new trains for the Midland Main Line with digital signalling equipment.

A number of stations in the Midlands are also benefiting from millions of pounds of funding to improve accessibility for those with disabilities, such as through new step-free routes. Stations to benefit include Retford, Ludlow, Smethwick Rolfe Street, Wellington, Naborough, Lichfield Trent Valley and Wolverhampton.

All projects in the programme are expected to complete by 2024 at the latest.