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Plans to open Black Country railway stations take another step forward

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 and the West Midlands Rail Executive, working in 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 our plans have 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."

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 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.

About West Midlands Trains

For further information on this release, call our press office on 03300 955150 or email press.office@wmtrains.co.uk

West Midlands Trains operates both West Midlands Railway and London Northwestern Railway services.

- **London Northwestern Railway** services operate between Liverpool and Birmingham, and on the West Coast mainline to and from London Euston.
- **West Midlands Railway** services operate to destinations across the West Midlands via Birmingham New Street.

For more information on these services visit westmidlandsrailway.co.uk or londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk

The West Midlands Trains franchise started on 10 December 2017 and will run until 2025/26.

West Midlands Trains operates 1,300 services a day, manages 150 stations and provides over 80 million passenger journeys a year. Over the course of the franchise, West Midlands Trains will be investing £1 billion into the rail network to deliver new trains, improved routes and station upgrades. This will include 400 new train carriages across the network and space for an extra 85,000 passengers into Birmingham and London at peak times.

The franchise is a joint venture between Abellio (70.1% share) and East Japan Railway Company / Mitsui & Co., Ltd (29.9% share in a 50:50 split). Abellio is the international passenger transport subsidiary of the Dutch national railway company, Nederlandse Spoorwegen. In the UK, Abellio operates ScotRail and Greater Anglia train services, Merseyrail services in a joint venture with Serco and buses through Abellio London. For more information visit www.abellio.com

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