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New bridge marks major step forward in redevelopment of University station in Birmingham

The installation of a new canal bridge has marked a major milestone in the £56million redevelopment of University railway station in Birmingham.

Spanning the Worcester & Birmingham Canal, the bridge links the new station to the University of Birmingham campus and will be crossed by thousands of passengers a day when it opens next summer.

The existing 1970s building, which serves both the University of Birmingham campus and Queen Elizabeth Hospital, is one of the busiest stations in the region. The new building will offer passengers greater capacity and comfort.

Mayor of the West Midlands Andy Street and representatives of partner organisations were among the first to get a close-up look at the new bridge as they toured the site to check progress on construction.

The station buildings are being assembled from a 480-tonne flat pack structure – parts produced off-site and assembled on location to speed up construction. Its huge concrete frame is now complete and brick-effect cladding is now being fitted. The main building is on Vincent Drive and a second smaller building sits between the railway line and canal.

Andy Street said:

“Last time I was on site it was an empty plot of land – so I am delighted to see how much progress has been made in just a few months. It really is an impressive achievement that progress has been made so quickly on the new station while the busy Cross City Line and existing station are continuing to stay open, with disruption to the travelling public kept to a minimum.

“We all know the current station is stretched well beyond its capacity and isn’t fit for purpose any more, and so this work will make a real difference to the thousands of commuters that use the station every single day.”

Cllr Karen McCarthy, from Birmingham City Council, said:

“Improved public transport and better access to rail links is vital for neighbourhoods like Selly Oak and Edgbaston, and those travelling into the university and hospitals. It will also help reduce congestion and improve air quality as we work towards become a net zero carbon city.”

Brenda Lawrence, head of stations for West Midlands Railway, said:

“We welcome this significant investment which will make a real difference to the millions of passenger journeys at University station every year.”

The building has been constructed from 1,500 square metres of concrete columns, beams and wall sections brought together to form the outer shell of the new buildings. The buildings are supported by foundations made up of 403 concrete columns under the ground.

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), which is part of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), and West Midlands Rail Executive are leading a consortium to fund and develop the project which includes the University of Birmingham, Birmingham City Council, Network Rail, West Midlands Trains, the Department for Transport, the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, Canal and River Trust, SLC-AECOM, CrossCountry Trains and Midlands Engine. Building work is being carried out by VolkerFitzpatrick under contract from TfWM.

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