



West Midlands Branch Newsletter

Remember the AGM this Saturday, 27th April, 1030-1300, Priory Rooms, Bull Street, Birmingham. Our guest speaker is Peter Sargant, Rail Development Manager for the West Midlands Rail Executive, who will tell us about the region's strategic plans for the next 30 years and answer relevant questions.

Moor Street redesign with all Redundant Platforms Reinstated for Midlands Hub



West Midlands Branch have been very active since the final designs for the Curzon Street HS2 station were revealed to ensure that passengers can easily interchange with both Moor Street and New Street stations for onward travel

Early concepts have been revealed by the West Midlands Rail Executive in collaboration with Transport for West Midlands, Midlands Connect, Network Rail, HS2, Chiltern Railways, West Midlands Railway and Birmingham City Council

The proposals also include the option to more than double the size of the concourse to 21,525 sq. ft, a transfer deck with access to every platform and links to a new footbridge taking passengers directly to the HS2 station via a public square.

There are also several options to improve pedestrian access between Moor Street and New Street, including a direct route via St Martin's Queensway, and steps and a ramp at Swan Passage adjacent to the new Primark.

The aim is to create seamless access between the new HS2 terminal in Curzon Street, Moor Street and New Street as part of the so-called 'One Station' strategy.

The new platforms will, alongside other network infrastructure improvements, allow extra services to stop at Moor Street from across the region under the 'Midlands Rail Hub' proposals to increase rail capacity to and from the East Midlands, Hereford, Worcester and the South West.

The newly planned service serving Moseley and Kings Heath could also eventually go into Moor Street

Passenger numbers at Moor Street are expected to grow from seven million to 12 million a year by 2043, with further increases expected as a result of the Midlands Rail Hub and the arrival of HS2 in 2026.



Passengers could see a new-look main entrance at Moor Street station (Image: Grimshaw)

There could also be a new ramped route from Rotunda Square to New Street station.

[West Midland Trains May Timetable 2019](#)

WMT has accepted Railfuture West Midlands' tweaks to enhance evening and weekend services, and to provide reasonable time at places such as Shrewsbury and Worcester for passengers to cross platforms for onward connections. However, the challenge of arranging connectivity between services operated by different TOCs has highlighted the constraint in their franchises not to speak to one another!

The New Direct Journeys

At least hourly throughout the day Monday-Saturday:

- Liverpool/Crewe/Stafford/Wolverhampton-New St-Euston
- Crewe/Stoke/Stafford/Wolverhampton-New St-Euston
- Rugeley-Walsall-New St-Euston
- Nuneaton-Coventry-Leamington Spa

Sunday extensions to match these are planned for December

Service Frequency increases

- New St-Euston Earlier and later services. 3tph continues until 0040 and 3tph on Sundays.
- Chase Line 2tph continues until 2220 (currently 1920)
- Cross-City 4tph to Trent Valley (currently 2tph) and 4tph after 1900 on Cross City north (currently 2tph)
- Shrewsbury-New St 2tph all day (currently 1tph) and a new hourly Sunday service

- Crewe-Stoke-New St Additional new hourly service
- Wolverhampton Later and earlier services
- Nuneaton-Coventry Shuttle runs through and new Sunday service
- Snow Hill Additional peak and evening services
- Worcester-New St Additional peak services and hourly Sunday trains
- Trent Valley Earlier and later additional services

Birmingham New St

- Currently 10 services terminate and start (turn -rounds) at New St every off-peak hour which occupy platforms
- May 2019 adds two more services which would be 12 but our changes mean we will only have THREE turnrounds
- Platform occupation will be reduced from 114 minutes to only 65 minutes
- New St has the highest level of reactionary delay on the network so this will improve performance for all operators
- New portion working for New St but we have been preparing for this with a military-style process

Longer Trains

- Existing four-car trains between New St. and London will get longer. The flagship hourly under two-hour services become eight car and peak services are also strengthened to eight cars.
- Up to one-third Trent Valley services become eight cars.
- All London services become eight cars on Sundays
- Nuneaton-Coventry Leamington Spa services are doubled in length from one to two car and frequency will be doubled/tripled soon
- Eleven additional 2/3 car diesel trains are added from May
- ***More services are doubled from December when we receive ten more electric trains***
- New trains start arriving this year, replacing 52 diesel vehicles with 80 and adding 185 more electric vehicles which are longer than existing
- By 2021 with almost all services will be longer and we are planning some exciting new services to new stations

Easier Fares for All – a Railfuture campaign success

The Rail Delivery Group's 'Easier Fares for All' proposal has taken on board all the key points on fares and ticketing that Railfuture has been campaigning for.

Railfuture had called for value for money fares which reflect journey quality and demand; clearly explained ticket choices which offer flexibility in time of travel, route, journey speed and journey quality; and smart ticketing which benefits the passenger by being pay-as-you-go, valid across operators, and cheaper than paying cash, rather than just being an electronic ticket wallet.

Read more at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Fares>

First electric train was been spotted on the Chase Line.

On Sunday 7th April West Midland Trains ran one of their class 323 units along the line calling at all stations North of Walsall and checking the stepping distance between the train and the platforms ready for the start of the new timetable which will see the switch from diesel to electric trains from Monday 20th May.



Kenilworth Station honoured in transport awards

12th April 2019



The new rail station at Kenilworth has been 'highly commended' in a regional award highlighting major transport projects in the West Midlands.

The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation commended the project that brought a station back to Kenilworth for the first time since it had initially closed in 1965.

Building on the site of the former station and using some of its former features such as the station sign and stained-glass windows, the station was completed last year and now offers hourly journeys along the Leamington-Coventry line.

The commendation came in the Best Large Project category which highlights outstanding examples of transportation or highways project which have made a major contribution to the West Midlands.

In the first eleven months after opening, it has received just over 170,000 customer visits and that figure is growing as more and more people are seeing the benefits of leaving the car at home and using the train.

[Underneath Birmingham's busy streets contractors have been repairing part of the city's history.](#)



The 20-man team has spent their last 12 weekends carrying out strengthening work to Snow Hill Tunnel, which dates to the mid-19th century and the days of rail pioneer Isambard Kingdom Brunel.

The 635-yard city centre tunnel links Moor Street station at its southern end with Snow Hill at its northern end – where contractors found evidence of the key role rail has long played in keeping the city moving.

Storey's senior project manager Matt Brown said at the northern end of the five-metre high, brick-lined tunnel there was still evidence of sidings that were used for transporting milk and post. Most intriguingly there used to be an underground entrance to the then Birmingham branch of the Bank of England.

He said: "It is a bit of a maze at the north end. The siding was used to transport cash and bullion by train. I think it was last used in the 60s and the entrance is all sealed up now."

The Snow Hill work, which was also carried out on behalf of Network Rail, involved spraying eight tonnes of concrete onto the walls over three weekends; construction of a 120-year shaft cap to reduce stress, brickwork repairs, pinning and grouting.

Mr Brown said: "The most pleasing aspect is that we were working only a few metres under-ground as it is quite a shallow tunnel and we did not get any complaints about inconvenience. Our biggest challenge was the speed of the project from it being awarded in November to getting on site in January and then delivering. But it was safely completed and handed back to the client on time."

Before the recent work could get under way a full ecology survey was undertaken ensuring the works did not impact bat roosting areas.

[Plans submitted for third entrance at Snow Hill Railway Station](#)



28th March 2019

A planning application for a third access to Birmingham's Snow Hill Railway Station has been submitted by the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE).

The new entrance will create a direct link between rail and metro services by offering easier and faster links between the station and St Chad's metro stop. It will also be more convenient for people living and working in the St Chad's area, including the new Three Snowhill office development.

The new entrance will be constructed in a vacant railway arch, part of the Victorian viaduct which carries trains and trams into Birmingham city centre.

A concrete wall will be knocked through linking to the second entrance which was constructed on Livery Street a decade ago.

New ticketing and travel information facilities will be provided as part of the £1.5 million project.

The Victorian brickwork arches, which suffer from crumbling mortar and vegetation, will also be repaired and restored. Landscaping and improvements to the forecourt area on Old Snow Hill will be carried out in phase two of the works. Vacant arches could also be refurbished as shops or restaurants.

Currently, many metro passengers use the Bull Street stop to access Snow Hill Station, whilst others have to walk under the Lionel Street archway or along the busy Great Charles Street Queensway.

Railway Industry Association: Electrification can be delivered at 33-50% lower cost

18th March 2019

A new report launched by the Railway Industry Association (RIA), the national trade body for the UK's rail supply community, has found that electrification can be delivered significantly more cost effectively than some previous upgrade projects, at between a third and half less.

RIA's Electrification Cost Challenge report uses examples from both the UK and internationally to show the cost of rail electrification has already reduced, and that with a rolling programme of work could be brought down even further. The report calls for Government to collaborate with the rail industry and renew its commitment to electrification, following the cancellation of a number of schemes in July 2017.

The main recommendations identified in the report, include:

- **Cost**
 - 1. To establish a 10year rolling programme of electrification to progressively lower the long-term operating costs of the railway towards European norms and to support investment in people, process and plant.
 - 2. To endorse electrification as the first choice in a hierarchy of options for decarbonising the rail network.
 - 3. To ensure future projects adopt a realistic programme and risk apportionment.
 - 4. To use the Rail Method of Measurement to allow comparison between projects on a consistent basis.
 - Standards 5. Future projects should use proven systems that comply with the relevant standards.
 - 6. Avoid developing and obtaining approval for new systems as part of a project.
 - 7. Review the Network Rail (NR) standards suite and risk allocation to support output specification.
 - 8. Implement a 'standards freeze' for the duration of a project.
- **Foundations**
 - 9. Have an appropriate level of design maturity before commencing foundation installation.
- **Masts**
 - 10. Future procurement should allow for alternative designs that deliver outcome requirements, including life cycle reliability and maintainability against the benchmark of NR Master Series.
- **Overhead Line Equipment (OLE)**
 - 11. To maximise value for money, the procurement process should allow for proven compliant proprietary designs to deliver outcome requirements, including life cycle reliability and maintainability against the benchmark of NR Master Series, rather than mandating the use of NR Master Series in major electrification schemes.
- **Power Supply**
 - 12. At the optioneering stage, future projects should ensure that all options for traction power supplies are considered, including distribution and traction power storage options.
- **Clearances to Bridges and Structures**
 - 13. Wherever possible, future projects should secure all necessary consents, such as via a Transport Works Order, and undertake route clearance in advance of OLE works, even if this means extending the programme.
 - 14. Sufficient detailed design should be undertaken at GRIP 3 (Option Selection)
- **Plant**
 - 15. The recommendation to establish a 'rolling programme' of electrification would both reduce the competition for scarce plant by allowing forward planning and create the incentive to, over time,

David Clarke, Technical Director at the Railway Industry Association, said: “The Railway Industry Association’s Electrification Cost Challenge shows how rail electrification can be delivered at **33-50% of the cost of some past projects if the Government commits to a rolling programme of work.**”

Rail Review Chair says franchising cannot continue in its current form

Keith Williams to announce that the rail franchising system cannot continue in the way it is now in the George Bradshaw Address.

I have heard a great deal about the franchising model.... driving growth in passengers and benefits to services. But with this growth the needs of passengers have changed whilst many of the basic elements of our rail system have not kept pace.

Put bluntly, franchising cannot continue the way it is today. It is no longer delivering clear benefits for either taxpayers and farepayers. I believe that for the railway to be successful it needs to put passengers at its heart.

We need to recognise that there is unlikely to be a ‘one size fits all’ solution which will work for every part of the country and all types of passenger.

The former British Airways chief executive and deputy chairman of John Lewis Partnership, will set out that the reason he took on the review was because he had a clear commitment from the government to deliver change:

Railfuture’s Rail Challenge 2019 can be found at:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1815-Rail-Challenge-2019>

Railfuture’s response to the Williams Review. Can be found at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1820-Williams-Rail-Review> and the response document itself at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1977>