

Friday 3rd February 2016

Track renewal work to enter next phase with rail services between Liverpool and Wirral

Merseyrail Wirral line passengers will be able to travel to and from Liverpool by train on weekdays from Monday 13th February as Phase 2 of major track renewal work gets underway.

Work to replace the concrete base on the 'loop' is on schedule, meaning that trains will be able to start and terminate at James St station, Monday to Friday.

Weekends will continue to see Wirral line trains starting and terminating at Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central, with high quality, express rail replacement buses running between Birkenhead and Liverpool stations.

There will, however, be special arrangements for weekends over the Grand National Festival, Easter and the May Bank Holidays, with trains starting and terminating at James St.

While direct rail services to and from the city centre are expected to be welcomed by passengers, they are being advised that the first week of Phase 2 (13th-17th February) will present challenges as only one platform will be available at the station. However by the second week (20th February-29th May), the service offered will be much improved as two platforms will be in use.

While trains will be back running Monday to Friday, people are still being advised to plan their journeys in advance as services will still be running to the same timetables as during Phase 1 of the works. There will also be specific advice for cyclists and other people with travel needs at www.merseyrail.org/trackrenewal

Meanwhile, there will continue to be a number of options for people travelling across the river at weekends— rail replacement buses, existing cross-river bus services, the Mersey Ferries and even the car. The tunnels are generally proving to be flowing freely at weekends, meaning driving may be an option on Saturday and Sundays without causing congestion.



Key advice:

- Bear with us. While trains will run in and out of James St on weekdays from 13th February, the experience will be improved for passengers from Monday 20th February when two platforms will be back in use.
- Leave more time for your journey. James St will be the only station in the City Centre where you can catch Wirral line trains so it will be a lot busier than usual.
- Avoid catching the train to and from James St at peak times wherever possible. This will help keep queues to a minimum.
- Consider your travel options. There are a number of ways to cross the Mersey during the week and at weekends. Existing cross-river bus services may be a convenient option or the Mersey Ferries.
- Ensure you've read up on Phase 2 at www.merseyrail.org/trackrenewal. There are differences in travel plans between weekdays and weekends and specific advice for cyclists and those with disabilities.

Network Rail are replacing the most challenging sections of concrete based track in the 'loop' – originally laid in the 1970s, while making the most of the opportunity to carry out other work, including replacing conventional track under the riverbed.

Network Rail, Merseyrail and Merseytravel, have been working over many months, with local authorities, operators and other partners, to come up with a plan that balances the need to get essential and complex work done with the need to keep people moving and the city region 'open for business'.

The work, which also supports a new Merseyrail fleet on the network from the early 2020s, is part of a £340m investment in the Liverpool City Region (LCR)'s rail network over the next three years (see notes to editors)

Jan Chaudhry-van der Velde, Merseyrail's Managing Director, added:

"I hope passengers will welcome the fact that during this longer, middle phase of work, it will be possible to get a train directly to and from the centre of Liverpool, and experience from phase 1 shows that customers used their nous and adapted quickly to the changes. We do recognise that phase 2 will take a bit of getting used to, and rest assured we will have plenty of staff on-hand to help and guide people, with particular focus on James Street station."

Said Frank Rogers, Interim Chief Executive of Merseytravel:



“The first phase of the track renewal work has gone successfully both from a works perspective, with Network Rail on course in a challenging and intensive project, and in terms of the way passengers have adapted brilliantly and graciously to making their journeys in different ways, helping keep the City Region moving. We thank them for their patience so far and hope they continue to bear with us as we start the next phase of the works.”

Key detail:

- **James St station will be back in use Monday to Friday and for special events**
- **Weekends will see a continuation of the rail replacement service between Birkenhead and Liverpool**
- **Trains will not run around the city centre ‘loop’ for the duration of the track renewal works.**

13th-17th February:

Only one platform, Platform 2, will be available, at James St Station:

- At busy times, there are likely to be long queues at James St, but we will endeavour to keep these moving as quickly as possible.
- **Assisted Travel:** All Wirral line trains will start and terminate at James Street Platform 2, which can only be accessed by stairs. If you require assisted travel, please contact Merseyrail’s Customer Relations Team to arrange alternative cross-river transport and to ensure staff
- are at either end of your journey to help.
- **Bikes:** because of the limited platform space at James St, we will not be able to accept bikes in the morning and evening peaks between Hamilton Square and James St. Passenger with bikes are being asked to use the bike bus and Mersey Ferries to cross the river at these times.
- **New Brighton & West Kirby lines:** To prevent overcrowding at James Street station while only one platform is available, passengers travelling to Liverpool from New Brighton or West Kirby will have to change trains at Hamilton Square between 16:00 & 18:00, Monday to Friday.

20th February- 29th May:

Both Platform 1 and Platform 2 will be in use at James St Station



- **Assisted Travel:** New Brighton and West Kirby services will start and terminate at James Street Platform 1, which has both lift and escalator access. Chester and Ellesmere Port services will stop at Platform 2 which can only be accessed by stairs. If you travel on Chester or Ellesmere Port services and you struggle to use stairs unaided, please change at Hamilton Square on to a West Kirby or New Brighton service to James Street.
- **Bikes:** the limited platform space at James St, platform 1 means that we will not be able to accept bikes in the morning and evening peaks between Hamilton Square and James St on this platform. All cyclists travelling from New Brighton or West Kirby are advised to change at Hamilton Square. The best option for those travelling with a bike is the Mersey Ferry or the bike-bus, which operates during the peaks in the week and at the weekends. Please see www.merseyrail.org for details.

All Phases 2: 13th February– 29th May

- Trains will run every 30 minutes on the New Brighton and West Kirby lines.
- Except for the Grand National Festival, Easter and the May Day Bank Holidays, there will be no cross-river rail services at weekends, with trains starting and terminating at Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central and rail replacement buses running between Birkenhead and Liverpool stations.
- Trains will not run around the city centre 'loop'. Valid rail tickets will continue to be accepted on the 10A bus service to help people get around Liverpool city centre.

Notes for editors:

Phase 1: Tuesday 3rd January – Sunday 12th February

For six weeks all Wirral line trains will start and terminate at Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central. Rail replacement buses will run between Wirral and Liverpool Stations

Phase 2: Monday 13th February – Monday 29th May

For 15 weeks, all Wirral line trains will start and terminate at James Street station from Monday to Friday. At weekends, all services will start and terminate at Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central Stations. Rail replacement buses will run between Wirral and Liverpool stations.

Phase 3: Tuesday 30th May – Sunday 18th June

For 20 days, all Wirral line trains will start and terminate at Birkenhead North and Birkenhead Central. Rail replacement buses will run between Wirral and Liverpool stations.



- £340m will be invested in the Liverpool City Region's rail network over the next three years– a combination of funding from Network Rail and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, via the Government's Growth Deal fund and Merseytravel. For more information visit <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/lcr/>

- **Understanding roles of the partners:**

Network Rail:

- Own the rail infrastructure and are investing in it
- Will be carrying out the work (via appointed contractors)

Merseytravel:

- People's champion: working with Merseyrail and Network Rail to ensure that robust, alternative, high quality alternative transport plans are in place for Merseyrail passengers and that those impacted indirectly on the wider transport network are considered.
- Liverpool City Region Major Events Transport Board lead; ensuring that partners are working in a co-ordinated way and that knock on impacts on the wider transport network can be addressed before and during the works
- Considering the assets it owns/manages- Mersey Ferries, Mersey Tunnels as part of the transport solution

Merseyrail:

- Rail Operator
- Lead for the transport plan for Merseyrail passengers

