

GREEN LIGHT FOR ALDRIDGE

Good progress is being made in reopening from Walsall to Aldridge. After the station there closed in 1965, the site was sold for the medical centre. A slice of land on the north side of the Sutton Park line was bought back last year for £400,000, enough for a single platform. Now £150,000 has been awarded from the Restoring Your Railways fund to prepare plans and develop the business case. £30 million is available from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement for construction costs.

The plan is for two trains an hour to Walsall. Journey time will be 6 minutes [the bus takes 14 minutes]. Ideally they will be through trains to Birmingham New Street taking 38 minutes. At present, the Sutton Park line is not electrified so until wires go up on the three miles to Aldridge from Ryecroft Junction, it will be a diesel shuttle to and from Walsall.

At the new Aldridge station, it is hoped to include park and ride with 150 spaces. There is passive provision for a second platform and the road bridge may need rebuilding for electrification. Transport for the West Midlands wants to see the whole of the Sutton Park line reopened. Mott MacDonald is producing a New Stations Assessment Study. It is linked to where new housing is being built such as at Walmley and The Fort. With trains half hourly each way, Aldridge to New Street would effectively be four trains per hour. The proposal is to open as far as Aldridge in 2027.



The empty wagons return to Immingham after delivering a trainload of imported steel to Wolverhampton Steel Terminal, passing the site of Aldridge station. The new platform will be on the right, possibly limited in length by the crossover being where the middle of the train is.

Words and photo: Keith Flinders