

Ambitious 'wish list' of new rail links



The disused line between Lichfield and Walsall could be up and running again by 2029 if regional transport chiefs' ambitions are realised. (AW776-1938LM)

AMBITIOUS plans for railway expansion across the region could see new stations and electric trains within 20 years.

Fradley and Alrewas could re-join the train network as well as the link between Lichfield and Walsall.

The draft proposals are due

to be approved by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority in April, and include a wish list of measures to beat congestion and cope with increasing passenger numbers across the region between now and 2029.

Projects in the strategic plan also take account of likely housing expansion in some areas.

Funding would need to be sought and the schemes approved by central Government.

But the authority hopes the line between Rugeley Trent Valley and Walsall could be electrified between 2014 and 2019.

The route from Lichfield Trent Valley to Burton-on-Trent could be electrified by 2029, with stations at Alrewas and an A38 park-and-ride site at Fradley.

Sometime between 2019 and 2029, light rail vehicles similar to trams could be running on the Lichfield to Walsall line via Hammerwich and Brownhills.

The authority's next step will be to develop the individual schemes further, assessing the costs and benefits, and to try to secure funding as well as the backing of local councils, train operators and government bodies.