22 December 2020

South Wales Metro – we’ll be working in your area

Dear neighbour,

Transport for Wales has started building the South Wales Metro, a multi-million-pound project that will make travelling easier, quicker and more convenient for us all in the future. It will also open up a range of job, business, education and other opportunities for the people and businesses of South Wales. As a neighbour of the railway we’re keen to update you on our progress.

We have major work to do on the Valleys lines to upgrade them so that we can run more services than ever before on the new, faster, greener tram-trains we’re building.

Together with our partners, we’ll be:

* Electrifying and modernising around 170 km of track – mostly installing overhead line equipment (OLE) to power our new tram-trains
* Upgrading our stations and signalling
* Building at least five new stations in and around Cardiff
* Modifying bridges, level crossings and signalling equipment
* Cutting back overgrown vegetation alongside the existing railway corridor.

Work will be ongoing and intermittent, during the day time and the night time, between now and the completion of this phase of Metro work (around 2023).

Next month, the railway north of Radyr, to Aberdare, Treherbert and Merthyr Tydfil will close to trains between 03 - 17 January to allow a significant amount of Metro preparation work to be undertaken on these lines. During this time, bus replacement services will be in operation and passengers should check before they travel at www.tfwrail.wales.

What’s happening?

Over the course of these two weeks, our people will work around the clock to undertake crucial survey and ground investigation work at stations and on the tracks that will help us further design and plan the upcoming construction of Metro. We will also be installing small and temporary railway access points and compounds at locations directly beside these lines and will work to remove overgrown vegetation; cutting back trees and bushes and managing other vegetation, such as invasive species.

Managing vegetation is essential to ensure the safe construction of the Metro and for running a reliable service, particularly once the railway is electrified. Unmanaged vegetation can cause accidents and disruption by obstructing signals and can block the railway, or fall on overhead line equipment in bad weather.

You might notice that we’re cutting back a bit further than you’re used to; up to 9 metres away from the track or to our boundary fence, whichever is closest. This is because we need more room to install the overhead line equipment in the coming years. Once we’ve cut back the trees, bushes and vegetation they’ll be maintained at this level in the future to make sure our services keep running safely and smoothly.

Working responsibly

The natural habitats of wildlife living near the Valleys lines are important to us. We collaborate with Natural Resources Wales to ensure the impact of our work is minimised, and ensure an ecologist is on site while we work.

You’ll see our people working on the railway during the day and at night. The scale of the preparation to be achieved in this two-week window when trains aren’t running, means work will be required 24 hours a day. A large collection of people, plant and machinery has meant the railway closure is unavoidable.

Alongside our partners, we’ll endeavour to work responsibly, ensure our sites are well managed and that our people are considerate to our neighbours. Engineering work can be noisy so we’ll try our best to find ways to keep disruption to a minimum.

The amount of work we have to do over the next few years means it won’t be possible to write to you every time we’re in your area, but we’ll keep you up to date by sharing our work on our website and writing to you at key points over the course of the project.

We'd like to reassure you that our work will be planned and undertaken in accordance with Welsh and UK Government guidance on COVID-19.

More information

We’d like to thank you for your patience while this important work is taking place. You can contact us about your rail journey, about our work in your area, or if you require this information in an additional format, on 033 33 211 202 (between 08:00 – 20:00 Monday to Saturday, and between 11:00 – 20:00 on Sundays) or by visiting [tfwrail.wales/contact-us](http://www.tfwrail.wales/contact-us).

You can find out more about our vision for the South Wales Metro by visiting trc.cymru/metro-faqs.

Yours faithfully

The Community Engagement Team at Transport for Wales