# Elephant and Castle station hits milestone but funding shortfall threatens full upgrade



Construction of a new tube station entrance at Elephant and Castle has hit a crucial milestone, with the main station box now completed and preparing to be handed over to Transport for London (TfL). Funded primarily by property developers Get Living, Delancey, and Multiplex as part of the wider redevelopment of the shopping centre above the station, the structure will serve as the new Northern line entrance and ticket hall. While this development promises improved passenger capacity and step-free access, critics argue it masks the deeper issues facing London's transport infrastructure—namely, chronic underfunding and mismanagement driven by a government more interested in political spin than real investment.

With the station box finished, the next phase involves tunnelling works to connect it to existing Northern line platforms, awarded to Dragados UK— the company responsible for managing major projects like the Bank station upgrade. Excavation of roughly 135 metres of new passenger tunnels is slated to begin in 2025 and be completed by 2027, yet questions remain about whether TfL has the funding capacity to deliver the complete solution. This project, like so many others, highlights how successive governments have starved the tube system of the funding needed to meet London's growing transport needs, forcing developers and local councils to fill the gaps with their own money—an unfair burden on those who rely on a system that should be publicly supported.

The new entrance is designed not only to replace the current Northern line ticket hall but also to eventually accommodate three additional escalators for a planned Bakerloo line extension—a project whose future remains uncertain amidst London’s spiraling costs and political indifference. This piecemeal approach raises serious questions about whether the infrastructure upgrades are truly future-proof or merely window dressing for a government that has repeatedly failed to deliver comprehensive transport expansion plans. TfL’s Chief Customer and Strategy Officer claims the improvements will boost capacity by over 30 percent and improve accessibility, but critics contend these promises are overly optimistic given the ongoing lack of funding and logistical challenges.

Despite this progress, the final fit-out—including escalators, ticket machines, and passenger facilities remains unfunded and therefore uncertain. This phase, supported by allocations from the Greater London Authority, the Southwark Borough, and local developers, underscores how stranded public agencies are trying to piece together funding from various sources while the government shirks its responsibilities. The redevelopment is set against a backdrop of over 10,000 new homes and 5,000 jobs planned for Elephant and Castle—ambitions that will never be fully realized without a commitment to proper investment, not just bureaucracy and half-measures.

TfL has hired Aecom as the lead designer, with firms like Arcadis and Hawkins\Brown tasked with ensuring the upgrade integrates seamlessly with surrounding developments, including new facilities like the London College of Communication. However, amid all this planning and heralded progress, the elephant in the room remains: London’s transport infrastructure is underfunded, underperforming, and increasingly disconnected from the needs of ordinary commuters. The current government priorities seem focused more on political optics than on ensuring vital projects actually deliver on their promises.

In essence, the Elephant and Castle project exemplifies London's wider transport crisis: impressive milestones overshadowed by the failure to secure sustainable funding for the full upgrade. While the station's structural works are a step forward, the reality is that without a genuine commitment from government to adequately fund London's transport network, these projects risk remaining incomplete, leaving commuters to suffer in a system long neglected by those in power. It's clear that only through a fundamental shift in how London's transport infrastructure is funded and managed can the city truly prepare for a future that works for everyone.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/elephant-and-castle-tube-stations-new-entrance-box-ready-to-be-handed-over-to-tfl-81874/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/elephant-and-castle-station> - Transport for London (TfL) is undertaking a significant upgrade of Elephant & Castle Tube station, including the construction of a new station box to house the Northern line entrance and ticket hall. The project aims to improve capacity and provide step-free access, supporting the delivery of over 10,000 new homes and 5,000 new jobs in the area. The station box was completed in early 2025, and tunnelling works to connect it to the existing Northern line platforms are scheduled to commence in 2025, with completion expected in 2027.
3. <https://tfl.gov.uk/info-for/media/press-releases/2024/september/vital-elephant-and-castle-tube-station-upgrade-as-tfl-appoints-tunnelling-contractor-to-link-new-station-box-with-existing-platfo> - TfL has awarded a contract to Dragados UK for the design and construction of new passenger tunnels at Elephant & Castle Tube station. These tunnels will link the newly constructed station box to the existing Northern line platforms and overbridge. The tunnelling work is part of the first stage of the station upgrade, funded by the Greater London Authority, London Borough of Southwark, and local developers. Excavation of approximately 135 metres of new passenger tunnels is set to begin in 2025 and is expected to be completed in 2027.
4. <https://www.geplus.co.uk/news/dragados-picks-aecom-as-lead-designer-for-elephant-castle-station-upgrade-08-01-2025/> - Dragados UK has selected Aecom as the lead designer for the Elephant & Castle station upgrade. The project involves constructing a new station box to house the Northern line entrance and ticket hall, as well as supporting new developments, including a campus for the University of the Arts London's London College of Communication. The station box was completed to basement level five, and preparations for new passenger tunnels are underway. The fit-out of the new station is planned to provide over 1,700 square metres of new concourse space and increase station capacity by over 30%.
5. <https://www.railmagazine.com/news/2024/10/07/milestone-reached-in-elephant-and-castle-upgrade> - A significant milestone has been achieved in the upgrade of Elephant & Castle Tube station. TfL has awarded a contract to Dragados UK for the design and construction of new passenger tunnels that will link the new station box to the existing platforms and overbridge. The first stage of the major upgrade, including the tunnelling work, is funded by the Greater London Authority, London Borough of Southwark, and contributions from local developers. Work on excavating approximately 135 metres of new passenger tunnels is set to start in 2025 and is due to be completed in 2027.
6. <https://www.arcadis.com/en-us/news/europe/united-kingdom/2023/2/elephant-and-castle-station-capacity-upgrade> - Arcadis and architects Hawkins\Brown have been appointed by Transport for London (TfL) to lead the Stage 2 Design Study for the Elephant & Castle Station Capacity Upgrade project. Stage 1 of the project commenced last year with funding secured from the Greater London Authority, Southwark Council, and local developers. Stage 2 will involve the fit-out of a new integrated ticket hall, providing step-free access to the Northern Line platforms. The project aims to support the creation of 7,500 new homes and 10,000 new jobs in the area.
7. <https://www.ianvisits.co.uk/articles/elephant-and-castle-tube-stations-new-entrance-box-ready-to-be-handed-over-to-tfl-81874/> - Construction of a new tube station at Elephant and Castle has reached a significant milestone as the main station box has now been completed. The new station box is being built by the property developers, Get Living, Delancey, and Multiplex, of the shopping centre above the station, at their cost as part of the area’s redevelopment. Now that it has been completed, the station box will shortly be handed over to TfL so that tunnelling works can commence to connect to the Northern line platforms. The fit-out of the new station will follow this, but at the moment, TfL doesn’t have the funding to complete that part of the project. So officially, at the moment, the empty station box will remain just that until TfL secures the necessary money to pay for it. When it opens, the new station entrance will replace the existing Northern line ticket hall and also includes space for three more escalators to be added later down to the Bakerloo line extension when that is eventually built. Alex Williams, TfL’s Chief Customer and Strategy Officer, said: “The proposed changes to Elephant and Castle Tube station will make the experience of those using the station significantly better. The new entrance will offer step-free access and increase capacity by over 30 per cent, making it a more pleasant and welcoming experience for all those visiting The Elephant and everyone living in the area. The work will also safeguard the plans for the Bakerloo line extension to Lewisham, a project that would transform communities across south London and boost economic growth throughout the UK as part of the supply chain.” Although the property developer built the box, TfL awarded separate contracts for the tunnels that will link the new station entrance to the existing Northern line platforms. That contract was awarded last year to Dragados UK, the same firm that led the Bank station upgrade project.