

Exciting new plans for Newbury station redevelopment submitted to council

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Exciting plans for the redevelopment of Newbury station have moved a step further after Great Western Railway submitted their application for new business growth units on the south side of the station.

Great Western Railway is working with West Berkshire Council and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) to deliver the scheme, designed to help support the town's economic development.

The growth units are part of a much wider regeneration of the area. The station will be remodelled, including the station buildings and interchange facilities to improve customer experience, housing the ticket gates inside for the first time. This will also provide three new business units adjacent to the station, helping to increase employment opportunities in the town.

Further improvements will see a new multi-storey car park on the existing site, providing over 160 additional parking spaces (with improved walking routes between the station and town centre); and the second of two new cycle hubs, which together will provide 300 extra spaces fitted with CCTV for added security, environmentally-friendly motion sensor LED lighting and a bike repair stand.

GWR Business Development Director Tom Pierpoint said: “It’s exciting to have been able to reach this stage of the project where we are able to submit our plans to continue the redevelopment of Newbury station – meeting a long-held ambition of ours to better support our customers and the wider area.

“Newbury station is a key gateway to the town and this work will help secure the economic prosperity of the region as we seek to build back better from the pandemic.”

The station refurbishment plan includes seven ticket gates on the north side and six on the south side, doubling throughput and bringing this activity inside along with ticket sales and waiting areas.

The scheme is being made possible with funding from the rail industry, the Department for Transport and Thames Valley Berkshire Local Enterprise Partnership’s Local Growth Fund.

Bob Mountain, vice chair of the Berkshire Local Transport Body and board director at Thames Valley Berkshire LEP, said: “We’re thrilled with the progress of this project. The redevelopment of the station will not only encourage sustainable travel by creating a high-quality sustainable transport hub but create a gateway to the growing and ambitious town of Newbury. As we continue to plan for growth alongside government actions, the three new business units are expected to support start-ups creating up to 23 jobs.”

West Berkshire Council’s executive member for Economic Development, Ross MacKinnon, said: “This is brilliant news for Newbury and the surrounding area – the new units at the station will provide much-needed additional space for local business start-ups to expand and grow in a really sustainable location.

“In recent months, we’ve been focussing on supporting local businesses to respond and adapt to COVID-19, including administering grants and other financial support. But we also need to look to the future, doing whatever we can to help the West Berkshire economy to recover and grow in a post-COVID world.

“I’m confident that this investment from our partners will support the local economy to get back on track and help us deliver our long-term strategic priority – helping businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire.”

With the selection of a preferred contractor following due process and the signing of contracts, work is expected to be completed by next year.

GWR has been working hard to welcome people back on to its services following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

This includes:

- A 24% increase in cleaning hours every week since March 2020
- Sanitising (fogging) of 1,120 vehicles every 4 weeks
- Carrying out 2,150 on board surface tests (ATP) every four weeks, to ensure the effectiveness of our cleaning
- 272 train cleaning processes reviewed, and many adapted
- Hand sanitising facilities at key stations across its network.

The train operator has also provided extra staff at key stations to offer help and guidance; and processes are in place to help customers maintain a safe distance where possible.

GWR is encouraging customers to continue to travel safely. People are reminded to:

- Wear a face covering
- Travel at quieter times where possible
- Wash your hands more regularly
- Buy tickets online, on a smart card or by using the GWR app

Photo credit: Great Western Railway