

Major funding boost for Headbolt Lane station scheme in Kirkby

March 8, 2021



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Metro Mayor Steve Rotheram's plans for a new station at Headbolt Lane in Kirkby received a welcome boost thanks to an additional £66m from the Transforming Cities Fund agreed at the latest Combined Authority meeting.

The new station plans include proposals for around 300 park and ride spaces and a bus interchange with step-free access throughout the station.

The full scheme includes the extension of the Merseyrail network beyond the existing Kirkby station. It would also mean that residents in the Northwood and Tower Hill areas of the town would be even closer to services on the Merseyrail network.

It would see Merseyrail services run into the new station, as opposed to the current services which run as far as Kirkby. Northern services from Wigan and Manchester would also operate to and from the new three-platform station.

The station development forms part of the plans to build new rail link to Skelmersdale, which would

connect to the Merseyrail network via the Kirkby branch.

Merseytravel is continuing to work closely with Lancashire County Council, West Lancashire Borough Council and Network Rail to support that scheme.

Network Rail is currently progressing the outline design for the project and preparing a full planning application for the necessary approvals. Work is aimed to start later this year and it is planned for the new station to be operational in 2023.

The station also forms part of the Liverpool City Region Long Term Rail Strategy, a 30-year plan, which was updated in 2018.

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor of the Liverpool City Region, said: "As Metro Mayor, bringing our communities closer together has been a priority for me. We've already opened the first new station on the Merseyrail network at Maghull North, and now we're cracking on with plans to build another at Headbolt Lane in Kirkby.

"Kirkby is somewhere especially close to my heart, and this £66m of funding is a real statement of intent for my vision. I want to make it as quick, cheap and easy as possible for people to get around our region.

"Transport might look a little different in the post-pandemic era, but I am still determined to deliver on my plans for an integrated, London-style transport system."

Cllr Tony Brennan, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, said: "I welcome this additional funding to bring this important scheme forward. It will significantly improve transport choices for our residents as well as improve access to Knowsley Business Park – one of the largest employment sites in Europe – and other key services, particularly in the Northwood and Towerhill areas of Kirkby. I look forward to seeing this project progress."

Andy Heath, Managing Director at Merseyrail, said: "We share the vision of a growing, vibrant and more connected city region with a reduced carbon footprint.

"Headbolt Lane is another step towards this vision, delivering a new station for the Merseyrail network with its proposed park & ride spaces and bus interchange. To receive this next stage of funding is an exciting step forwards towards welcoming new passengers onto an expanded network.

"We are committed to creating a cleaner, greener Merseyrail and to working with our partners to deliver a rail network that serves as many communities within the Liverpool City Region as possible."

Karen Hornby, Head of stations and customer relationship for Network Rail, said: "This is a really positive step forward for the proposed new Headbolt Lane station which we are working closely with the Metro Mayor and our Combined Authority partners to develop.

"The new station and reinstatement of two tracks, will mean Merseyrail and Northern can serve a greater number of passengers in the wider Kirkby area.

“It will mean better connections to Liverpool and Manchester by public transport, bringing greater opportunities for work, study and leisure.”

Photo credit: Merseytravel