

Network Rail releases images of brand-new platform at Leeds station

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Network Rail has released photos of a brand-new platform, Platform 0, at Leeds station following its completion over the festive period.

The new platform will mean major improvements to passenger journeys by providing more trains, more seats and fewer delays due to an improved track layout, allowing trains to enter and exit the station more easily.

Work on the £161million investment began back in 2018 and the final touches were carried out by hundreds of Network Rail workers between the last service on Christmas Eve and early morning on Sunday, 27 December.

Over the 2.5 days, final work to the overhead lines, track and signalling systems took place, as well as rigorous testing to make sure the platform was ready for train services.

The platform initially will be available for trains to use during times of disruption, helping to minimise delays for passengers, and will see timetabled services call there next year.

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail's North and East Route, said: "Over the last two years, we have invested heavily into Leeds railway station to create a transport hub which the city can be proud of and which offers a warm welcome to visitors.

"The completion of the platform is a huge part of this work and will make journeys more punctual and reliable for all those travelling to, from or through Leeds. The platform will help to make things easier during times of disruption, meaning fewer delays for passengers and getting them on the move again more quickly."

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: "The completion of Platform 0 is an important milestone in improving Leeds railway station as a key transport hub. It will enhance the region's infrastructure and is a boost for the north.

"I want to say a huge thank you to the hundreds of Network Rail engineers who worked tirelessly over the festive period to complete this platform, which will improve punctuality and reliability for passengers for years to come."

Tony Baxter, Regional Director at Northern said: "The creation of Platform 0 is vital for our plans to increase capacity and provide improved services for our customers. Our aim is to make a positive impact for the north of England and the improvements carried out at Leeds will help us achieve this. I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in the project, including Network Rail who carried out the work."

Cllr Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council, said: "Completing Platform 0 is extremely positive news for Leeds and the wider region, because it is a step towards securing the improved regional and national connectivity we so desperately need to better connect our towns and cities, and boost our economic recovery.

"The increased capacity on the rail network that Platform 0 provides means more people will travel through our city station. This demonstrates the importance of our partnership work under the Leeds Integrated Station Masterplan to improve the station experience for the benefit of current and future rail users."

Cllr Kim Groves, Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee, said: "Investment to improve capacity and punctuality at Leeds station is important not just to the city and West Yorkshire but also impacts on the reliability of services across the North of England and the national rail network. I look forward to passengers seeing the positive impact of Platform 0 on their journeys in the coming year."

Matt Gillen, a Civil Engineer who authorised the upgrades from the Office of Rail and Road, said: "We were pleased to assist Network Rail and approve these important upgrades; bringing a new Platform 0 in to operation and the upgrade of Platform 1. Despite some work remaining, we recognised the importance of improving operations at Leeds station and ultimately for passengers when they come into use in May 2021. This will make it easier for trains to enter and exit the station and provide more reliable journeys thanks to the improved track layout."

To allow for the construction of Platform 0, the long-stay car park has been closed since late 2018.

Network Rail plans to reopen the car park in Spring 2021.

People are urged to continue to follow Government advice in regards to travelling and are reminded not to leave home unless for a reasonable excuse, for example, for work, to attend a medical appointment or education purposes. If people need to travel, they should walk or cycle where possible and plan ahead to avoid busy times and routes on public transport.

Photo credit: Network Rail - Platform 0 at Leeds station