

# New, longer platform opens at Market Harborough railway station

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Network Rail has today opened a new, longer platform at Market Harborough station, which will allow longer trains with more seats to call there.

Platform two has been extended to 265 metres to allow for 250-metre trains to call there. Work has also taken place to reduce the stepping distance between the train and the platform, making it easier for people to board and alight trains.

The work is part of the Midland Main Line Upgrade, which is the biggest investment into the line since its construction in the Victorian era. Over the last year, major work has taken place at Market Harborough station, including the straightening of the tracks through the station to allow trains to travel at a higher speed, installing a new accessible footbridge at the station and increasing the car parking available by 200 spaces.

There will also be further improvements to customer toilets at the station, as well as to the waiting room on platform one. A secure cycle hub will also be added.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said: “A new platform at Market Harborough station will allow for longer trains with more seats, reducing overcrowding and improving travel for passengers.

“This key enhancement is part of the £1.5bn Midland Main Line upgrade, a historic investment in the line which will transform journeys across the region.”

Gavin Crook, Principal Programme Sponsor for Network Rail, said: “We are delighted to have opened the newly extended platform two at Market Harborough station which will make travelling easier and more comfortable for all those who use it.

“We have carried out a vast amount of work to improve the railway in this area, as well as preserving the heritage of the station building, and we look forward to the final improvements to the customer toilets, platform one waiting room and cycle hub facilities completing.”

Neil Grabham, Customer Service Director for East Midlands Railway, said: “We are really pleased that platform two at Market Harborough station is open from today and we are grateful for the patience and understanding of our customers. The extended platform will make it easier for passengers to get on and off the train.

“Later this year, Market Harborough passengers will also benefit from several other improvements at the station, including the waiting room on platform one and a cycle hub.”

Kevin Harris, Chair of the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership Ltd. (LLEP), said: “One of Leicestershire’s key strengths is our position at the heart of the country, making us the ideal location for the movement of goods and people.

“This upgrade to Market Harborough station represents a real improvement both for the people of Leicestershire, and for the UK’s transport network as a whole, as journey times on the Midland Main Line are reduced. I’m very proud that the LLEP invested £3m of its Local Growth Fund in the project. This forward-thinking investment will play a huge role in connecting our region and growing our economy for the future.”

Sajeeda Rose, CEO of D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership who invested £5million into the project, said: “Strong transport links are the bedrock of a productive region and the works that have taken place around Market Harborough will boost our connectivity by improving journey times.

“Reliable and high quality infrastructure is critical to giving businesses the confidence to invest in our area and therefore create further opportunities for the whole region to enjoy.”

Tom Sutton, Head of Corporate Partnerships & Membership for Sheffield Chamber, said: “It’s great to see the Market Harborough station upgrade project completed. We welcome the improvements that enable faster services with increased capacity. The Midland Main Line provides a vital hub of connectivity between

Sheffield and London that many of our members will utilise for business or commuting purposes.

“The work at Market Harborough compliments the already completed £200m Derby resignalling project to ensure the provision of a more reliable service for passengers. We look forward to continuing to work with Network Rail to further enhance the service delivery on the Midland Main Line.”

*Photo credit: Network Rail*