

# Newhaven Marine station closure: outcome and summary of responses following consultation

June 24, 2020



The Department for Transport says the closure of Newhaven Marine station will proceed and the closure proposal should be submitted to the ORR for ratification following the completion of a consultation.

In 2006 passenger rail services were suspended because of the dangerous condition of the station canopy. Both the canopy and the station building were demolished in 2017. A single daily service in and out of the station operated as empty stock movements until early 2019 when these were suspended owing to signalling works.

The proposed closure would see the platform demolished and the track remain as a siding for berthing trains, as now, but also for freight train access to Newhaven Port where a new dock and freight handling facility is due to open.

Full details from the Department of Transport below:

## Next steps

The proposed closure of Newhaven Marine station is now subject to ratification by the [Office of Rail and Road](#) (ORR), which is not automatic. If the closure is ratified by the ORR, the station will close on a date to be confirmed, which will not be before 26 September 2020, or four weeks after ratification by the ORR, whichever is the later.

## Responses received

27 responses to the consultation were received by the department during the consultation period from private individuals and stakeholder organisations, including Transport Focus, East Sussex County Council, and Railfuture. Responses that proposed changes to the surrounding rail infrastructure and nearby stations are beyond the scope of this consultation and so are not considered in this summary. However, where possible, we have referred these concerns to Network Rail.

Twenty-three responses made substantive comments about the proposal to close Newhaven Marine station.

Fifteen respondents expressed support for the proposed station closure. Whilst supporting commentary was diverse, 4 responses had a common theme in their support for the freight plans outlined in Network Rail's proposal. Two of these respondents highlighted that their support was conditional on the realisation of the Newhaven Port development project and the benefits this would bring to freight. Two respondents queried why this consultation had not taken place earlier given the length of time services have been suspended at the station, whilst at least one other voiced support for the proposals based on Network Rail's value for money assessment.

Of the 4 respondents who opposed the proposals, 2 did so on the basis that Newhaven Marine's closure may have a negative impact on the quality of local rail services that are available in the future. Similarly, the remaining 2 respondents that opposed the proposals raised concerns about closing any station given that stations and the railways they serve represent a method of responsible and sustainable transportation. Both sets of concerns are underpinned by an assumption that a restored Newhaven Marine would offer some environmental, social or economic benefit to the local area, either immediately or in the future.

The remaining responses did not comment on the merits of the proposed closure of Newhaven Marine station, where other suggestions were received these have been considered.

One respondent raised concerns about traffic disruption and objected to the stations closure on general heritage grounds.

One respondent proposed retaining a parliamentary service so as not to incur closure costs.

One respondent called for a commitment from the rail industry to invest in improvements for the remaining 2 Newhaven stations.

We acknowledge the various suggestions that the land be used for residential homes, those concerning the new port development and associated road infrastructure, and that the platform be sold off to raise funds for Network Rail but these are outside the scope of this consultation.

Responses that proposed further station closures would require a separate process in line with the Railways Act 2005.

One respondent raised a concern about the time a digital display at London Victoria advertised the Department's consultation. The department has confirmed that, in line with the statutory obligations set out in the 'Railways closures guidance', the notices advertising the Newhaven Marine station closure consultation were displayed at London Victoria on both a static poster and additionally a digital display board, for 30 seconds at a time.

## Responses on Newhaven Marine's potential benefit to the local area

### Departments for Transport comment

Restoring passenger services to Newhaven Marine station would offer no journey time advantages nor would it offer access to any locations not already served by Newhaven Harbour station. These stations' close proximity also mean any environmental impact is negligible. As such, the unused station has no current or future value. The department therefore supports Network Rail's view that its closure would allow for existing resources to be better focused on improving rail passenger services in the area, and the regeneration of Newhaven Port and supporting freight infrastructure

## Response citing traffic disruption and heritage concerns

### Department for Transport comment

Where closure works create additional vehicle movements these must be managed in line with current regulations such as those set out by the Health and Safety Executive. Any particular concern on this should in the first instance be directed to Network Rail.

Turning to respondent's heritage concerns, the department is happy to acknowledge the history of Newhaven Marine and its long association with the railway. However, while the Railways Closures Guidance notes that there will often be impacts that cannot be quantified or valued in money terms, historical importance is not one of the objectives for transport referred to as a basis for evaluating railway closures (the objectives being Environmental, Safety, Economy, Accessibility, and Integration).

## Response concerning station closure costs

## Department for Transport comment

The estimated capital costs in bringing the station up to minimum safety standards required to enable its use by passenger services would exceed the costs of closure.

## Response on greater resources for existing Newhaven stations and passenger services

This question was referred to Network Rail who provided the comment:

Network Rail has recently resignalled the Lewes to Seaford line for the benefit of passengers and freight customers and provided access to the new freight terminal. Network Rail would be happy to work with stakeholders on the identification of third-party funded improvements at Newhaven Town and Newhaven Harbour stations as it is not funded for enhancements.

## Conclusion

Having considered the responses received to the consultation, the department has concluded that the closure of Newhaven Marine station should proceed, and the closure proposal should be submitted to the ORR for ratification.

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