

Plans approved for transformation of Hartlepool station

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The transformation of Hartlepool station has taken a major step forward after plans for the major overhaul were given the green light by Hartlepool Borough Council.

Proposals will see the station's redundant second through platform brought back into use with a new replacement platform, and plans also for new lifts and a footbridge for improved access.

Hartlepool station is the busiest single-platform station in the UK and the third biggest station in the region which, pre-pandemic, welcomed up to 650,000 passengers per year.

The works will help provide more capacity to enable future service for routes including those between London and Sunderland operated by Grand Central. Northern services which connect Hartlepool with Middlesbrough, Newcastle and other key economic centres on the Durham Coast rail line are also in line for enhancement as a result.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen worked closely with Councillor Shane Moore, Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, to provide £12million in funding for the redevelopment of the station. In October, Mayor Houchen

secured £310million from the government to invest in local transport priorities.

The news comes just weeks after the first images of the new look station were revealed, showing what the platforms could look like after the transformation is complete.

The station's redevelopment will also support the ambitions of the Hartlepool Mayoral Development Corporation, currently out for public consultation, which aims to reshape the town to make it a more attractive place to live and visit, support small businesses and deliver a master plan to maximise future funding.

The work, supported by Network Rail, Northern Trains Limited and Hartlepool Borough Council, is set to begin later this summer so the new station is ready for the Tall Ships coming to the town in July 2023.

Mayor Houchen said: "2022 is our years of construction and I am delighted that we will soon see diggers onsite and spades in the ground at Hartlepool station to deliver its biggest ever transformation.

"Local people have been crying out for years for the second platform at the station to be brought back into service, and working with Shane at the council I am pleased that we are now able to deliver what local people have been asking for for far too long. Bringing the new platform back into service will help futureproof the station, unlock the potential to expand critical services including those to and from the capital, and quite simply make getting around much easier.

"Huge opportunities are opening up in the town thanks to the Hartlepool Mayoral Development Corporation which will boost the reshape and transform the town centre like never before, making it a thriving place for local people and local businesses. And with the Tall Ships returning next year it's critical that we crack on and deliver the reliable, top quality connections and a welcoming station local people rightfully demand.

"We're transforming rail infrastructure the length and breadth of our region and Hartlepool is no different, so we can give local people the network that they deserve."

Councillor Shane Moore, Leader of Hartlepool Borough Council, said: "This is a time of great change in Hartlepool, with a range of fantastic new developments in the pipeline – including the regeneration of the town centre through the £25m Hartlepool Town Deal and the development of a new multi-million pound leisure centre which received planning permission last week.

"Improvements to the town's transport infrastructure are vital to the success of our plans, so I welcome the progress being made in relation to the railway station and the proposal to reinstate a second through platform and provide other key facilities.

"With the town hosting the world famous Tall Ships Races in 2023, I'm delighted that work is scheduled to begin later this summer so that it will be completed in time for the event which runs from July 6th-9th."

Matt Rice, Route Director for Network Rail in the North East, said: "Supporting stakeholders' aspirations to improve the railway in the North East is something we take great pride in. Securing planning approval is

testament to the hard work all parties have put into this project so far, and is an important stride towards turning aspirations into real passenger benefits.”

Kerry Peters, Regional Director at Northern, said: “Improvements like these at Hartlepool are essential in delivering our long-term strategy to create a better railway for the north and I am really pleased that the proposals have been given the go-ahead.

“I am confident that these enhanced facilities will be welcomed by our customers.”

Photo credit: Tees Valley Combined Authority