

# Plans for transformation of South Bank railway station

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A tired Teesside railway station is to be transformed as part of a major vision to link South Bank with new jobs and make the most of the region's Freeport.

Details on a proposal to develop a transport hub at South Bank railway station have been unveiled in plans for the first phase of work submitted to Redcar and Cleveland Borough Council.

Road improvements and a co-ordinated access to the Teesside Freeport area near the station are part of the vision to offer better access to jobs.

A new station car park, including a park and ride facility, is also part of the wider plan.

A £40 million allocation to deliver a transport hub as well as a raft of improvements in and around the station was signed off by the Tees Valley Mayor and Cabinet Members as part of a funding package agreed

in January and will form phase two of the South Bank project.

The existing footbridge link over the railway line needs replacing to offer better access to the Freeport area and jobs on the Teesworks site for South Bank residents.

A new and improved widened platform would also be created alongside a fully accessible footbridge with lifts to ensure sorely needed access is provided to rail passengers.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said: "Projects at Teesworks and the opportunities being opened up at the Teesside Freeport are ensuring thousands of good, well-paid jobs are coming on-line for people across Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool.

"South Bank is at the beating industrial heart of our region on the doorstep of Europe's biggest industrial opportunity this century but, at the moment, the station is cut off, tired and simply not good enough.

"These bold plans will ensure people in South Bank and beyond will have the access they sorely need to the great opportunities on the site – be it on the train, on foot, by bike, in the car, or on a bus.

"The wider transport infrastructure for the Freeport north of the station will mean the full benefits of the zone can be realised and ensure travel in and out of the Freeport area is as smooth as possible.

"Again, this means better trade for businesses, more jobs, more money raised through business rates for the council, and, ultimately, a better future for people."

A planning application submitted in February includes proposed Freeport and Transport Management offices as well as HGV lanes and holding areas for Freeport access and exit off the Smith's Dock Road roundabout north of the station.

Hybrid units included in part of the plans will not be paid for out of the transport funding allocation.

Plans have also previously been announced for a memorial to be built at South Bank to provide a lasting tribute to workers who have tragically died on the former steelworks site.

The remembrance garden will offer a place of quiet reflection for loved ones while honouring those that have died in the 170 years of iron and steelmaking on Teesside.

*Photo credit: Tees Valley Combined Authority*