

Strong support for Network Rail's plans to unblock Croydon railway bottleneck

December 9, 2020



Network Rail's proposals to untangle a notorious railway bottleneck in Croydon have been met with strong support from passengers and the community following an extensive public consultation.

As part of the consultation, which ran from 1 June to 20 September, Network Rail engaged with passengers, local residents, businesses and other local stakeholders on its proposals to upgrade the railway and rebuild East Croydon station.

Of the 1,428 responses submitted to Network Rail during the public consultation, 90 per cent were in favour of the plans to allow more reliable, more frequent and faster services for the Brighton Main Line and its branches, and see East Croydon station expanded and enhanced.

The consultation has helped Network Rail to identify concerns about the proposals, as well as opportunities to further enhance designs to meet the needs of passengers and the local community.

The top five themes identified in the consultation are:

- Desire to complete the project and deliver the benefits quickly
- Concerns over service disruption during construction
- Concerns about highways disruptions
- Matters related to impacted land and property
- Suggestions for improving intermodal integration at East Croydon station

Other matters that were raised include cycle parking, concerns over noise and questions related to the impact of COVID-19 on Network Rail's plans.

To find out more about Network Rail's proposals for Croydon, visit networkrail.co.uk/Croydon

Southern Region managing director John Halsall, said: "I'm really pleased to see such a great response to our public consultation, particularly in such trying circumstances where face-to-face events are just not possible. The feedback we received contains valuable insights that will help us to develop our final designs before we share them with the public next year.

"In the months and years ahead, we will continue to work with residents and businesses directly impacted by the project. And, we encourage anyone who thinks they may be affected to get in touch.

"Many people will be wondering about the impact of COVID on passenger numbers. However, Network Rail takes a long-term view when planning for the future of our railway and we'll be modelling the short, medium and long-term passenger projections as we develop the business case for this scheme.

"We feel that this scheme is still vitally important to ensuring we can meet future demand in this growth corridor and provide the reliable services passenger expect and deserve."

Steve White, Chief Operating Officer at Govia Thameslink Railway which runs Thameslink, Southern and Gatwick Express trains through the region, said: "In the rail industry whilst we continue to work for our customers in this pandemic, we are also looking to the future. This scheme will transform one of the busiest stretches of railway in the country, improving punctuality and increasing the number of trains we can run. I'm very pleased it has received such strong support."

Jonathan Sharrock, Chief Executive at Coast to Capital said: "I'm delighted to see that there is strong public support for the Croydon bottleneck proposals. We recently outlined the upgrade as critical to delivering our plans to build back smarter, stronger and greener. It will enable more frequent and reliable services between our economic centres and into London and align demand and capacity in the regional rail network.

"This will unlock opportunities for development and growth way beyond the railway itself and outside the boundaries of our region."

Councillor Muhammad Ali, Croydon Council's cabinet member for sustainable Croydon, said: "Strong and reliable public transport links into and out of our borough play a key role in Croydon's economy, so this rail upgrade promises to make a real difference to our town centre and our many residents, workers and visitors who use East Croydon station each day. I look forward to seeing these important improvements

benefitting people in Croydon and across the South East.”

Employing the use of a live chat facility and a consultation hotline, Network Rail was able to recreate the experience of its regular face-to-face public consultation events, which were cancelled due to the pandemic. The consultation period was also extended to 16 weeks from the usual six-week period to allow members of the public ample opportunity to help shape its proposals.

Photo credit: Network Rail

For today's rail news from railbusinessdaily.com [click here](#).