

Tees Valley Mayor Launches £35 Million Station Transformation To Deliver More Trains To Middlesbrough

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Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen has announced a £35million transformation of Middlesbrough Station to deliver more train services to the town, including the first direct rail link to London in decades.

Mayor Houchen has committed £22.5million to the scheme which, in its first phase early next year, will see a platform extension facilitate more services and longer trains. The extended platform 2 will be able to accommodate new LNER Azuma trains as Mayor Houchen leads discussions with the government-owned operator to restore daily services from Middlesbrough to the capital.

The scheme will also see major customer service improvements at the station including a new £6.5million entrance, with accompanying business units on Zetland Road. A third phase could see a new platform 3 built to the north of platform 2 to further increase train capacity within the station.

The scheme is a joint partnership between the Tees Valley Mayor and Combined Authority, Network Rail, Middlesbrough Council and the Department for Transport, with support from train operators.

Mayor Houchen said: “For years people have talked about the need to develop this station to get new services but very little has actually been done, so I’m putting my money where my mouth is to deliver increased capacity at the station and help bring us the services the people of Middlesbrough and Teesside deserve. Increasing the frequency of services and train routes is a key part of my plan to for workers, local jobs and wages to restore our way of life once we’re through the pandemic.

“While we will also make major improvements in customer areas, including a modern and much more accessible front entrance, first and foremost this is about increasing the capacity of the station to accommodate more and longer trains.

“I have been leading very positive discussions with LNER and Network Rail to work with them and partners to introduce the first services between London and Middlesbrough in decades and, as they have told me, the increased station capacity is crucial to achieving this.

“Network Rail expects to start work to expand platform 2 in early 2021, and we’re hoping to get confirmation of a service to London in 2021 which would be a great boost for businesses and people in Middlesbrough.

“While there are lots of things to consider when planning the introduction of new services, including the supply of rolling stock, the impact of the recent pandemic and infrastructure upgrades across the rail network, I will make sure we play our part in encouraging the operators to bring new services to our region by getting the station ready as quickly as we can. Capacity is already stretched, and doing nothing is not an option.”

Matt Rice, North and East Route Director at Network Rail, said: “We’ve been working for many months with Mayor Houchen and the other stakeholders involved at Middlesbrough to move forward the long-held aspiration to secure a direct-to-London train service without unduly impacting the services that already serve the town.

“New infrastructure is one part of the solution, and behind the scenes my team are putting together the plans that will see us start building the extension to platform 2 early next year as we start the journey of turning our stakeholders’ ambition to reality.”

A second phase of development will include the refurbishment of the redundant, derelict and dilapidated station undercroft to provide a new entrance into the station subway and newly refurbished workspaces. There will also be changes to the road to the front of the station.

The plans form part of an outline business case with preparatory work expected to start in the autumn, and building work on site in early 2021.

Middlesbrough Mayor Andy Preston said: “I’m furious that there are no direct trains to London – this staggering gap in basic infrastructure is a symptom of major historic problems here. So thank God that this is finally being sorted. Well done Ben Houchen and everyone involved.

“Direct trains will boost our progress towards creating the UK’s digital city and countless jobs in the oldest

part of Middlesbrough.”

Photo credit: Tees Valley Combined Authority