



Northumberland County Council

We Asked, You Said, We Did: Northumberland Line, North Seaton Viaduct to Bedlington Viaduct

We Asked

We asked for your feedback on our proposals for the Northumberland Line scheme, which will see the reintroduction of passenger services between Ashington and Newcastle. In particular, we asked for comments on proposals for new stations and bridges, changes to level crossings and the land we will need to use to build the scheme. In the North Seaton Viaduct to Bedlington Viaduct area, we sought feedback on proposals for Bedlington station.

You Said

We received 1023 responses to the consultation, made up of 949 response forms and 74 emails and letters. 91% of respondents were fully, mostly or slightly supportive of the project.

We have analysed all the feedback and have provided a summary of the main themes raised in relation to Bedlington station and the level crossings and temporary sites between North Seaton Viaduct and Bedlington Viaduct.

Bedlington station

We received 386 comments from 211 individuals directly relating to Bedlington station. 33% of these comments were positive and 35% were neutral or suggestions.

Comments on Bedlington station:

- where positive, were generally supportive of the proposals, including the plans to retain the existing buildings on the site;
- gave feedback on the three potential locations identified for station parking;
- raised concerns about loss of green space; and
- asked questions about visual impact, noise and privacy impacts on neighbouring residential properties.

Further details of the consultation feedback on Bedlington station and how this was considered by the project can be found in the Statement of Community Engagement, which was submitted alongside the planning application.

Level crossings

81 comments from 81 individuals were received on the level crossings between North Seaton Viaduct and Bedlington Viaduct, of which 56% were positive and 29% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on the level crossings in this section:

- was generally supportive of the proposals for the crossings and suggested that upgrades would improve safety at the crossings;
- made suggestions about improving crossing safety for pedestrians and horse riders;
- made suggestions about how vehicle movements could be altered to improve traffic flows; and
- asked questions about how the changes to the local road network would impact pedestrians and cyclists.

Temporary sites

At the time of our consultation we presented a number of potential options for temporary sites needed to build the scheme. 89 comments from 89 individuals were received about the proposed temporary sites between North Seaton Viaduct and Bedlington Viaduct. 57% were positive and 32% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on the North Seaton Viaduct to Bedlington Viaduct temporary sites:

- suggested that construction should be timed to minimise the impact on local residents and traffic;
- asked how construction traffic would be managed to limit noise, congestion and dirt; and
- raised concerns about the impacts on green space and bridleways.

We Did

We met with the design team and considered your feedback. Where possible we have incorporated this into the proposals and have outlined our response to key areas of concern below. Your feedback will continue to be considered as the detailed design progresses.

Car parking

The station's Transport Assessment considers anticipated demand and existing supply of local car parking spaces, and the size of the car park has been determined by demand forecasting, with an allowance for future anticipated demand. The Assessment has shown that existing car parks in the area are already at capacity at peak times, alongside additional parking on local streets, and it is therefore necessary to provide dedicated car parking for station users.

As a result of the consultation feedback on the proposed car parking locations and ongoing technical work, the following two car parking sites are being taken forward for Bedlington station.

1. The existing car park on Network Rail land adjoining Barrington Road.
2. A new car park on the public open space at the junction of Barrington Road and Ravensworth Street.

A robust optioneering exercise has been undertaken to support this decision and in particular the conversion of public open space at Ravensworth Street to a car park. This has included an assessment of the loss of open space against relevant planning policy. The Design and Access Statement for the station, which forms part of the planning application, gives more information about the optioneering process.

A key consideration has been that alternative locations to accommodate parking in close proximity to the station are limited by safety, signalling, engineering, existing built development and other constraints. Following the public consultation, the alternative site proposed on Barrington Road was discounted on this basis.

Northumberland County Council also remains committed to promoting active travel for journeys to the station and a modal shift from private cars. This will help encourage those who can to choose to travel to the station more sustainably.

Green space

While some existing trees and green space will need to be removed to construct the station and car park, the project will only remove what is necessary to enable construction and use of the station.

Our scheme seeks to balance the need to safeguard public open space with the strategic public benefits that will result from the new railway station development, for which there is a requirement to provide adequate parking and safe footways and highway access arrangements. As part of the station development, we will be providing planting as part of a landscape scheme to compensate for the loss of trees and vegetation. On top of this, we are seeking to agree compensatory provision for the loss of open space. Exact details of this provision are currently under discussion and further information will be released when available.

Impact on residents (visual impact, noise, air quality and congestion)

The project has carried out an appraisal of the health and wellbeing impacts of the scheme and this has been submitted with the planning application.

In particular, the potential impacts of noise on local residents has been assessed and appropriate mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise them, the details of which will be confirmed as part of the planning application determination process.

The station's Transport Assessment considers the development's impact on the local road network and indicates that the station and new road layout will have no adverse impact on the local road network.

Level crossings

The detailed design of the level crossings is currently ongoing. Feedback in relation to these is being reviewed and will be considered as the design progresses.

Temporary sites

Preferred temporary works sites have yet to be agreed, and consideration of the feedback received in relation to them is currently ongoing and will inform a construction strategy. Once the location of temporary works sites have been confirmed, all necessary conditions and permissions would need to be obtained from the relevant authority.