



Northumberland County Council

We Asked, You Said, We Did: Northumberland Line, Bedlington Viaduct to Blyth Bebside

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 Bedlington Viaduct to Blyth Bebside, we sought feedback on proposals for Blyth Bebside 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 received and have provided a summary of the main themes raised in relation to Blyth Bebside station and the level crossings and temporary sites between Bedlington Viaduct and Blyth Bebside.

Blyth Bebside station

We received 436 comments from 265 individuals directly relating to Blyth Bebside station. 49% of these comments were positive and 28% were neutral or suggestions.

Comments on Blyth Bebside station:

- noted that it would improve the economy by encouraging people to visit the area, providing more opportunities for local people and boosting investment;
- provided suggestions for wider connectivity with footpaths and cycle routes;
- asked questions on the detailed design of the car park;
- noted that the design should discourage anti-social behaviour and promote personal security;
- asked if the station would have an impact on the road network, including the potential for increased congestion;
- suggested that more parking should be included to limit the impact on parking for local shops;
- noted that the station is isolated from most of Blyth and should be located on the east side of the A189; and
- raised concerns about the footpath connecting the Heather Lea, and the impact this could have on local residents.

Further details of the consultation feedback on Blyth Bebside 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

112 comments from 112 individuals were received on the level crossings between Bedlington Viaduct and Blyth Bebside, of which 42% were positive and 23% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on the level crossings:

- where positive suggested that upgrades would improve safety;
- asked questions on what improvements would be made to the local road network to accommodate additional traffic;
- made suggestions on the detailed design of the crossings, including to improve safety;
- suggested that the crossings should be suitable for all users, including equestrians; and
- suggested that long barrier down time would increase congestion and may increase the risk of accidents.

Temporary sites

At the time of our consultation we presented a number of potential options for temporary sites needed to build the scheme. 76 comments from 76 individuals were received about the proposed temporary sites between Bedlington Viaduct and Blyth Bebside. 66% were positive and 30% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on the Bedlington Viaduct to Blyth Bebside temporary sites:

- gave suggestions for other temporary work site locations; and
- made suggestions on improvements to the site/s post construction and suggested that disruption to local residents from noise and construction traffic should be minimised where possible.

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.

Parking

The size of the car park has been determined by the station's Transport Assessment, which considers anticipated demand and existing supply of local car parking capacity, with an allowance for future anticipated demand. This means that it should be large enough to avoid negative impacts on parking for local shops. Should any parking issues arise, Northumberland County Council will monitor these and implement measures as necessary. The detailed design of the car park is underway, and additional details will be shared with local residents and businesses in due course.

Anti-social behaviour

Although the station is unmanned, the increase in footfall through the area it generates is anticipated to act as a natural deterrent to antisocial behaviour. In addition, all new stations will feature CCTV, lighting and passenger help points. The detailed design of the station is

anticipated to be subject to a planning condition and will include specific locations for CCTV and other safety features.

Impact on the road network

The station's Transport Assessment considers the development's impact on the local road network and indicates that there is sufficient capacity on the local road network for additional traffic associated with the station. In addition, Northumberland County Council is promoting active travel and a modal shift from private cars. This will help encourage those who can to choose to travel to the station more sustainably.

Station location

One of the project's priorities is to enable people to travel quickly between Ashington and Newcastle, helping encourage them to switch from car to rail. With this in mind, the number of stations and their locations have been chosen to carefully balance passenger demand and journey times.

The proposed location of the station has been identified as the most suitable, with consideration of detailed surveys and analysis including demand modelling and the station's Transport Assessment.

A station on the other side of the A189 would be constrained by the existing roads and Public Rights of Way.

Heather Lea footpath

Providing good pedestrian connections to the station is an important aspect of the proposals, and therefore we have decided to retain the proposed footpath between the station and Heather Lea. As the parking spaces in the station car park are sufficient to meet forecast demand, we do not anticipate this footpath will lead to rail users parking on residential streets but, should any parking issues arise, Northumberland County Council will monitor these and implement measures as necessary. concerns about the impact this will have on local parking and anti-social behaviour

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.