



Northumberland County Council

We Asked You Said, We Did: Northumberland Line, Holywell Curve to Benton North Junction

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 Holywell Curve to Benton North Junction area, we sought feedback on proposals for Northumberland Park 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 Northumberland Park Station and the level crossings and temporary sites between Holywell Curve and Benton North Junction.

Northumberland Park station

We received 197 comments from 160 individuals directly relating to Northumberland Park station. 47% were positive and 37% were neutral or suggestions.

Comments on Northumberland Park station:

- where positive were generally supportive of the proposals, suggesting that the station improved connectivity by linking to the Metro and improved access to employment opportunities;
- suggested ways to improve active travel and accessibility by providing cycle storage, lifts and access;
- asked questions about the design of the station, including the provision of shelters and the location of the station;
- asked questions on linkages between the Metro, rail and bus services and noted that signage and wayfinding within the station would be important;
- suggested alternative station locations, including Palmersville; and
- raised concerns about increased noise during construction.

Further details of the consultation feedback on Northumberland Park 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

64 comments from 64 individuals were received on the level crossings between Holywell Curve and Benton North Junction. 36% were positive and 49% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on level crossings:

- noted that the improvements to the Earsdon level crossing and closure of Benton square footpath crossing were welcomed;
- asked questions on planting, landscaping and noise mitigation;
- gave suggestions and raised concerns around the accessibility of the crossings;
- asked questions and raised concerns about the impacts on local residents during and after construction;
- asked questions and gave suggestions on the detailed design of the crossings;
- noted that closing Palmersville Dairy crossing would impact on local walking routes; and
- noted potential impacts on equestrians.

Temporary sites

At the time of our consultation we presented a number of potential options for temporary sites needed to build the scheme. 70 comments from 70 individuals were received about the proposed temporary sites between Holywell Curve and Benton North Junction. 54% were positive and 29% were neutral or provided suggestions.

Feedback on temporary sites:

- asked questions about the detailed design of the sites;
- noted potential impacts on local wildlife, including nesting birds;
- queried potential impacts on Public Rights of Way (ProW);
- raised concerns about the noise and visual impact of the proposed Northumberland Park locations; and
- asked questions about the impact on flood defence systems at the Northumberland Park locations.

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.

Active travel

We understand the need for the stations to have good connections for people travelling by foot and bicycle, and have considered this as part of our design.

With regards to bicycle parking, there are existing facilities associated with the Metro station and local retail units. This provision was considered as part of the station's Transport Assessment, which indicated that it is sufficient for future anticipated cycle use and access. North Tyneside Council has also indicated that no further cycle parking is required.

Lifts are proposed at the station, and are designed to be large enough to accommodate a turnaround for all bicycles.

Station design

The station platform will include shelters and seating. The detailed design of the station is anticipated to be subject to a planning condition, and passenger facilities will be subject to Network Rail standards. As the detailed design progresses, we will share further information about the passenger facilities that will be on offer.

Good signage, wayfinding and connectivity

We are aware of the need to provide consistent and understandable wayfinding and signage both within and outside of the station site, including to help people interchange between the Northumberland Line and the Metro. Within the stations, this will be a detailed design consideration and we will take feedback received to date on board as we develop our designs. Site signage will also be agreed with the train operator and Nexus.

We also understand the need for the stations to have good connections for people travelling by public transport (as well as by foot, bicycle and car). We are currently in discussions with bus operators about how best to enhance and promote existing options. However, changes to bus services are outside the scope of the Northumberland Line scheme and the project is unable to directly influence service provision.

Alternative station locations, such as Palmersville

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 found as the most suitable, including through discussions with Nexus.

Noise during construction

Construction of the station will be controlled through a Construction Environment Management Plans (CEMP) and a Construction Transport Management Plan (CTMP), which are anticipated to be subject to a planning condition. These plans will set out how environmental impacts from construction (including noise, vibration, dust and traffic) will be controlled and monitored. They will also set out how impacts on neighbours will be reduced, including how information about the works will be communicated.

Whilst construction is taking place contractors will keep neighbours and local businesses informed about planned working arrangements so they are aware of and can plan for any disruption. When essential construction works need to take place at night and at weekends, nearby residents and businesses will be advised in advance. Every effort will be made to ensure that impacts on residents and businesses are kept as low as possible, both during daytime working and in the event that essential work needs to take place at night.

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.