

# £15 million boost to bring better rail journeys to the North East

- over £15 million invested in 3 rail stations in North East to level up infrastructure in the country
- Horden Station in Durham opens with £4.4 million for new stations, meaning more convenient travel and less congestion
- £8.7 million for Darlington station and a further £2.45 million for Middlesbrough station to improve journeys for passengers

Thousands of passengers in the North East of England are set to benefit from more frequent, reliable rail services and better connections, thanks to £15 million of government investment, the Transport Secretary has announced today (29 June 2020).

Horden Station in Durham will open to passengers for the first time today. It will be served by one train per hour calling at all stations between Newcastle and Middlesbrough. This restores a vital link for up to 70,000 passengers in an area that hasn't had a station in a 20 kilometre stretch after the previous station was closed following the Beeching cuts in 1964.

The £10.55 million project, led by Durham County Council and Network Rail, has been supported by £4.4 million from the Department for Transport's [New Stations Fund](#).

The Transport Secretary has also announced £8.7 million of investment to develop proposals for a package of enhancements to modernise Darlington station. These include 2 new platforms for local services, one new platform for southbound long-distance services and a raft of improvements to make the station more accessible.

A further £2.45 million has also been agreed to develop proposals at Middlesbrough station that would see platform 2 extended to accommodate longer trains with more seats. A new platform would also be built, increasing capacity for local services and delivering more comfortable journeys for passengers.

Transport Secretary and Northern Powerhouse Minister Grant Shapps said:

Our ambitious plans to restore and revitalise the railways of the North East sits at the heart of our commitment to level up infrastructure across the country, build a railway that works for everyone and kickstart our economy as we begin the recovery from COVID-19.

I've seen first hand how the new Horden Station will improve connectivity for thousands of people, easing congestion in Durham and enabling quick, convenient travel between Newcastle and

Middlesbrough.

By backing proposals to improve both Darlington and Middlesbrough stations, we will work to invigorate rail connections and deliver more modern, reliable services for passengers and businesses now and in the future.

Councillor Simon Henig, leader of Durham County Council, said:

It has been a long held ambition to have a station at Horden so, after a number of years of hard work and commitment by ourselves and our partners, it's fantastic that we are now ready to welcome the first train and the first passengers.

This new facility will open up significant opportunities for communities across east Durham, by providing a direct transport link to Teesside, Wearside and Tyneside. And, of course, it will also make it easier for people from outside the area to travel to the east of the county, whether for business or pleasure.

It is going to provide a major economic boost to the county and I'm sure residents and businesses will be keen to take advantage.

It comes as the Transport Secretary recently agreed to give £5 million from the [Restoring Your Railway](#) funding to Northumberland County Council to develop proposals to drive forward the return of passenger services on the Ashington-Blyth-Tyne line in Northumberland.

The New Stations Fund was launched in 2013 to help give local communities improved access to rail services in England and Wales and has so far helped to fund 10 new stations. The third round of the New Stations Fund, which will invest £20 million in new stations and help restore closed stations to their former glory, has now closed with a decision on successful applicants due in the Autumn.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said:

I am delighted that the government has once again thrown its weight behind my plans to upgrade both Darlington and Middlesbrough Station, a move which will help thousands of rail travellers in my region with more frequent and reliable services, and ensure we are better connected to London and the rest of the UK.

Improved rail connectivity will help us attract even more big businesses and high levels of investment to the Tees Valley, which is central to my plan to create good quality, local jobs for people in Teesside, Darlington and Hartlepool.

This £11 million investment is another significant milestone in

improving transport connectivity in the Tees Valley and is further proof that this government is serious about its levelling up agenda and giving the north the investment it deserves.

Today's announcement comes as engineering works continue on the £1.2 billion programme of infrastructure enhancements for the East Coast Main Line (ECML) that will increase capacity and reduce journey times.

Power supplies north of York are being upgraded to enable more electric services to run, minimising the use of diesel fuel and reducing the impact on the environment. The work between York and Newcastle is due to be completed by the end of 2022 with the upgrades between Newcastle and Edinburgh set to be completed around 12 months later.

The East Coast Main Line is also set to become Britain's first mainline digital rail link with [£350 million of new investment](#) to install state-of-the-art electronic signalling designed to cut journey times and slash delays.

Conventional signalling will be replaced with a digital system that allows trains to talk to the track allowing the smooth flow of trains, reducing signal failures that every year result in thousands of hours of delays, and making journeys safer.

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## [PM announces transformative school rebuilding programme](#)

Schools across England are set for a transformative ten-year rebuilding programme under radical plans to be set out by the Prime Minister today [Monday 29 June].

Representing the first major rebuilding programme to be launched since 2014, schools will benefit from substantial additional investment. Schools and colleges will also receive funding this year to refurbish buildings in order to continue raising standards across the country.

The rebuilding programme will start in 2020-21 with the first 50 projects, supported by over £1 billion in funding. Further details of the new, multi-wave ten-year construction programme will be set out at the next Spending Review.

Investment will be targeted at school buildings in the worst condition across England – including substantial investment in the North and the Midlands – as part of the Prime Minister's plan to level up opportunity for all.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

All children deserve the best possible start in life – regardless of their background or where they live.

As we bounce back from the pandemic, it's important we lay the foundations for a country where everyone has the opportunity to succeed, with our younger generations front and centre of this mission.

This major new investment will make sure our schools and colleges are fit for the future, with better facilities and brand new buildings so that every child gets a world-class education.

He will commit:

- Over £1bn to fund the first 50 projects of a new, ten-year school rebuilding programme, starting from 2020-21. These projects will be confirmed in the autumn, and construction on the first sites will begin from September 2021.
- £560m and £200m for repairs and upgrades to schools and FE colleges respectively this year.

Rebuilding projects will be greener, helping meet the government's net zero target, and will focus on modern construction methods to create highly skilled jobs and boost the construction sector.

Investment in schools will be prioritised on the basis of buildings' condition and further details of the programme, including the approach to eligibility will be confirmed following the Spending Review.

The £560m for school repairs and upgrades comes on top of over £1.4bn in school condition funding already committed in 2020-21.

The £200m for FE colleges this year brings forward plans announced by the Chancellor at Spring Budget this year for £1.5bn of investment over five years to transform the FE college estate.

This fast tracked activity will further support the government's wider plans to protect jobs and incomes and drive forward the country's economic recovery from the pandemic.

Later this year government will launch a competition for further funding to ensure that all of England is covered by Institutes of Technology, making sure everyone has the chance to gain higher technical skills and helping unlock growth across the country.

Earlier this month, the Education Secretary announced a £1bn Covid catch-up plan to tackle the impact of lost teaching time.

This included new measures to help primary and secondary pupils catch up,

including £650m for state schools to lift educational outcomes and a £350m tutoring scheme specifically for the most disadvantaged

This one-off grant to support pupils in state education during the 2020/21 academic year recognises that these young people have lost time in education as a result of the pandemic, regardless of their income or background.

In his first months in office, the Prime Minister announced an extra £14.4 billion in funding for schools over three years. That translates to £135 million a week and means that every secondary school will receive at least £5,000 a year for each pupil, and primaries at least £4,000 a year.

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## Appointment of Prime Minister's National Security Advisor

Press release

Prime Minister announces appointment of David Frost as National Security Advisor.



The Prime Minister has today announced the appointment of David Frost as the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser. David is currently the Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and the UK's Chief Negotiator. He will succeed Sir Mark Sedwill who has served as National Security Adviser since April 2017.

The Prime Minister, with the approval of HM The Queen, has nominated David for a life peerage.

Welcoming David Frost's appointment, the Prime Minister said:

I am delighted to appoint David Frost as my next National Security Adviser. He is an experienced diplomat, policy thinker, and proven negotiator, with a strong belief in building Britain's place in the world.

He negotiated the deal that finally enabled us to leave the EU in January and in his new role I am confident he will make an equal difference to this country's ability to project influence for the better.

I have asked David to help me deliver this Government's vision for Britain's place in the world and to support me in reinvigorating our national security architecture and ensuring that we deliver for the British people on the international stage.

David Frost said:

I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed the next National Security Adviser. I look forward to helping deliver the Prime Minister's vision for a global Britain, with real influence around the world.

My aim is to support the Prime Minister in setting a new strategic vision for Britain's place in the world as an independent country after the end of the EU transition period, and in championing that vision as we strengthen our international relationships.

To do this effectively we need to strengthen and refocus our international policy apparatus, to ensure that we keep pace with others in the world. The creation of the new Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office is one important step in this. Implementing the Integrated Review of our international capability, and making sure we use the National Security Council to drive its results, are also essential and I look forward to leading both.

I will of course remain Chief Negotiator for the EU talks and these will remain my top single priority until those negotiations have concluded, one way or another.

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## [Exchange of letters between Sir Mark Sedwill and the Prime Minister](#)

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## Cabinet Secretary to stand down

Sir Mark Sedwill has today announced that he will stand down from his role as Cabinet Secretary, National Security Adviser and Head of the Civil Service in September, after over 30 years in Government service.

In his letter to the Prime Minister, Sir Mark said:

Two years ago, when my predecessor fell ill, your predecessor asked me to step in as Cabinet Secretary, and you asked me to continue to support you through Brexit and the Election period. It was obviously right to stay on for the acute phase of the Covid-19 crisis. As you are setting out this week, the Government's focus is now shifting to domestic and global recovery and renewal.

I am fortunate to have served in some of the most challenging and rewarding jobs in national and international public service under seven prime ministers and in extraordinary times. I am grateful for your confidence and friendship as both Foreign Secretary and Prime Minister. I wish you well and, of course, remain at your disposal in the years ahead. It has been a privilege to serve.

In his response, the Prime Minister paid tribute to Sir Mark's public service:

Over the last few years I have had direct experience of the outstanding service that you have given to the Government and to the country as a whole.

It has been by any standards a massive contribution – but as PM I have particularly appreciated your calm and shrewd advice.

You have also spoken with a unique authority – unusual in a Cabinet Secretary – on international affairs and national security; and as National Security Adviser you have done much to keep this country safe. It is therefore great news that you have agreed to continue to serve this country on the international stage, beginning with

the UK's preparations for the G7 summit next year.

You have done it all in Whitehall: from Afghanistan to the modernisation of the civil service; from immigration policy to Brexit and defeating coronavirus. After serving for decades with great distinction – and unflappable good humour – I believe you have earned the gratitude of the nation.

In recognition of his distinguished service to public life, the Prime Minister, with the approval of HM The Queen, has nominated Sir Mark Sedwill for a life peerage.

The Prime Minister has also asked Sir Mark to lead a new G7 panel on Global Economic Security as the UK assumes the presidency. Its mission will be to ensure that the global free trading system on which our economy is based remains fair, competitive and secure.

The First Civil Service Commissioner, Ian Watmore, will shortly launch a competition to appoint a new Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service. Applications will be invited from existing and former permanent secretaries.

David Frost, currently the Prime Minister's Europe Adviser and the UK's Chief Negotiator, will succeed Sir Mark as the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser.