

Rugby Parkway Station

Pre-Planning Public Engagement 23 January to 20 February 2023

We Asked, You Said, We Did: Update to Respondents

Introduction

Warwickshire County Council with the support of the rail industry is bringing forward plans for Rugby Parkway Station, located approximately 5km South East of Rugby adjacent to the A428 Crick Road at Houlton. Situated on the Northampton Loop of the West Coast Mainline between Rugby Station and Long Buckby Station. Rugby Parkway Station will offer access to the local and national rail network with two trains per hour in each direction.

An application for outline planning permission for Rugby Parkway Station has been submitted; you can view the application on Warwickshire County Council's planning pages

<https://planning.warwickshire.gov.uk/swiftlg/apas/run/WCHVARYLOGIN.display>

Prior to the submission of the planning application, Warwickshire County Council undertook a four-week pre-planning public engagement exercise which ran from 23 January 2023 to 20 February 2023. The engagement provided an opportunity for residents, businesses and other stakeholders to find out more about the station project and have their say at an early stage of the design development.

Engagement summary

Warwickshire County Council used a variety of publicity materials, delivery methods and material formats to promote and encourage engagement participation including:

- A letterbox mailshot to over 3000 addresses in proximity to the proposed station.
- A stakeholder mailing to over 80 named stakeholders, contacted directly by members of the project team at Warwickshire County Council via e-mail, post or a 'Contact Us' web page
- A press release was carried on local media channels including the Rugby Observer, BBC, Coventry Telegraph, and Warwickshire World between 18 January and 24 January 2023.
- A social media campaign, utilising Warwickshire County Council's existing media channels, attracted on Facebook: 5 posts, 54 comments, 16 shares, 35 reactions; Twitter: 4 posts, 1,657 impressions, 66 link clicks and NextDoor: 1 post, 12 comments, 3 likes.
- Posters promoting the pre-planning public engagement were distributed to five venues (Houlton (Urban & Civic), Rugby Station, along Crick Road, Rugby Museum/Library and Rugby Central Shopping Centre).
- Two drop-in engagement events were held:
 - (i) 3 February 2023, The Barn Houlton, 107 attendees
 - (ii) 4 February 2023, Rugby Central Shopping Centre 306 attendees

Warwickshire County Council received 388 written responses either through the online Response Form, by e-mail or paper form completed at the drop-in engagement events. Responses received via e-mail or completed on paper copies of the Response Form were manually uploaded to be captured for analysis and reporting purposes.

A significant proportion of respondents (265 – 68%) indicated that they lived in Rugby Borough, 39 lived elsewhere and commute to/via Rugby (10%), 35 lived elsewhere (9%) and the remainder of respondents lived in neighbouring areas/counties.

Consultees were asked to indicate their level of support for the proposals presented. 229 respondents strongly agree/agree with the proposals (59%), 106 strongly disagree/disagree (27%), the remaining respondents are neutral or did not express an opinion.

At this phase of the project development the design of the station is at a very early stage. The submitted application seeks outline planning permission with all matters reserved, except for access to the highway network. All matters other than access to the site from the highway network will be the subject of a subsequent application for reserved matters approval. The reserved matters include the appearance, landscaping, layout, and scale. The plans presented for the public engagement were developed in line with rail industry standards for a station of this type. Much of the detail will be the subject of planning conditions set by the local planning authority, these will need to be discharged by the local planning authority prior to construction/installation.

We Asked, You Said, We Did

Your responses have been carefully considered by the project team. This report provides an overview of the key responses ('You Said') and how these have influenced (and will continue to influence) the submission for outline planning permission to Warwickshire County Council ('We Did') and the ongoing development of the station design.

Facilities/design of the station

Station facilities

Respondents queried whether the station could provide toilets (and baby change), waiting room facilities, platform canopies and platform seating. Respondents said they would like to see a retail or hospitality facility at this location – suggestions included a coffee shop, newsagent, hotel, vending machine, pub or hot/cold food vendor.

The plans submitted for outline planning permission include the following features:

- New highway access through creation of a fourth arm to the existing signalised junction on Crick Road;
- Parking for up to 325 vehicles with allocated parking bays for blue badge holders and EV (electric vehicle) charging points. The exact number of spaces will be informed by ongoing passenger demand modelling and Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan parking standards but will be limited to 325 spaces;
- Secure cycle stands for station users, with the number informed by passenger demand modelling and cycle parking standards;
- Two platforms with step free access via a footbridge and ramps and/or lifts. The station will be fully accessible to people with reduced mobility and other access requirements;
- Shelters and seating along the platforms, exact number and position to be confirmed;
- Passenger drop off/pick up;
- Taxis drop off/pick up;
- Provision of bus stop and bus information;
- Audio frequency induction loops for station announcements;
- Ticket purchasing facilities and real time passenger information boards;
- CCTV cameras.

The plans have been developed in line with rail industry standards and do not preclude a station building and/or provision for a retail/hospitality unit at this location.

Car park design

Respondents queried the basis for the number of car parking spaces, comments ranged from the car park being too large to too small. Respondents suggested the car park design should be inclusive, safe and accessible with provision for blue badge parking, motorcycles and electric vehicle (EV) charging.

It is anticipated that Rugby Parkway Station will provide parking for up to 325 vehicles, there is currently provision for 5% of the parking to be allocated as blue badge and 5% as EV charging (with a further 5% passive provision). The number of parking spaces to be provided will be subject to ongoing passenger demand modelling and Rugby Borough Council's Local Plan parking standards (up to 325 spaces as previously noted).

Highways

Respondents made comments on the impact of the proposals on the road network, three themes emerged: The station would cause an increase in traffic in the locality; the station would alleviate some of the congestion in and around the existing Rugby Station and routes into the city centre; suggestions for works to the highways such as additional lighting on the A428, priority bus lanes and re-surfacing. Respondents asked why the station was being located at the proposed site.

The project has undertaken robust traffic impact assessments and modelling which has taken account of all known consented/committed and allocated developments (and schemes) including Rugby Parkway Station. Overall, the assessments indicate that there is unlikely to be any strategic level impacts arising from the delivery of Rugby Parkway Station proposals meaning that for the majority of existing road users, the experience remains unchanged. Traffic flows at the proposed access highway junction with Crick Road have also been modelled, the results indicate the junction will be able to cope with the projected demands.

The suggestions for works/changes to the highways in the immediate vicinity of the proposed station have been shared with Warwickshire County Council's Transport Planning and Engineering Design Services.

Impact on parking for local residents

There were concerns raised about the anticipated impact of the proposals on availability of parking for residents. A number of respondents requested more information on how street parking would be controlled. Respondents suggested car parking should be free to incentivise use of the station and prevent overspill on neighbouring roads.

It is anticipated that there will be a car parking charge at this location. Once the station is open, Warwickshire County Council will monitor parking on neighbouring streets. Should measures be required to prevent parking on surrounding roads, these will be the subject of a separate consultation and engagement with local residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Bus connectivity

There were concerns raised about bus services in Rugby in terms of frequency and destinations. Consultees supported regular bus connectivity with the station and the surrounding areas to align with the rail timetables.

The station design includes provision for a bus stop, the design of the bus stop will be determined by discussions with bus operators as the project progresses and is anticipated to be subject to a planning condition.

The project is unable to directly influence bus service provision, notwithstanding this, your feedback has been shared with Warwickshire County Council's Transport Planning team and will inform discussions with bus operators as the project progresses.

Cycle connectivity/facilities

Cycle connectivity

Respondents suggested a number of opportunities for connectivity with the existing cycle network and/or provision of new links.

The station site layout will integrate access for sustainable modes of travel into and around the site. The highway access design will integrate with the shared use cycle/footway, along to the north of the A428, Crick Road, via controlled crossings introduced for cyclists and pedestrians.

The feedback on suggested cycle routes and cycle connectivity has been shared with Warwickshire County Council's Transport Planning team for their consideration.

Cycle facilities

Respondents made suggestions as to what cycle facilities they would like to see incorporated at the station to promote and encourage cycling.

The station design includes provision for secure cycle parking, the design of the cycle parking will be determined by ongoing discussions with key stakeholders including the rail industry, British Transport Police and local cycling groups.

Connectivity with rail services

Impact on network

Respondents sought further information on the impact of train services calling at Rugby Parkway Station for existing stations such as Long Buckby and Rugby.

The services calling at Rugby Parkway Station are not anticipated to impact the frequency of rail services calling at Rugby Station or Long Buckby. There will be necessary timetable changes to add in the Rugby Parkway Station service between the two stops. The journey between Rugby Station and Long Buckby will therefore take a little longer because of the new stop at Rugby Parkway Station.

West Coast Main Line

Respondents would like plans for the station to include access to services on the fast line in and out of London in preference (or in addition to) the Northampton Loop.

The station development will not preclude a future connection with the West Coast Main Line as part of a future expansion but there are no plans currently for Rugby Parkway Station to serve the West Coast Main Line ('fast' line). Services on the West Coast Main Line can be picked up at Milton Keynes and Rugby Station which will both be accessible by connection via Rugby Parkway Station.

Rail services

Respondents were in support of more connectivity to the rail network. Respondents requested further information on the timetable for services calling at the station including operational hours to support longer distance commuting and leisure activities. A number of respondents asked whether Rugby Parkway Station could offer different service connectivity to that provided by Rugby Station.

Rugby Parkway Station will be an additional station on the existing Northampton Loop of the West Coast Main Line (the 'slow line') and will be served by the rail services operating on this route between Birmingham and London Euston. No new services will be introduced on to the route as part of this project.

Current timetable modelling allows for two trains per hour to call at Rugby Parkway Station on the Northampton Loop of the West Coast Mainline (the 'slow' line) in each direction travelling from Birmingham New Street to London Euston and London Euston to Birmingham New Street. These services will also call at Rugby Station.

Engagement is ongoing with Network Rail and key industry stakeholder to refine the timetable including confirming first and last daily services.

Funding

Respondents suggested that the funding for the station should be allocated towards other facilities and council needs in Rugby Borough.

Warwickshire County Council has funded the development of the project to date. It is currently exploring funding options for the next stage of the development and delivery of the proposals. Any funding allocated for the purpose of a new railway station is non-transferable for the purpose of other council or NHS spending.

Environment

Respondents were interested in the environmental and ecological impact of Rugby Parkway Station, a number of suggestions were made to reduce its impact including habitat creation and soft landscaping.

The application for outline planning permission will be supported by ecological assessments. Feedback from the public engagement, alongside the ecological assessment, will be used to inform the later detailed design process. The project will seek to deliver biodiversity net gain, include embedded mitigation and safeguard land for wildlife.

Location

Respondents asked why the station was being located at the proposed site.

The location of Rugby Parkway Station has been carefully chosen for its proximity and accessibility to the rail network (rail lines), planned and committed development sites, and the strategic road network. In addition, the site of the proposed station has been safeguarded in the adopted Rugby Local Plan for the purpose of a railway station.

What Next?

We would like to thank everyone who has taken the time to provide written feedback about Rugby Parkway Station and/or visited our drop-in events.

An application for outline planning permission for the station has been submitted to Warwickshire County Council. As at May 2023 a statutory consultation process is underway which will allow residents, businesses and other stakeholders a further opportunity to comment on the proposals prior to determination. You can find view and comment on the application by visiting Warwickshire County Council's planning pages during the statutory consultation period - <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/commentingonplanning>

A Statement of Community Engagement has been submitted as part of the planning application, this describes in more detail the public engagement process and the feedback received.

Future updates on Rugby Parkway Station will continue to be posted to the project's web page at: <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/major-transport-construction-projects/rugby-parkway-station>