



Press Release

24 May 2024

Whittlesea Railway Station £3m investment moves forward

The delivery of a £3million programme of enhancements at Whittlesea railway station was approved by Fenland District Council's Cabinet on Monday (20 May).

The enhancements will form part of the Council's ongoing Railway Station Masterplans project, delivering improvements to Whittlesea, March and Manea stations with a total funding package of £9.5million from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority.

A masterplan for Whittlesea station, drawn up by the Council and the Hereward Community Rail Partnership some years ago, includes high-level plans for a new station car park, longer platforms and a new pedestrian bridge.

Smaller projects in the masterplan, such as improved platform lighting, new platform waiting shelters and a second ticket machine have already been completed at Whittlesea station, as part of the £9.5million of funding from the CPCA.

The funding has also delivered a raft of projects identified in the March and Manea railway station masterplans, but technical challenges identified in feasibility studies meant additional work was needed to deliver the remaining 'big-ticket' schemes at Whittlesea.

In January, the CPCA Board agreed that £3million of its funding could be spent between April 2024 and March 2027 to take forward an Outline Business Case for Whittlesea, and progress to detailed design proposals and construction.

At Monday's Cabinet meeting, members approved an agreement with the CPCA to draw down the funding. All proposals taken forward through the £3million enhancement programme for Whittlesea station will be subject to additional public consultation, the report to Cabinet said.

At the meeting, Whittlesey East and Villages ward member Cllr Alex Miscandlon said: "I think this is a good way forward. Whittlesea station has suffered for many years with underinvestment, and I think bringing it forward as a main station, in view of the fact that Whittlesey is growing and growing quite considerably, to give us a better transport system out of the areas for work and leisure.

Council Leader and fellow Whittlesey East and Villages member Cllr Chris Boden added: "It is a chicken and egg situation to some extent. The poor facilities and, for that matter the

short and disjointed platforms at the station, discourage people from using the station. Therefore, additional trains aren't put on and because there are so few trains and the service is so infrequent people don't tend to use the station and it's important that that cycle is broken.

"One of the ways of breaking that cycle is through initiatives such as this to enable specific improvements to take place at the station to encourage more people to be able to use the station which may be able to be used to encourage the train operators to stop more frequently at the station.

"It's not that we lack trains passing through the station, but the problem is too many passenger trains do exactly that. They pass through and they don't stop so that will be a big battle ahead. It's a battle we've been fighting for some time, but these proposals will assist in ensuring that that battle is eventually won."

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Chris Seaton, Portfolio Holder for Transport at Fenland District Council and Chairman of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership, said: "Further investment in Whittlesea Station will hopefully be a catalyst for further development of the local rail infrastructure, with additional trains making it easier for people to travel by train and bringing more regional and national opportunities within reach.

"The funding from the CPCA will enable us to work through viable options for the station, come up with detailed designs and bring them to fruition."

Following the feasibility study work conducted as part of the Whittlesea Station masterplan, work has been underway to explore and rule out other options including whether an alternative site for Whittlesea Station might be more appropriate.

In 2022, it was deemed the cost of a new station would be prohibitive and unlikely to represent value for money.

- Watch the Cabinet meeting from Monday, 20 May, at: [FDC Cabinet Meeting - 20/05/24 - YouTube](#)
- See the full reports submitted to Cabinet at: [Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 20th May, 2024, 2.00 pm - Fenland District Council](#)
- Find out more about the Council's Railway Station Masterplans, at: [Railway Station Masterplans - Fenland District Council](#)

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Notes to Editors

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