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POINTS OF VIEW



View of the new Beaulieu Park Station in Chelmsford, taken from the Generals Lane road bridge  
CLLR MARIE GOLDMAN

## New train station will have positive impact on city for generations to come

LONG WAIT NEARLY OVER FOR KEY PIECE OF INFRASTRUCTURE

**I**NFRASTRUCTURE. Did you know that the word comes from Latin, literally meaning beneath or below the structure? So, strictly speaking, we're talking about something that everything else gets built on.

But in everyday use, it gets bandied around to refer to all sorts of things that are essential to how we live as a society. That can be things like roads and footpaths, or hospitals, GP surgeries, schools, dentists, and a whole lot more besides.

In the north of Chelmsford, a key piece of infrastructure is currently being put in place that will hopefully have a positive impact on our city for generations to come – that's the new Beaulieu Park Station.

I know from knocking on lots and lots of doors across Chelmsford over the past few years, and from speaking to even more residents, that many people moved to Beaulieu Park and other parts in the north of Chelmsford many years ago because of the promise of a new railway station nearby. In some cases, residents tell me this was more than 20 years ago.

Now that promise is finally becoming a reality.

It certainly has taken a long time to get to this point. In fact, planning permission was first submitted in 2013. It has taken a huge amount of partnership working to get to the point where we can finally see the platforms going in and the roof going on to the structure of the station building. Over the past year, the effort

has mainly been concentrated on the groundworks and other preparatory work.

Some of it will have been fairly invisible to most residents, but if you take a look at the fascinating time-lapse video on the Network Rail site (here: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/improving-the-railway-in-anglia/beaulieu-station/>) you can see what the contractors have been doing with that time.

And now, if you stand on the new Generals Lane Bridge and look over at the site, which is where the photo above was taken, you can see it all taking shape.

Now that things are out of the ground, progress will appear to be much quicker.

We need it to be if the station is to open by

its target date of the end of 2025.

Incidentally, the station is called Beaulieu Park Station even though it is officially outside of the Beaulieu Park residential area.

That's because there is another station elsewhere in the country, in Hampshire, called Beaulieu Road station, and yet another station in the Highlands called Beaulieu Station, spelled differently, but pronounced the same.

The station and the new roads and bridge around it are critical to the success of the development of the homes that are being built nearby, including in the new Chelmsford Garden Community.

Research suggests that when people move into their new home, it only takes them a few months to form habits that will likely stay with them for the rest of their time there. So, if their only way of getting around is by car because there aren't the safe walking, cycling or bus routes to allow them to make other choices, the chances are they may not ever

(or at least rarely) choose those options for their regular journeys in the future.

Of course, nobody is saying that residents should never use their cars (despite the opposite claims from people who seem to have ulterior motives) – there are times when car journeys are the best and, indeed, only choice.

Nobody can carry heavy goods or ten bags of shopping back from the supermarket that's a few miles away. You can't walk or cycle to hospital if your leg is in plaster. A bus journey won't work if it doesn't go anywhere near your destination.

But if we can make it easier for people to make those sustainable choices when it works for them, we really should.

We'll all benefit from it too as every journey not taken in a car will create more space on our already overcrowded network for those car journeys that can't be avoided.

But the benefits are much wider than that as well. We need to make it

possible for people to travel to and from our city to bring trade and workforces into the area. It might sound a bit old-fashioned in these days of remote working, but it really is important that people can get to their place of work, which isn't always sitting at the dining room table.

Just ask people in Jaywick, one of the most deprived areas in the whole country. Public transport options are so sparse there that they can't get to jobs in other parts of the region, creating a downward spiral of poverty and deprivation.

That needs to be fixed, but we also need to make sure we keep on top of it in Chelmsford, which is exactly what's happening with Beaulieu Park station.

Do have a look if you're passing that way, but of course, keep safe if you're driving.

I can't wait to see it finished and open and seeing the benefits that it will bring to Chelmsford.

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