

Calling for new Guildford railway station

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Guildford's MP has reiterated calls for a third railway station to be built in the town, saying public transport infrastructure "must be delivered" alongside new house building.

Zöe Franklin has urged the government to revive plans for a Guildford West train station, which would be located in the Park Barn area.

Plans for the new station have been floated as far back as the 1990s, but have yet to materialise despite advocates arguing it would boost connectivity to Royal Surrey County Hospital and the University of Surrey.

Ms Franklin told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS): "The western part of Guildford is growing rapidly.

"New housing developments will bring thousands of new residents to an area that's already under-served by public transport.

"We must join up housing, transport and economic growth alongside infrastructure, not try to retro-fit it, when congestion and other problems have become ingrained and it becomes, I would argue, a much bigger project."

If fully realised, Guildford West station would operate on the North Downs Line - which runs from Reading through Guildford and links up to Gatwick Airport.

In 2019, it was reported that the station could be on course to open by 2025, but the project is still yet to materialise.

Surrey County Council reportedly set aside hundreds of thousands of pounds for the project over the years.

Surrey Live reported in January that the authority's ambitions for the project remain unchanged, although further national funding would be needed for it to proceed.

Ms Franklin, who had been a Guildford Borough councillor before her election as an MP, added: "By providing a realistic alternative to car travel for thousands of existing and future residents, a new station could help reduce traffic-related emissions, supporting both local environmental objectives and national net-zero goals."

She further said that Guildford's high housing costs mean many of the town's workers cannot afford to live locally, and that improving rail links would broaden the labour market for businesses.

"I've been supporting this project since I was first elected as a councillor to Guildford Borough Council nearly 20 years ago," she said.

"Now representing Guildford as MP, it's given me more opportunities and a louder voice to work on this in earnest."

James Moules Local Democracy Reporter

Zöe Franklin At London Road Station (Credit: Zöe Franklin)