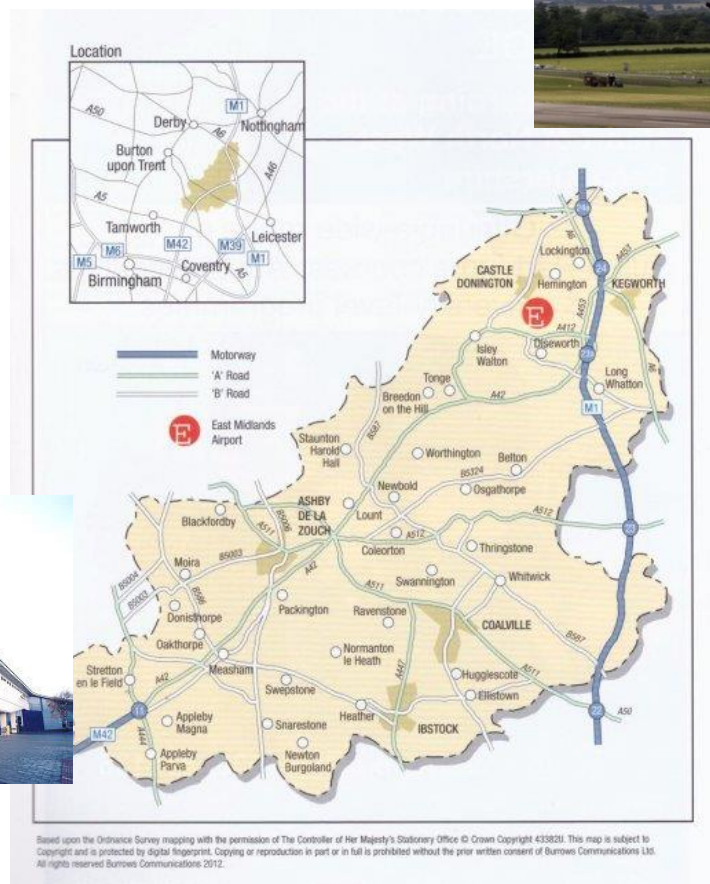


# East Midlands Trains Franchise Consultation. North West Leicestershire District Council's response to questions raised in DfT consultation document.



## INTRODUCTION

This document is North West Leicestershire District Council's response to the East Midlands Rail Franchise Public Consultation document issued in July 2017, and directly answers the 30 questions asked in that document.

This District is in a somewhat unique position in relation to Leicestershire's railway services, as there is currently no passenger line which runs **directly** through the area. However, rail services are still of prime importance to us for the following reasons:

- East Midlands Airport is located in the north-eastern corner of the District, and although its nearest railway station (East Midlands Parkway) is just a few yards inside Nottinghamshire, we have a vested interest in improving services here because it serves a significant regional airport and one of our key centres of employment
- Many of our residents use the county's rail services from stations outside the District, and we are aware that Leicester-London services are a priority, as are other trains which can be accessed from either Leicester or Loughborough
- The north-eastern arm of HS2 will pass directly through our area. We are anxious to gain every possible advantage and prevent any deleterious effects upon the rest of our local network when the new services come into operation
- Our District is a growing area of the county and we are working towards sustainable transport. Access to rail is an essential part of this objective.

We support the City and the County's main strategic objective for the new East Midlands Rail Franchise, which is to support the continued drive for economic growth across Leicestershire by improving connectivity within the County and to and from other regions of the UK. We are aware that their priorities are:

- Improved long-distance connectivity to and from Leicester, especially London, Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Sheffield and Cambridge.
- Improved connectivity to airports, including Birmingham, East Midlands, Luton and Stansted
- Improved local services for outlying communities across the county

We wholeheartedly subscribe to any efforts made by the City and the County to improve economic growth, and the District itself has some significant projects which will contribute to this. These are:

- East Midlands Gateway Strategic Rail Freight Interchange
- Large housing developments in Measham and Kegworth
- Future development of the Ratcliffe on Soar power station site

The need to improve our rail services is consistent with the Midlands Engine, Midlands Connect and East Midlands Connect initiatives.

We were saddened to hear of the recent decision to halt the electrification of the Midland Mainline, but will continue to join the City and County in pressing for this work to continue as soon as it is feasible. We will also actively support any solutions which are projected to improve journey times through the county within the current infrastructure.

## MIDLAND MAINLINE

We support the City and the County's view that intercity services are essential to support the county's economy and facilitate growth. Leicestershire depends on good links to London, the West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Cambridge, Yorkshire and the north.

What is a "good" rail service? For us, it is:

Fast
Efficient
Comfortable

In line with the views expressed in the City's and the County's consultation response, our target for Leicester – London journeys is 60 minutes, and like them, we are anxious that this also applies post-HS2, as the GVA benefit or disadvantage per minutes is estimated to be worth around £1m pa. Faster journeys are needed to make the county's economy efficient and to compete with the speed of car travel. Placed where we are in the county, it is essential that we continue to encourage people out of cars and on to public transport, and we see this as a vital part of making our District move towards sustainable travel.

### London Services

Our priorities are:

- Later departure and arrival times into London, and increased frequencies on Sunday
- Retain calling patterns and improve where suggested
- Reshaping of the timetable to accommodate Thameslink and the best use of the 6<sup>th</sup> path from St Pancras must not be at the detriment of Leicester-London journey times

Within the structure of the London services, it is imperative for us that calling patterns at East Midlands Parkway are improved; currently the service is irregular and not useful to airport passengers.

With the electrification project on hold, we are keen to see that journey speed targets are met through improvements in rolling stock and infrastructure investment, rather than removing station stops, as this could affect accessibility to rail for our residents.

### Regional Services

In line with the City and the County's view, limited stop ("semi-fast") services to Birmingham, Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool and Manchester should have an overall journey speed of at least 60mph.

It should be the successful franchisee's operational/commercial decision to make final decisions on calling patterns, but we would urge them to consider the following:

- Taking passenger flows into consideration
- The impact of change on station pairings
- That there is sufficient capacity for predicted **and** future passenger numbers
- Appropriate mitigation is put in place for passengers with special access needs, ensuring that if they are displaced on to other services, these have sufficient capacity

- To consult with local authorities (and more widely) before making decisions on any changes

We are aware that train capacity is an issue. There are existing problems of overcrowding and it must be possible for the successful franchisee to accommodate the anticipated growth in passengers. A failure to meet capacity requirements could affect economic growth and sustainable travel plans.

We agree with the City and County's definitions of overcrowding:

- 100% seating for journeys over 20 minutes
- On shorter journeys, involuntary standing must not exceed 20 minutes
- Passengers must not be left at stations under any circumstances

We believe that these principles should apply for the duration of the franchise, meaning that passenger growth must be taken into account.

The District would also ask bidders to consider carrying out appropriate impact assessments when considering changes to services. Our District includes commuters, business travellers, family groups, leisure/retail users, people with special access needs and those travelling to airports with extra luggage.

### **ROLLING STOCK**

As we have already stated above, we are disappointed that the electrification of the Midland Mainline is going to halt at Kettering. The obvious short-medium term solution is the use of bi-mode rolling stock which will swap from electric to diesel power when the electrified lines run out.

However, there has already been some media comments about speed differences between bi-mode and electric trains, and an assertion that it will be "difficult" to maintain London – Leicester journey times with these vehicles, particularly when they switch to diesel mode. This raises an obvious concern for us as one of our stated priorities is to maintain the 60-minute journey time between these two cities, and particularly after the arrival of HS2.

Our suggestion to the successful franchisee on this issue is that we would hope that they will consider procuring the bi-mode vehicles with a superior power to weight ratio than some of the models currently available.

According to the current specifications of the bi-mode trains, (the 800-801-802 range), their maximum speed on diesel power is 100mph. Therefore, while there are many sections of track north of Kettering with more than 100mph speed limits, these trains will not be able to take advantage of this. The bi-modes do have a small speed advantage in terms of better acceleration from stations, but the overall result of the use of these units will be longer journey times, with the possibility of knock-on economic effects over time.

The HSTs which the bi-mode trains will be replacing are capable of higher speeds overall. The new rolling stock will have a clear sustainability advantage, but a creative solution needs to be found which will sustain current journey times.

We are aware that there have been initial discussions with Hitachi about upgrading the Class 800's MTU engines to match the Class 802's 904hp rating. This would give a five-car Class 800 a similar power to weight ratio of an HST composed of 8 coaches and two power cars. However, there is also a possibility of mechanical issues if these units are run much outside their original specification.

## **Question 1. How do you think closer co-operation between staff in Network Rail and the operator of the next East Midlands franchise can be achieved?**

We are aware that other respondents to this consultation exercise are in favour of a formal alliance. We would support this, as we believe that Network Rail, Train Operators and the communities they serve should be working towards the best result for passengers.

## **Question 2. How can the operator of the next East Midlands franchise engage with community rail partnerships or heritage railways to support the local economy to stimulate demand for rail services in the region?**

### **Community Rail Partnerships:**

There are two Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in EMT's catchment area; the Derwent Valley Line CRP, covering Derby – Matlock, and the Grantham – Skegness CRP (The Poacher Line), which also covers Nottingham – Grantham. Both organisations could have a valuable input to any changes proposed to service patterns on their respective lines, and improvements to stations. The new franchisee should continue to build on these relationships.

### **Heritage Rail:**

There are two heritage railways in the County; the Great Central Railway (GCR), which runs from a terminal in north Leicester to Loughborough Central, and the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) which operates over part of the Loughborough – Ruddington branch. These are separate organisations, but there are ambitious plans to link them by means of a new bridge over the Midland Main Line near Loughborough station, and also to construct a new station at the north end of the GCR to provide improved passenger interchange between the national network and the preserved railway. Freight traffic still passes over part of the GCR (Nottingham) between East Leake and the national network at Loughborough.

### **Opportunities for Franchisee Engagement:**

There may be scope for joint marketing, particularly if the plan to join the two sections of the Great Central Railway are completed, as this will be one of the longest heritage railways in the UK with long sections of double track.

## **Question 3. Do you think that the operator of the train service, stations and support services should take the following into consideration when they run the franchise:**

- **The environment**
- **Equality**
- **Communities in the areas that they operate**

**If so, how should they do this?**

We feel that it is imperative that all these elements are taken into consideration. The District has sustainability objectives which include greener travel, and we will expect that the successful franchisee will set out how it will promote sustainability and equality. We would expect measures to include the following:

- Minimising waste and pollution through appropriate procurement, maintenance, operation and cleaning policies
- Reduce carbon emissions through business activities and by marketing the railway as a good alternative to car use
- Improving outdoor spaces round station environments, either by use of underused/redundant station buildings or landscaping initiatives which could be run in conjunction with local communities
- Specifying rolling stock that minimises or eliminates emissions and other adverse effects on the environment
- Adopting policies for recycling waste and scrap material
- Ensure stations are accessible for all (as far as physically possible)
- Ensuring employment policies are fully compliant with equal opportunities legislation
- Consulting with local communities and organisations on station facilities, and supporting groups who may wish to maintain or look after their local station.
- Consulting with residents when maintenance and/or infrastructure work is planned at unsocial hours, or when there is likely to be local disruption

**Question 4. Do you agree with our proposed approach, which could reduce journey times on long distance services and increase the likelihood of getting a seat?**

The proposal to reduce intermediate stops in longer-distance services during peak hours, serving Kettering southwards, with enhanced services to and from Corby, is, in principle, supported. Reduced journey times may help to encourage our residents to use intercity services rather than driving.

**Question 5. What are your suggestions about how to mitigate the potential loss of some direct services between Oakham, Melton Mowbray and London?**

This is a matter for the City and the County, as District residents are unlikely to be affected.

**Question 6. What are the particular services, routes and times of day when you think additional seats for passengers are most needed?**

Overcrowding issues for journeys north of Bedford on the Midland Mainline are detailed in the consultation document. The proposed mitigation measures should be helpful.

The Birmingham – Peterborough services may be relevant to those of our residents who board this service at Leicester. The current rolling stock consists mainly of 3-car Class 170 diesel units, with some services rostered only for 2-car sets. Overcrowding can occur at times of high demand, and there is little spare capacity to accommodate growth. This is clearly part of the larger issue of overcrowding which will need to be addressed by the new franchisee.

**Question 7. Which on-board facilities, in order of preference (these are listed in the response form) are most important to you:**

- **On short distance journeys (up to 60 minutes)**

CCTV

Wheelchair space

Cycle storage

Free Wi-Fi

Power sockets

USB Sockets

Pushchair space

- **On long distance journeys (over 60 minutes)**

CCTV

Wheelchair space

Luggage space

Pushchair Space

Catering

Free Wi-Fi

Power Sockets

USB sockets

Baby changing facilities

Cycle storage

Table seating

Seat back tables

First Class areas

**Question 8. What other on-board facilities should be:**

- **Introduced**

Flexible seating to allow more space for luggage on trains to London, coastal and airport services, and for pushchairs on local trains. However, we would discourage the use of “standing” seats.

Flexible space design so that when wheelchair users are on board, or when cycles or large luggage items are being carried, this space can be used for seating, particularly on

commuter/local services. However, it must be clear that wheelchair users take priority over others for the use of flexible space.

We feel that flexible seating arrangements are particularly important for services which run through East Midlands Parkway, to encourage more customers to use rail as an option for travelling to the airport.

- **Improved**

We are aware that East Midlands Councils have undertaken research on priorities for train interiors. The key points from this work include:

- Overhead storage can be too small for some cases and back packs, which then take up space which should be used for larger items
- Access to power points and WiFi is important
- WiFi access should be free, without significant time restrictions
- Catering is of average quality but offered at premium prices. Quality and innovation is needed without pushing up costs excessively
- Better environmental controls are needed; air conditioning and heating which can be adjusted by the on-board team during journeys
- On-train facilities must be kept clean and in good working order

However, in considering interior design, it must be recognised that there are two distinct types of services running through the county; “intercity”-type services and suburban ones. Appropriate rolling stock must be selected for these two journey types.

## **Question 9. How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs?**

- **At peak and/or off peak periods**

This is discussed in more detail in other parts of the document.

- **During the early mornings, late evenings or at weekends**

Trains should be starting from Leicester at or before 0600 and run until at least 2200, and longer if the market demands. Airport services need to be timed appropriately for the needs of passengers and staff, bearing in mind that many morning services require check-in between 0500-0700.

Patterns of demand at weekends can vary significantly from those during the week, and alterations to services to suit the particular travel requirements at weekends should be considered. In particular, demand for travel on Sundays has been growing, and the tendency to undertake disruptive engineering work on Sundays may need to be reappraised.

- **At Christmas and New Year periods**

Ensure that these are kept under review, especially Boxing Day services.

- **During the Summer Period**



Holiday destinations have changed dramatically over the last 30 years and the annual exodus through the county towards the East Coast does not require the slew of extra services that it used to in the past. Also, most railway operators do not have large quantities of extra rolling stock for additional summer holiday services. However, should travel patterns change, there should be an opportunity for train operators to consider spot-hire of stock from private companies, if there appears to be an economic case for doing so.

- **For students travelling to local schools**

This is unlikely to affect our residents at the current time.

- **To special events**

The key events for the county are:

- Download Music Festival, typically held in June at Donington Park
- Race events at Donington Park
- Football matches at the King Power Stadium

There are also a number of cycling events which attract high numbers of people travelling by bike, and flexible passenger accommodation would be useful at these times.

- **New Housing, employment or retail developments**

**Our case for better rail services to East Midlands Airport (via East Midlands Parkway)**

East Midlands Airport (EMA) lies in North West Leicestershire, and accessibility to and from there by rail is vital to the district's economy.

EMA is currently the 11<sup>th</sup> busiest airport in the UK, handling some 4.5m passengers during 2015. Its largest single operator is currently Ryanair with 51% of total passengers flying with this airline. Other passenger services include seasonal charter operations and regular scheduled services.

The Airport's Sustainable Development Plan clearly states that public transport access is vital to support and sustain growth in the next 25 years. The targets are to increase passenger public transport use from 9% to 15%, and employee public transport use from 29% to 35%. The employee figure is targeted against the projection that employment on the airport site will treble by 2040, **excluding** 7,000 new jobs planned at the East Midlands Gateway freight terminal.

Rail is currently under-exploited as a means of travel to EMA. Five trains per hour (tph) stop at East Midlands Parkway in both directions:

- 2 tph London via Leicester
- 1 tph Sheffield via Derby
- 1 tph Nottingham
- 1 tph Leicester – Lincoln in each direction

However, all these services are timetabled to leave East Midlands Parkway within an approximately 15-minute period, so there are long waits for passengers if trains are missed or cancelled. The road link between the railway station and the airport currently consists of

one 6-seat taxi per hour, which is not timed appropriately. No combined rail/taxi fares are available.

See our answers to subsequent questions on improvements to stopping patterns and rail services.

EMA is also a major cargo carrier, and it is worth noting that considerable expansion and increased employment is planned at East Midlands Airport over the next few years, including the new Roxhill Freight Terminal, where it is estimated that there will be an extra 7,500 employees when the terminal is in operation. Accessibility to rail is a sustainable alternative to single travellers in cars and also deals with the associated use of large amounts of land for car parking.

We feel that it is vital for the District that train services to East Midlands Parkway are improved. This could be achieved by varying stopping patterns and considering the provision of extra services which would stop at this station. A better service would enable the transport chain to work better throughout, as currently it is difficult to justify improving bus and/or taxi services when passengers are not inclined to use the train.

If services to East Midlands Parkway are improved, there will be future benefits in addition to those accrued in the short term. The large number of workers to the new Strategic Freight Terminal will be given the choice of rail travel, and at such time as the Ratcliffe on Soar power station site is redeveloped, it would provide rail access for either commercial or residential use, adding economic value and sustainability.

- **On journeys where interchange is poor**

See our comments above and the following:

Recent studies have shown that significant improvements could be secured by recasting the train service into a more regular and frequent pattern, and improving the road links to the standards at other similar airport interchange points.

We ask that the bidder looks specifically at measures to maximise the potential of East Midlands Parkway as an access to East Midlands Airport, as well as improving links to other airports important to the East Midlands economy such as Birmingham and Luton.

## **Question 10. What additional train services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?**

We endorse the view of the City and the County that Leicester and Leicestershire have poor rail connectivity. They employed a model that tested potential Gross Value Added (GVA) uplift that could be achieved through new and enhanced services, including through services via HS2 to identify priorities for development. They have identified the elements briefly summarised below:

- An hourly service between Leicester and Manchester running via Dore Curve (for faster journey time). Bidders would need to assess pathing and routing options.
- An hourly service between Leicester and Coventry. This is linked to the LE-NUCKLE infrastructure project at Nuneaton, which is being actively pursued by Leicestershire LEP and

Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, in collaboration with Midlands Connect. Like the City and the County, we would expect the franchisee to support this development and engage actively. We also endorse the City and County's view that the franchise bid includes a priced option for the operation of this service.

- Regular links to Leeds and the North from the East Midlands by extending some of the existing London, Leicester, Derby, Sheffield services to Leeds, including retention of the existing through services.
- New direct services from Leicester to Coventry the Thames Valley, Manchester and West Yorkshire
- Links into Leicester must be maintained for stations to the south, particularly to Kettering and Market Harborough
- Faster journeys from Leicester to London and Birmingham
- Reduced east-west journey times between Leicester and Stansted Airport

**i) To achieve the best result from the implementation of HS2 Phase 2**

The proposed HS2 route will run through the north-western part of Leicestershire, with the nearest stations being Birmingham Interchange (near the NEC) and East Midlands Interchange at Toton. The delivery of this project will result in fast services from Sheffield and the Nottingham/Derby area to London and to Leeds and the north. For Leicestershire, achieving the best result means:

- Ensuring that the perceived risk of lengthened journey times between Leicestershire and London does not occur. The risk arises because existing Midland Main Line trains are projected to lose nearly half of their passengers to HS2. However, forecast growth in passengers will mean that existing levels of demand will be exceeded even with HS2. Nevertheless, Leicester and Leicestershire should seek assurances from the Secretary of State that Leicester's fast services will be protected.
- Securing through "classic compatible" direct services from Leicester to destinations in the north via HS2. The journey time reductions available are substantial (up to an hour on many station pairings). If services are provided through Leicester from key economic development areas in the South Midlands and Thames Valley, the proposition is substantially strengthened, especially if an alliance with other LEPs and Local Authorities can be achieved, including with Transport for the North, creating a "string of pearls".

Whilst we recognise that the new franchisee will not be in a position to deliver these elements of our strategy within the life of the franchise, we want to see an innovative and forward-thinking company that engages fully with the Department for Transport, Local Authorities, HS2 Limited and Network Rail in long-term planning to maximise the value of HS2 for the region, and that, in the interim, will introduce new and improved services consistent with these long term developments. It should be noted that construction of HS2 will start during the life of the next franchise, and that it is therefore vital that long-term plans for the "classic" network are developed and agreed early and in parallel with HS2 so that there is no inconsistency between the two systems. We believe that the new franchisee will have a vital role to play in the process.

The Gross Value Added (GVA) benefits that have been identified include:

Between Leicester and:	£m per annum
Sheffield, Leeds and North East England (direct services via HS2)	40.9
Sheffield, Leeds and North East England (via interchange with HS2 at Toton)	19.5
Reading and Thames Valley via Coventry and Leamington	14.9
Manchester	9.1
Faster journey time to London	6.9
Sheffield, Leeds and North East England (direct services via existing network)	6.4
Sussex Coast and/or Sevenoaks (direct services via Thameslink)	4.0
Norwich	1.5
Burton-upon-Trent	0.34

Enhancing local rail connectivity to destinations in the West Midlands would also benefit residents and businesses in the South West of the County by providing improved access to longer distance services on the West Coast Main Line and the HS2 western leg.

Our expectation is that there would be a minimum of 3tph to key destinations from Leicester with an average journey speed of 60mph, to equal car travelling times. Train services should be starting from Leicester at or before 06:00 and run until at least 22:00, or longer if the market demands. Airport services need to be timed appropriately for the needs of passengers and staff, bearing in mind that many morning services require check-in between 05:00 – 07:00.

**Question 11. Do you support the proposal to reopen the line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains? If so, what sources of investment could be identified to fund this proposal?**

We believe this question is for Nottinghamshire and the City/County to answer.

**Question 12. Do you think that the current number of services on the Midland Main Line to and from Luton Airport Parkway is adequate?**

We consider that a strategic objective for the new East Midlands Rail Franchise is to support the continued drive for economic growth across Leicestershire by improving connectivity already identified as poor. Improved connectivity to airports, including Birmingham, East Midlands, Luton and Stansted, forms a key element in this strategy.

As already stated above, East Midlands Airport is in the District and we regard adequate service provision to East Midlands Parkway a priority.

**Question 13. Would you like additional fast trains each hour to call at Luton Airport Parkway if this meant that, as a trade-off:**

- Some services are withdrawn from other stations, such as Luton?

- **Journey times to other stations may increase?**
- **Freight capacity and/or frequency is reduced?**

Maintaining most Leicester – London journey times at under 60 minutes start to stop is an absolute priority. While improved connectivity to airports, including Luton, is also important, this should not be at the expense of extended Leicester – London journey times, nor to the detriment of journeys to and from other locations along the Midland Main Line. In this context, the improved connection opportunities available at Kettering and/or other stations as a result of the enhanced outer suburban services to Corby should not be overlooked.

As a general principle, we are keen to see that journey time targets are met through improvements in rolling stock and infrastructure investment, rather than by removing station stops.

We do not see why additional stops at Luton Airport Parkway should, by themselves, result in a reduction in freight capacity or frequency, as no additional train paths are proposed to serve Luton Airport. We are anxious that freight capacity is maintained to allow for adequate service slots to Roxhill.

Finally, we note the recent proposals for a fixed link between Luton Airport Parkway station and the airport, which is likely to make the airport more attractive for both airlines and passengers.

#### **Question 14. How could the train service be better at meeting the needs of passengers travelling to and from the airports within the East Midlands franchise?**

Although East Midlands Airport is close to East Midlands Parkway station on the Midland Main Line, access to and from the airport at this location is perceived to be poor, with an hourly taxi link between 05:20 (06:00 Saturdays and Sundays) and 19:00 daily, seating only 6 people. Combined rail/taxi fares are not available.

The rail timetable currently features all arrivals and departures to both north and south within an 18-minute window in each hour. Despite this, the taxi service fails to provide a convenient interchange in either direction, and actually contrives to miss some departures by a few minutes.

Recent studies have shown that significant improvements could be secured by recasting the train service into a more regular and frequent pattern, and improving the road links to the standards at other similar airport interchange points.

The current southbound timetable from East Midlands Parkway, including the timings of the taxi link, is shown below:

		A	TAXI	TAXI	
Sheffield	00:49				
Derby	01:21				
Lincoln				00:36	
Nottingham		01:32		01:36	
East Midlands Airport (dep)			01:30		
East Midlands Parkway (arr)	01:34	01:42	01:45	01:49	
East Midlands Parkway (dep)	01:35	01:43		01:50	02:00
East Midlands Airport (arr)					02:20
Loughborough	01:42			01:58	
Leicester	01:52	01:59		02:23	
London St. Pancras	02:59	03:14			

**A: also stops at Market Harborough**

Five trains per hour pass through East Midlands Parkway; two London – Sheffield, two London – Nottingham and one Leicester – Lincoln. While it is recognised that Network Rail and the franchise holder would be unlikely to permit more trains to stop at EMP as it would increase journey times overall, it is considered that swapping the EMP stop between the Sheffield services in order to give a more even spread of departures would provide a more coherent service in the short-to-medium term.

#### Alternative timetable Sheffield – London:

		A	B
Sheffield	00:29		
Derby	01:00		
Lincoln			00:36
Nottingham		01:32	01:36
East Midlands Parkway	01:14	01:43	01:50
Loughborough			01:58
Leicester	01:30	01:59	02:23
London St. Pancras	02:37	03:14	

A: Also calls at Market Harborough

It is of paramount importance to the District that timetable and other service improvements are made which maximise the potential of East Midlands Parkway as an access to East Midlands Airport.

The importance of Stansted and Birmingham Airports to the region are also recognised, and we would support proposals to improve links to these strategic hubs, particularly reduced through journey times to Stansted.

#### Question 15. What ideas do you have for improving the current service on the Liverpool – Norwich route?

The City and County have made suggestions on improving this route and we are generally in support of these, particularly if there is an opportunity to improve services to East Midlands Parkway.

**Question 16. Would you support changing the destinations served by the existing Birmingham – Stansted Airport service, such as serving Norwich instead of Stansted Airport.**

As the District is in general favour of ensuring airport services are preserved, we do not support this suggestion.

**Question 17. Are you in favour of these route changes:**

- **Liverpool – Norwich**
- **Birmingham – Nottingham**
- **Birmingham – Leicester/ Stansted**

We support the views given by the City and the County on the Liverpool – Norwich and Birmingham – Stansted services in questions 15 and 16 above.

Our priority for route changes relates to Birmingham – Nottingham.

Through services between Birmingham and Nottingham via Leicester were withdrawn in 2004. The restoration of this service would provide new and potentially valuable through journey opportunities between the West Midlands and East Midlands Airport, Nottingham and Lincoln.

We believe this could be achieved by linking the current local Birmingham-Leicester and the Leicester-Lincoln services. However, this would require alterations to the franchise boundaries to bring the through service under one operator, as Birmingham – Leicester is currently operated by Cross Country and Leicester – Lincoln by East Midlands Trains. The amalgamation of these two services would restore a “lost” route and in addition to the obvious benefits to Leicester and East Midlands Airport, it would give an improve opportunity for cross-country travel to the east.

The City and County have also suggested re-routing the existing Cross Country Cardiff – Nottingham service to run via Leicester instead of Derby. We find this proposal interesting and would support such a move, but our obvious interest is to improve services to East Midlands Airport.

**Question 18. Would you like to see any other routes transferred to or from the East Midlands franchise? If so, which routes?**

Our priority would be the combination of the Birmingham – Leicester and Leicester – Lincoln services as noted above. If both services were combined and operated by one TOC (Cross Country of East Midlands Trains), this would add an additional service from Birmingham to Leicester, and importantly give another opportunity for an extra train to stop at East Midlands Parkway.

In addition, we believe the Birmingham - Leicester - Stansted Airport service should transfer to the East Midlands franchise from Cross Country. This would enable better integration with the Liverpool-Norwich service, support bidders in developing a regional rolling stock solution, and enable development of the service focussed on cross-regional travel. This would benefit residents who use Leicester as a travel hub and provide them with more options, as well as contributing to economic growth.

The City and County have raised the issue of diverting the Cardiff – Leicester – Nottingham to be operated by Cross Country and we would be happy to support this.

## Question 19. Do you support increasing frequency of train services in Lincolnshire despite the impact this may have on level crossing users?

This is a matter for Local Authorities in Lincolnshire.

## Question 20. How can we improve all aspects of your door-to-door journey experience?

For our rail users, the “door-to-door journey experience” requires travel (usually by car) to a destination outside the District. We feel that the top priority for our residents is how access to the rail network can be facilitated, which includes:

- Adequate parking at or near Loughborough and Leicester stations for access to intercity services
- Adequate “kiss and ride” drop off areas
- Information on all modes of travel connections
- Integrated ticketing – the top priority for us relates to
- Constructive communications with local bus companies to ensure that there are smooth connections between bus and train services

In addition, there are several other factors which we feel will help to encourage more rail use:

<b>Information:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online and billboard information about train times, routes, fares and tickets</li> <li>• At stations on platforming, train running, train formation and seat availability, plus onward travel information such as connections, directions to other modes of transport and walking routes</li> <li>• On-train information about stopping points, timekeeping, availability of catering and other services</li> </ul>
<b>Ticketing:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ticket sales through a wide variety of outlets, including online and remote retail outlets</li> <li>• Availability of through ticketing via multiple modes where appropriate</li> </ul>
<b>Facilities:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station facilities</li> <li>• On-train comfort and facilities, including availability of seats</li> </ul>
<b>Service delivery:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timekeeping and reliability - both of which affect customer satisfaction if there are problems</li> </ul>
<b>Safety/Security:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On- and off-train</li> </ul>

On governance, we would suggest the following:

- Performance data to be measured at all stations, not just at the end of routes, as passengers notice when a train is late at “their” station
- We feel that train operators are sensitive to passenger views on reputation and this can also affect the management culture
- When service delivery issues occur, compensation claims should be made simple and easy for passengers, and should be in the form of financial refunds rather than travel vouchers



## **Question 21. What more could be done to improve access to, and provide facilities at stations, including for those with disabilities or additional needs?**

At the moment there are no railway stations within the District, but we are aware that our residents travel to others in the county, and therefore we endorse the response which has been given by the City and the County, and is shown below. The District fully supports any measures which will promote access for all and help our rail services meet the requirements of the 2010 Equalities Act.

*“We have categorised our stations in the following way:*

### ***Hub station (Leicester)***

*The highest volume of passengers is handled here and many of them will interchange with other services running from this station. Travellers from outside the county will also interchange here, and due to the numbers of passengers per day, the facilities provided should be of a high standard. We consider that Leicester station is the county’s economic gateway, and expect that the successful franchisee would be an active partner in the development and eventual implementation of our ambition for a long-term Masterplan for Leicester station and the surrounding area.*

### ***Town centre stations (e.g. Market Harborough, Loughborough)***

*Reasonably high volumes of passengers are expected, and some of these will interchange with other services. These stations must provide essential facilities for those passengers awaiting other trains.*

*The “Access for All” project to improve facilities at Market Harborough has already been subject to delay and Network Rail should be pressed to complete it as soon as possible.*

### ***Local stations (e.g. Narborough, Sileby)***

*These serve smaller numbers of passengers, many of whom are commuters, or making leisure trips to other towns and cities inside and outside the county. A local station’s main function is to allow passengers to make their planned trip safely and with minimal waiting time.*

*Stations, no less than trains, are central to the passenger experience. They form a vital link in the end-to-end journey, facilitate connections between the railway and other modes of transport, provide economic gateways into the city centre and connect the railway with the surrounding community and the local environment.*

*We wholeheartedly support Local Travel Plans to encourage the use of rail services and public transport generally, and urge that Station Travel Plans are developed jointly with local authorities, who have a shared responsibility for access to the railways via local road and bus networks. We would also support other station improvements to improve accessibility to, and the environment at, local stations, but consider that provision of retail facilities as an end in itself is a lesser priority than travel-related facilities. We would not support proposals to develop retail facilities at stations at the expense of improved facilities more directly related to travel.*

*Railway stations should be designed to be accessible by all modes of transport, and adequate facilities to at least minimum statutory requirements must be provided for people with physical disabilities or who have limited mobility.*

- **Bus** –*We are aware that many bus routes do not provide convenient and adequate interchanges at railway stations and, while re-routing would be a major operation subject to many practical difficulties, the provision of improved bus timetable and interchange*

*information, and directions to local bus stops and destinations, would provide significant improvements at more affordable cost. For example, Leicester station currently has no obviously visible onward travel bus information on display, despite a number of major routes directly serving the station.*

*There must also be active efforts to promote options like PlusBus and multi-modal ticketing from the franchisees own ticket platforms in order to enable more integrated “door-to-door” travel options to and from our larger towns, notably Coalville, Ashby and Shepshed, which are not rail connected. Specific proposals by bidders to address these issues in partnership with local bus companies and local authorities would be welcomed.*

- **Cycling and walking** – safety and security are vital, with well-lit and signposted routes for both. Secure cycle parking is also a priority.
- **Car parking** – must be managed to promote it as an option for rail users, but where fees are paid, these should be no higher than nearby town or city centre parking. Ideally, parking at small and remote stations should be free. Car parks must be safe and secure with appropriate lighting and CCTV cover.
- **Waiting facilities.** Waiting areas should be provided at all stations, to a level appropriate to the size and importance of each station. We have no particular problem with “bus shelter” style facilities at small, unstaffed stations, but they must provide adequate protection from the weather and include seating.
- **Information.** All stations should have information displays providing timetable, platform and real time train running information, as well as local information regarding local bus stops, directions to taxi ranks and pick-up points, and walking routes to local centres or destinations.
- **Security.** Stations should be staffed wherever viable, but where this is not possible, CCTV monitored at a central location should be provided, together with a reliable and visible means of summoning assistance. Where provided, Staff need to be visible at times of disruption to advise and direct passengers, and continuously during the evening and at night as it helps to reassure passengers about safety.

*Stations should be brightly lit, with lighting designed to eliminate shaded areas. Wherever possible, isolated and secluded areas in stations should be eliminated, but where this is not possible such areas should be well lit and monitored by CCTV.*

- **Access.** Step free access to statutory disabled standards should be provided wherever possible, including at the platform / train interface.
- **Disability protection.** The needs of disabled passengers or those with limited mobility should be considered at all stages. For example, ticket machines should be sited where there is adequate room to manoeuvre a wheelchair and be operable from a seated as well as standing position. Platform edges should be marked by tactile strips. Train running information should be provided by aural as well as visual means.

*We would support the development of a station investment programme, with adequate funding through the franchise to achieve the standards required, which include full accessibility to all stations*

*in the county, including step free access to platforms, accessible ticket offices, information assistance and appropriate cycle parking.”*

## **Question 22. How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for community and commercial purposes?**

While the measures suggested below do not have a direct effect upon the District, we recognise there are cumulative effects for the rest of the County.

We support the City and County’s view that the development of Community Rail Groups help to integrate railways into the community and promote local ownership. The successful franchisee should provide ongoing funding for developing relationships with a wide variety of groups.

Other measures include encouraging community use of spare/redundant railway buildings, either for local small businesses, such as shops and pubs, or other community initiatives, including local meeting spaces, and arts or health initiatives. The franchisee might consider making some funding where a commercial case can be made, such as through profit sharing or accounting of costs avoided in repairs and maintenance. The benefits to the TOC are that vandalism and fabric decline to empty buildings can be reduced and safety and security on and around the station is increased.

## **Question 23. What could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?**

**and**

## **Question 24. What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?**

Our priorities for fares and ticketing are:

- A simple fare structure which is easy for customers to understand
- An appropriate range of ticket options to give affordable and value for money travel
- Modest price upgrades for first-class travel, especially when spare capacity is available at off-peak times
- Freely accessible and easily understood communication of ticket options, pricing and availability, including online information which matches that available in stations
- A wider range of ticketing offers such as family/group travel
- Tickets to be available through a wide range of retail channels, including ticket offices/machines, and online/smart ticketing

There are also some options which the prospective franchisees should consider as part of the tendering process. These are:

- “Short week” tickets for those who travel less than five days a week
- Discounted tickets for students, trainees and apprentices, or those attending job interviews

We expect smart ticketing to be provided in collaboration with Midlands Connect and to be comparable with smart ticketing options provided by other TOCs and travel providers. Smart ticketing should also be account based to enable easy refunds to be credited to passengers where required.

Station barriers should be capable of recognising all types of tickets, such as ITSO smart media, mobile and paper tickets, QR codes etc.

Where more than one operator offers competing services on the same or alternative routes (for example between London and Birmingham New Street) lower fares may be offered at the expense of ticket interavailability between the operators. While this results in some disadvantage to passengers in terms of service frequency and choice, we recognise that it is an inevitable result of competition and does have the advantage of encouraging a wider range of discounted fares.

**Question 25. What additional information would be useful to you when planning or making your journey, such as seat availability, journey times and connections? How would you like it to be communicated to you?**

For intercity services, we would like to see platform indicators which show train formations, including the position of each coach and seat availabilities (as currently used by Virgin West and East Coast).

Information on the number of coaches is also useful and can help passengers to distribute themselves along platforms while waiting to board trains.

We do not support fully pre-booked ticketing as it rules out last-minute or spontaneous travel, and may put passengers off rail use.

However, we would encourage the use of on-train displays which indicate which seats are available in a particular coach. This practice would help avoid passengers bunching up in coaches when there are seats available elsewhere.

A review of the proportion of first-class to standard class accommodation would be welcome, particularly in shorter train formations such as the 4-car “Meridians” currently used by EMT, and the availability and cost of first class upgrades on off-peak services.

Onward connectivity announcements and written information needs improvement, including rail connection and access to other public transport modes.

**Question 26. How could staff be more effective in providing the service and assistance that passengers need in a modern railway network?**

When considering that often the main interface between the District’s residents and the railway is via Leicester Station, we feel that staff need to be visible at times of disruption to advise and direct passengers. Staff visibility is particularly important for evening services as it helps to reassure passengers about safety.

We would positively encourage the recruitment of high-quality staff and ensuring they are paid an appropriate wage to retain their services in a worthwhile and rewarding career.

We would welcome the use of innovative IT/social media solutions to publicise service disruptions, alternative travel arrangements or other issues of concern to passengers.

## **Question 27. How would you prefer the next operator to engage with your organisation?**

Like the City and the County, we will welcome all opportunities to engage with the successful franchisee to assist with delivery of the best quality service. We will actively respond to consultations on changes to services (including train plans and working timetables in view of Leicestershire's participation in the rail freight industry and the part which the Strategic Rail Freight Terminal will play in this), branding, marketing and station/rolling stock developments.

We expect the new franchisee to be an innovative and forward-thinking company that engages fully with the Department for Transport, Local Authorities, HS2 Limited and Network Rail in long-term integrated economic and transport planning and to maximise the value of HS2, while ensuring that the existing rail network continues to fulfil its vital role in the economic and social life of the region by providing new and improved services consistent with these long term aims.

To reiterate some of the points made earlier, our major requirements for the East Midlands Trains franchise are:

- Most Leicester-London journey times under 60 minutes.
- No adverse impacts on Leicester – London frequencies or journey times as a result of the new high-density Thameslink timetable.
- Introduction of direct Leicester-Manchester services (via the Dore Curve if possible)
- Introduction of regular direct Leicester-Leeds services
- New rolling stock appropriate to their markets and present and future passenger needs: faster, better acceleration and cleaner
- Improved fare values, particularly on off-peak intercity routes
- Enhancements for cyclists and bus users
- Continuous reliable on-train mobile phone coverage and free continuous mobile WiFi
- A commitment to supporting positively LE-NUCKLE and the introduction of new direct services between Leicester and Coventry
- Frequency and journey time improvements between Leicester and Birmingham
- Improvements to Leicester – Nottingham – Lincoln services by linking with Birmingham – Leicester services under a single train operator.
- To be an active partner with the County, City, LLEP, DfT, Network Rail and HS2 in planning for the long-term future, including benefits to be realised beyond the franchise term

## **Question 28. What would make you feel safer and more secure on your journey in relation to:**

- **Trains?**
- **Routes?**
- **Stations?**
- **Other?**

Please see answers to other Questions above which relate to passenger and staff security.

## **Question 29. How do you think more investment might be put into the railways to match money already coming from government through Network Rail?**

The Government and Network Rail has just announced an initiative to enable opportunities for private organisations to invest in rail infrastructure. This may include the building of new, privately owned, stations, privately funded and delivered signalling and electrification projects and contracts to design, build and operate new railways, similar to the model previously adopted for the Oxford – Bedford “East West Rail” project.

While it remains to be seen exactly how this will work, it does appear to open up new opportunities for financing rail infrastructure projects.

In the light of the recent news on electrification of the Midland Mainline, we would welcome investment in this direction as a very positive move to improve rail infrastructure in the County and further north.

## **Question 30. Are there any other ideas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been discussed in the consultation?**

### **Branding:**

We support the City and County’s suggestions on branding and agree that a long-term solution would:

- Promote the bond between the railway and the local community
- Help to reduce cost wastage associated with periodic rebranding
- Recognise the locality of the East Midlands and its place in the country, in the same way that Transport For London is an iconic and instantly recognisable brand

We feel that branding should reflect the difference between local, regional express and London services, and should play a role in actively promoting and marketing the region.

Branding should cover:

- Stations
- Rolling stock
- Web/electronic/mobile/hard copy information
- Marketing and ticketing
- Company assets
- Customer-facing staff presentation

Where a local service covers one specific route, the branding could reflect this, e.g. the Ivanhoe Line

It would also be appropriate for the branding to work with other public transport modes, as long as this is on a no-profit basis for other operators. Once established, the brand should then pass on to future franchisees, as long as it is clear who the responsible operator is.