

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**MEETING OF CABINET MEMBER – HIGHWAYS, TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURE**

14 September 2017

Report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

EAST MIDLANDS RAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- (1) **Purpose of Report** To approve a response to the Department for Transport's (DfT) 2019 East Midlands rail franchise consultation.
- (2) **Information and Analysis** In July 2017, the DfT produced a 12 week consultation to the next East Midlands rail franchise process. The new franchise will begin operation in August 2019 to replace the current operation run by East Midlands Trains, part of the Stagecoach group.

The East Midlands rail franchise currently comprises:

- a. The services along the Midland Main Line from London St Pancras northwards through Leicester to Nottingham, Derby, Chesterfield and Sheffield.
- b. The Liverpool-Norwich service which operates through Sheffield, Chesterfield, the Erewash Valley and Nottingham.
- c. Local rail services across the whole of the East Midlands, including within Derbyshire, the Matlock–Derby–Nottingham–Newark, Derby–Stoke-Crewe, and Robin Hood Line [Nottingham–Mansfield–Worksop] services.

The DfT is looking for a new franchisee to meet six overriding franchise principles:

1. Support the Government's agenda to make the Midlands an engine for growth, working to develop connectivity within the region and beyond, and supporting the region's industry and leisure economy.
2. Provide the capacity to address predicted growth in demand, particularly into St Pancras, but also on crowded local services.
3. Invest in the train fleet to improve capacity, operating performance and reliability, while reducing operating costs and the carbon footprint.
4. Improve passenger satisfaction and public perception of the railway including the ticket buying experience, station facilities, compensation

- arrangements and on board passenger comfort, including availability of high speed Wi-Fi and wireless connectivity.
5. Work closely with Network Rail to make the most of investment in the route's infrastructure to reduce journey times on long distance services and achieve a high level of service resilience.
 6. Clearly express its commitment to operate a sustainable rail business, supporting the region's social and economic development, and investing in its workforce, their training, skills and career development.

The DfT consultation has taken the form of providing answers to 30 basic questions with a deadline for response of 11 October 2017. East Midlands Council's (EMC) has been actively working with the DfT to identify East Midlands issues in conjunction with constituent Local Transport authorities and has produced a response which will seek approval at the East Midlands Council's Executive Board meeting on 29 September 2017.

In view of the involvement of Derbyshire County Council (DCC) in the current EMC draft response, it is proposed that this EMC response forms the basis of the DCC response (<http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/East-Midlands-Rail-Franchise>), and anything more specific which adds to this response is identified separately (as Appendix 1). EMC's draft response extends to some 61 pages and can be seen at: http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/write/EMC_Consultation_shared_draft_15.8.17.pdf

Rail North, the body representing Northern Local Transport authorities, of which DCC is also a member, will be submitting a separate response, and this is likely to focus primarily on services from the East Midlands heading north and west of Sheffield to West Yorkshire and the North West.

In parallel with the franchise consultation, DfT has reopened the bidding process with any new potential train operators beyond those already shortlisted: namely Stagecoach, Arriva, and First/Trenitalia (First Group and Italian State railways). The separate announcement by DfT (at the same time as the franchise consultation) of the future of the rail electrification proposals in the East Midlands and, in particular, the priority given to bi-mode/hybrid solutions to the Midland Main Line north of Kettering, has given some pointers to franchise bidders about timescales and types of trains to procure in their bids to DfT. The final decision on how this will be determined is a matter for DfT and the successful bidder. Cabinet will wish to note, though, that there may be opportunities for local rail industry suppliers involved in the production and maintenance of rolling stock. Officers will continue to work with the East Midlands Rail Forum to keep abreast of developments.

The DfT expects to issue an Invitation to Tender to bidders in April 2018, and award the contract in Spring 2019 for commencement in August 2019.

Other Considerations

In preparing this report the relevance of the following factors has been considered: financial, legal, prevention of crime and disorder, equality and diversity, human resources, environmental, health, property, social value and transport considerations.

(3) **Key Decision** No.

(4) **Call-In** Is it required that call-in be waived in respect of the decisions proposed in the report? No.

(5) **Background Papers** Held on file within the Economy, Transport and Communities Department. Officer contact details - Kevin Williams, extension 36747.

Further information on the consultation and EMC's response is available at:
<http://www.emcouncils.gov.uk/East-Midlands-Rail-Franchise>

(6) **OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION** That the Cabinet Member authorises the Derbyshire County Council response, allied to the East Midlands Council's response, for the new East Midlands franchise to go the Department for Transport.

Mike Ashworth
Strategic Director – Economy, Transport and Communities

Appendix 1

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL RESPONSE TO THE EAST MIDLANDS RAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION QUESTIONS SEPTEMBER 2017

Derbyshire County Council has helped to shape the East Midlands Council's response to the East Midlands Rail Franchise Consultation questions posed by the Department for Transport (DfT), and supports the aims of that response to meet the growing demands and address current deficiencies on the East Midlands network, both in terms of local and long distance connectivity to support economic growth.

In the interim period between September 2017 and the commencement of the new franchise, an extension of the current franchise awarded to East Midlands Trains must begin to address the issues raised in the franchise consultation responses.

More particularly, in answer to the individual franchise consultation questions posed, the Council would refer you to the East Midlands Council's response to that question. Derbyshire issues to make a specific response, provide examples or highlight an issue are mentioned in the response below.

Responses to the questions:**Q1] How do you think closer co-operation between staff in Network Rail and the operator of the next East Midlands franchise can be achieved?**

A1] The UK rail engineering industry has a historical base in and around Derby and Derbyshire, and this is reflected by the cluster of locally based companies with international credibility directly working with both Network Rail and train company staff. Network Rail is a significant employer locally and is working with train companies to improve the services in the next franchise. For example, the £200 million Derby Station Upgrade project in 2018 has been developed as a joint project.

Q2] 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?

A2] The Council fully supports the East Midlands Council's [EMC] response. The funding for specific officer roles with proven success, like Community Rail Derbyshire where it is not a formal Community Rail Partnership and funded accordingly, is under threat and could be withdrawn at any point between September 2017 and the new franchise commencing in August 2019. This would be extremely unfortunate in view of the success of recent project work, such as at Long Eaton and Willington stations, where it has been supported specifically by train operators and Network Rail, and highlighted in train operator national stakeholder communications. It is hoped funding can be

resolved earlier, in the Direct Award process, but it remains a concern and a risk to the increased rail patronage that the work encourages.

Q3] 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 they operate?**

If so, how should they do this?

A3] The Council supports the EMC response. Specific examples of support include the Women's Institute at Willington, and the adoption of the new station at Ilkeston by a primary school and a supermarket chain locally.

Q4] Do you agree with our proposed approach, which could reduce journey times on long distance services and increase the likelihood of getting a seat?

A4] In supporting the EMC response, the Council believes that the current off-peak service frequency for long distance services on the Midland Main Line is about right, but increasing demand should be met by increasing train capacity first. Peak hour long distance services would benefit by transferring most stops south of Kettering to the new, electrified commuter services to Corby.

Q5] What are your suggestions about how to mitigate the possible loss of some direct services between Oakham, Melton Mowbray and London?

A5] See EMC response

Q6] What are the particular services, routes and times of day when you think additional seats for passengers are most needed?

A6] In addition to the EMC response, there is a need for earlier first Sunday services to arrive in major cities before 0945 to access retail employment. The Council aspires to a minimum of two trains per hour at all stations between Sheffield and Nottingham, and an hourly service at Willington if Nottingham-Birmingham services are remapped from Cross Country. There is a strong business case to operate an hourly semi-fast Nottingham-Derby-Stoke-Crewe-Manchester Airport service to relieve the gross overcrowding on the current local Derby-Crewe service, and to both release capacity, and ease congestion on the Hope Valley route, as well as providing faster connectivity to Manchester Airport.

Q7] Which on board facilities in order of preference [of those listed] are most important to you:

- On short distance journeys [up to 60 minutes]**
- On long distance journeys [over 60 minutes]**

A7] See EMC response.

Q8] What other on-board facilities should be:

-Introduced?

-Improved?

A8] See EMC response.

Q9] How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs?

A9] See EMC response, and answer to Question 6.

Q10] What additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?

A10] See EMC response and answer to Question 6.

Q11] 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?

A11] See EMC response.

Q12] Do you think that the current number of services on the Midland Main Line to and from Luton Airport Parkway is adequate?

A12] See EMC response.

Q13] Would you like additional fast trains from London 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?

A13] See EMC response.

Q14] How could the train service be better at meeting the needs of passengers travelling to and from the airports within the East Midlands franchise?

A14] See EMC response.

Q15] What ideas do you have for improving the current service on the Liverpool-Norwich route?

A15] In supporting the EMC response, the Council would also point out that if a Nottingham-Derby-Stoke-Crewe-Manchester Airport service were to be provided, this would assist in providing more capacity on existing services through the Hope Valley and reduce congestion if more services were to be added to that route. The Council would also reiterate the need for two trains per hour to serve all stations between Sheffield and Nottingham.

Q16] Would you support changing the destinations served by the existing Birmingham-Stansted service, such as serving Norwich instead of Stansted Airport?

A16] See EMC response.

Q17] Are you in favour of these route changes:

-Liverpool-Norwich

-Birmingham-Nottingham

-Birmingham-Leicester/Standed

A17] In supporting the EMC response, please also see responses to Questions 6 and 15.

Q18] Would you like to see any other routes transferred to or from the East Midlands franchise? If so, which routes?

A18] See EMC response.

Q19] Do you support increasing the frequency of train services in Lincolnshire despite the impact this may have on level crossing users?

A19] See EMC response. In principle, the Council supports the removal of all level crossings on the rail network for safety reasons, either by closure, closure and diversion, or some form of grade separation of the modes of transport. Parts of South Derbyshire are low lying, and share some of the problems that Lincolnshire have. The Council has worked with Network Rail in recent years to remove or improve as many crossings as practicable with some success.

Q20] How can we improve all aspects of your door-to-door journey experience?

A20] See EMC response

Q21] What more could be done to improve access to, and provide facilities at stations, including those with disabilities or additional needs?

A21] In supporting the EMC response, there is a need to resolve current delivery delays in progressing approved Access for All schemes at stations [e.g. at Alfreton], as well as authorising more schemes at non-compliant stations to make the rail network more accessible to more people.

Q22] How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for community or commercial purposes?

A22] See EMC response.

Q23] What could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?

A23] See EMC response.

Q24] What changes to the fare structure would be of benefit to you?

A24] See EMC response.

Q25] 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 this to be communicated to you?

A25] See EMC response.

Q26] How could staff be more effective in providing the service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?

A26] In supporting the EMC response, the Council would recommend that a national standard is determined where sufficient footfall and/or interchange at a station warrants the provision of staff to assist passengers.

Q27] How would you prefer the next operator to engage with;

-You as an individual?

-Your organisation?

A27] See EMC response.

Q28] What would make you feel safer and more secure on your journey in relation to:

-Trains?

-Routes?

-Stations?

-Other?

A28] See EMC response.

Q29] How do you think more investment might be put into the railways to match money already coming from government through Network Rail?

A29] see EMC response.

Q30] Are there any other areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been discussed in this consultation?

A30] See EMC response.