



Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM) is the joint committee which brings the Local Transport Authorities in the region together under the auspices of East Midlands Councils (EMC).

In the East Midlands, transport spend per head has been significantly below the UK average level for all of the last 25 years, declining to just 58% of the UK average in 2019/20, the lowest level of any UK region or nation. In particular regional rail services have lacked investment.

Our strategic vision for rail is to facilitate sustainable patterns of movement and drive economic growth in the East Midlands by increasing connectivity for people and businesses within the region, and with the rest of the UK. There is a clear case for growing rail in the East Midlands which is key to address the Climate Change emergency that many Local Authorities have recognised, and to 'Level Up'.

Rail has experienced high user growth in the 25 years prior to the pandemic. The East Midlands was one of only two regions of continuous passenger growth since 1995. During that time, it was identified that rail capacity and connectivity in the region was insufficient to support housing growth, job growth and population growth. The population of the East Midlands is projected to rise to 5.2m by 2031, which is significant growth relative to other regions, spread across a diverse polycentric region, with many towns now with 10k+ populations and growing. The East Midlands has 397k businesses which grew by 11.4% in 2019-20, growth far more than any other region.

Rail has an important role to accommodate this growth, lead recovery post-pandemic, and also support long-term levelling up. The UK is one of the most spatially unequal economies in the developed world, and the gap is growing. 17 out of 40 of the worst ranking local authorities for social mobility are in the East Midlands.

Transport investment is a key driver of productivity and economic growth. Declining relative productivity means the recent level of GDP growth performance cannot be sustained. Boosting transport spending in the East Midlands towards the UK average to stem relative decline will help improve productivity and growth in the East Midlands and benefit the whole of the UK economy.

The TfEM Rail Strategic Statement outlines the Boards vision for continuous improvement of rail in the region, encouraging modal shift and transport decarbonisation, and supports the innovative rail collaboration agreement TfEM have with the DfT, to be continued in the future with Great British Railways (GBR).

For Passengers, Businesses and rail Freight users we are asking the Government and GBR to:

- ⇒ **Commit to a long-term rail network plan and enhancement funding settlement.** Reduce the uncertainty for Transport Planning Agencies, Businesses and Employees, and the inefficient burden on Local Transport Authorities to bid competitively for ad hoc transport funds. Smooth the reactive 'boom and bust' supply chain demands, build skills, and tackle enduring network constraints with an enhanced network blueprint approach.
- ⇒ **Adopt a new decision-making approach to ensure a new balance of regional growth.** This will require changes to the current 'virtuous cycle' processes and should increase the weight of the pro-active pursuit of targeted East Midlands rail growth. This must be an explicit mandate for the GBR region.
- ⇒ **Sustain a well-phased buoyant pipeline of regional rail enhancements,** and immediately establish an industry task force (in advance of GBR being established), with Local Authorities, Transport Planning Agencies and Passenger Groups, to develop urgent incremental enhancements in the period to 2030, in parallel to the long held strategic goals - which appear at a more distant horizon.
- ⇒ **Ensure more trains run on time.** Ensure key rail industry partners plan and maintain track and train to perform safely and as planned without further sacrificing the relative low service base in the East Midlands. Instead strive harder to serve a 7-day economy with a reliable service. Where possible simplify accountability with multi-operator conflicts, mitigate service improvement inhibitors, and ensure stations are managed by those that primarily operate the services. Prioritise the value of more staff on trains and at stations. Improve industry strategic resilience to climate change, incident response, and medium-term labour skills shortages (with recruitment strategies to include the pursuit of diverse teams with local mixed-grade opportunities). Avoid recent trends in Timetable change failures with strengthened governance, and ensure customers have clarity over their complaints when GBR is established with the new Operators. Normalise that the railway communicates with customers with real time information throughout.
- ⇒ **Budget for well-resourced integrated multi-modal transport planning and rail delivery organisations.** Through a strengthened Transport Focus and GBR Region, respond to the voice of the customer, future business asks, and future demographic needs, with a new mandate to rail agencies to specify East Midlands specific rail enhancements based on a forensic understanding of places, people, and trade. Collaborate on rail investment decisions with Regional Government and go further to engage with stakeholders in a more regionally responsive way on public transport choices, and spatial planning of rail capacity integrated with housing, jobs and population growth. We want to build consensus around objective,

evidenced, shared objectives; and this will require a deeper understanding of new travel patterns and an increase of rail case evidence to be put in the public domain to make levelling up transparent.

⇒ **Deliver concrete policies to enable the Governments Transport Decarbonisation Plan published in July 2021.** Work with Local Authorities climate action plans and the energy industry partners to help Transport achieve rail net zero by 2050. Each freight train removes 43 to 76 lorries from the roads so develop joint freight modal share targets and boost the East Midlands as a strategic rail freight region with integrated SRFI and Freeport demands to support wider business agglomeration in the region. Support the network to utilise existing freight paths and decarbonise those freight miles further. Adopt the technologies the market can bring to bear for rail freight, but do not expect the market to adopt modal shift quickly enough without Government leadership.

⇒ **Urgently recognise that a better deal for passengers is in the national interest,** and that transparent, equitable, competitive fares, and modern ticketing, are keys to sustained patronage and overall revenue. As the pandemic travel restrictions abate, and GBR emerges with a mandate for fare and ticketing reform; seek to simplify the complex historic structure with standard core products. With an annual season ticket already 10-20% of average disposable income, mitigate the associated rail user costs beyond the fare, and adopt targeted positive marketing and initiatives that support user growth and reductions in private car use. Ticket prices for journeys on 'new trains' such as the Aurora or HS2 fleets should not be set that erode their capacity benefits.

There is no reason that the East Midlands could not target customer service scores of the best in the country. This could include initiatives such as "named" assistance staff for familiarity; and seek to match the ambitions adopted elsewhere for accessibility notice of 2 hours. Operators leading on best practice through customer insight will be essential.

... and to work with East Midlands regional authorities to prioritise network enhancement...

Whilst we recognise national short-term uncertainty as the industry returns from enforced travel restrictions, the East Midlands is not a candidate for a sustained reduction in services or train capacity. Immediate reinstatement of Train Service Requirement (TSR) planned services should be a minimum. Further enhancement should be efficient and effective but relentless to prevent the region from falling relatively further behind still.

- ⇒ The 7-year East Midlands Rail (EMR) operating contract commenced in 2019 promises a number of long-sought improvements to the East Midlands services and quality of trains, progressively commissioned up to 2022/23 - and is no more than the minimum the region deserves. **The 2019 operator franchise Committed Obligations must be delivered as expected.** Specifically, timetable, station enhancements, and the introduction of refurbished trains and new Bi-Mode electric intercity units. The expectation is that the Operator and Network Rail with GBR, will be incentivised by Government to seek to put passengers first and adopt further continuous improvement through to the adoption of an ambitious East Midlands operator Passenger Service Contract.
- ⇒ **In-reach timetable enhancements and optimisation changes inhibited due to operational management choices should be challenged** such that *everyday of the week*, trains run earlier, later, and regularly – which can be limited by choices such as the rostering of signalling staff.
- ⇒ **HS2 must be delivered in full.** The segregation of lines will improve journey times, provide critical links, and release key capacity on the West Coast, MML and East Coast arterial lines to better serve regional needs and freight. The region has committed to supporting the railway with associated industrial and regenerative investments through the East Midlands Development Corporation, East Midlands Freeport and ‘Access to Toton’ programmes. A post-IRP impact assessment will need to be prioritised at pace and with no curtailment to ambition, in order to ensure the region can make the most of HS2 and realise the step-change in connectivity needed from the East Midlands to other regions, and the transformation of the mixed-use mainlines in the East Midlands for regional services (e.g. Trent Junction, Erewash to MML, ECML regionals). The East Midlands must not be excluded from the transformational connectivity, capacity and inward investment that HS2 will attract.
- ⇒ The DfT ‘Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline’ (RNEP) identifies the current development commitment for strategic schemes such as Leicester Area Capacity, which should be ballasted by commitment to the Leicester Station Masterplan. Leicester is a Midlands Engine City held back by its rail infrastructure and current compromised connectivity – the worst of any big city in Britain. **Transformation of Leicester Station and area network capacity will provide benefits to customers and businesses across the region as a whole.** Lincoln, Bedford, Grantham and Nottingham hubs have medium-term strategic need for similar planning treatment, as their horizon for incurring unacceptable network constraints can be foreseen.
- ⇒ The UK railway would benefit from the canopy of a network wide business case for enhancement enabled by **repeated installation of technologies to the network** as a whole. **A commitment to a prioritised rolling programme** of upgrades should apply to:
 - ✓ An Accessibility and Security minimum standard for all Stations and Trains – no longer ‘If’ but ‘When’.
 - ✓ Rail 5G rollout ensuring the unique rail productive passenger offer is maximised.

- ✓ Digital train control twinned with associated junction and terminus works.
 - ✓ Electrification twinned with an electric rolling stock cascade
- ⇒ **The East Midlands has a strategic advantage to continue a rolling wave of network-wide Electrification**, as Bi-Modes are planned for introduction to the MML intercity route from 2022. Electrification should not inadvertently crowd-out vital capacity and linespeed works - so efficient delivery sequencing is paramount. Any discontinuous electrification should be seen as an interim solution to support phased rollout of full electrification such that Bi-Modes can roll off to other routes to be replaced by full electric stock on the MML which are greener, faster, and more cost efficient. Confirmation of more new electric rolling stock adopted across the East Midlands regional routes, and a more intense service would make a joined-up case.
- ⇒ The East Midlands is planned to be the largest region for operation of 20yr+ diesel class 170s. Given lead times, the planning for **diesel rolling stock replacement in the East Midlands should be commenced now across all regional operators for a safe, accessible, fast and reliable green fleet**. The rolling stock strategy should go hand in glove with the Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy, and also optimise the infrastructure tactically with the rolling stock capability. There is a near-term opportunity to adapt existing diesel rolling stock, in order to offer low carbon energy and low emission solutions for use at Stations and other identified Air Quality Management Areas.
- ⇒ As the Multi-Modal Transport arm of the Midlands Engine, 'Midlands Connect' plan to deliver strategic rail improvement at scale and should receive commitments in order to maximise their efficiency and effectiveness. This includes the **Midlands Engine Rail Hub which aims to provide a step change in journeys between Leicester, Derby and Nottingham to Birmingham** (including interface with the future Curzon Street interchange station) which only currently occupy low modal share.
- ⇒ Rail is particularly uncompetitive for journeys between many areas in and out of the East Midlands. One stark example is **between Leicester and Coventry where there is no direct rail service despite the cities being less than 30 miles apart**. Midlands Connect have identified a means to unlock this at good value for money, and **we now want to see it achieved at pace**.
- ⇒ There are areas of the existing rail infrastructure that are enduring constraints, where the cost of intervention outweighs the benefits from a single proposal to enhance a service. These pinch points require a centrally driven mandate to consolidate otherwise disparate benefits into a portfolio of network future proofing, such that enduring infrastructure constraints are progressively overcome in a value for money way e.g. overcoming Newark Flat Crossing to benefit the ECML, freight to Immingham Port, and the **reinstatement of frequent fast journeys between Lincoln and Birmingham**.

- ⇒ Long Distance journeys to London saw timetable improvements in 2021 - and this goes to prove enhancement at scale can be achieved without cost escalation. The MML is still behind other Intercity lines with St Pancras as a major constraint. But long-held demands for **competitive journey times to the Capital** are now closer in touch, **such as Leicester within an hour, and Nottingham within 90mins. More ambitious direct connectivity for Lincoln, Grimsby and Mansfield** should also be planned to enable rail to become the dominant mode for long-distance travel, in turn enhancing local services so that additional stops are no longer required on long distance journeys.
- ⇒ There are ‘burning platforms’ whereby existing services are forecast to perform sub-optimally, or experience regular overcrowding. Relief of these cases should be time-constrained, with interventions planned in advance of passengers being impacted. An example could be between Nottingham and Mansfield, where constraints of a shared line between rail and light rail is challenging; or assessment of train lengthening where standing is too common. The impacts of climate change on rail, prevalence of local temporary speed restrictions, and ease of trespass, are all currently sub-optimal for a mature engineering industry and will impact passengers through poor performance without strategic treatment.
- ⇒ With the introduction of faster trains, **linespeed improvements should be optimised to seek car competitive journeys.** Examples could be between Nottingham and Skegness, Derby to Crewe, Oakham to Birmingham and Peterborough, and level crossing closures. Synergies with renewals is an efficient means, and any planned renewals should be enhanced to a future network blueprint.
- ⇒ TfEM support the development of a TSS blueprint to identify a step change in ambition for rail frequencies in the region including **new direct community-to-community connectivity.** In addition to services already mentioned, this should include strategic connections for the East Midlands to Manchester, Cambridge and Leeds which are currently sub-optimal:
 - Demand to the North-West region from the East Midlands was the fastest growing in 2018/19. Leicester and Derby are, respectively, the biggest centers within 100 and 75 miles of Manchester without through trains.
 - With the affinity between their science, biomedical and business communities, there is demand for better links between Cambridge and Nottingham.
 - East-West regional connectivity within the East Midlands can be improved such as Northampton to the MML, East Midlands to Anglia, and improved connections to the ECML.

...The burden of the expectation to interchange affects journey times and rail appeal and inhibits patronage and the economic returns of rail to the East Midlands.
- ⇒ It is possible that the region will benefit from some of the wider national investment in the development of restoring railways to passenger use, specifically for the **restoration of mass public transport to areas of transport poverty.** TfEM welcome this stimulus to assess schemes that many Local Authorities and Community Partnerships have campaigned to get on the

agenda. There are also communities that have grown since the peak reach of the UK rail network, and now warrant genuine consideration of initial or improved rail connectivity. Examples could include Coalville, Ollerton, Staveley Town, or Daventry. In South Derbyshire (Swadlincote) and North-West Leicestershire (Ashby, Castle Donington) locations without rail have had population growth above 8% between 2014 – 2019, which makes them part of the top 20 places for population growth in the UK. Unusually, there is no direct local Airport connectivity by rail in the region. For populations where rail is simply insurmountable a strategic coach connected to the rail network should be considered. Where rail exists but is under-served, these areas should be identified for strategic modal shift acceleration as rural hub stations, such as Retford and Oakham, integrated with the local transport plans. The rail network needs deeper changes in some regions to correct historical development. Mansfield has particularly low rail station entries/exists compared to its population, and the slow infrequent 'Joint Line' through Spalding, Sleaford, Lincoln and Gainsborough is underdeveloped for the population size it serves. Lincolnshire train services require a standard, connecting, all-day pattern.

- ⇒ For too long Local Transport Authorities, Community Rail Partnerships and Operators have been under-supported to get scheme initiation off the ground, with ad-hoc competitive funds, and unrealistic expectations by Government from preliminary assessments, that have stymied momentum on meaningful local changes – specifically on Accessibility. East Midlands areas feature in the top tier of disability prevalence. **The burden must be shifted to a new approach where stations and trains across the network are enhanced to meet a minimum public inclusivity standard.** Examples are Alfreton, Beeston, Duffield and Bingham which are just a sample of community centered stations which are not currently step-free. Other incremental improvements could include wayfinding, changing places, and on-board security and inclusiveness. Accessibility is a diverse ambition which needs regular, meaningful, expert, and user-led reviews of the rail offer to shape the minimum standard criteria.

We will:

- ⇒ **Provide regional input** to GBR and the Department for Transport with their Operational Management choices, starting with the post-covid recovery and the pre-GBR 30-year 'Whole Industry Strategic Plan'. Seek further deepening of the role of the innovative TfEM Collaboration Agreement.
- ⇒ **Seek to ensure both the voice of the passenger is heard and guide the rail industry to be more regionally responsive.** Seek objective evidence on decisions from Government and scrutinise apparent inertia.

- ⇒ Seek intelligence to adopt an informed view of progress of committed rail investment. Help **drive the pipeline including reaching out to other regional representatives to make the case with unity**. Support the LTAs and associated CRPs with promotion cases.
- ⇒ **Respond to industry reform and emerging policy in the interests of the whole East Midlands region**. Support regional planning and growth efforts with partners (Midlands Engine, LEPs etc). Where appropriate, supplement the rail industry agenda with direct contributions and/or original insight.

Annex 1:

	Intercity	Regional Hub	Local
	London North Eastern Railway / East Midlands Railway	CrossCountry / TransPennine Express / East Midlands Railway	Northern Rail / East Midlands Railway
Capacity	Capacity to meet needs with 100% seating	No one standing for longer than 20 minutes and no one left at the station	No one standing for longer than 20 minutes and no one left at the station
Quality	<p>Comparable feel to other Mainline offers (e.g WCML) into London, through investment in new trains.</p> <p>For East/West destinations then a comparable feel to other regional express offers (e.g Trans-Pennine).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional, free, reliable and fast WiFi continuously for the full journey duration • Air Conditioned • Fully accessible 	<p>Comparable feel to other regional express offers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional, free, reliable and fast WiFi continuously for the full journey duration • Air Conditioned • Fully accessible 	<p>Comparable feel to other local service offers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unconditional, free, reliable and fast WiFi continuously for the full journey duration • Attractive and clean toilets • Fully accessible
Journey time, connectivity and frequency	<p>90mins Nottingham to London, 60 minutes Leicester to London and similar journey speed on other London routes.</p> <p>90mph train speed capability (ave. 60mph) on express services to other cities in adjoining regions, including West Midlands, Yorkshire and the North, Lancashire and Cambridge.</p> <p>Clock-face timetable and standard platforming.</p>	<p>90mph train speed capability (ave. 60mph) express services between the four Regional Hub stations of Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Nottingham (and beyond).</p> <p>Services designed to connect into Intercity services.</p> <p>Connectivity to regional airports.</p> <p>Clock-face timetable and standard platforming.</p>	<p>Faster than the car alternative.</p> <p>Services designed to serve local communities and connect into the four Regional Hubs and Intercity services.</p> <p>Clock-face timetable and standard platforming.</p>
7 day railway	<p>Sunday services comparable to Mon-Sat</p> <p>First and last services to be timed to meet current needs (min 06:00-22:00) with airport station services timed to meet the staff, customer check in and evening flight times</p>	<p>Sunday services comparable to Mon-Sat</p> <p>First and last services to be timed to meet current needs (min 06:00-22:00) with airport station services timed to meet the staff, customer check in and evening flight times</p>	<p>Sunday services comparable to Mon-Sat</p> <p>First and last services to be timed to meet current needs (min 06:00-22:00) with airport station services timed to meet the staff, customer check in and evening flight times</p>
Ticketing	<p>Easily understood and well promoted, value for money tickets which are easy to purchase and support integrated travel options.</p> <p>Smart ticketing provided in collaboration with Midlands Connect.</p> <p>Fares should be equitable and comparable to service characteristics.</p>	<p>Easily understood and well promoted, value for money tickets which are easy to purchase and support integrated travel options.</p> <p>Smart ticketing provided in collaboration with Midlands Connect.</p> <p>Fares should be equitable and comparable to service characteristics.</p>	<p>Easily understood and well promoted, value for money tickets which are easy to purchase and support integrated travel options.</p> <p>Smart ticketing provided in collaboration with Midlands Connect.</p> <p>Fares should be equitable and comparable to service characteristics.</p>

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