

HS2 CONSULTATION: EMC RESPONSE

- Q1 Do you agree that there is a strong case for enhancing the capacity and performance of Britain's inter-city rail network to support economic growth over the coming decades?

EMC strongly supports the development and expansion of the inter-city rail network to promote economic growth as part of a balanced approach to national and local transport investment.

There is a significant amount of academic and empirical evidence to suggest that improving inter-city linkages can have substantial economic benefits through enhanced productivity from reduced journey times, labour market flexibility and enabling more 'business to business' contact.

Compared with a major expansion of the motorway network or domestic aviation services, enhancements to the inter-city rail network are the most cost effective way of catering for the expected growth in long distance travel and reducing journey times. Given the very substantial growth in rail patronage that has occurred over the last two decades compared to other modes, it also reflects the clear preference of the market.

In addition, analysis indicates the level of carbon emissions per rail passenger are lower than for car or air travel, making rail travel a comparatively 'green' mode, particularly over longer distances and for electrified services. The expected long term trend in oil prices and the Government's plans to 'de-carbonise' the national grid are likely to make (particularly electric) rail travel even more attractive over time.

The East Midlands is currently served by 3 Main Lines linking London with major conurbations within and outside of the region.

- **Midland Main Line (MML).** *The MML primarily serves the Sheffield City Region and the 3 Cities of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham, which together contain almost 4 million people and 2.5 million jobs. It also supports a number of smaller but important economic centres such as Chesterfield, Loughborough, Market Harborough, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough. The MML has seen an 87% increase patronage between 1997 and 2008 (despite diesel traction, limited investment and slow journey times) and has continued to grow despite recent adverse economic conditions. Even if passenger growth only continues at 1-2% per annum (in line with Network Rail forecasts), demand will soon start to out strip*

capacity.

- **West Coast Main Line (WCML).** *Northampton is served by a loop on the WCML linking London with Birmingham and Manchester, which has recently been subject to major upgrade.*
- **East Coast Main Line (ECML).** *The ECML directly serves Retford, Newark and Grantham, and from May 2011 has enabled a limited direct Lincoln to London service.*

Despite access to 3 Main Lines, capacity restrictions and the historic pattern of the rail network means that connectivity between Derby, Leicester, Lincoln Northampton and Nottingham and 'core cities' such as Birmingham, Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle remain poor.

If the Government is to succeed in its stated aim of 'rebalancing' the economy away from the public sector and south east based financial services, then the towns and cities of the East Midlands must be amongst those that begin to thrive economically over the next few years

- Q2 Do you agree that a national high speed rail network from London to Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester (the Y network) would provide the best value for money solution (best balance of costs and benefits) for enhancing rail capacity and performance?

Further work must be undertaken to develop and refine the business case for HS2 so that it fully reflects all the relevant costs and benefits. From an East Midlands perspective a high speed rail line on the proposed 'Y' configuration must meet the following objectives:

- *The new line must enable at least 10 new high speed services per hour from the East Midlands to destinations including London, Birmingham, South Yorkshire, Leeds and Newcastle (via a link to the ECML) at very substantially reduced journey times compared with current services;*
- *Capacity released from the East Coast Main line must enable enhanced services for Retford, Newark, Grantham and Lincoln;*
- *Capacity released from the Midland Main Line must enable further improvements to*

connectivity between Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and the northern 'core cities', and enhanced services for Chesterfield, Loughborough, Market Harborough, Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough;

- *Capacity released from the West Coast Main Line must enable enhanced services for Northampton to both Birmingham and London;*
- *A new high speed rail station must deliver considerable local and sub-regional economic benefits, and if located in an urban area, must also be a major catalyst for regeneration.*
- *potential for a number of locations to be directly served by high speed rail through the use of so-called 'hybrid' trains that can run on both HS2 and classic (electrified) lines must be fully explored.*

*Importantly, the development of HS2 must **not** be used to undermine the case for enhancements to the MML and in particular the case for electrification.*

The MML is likely to see very considerable passenger growth over the next 20 years, and will remain a vital link to London and the north for much of the East Midlands even after Phase 2 of HS2 is operative (which will not be until 2032 at the earliest). It is therefore vital that Government maintains a long term programme of investment to enhance the MML. This should mean supporting the pan-regional Round 2 Regional Growth Fund bid that will enable a number of line speed enhancements (around Market Harborough) and, crucially, setting out a clear timetable for electrification of the MML.

Analysis previously undertaken by Network Rail has confirmed that the benefits of MML electrification in terms of journey time savings, reliability, noise reduction, opportunities for capacity enhancements and carbon savings are compelling regardless of HS2. In fact, HS2 strengthens the case for the electrification, as it would enable inter-operability between the high speed and classic lines through the use of 'hybrid' trains. As a result, the Government is strongly advised to ensure that MML electrification features as part of Network Rail's next investment programme (Control Period 5: 2015-19).

In addition, HS2 Ltd should be asked to work with Network Rail and councils to produce indicative service patterns showing how capacity freed up by HS2 can best be used to improve services at existing main line stations across the East Midlands to inform future public consultations.

- Q3 Do you agree with the Government's proposals for the phased role-out of a national high speed rail network, and for links to Heathrow Airport and the High Speed 1 line to the Channel Tunnel?

It will be essential for the Government to demonstrate to local communities that HS2 is not diverting resources away from other vital transport projects – such as the electrification of the Midland Main Line, the proposed improvements to the A453 between the M1 and Nottingham, or the proposed junction improvements on the M1 (J19, J21 J24). The success of HS2 will also in part be dependant on the extent to which it is integrated with other transport modes. As a result, it will be vital to ensure that any new HS2 Station in the East Midlands is well connected to Derby, Leicester and Nottingham and to surrounding rural hinterlands.

Whilst it is expected that the Government's fiscal position will be much improved by the time Phase 1 of HS2 begins, HS2 should be implemented primarily with funds currently allocated to the Crossrail and Thameslink projects in London to allow mainstream transport funding in the East Midlands to be protected and enhanced to support re-balancing of the economy.

Given the scale and cost of the project, a phased implementation within an agreed long term framework is therefore considered to be the most appropriate way forward. Clarity about the eventual shape of the high speed network and the expected timetable for its implementation will provide the necessary certainty for businesses, developers and councils to make long term strategic infrastructure and investment decisions. Linking HS2 to Heathrow and HS1 would have obvious economic and environmental benefits.

- Q4 Do you agree with the principles and specification used by HS2 Ltd to underpin its proposals for new high speed rail lines and the route selection process HS2 Ltd undertook?

Designing the route to a specification that will allow trains to run at up to 250 mph maximises the potential for journey time savings, and allows a certain amount of 'future proofing' that may result from rolling stock improvements.

The route selection process has looked at an appropriate range of alternatives, and has been robust at the strategic level. The efforts made to mitigate local adverse impacts are acknowledged. However, experience of major infrastructure projects indicates that there is much more that can be done to improve the quality of the final build and to mitigate noise and visual impacts by working closely with councils and local communities in the detailed design and implementation phases.

Q5 Do you agree that the Government's proposed route, including the approach proposed for mitigating its impacts, is the best option for a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands?

The changes proposed to the route between London and Birmingham in the East Midlands around Brackley and Edgcote House will help to lessen the impact of the route on communities in South Northamptonshire. However, there will still be those who will be adversely affected.

As a result, it is vital that both HS2 Ltd and the Government works openly and proactively with councils and local communities on the detailed design and implementation of the route, to further mitigate the impacts on people, local businesses and the environment.

Q6 Do you wish to comment on the Appraisal of Sustainability of the Government's proposed route between London and the West Midlands that has been published to inform this consultation?

The Appraisal of Sustainability is appropriate for making strategic level choices of this nature. However, further analysis of the more detailed design options will still be required to ensure that the final development adequately mitigates adverse impacts on local communities and the environment. Experience elsewhere (including HS1) also indicates there will be opportunities for environmental enhancements through planting, landscaping and habitat creation.

Q7 Do you agree with the options set out to assist those whose properties lose significant amount of value as a result of the new high speed line?

Given the scale of the potential impacts and the current state of the property market, it is vital that the Government adopts a discretionary package of support for home owners and businesses, over and above the statutory blight and compensations schemes. To give the necessary confidence to home owners and businesses over the longer term, it is recommended that the Government adopts a 'bond based' compensation scheme rather than extending the current 'exceptional hardship' arrangements.