

Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP  
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22<sup>nd</sup> July 2025

Dear Secretary of State

### **MIDLAND MAIN LINE ELECTRIFICATION & RAIL IN THE EAST MIDLANDS**

We are to writing express our dismay at the Government's decision to 'pause' indefinitely Midland Main Line electrification, and the lack of any strategic alternatives for improving rail infrastructure in the East Midlands identified in the Spending Review.

The Government's decision is the latest in a long line of delays and cancellations to a project that has so far taken 44 years to extend from London to just south of Leicester – only 60% of the length of the line through to Sheffield.

Halting the project now appears to make little sense in terms of the Government's objectives for the Spending Review. It is a 'shovel-ready' project that could have been largely delivered within this Parliament, it supports highly skilled jobs in the strategically important but vulnerable rail supply chain sector and contributes to the Government's core missions of growth and de-carbonisation.

Recent sections from Kettering to South Wigston have been delivered on time and on budget and at a substantially lower unit cost than previous electrification projects, in sharp contrast to rail schemes elsewhere in the country which have spiralled out of control, but which continue to be funded – most notably HS2 in the West Midlands.

The Government's decision will have significant consequences. As Rail Forum and the Rail Industry Association have articulated<sup>1</sup>, there is a real threat to local jobs, skills and business viability. Councils have spent time and money working with Network Rail to demolish and rebuild road bridges along the route for now no obvious purpose. We are also very concerned about the impact on Network Rail's renewals programme in the East Midlands, which is predicated on sharing the cost of track access with the electrification project.

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<sup>1</sup> [Rail industry bodies urge action on Midland Main Line electrification, after 'pause' - Rail Forum](#)

Over the longer term, full electrification of the Midland Main Line would enable the introduction of next generation battery-electric regional trains (already deployed in Merseyside) across the whole of the East Midlands. We are currently the most diesel-dependent region in Great Britain. EMR is being forced to refurbish its fleet of 25–35-year-old diesel regional trains to keep services running for another decade because of the lack of any alternative.

Despite having a robust economy and experiencing rapid population growth over the last decade, the East Midlands has received the lowest level of transport funding per head of any UK region or nation for much of the last 20 years – currently just 58% of the UK average<sup>2</sup>. Consequently, our rail network is ‘*sparse, infrequent, unreliable, and poorly used*’<sup>3</sup>. It is also on a cost-per-mile basis, amongst the most expensive to use in the country - particularly on the Midland Main line.

This all begs a fundamental question; if electrification does not proceed within this Parliament, what is the Government’s vision for the future of rail in the East Midlands?

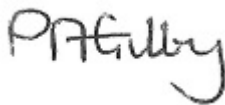
Yours sincerely



Cllr Sean Matthews  
Leader of Lincolnshire CC & Chair of EMC



Sir Peter Soulsby  
City Mayor of Leicester & Chair of TfEM



Cllr Tricia Gilby  
Leader of Chesterfield Borough Council &  
Vice Chair of EMC

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<sup>2</sup> [Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2024 - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>3</sup> [A-Platform-for-Growth \(3\).pdf](#)