

**EAST Midlands Franchise workshop
National Civil War Museum, Newark
25th April 2015**

Summary Notes of Discussions

1. Strategic Issues

- The principle of a 'Regional Express Network' built around a series of hubs and spokes was supported. This reflects the 'polycentric' settlement structure of the East Midlands and economic relationships with surrounding cities (e.g. Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham as well as London), and the potential for improved rail services to facilitate significant housing and job growth in key locations.
- Whilst it is important to set out a clear vision of what kind of service patterns would facilitate growth, the franchise competition provides the opportunity for market led innovation that can deliver enhanced outcomes - which has been the experience of the recent Northern Franchise competition.
- The upgrade and electrification of the MML will deliver long over-due transformational change to the rail network in the East Midlands, but it will be extremely disruptive in the short term. As a result there is a case for taking a different approach to franchise requirements in the pre and post 2023 periods.
- Although there is limited scope to develop short distance commuter services compared to other regions, there are a number of corridors (e.g. Grantham to Nottingham) where it will be important to get the right mix of fast and semi-fast services to meet local economic needs.
- Rolling stock is a matter for the private sector. However, it is clear that the network covered by the franchise will remain only partially electrified for the foreseeable future and the choice of rolling stock will need to reflect this to maintain flexibility and resilience.
- We are increasingly moving towards a 7 day economy and yet the current pattern of rail services fails to reflect this. This is an issue not just for the consumers of commercial services but for those who provide them.
- There is an operational case for removing some services from the Cross-country Franchise: Birmingham – Leicester- Stanstead Airport (to WM) and Birmingham to Nottingham (to EM). 'Code sharing' may also be an option.

2. Lincoln Hub

- Lincoln Hub proposals generally supported
- Food, manufacturing and tourism are key drivers of the Lincolnshire economy.

- The University has been a driver for major housing and job growth in Lincoln and further growth is planned.
- The concept of a Lincoln – Newark – Nottingham - Birmingham corridor should be embedded into the next franchise. Securing additional rolling stock has been a key barrier to improving services – despite recent improvements to infrastructure
- Good connectivity to Doncaster is the key accessing services to the north
- Economic links to Grimsby, Immingham and Cleethorpes are important and growing – and should be better reflected in service patterns
- Newark is key bottleneck on the network – conflicts between EMCL, local passenger and freight services need to be addressed (assessment of a ‘Newark flyover’ ongoing by NR)
- There is potential to make better use of the Joint Line for passenger services from Peterborough, Spalding and Sleaford
- Services to the Lincolnshire Coast remain important to the local tourist economy

3. Leicester Hub

- The Leicester Hub proposals generally supported and consistent with the emerging Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy
- Further Improvements to stations and station car-parking facilities will be required to maintain passenger growth
- There needs to be a better alignment between the franchise-holder maintaining the station and franchise-holder running the trains (some EMT stations have few or no EMT trains).
- There needs to be greater clarification (in the draft paper) on the roles of the stations south of Leicester
- Local bus connectivity to rail stations is being undermined by cuts to local government

4. Derby Hub

- Proposals for Derby Hub generally supported
- Trent junction a fundamental infrastructure constraint to E-W connectivity – major enhancement required
- Major crowding issues on Derby to Crewe link which is not reflected in the EM Route Study analysis

- Starting services at Ambergate at peak times is not the best solution but infrastructure constraints may prevent a 2tph service to/from Matlock
- Opportunities for better links to Manchester Airport: Nottingham – Derby- Crewe – MA
- Derby - Loughborough - Leicester service serving local stations should be explored
- Faster links to Birmingham should not disadvantage services to Tamworth and Burton

5. **Nottingham Hub**

- Proposals for Nottingham Hub generally supported
- ‘Nottingham in 90’ (to London) needs greater prominence
- Nottingham to Leeds and Birmingham both very poor in terms of Journey times - not competitive with the car
- Local connectivity to and within stations becoming increasingly important as passenger numbers rise
- Opportunities to make use of ex-colliery lines for both freight and passenger services should be explored
- Opportunities to improve services to Mansfield and Ollerton via the RH Line
- Opportunities to make better use of capacity on the Erewash Valley line: Mansfield – Ilkeston - Derby/Leicester

6. **Other Issues**

- Need to look at wider opportunities that reflect changing economic relationships - e.g. Nottingham to Cambridge (bio-science links)
- Incremental station improvements are important – there needs to be an unallocated pot within the franchise to deliver such improvements over the franchise period
- Similarly there needs to be the potential for further revenue spend to deliver incremental improvements to services during the franchise
- Community Rail Partnership and other local initiatives very important on local lines - passenger numbers at Dore (south of Sheffield) increased from 14,000 to 250,000 pa over 7 years as a result of local action
- Availability of rolling stock has been a key constraint on improving services in recent years – must be addressed

- Car parking changes seen as revenue raising opportunity by TOCs – must change
- Desire for new rolling stock understandable and necessary in some circumstances, but refurbished trains can often be as effective, cheaper and benefit local companies (who are more likely to do the work)

7. Next Steps

- There is a clear willingness to work on a collective basis in partnership with DfT on the EM franchise competition
- There is no requirement or desire to establish an EM version of West Midlands Rail Ltd at the moment. EMC provides an appropriate political governance structure in the short term
- However an additional shared resource is required to work with DfT over the next 18 months
- The LTAs agreed to develop a funding proposal to secure this - which would be open to the authorities outside the EM to buy into and reporting to an officer steering group from the funding authorities
- A short term priority is to develop a local contribution to the East Midlands Prospectus (July 2016)
- EM franchise priorities should also feature as part of the Midlands Connect Strategy
- Over the longer term Midlands Connect may provide the basis for future joint working on franchising if it becomes a statutory Sub-National Transport Body

16th May 2016