

PRESS RELEASE

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A GREEN LIGHT FOR ELECTRIC TRAINS?

The long awaited electrification of the Midland Main Line from Bedford through the East Midlands to Sheffield moved a step closer today, 29th September 2011, with the publication of a major report on national rail investment priorities.

Council and business leaders from across the East Midlands and South Yorkshire have strongly welcomed key aspects of the so-called 'Initial Industry Plan' published today by Network Rail. The report has been submitted to Government and will help to determine the Government's rail investment priorities for the period 2014-2019.

This plan includes prioritisation of the electrification and enhancement of the Midland Main Line that will enable more reliable and greener rail travel leading to significant journey time savings.

East Midlands Councils has been at the forefront of the campaign to secure the electrification. Its Chair, Cllr David Parsons CBE, said: *"Electrification and enhancement of the Midland Main Line is a key objective of East Midlands Councils and would be of huge benefit to communities across the region. Today's announcement represents a big step forward"*

Over the longer term, electrification would also allow trains to run on both 'classic' lines and the Government's proposed new HS2 line – widening access to 'high speed' rail services across the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

Chair of the South Yorkshire Integrated Transport Authority, Mick Jameson said: *"Electrification and improvement of the Midland Main Line would boost connectivity and be great news for the travelling public of Sheffield and South Yorkshire. Today's announcement is welcome, and we will continue to press Government to implement Midland Mainline upgrades and then electrification as soon as possible"*.

Cllr Jim Harker, Leader of Northamptonshire County Council and EMC's 'Infrastructure Champion' said: *"Electrification would help to bring our rail infrastructure into the 21st century, making it more efficient, resilient to climate change and adding a real boost to the economy of the whole of the East Midlands."*

Today's report is not the end of the process. The Government and the Office of the Rail Regulator are now inviting comments on the proposals before finalising the investment plan in 2013.

In a joint statement issued today, 29th September, Cllr David Parsons and Mick Jameson said. *"Although today's news is positive, it does not guarantee the outcome. It is vital that all those who want to see the electrification and enhancement of the Midland Main Line make their views known to Government. We will also be organising a Parliamentary lobbying event in London to press home the case"*

Details of the consultation process can be found at
<http://www.networkrailmediacentre.co.uk/imagelibrary/downloadMedia.ashx?MediaDetailsID=5067>
Closing date for comments is the 18 November 2011

ENDS

Notes East Midlands Councils, is the consultative forum for all the Local Authorities in the East Midlands.

It represents 46 councils, covering an area of over 6000 square miles with a population of 4.4 million people.

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