

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING & TRANSPORT
CABINET PANEL**

THURSDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2017 AT 10:00AM

RAIL UPDATE INCLUDING EAST MIDLANDS FRANCHISE CONSULTATION

Report of the Chief Executive and Director of Environment

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide the Panel with an opportunity to consider the County Council's response to the East Midlands Franchise consultation.
- 1.2 To provide an update on other key rail issues affecting Hertfordshire.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Responses to the East Midlands Franchise consultation are required by 11 October. The key issue for Hertfordshire is the proposal to change the stopping pattern in the Luton area, which could have implications for local connections.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 To agree the response to the East Midlands Franchise consultation.

4. Background

- 4.1 Although the County Council has no direct responsibility for rail issues, it seeks to influence the rail industry in order to provide better levels of service for Hertfordshire residents and businesses. The County Council's overall aspirations are set out in its Rail Strategy.
- 4.2 The key areas of influence are in the specification of franchises and the programmes of infrastructure enhancements. The formal process for this is in the response to consultations from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail, although the County Council also seeks other opportunities to support Hertfordshire's aspirations.
- 4.3 This paper sets out a draft response to the current DfT consultation on the East Midlands franchise. It also sets out progress on other rail initiatives,

highlighting when the Panel is likely to have the opportunity to consider formal responses.

5. East Midlands Franchise

- 5.1 The East Midlands franchise covers intercity services on the Midland Main Line between London St Pancras and Corby, Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield. Services are currently provided by East Midlands Trains, which is part of the Stagecoach Group. The current general pattern of services is shown in Appendix 1, which also shows the Thameslink local services which share the same route. Local services in the East Midlands have been omitted for clarity.
- 5.2 The franchise does not directly serve Hertfordshire. However, the calling point at Luton Airport Parkway provides connections from stations such as St Albans to Leicester and Nottingham, with services to Corby accessed via Luton. Derby and Sheffield can only be reached by a further change at Leicester.
- 5.3 The current franchise was due to end in March 2018, but this has now been extended to August 2019.
- 5.4 Consultation to inform the franchise specification (the Invitation to Tender) was published on 20 July 2017, with a deadline for comments of 11 October 2017. A series of public consultation meetings are being held, with a London event taking place on 19 September 2017.

6. Consultation Proposals

- 6.1 The consultation document sets out a number of options for changes to the current arrangements. The options which affect Hertfordshire are:
- Reduce stops at “stations used by commuters”, such as Luton, Bedford, Wellingborough and Kettering;
 - Introduce commuter trains on the Corby – London route to replace intercity services;
 - Providing additional East Midlands fast trains to Luton Airport Parkway.
- 6.2 The consultation document is not fully clear on what services would result from these options. It states that the proposal would result in no peak time intercity trains calling at Bedford, Luton and Luton Airport Parkway, but there is no statement on what the off-peak calling pattern would be. The option of increased stops at Luton Airport Parkway is also potentially contradictory to

the reduction of “commuter station” stops. Clarification on this is being sought from DfT.

- 6.3 Regardless of the actual detail, the principle of a reduction or removal of stops would decrease accessibility for Hertfordshire residents by adding in additional changes. This is demonstrated in Table 1.

Journey	Current	Proposed
St Albans to Leicester / Nottingham	Thameslink train to Luton Airport Parkway East Midlands train to Leicester / Nottingham [1 change]	Thameslink train to Luton Airport Parkway East Midlands commuter train to Kettering East Midlands train to Leicester / Nottingham [2 changes]
St Albans to Sheffield	Thameslink train to Luton Airport Parkway East Midlands train to Leicester East Midlands train to Sheffield [2 changes]	Thameslink train to Luton Airport Parkway East Midlands commuter train to Kettering East Midlands train to Leicester East Midlands train to Sheffield [3 changes]

- 6.4 To maintain suitable connections for Hertfordshire residents, it is important to maintain Luton Airport Parkway or Luton as a stopping point.

- 6.5 A draft response is set out in Appendix 2. It should be noted that the consultation meetings arranged by the DfT will not be held until after the Panel meeting. Therefore further changes to the draft response may be required.

7 Other Rail Updates

GTR 2018 Consultation

- 7.1 The Panel received a paper on GTR’s current consultation on the 2018 timetable at its meeting in November 2016, and the County Council subsequently submitted a formal response.
- 7.2 A second round of consultation on the detailed weekday timetables was held from 26 June to 27 July 2017, with a further County Council response submitted.

- 7.3 Further consultation on weekend and late night services is expected in October 2017.
- 7.4 A key issue is the proposed bus substitution between Stevenage and Watton at Stone from May 2018 until such time as an additional platform is built at Stevenage. An update on the likely time scale for this is expected to be included in Network Rail's East Coast Route Study to be published in late summer.

Crossrail 2

- 7.5 The Crossrail 2 scheme will provide additional capacity on the West Anglia Main Line for local and regional services, as well as providing a new service to central London from stations such as Broxbourne.
- 7.6 Further consultation on stations, level crossings and sidings is expected later this year. Full implementation of the scheme is scheduled for 2033.
- 7.7 In a joint statement on 24 July 2017, the Secretary of State and the Mayor of London gave their support to the scheme.
- 7.8 Broxbourne Borough Council, supported in principle by the County Council, is also pursuing the option of a new Crossrail 2 station at Turnford. Indications from TfL are that local funding will be required to ensure that this proposal is delivered.

East West Rail

- 7.9 East West Rail is a project to provide a new rail link from Oxford to Cambridge. The section from Oxford to Bedford is due to open in 2022, with the Bedford to Cambridge section scheduled to be completed by 2034.
- 7.10 Although the line will not pass through Hertfordshire, there will be benefits to local residents provided that there are good connections with existing train services at Bedford (on the Midland Main Line) and Sandy (on the East Coast Main Line).
- 7.11 The next update will be provided at the East West Rail Stakeholder Group on 5 September, although the final preferred route is not expected to be announced until summer 2018.

West Midlands Franchise

- 7.12 The West Midlands franchise, which provides local services on the main line through Watford Junction and on the Abbey Line, was awarded on 10 August 2017 to a consortium led by Abellio, and will commence in December 2017.

West Coast Main Line Post HS2

- 7.13 The delivery of High Speed 2 in 2026 will free up capacity on the West Coast Main Line, providing an opportunity to press for increased local services in Hertfordshire and for more intercity stops at Watford Junction.
- 7.14 The HS2 update provided by DfT in July 2017 included a range of options for new services on the existing line. These include scenarios which provide enhanced services for Hertfordshire. However, continued lobby will be required to ensure that these positive scenarios are adopted.
- 7.15 West Coast Rail 250, a consortium of Local Authorities of which the County Council is a member, has recently commissioned consultants to look at options for the freed up capacity. This will provide evidence to support lobbying activity.

West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study

- 7.16 Network Rail published the West Midlands & Chilterns Route Study in early August, following consultation held in June to September 2016. The only part of the route directly relevant to Hertfordshire is the Chilterns route to Aylesbury via Rickmansworth and Chorleywood.
- 7.17 The study includes an option to lengthen trains on this route, and notes that “calling patterns at Rickmansworth station will have to be altered to avoid an infrastructure intervention to make the station 6-car capable”. The County Council objected to this option in its consultation response, on the assumption that this means a reduction in train service, which currently is two trains per hour. The stated timeframe for delivering this option is 2024.
- 7.18 The issue will be raised with Network Rail at a London North Western Route meeting on 2 October 2017.

8. Forward Programme

- 8.1 A programme of upcoming key dates as regards to rail issues is shown in Appendix 3.

9. Financial Implications

- 9.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

10. Equality Implications

- 10.1 When considering proposals placed before Members it is important that they are fully aware of, and have themselves rigorously considered the equalities implications of the decision that they are taking.
- 10.2 Rigorous consideration will ensure that proper appreciation of any potential impact of that decision on the County Council’s statutory obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a minimum this requires decision makers to

read and carefully consider the content of any Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) produced by officers.

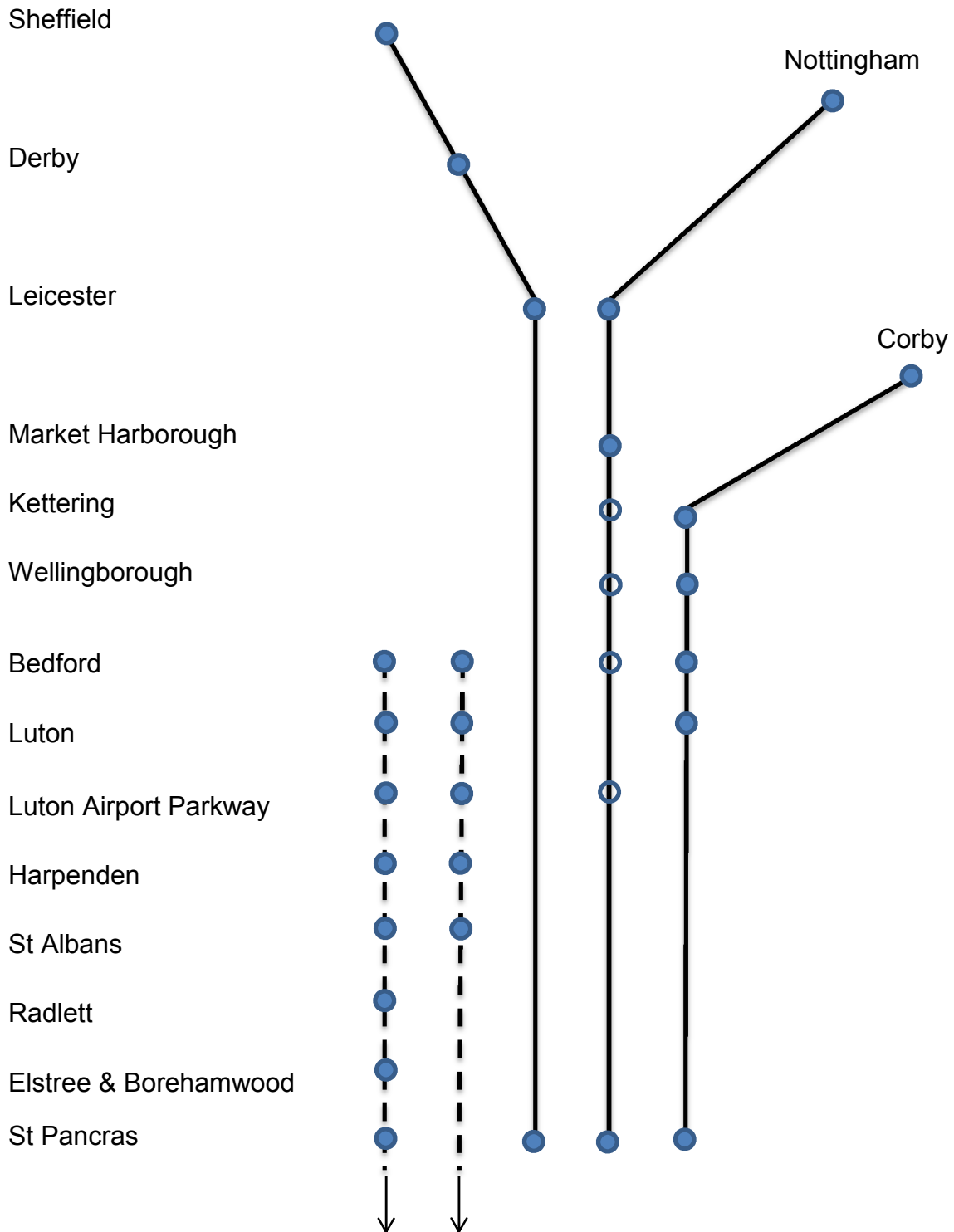
- 10.3 The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council when exercising its functions to have due regard to the need to (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited under the Act; (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it and (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it. The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age; disability; gender reassignment; marriage and civil partnership; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion and belief, sex and sexual orientation.
- 10.4 No Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) was undertaken in relation to this report because it does not introduce any changes that require an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA).

Background Information

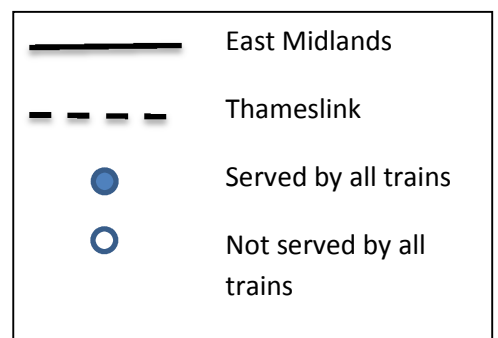
East Midlands Rail Franchise Public Consultation – Department for Transport (July 2017)

High Speed Two – From Concept to Reality – Department for Transport (July 2017)

**Appendix 1 General Pattern of Current East Midlands Franchise
(also showing GTR Thameslink services)**



To Thameslink core



Appendix 2 Draft response to East Midlands Rail Franchise Consultation

Given that the franchise does not directly serve Hertfordshire, the draft response below focusses only on the key service pattern issues. The other consultation questions are listed afterwards for completeness.

4. Do you agree with our proposed approach, which could reduce journey times on long distance services and increase the likelihood of getting a seat?

No. Hertfordshire County Council does not agree with the proposals.

The removal of station stops south of Kettering would severely reduce the attractiveness of rail travel for Hertfordshire residents making a journey to Nottingham, Leicester, Derby or Sheffield. This would be contrary to our Rail Strategy, which seeks improved connections with these cities.

Although the details in the consultation document are not fully clear, it appears that an additional change of trains would be required for all journeys from Hertfordshire, and that a higher proportion of the journey would be on slower commuter trains. For example, a journey from St Albans to Sheffield would require three changes, making it highly unattractive.

Hertfordshire County Council therefore requests that main line train stops are retained at Luton Airport Parkway so that the current level of connectivity is maintained.

Furthermore, the county council would wish to see all main line trains, including the Sheffield services, calling at Luton Airport Parkway so that connectivity is enhanced..

The concept of commuter services on the Corby route is supported in principle. If this concept is pursued, Hertfordshire County Council would wish to these services call at St Albans.

13. Would you like additional fast trains from London each hour to call at Luton Airport Parkway if this meant that, as a trade-off:

- Some services are withdrawn from other stations, such as Luton?*
- Journey times to other stations may increase?*
- Freight capacity and/or frequency is reduced?*

It is essential that Luton Airport Parkway is retained as a stopping point for East Midlands intercity services in order to provide connecting services for Hertfordshire residents.

An increase in the number of trains stopping at the station would improve connectivity for Hertfordshire residents, and hence the proposal is supported in principle.

Hertfordshire County Council's aspirations is for all main line services to call at Luton Airport Parkway in order to increase connectivity to cities further north.

Other questions included in consultation document

1. How do you think closer co-operation between staff in Network Rail and the operator of the next East Midlands franchise can be achieved?

2. How can the operator of the next East Midlands franchise engage with community rail partnerships or heritage railways to support the local economy to stimulate demand for rail services in the region?

3. Do you think that the operator of the train service, stations and support services should take the following into consideration when they run the franchise:

- The environment?
- Equality?
- Communities in the areas they operate?

If so, how should they do this?

5. What are your suggestions about how to mitigate the potential loss of some direct services between Oakham, Melton Mowbray and London?

6. What are the particular services, routes and times of day when you think additional seats for passengers are most needed?

7. Which on-board facilities in order of preference (these are listed in the response form), are most important to you:

- On short distance journeys (up to 60 minutes).
- On long distance journeys (over 60 minutes).

8. What other on-board facilities should be:

- Introduced?
- Improved?

9. How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs? (A number of options are listed in the response form).

10. What additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?

11. Do you support the proposal to reopen the line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains? If so, what sources of investment could be identified to fund this proposal?

12. Do you think that the current number of services on the Midland Main Line to and from Luton Airport Parkway is adequate?

14. *How could the train service be better at meeting the needs of passengers travelling to and from the airports within the East Midlands franchise?*

15. *What ideas do you have for improving the current service on the Liverpool – Norwich route?*

16. *Would you support changing the destinations served by the existing Birmingham – Stansted Airport service, such as serving Norwich instead of Stansted Airport?*

17. *Are you in favour of these route changes:*

- *Liverpool – Norwich.*
- *Birmingham – Nottingham.*
- *Birmingham – Leicester/Stansted.*

18. *Would you like to see any other routes transferred to or from the East Midlands franchise? If so, which routes?*

19. *Do you support increasing the frequency of train services in Lincolnshire despite the impact this may have on level crossing users?*

20. *How can we improve all aspects of your door-to-door journey experience?*

21. *What more could be done to improve access to, and provide facilities at stations, including for those with disabilities or additional needs?*

22. *How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for community and commercial purposes?*

23. *What could be done to improve the way tickets are sold and provided?*

24. *What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?*

25. *What additional information would be useful to you when planning or making your journey, such as seat availability, journey times and connections? How would you like it to be communicated to you?*

26. *How could staff be more effective in providing the service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?*

27. *How would you prefer the next operator to engage with:*

- *You as an individual?*
- *Your organisation (if applicable)?*

28. *What would make you feel safer and more secure on your journey in relation to:*

- *Trains?*
- *Routes?*
- *Stations?*
- *Other?*

29. How do you think more investment might be put into the railways to match money already coming from government through Network Rail?

30. Are there any other areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been discussed in this consultation?

Appendix 3 Rail Key Dates

	Lead	Date
2017		
East Coast Route Study	NR	Late Summer
GTR consultation on 2018 weekend / late night services	GTR	October
East Midlands Franchise consultation closes	DfT	11 October
Crossrail 2 consultation	NR / TfL	tbd
West Midlands Franchise commences	DfT	December
2018		
GTR 2018 Timetable Phase 1	GTR	May
GTR 2018 Timetable – full delivery	GTR	December
Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) fully opened	TfL	December
Beyond 2018		
West Coast Partnership Franchise commences	DfT	April 2019
East Midlands Franchise commences	DfT	August 2019
TSGN Franchise consultation	DfT	2020
Chilterns Franchise consultation	DfT	2020
InterCity East Coast Franchise consultation	DfT	2021
TSGN Franchise commences	DfT	September 2021

Longer-Term Major Scheme Delivery

	Lead	Date
HS2 Phase 1 completed	DfT	2026
Crossrail 2 completed	DfT / TfL	2033
HS2 Phase 2 completed	DfT	2033
East West Rail Central Section completed	EWR	2034

Future Panel Papers

Panel Date	Potential Rail Papers
5 October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update on East West Rail
1 November 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crossrail 2 consultation GTR weekend / late night services WCML post HS2 update
5 February 2018	
9 March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rail Strategy Refresh