

LEICESTERSHIRE LOCAL ACCESS FORUM – 26 JANUARY 2016

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED MIDLAND MAINLINE ELECTRIFICATION

Purpose

1. To provide an update on recent developments regarding the proposed enhancement works programme for the Midland Mainline in Leicestershire.

Background

2. In June 2015, the Secretary of State for Transport announced that plans to electrify the Midland Mainline would be 'paused' whilst the Network Rail programme of enhancements was reviewed.
3. In July 2015 Sir Peter Hendy was appointed chair of Network Rail, with his first task being to review Network Rail's plans for the five years between 2014-2019 (known as Control Period 5, or CP5).
4. On 29 September 2015, Sir Peter Hendy reported his initial findings to the Secretary of State for Transport, and on 30 September 2015, the Secretary of State for Transport confirmed that both the TransPennine and Midland Mainline electrification schemes could be un-paused with immediate effect and progressed with some urgency¹.
5. Subsequently, Sir Peter Hendy's detailed findings and recommendations were published in a report (abbreviated to, and known as, the Hendy Review².) in November 2015. As well as the Midland Mainline Electrification, the report confirms that other Line Speed Improvements will be undertaken that will enable faster longer distance journeys between Leicester, Nottingham, Derby, Sheffield and London. An extra long-distance train per hour running between London and Kettering, and new track between Bedford and Kettering will allow additional express services to and from stations north of Kettering. In addition, more seats on trains will help to address capacity and meet growing demand.

¹ Rail electrification of TransPennine and Midland Mainline routes correspondence: www.gov.uk/government/publications/rail-electrification-of-transpennine-and-midland-mainline-routes

² Report from Sir Peter Hendy to the Secretary of State for Transport on the replanning of Network Rail's Investment Programme: www.networkrail.co.uk/Hendy-review/

Current situation

6. Where previously the Midland Mainline Electrification programme was to be completed by 2019, the programme is now expected to extend to 2024. Network Rail has yet to release a detailed programme of works for the route and the associated Line Speed Improvement programme through Leicestershire, but current correspondence with Network Rail suggests that they are focused on developing these programmes. It is anticipated that early parts of this programme will be revealed in the first few months of 2016.

Rights Of Way Crossings

7. The main outstanding highway works for electrification relate to roadworks and carriageway crossings. As regards Rights of Way, six proposals for level crossings have already been completed or are at an advanced stage to divert routes to bridges that allow for future electrification. These are shown on the attached plan and represent a significant capital investment. In addition, there are currently two further crossings that are subject to ongoing proposals. At Barrow, Network Rail has applied for the crossing to be extinguished rather than bridged and this has been subject to preliminary consultations, including comment from the Forum. At Little Bowden, Network Rail has recently announced that the company now intends to bring forward a bridge scheme rather than a shorter term signalling proposal.
8. The recent replacement of a footbridge at Sileby was to allow for future electrification. It is possible some older Rights of Way bridge structures will need to be assessed. Other works, such as new safety fencing alongside the railway, possible new power transformers next to the railway, and new power cables leading to these transformers could all lead to potential temporary and permanent diversions in the vicinity of the Midland Mainline rail route.

Next Steps

9. Leicestershire County Council is ready to work with Network Rail on the programme. Specific proposals for any changes to Rights of Way will continue to be subject to consultations with parties and any road closure diversion routes will aim to minimise clashes with other works on the highway network and help to plan appropriate diversion routes to minimise disruption. This includes non-motorised traffic.

Appendices

Appendix – Plan of Former & Current Rights of Way Level Crossing Points on MML

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