

APPENDIX B

East Midlands Rail Franchise Consultation Response
Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and
Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership

This consultation response is made on behalf of Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership (LLEP). Within the response the above organisations will be referred to as “the partnership”.

Question 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?

Railways operate as an integrated system, and therefore we believe that a better result for passengers and for cost efficiency can be achieved by close, integrated working between train operators and Network Rail. A formal alliance structure may be the best way to achieve this, and could cover joint operations control, a joint performance improvement plan, joint planning of engineering access to the railway, and timetable planning. The key will be for the franchise operator and Network Rail to sign up to a shared set of objectives, including acceptance by both parties that their own short-term interests might occasionally have to be sacrificed to the long-term benefit of the railway, its passengers and wider economic benefits.

In addition, the partnership want to see the operator and Network Rail working together to address the lack of incentives in the current industry structure to develop and improve stations. This arises because Network Rail is only funded to maintain these assets at their Control Period 3 level (i.e. 2004), and because the train operator only has a short franchise. Therefore, the partnership would wish to see an alliance process for Network Rail and the operator to work together, with other stakeholders (such as Local Authorities and LEPs) to develop a vision for stations in the franchise, to create long term improvement plans for stations to achieve that vision, and to assemble funding and project teams for delivery. The station vision should include recognition that stations are community assets, with a role to play as the gateway to the communities they serve as well as the gateway to the railway.

Question 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?

There are two Community Rail Partnerships (CRPs) in the area: the Derwent Valley Line CRP, covering Derby – Matlock, and the Grantham – Skegness CRP (The Poacher Line), which also covers Nottingham – Grantham. The Poacher Line includes the station at Bottesford which lies within Leicestershire. The next franchisee and the CRP's could have a valuable input to any changes proposed to service patterns on their respective lines, and with regard to improvements to stations. The new franchisee should build on the relationships with the CRPs already

established by its predecessors over a number of years. The franchisee should also encourage station adoption where appropriate in order to create local “ownership” of smaller stations which inevitably only receive attention from the franchisee proportionate to their size.

There are also two heritage railways; the Great Central Railway (GCR), which runs from a terminal in north Leicester to Loughborough Central, and the Great Central Railway (Nottingham) which operates over part of the Loughborough – Ruddington branch. Although they are separate organisations, there are ambitious plans, supported in principle by the partnership, to link them by means of a new bridge over the Midland Main Line near Loughborough station, and also to construct a new station at the north end of the GCR to provide improved passenger interchange between the national network and the preserved railway. Freight traffic still passes over part of the GCR (Nottingham) between East Leake and the national network at Loughborough. There will undoubtedly be scope for joint marketing, including through ticket arrangements, supporting these railways as Leicestershire tourism destinations.

Question 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 that they operate**

If so, how should they do this?

These issues should be taken into consideration in the operation of the franchise. In line with the partnership’s sustainability objectives, we expect that the successful franchisee will set out clearly how it will minimise its impact on the environment and promote equality and sustainability. Measures could include the following:

- Minimising waste and pollution through appropriate procurement, maintenance, operation and cleaning policies
 - Reduce carbon emissions from the workforce, through its business activities and by marketing the railway as a good alternative to car use
 - Improving outdoor spaces around station environments, either by use of underused/redundant station buildings or landscaping initiatives which could be run in conjunction with local communities
 - Specifying rolling stock that minimises or eliminates emissions and other adverse effects on the environment
 - Adopting policies for recycling waste and scrap material
 - Providing, as far as physically possible, access and other facilities at stations in full compliance with disability discrimination legislation. There are a number of stations in the county, such as Sileby and Barrow-on-Soar, where provision of disabled access must be regarded as a priority.
 - Following employment policies that offer equal opportunities to all groups and sectors of society
 - An apprenticeship programme to support local skills development
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- Consulting with local communities and organisations regarding facilities at stations, including support for groups who may wish to maintain or look after their local station.
- Full consultation with local residents and the implementation of mitigation measures wherever possible when work is planned at unsocial hours, or otherwise disrupts the local community.

Question 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?

The partnership understand that the proposed approach is to have two service groups on the Midland Main Line: a 2 train per hour electric “commuting” service between Corby and London, and a 4 train per hour long-distance “inter-city” service as now, but with fewer stops at stations south of Kettering. This would enable the speeding up of inter-city services in the peaks (by making fewer station calls), and potentially of 1 train per hour in the off-peak. Intermediate journeys (e.g. Leicester to Bedford) would be made by changing at Kettering.

In principle, the proposed change to stopping patterns to improve journey times and provide more seating capacity between Leicestershire and London is supported. However, we need to see this in a wider context. There are two issues.

Firstly, the partnership is disappointed that electrification of the railway between Kettering and Sheffield and Nottingham has been cancelled. The partnership strongly believes that this is the right long-term solution for improved services, lower environmental impact and more efficient operation. It would also support the introduction of classic compatible services from Leicester (and further south) to the North via HS2, for which we and East Midlands Councils have been pressing.

Secondly, the partnership is seeking urgent assurance that journey times for fast trains on the Midland Main Line are not under threat. Significant investment has been made, and continues to be made in line speeds (including the project at Market Harborough), and the route now has many stretches with line speeds of 110 and 125 mph. It remains a key ask for non-stop journeys between Leicester and London in under 60 minutes. We are concerned that:

- The line south of Bedford may be limited to 100 mph for electric traction because of power supply issues.
 - The Bi-mode trains most likely to be used on the route (the Hitachi Class 8xx series) are known not to be able to achieve over 100mph in diesel mode.
 - These Bi-mode trains are also known to have poorer acceleration in diesel mode than the current Class 222 Meridian sets, and may be no better than the older High Speed Trains (HST).
 - The partnership understand that Network Rail has been having some difficulty in timetabling inter-city services alongside the proposed new Thameslink timetable without the insertion of significant amounts of pathing time in the schedules of the former.
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- The partnership believe these issues mean that it will not be possible to deliver improved journey times under the revised project scope, and, indeed, that there is a high risk that journey times will be increased compared to the current timetable. The partnership's support for the project is firmly based on delivery of the projected improvements, and we are closely following concerns regarding the ability of the Hitachi bi-mode trains being introduced on the Great Western to achieve even existing journey times on the non-electrified sections.

The partnership is therefore seeking assurance that bidders will be asked to achieve 60 minute journey times on most non-stop Leicester-London services and that end to end journey times (e.g. Sheffield-London) are not under threat. We are also seeking comfort from the DfT regarding the issues raised above.

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

At present, there are two daily direct services from Melton Mowbray and Oakham to London, and one from London.

Melton Mowbray	dep	06:00	17:14	London St. Pancras	dep	18:00
Oakham	dep	06:12	17:27	Oakham	arr	19:36
London St Pancras	arr	07:48	19:48	Melton Mowbray	arr	19:48

The partnership understand that the rolling stock to be procured for the Corby-London service will be electric only, and that therefore these services may be withdrawn north of Corby.

However, the potential loss of peak time direct trains is a serious matter. The Melton Local Plan from 2011 to 2036 advocates, through policy SS2, "the development of at least 6125 homes and some 51 hectares of employment land between 2011 and 2036". The success of such developments is crucially dependent on transport links. For this reason we would urge the DfT to specify at least one peak direct train each way between Melton Mowbray and London (this could potentially be routed either via Corby or via Leicester).

Currently, most of the hourly services between Melton Mowbray and Leicester connect with a fast service to London at Leicester, with an end to end journey time of 1hr 30min. It is important that these connections are maintained to ensure that the current service between Melton Mowbray and London is secured and developed.

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

The problems currently experienced by regular passengers travelling to and from stations north of Bedford on the Midland Main Line, particularly in the evening peak, are well described in the consultation document, and the mitigation measures proposed will go a long way towards easing them. The most important point is the

segregation of passengers from St Pancras in the evening peak between commuter services to Corby and long-distance services running fast. This will provide passengers to Leicestershire stations with a much greater chance of a seat and a more comfortable journey, and is supported.

The Birmingham – Peterborough services are also subject to periods of high demand, both to the east and west of Leicester. The current rolling stock consists mainly of 3-car Class 170 diesel units, with some services rostered only for 2-car sets. Overcrowding can occur at times of high demand, and there is little spare capacity to accommodate growth. Additional seating capacity can be provided by longer trains, additional services or a combination of both. On this route longer trains are required, appropriate for the many journeys of over 2 hours that take place on them. As growth continues, however, more services will be required both west and east of Leicester (see question 10).

Question 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)**

CCTV
Wheelchair space
Cycle storage
Free Wi-Fi
Power sockets
USB Sockets
Pushchair space

- **On long distance journeys (over 60 minutes)**

CCTV
Wheelchair space
Luggage space
Pushchair Space
Catering
Free Wi-Fi
Power Sockets
USB sockets
Baby changing facilities
Cycle storage
Table seating
Seat back tables
First Class areas

Question 8. What other on-board facilities should be:

- **Introduced**

Flexible seating to allow more space for luggage on trains to London, coastal and airport services, and for pushchairs on local trains. However, the partnership would discourage the use of “standing” seats.

Flexible space design so that when wheelchair users are on board, or when cycles or large luggage items are being carried, this space can be used for seating, particularly on commuter/local services. However, it must be clear that wheelchair users take priority over others for the use of flexible space.

- **Improved**

More thought needs to be given to the design of rail vehicle interiors, which, on some builds of modern rolling stock, is widely regarded as inferior to the older stock it has displaced.

The ratio of “face to face” compared to “unidirectional” (or “airline style”) seating on rolling stock intended for long-distance services should be re-examined. While unidirectional seating provides more capacity, and can be justified as the majority provision in suburban stock, on longer distance journeys there are more likely to be groups travelling together, and more people, even if they are alone, who wish to work during the journey and who need additional table space. It is evident from observation that the seats with tables regularly get occupied first.

The distribution of seats in relation to windows could be improved. While there are always likely to be seats that do not completely align with windows, more attention could be given to minimising the number of seats with restricted views.

East Midlands Councils have undertaken research on priorities for train interiors. The key points from this work include:

- Overhead storage can be too small for some cases and back packs, which then take up space which should be used for larger items
- Access to power points and Wi-Fi is important
- Wi-Fi access should be free, without significant time restrictions
- Catering is of average quality but offered at premium prices. Quality and innovation is needed without pushing up costs excessively
- Better environmental controls are needed; air conditioning and heating which can be adjusted by the on-board team during journeys
- On-train facilities must be kept clean and in good working order

However, in considering interior design, due recognition must also be given to the fact that long-distance services to and from Leicester, both to London and to other urban centres, are, and will remain, essentially “intercity” type operations. High-density, suburban type rolling stock is not suitable or acceptable for these journeys, which require comfortable seating with adequate legroom, seats distributed with due regard to the position of windows and adequate space for the safe storage of luggage to reduce the incidence of bags on seats.

Question 9. How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs?

- **At peak and/or off-peak periods**

This is discussed in more detail in other parts of the document.

- **During the early mornings, late evenings or at weekends**

The partnership would wish the following specific points to be addressed:

Leicester-Derby. The first train to Derby on weekdays leaves at 0712 – an unusually late time for a service between two cities so close together. On Sundays the first departure for Derby and Sheffield leaves at 1020. Earlier services between Leicester and Derby are desirable.

East Midlands Parkway. Passenger flights arrive and depart from East Midlands Airport for around 20 hours out of every 24, with a “quiet” period between approximately 0130 and 0530. In common with most airports, the flight pattern at EMA features a high number of departures between 0600 and 0900, which may require passengers to arrive as early as 0400 for check in and security procedures. There is a steady pattern of arrivals during the evening, as late as 0130-0200. Passengers with hold luggage frequently will not leave the airport until at least 45 minutes after the arrival time. The service at this station generally is not conducive to engaging access to the Airport by rail. This is discussed further in Question 14.

Loughborough. Although passengers travelling between Loughborough and London generally have 2 trains per hour, in reality the 2 trains are spaced such that there is really only one opportunity per hour to travel as the 2 trains arrive at or depart from St Pancras 3 minutes apart. A better spacing of trains at this station should be considered.

Sundays. Sunday travel is growing, and during the middle of the day and afternoon it can be busier than weekdays. However, railway services on many lines have not kept pace with changing travel behaviours. On some routes, however, the weekday off-peak service has been instituted after midday on Sundays, and the partnership would urge bidders to consider this approach.

- **At Christmas and New Year periods**

The question of Christmas period, and particularly Boxing Day, services should be considered carefully. Boxing Day shopping is now common, and yet there are few railway lines operating.

- **During the Summer Period**

It is recognised that the economics of railway operation no longer support the availability of spare rolling stock to run additional summer holiday services, or to strengthen timetabled services. Nevertheless, opportunities for doing so, perhaps through the spot-hire of stock from private companies, should be considered if there appears to be an economic case for doing so.

- **For students travelling to local schools**

Should be considered where local demand exists.

- **To special events**

The key events for the County are:

- Download Music Festival, typically held in June at Donington Park
- Race events at Donington Park
- Sporting events in Leicester – football, rugby, cricket and horse racing throughout the year.

There are also a number of cycling events which attract high numbers of people travelling by bike, and flexible passenger accommodation would be useful at these times.

- **On journeys where interchange is poor**

East Midlands Airport lies in Leicestershire and accessibility to and from there by rail is therefore important. East Midlands is the main airport for businesses in the region, followed by Birmingham Airport, and it is worth noting that considerable expansion and increased employment is planned at East Midlands Airport over the next few years, including the new Roxhill Freight Terminal.

Although East Midlands Airport is close to East Midlands Parkway station on the Midland Main Line, access to and from the airport at this location is perceived to be poor, with no more than an hourly taxi link that fails to provide a convenient interchange with the somewhat irregular train service. Recent studies have shown that significant improvements could be secured by recasting the train service into a more regular and frequent pattern, and improving the road links to the standards at other similar airport interchange points. The partnership ask that the bidder looks specifically at measures to maximise the potential of East Midlands Parkway as an access to East Midlands Airport, as well as improving links to other airports important to the East Midlands economy such as Birmingham and Luton.

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

Leicester and Leicestershire have poor rail connectivity to key regional economic hubs, impairing their competitiveness and the rate of economic development. The Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy (L&LRS) identifies as a key priority the need to improve radically fast connectivity to key regional and national centres. As part of the work underpinning the L&LRS, the partnership tested the Gross Value Added uplift that could be achieved by addressing some of these weaknesses.

The advent of a new East Midlands franchise, with associated commitments to train services and a rolling stock strategy, presents a key opportunity to address some of these weaknesses.

The partnerships ask therefore from bidders for the East Midlands franchise is as follows.

An hourly service between Leicester and Manchester. This was forecast to stimulate an uplift in Leicester and Leicestershire's economy of £9.1 pa GVA. There are various ways this service proposal could be delivered, and careful analysis by bidders will be required to assess pathing and routing options through the East Midlands, Hope Valley and into Manchester. For example, the Hope Valley line is being resignalled, creating more capacity on this route, and there are a number of different routes available between New Mills and Manchester Piccadilly, and between Leicester and Chesterfield. The best journey time would be achieved by routing this service via Dore South curve, but other scenarios could include extension of a London-Sheffield train to Manchester, or diversion of the Liverpool-Norwich train as suggested in question 15.

An hourly service between Leicester and Coventry. Delivery of this is dependent on the completion of the Le Nuckle infrastructure project at Nuneaton, which is being actively pursued by Leicestershire and Warwickshire Local Authorities, LLEP and Coventry and Warwickshire LEP, in collaboration with Midlands Connect. The role of the franchisee will be to support this development and commit to engage actively in plans to introduce the associated operation. The partnership recommends that the franchise bid includes a priced option for the operation of a regular interval Leicester – Coventry service. The service could be extended north to Nottingham. The most recent business case for this project forecast a BCT of over 3:1.

The potential of this route to deliver a regular service between the East Midlands and the Thames Valley, opening up an entirely new market for rail travel, should also be explored.

Regular links to Leeds and the North. This was forecast to stimulate an uplift in Leicester and Leicestershire's economy of £6.4 pa GVA. This could be achieved by extending some of the existing London, Leicester, Derby, Sheffield services to Leeds, subject to the availability of paths north of Sheffield, and the capacity of Leeds station. Another approach would be a "code-share" with Northern Railway to enable the extension of their Leeds-Nottingham service to Leicester.

Reduced East-West Journey Times, both between Birmingham and Leicester, and east of Leicester to Cambridge. This could be achieved through service enhancement or through new rolling stock with better acceleration. Enhancing local rail connectivity to destinations in the West Midlands would also benefit residents and businesses in the South West of the County by providing improved access to longer distance services on the West Coast Main Line and the HS2 western leg.

Our expectation is that there would be a minimum of 3 trains per hour to key destinations from Leicester with an average journey speed of 60mph, to equal car travelling times. Train services should be starting from Leicester at or before 06:00 and run until at least 22:00, or longer if the market demands. Airport services need to be timed appropriately for the needs of passengers and staff, bearing in mind that many morning services require check-in between 05:00 – 07:00.

The County Council will continue to work with neighbouring authorities to seek opportunities to improve services and stations on the Poacher Line, which serves Bottesford. Active engagement from the new operator will be expected in developing these opportunities further.

Question 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?

While this route lies outside Leicestershire, the partnership supports Nottinghamshire's position on reopening the line to passenger services.

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

The partnership consider that a strategic objective for the new East Midlands Rail Franchise is to support the continued drive for economic growth across Leicestershire by improving connectivity already identified as poor. Improved connectivity to airports, including Birmingham, East Midlands, Luton and Stansted, forms a key element in this strategy. However, the economic stimulus provided by fast journey times between Leicestershire and London outweighs the benefits of stopping more long- distance services at Luton Airport Parkway.

Question 13. Would you like additional fast trains 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?**

Maintaining most Leicester – London journey times at under 60 minutes start to stop is our priority. While improved connectivity to airports, including Luton, is also important, this should not be at the expense of extended Leicester – London journey times, nor to the detriment of journeys to and from other locations along the Midland Main Line. In this context, the improved connection opportunities available at Kettering and/or other stations as a result of the enhanced outer suburban services to Corby should not be overlooked.

As a general principle, the partnership are keen to see that journey time targets are met through improvements in rolling stock and infrastructure investment, rather than by removing station stops.

The partnership do not see why additional stops at Luton Airport Parkway should, by themselves, result in a reduction in freight capacity or frequency, as no additional train paths would be required by this proposal.

Question 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?

Although East Midlands Airport is close to East Midlands Parkway station on the Midland Main Line, access to and from the airport at this location is poor, with an hourly taxi link between 05:20 (06:00 Saturdays and Sundays) and 19:00 daily, seating only 6 people. Combined rail/taxi fares are not available.

The rail timetable currently features all arrivals and departures to both north and south within an 18-minute window in each hour. Despite this, the taxi service fails to provide a convenient interchange in either direction, and actually contrives to miss some departures by a few minutes. The role of this station as an airport station – one of the reasons it was built – is not being fulfilled.

Improvements are needed to the train calling pattern, service hours, interchange and passenger information. This becomes even more important as the employment on and around the airport site increases.

On timetabling, for example, significant improvements could be secured by recasting the train service into a more regular and frequent pattern, and improving links by road to the standards at other similar airport interchange points. The current southbound timetable from East Midlands Parkway, including the timings of the taxi link, is shown below:

			TAXIBUS		TAXIBUS
Sheffield	xx:49				
Derby	xx:21				
Lincoln				xx:36	
Nottingham		xx:32		xx:36	
East Midlands Airport (dep)			xx:30		
East Midlands Parkway (arr)	xx:34	xx:42	xx:45	xx:49	
East Midlands Parkway (dep)	xx:35	xx:43		xx:50	xx:00
East Midlands Airport (arr)					xx:20
Loughborough	xx:42			xx:58	
Leicester	xx:52	01:59		xx:23	
London St. Pancras	xx:59	03:14			

Five trains per hour pass through East Midlands Parkway; two London – Sheffield, two London – Nottingham and one Leicester – Lincoln. The partnership suggest swapping the EMP stop between the two Sheffield services in order to give a more even spread of departures, as shown below.

Alternative timetable:

Sheffield	xx:29		
Derby	xx:00		

Lincoln			xx:36
Nottingham		xx:32	xx:36
East Midlands Parkway	xx:14	xx:43	xx:50
Loughborough			xx:58
Leicester	xx:30	xx:59	xx:23
London St. Pancras	xx:37	xx:14	

The partnership would also wish bidders to be encouraged to develop a more integrated service, working with the airport, to provide better and more frequent interchange, through-ticketing and joined-up passenger information.

The importance of Stansted and Birmingham Airports to the region are also recognised, and we would support proposals to improve links to these strategic hubs, particularly reduced through journey times to Stansted.

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

The Liverpool – Manchester – Sheffield – Nottingham – Peterborough – Norwich route was developed over a period of time from the combination of several local services, and has remained substantially unchanged for several years. The time might, therefore, be right for a review of the relative value of this through service against a recast service pattern.

One of the key priorities in the L&LRS is for a regular Leicester – Manchester service as noted in question 10. One way this could be achieved would be to divert Liverpool – Norwich services from Nottingham to Leicester, with the eastern leg replaced by a connecting Nottingham – Norwich service. While this would not meet our aspiration to minimise overall journey times by running via Dore South curve (reversals at both Nottingham and Sheffield would be required), it could be seen as an interim stage if an additional path on the Midland Main Line through Chesterfield cannot be found, and would also give an opportunity to improve links to East Midlands Airport via East Midlands Parkway station.

A feature of cross-country routes such as Liverpool – Norwich is that there tend to be relatively few through journeys over the whole length of the route, most demand being over shorter sectors with a high turnover of passengers at principal intermediate points. If this is the case at Nottingham, and convenient connections to and from the east are maintained for through passengers, it is possible that the value of completely new links to and from Leicester would outweigh the value of the existing through services to and from East Anglia. In this context, the GVA value of £9.1million per annum for a direct service between Leicester and Manchester should be noted.

Even if such changes do not prove to be viable, improved rolling stock should be considered for the route. The existing class 158 diesel units, while certainly not the worst stock, are considered increasingly inappropriate for what is, and will remain, essentially a long-distance intercity-type operation, and, particularly when operated in 2-car formation, frequently inadequate in capacity terms.

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

The partnership commissioned an extension of the GVA model used for the Leicester and Leicestershire Rail Strategy in order to assess the economic impact of the proposed change. This was because, intuitively, direct services to Cambridge and Stansted seemed to be more important to the partnership's economy than to Norwich.

The GVA results show that the swap of destinations in East Anglia to give a Liverpool-Stansted and Birmingham-Leicester-Norwich would have **a negative impact on Leicestershire's economy of £794K pa GVA.**

Looking at the impact of the proposed change across the whole of the services groups and for all economies excluding Liverpool and Manchester shows that the changes would result in **a negative impact of £2,339K pa GVA.** This higher figure is driven by the importance of Birmingham's economy and its links to the technology and university centres of Cambridge.

If the economies of Liverpool and Manchester are included the overall effect of the proposal is broadly neutral, despite the relatively large distances between these places and East Anglia.

Therefore, the partnership do not support the proposal because of the negative impact of the suggested change on Leicestershire's economy. Our view is strengthened by analysis described above that shows that the overall impact on the economies of the East and West Midlands taken as a whole (the area covered by Midlands Connect) would be also be negative.

Question 17. Are you in favour of these route changes?

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

The partnership's views on the future of the Liverpool – Norwich service are described under question 15 above, and our position on the Birmingham – Stansted service is stated under question 16.

Through services between Birmingham and Nottingham via Leicester were withdrawn in 2004. Restoration would provide new and potentially valuable through journey opportunities between the West Midlands and East Midlands Airport, Nottingham and Lincoln. Such a link could be achieved, perhaps without additional rolling stock, by linking the current local Birmingham-Leicester and the Leicester-Lincoln services. This would, however, also require alterations to the franchise boundaries to bring the through service under one operator, as Birmingham – Leicester is currently operated by Cross Country and Leicester – Lincoln by East Midlands Trains.

A more radical suggestion would be to re-route the existing Cross-Country Cardiff – Nottingham service to run via Leicester instead of via Derby as now. This would provide a second fast Birmingham – Leicester service, increasing the frequency on this section to 3 trains per hour to cater for growth, in accordance with our aspirations, and providing an entirely new through service between South Wales and the East Midlands. Alternatively, the hourly “local” Birmingham – Nottingham service, also currently operated by Cross Country, could be diverted via Leicester.

Wilnecote, Tamworth and Burton-on-Trent would of course have a less frequent service, and it would not be easy to replace the diverted trains at these locations. However, some advantage in terms of timetable reliability, or additional capacity for new services, might be gained by releasing a train path on the already heavily subscribed Birmingham – Derby route. The move would reduce frequency between Derby and Nottingham to 2 trains per hour, but the third train could be restored by extending the Crewe – Derby service to Nottingham.

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

The partnership believes the Birmingham - Leicester - Stansted Airport service should transfer to the East Midlands franchise from Cross Country. This would enable better integration with the Liverpool-Norwich service, support bidders in developing a regional rolling stock solution, and enable development of the service focussed on cross-regional travel.

As noted above, combination of the Birmingham – Leicester and Leicester – Lincoln services would require both to be operated by one Train Operating Company (TOC), either Cross Country or East Midlands Trains.

A diverted Cardiff – Leicester – Nottingham service would more logically continue to operate under the Cross-Country banner, given that EMT would have no interest in operating south and west of Birmingham. However, if the service were to be provided by diversion of the Birmingham – Nottingham “local” train, a case might be made for transfer to East Midlands to unify operations between Birmingham and Leicester under a single TOC.

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

This is a matter for Local Authorities in Lincolnshire.

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

The “door-to-door journey experience” is dependent upon a very wide range of factors, including:

- Straightforward and easy access to information about train times, routes, fares and ticket restrictions.
 - Accessible information regarding travel to and from the railway station at both ends of the journey by whatever mode is chosen
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- Ticket sales through a wide variety of outlets, including those remote from railway stations such as websites and remote retail outlets.
- Availability of through ticketing via multiple modes where appropriate
- Information at stations regarding platforming, train running, train formation and the position of reserved and/or unreserved coaches.
- On-train information about stopping points, timekeeping and availability of catering and other services.
- Information regarding onward journeys at the destination station, such as platforming and running of connecting trains, directions to taxi ranks, bus and tram stops, car pick up points and walking routes to major destinations.
- Safety and security both on and off train.
- Station facilities i.e. sufficient secure cycle parking provision at all stations
- On-train comfort and facilities, including availability of seats.
- Delivery of the timetable, i.e. timekeeping and reliability.

Many of these issues are discussed elsewhere in this response.

The partnership believes that for most passengers, reliability is the most important element of service delivery, and where it is poor it adversely affects all other satisfaction sources. Performance data should be measured at all stations, not just at the end of routes. The key point is passenger lateness, not whether a train arrives at destination on time.

Operator performance reporting is an important element of governance as we believe that train operators do respond to reputational issues, and this can drive management behaviour.

When disruption does occur, however, the criteria and procedure for claiming compensation should be easy to understand and simple to implement. We acknowledge that much has been achieved by the rail industry in recent times, particularly through the widespread adoption of “Pay Delay” schemes, but consider that more can be done.

Whatever systems the franchisee eventually adopts, compensation should be in the form of real financial refunds and the use of travel vouchers as compensation should be abandoned.

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

The partnership have categorised our stations in the following way:

Hub station (Leicester)

The highest volume of passengers is handled here and many of them will interchange with other services running from this station. Travellers from outside the county will also interchange here, and due to the numbers of passengers per day, the facilities provided should be of a high standard. The partnership consider that Leicester station is the County’s economic gateway, and expect that the successful franchisee would be an active partner in the development and eventual

implementation of our ambition for a long-term Masterplan for Leicester station and the surrounding area.

Town centre stations (Market Harborough, Loughborough)

Reasonably high volumes of passengers are expected, and some of these will interchange with other services. These stations must provide essential facilities for those passengers awaiting other trains.

The “Access for All” project to improve facilities at Market Harborough has already been subject to delay and Network Rail should be pressed to complete it as soon as possible.

Local stations (Bottesford, Barrow-on-Soar, Hinckley, Melton Mowbray, Narborough, Sileby, South Wigston, Syston)

These serve smaller numbers of passengers, many of whom are commuters, or making leisure trips to other towns and cities inside and outside the county. A local station’s main function is to allow passengers to make their planned trip safely and with minimal waiting time.

See appendix A for our comments on individual stations.

Stations, no less than trains, are central to the passenger experience. They form a vital link in the end-to-end journey, facilitate connections between the railway and other modes of transport, provide economic gateways into the city centre and connect the railway with the surrounding community and the local environment.

The partnership support the development Travel Plans to encourage the use of rail services and public transport generally, and urge that Station Travel Plans are developed jointly with local authorities, who have a shared responsibility for access to the railways via local road and bus networks. The partnership would also support other station improvements to improve accessibility to, and the environment at, local stations, but consider that provision of retail facilities as an end in itself is a lesser priority than travel-related facilities. The partnership would not support proposals to develop retail facilities at stations at the expense of improved facilities more directly related to travel.

Railway stations should be designed to be accessible by all modes of transport, and adequate facilities to at least minimum statutory requirements must be provided for people with physical disabilities or who have limited mobility.

- **Bus** –The provision of improved bus timetable and interchange information, and directions to local bus stops and destinations, would provide significant improvements at more affordable cost. For example, Leicester station currently has no obviously visible onward travel bus information on display, despite a number of major routes directly serving the station.
 - There must also be active efforts to promote options like Plus Bus and multi-modal ticketing from the franchisees own ticket platforms in order to enable more integrated “door-to-door” travel options to and from our larger towns, notably Coalville, Ashby and Shepshed, which are not rail
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connected. Specific proposals by bidders to address these issues in partnership with local bus companies and local authorities would be welcomed.

- **Cycling and walking** – safety and security are vital, with well-lit and signposted routes for both modes of travel. Secure cycle parking is also a priority at all stations.
 - **Car parking** – Must be managed to promote it as an option for rail users, but where fees are paid, these should be no higher than nearby town or city centre parking. Ideally, parking at small and remote stations should be free. Car parks must be safe and secure with appropriate lighting and CCTV cover.
 - **Waiting facilities.** Waiting areas should be provided at all stations, to a level appropriate to the size and importance of each station. The partnership has no particular problem with “bus shelter” style facilities at small, unstaffed stations, but they must provide adequate protection from the weather and include seating.
 - **Information.** All stations should have information displays providing timetable, platform and real time train running information, as well as local information regarding local bus stops, directions to taxi ranks and pick-up points, and walking and cycling routes to local centres or destinations.
 - **Security.** Stations should be staffed wherever viable, but where this is not possible, CCTV monitored at a central location should be provided, together with a reliable and visible means of summoning assistance. Where provided, staff need to be visible at times of disruption to advise and direct passengers, and continuously during the evening and at night as it helps to reassure passengers about safety.
 - **Lighting.** Stations should be appropriately lit, with lighting designed to eliminate shaded areas. Wherever possible, isolated and secluded areas in stations should be illuminated, but where this is not possible such areas should be monitored by CCTV.
 - **Access.** Step free access to statutory disabled standards should be provided wherever possible, including at the platform / train interface.
 - **Disability protection.** The needs of disabled passengers or those with limited mobility should be considered at all stages. For example, ticket machines should be sited where there is adequate room to manoeuvre a wheelchair and be operable from a seated as well as standing position. Platform edges should be marked by tactile strips. Train running information should be provided by aural as well as visual means.
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In addition, the partnership want to see the operator and Network Rail working together to address the lack of incentives in the current industry structure to develop and improve stations, as discussed in question 1. We want to see Network Rail and the operator work together, with other stakeholders (such as Local Authorities and LEPs) to develop a vision for stations in the franchise, to create long term improvement plans for stations to achieve that vision, and to assemble funding and project teams for delivery. The station vision should include recognition that stations are community assets, with a role to play as the gateway to the communities they serve as well as the gateway to the railway.

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

The partnership would also encourage the development of Community Rail Groups, as they help to integrate railways into the community and promote local ownership. The successful franchisee should provide ongoing funding for developing relationships with a wide variety of groups.

Other measures include encouraging community use of spare/redundant railway buildings, either for local small businesses, such as shops and pubs, or other community initiatives, including local meeting spaces, and arts or health initiatives. The franchisee might consider making some funding where a commercial case can be made, such as through profit sharing or accounting of costs avoided in repairs and maintenance. The benefits to the TOC are that vandalism and fabric decline to empty buildings can be reduced and safety and security on and around the station is increased.

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

and

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

Our priorities for fares and ticketing are:

- A simple fare structure which is easy for customers to understand
 - An appropriate range of ticket options to give affordable and value for money travel
 - Modest price upgrades for first-class travel, especially when spare capacity is available at off-peak times
 - Freely accessible and easily understood communication of ticket options, pricing and availability, including online information which matches that available in stations
 - A wider range of ticketing offers such as family/group travel
 - Tickets to be available through a wide range of retail channels, including ticket offices/machines, and online/smart ticketing
-

There are also some options which the prospective franchisees should consider as part of the tendering process. These are:

- “Short week” tickets for those who travel less than five days a week
- Discounted tickets for students, trainees and apprentices, or those attending job interviews

The partnership expect smart ticketing to be provided in collaboration with Midlands Connect and to be comparable with smart ticketing options provided by other TOCs and travel providers. Smart ticketing should also be account based to enable easy refunds to be credited to passengers where required.

Station barriers should be capable of recognising all types of tickets, such as ITSO smart media, mobile and paper tickets, QR codes etc.

Where more than one operator offers competing services on the same or alternative routes (for example between London and Birmingham New Street) lower fares may be offered at the expense of ticket inter-availability between the operators. While this results in some disadvantage to passengers in terms of service frequency and choice, we recognise that it is an inevitable result of competition and does have the advantage of encouraging a wider range of discounted fares.

There is a perception locally that fares to and from Leicester are more expensive than fares to and from other centres of a similar size or distance from London. The analysis below supports this view. The partnership would wish to see bidders address this imbalance.

Journey to London from	Miles	Open Single	Approx. rate per mile	Off Peak Single	Approx. rate per Mile
LEICESTER	99	£83.50	£0.84	£59.50	£0.60
Rugby	82	£67.50	£0.82	£42.00	£0.51
Coventry	94	£77.00	£0.82	£48.30	£0.51
Nuneaton	97	£67.50	£0.69	£42.00	£0.43
Norwich	115	£65.40	£0.57	£52.10	£0.45
Birmingham	110	£88.00	£0.80	£52.10	£0.47
Grantham	105	£65.00	£0.62	£50.40	£0.48
Bath	107	£95.00	£0.89	£44.70	£0.42
Bournemouth	108	£55.30	£0.51	£51.70	£0.48
Nottingham	123	£86.00	£0.70	£61.00	£0.50
Manchester	183	£169.00	£0.92	£82.90	£0.45

Note. The figures in this table represent a broad indication of comparative fares for journeys to London of a similar distance to that from Leicester, or from cities of similar size and importance, verified by the National Rail website.

Question 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?

The partnership have noted that Virgin West and East Coast have introduced platform indicators showing train formations, with the position of each lettered coach, the proportion of reserved seating in each coach and the availability and position of unreserved coaches. Provided the information is clear, and easily understood by

passengers who may not be familiar with rail travel, this should help to make boarding more efficient, particularly at peak times.

Information about the number of coaches on an approaching train, as currently practised by a number of operators such as London Midland, can be useful in encouraging passengers to distribute themselves along platforms before boarding trains. This is particularly important where trains are formed of a number of units with no intercommunication between them.

Fully pre-booked ticketing is not supported, as it would result in the elimination of one of the great strengths of rail travel, the ability to “turn up and go”. There should always be a proportion of unreserved seating on all trains. Also the policy of allowing seat reservation whilst a train is en route (as per Cross Country Trains) is not supported, as it is unfair to walk on passengers who may already be in the seat that is to be reserved.

On-train displays should be clear and bold in indicating reserved and unreserved seating to avoid as far as possible conflict where passengers are occupying other customers seats, and to ensure the most efficient use of available seating. Measures include a review of seat reservation policy and practice to reduce the impact of “no show” passengers on seat availability, for example by programming reservation displays to revert to “Available” shortly after departure from the station at which the seat is reserved, rather than showing “Reserved” throughout the journey. Several TOCs use displays such as “Available until [station]” or “Reserved from [station]” to make more efficient use of spare seating, and this practice should be more widely adopted.

Other marketing policies might also be usefully reviewed, such as the proportion of first- to standard-class accommodation, particularly in shorter train formations such as the 4-car “Meridians” currently used by EMT, and the availability and cost of first class upgrades on off-peak services.

Onward connectivity announcements and written information needs improvement, including rail connection and access to other public transport modes.

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

Staff need to be visible at times of disruption to advise and direct passengers. Staff visibility is particularly important for evening services as it helps to reassure passengers about safety.

There appears to be a wide consensus that the overall quality of front-line rail staff has improved significantly since privatisation, and this trend should be encouraged to continue. Staff need to be properly informed particularly during periods of disruption, and knowledgeable enough about rail systems and travel to be able to offer well informed advice on their own initiative.

The operator should consider the means by which information is disseminated to on-train and station staff during disruption, perhaps using some form of social media to

hand held devices which can also be used to interrogate central staff regarding alternative travel arrangements or other issues of concern to passengers.

Question 27. How would you prefer the next operator to engage with your organisation?

The partnership expect the new franchisee to be an innovative and forward-thinking company that engages fully with the County Council, City Council, Leicester and Leicestershire Local Enterprise Partnership, the Department for Transport, HS2 Limited and Network Rail in long-term integrated economic and transport planning, including developments that go way beyond the end of the franchise. Railway planning obviously is a long-term activity, and the existing operator is a key participant in this, including in the delivery of the L&LRS.

The key areas in which we anticipate an active engagement are:

- Continuing to press for, and make the case for, full electrification of the Midland Main Line through to Nottingham and Sheffield as originally proposed, to deliver improved journey times and additional capacity.
- Maximising the benefits to Leicester's economy, including reduced journey times, of the new trains and other Midland Main Line projects
- Supporting the development of Le Nuckle project to reintroduce direct services between Leicester and Coventry
- Working with us on developing plans for the Leicester Masterplan project, which will aim to transform land-use and public amenity around the station area, and enhance the station itself
- Planning to maximise the value of HS2, while ensuring that the existing rail network continues to fulfil its vital role in the economic and social life of the region by providing new and improved services consistent with these long term aims.

Whilst the opening of HS2 Phase 2b through Leicestershire to Leeds is not planned until 2033, the process of determining the impact of this on the existing railway has already begun, and will be well-advanced during the term of the East Midlands franchise. For Leicestershire, maximising the value of HS2 achieving the best result means:

- A restructuring of the service on the Midland Main Line after HS2 opens which improves connectivity not only for Leicester and Leicestershire, but brings wider benefits for the East Midlands and the UK as a whole. One of the principal benefits of HS2 is the opportunity it creates to redesign existing services on the classic network using the capacity released by long distance services using HS2.
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- Securing through “classic compatible” direct services from Leicester to destinations in the north via HS2. The journey time reductions available are substantial (up to an hour on many station pairings). If services are provided through Leicester from key economic development areas in the South Midlands, the proposition is substantially strengthened, especially if an alliance with other LEPs and Local Authorities can be achieved, including with Transport for the North, creating a “string of pearls”. Midlands Connect is active in developing a business case for this.

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

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

Please see answers to other Questions above

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

Investment is needed in the railway to tackle existing capacity bottlenecks and barriers to connectivity (such as between Leicester and Coventry), provide electrification, new trains to replace the aging fleet.

Involving communities in the railway secures funds in kind and builds considerable goodwill. Funding sources beyond the rail industry for the right schemes include:

- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Planning Section 106 obligations
- Business Improvement Districts
- Major employers/businesses
- Airports

Examples of investment across the East Midlands are station improvements, access to station improvements, public realm, station car and cycle parking, bus service provision. As described in question 27, the partnership are looking for a forward-thinking operator of the franchise who will work with all parties to progress long term investment in partnership. Funding assembly from sources such as the above is a key part of how we envisage such partnerships working.

The partnership is disappointed that the Government has chosen to withdraw funding from the Midland Mainline by not progressing electrification. This is the sort of scheme, integrated into the existing railway, impacting on existing operations, and of large magnitude, which it is difficult to fund from sources other than Government and Network Rail.

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

Branding

Ideally, we would wish to see long-term branding developed, as this would:

- Promote the bond between the railway and the local community
- Help to reduce cost wastage associated with periodic rebranding
- Recognise the locality of the East Midlands and its place in the country

The partnership feel that branding should reflect the difference between local, regional express and London services, and should play a role in actively promoting and marketing the region.

Branding should cover:

- Stations
- Rolling stock
- Web/electronic/mobile/hard copy information
- Marketing and ticketing
- Company assets
- Customer-facing staff presentation

Where a local service covers one specific route, the branding could reflect this, e.g. the Ivanhoe Line

It would also be appropriate for the branding to work with other public transport modes, as long as this is on a no-profit basis for other operators. Once established, the brand should then pass on to future franchisees, as long as it is clear who the responsible operator is.

Appendix – Leicester and Leicestershire Station Survey

A survey of all of Leicestershire's stations was undertaken at the end of April 2017. The stations were all visited on a weekday outside peak hours and a number of factors were examined. Not all of the stations in Leicestershire run services operated by East Midlands Trains, although they are the operating company with current responsibility for the stations.

The factors examined were:

- Facilities
- Safety and security
- Car parking
- Intermodal exchange
- Signposting and information
- Other

A headline summary of our findings for each station is below.

HINCKLEY

The station is on the Cross-Country Birmingham to Peterborough Line between Leicester and Birmingham New Street and is about 4 miles east of Nuneaton.



Facilities: Manned for at least part of the day. Toilet with key, no catering or retail. Buildings well maintained and there is a modern footbridge and new waiting shelter on platform 2. Wi-Fi available for passengers and a cycle rack on platform 1. The station is fully accessible.

Safety and security: No visible CCTV on platforms. Station is well lit and there is a help point.

Car parking: Reasonable amount of space, but passengers choosing to park for long period at the Tesco's next door to the station is likely to cause issues. Adequate lighting and CCTV.

Cycle parking: 16 storage spaces covered by CCTV

Intermodal exchange: Onward travel information available and a small taxi office outside the station.

Signposting: Adequate, with some onward travel information available.

Other: Some areas of the station buildings are in use by other local businesses, which helps use redundant space. The station area would benefit from some cosmetic landscaping.

NARBOROUGH

The station serves the villages of Narborough and Littlethorpe in Leicestershire. It is on the Birmingham to Peterborough Line about 5 miles (8km) southwest of Leicester.

Facilities: Manned station, with waiting room and small open shelter on platform opposite ticket office. WiFi available for passengers, but no toilet or retail. Platforms are step free, but passengers are required to walk across the level crossing to reach the ticket office.

Safety and security: Manned stations are helpful for passenger perception of safety, and there is visible CCTV on platforms and in the car park.

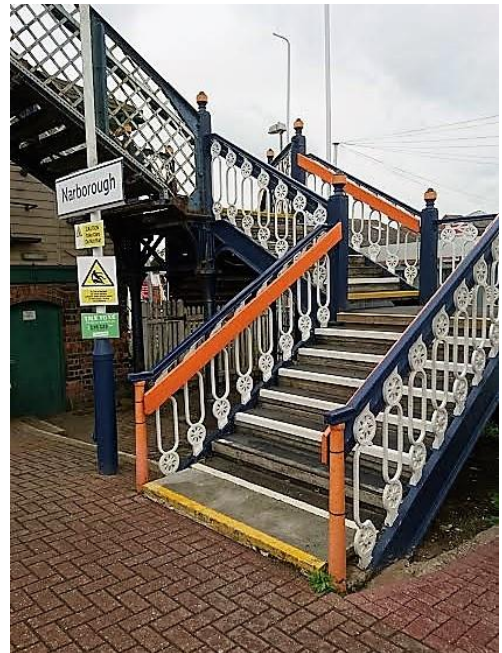
Car parking: Reasonable number of pay and display spaces

Cycle parking: 20 covered storage spaces covered by CCTV

Intermodal exchange: Some onward travel information outside the station

Signposting: Fair

Other: The station buildings and footbridge are in need of some restoration. Picket fences outside are in poor condition, and the area would benefit from landscaping. There is a level crossing outside the station, and a young woman with a pushchair was witnessed attempting to beat the barriers at the time of visiting.



SOUTH WIGSTON

This station serves the suburb of South Wigston, Leicester. It is on the Birmingham to Peterborough line about 3km south of Leicester.



Facilities: Unmanned, so little shelter for passengers other than on platforms. There did not appear to be a ticket machine anywhere!

Safety and Security: CCTV on platforms, but these are split from each other by the railway's layout and feel "remote".

Car parking: There is a car park run by Oadby and Wigston District Council signposted from the station, but it is not adjacent so there could be access issues for the less abled.

Cycle parking: No provision

Intermodal exchange: Some signage to nearby

buses at the station.

Signposting: Could be improved. No indication that the car park was for station customers.

Other: The station needs some general tidying and landscaping, particularly around the platforms.

LEICESTER

The county's principal station was originally opened in 1840 by the Midland Counties Railway, and rebuilt in 1894 and 1978. The frontage of the building is Grade II listed.



Facilities: This is a principal railway station and has facilities commensurate with this, including catering, retail, cashpoints and toilets in platform and station concourse (although concourse toilets were all out of order on the day visited). The station is manned throughout its opening hours. WiFi is

available for passenger use, and there is ample space for the large number of travellers who pass through daily. The station is fully accessible.

Safety and security: CCTV in all principal passenger areas and station staff in evidence. British Transport Police have a regular presence there.

Car parking: There is a large station car park and other municipal car parks nearby, but car park was very full at the time of visiting.

Cycle parking: A Cycle Hub is located underneath the station. It is sheltered and secure, with 222 spaces. There are also mixed type stands. Outdoor covered spaces in main car park. Stands at the station front.

Intermodal exchange: There is a taxi rank/drop off area at the front of the station, and cycle racks available. Numerous bus services pass through the city centre. However, there is little onward bus travel information available at the front of the station.

Signposting: Good, with ample signage from ring road inwards.

Other: The station is in need of some cosmetic improvement to match the listed areas; the fibre glass roof over the platforms is very stained and needs to be replaced or deep cleaned. Some of the 1970s areas need refreshing.

SYSTON

The station is on the Midland Mainline from Leicester to Loughborough and is 167km from London St Pancras. Express trains do not stop here as the platform is on the bidirectional Leicester to Syston slow line.

Facilities: There is a single platform, and a small shelter for passengers. The station is unmanned. No catering or other facilities are provided. There is a ticket machine and swipe card device at the entry.

Safety and security: There is CCTV and a help point for passengers.

Car parking: This is situated near Tesco's and other shops, and there was ample space at the time of visiting.

Cycle parking: 3 cycle racks providing 14 spaces, covered by CCTV.

Intermodal exchange: There was no evidence of cycle racks in the shoppers' car park, and very little information about exchange with bus services.

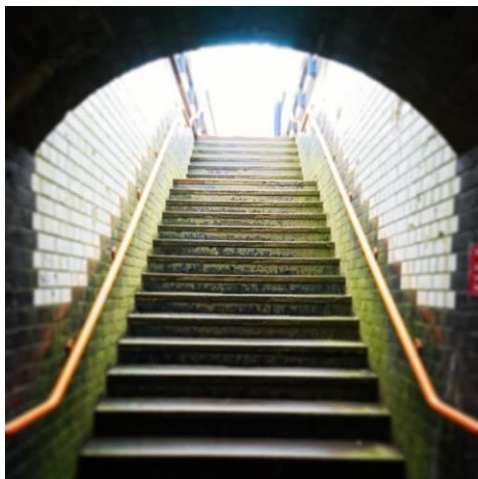
Signposting: Could be improved.

Other: The station is in generally good order and there is a community project in place to maintain the garden.



SILEBY

The station is located on the Midland Mainline 10.5km north of Leicester towards Loughborough.



Facilities: The station is unmanned, but there is a ticket machine on platform 1 and a swipe card point. There are no catering facilities or toilets. The station is not accessible as passengers must climb steps to the platforms and there is no alternative route.

Safety and security: The station is well lit and there is CCTV on the platforms. There is also a help point for passengers' use.

Car parking: There is a free car park but this is some streets away.

Cycle parking: No provision

Intermodal exchange: There is information on forward bus travel at the station entrance.

Signposting: There are no warning signs that the station is not accessible for the less abled.

Other: The access issues need to be addressed urgently. The station would also benefit from some landscaping work.

BARROW UPON SOAR

The station serves the large village of Barrow upon Soar in Leicestershire, and is located on the Midland Mainline between Loughborough and Leicester.

Facilities: The station is unmanned and is of modern construction with open metal platform shelters. There is no disabled access.

Safety and security: The station is well lit and there is CCTV on the platforms. A help point is available for passengers' use.

Car parking: There is no car park.

Cycle parking: 12 storage spaces available covered by CCTV

Intermodal exchange: There is information for onward bus travel, but the lack of car parking (and cycle racks) is a significant issue.

Signposting: There is no indication outside that there is no disabled access.

Other: The station is tidy, but generally drab and unprepossessing, and open shelters are not helpful in bad weather. These would benefit from being replaced, and some landscaping work is needed.



LOUGHBOROUGH

The station is a Grade II listed building which serves the town of Loughborough. It is situated on the Midland Mainline, 20.1km north of Leicester. The station lies to the north-east of the town centre. Train services run from here to London St Pancras.



Facilities: This is a medium-sized town station which is well equipped. There are catering facilities; a shop and toilets, recently installed (2012) ticket barriers and swipe card readers. The station is manned with a large ticket office, and there is a new footbridge with lifts to enable accessibility to both platforms.

Safety and security: The station is well lit and there are CCTV cameras on both platforms. Staffing on the station also help to create a sense of security for passengers.

Car parking: There is a fairly large car park, but it was full at the time of visiting. There is some spare land to the left of the station building, but it is unknown whether this could be used for car park expansion. It may not be possible to add decking as most of the surrounding buildings are low-level.

Cycle parking: 200 storage spaces available. Secure and covered.

Intermodal exchange: There is onward bus travel information and a taxi rank outside the station.

Signposting: Good.

Other: The station is in generally good order but the glass roof would benefit from restoration and/or deep cleaning.

MELTON MOWBRAY

The station serves the town of Melton Mowbray and most of the services are operated by Cross Country as part of the Birmingham to Stansted Airport route. It was refurbished in 2011, including improved disabled access to the barrow crossing.

Facilities: The station has a ticket office which is staffed part time, and help points for times where there are no staff present. There are toilets on platform 1 and vending machines for customers' use.

Safety and security: The station platforms are well lit and there is CCTV.

Car parking: There is a large car park alongside the station, a drop-off area outside.

Cycle parking: 32 storage spaces covered by CCTV

Intermodal exchange: There is information on bus travel outside the station, and opportunity to use cycles or taxis to reach the railway. There is also a bay for a local bus service.

Signposting: Good.

Other: Although the "barrow crossing" has been improved fairly recently, this is still not best practice for the less physically able to cross the line and a better solution for access should be considered.

BOTTESFORD

The station is located on the Nottingham – Grantham line about 15 miles (24Km) east of Nottingham, conveniently located on the north-eastern edge of the village of Bottesford. Services are operated by East Midlands Trains at two hourly intervals to Nottingham and to Skegness via Grantham, where connections are available to East Coast Main Line services towards London, York and the North-East. Despite the relatively infrequent timetable, the station is considered one of the more heavily used on the route, with significant numbers of regular daily commuters to and from Nottingham.

Facilities: The station is continuously unstaffed, and is not provided with ticket issuing equipment, all fare collection being undertaken on-train. A customer help

point is provided on Platform 1 (towards Nottingham) but not on Platform 2 (towards Grantham). There is a shelter on each platform, but no toilets or enclosed waiting rooms. Level access is available from the station forecourt to Platform 1, with access to Platform 2 by means of a footbridge. There is also a barrow crossing, but this may now be disused



Safety and Security: The platforms and pedestrian approaches are quite well lit, but there is no CCTV.

Car Parking: 13 free car parking spaces are provided in the station forecourt, but no designated disabled spaces or pick up / set down facilities for customers with mobility impairments.

Cycle parking: 4 storage spaces. Covered by CCTV

Intermodal Interchange: The nearest bus stops are in the centre of the village, between 6 and 10 minutes' walk from the station. A telephone number for a local taxi firm is displayed on the station.

Signposting: A standard totem sign is erected at the station entrance.

Other: There is considerable scope for improved facilities at Bottesford, particularly disabled access to and between the platforms, passenger information systems and personal security measures.