

Q7 Your Comments

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better passenger and freight rail services. This response is from the East Midlands Branch.

We welcome EMCCA. It would help coordinate planning and increase funding for a region that has fallen behind in transport investment, and help in levelling up the East Midlands relative to the West Midlands. We hope to establish a good working relationship with EMCCA and be a responsive consultative body on transport matters.

HOMES

We agree with the proposals. Being more region-wide, EMCCA should enable good planning practice, promoting new housing on brownfield land, served by high-quality sustainable transport.

SKILLS

Employment and training provision should be well served by sustainable transport. We welcome the references to the Freeport, HS2 and rail, and the EM Development Corporation. Suitable investment in rail including HS2 at EM Parkway, rail upgrades and extensions to NET are essential to maximise the potential.

TRANSPORT

A single Local Transport Plan will promote better integration and more efficient development of the network for all transport modes.

The proposals refer to poor E-W and N-S connectivity, and transport isolation. Devolution offers an opportunity to promote improvement including HS2, main line electrification, and upgrades to the regional railways.

We welcome expansion of NET to support the EM HS2 Growth Strategy. However, NET's potential should extend far wider, to serve the whole Nottingham conurbation plus Derby.

We welcome integrated public transport ticketing and concessionary fare schemes. These could make public transport more accessible to all. Good transport can aid social mobility, bringing employment and training within reach of deprived areas. The Robin Hood Line and NET have both done this, and we see more such opportunities in the region.

As well as the intercity lines crossing the region, there are local and regional routes where rail could do more. There are many market towns where rail should strengthen its market share as quicker than bus but less intrusive than car. However, Derbyshire is not well connected internally by rail, especially between Derby and the Peak District and Buxton.

There are numerous passenger flows between towns in the EMCCA area and Sheffield and Manchester. The EMCCA Mayor should be able to liaise effectively with counterparts in other combined authorities on such cross-boundary flows, to mutual benefit. This would also help towards addressing the poor connectivity between the East Midlands and the North West.

We advocate integration of rail with other modes, eg via multi-modal interchanges. Park + Ride stations could help, eg Saxondale on the Poacher Line near the A46/A52. Information provision is also important, eg live bus departure information at rail stations. Bus franchising and highway

EAST MIDLANDS COUNTY COMBINED AUTHORITY – CONSULTATION

<https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/partnerships/county-deals/county-deals.aspx>

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management are also relevant and we welcome them. We would look to see a more comprehensive bus network irrespective of local authority boundaries.

We would welcome a refreshed Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan.

Freight must not be overlooked, both heavy freight and light goods. EMCCA should promote freight interchanges in the best locations. The EM rail network must also be best able to handle the large volumes of quarry traffic.

We would welcome faster decision-making, eg on Midland Main Line electrification.

EMCCA should work closely with Midlands Connect, EM Councils and TfEM, subject to any changes in their own roles and functions.

We would welcome 'A new rail partnership with GBR'.

CARBON

Rail offers low- or zero-carbon travel, through both electrification and modal shift from road, especially if the electricity is zero-carbon.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Public transport can improve air quality by means of potential zero-pollution at the point of use, plus modal shift from road. Good public transport also promotes mobility for all, reducing social isolation and enhancing both prosperity and wellbeing.