

INTEGRATED RAIL PLAN BRIEFING

On 18 November the Government published its much awaited Integrated Rail Plan for the North and Midlands. This represents a comprehensive £96 billion investment plan covering HS2, Midlands Engine Rail and Northern Powerhouse Rail.

Highlights

- A new HS2 East rail line will be built between Birmingham and East Midlands Parkway; HS2 trains will continue to serve Nottingham and Derby Stations (expected in 2040s)
- Full electrification of the Midland Mainline from St Pancras to the East Midlands and on to Sheffield (expected in 2030s).
- A further study to be undertaken to review the best way to take HS2 on to Leeds (next 3 years).
- A much scaled back station for Toton for local and regional services (no timescale).
- Progression of Midlands Engine Rail included although proposal for a new Birmingham-Coventry-Leicester-Nottingham service does not feature (expected 2035)
- Upgrading of the East Coast Mainline including grade separation of the flat crossing at Newark (expected 2035)
- Upgrading of Hope Valley line between Sheffield and Manchester (expected 2030).
- Contactless ticketing across the Midlands (next 3 years)

This will deliver

- Journey times from Nottingham to Birmingham will reduce to under 30 mins and from Nottingham to London in under 60 mins.
- It will double capacity from Nottingham to London and potentially treble the number of seats to Birmingham.
- Plans for an East Midlands Delivery Vehicle to regenerate the large opportunity sites at Chetwynd, Ratcliffe Power Station and East Midlands Airport and Freeport will continue.
- Robin Hood Line Extension and reopening of the Maid Marian line proposals to be progressed.
- Birmingham area station capacity improvements, helps Nottingham in terms of connections to areas west of Birmingham, South Wales and the Southwest.
- Reduced journey times and increased train frequencies on existing lines including from Nottingham to Lincoln and to Manchester.
- Integrated ticketing with city buses and trams.

Commentary

The announcement of HS2 trains into central Nottingham undoubtedly creates a fantastic opportunity for Nottingham. Being directly on the country's HS2 network is something the City must exploit to attract significant new investment into the City and support City Centre regeneration.

The scrapping of the HS2 Eastern Route north of East Midlands Parkway is disappointing as Nottingham's rail connections to the north are currently so poor.

Regional partners will be disappointed by the downgrading of Toton from an HS2 hub to a regional station.

The electrification of the Midland Mainline is long overdue having been cancelled twice before. It will significantly reduce emissions at Nottingham Station helping to improve City Centre air quality and help with decarbonisation contributing to Nottingham's carbon neutral ambitions.

Capacity remains a concern with HS2 trains proposed to use existing lines north of East Midlands Parkway.

Nottingham Station is known to be capacity constrained so accommodating additional HS2 trains is going to need some additional new capacity including platforms to accommodate 200m high speed trains.

Capacity and electrification works will be very disruptive during the construction phase.

All proposals are still subject to positive business cases and so could yet be cancelled.

The extension of HS2 services into Nottingham will now require a higher level of engagement by the City Council with the Department for Transport and HS2 Limited which will require additional resources.

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Relevant Extracts from the Plan

We will build HS2 from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway¹⁰ (HS2 East)...

about six miles southwest of Nottingham, on the route and line speed as previously planned (East Midlands Parkway is around 3 miles from the previously proposed Toton station site). From here, HS2 trains will continue directly to Nottingham, Derby, Chesterfield, and Sheffield on the upgraded and electrified Midland Main Line. Unlike the original plans, HS2 will serve Nottingham and Derby city centres. We expect trains to run from London to Nottingham in 57 minutes and from Birmingham to Nottingham in 26 minutes – significantly faster than the original HS2 plans, which would have required a change of train at Toton. HS2 trains will run from London to Sheffield in 87 minutes, the same as under the original HS2 plans. We will look at the most effective way to run HS2 trains to Leeds including the most optimal solution for Leeds Station capacity, and start work on the West Yorkshire Mass Transit System.

We will fully electrify and upgrade the Midland Main Line between London St Pancras, the East Midlands and Sheffield.

We will speed up, and decarbonise, services to benefit the whole of the East Midlands, including Leicester, Loughborough, Derby and Nottingham, which would have seen little improvement in city-centre journey times to London under the previous plans for HS2.

We will further invest in local transport at Toton and in the East Midlands.

HS2 will now serve Nottingham and Derby city centres directly rather than with a parkway stop between the two cities at Toton, which would have required passengers for Nottingham and Derby to change trains. The Government will also accelerate transport improvements at Toton, such as a station for local/ regional services, with delivery subject to significant private sector investment – on a 50:50 match-funded basis with the taxpayer – coming forward at the site and developer contributions. We will accelerate plans for an East Midlands Delivery Vehicle covering Toton and other regional regeneration sites. We will look to exploit any linkages with other investment in Nottinghamshire, including the proposals for the Robin Hood Line Extension and reopening the Maid Marian line.

We will improve long-distance connections with HS2 and progress work on options to complete the Midlands Rail Hub (MRH).

New high-speed line from Birmingham to Manchester will enable improved onward connectivity to the South West and Wales. Much of North Wales would also be brought within two and a quarter hours of London, via interchange with HS2 at Crewe (based on the indicative train service). By redeveloping the Midlands Rail Hub business case it focuses on improving links to

Hereford, Worcester, Coventry and regional links to South Wales and Bristol. This could give options for routing more services into Moor Street station, giving towns and communities much better links to the new HS2 station at Curzon Street, next door.

We will upgrade and speed up the East Coast Main Line (ECML)

DfT analysis shows it is unlikely HS2 would be able to serve York and North East England as previously promised without compromising existing services. However, unlike the West Coast Main Line, the East Coast Main Line from King's Cross has significant potential to further improve line speed increases and seat capacity. We will ensure digital signalling is delivered and also upgrade the power supply to allow longer and more frequent trains, increase maximum speeds up to 140mph on in some places, improve the capacity of stations, and remove bottlenecks 14 Executive Summary such as flat junctions and crossings. This will reduce journey times from London to York and Darlington by up to 15 minutes and to other parts of the North East and Edinburgh (subject to stopping patterns) by around 25 minutes compared to today, only a little less than the reductions that would have been delivered by HS2. It will reduce journey times from London to Leeds by around 20 minutes.

We will complete planned upgrades on the Hope Valley Line

between Manchester and Sheffield, which removes a key bottleneck, and makes improved provision for freight trains and, in the longer term, could help facilitate a 3rd fast Sheffield to Manchester service each hour. Elsewhere we are also electrifying the route between the West Coast Main Line and the Wigan – Bolton – Manchester commuter corridor.

We will introduce London-style contactless ticketing across the commuter networks of the Midlands and North

allowing passengers simply to tap in and out with a debit or credit card, ending the need to queue at ticket offices or excess fare windows, automatically charging passengers the best fare, avoiding the confusion that many feel over tickets. Work will begin immediately for our 3-year programme of work, with many benefits being realised during this time. With seamless ticketing and improved customer service essential in attracting passengers back to rail, our investment delivers for taxpayers as well as benefiting over 100 million passenger journeys a year. It will also allow us to work with Local Authorities to unlock fully integrated ticketing with city buses and trams.