



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **Lord Adonis' High Speed Rail gets "maybe two cheers" says TravelWatch East Midlands**

We welcome the plan to bring high-speed rail to more of the UK, but it will have only a peripheral effect on the East Midlands. As the proposed route will link London to Birmingham and then further north, it will leave the still under-capacity Midland Main Line to serve the majority of our Region.

High Speed Rail links in the rest of Europe have found favour with users over travel by air or in cars. HS2 will reduce travelling time for those able to use it, although there will not be direct services for the East Midlands until the second stage, after 2026, when a new station will be provided to serve both Nottingham and Derby

The first stage from London to Birmingham will free up capacity for both passenger and freight on the existing West Coast Main Line route - the busiest line in the country. This will benefit Northampton.

Even if the second stage is built, much of the region will still be linked to London by the Midland and East Coast Main Lines. It's vital for the region that investment to increase capacity on these lines is not postponed. Schemes to allow additional and faster trains on the Midland Line have been put to government, which would cost peanuts in comparison with any High Speed Line. Electrification of the Midland Line, which would give a positive return on investment, is needed now.

It is also important that Government remembers that most people are not travelling to London. Other than to the North-East, HS2 will not improve inter-regional links\*. The UK should aim to emulate France's high-speed services to the capital, but not its neglect of cross-country services.

Arguably, more important than any expenditure on long-distance services is making best use of what we have for more local travel. In the case of rail this means improving access to stations, more rolling stock for local and inter-urban services, and reasonable fares to ensure that they are used.

\* TravelWatch East Midlands is holding a conference entitled "Connecting the East Midlands: Improving Inter-Regional Public Transport" on 15th June in Leicester.

For more information visit our website [www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/events.asp](http://www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/events.asp)

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### **Notes for Editors:**

1. **TravelWatch East Midlands** is an alliance of groups representing the consumer interest across all modes of public transport. The organisation's aim is to represent the interests and concerns of public transport passengers across all forms of transport and to assist local and regional authorities' work towards an integrated and seamless quality public transport network for the East Midlands region.  
Website [www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/](http://www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/)
  
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