

# REMAPPING OF THE CENTRAL TRAINS FRANCHISE

## PASSENGER REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DELIVERY OF RAIL SERVICES IN THE EAST MIDLANDS



**TRAVELWATCH**  
*East Midlands*

**MAY 2006**

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## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is the outcome of a project to determine passenger requirements for the forthcoming changes in the delivery of rail passenger services in the East Midlands.

It presents the results of a survey of passenger groups and other stakeholders and reviews the travel market, before discussing issues on a route by route basis and the proposed allocation of routes to franchises. It also considers generic issues applicable to rail services in the East Midlands as a whole.

Survey respondents were asked to choose their top 10 priorities for the new franchises from a list of 30. This list had been used for similar surveys both in the West Midlands and nationally.

The top priorities identified in the East Midlands are mainly concerned with aspects of good delivery of the train service. *Reliability and punctuality* is the top issue, followed by *the frequency of the trains, connections with other train services, value for money of the price of the ticket and sufficient room on the train for all passengers to sit or stand*. Other important issues are *connections with other forms of transport, the length of time the journey is scheduled to take, facilities for car parking and provision of information about train times and platforms*.

Five of the most important East Midlands issues were also important in the West Midlands and National surveys: *reliability and punctuality, frequency, value for money, connections with other train services and provision of information*. One issue – *connections with other train services* - was important in the East Midlands and West Midlands surveys but not in the National survey. On the other hand *sufficient room for passengers to sit or stand* was rated highly in the East Midlands and National surveys but not in the West Midlands.

Two of the most important East Midlands issues were not in the top nine for the other two surveys. These are *the length of time the journey is scheduled to take and facilities for car parking*. This may be explained by the nature of the train services on

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regional and rural routes and the lack of parking, and its cost, at stations within the region.

Paired choice questions showed strong preference for more investment rather than smaller fares rises, but more government subsidy rather than higher fares. Retaining or increasing stops at smaller stations was preferred to faster inter-urban services, as was improved reliability (trains running and not turned back short of destination) over punctuality.

Selected organisations were invited to make more detailed comments through written submissions, and discussions have been held with regional bodies and other stakeholders and potential bidders for the East Midlands franchise.

Rail in the East Midlands has a strong position in the market for travel to London, aided by lack of airline competition and congested motorways, and daily commuting is significant. Exceptionally, Lincoln suffers from lack of through trains to London.

With the multi-centred nature of the region inter-urban and regional journeys have grown, the market for travel being stimulated by increases in service frequencies on main and regional routes. Recent alterations aiming to improve performance have handicapped longer journeys through splitting of routes. The peak holiday traffic on the Skegness route has not been catered for satisfactorily.

Rail has a limited role in the East Midlands for suburban or 'metro' type journeys but there are useful flows into the cities. For rural journeys rail also plays a modest part, although the services are important to those who use them. Such journeys feature in particular on routes east of Nottingham. Where there has been housing development business is quite brisk, but some stations see only small passenger numbers. Stopping patterns have been static for many years and need to be reviewed.

The East Midlands has poor links to other regions and some useful through services have been curtailed in recent years. There is a possibility that the Liverpool to Norwich route will be split at Nottingham. The Cross Country route through Derby should serve a wider range of northern destinations. In addition there is strong

demand for through trains from Leicester and Derby to Manchester, and Leicester and Nottingham to Leeds.

Route specific issues are discussed at some length, the key issues vary from route to route. On the main line to St Pancras, and from Northampton to Euston, there is the need to cater for growth in commuting but with better peak hour separation of commuting and longer-distance passengers. On the regional routes there is general demand for provision of regular services, which are reliable and have adequate seating capacity, and appropriate levels of service at smaller stations. There are also calls for review of the route structure to restore and increase inter-urban linkages and favour through journeys. On the inter-regional routes capacity at peak times is an issue, as is cooperation between operators where more than one franchise will cover a section of route.

The proposed allocation of routes to franchises is likely to increase, rather than reduce, the number of operators serving Leicester and Nottingham. The Birmingham-Leicester and Birmingham-Nottingham stopping services would be better operated by the East Midlands rather than the West Midlands franchise.

Generic issues affecting the whole railway in the region include connections and linking of services; stations and access; facilities for the disabled and cyclists; network identity and fares structure; passenger representation; train fleet and staff issues; and engineering access and infrastructure development.

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In October 2005 the Secretary of State for Transport announced a revision to the structure of franchised rail services in the Midlands (see Appendix 1). The Central Trains franchise is to be discontinued, with most services in the West Midlands combining with the County services of Silverlink in a new West Midlands franchise. Central Trains services in the East Midlands together with Midland Mainline services will form a new East Midlands franchise. Some routes will pass to a revised Cross Country franchise. These changes are scheduled to come into effect in November 2007.

This report is the outcome of a project to determine passenger requirements for the forthcoming changes in the delivery of rail passenger services in the East Midlands. The project has been carried out by a team of members of TravelWatch East Midlands whose knowledge and experience covers all parts of the region. (TravelWatch East Midlands is the public name of the East Midlands Passenger Transport Users Forum – EMPTUF).

This report discusses the issues and the aspirations of passengers travelling within, and to or from, the East Midlands which the new rail franchises: East Midlands, West Midlands and Cross Country should address. Against the background of steadily improving services and passenger growth, inter-city and inter-urban passengers expect timetable improvements and increases in capacity to continue under the new arrangements. Regional and local passengers on the other hand are concerned to see services retained and adapted to best meet their needs.

The report presents the results of a survey of passenger groups and other stakeholders and reviews the travel market, before discussing issues on a route by route basis, with comments on the proposed allocation of routes to the various franchises. It also considers generic issues applicable to rail services in the East Midlands as a whole.

The East Midlands Government Region is the fourth largest in England and has a population of 4.2 million. It comprises the six counties Derbyshire, Leicestershire,



Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland, and includes the four cities Derby, Leicester, Lincoln and Nottingham plus many other urban centres.

As part of the privatisation process for British Rail, services on the Midland Main Line to London St Pancras have been franchised to Midland Mainline since April 1996, and regional and local services to Central Trains since March 1997. Both operators are part of the National Express Group, as is Silverlink, the franchised operator from Northampton to Euston since March 1997. Services from the South and South West to the North East, via Derby, have been franchised to Virgin CrossCountry since January 1997.

The improved Midland Mainline service introduced in May 1999, with doubling of train frequencies from Derby and Nottingham to St Pancras, and improvements to services between Northampton and Euston, have been rewarded by substantial growth in passenger journeys. Commuting has grown to both St Pancras and Euston. Since the late 1980s improved frequencies on the inter-urban routes, the reintroduction of frequent regular services at intermediate stations, the development of new inter-regional services such as Birmingham-Stansted Airport and Liverpool-Norwich, and from September 2002 the doubling of frequency on the CrossCountry route through Derby, have also led to marked passenger growth.

Local service developments include the Robin Hood and Ivanhoe lines, but splitting of some regional services with accompanying service reductions and gaps in through routes has been a set back. Frequent changes in service patterns have stifled growth. Seaside holiday travel, a traditional railway traffic which has been largely lost elsewhere, has been maintained on the route to Skegness, Britain's fifth most popular seaside resort.

### **3. SEEKING THE PASSENGER VIEW**

As a precursor to this report a survey of stakeholders and passengers was carried out in January 2006, followed by written submissions and discussions with individual stakeholder bodies.

#### **3.1 THE PASSENGER SURVEY**

##### **3.1.1 Methodology**

This survey was carried out in conjunction with the RPC (now Passengerfocus) to seek views on requirements for the new rail franchises for the East Midlands.

The survey form was similar, but with minor modifications, to that used by the West Midlands Passenger Transport Users forum (WMPTUF – now TravelWatch Midlands West) in a survey in their area in November 2005. The survey was also similar to that undertaken nationally by the Rail Passenger Council (now Passenger Focus) in May 2005. We recognised the importance of using a similar form for consistency, and to allow comparative analysis of the results.

The form was circulated to nearly 250 TravelWatch East Midlands contacts – mainly rail user, community, voluntary and social groups and other stakeholders – with Freepost return to the Passengerfocus Manchester office. The form was copied and could also be downloaded from the TravelWatch East Midlands website and returned by email; in all there appears to have been around 300 recipients.

Over 75 forms were returned, a response rate of about 25%. The geographical spread of respondents' addresses, and the routes in which interest was declared, gave complete coverage of the East Midlands network. There was a good response from Lincolnshire and those representing rural lines elsewhere, perhaps reflecting fears that their services might be under threat.

##### **3.1.2. Results from 'top 10 priorities' question**

In this question respondents were asked to choose, in order, their top 10 priorities for the new franchises from a list of 30. The results were analysed by awarding 10 points to the item given priority '1', 9 points for priority '2' and so on.

The results obtained in the East Midlands, West Midlands and National Surveys are summarised in the following sections.

### **3.1.2.1 Results from the East Midlands Survey**

The list of priorities was that used by WMPTUF, reordered into a more logical sequence.

Some respondents misunderstood the question and allocated scores to all 30 items, so their forms had to be excluded from the analysis. Table 1 below shows the scores in questionnaire order and Table 2 the scores in ranked order.

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**Table 1. East Midlands scores in questionnaire order**

Reliability/punctuality (the train running & arriving/departing on time)	421
The frequency of the trains	287
The length of time the journey is scheduled to take (speed)	144
Connections with other train services	266
Connections with other forms of public transport	162
Facilities for car parking	112
Ticket buying facilities	71
The value for money of the price of the ticket	247
Provision of information about train times/platforms	98
Cleanliness of the station	16
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	53
The facilities and services at the station	76
The availability of staff at the station	43
The attitude and helpfulness of the staff at the station	56
How any request for information is handled at the station	12
Personal security whilst using the station	68
The overall station environment	66
Ease of being able to get and off the train	42
The cleanliness of the outside of the train	13
The cleanliness of the inside of the train	93
Upkeep and repair of the train	64
Sufficient room on the train for all the passengers to sit/stand	221
The comfort of the train seating area	52
The space for luggage	58
The toilet facilities on the train	79
The availability of the staff on the train	26
The attitude and helpfulness of the staff on the train	62
The provision of information during the journey	64
Personal security whilst on board the train	69
How train company deals with any delays to the train	92

**Table 2. East Midlands scores in ranked order.**

## REMAPPING OF THE CENTRAL TRAINS FRANCHISE

Reliability/punctuality (the train running & arriving/departing on time)	421
The frequency of the trains	287
Connections with other train services	266
The value for money of the price of the ticket	247
Sufficient room on the train for all the passengers to sit/stand	221
Connections with other forms of public transport	162
The length of time the journey is scheduled to take (speed)	144
Facilities for car parking	112
Provision of information about train times/platforms	102
The cleanliness of the inside of the train	93
How train company deals with any delays to the train	92
The toilet facilities on the train	79
The facilities and services at the station	76
Ticket buying facilities	71
Personal security whilst on board the train	69
Personal security whilst using the station	68
The overall station environment	66
The provision of information during the journey	64
Upkeep and repair of the train	64
The attitude and helpfulness of the staff on the train	62
The space for luggage	58
The attitude and helpfulness of the staff at the station	56
The upkeep/repair of the station buildings/platforms	53
The comfort of the train seating area	52
The availability of staff at the station	43
Ease of being able to get and off the train	42
The availability of the staff on the train	26
Cleanliness of the station	16
The cleanliness of the outside of the train	13
How any request for information is handled at the station	12

Of thirty priorities listed, nine produced scores above 100, four of these being above 200 and one above 400. Fifteen priorities had scores above 50 but below 100, the remaining six had scores below 50.

The results show there are clear issues which are very important to passengers in the East Midlands. Perhaps not surprisingly, the most significant requirement identified is *reliability/punctuality (the trains running & arriving/departing on time)*. This is followed by *the frequency of the trains, connections with other train services, value for money of the price of the ticket and sufficient room on the train for all passengers*

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*to sit/stand.*

Further important issues are *connections with other forms of transport, the length of time the journey is scheduled to take (speed), facilities for car parking* and finally *provision of information about train times/platforms.*

Most of the top priorities are connected with aspects of good delivery of the train service. Value for money also rates highly. Some of the topics with relatively low scores, such as *availability of staff* and *ease of getting on and off the train*, would nevertheless be highly important to particular groups of passengers such as those with disabilities or those with a large amount of luggage or accompanied by small children.

### **3.1.2.3 Comparison of results: East Midlands and West Midlands surveys**

The same thirty priorities were also listed in the West Midlands survey. In order to facilitate comparison the top score in the West Midlands survey was assigned the same value as the top score in the East Midlands survey and the other scores recalculated, or normalised, in the same ratio.

Of the normalised West Midlands scores eleven were above 100, three of these being above 200 and one above 400.

The nine top scoring requirements are shown in Table 3.

### **Table 3. Top scores in West Midlands Survey**

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<b>Reliability/punctuality (the trains running &amp; arriving/departing on time)</b>	421
<b>The value for money of the price of the ticket</b>	292
<b>The frequency of the trains</b>	236
<b>Connections with other forms of public transport</b>	202
<b>Provision of information about train times/platforms</b>	187
Connections with other train services	187
Upkeep and repair of the train	133
Personal security whilst using the station	129
How train company deals with any delays to the train	129

The top five requirements in the West Midlands, shown in bold text in Table 3, also came within the top nine for the East Midlands.

- Reliability/punctuality was the only item to score above 400 in the West Midlands, the East Midlands and the National surveys.
- *The frequency of the trains* was third in the West Midlands and second in the East Midlands
- *The value for money of the price of the ticket* was second in the West Midlands and fourth in the East Midlands
- *Connections with other train services* was sixth in the West Midlands and third for the East Midlands

Three requirements in the top nine for the East Midlands did not appear in the West Midlands top nine:

- *Sufficient room on the train for all passengers to sit/stand*
- *The length of time the journey is scheduled to take (speed)*
- *Facilities for car parking*

The higher scores for the first two in the East Midlands may be explained by the nature of train travel on regional and rural routes. Journeys can be crowded over longer distances, and are relatively slow compared with inter-city routes and relatively lengthy compared with urban services.

The lack of free car parking and its scarcity in the East Midlands compared with the West Midlands may also have contributed to the higher score given to this in the East Midlands results.

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**3.1.2.4 Comparison of results: East Midlands and National surveys**

The same thirty priorities were also listed in the National survey. In order to facilitate comparison the top score in the National survey was again assigned the same value as the top score in the East Midlands survey and the other scores recalculated.

Of the ‘normalised’ National scores seventeen were above 100, one of these being above 200, one above 300 and one above 400. Nine scores were above 50 but below 100, and four below 50.

The nine top scoring requirements are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Top scores in National Survey**

<b>Reliability/punctuality (the train running &amp; arriving/departing on time)</b>	421
<b>The value for money of the price of the ticket</b>	316
<b>The frequency of the trains</b>	226
<b>Provision of information about train times/platforms</b>	177
<b>Connections with other forms of public transport</b>	174
<b>Sufficient room on the train for all passengers to sit/stand</b>	162
The availability of staff at the station	162
Ticket buying facilities	159
Upkeep and repair of the train	150

The top six requirements nationally, shown in bold text in Table 4, also came within the top nine for the East Midlands.

- *Reliability/punctuality* was the only item to score over 400 in both surveys
- *The frequency of the trains* was third nationally and second in the East Midlands
- *The value for money of the price of the ticket* was second nationally and fourth in the East Midlands

Three questions in the top nine for the East Midlands did not come in the national top nine:



- *Connections with other train services* (third in the East Midlands)
- *The length of time the journey is scheduled to take (speed)*
- *Facilities for car parking*

The higher scores for these in the East Midlands may again be explained by the nature of regional and rural services, where changes of train have become more necessary in recent years and journeys are relatively slow compared with inter-city routes, together with the cost of car parking and its scarcity.

#### **3.1.2.4 Conclusions from comparing survey results**

Figure 1 shows the results of the two other surveys compared with those for the East Midlands survey.

- The East Midlands results gave a score of over 100 to nine requirements whereas in the National survey seventeen scored over 100. The West Midlands had eleven requirements scoring over 100. This suggests that the important issues in the East Midlands are more clearly defined than in the other surveys.
- *Reliability/punctuality* is the most important issue by far in all three surveys.
- Five of the most important East Midlands issues (all in the top nine) were also important in the West Midlands and the National surveys:
  - *reliability/punctuality (the trains running & arriving on time)*
  - *the frequency of the trains*
  - *the value for money of the price of the ticket*
  - *connections with other train services*
  - *provision of information about train times/platforms*
- One issue was important in the East Midlands and West Midlands surveys but not in the National survey:
  - *Connections with other train services*

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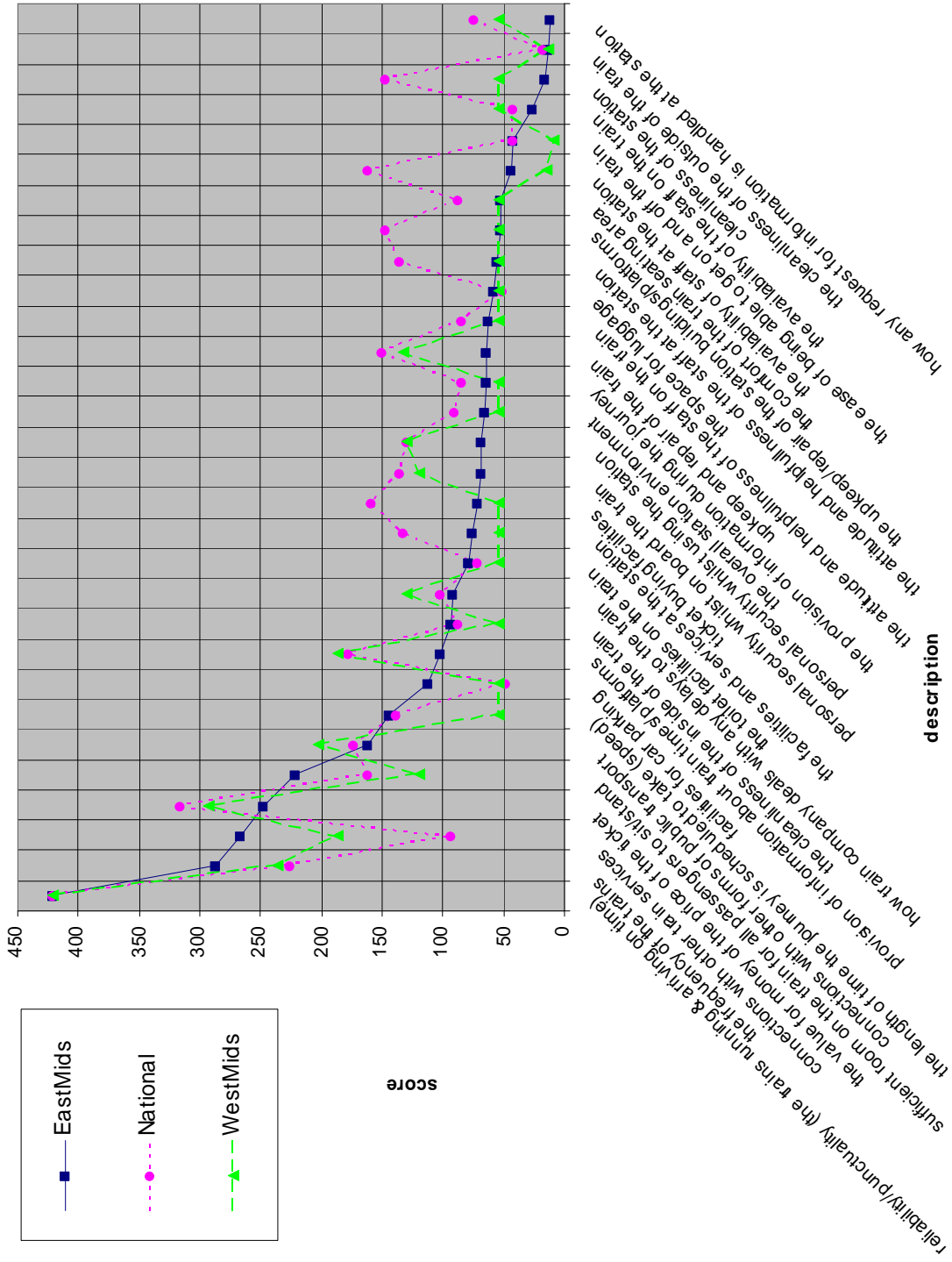
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- One issue was important in the East Midlands and National surveys but not in the West Midlands:
  - Sufficient room on the train for all passengers to sit/stand
  
- Two of the most important East Midlands issues were not in the top nine for the other two surveys:
  - *the length of time the journey is scheduled to take*
  - *facilities for car parking*

This may be explained by the nature of the train services and parking facilities within the region.

FIGURE 1 – EAST MIDLANDS COMPARED WITH NATIONAL & WEST MIDLANDS

Figure 1 - East Midlands compared with National & West Midlands results



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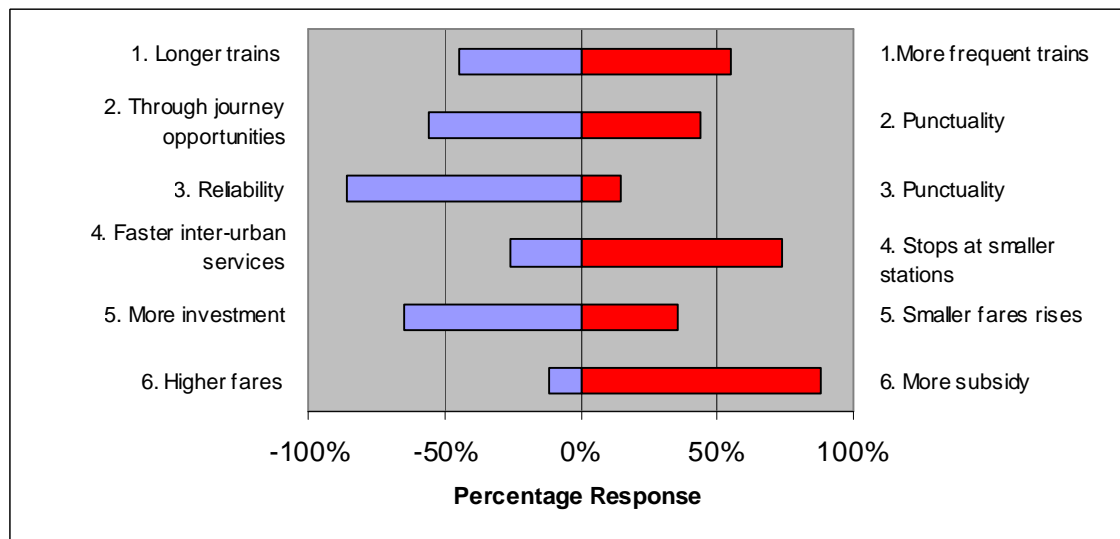
**3.1.3. Results from ‘paired choice’ question**

In this question respondents were asked to express preference for one or other of two options. The paired options were again those used by WMPTUF, but ‘inter-urban’ was substituted for ‘inter-city’ to reflect the situation in the East Midlands of a large number of urban centres, and ‘improved stations’ was added to ‘new trains’. An additional choice was added covering reliability versus punctuality, in view of known concerns about this issue.

Figure 2 shows the scores. A few respondents indicated equal preference for both choices of a pair, in this case half a point was awarded to each. Others chose not to indicate any preference, in which case no points were given.

**FIGURE 2 THE PASSENGER SURVEY DIFFICULT CHOICES**

**RESPONDENTS were asked to consider pairs of options and to INDICATE a PREFERENCE FOR ONE OR OTHER**



There was a strong preference for more government support (which might have been

better expressed as ‘higher taxes’) over higher fares, although individual respondents wanted ‘both’ or ‘neither’, or the same subsidy as now but better spent. There was a similarly strong preference for improved reliability over punctuality, perhaps reflecting recent unhappy experiences on the regional routes through cancellations and emergency timetables.

A firm majority wanted more investment rather than lower fares rises, and stops at smaller stations rather than faster inter-urban services. The latter question was possibly misinterpreted, as some of those respondents supporting stops at smaller stations represented such places as Loughborough and Market Harborough which are logically ‘urban’. In addition the ‘smaller’ category, which was meant to embrace suburban and rural stations, drew firm support from rural respondents.

There was a slight preference for more frequent trains over longer trains, and for through journey opportunities over punctuality. The responses here probably reflect the widely differing service levels and usage found on routes in the East Midlands, and varying passenger requirements – those on longer distance journeys want through trains, those on a short journey want punctuality.

### **3.1.4. Other comments**

Respondents were invited to use three blank lines on the form to indicate what specifically they, or their group, would like to see the new franchises deliver for rail services in their area. This led to a large number of comments, but in many cases these can be grouped.

General requirements mentioned by several respondents tend to reflect the ‘priorities’ scores:

- Better timetables – evenly spaced services, later evening services.

- Connections train/train and train/bus.

- Better inter-regional links – Leeds, Manchester, seamless longer journeys.

- Value for money, simpler fares structure.

- Performance and punctuality.

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Adequate seating capacity.  
Information, especially when trains are delayed.  
Car parking.  
Provision for cyclists.  
Disabled access.  
Comfort and cleanliness.  
Personal security.  
Longer staffing hours at stations.

Specific issues mentioned by one or more respondents include:

Restoration of Crewe-Nottingham service.  
Better connections at Grantham.  
Longer trains to Skegness at busy times.  
Better services in Lincolnshire.  
New stations, especially East Midlands Parkway and Ilkeston.  
Investment in Nottingham station and signalling.  
More frequent Nottingham suburban trains.  
Trains from Matlock to Nottingham.  
Later trains Sheffield-Leicester, every day.  
More stops at South Wigston.  
Better connections for Coventry at Nuneaton.  
Better rolling stock Leicester-Birmingham.  
Less replacement of trains by buses.  
Less Saturday engineering work.  
Regional railcard.

### 3.2. WRITTEN SUBMISSIONS

Several organisations, in responding to the questionnaire, indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to make more detailed comments. They were invited to make a written submission not exceeding three pages in length, and most points made have been summarised in this report at the judgement of the project team. Some

issues and ambitions have been excluded as they were unlikely to progress during the lifetime of the new franchises. However, the full texts of all submissions have been retained in accessible form.

Bodies making written submissions include the Cyclists' Touring Club, Railfuture East Midlands, Railfuture Lincolnshire, South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association (SELTA), Transport 2000 Derbyshire & Peak District, Transport 2000 Nottinghamshire.

### **3.3. DISCUSSIONS WITH STAKEHOLDERS**

The project team and individual members have held discussions with stakeholders including the East Midlands Regional Assembly (EMRA) as well as the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA). Particularly useful have been meetings of the East Midlands Rail Forum which comprises local authority transport officers from throughout the region and operator representatives.

This report has been informed by, and is consistent with, the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands, which addresses regional public transport networks and linkages to other regional centres.

Discussions have also been held with potential bidders for the East Midlands franchise.

## **4. THE TRAVEL MARKET**

### **4.1 INTER-CITY TO LONDON**

With virtually no airline competition and growing motorway congestion, rail in the East Midlands has a strong position in the market for travel to London from Sheffield, Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and intermediate stations, also from Northampton. Connections at St Pancras for Europe from 2007 and Kent from 2009 will further strengthen rail's position. Heathrow Airport can be accessed by direct Underground service from St Pancras or by Heathrow Express via Paddington; Gatwick Airport by changing onto Thameslink (now first Capital Connect) services; and Luton Airport through Luton Airport Parkway station.

Daily commuting to London is significant on the Midland Main Line, with especially heavy flows from Leicester southwards, although at present only about one in nine passenger journeys on the route is a commuter journey. Commuting is also strong from Northampton to Euston. Numbers on both routes are likely to increase further with planned growth in the towns concerned. Lincoln has no through trains to London despite growing importance as a regional centre and university city, and is reliant on connections to the East Coast main line. These are not always reliable, especially at Newark.

### **4.2 INTER-URBAN AND REGIONAL**

With three cities (Leicester, Nottingham, Derby) rather than one at the heart of the region, and these and many sizeable towns separated by 10-30 miles, rail sees growing usage by inter-urban passengers. This market has been stimulated during the last ten years by the doubling of service frequency on the main line and on some regional routes, with good business between the peaks as well as at commuting times. Nottingham East Midlands Airport is served by bus connections but the proposed East Midlands Parkway station would offer improved access.



North-South on the Midland Main Line intermediate travel by passengers making inter-urban journeys is significant.

On the regional routes, mainly East-West services, recent alterations in an attempt to improve performance have created gaps in services and have increased the number of changes necessary on through journeys. Where a change of journey is necessary connections are often poor. For example: splitting of the Crewe-Derby-Nottingham-Skegness route into Crewe-Derby and Nottingham-Skegness has imposed one or two changes for through passengers, reduced service frequency Derby to Nottingham and worsened connections at Grantham. The Skegness route sees strong peak traffic on summer Saturdays and Bank Holiday weekends and increasing business out of season with the growth in short breaks.

In future, some regional services will be provided by the Cross Country and West Midlands franchises. It is important that these complement services provided by the East Midlands franchise, for example between Nottingham and Derby and Birmingham and Leicester, to give a balanced inter-urban timetable.

### **4.3 LOCAL-SUBURBAN**

Heavy rail has a limited role in the East Midlands for truly suburban or 'metro' type journeys from small stations up to about 15 miles distant into major centres, although many journeys on the inter-urban routes are suburban in character. There are significant passenger flows from the Robin Hood line and from the Derby line into Nottingham, from the Derwent Valley line into Derby, and moderate business from stations to the east into Nottingham, from west and south into Lincoln, from the Stoke line into Derby, and on the Ivanhoe line into Leicester and Loughborough. Poor service reliability has been a handicap especially on the Robin Hood and Derwent Valley lines. Many potential commuting journeys are frustrated by infrequent services at local stations and/or lack of through services or acceptable connections. For example, some of the stations between Nottingham and Bingham/Newark have potential providing they are given a better service.

#### **4.4. LOCAL-RURAL**

Again, rail plays a modest role for journeys between small communities and between them and neighbouring towns. Nevertheless, for those who use them the train services are very important. Such journeys feature on the lines mentioned above and in particular on the Lincolnshire lines; most of the small stations in the new East Midlands franchise area are east of Nottingham. Some see only small passenger numbers, but at places such as Heckington and Metheringham where there has been housing development near the station business is quite brisk. Service patterns at some stations have been static for many years, others have been reduced to one or two stops at odd times which appear to serve only to avoid closure formalities. There may be a case for reducing the service at some stations, providing stops are at times which meet local needs, and even closing one or two, in favour of improving the service at neighbouring stations. The nine hour operating day on the Spalding-Sleaford line severely limits the usefulness of the train service on this portion of the Peterborough-Lincoln route.

#### **4.5 INTER-REGIONAL**

Mainly due to railway history and geography, the East Midlands has poor links to other regions. Derby has through services to the North East, South West and South; Nottingham to Cardiff/Hereford, the North West and East Anglia; Leicester only to Cambridge and Stansted Airport. Lincoln has no direct service beyond Peterborough, Sheffield or Doncaster. In recent years Leicester has lost through trains to Coventry, Cardiff and Norwich; Nottingham trains to Coventry, Stoke-on-Trent and Crewe; and Lincoln trains to Birmingham.

The only current inter-regional service to pass to the new East Midlands franchise will be Norwich-Nottingham-Liverpool, although transfer of the Nottingham-Liverpool segment to TransPennine Express is a possibility.

The service from Birmingham to Stansted Airport will in future be operated by the

new Cross Country franchise. It should continue to run at hourly intervals.

Nottingham-Cardiff/Hereford services are also scheduled for transfer to the Cross Country franchise. They should continue to provide a regular half-hourly service between Nottingham, Derby and Birmingham.

Services on the Birmingham-Derby-Sheffield axis provided by the Cross Country franchise should continue to run at half-hourly intervals and serve a wide variety of final destinations.

Manchester and Leeds are two of the most asked for destinations from the East Midlands. There is strong demand for through trains Leicester-Derby-Manchester and for more than the current few trains in marginal time from Leicester and Nottingham to Leeds. Such services, if not specified for the new franchise, could form an enhancement for a franchise bidder to offer.

## 5. ROUTE SPECIFIC ISSUES

The routes are shown as listed in the announcement by the Secretary of State. Before the new franchises come into effect some routes may be reconfigured, as has already happened between Crewe and Skegness in December 2005 and is proposed for the Hereford – Nottingham route in June 2006.

The notes which follow are concerned mainly with issues and aspirations which should be addressed by the specification for the new franchises in the East Midlands. However, in some cases there are aspirations for future enhancements which it may not be feasible or practicable to introduce from commencement of the franchises, but might be implemented during the franchise terms. These are mentioned as appropriate under specific routes, and also listed together at 5.4.

### 5.1 ROUTES ALLOCATED TO THE EAST MIDLANDS FRANCHISE

#### 5.1.1 St Pancras – Derby / Nottingham / Sheffield / Leeds

The present pattern of fast and semi-fast services to London works well and should be maintained. Most fast trains should be non-stop between St Pancras and Leicester.

Journey times by fast services compare badly with those on other inter-city routes and have become extended in recent years. Services could be speeded up by several minutes by making better use of the performance of the HST and Meridian trains; by modest infrastructure improvements; and by removing excessive ‘padding’ from the timetable.

There is a need for better peak hour separation, especially during the evening, of commuting and longer-distance passengers. Many peak hour trains are lightly loaded north of Kettering or Leicester, and Nottingham and Sheffield have virtually no fast trains from London after mid afternoon. In order to provide Chesterfield and Sheffield with faster peak services additional trains should operate via the direct Erewash Valley route.

With growing congestion in the three principal cities some passengers from surrounding areas use other railheads which have developed as important traffic centres in their own right – Long Eaton, Beeston, Loughborough and Market Harborough. Implementation of the proposed East Midlands Parkway station would improve access to London services from south and west of Nottingham. However, this new station should not lead to any significant reduction in services from Loughborough, which falls within the top ten per cent of stations by footfall. (Network Rail has now taken responsibility for East Midlands Parkway from Midland Mainline with completion scheduled for summer 2008).

Short and medium distance regional passengers usefully fill seats which become vacant on trains from London as these unload progressively from Bedford northwards, but revision of the departure pattern from London to give more evenly spaced departures to Derby and Nottingham has led to uneven service intervals north of Leicester.

A regular service from Nottingham, or St Pancras via Nottingham, to Leeds would have the added benefit of providing a much-needed increase in frequency and capacity between Nottingham and Sheffield, which in turn would facilitate the provision of a new station at Ilkeston. Demand for through trains Leicester-Derby-Manchester was identified by the ‘Project Hope’ study carried out by the former RPC Midlands in 2003-04. This need could be met by extension of St Pancras-Derby semi-fast trains to Manchester, at two-hourly intervals.

Key issues:

- Maintenance of the present pattern of fast/semi-fast services.
- Need for faster inter-city services.
- Catering for growth in commuter journeys.
- Better peak hour separation of commuting and longer-distance passengers.
- Implementation of East Midlands Parkway station while maintaining good service levels at Loughborough.
- Earlier first northbound service Mondays to Saturdays.

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- Later last southbound service on Saturdays and Sundays from Sheffield and Derby, at least to Leicester.
- Leicester-Derby / Nottingham services at more even intervals.
- More trains from Leicester and Nottingham to Leeds.
- Provision of through trains from Leicester and Derby to Manchester.

### **5.1.2 Liverpool – Nottingham – Norwich**

About one quarter of passengers on this service from the east travel through Nottingham and would be handicapped by splitting the service. Splitting the service at Nottingham would facilitate better matching of train capacity to passenger numbers at peak times between Manchester and Nottingham, but would increase the already large proportion of trains at Nottingham which terminate there, adding to the existing congestion and capacity problems. These are acknowledged by Network Rail in their 2006 Route Plans.

This route suffers from gaps in the timetable east of Nottingham, crowding at peak times and spasmodic provision of on board refreshment services.

Key issues:

- Maintenance of service through Nottingham, or robust connections at Nottingham.
- Operation of regular hourly services Nottingham-Norwich.
- Provision of adequate seating capacity, especially between Manchester and Nottingham.
- Provision of reliable refreshment service.

### **5.1.3 Matlock – Derby**

This route, the 'Derwent Valley Line', carries significant passenger numbers into Derby (and beyond) and enjoys good community support, but poor service reliability has been a handicap. The journey time of about 30 minutes makes an hourly service hard to resource, so trains are less frequent. Linking with other routes might be beneficial, there is demand for through trains (or better connections) to Nottingham.

### Key issues

- Improved, regular frequency.
- Maintenance of high level of service reliability.
- Linkage with other services.

#### **5.1.4 Crewe – Skegness**

In an attempt to improve performance this route was split in December 2005 into Crewe-Derby and Nottingham-Skegness segments. This has imposed one or two changes and extended journey times for through passengers, reduced service frequency Derby to Nottingham and worsened connections at Grantham. If this pattern is maintained then the new East Midlands franchise will be faced with an enclave on its western fringe which is not linked to any of its other routes!

The route is used primarily for inter-urban journeys, also for local journeys into Stoke-on-Trent, Derby, Nottingham and other centres. There is an urgent need to restore through services beyond Derby, at least to Nottingham. There is also demand for later evening services between Crewe and Derby.

East of Nottingham some trains serve Grantham, with connections to and from the East Coast Main Line (ECML), whereas others run direct between Nottingham and Sleaford. The new Allington Chord allows flexibility, as a train stopping at Grantham no longer conflicts with ECML services. Connections at Grantham with the East Coast Main Line need to be improved, this would be facilitated by reorganisation of the ECML timetable on a 'clock face' basis. Trains avoiding Grantham are particularly valued by day trippers and holiday travellers from Nottingham to Skegness. The balance of trains serving and avoiding Grantham needs to be kept under review.

West of Derby the service is regular, but east of Nottingham stopping patterns are random and have been static for many years. Some stations see only one or two stops per day at odd times which appears to serve only to avoid closure formalities. The communities they serve often have no other public transport and the limited service at such stations should be revised to meet likely passenger needs. Although several

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stations see only low passenger numbers, at places such as Bingham and Heckington where there has been housing development near the station business is quite brisk. Stops should be examined with a view to improving the service at the stations with most potential for passenger growth; it is pleasing to note additional stops at Heckington since December 2005.

The railway has failed to meet satisfactorily the peak demands on this route. Gross crowding due to inadequate train capacity occurs on summer Saturdays, Bank Holiday weekends, when special events take place at Butlins holiday centre, during school half term holidays and on trains used by day trippers. Trains need to be 3 or 4 cars, and a few 5 or 6 cars, at these times.

Substantial numbers of passengers on peak dates travel from beyond Nottingham, and a change there causes inconvenience especially as most passengers travel with substantial quantities of luggage, and many with children and pushchairs. Use of the remote, unsheltered, platform 2 at Nottingham station is a further handicap. A change at Nottingham also worsens journeys for passengers from Lincolnshire to the South and South West via Derby. If the regular service continues to run no further west than Nottingham, then some trains on summer Saturdays should start back from Derby or Leicester. An earlier first departure from Skegness is desirable on winter Sundays.

Key issues:

- Restoration of through service Crewe-Nottingham.
- Later evening services between Crewe and Derby.
- Balance of services serving or avoiding Grantham.
- Stopping patterns at smaller stations east of Nottingham.
- Provision of adequate capacity to Skegness at times of high demand.
- Through trains from beyond Nottingham in summer, especially on Saturdays, and at other holiday periods
- Earlier first train from Skegness on winter Sundays.



### **5.1.5 Leicester – Loughborough – Lincoln**

Since June 2005 this service has incorporated the former Leicester-Loughborough ‘Ivanhoe Line’ stopping service. The Ivanhoe Line receives revenue support from Local Authorities, but following its consolidation into a franchised service and consequent cost savings it should form part of the specification for the franchise and be funded nationally. Between Leicester and Nottingham the service is used mostly for journeys to and from intermediate stations, although perversely trains do not stop at Attenborough or Beeston.

East of Nottingham the route serves inter-urban travellers, and for local journeys into Nottingham and Lincoln. Some trains are limited stop, others call at most stations. Recent timetable changes have handicapped stations such as Collingham, although some calls here are to be reinstated from June 2006. There is not sufficient business to justify both fast and stopping trains to a regular pattern, although this might change with continued growth. In the meantime stopping patterns should be kept under review to favour stations with the most potential while retaining an acceptable level of service at others.

This route might benefit from rearranged linkages. Lincoln trains could start at Birmingham or Crewe, with a self-contained Leicester-Nottingham local service.

Key issues:

- Consolidation of the Ivanhoe Line into franchised services.
- Stops at Beeston and possibly Attenborough.
- Stopping patterns at smaller stations east of Nottingham.
- Linkage with other services.

### **5.1.6 Worksop – Nottingham**

This route, the Robin Hood Line, carries substantial numbers of passengers from Mansfield into Nottingham, with smaller flows from stations to Worksop. It has suffered from periods of poor performance and has lost some passengers between Hucknall and Nottingham since the introduction of the Nottingham Express Transit (tram) system, but others now have the opportunity to transfer to the tram to reach a

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wide range of destinations within the city. Better through ticketing and inter-available tickets would improve integration with NET. With singling of track sections to accommodate NET some trains miss Bulwell or Newstead, with only minor impact on performance. There is a demand for later trains on weekday evenings. With the growth in shopping and leisure activities on Sundays, and longer distance weekend travel, provision of a Sunday service should be considered, at least between Mansfield and Nottingham.

There is an aspiration for Robin Hood Line services to be extended east of Nottingham to Bingham, with provision there of a 'park and ride' facility.

Key issues:

- Operation of regular services, half hourly from Mansfield Woodhouse, hourly from Worksop, plus later evening trains.
- All trains should call at all stations.
- Maintenance of high level of service reliability.
- Better integration with NET (tram) services.
- Provision of Sunday services.

### **5.1.7 Cleethorpes – Lincoln – Newark / Nottingham**

This route provides for inter-urban journeys between Cleethorpes/Grimsby and Lincoln together with connections for London at Newark North Gate. Most passengers travelling from Lincoln to Newark use Nottingham services to Newark Castle. The service between Lincoln and Nottingham is considered under Leicester-Loughborough-Lincoln (above).

The timetable is not clock-face and has unfortunate gaps. Provision of a regular service depends in part on adoption of a clock-face timetable on the East Coast Main Line.

Lincoln has no through trains to Birmingham or London despite growing importance as a regional centre and university city, and is reliant on connections at Nottingham or on to the East Coast Main Line at Newark or Peterborough. These are not always

reliable, especially at Newark. Connections out of trains from London should be held for, say, up to 15 minutes without penalty under the performance regime, in the interests of the majority of passengers. With capacity constraints on the East Coast Main Line, consideration should be given to running trains through to London St Pancras via Nottingham

Key issues:

- Operation of regular services, two hourly from Cleethorpes/Grimsby, hourly from Lincoln.
- Better London service for Lincoln, through reliable connections and perhaps by running trains to and from St Pancras in ‘marginal time’.

#### **5.1.8 Doncaster – Lincoln – Peterborough**

This route provides an infrequent service from Doncaster to Lincoln, providing connections from the north, and an hourly service from Lincoln to Peterborough except that trains only run between Sleaford and Spalding during the middle of the day. There is significant commuting and local travel between Sleaford and Lincoln and Spalding and Peterborough.

The service between Doncaster and Lincoln could be better spaced, preferably at regular intervals which give connections from the north at times when these are not available via Retford or Newark. Planning permission has been sought recently for a station at Finningley to serve the new Robin Hood Airport, but this will require a more frequent train service. Most Doncaster-Lincoln trains now operate as a separate service. They should be reintegrated with Lincoln-Sleaford/Peterborough trains to increase through journey opportunities.

The nine hour operating day between Sleaford and Spalding severely limits the usefulness of the train service on this portion of the route, but it does provide some Lincoln to London connections as an alternative to travelling via Newark.

Key issues:

- Review of service Doncaster-Lincoln.

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- Opening of a station at Robin Hood Airport
- Review of operating hours Spalding-Sleaford.

**5. 2 ROUTES ALLOCATED TO THE WEST MIDLANDS FRANCHISE**

**5.2.1 Birmingham –Leicester**

It is important that Birmingham-Leicester trains complement Birmingham-Standed Airport services provided by the Cross Country franchise to give a balanced half-hourly inter-urban timetable between Birmingham, Nuneaton and Leicester, linking important regional centres. An hourly service should be provided at all other stations, at present Water Orton and South Wigston are served in alternate hours. It is accepted that stops at the proposed station at Coleshill might reduce, or even eliminate, the need to serve Water Orton by trains on the Leicester route.

Key issues:

- Operation of regular hourly service serving all stations.
- Implementation of the proposed station at Coleshill.

**5.2.2 Euston – Northampton**

This route provides for journeys from Northampton to Milton Keynes, Watford Junction and London. There are connections at Watford Junction for Gatwick Airport and Brighton, and (by bus) to Heathrow Airport. The present mix of fast and semi-fast services meets passenger needs and should be maintained. Growth in commuting from both Northampton and the Milton Keynes area is putting pressure on peak hour services, but the platform extensions provided under the West Coast Main Line (WCML) route modernisation scheme facilitate the operation of more 12 coach trains.

Key issues:

- Maintenance of the present pattern of fast/semi-fast services.
- Catering for growth in commuter journeys.

### **5.2.3 Birmingham – Coventry / Northampton**

This route serves Northampton and Long Buckby stations in the East Midlands and caters for regional and local journeys towards the West Midlands. It was once connected to the Euston – Northampton service as a through route, but was split (except for a few peak hour trains) for performance reasons. The service, once half-hourly, has been reduced to hourly outside of peak periods to accommodate WCML works. A half-hourly frequency, preferably with regular trains through to Euston, should be restored as soon as possible. There is heavy peak hour use by commuters, introduction of new trains with lower seating capacity has been a handicap.

The service also provides connections to Crewe and the North West at Rugby. There is a demand for through trains from Northampton to stations to Crewe and beyond, the regular semi-fast trains on the Trent Valley route proposed for 2008 should all serve Northampton.

Travel from Northampton to other East Midlands centres such as Leicester and Nottingham is difficult. There are few direct connections as few main line trains stop at both Rugby and Nuneaton. Travel via Birmingham entails lengthy journeys, travel via Coventry requires changes there and at Nuneaton, and at Leicester, now that the Coventry-Leicester-Nottingham service no longer runs. The proposed Trent Valley semi-fast service should provide regular opportunities to travel direct from Northampton to Nuneaton for East Midlands connections.

Key issues:

- Restoration of regular half-hourly service, with through trains to Euston.
- Catering for growth in commuter journeys.
- Provision of regular service from Northampton to stations to Crewe.
- Provision of services to the East Midlands by connection at Nuneaton.

### **5.2.4 Coventry – Nuneaton**

Although strictly not within the East Midlands this route provides a link for inter-urban and inter-regional journeys. Most passengers travel from beyond Nuneaton, either to Coventry, or to stations to Oxford, Reading and Bournemouth. For many

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journeys this saves time and avoids a change at Birmingham New Street. Trains should be held for say, up to 10 minutes, to maintain connections. The service has suffered major disruption in recent years through lengthy periods of planned bus substitution, and spasmodic lack of service due to driver shortages.

Key issues:

- Operation of regular hourly service.
- Maintenance of high level of service reliability.
- Good connections at Nuneaton to and from Leicester and at Coventry towards Reading.

### 5.3 ROUTES ALLOCATED TO THE CROSS COUNTRY FRANCHISE

#### 5.3.1 Cardiff / Hereford – Nottingham

Cardiff / Hereford – Nottingham services should continue to provide a regular half-hourly service between Birmingham and Nottingham. This should complement services (if any – see 5.1.4) provided by the East Midlands franchise between Derby and Nottingham, to give a regular service at intermediate stations.

There is an aspiration for faster Birmingham-Nottingham trains via the Castle Donington route, avoiding Derby, which is currently used by freight trains and for engineering diversions. With only a small saving in distance and lower line speeds compared with the existing route, time savings would be modest and would mainly derive from avoiding reversal and conflict with other services at Derby.

Key issues:

- Operation of regular hourly services with additional trains at peak times.
- Service level between Derby and Nottingham and at intermediate stations.
- Service level at intermediate stations between Birmingham and Derby.
- Provision of adequate seating capacity.

### **5.3.2 Birmingham – Stansted Airport**

The service from Birmingham to Stansted Airport should continue to run at hourly intervals, with additional trains at peak hours on parts of the route. This service suffers from peak crowding, to the particular discomfort of longer distance passengers, and unreliable refreshment services. Passengers using Stansted Airport are handicapped by the lack of very early and late services, and service gaps.

Key issues:

- Operation of regular hourly services with additional trains at peak times.
- Improved early and late services for airport passengers.
- Provision of adequate seating capacity.
- Provision of reliable refreshment service.

### **5.3.3 Birmingham-Derby-Sheffield (existing Cross Country route)**

Services on the South/SouthWest-Birmingham-Derby-Sheffield-North East axis provided by the current Cross Country franchise should continue to run at half-hourly intervals and serve a wide variety of final destinations. Between York and Newcastle, the hourly train via Doncaster runs closely following the hourly train via Leeds; southbound, it is closely followed by the Leeds train. The Doncaster train would be more useful if it served alternative destinations such as Hull or Middlesbrough.

## **5.4 ASPIRATIONS FOR FUTURE ENHANCEMENTS**

This report is concerned mainly with issues and aspirations which should be addressed by the specification and bidders for the new franchises in the East Midlands.

However, there are other long-standing aspirations of passengers and stakeholders.

Franchise bidders might like to commit to the further development, with local stakeholders, of schemes which meet the following needs:

- Provision of a rail service to Corby, perhaps as part of enhanced services to cater for traffic growth from Kettering and Wellingborough.

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- Provision of a new station at Ilkeston.
- Extension of the Robin Hood Line train service to Bingham, to provide a cross-Nottingham link and 'park and ride' facilities to counter growing road congestion across the River Trent and east of the city.
- Faster train services from Nottingham to Birmingham, via the Castle Donington line.
- Reopening to passenger trains of the line from Leicester to Coalville and Burton-on-Trent.



## 6. ALLOCATION OF ROUTES AND STATIONS TO FRANCHISES

The notes above indicate possible alternative route linkages and identify potential problems where more than one operator serves a key flow. It is therefore necessary to consider whether or not the proposed allocation of routes to the new franchises best serves passenger needs.

The area covered by the new East Midlands franchise fits quite well with both the regional government and Network Rail (London & North Eastern) boundaries. By design or accident, the proposed franchise structure has the operational advantage that no East Midlands franchise routes serve Birmingham New Street and no West Midlands franchise routes serve Nottingham, leaving Cross Country to provide the Birmingham-Nottingham links.

Transfer of the Cardiff-Nottingham and Birmingham-Stansted Airport routes to the Cross Country franchise has the advantage of bringing Leicester, Nottingham and East Anglia into the Cross Country network with possible benefits for inter-regional passengers. The Cardiff-Nottingham service would achieve a more distinctive inter-regional character and faster journey times if stops at smaller stations between Birmingham and Nottingham were transferred to the Hereford-Nottingham service (and to a restored Crewe-Nottingham service). There might be a case for some services to Nottingham to run from Bristol, balanced by services from Cardiff to the North East.

The Hereford-Nottingham route fits less well into the Cross Country franchise, serving mainly inter-urban and suburban traffic flows. The possibility of splitting this route at Birmingham New Street has been suggested in the past and is proposed, except for some trains at peak hours, for June 2006. If this change becomes permanent then Hereford-Birmingham could be allocated to the West Midlands franchise and Birmingham-Nottingham to either the West Midlands or, preferably, the East Midlands franchise.

The Birmingham-Leicester stopping service, which serves mainly East Midlands

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stations, would also fit better with the East Midlands franchise.

An unfortunate consequence of the proposed allocation of services to franchises is that two key inter-urban flows from the East Midlands: Leicester-Birmingham and Nottingham-Derby-Birmingham – will not be operated by the East Midlands franchise.

Another consequence is an increase from two to three in the number of franchises serving Leicester, and from two to three (or even four) serving Nottingham.

The current pattern of regional and local services in the East Midlands has developed in recent years in a haphazard manner rather than holistically. To increase inter-urban linkages the service group:

Birmingham-Leicester  
Leicester-Nottingham-Lincoln  
Hereford-Nottingham  
Crewe-Derby

could be better configured, for example as:

Birmingham-Leicester-Nottingham  
Hereford (or Birmingham)-Nottingham-Lincoln  
Crewe-Nottingham

This might require the Birmingham-Leicester and Birmingham-Nottingham services to be allocated to the East Midlands franchise.

The proposed allocation of services to the Cross Country franchise will mean that this franchise will become, for the first time, a station facilities operator – at Melton Mowbray, Oakham and Stamford; at Wilnecote, Tamworth, Burton-on-Trent and Willington; and possibly at Spondon, Long Eaton, Attenborough and Beeston. One option would be to give responsibility for these stations to the East Midlands or West Midlands franchise, as appropriate. For the East Midlands this would have the benefit

of bringing almost all the stations in the region under one management.

The new East Midlands franchisee should be required to work with local partners and stakeholders to support the Community Railway initiatives on lines so designated. In the East Midlands these are Derby-Matlock; Derby to Stoke-on-Trent; Grantham to Skegness.

## **7. GENERIC ISSUES**

### **7.1 Protecting and growing the railway**

There is a strong demand among stakeholders for the new franchises to be structured to facilitate a continuation of the general improvement in rail services seen in the East Midlands over the last 40 years. Almost certainly commercial imperatives will ensure the maintenance and development of services on the main line to London. On the regional and rural routes there is a wish not only for protection against further service reductions, but restoration of the cuts imposed in the last two years. In other words, the base timetable for the new franchises should reflect, in terms of service frequencies and train mileage, that which applied in 2004, not the present timetable.

### **7.2 Connections and linking of services**

Many journeys within and beyond the East Midlands require changes of train. Given the multi-centred nature of the region this will continue to be the case. However, as discussed earlier, there is scope for regrouping of services to best serve the most important potential traffic flows. Where through services cannot be justified convenient connections should be provided, so that the principal centres – Derby, Leicester, Lincoln, Nottingham – can be reached from most other stations in the region with no more than one easy change of train.

### **7.3 Stations and access**

Despite some improvements in recent years, for example at Kettering and Chesterfield, the stations in the East Midlands vary widely in facilities for passengers. Most have received an acceptable standard of cleaning and general maintenance. Information screens at the main line stations are generally good, but at the regional stations need improvement - if provided at all, they often display the current timetable with no updates for late running.

Many stations require the provision of step-free access, including four on the main line - Wellingborough, Market Harborough, Loughborough and Long Eaton. Wellingborough is likely to be improved through a development scheme and Loughborough is a high priority for 'access for all' funding. Market Harborough

station requires platform canopies.

Facilities at many regional stations, even those in towns, are poor – Newark Castle, for example, provides only bus stop style shelters. Staffing, at least for the busiest periods, should be considered for all stations with a footfall greater than 90,000 per year (about 250 passengers per day). Some stations with much higher footfalls are staffed for only part of the day, and staffing hours should be reviewed and extended wherever possible. Moves to have small unstaffed stations ‘adopted’ by local users are commendable and should continue.

Car parking is a problem at many stations, demand having outstripped supply. There is an urgent need to increase the number of spaces, especially where land is available near to existing sites. The car park charging policy should make concessions for short stay local travellers, for whom parking often costs more than the rail ticket, and should offer incentives to increase utilisation of spaces through reduced charges at weekends and other times of light demand. Improved provision for parking cycles in secure conditions is also needed at many places.

Integration of rail and bus services needs to be improved. Where buses already run to and from the railway station publicity is poor, except for the links to Nottingham East Midlands Airport from Derby and Nottingham. The similar link from Loughborough is not mentioned on websites or the station departure screens and lacks proper signage.

#### **7.4 Facilities for disabled passengers**

In addition to satisfactory means of access at stations, disabled passengers require dedicated facilities on trains. Pending regulations under the Disability Discrimination Act will make such provision mandatory over a period which allows for modification of trains or their replacement. Much of the train fleet which is likely to be used in the East Midlands is already compliant, and the new franchise holders should take steps to improve the provision for disabled passengers on older train as far as is practicable. The assistance available to less able passengers, at stations and on trains, should be clear and well-publicised.

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**7.5 Facilities for cyclists**

In addition to storage facilities for cycles at stations there should be adequate provision for the carriage of cycles on trains, such that this does not inconvenience other passengers. There should be a clear policy governing the numbers of cycles which can be accommodated, peak hour restrictions, and charges. For journeys within the East Midlands the policy should be the same irrespective of the train operator.

**7.6 Network identity and marketing**

East Midlands rail needs promoting as a single network, with timetables and maps which include main line and regional services, together with integrated advice of timetable changes. The timetable should properly connect main line and regional services. Those services in the region which will be operated by the new Cross Country and West Midlands franchises should be seen as, and promoted as, part of the East Midlands network.

**7.7 Fares structure and ticket purchase**

There should be a coherent fares structure for all services within the East Midlands, to remove the present confusion through different ticket types and restrictions, depending on the operator, for similar journeys. This fares structure should cover all operators for journeys within the East Midlands. All fares for journeys within the region should be 'walk-on' with no advance booking requirement. Advance purchase tickets for longer journeys should have common, easily understood, conditions.

Where stations are staffed for only part of the day ticket machines or 'permit to travel' machines should be provided. Ticket purchase by telephone and internet is likely to grow and should be made as simple as possible. With its variety of train services the East Midlands would be an ideal, albeit challenging, region for trials of smartcard technology for local and regional journeys.

Steps should be taken to ensure that revenue is collected, whether through adequate staffing of ticket offices, provision of gates at principal stations, or rigorous on train checks.

### **7.8 Security**

Franchisees should implement measures which allow passengers to feel safe and secure both at stations and on trains. This requires the uniform application of good practice at stations, with gating at larger centres, provision of CCTV where appropriate, and attention to staffing and training, passenger access routes and lighting. On trains security largely depends on staff diligence, aided by CCTV where fitted, including enforcement of policies regarding no smoking and quiet areas.

### **7.9 Passenger representation**

The franchises serving the East Midlands should be required to set up formal links with bodies representing the interests of rail passengers, such as TravelWatch East Midlands and properly constituted Rail User Groups. Alternatively, they might be required to establish a Passenger Panel for each franchise, on which both user groups and individually passengers are represented.

### **7.10 Train fleet**

The train fleet used for the fast services from St Pancras to Nottingham, Sheffield and Leeds should be of HST or equivalent standard, without underfloor engines. In due course this route should receive an allocation of the proposed HST2 train fleet. Meridian type trains are adequate for semi-fast main line services and Turbostar and Sprinter units for the regional routes. However, other than on HSTs, lack of adequate luggage storage capacity is a handicap, space on Meridians is reduced by the unnecessary tilting body profile. Orders for new trains developed during the life of the franchise should recognise the need to maximise space for passengers and their luggage. Modern electric trains such as the Desiro should be used on the principal services serving Northampton.

An integrated train fleet rather than units rigidly designated for main line and regional use would allow flexibility in meeting peak demands. Main line trains which are not used at weekends could strengthen services to the east coast which are over-crowded, either directly or by releasing units from other regional services for this purpose.

Train cleanliness in the East Midlands has been variable, but much improved recently. However, some regional trains have shabby interiors. Good standards of train

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cleanliness, inside and out, should be maintained, and train interiors refurbished at appropriate intervals.

### **7.11 Staff**

Integrating main line and regional train crews with common conditions of service would give maximum operational flexibility. Sunday and Bank Holiday working should be part of the rostered duties, or other steps taken to ensure the provision of the advertised service at these times.

### **7.12 Engineering access**

Line closures for engineering work should be arranged, except in emergencies, to a pre-publicised programme, with combined publicity for all train operators affected. Re-routing, rather than splitting plus bus substitution, should be the preferred option for longer distance services. Steps should be taken to avoid route closures on Saturdays, except for occasional major works.

### **7.13 Infrastructure**

Capacity and infrastructure issues will be addressed by Network Rail's Midland Main Line/East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy, work on which is likely to commence after the new franchises have been let and the specifications for them are known. They are also addressed in Network Rail's business plan, which is updated annually.

If growth in rail travel to London continues, investment in the infrastructure will soon become necessary, such as restoration of a third track between Harrowden Junction and Kettering, and between Knighton Junction and Leicester. Such investment should aim to both increase route capacity and speed up services.

Line capacity south of Bedford and platform capacity at St Pancras, where East Midlands services will be limited to four platforms, are constraints to future growth. In the short term these can only be addressed by attention to timetabling and platform utilisation and maximising train lengths.

Resignalling of much of the East Midlands network is due to take place over the next few years, especially in the area at present controlled by Trent signal box. This will



provide the opportunity for enhancements such as the remodelling of Trent East Junction. Particularly useful would be the improvement in operating flexibility and reduction in conflicting movements through reversible working on the approaches to Nottingham station – allowing, for example, Robin Hood Line trains to both arrive and depart on the present Down Slow line.

The Network Rail 2006 business plan schedules the Trent resignalling in phases between 2007 and 2011, but other desirable work to enhance capacity at known congestion points is under development without commitment or target dates. A scheme on which work has now started is resignalling between Wigston (Glen Parva) and Nuneaton which will provide a useful increase in line capacity.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks are due to Alan Meredith, Chairman of TravelWatch East Midlands for developing the project and his guidance and support; to Paul Fullwood of Passenger Focus for securing part-sponsorship and for his advice; and to his colleague Bev Wright for help with the survey.

The financial support for this work from EMRA, EMDA and Passengerfocus is much appreciated, without it the project would not have gone ahead.

Last, but not least, thanks are due to the many bodies and individuals consulted, who have given freely of their time in responding to the survey and participating in follow-up activities.

## **APPENDIX 1: THE ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

### **TEXT OF DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT NEWS RELEASE 2005/0102: 18 OCTOBER 2005**

The DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT has today announced a new structure of rail franchises, to be implemented following the expiry of the current Central Trains franchise.

The new franchise map will see:

- Three new franchises replacing four existing franchises.
- An East Midlands franchise being created. This will operate services to and from London St Pancras together with regional and local services in the East Midlands.
- A West midlands franchise being created. This will operate the West Coast Main Line outer suburban services to and from London Euston (currently operated by Silverlink County) together with regional and local services in the West Midlands.
- A new Cross country franchise being created. The existing franchise, operated by Virgin Rail Group under a “letter agreement” with the Department for Transport, will be re-let in Autumn 2007.
- The expiry dates of the current Central Trains and Silverlink franchises will be extended to Autumn 2007. This allows time for the development of detailed specifications for the new franchises and for full competitive procurement to take place.

There will be an option to transfer the Liverpool to Nottingham service to the TransPennine Express franchise if this demonstrates better value for money. There will also be an option to transfer the services to and from Birmingham Snow Hill to

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Chiltern Railways, if this, too, can demonstrate better value for money.

Discussions are still taking place on the possible transfer to Transport for London of the London inner-suburban services operated by Silverlink Metro and no final decision has been made.

The new franchise map is designed to increase the efficiency and performance of the railways, improving service fro passengers. Working from these aims, in consultation with the rail industry, a wide range of options was considered before the final decision was made.

## CENTRAL TRAINS REMAPPING: MEDIA / WEB BRIEFING

### Background

The Future of Rail White Paper (Command Paper 6233), published in July 2004, announced Government's intention to consider how rail passenger franchises could be better aligned with Network Rail's regional and route structure in order to deliver better performance and improved service to passengers.

In October 2004, the Secretary of State announced that following expiry of the current Central Trains franchise, the existing services would be distributed amongst other train operators in the region. Central Trains currently provides local services throughout the East and West Midlands and long distance services from the Midlands to South Wales, the North West, East Anglia and the East Coast. The objective was to create a franchise structure better aligned to Network Rail's routes, encouraging joint working between track and train. This will see the efficiency and performance of the railways improve, meaning better services for passengers. Details of the current franchises affected by Central Trains remapping are shown in annex A.

Working from these policy aims, in consultation with rail industry stakeholders including Network Rail, ATOC, PTEs, Train Operators, franchise owning groups and the Rail Freight Operator's Association, a wide range of options were considered before the final decision on the future franchise map was made.

### Future Franchise Structure

The new franchise map incorporates market-based groups of services with an operational focus, which are better aligned to Network Rail's routes in order to encourage joint working between track and train and to deliver an improved service to customers. The new franchises will also have closer regional identities than the old Central Trains franchise.

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Three new franchises will replace four existing franchises. New franchises will be created to serve the East Midlands and the West Midlands. The East Midlands franchise will operate intercity services to and from London St. Pancras and regional and local services in the East Midlands. The West Midlands franchise will operate local and regional services in the West Midlands and the West Coast Main Line outer suburban services to and from London Euston currently operated by Silverlink County.

A new Cross Country franchise will be created incorporating the current Central Trains inter-regional Nottingham to Cardiff, Nottingham to Hereford and Birmingham to Stansted Airport services into the existing Cross Country network.

Details of the service groups to be included in each franchise are shown in annex B.

It is considered that there could be further potential improvements in customer and operational focus through the transfer of two service groups to adjacent existing franchises. Liverpool – Nottingham services could be operated by TransPennine Express and services to and from Birmingham Snow Hill could be operated by Chiltern Railways. In order to confirm that these changes represent better value for money, they will be included as options within the new East and West Midlands franchises respectively. Discussions are still taking place on the possible transfer to Transport for London of the London inner-suburban services operated by Silverlink Metro and no final decision has been made.

### **Specification and procurement of the new franchises**

In order to allow time for the detailed development of the specification for the three new franchises and time for full procurement competitions to take place, there will be interim Central Trains and Silverlink franchises extending from their current expiry dates in 2006 to Autumn 2007. These interim franchises will operate services broadly comparable to those operating today. Further arrangements will be put in place for the timing of the new East Midlands franchise to match the expiry of the current Midland Mainline franchise. The existing Cross Country franchise is operated by Virgin Rail Group under a temporary arrangement (“letter agreement”\*) with the Department for

Transport. This franchise will be re-let in Autumn 2007.

The Department for Transport will now commence development of the detailed specifications for the new franchises. As set out in the White Paper, consultation will be undertaken with relevant transport authorities and regional and local authority stakeholders during the development of the specifications.

\* The "Letter Agreement" is a side letter to the franchise agreement and varies some of the key terms of the franchise agreement. The letter agreement provided emergency financial assistance to the train operators. Under the letter agreement, annual budgets need to be either agreed with Virgin each year or determined by DfT.

The letter agreement is an interim arrangement pending re- franchising of Cross Country.

The letter agreement gave the SRA/DfT the option to terminate the CrossCountry franchise by giving a minimum of 1 year's notice. This option has to be exercised before 28 February 2006.

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### Annex A

#### Details of current franchises affected by Central Trains remapping

Franchise	Current expiry date	Franchise Owning Group	Passenger journeys 2004/5 (million)	Subsidy 2004/5 (£ million)	Public Performance Measure - Year to 31 March 2005	National Passenger Survey Spring 2005 Overall opinion of journey - % satisfied or good
Central Trains	March 2006	National Express Group	40.5	155.6	73.1	81
Silverlink	October 2006	National Express Group	41.1	30.1	84.2	71
Midland Mainline	April 2008	National Express Group	10.7	(9.0)	88.3	84
Virgin Cross-Country	March 2012	Virgin Rail Group	15.3	111.0	77.8	83
TransPennine Express	February 2012	First Group	14.6	43.5	74.6	81
Chiltern Railways	December 2021	M40 Trains	14.1	14.0	92.5	89



## Annex B

### New Franchise service group allocations

#### East Midlands franchise

- St Pancras - Derby / Nottingham / Sheffield / Leeds
- Liverpool – Norwich (Liverpool – Nottingham may be operated by TPE if this demonstrates better value for money)
- Matlock - Derby
- Crewe - Skegness
- Leicester - Loughborough - Lincoln
- Worksop - Nottingham
- Cleethorpes - Lincoln - Newark / Nottingham
- Doncaster - Lincoln - Peterborough

#### West Midlands franchise

[NB: Some of the services below are subject to recommendations in the West Midlands Route Utilisation Study]

- Euston - Northampton
- Bedford - Bletchley
- Watford Jn. - St.Albans Abbey
- Birmingham – Liverpool / Preston
- Birmingham – Coventry / Northampton
- Birmingham - Leicester
- Birmingham – Wolverhampton
- Birmingham - Shrewsbury
- Coventry - Nuneaton
- Walsall - Wolverhampton – Wellington

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- Lichfield - Redditch
- Stafford – Rugeley - Walsall – Birmingham
- Stafford – Stoke-on-Trent
- Stafford – Nuneaton
- Stratford / Shirley / Leamington / Dorridge – Birmingham Snow Hill -  
Stourbridge Jn / Kidderminster / Worcester / Great Malvern (May be operated  
by Chiltern Railways if this offers better value for money)
- Stourbridge Jn - Stourbridge Town (May be operated by Chiltern Railways if  
this offers better value for money)

**Cross Country franchise**

- Birmingham – Reading / The South
- Birmingham – Bristol – South West
- Birmingham – North East – Scotland
- Birmingham – North West – Scotland
- Birmingham – Manchester
- Manchester – Scotland
- Cardiff - Nottingham
- Hereford - Nottingham
- Birmingham - Stansted

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Report produced and published by **TravelWatch East Midlands**,  
5 Monroe Close, Market Harborough, Leics. LE16 7QN  
Email: [secretary@travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk](mailto:secretary@travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk)

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