

5th October 2017**Agenda Item: 6****REPORT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF PLACE DEPARTMENT****EAST MIDLANDS RAIL FRANCHISE CONSULTATION****Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for the proposed East Midlands rail franchise response as detailed in this report and in the attached appendix.

Information and Advice

2. Nottinghamshire is currently served by four rail franchises (Cross Country, East Coast, East Midlands, and Northern). The East Midlands franchise currently offers 470 services each weekday and provides 26 million passenger journeys each year. The franchise is made up of four distinct passenger markets:
 - Intercity long distance services between Nottingham, Derby, Leicester, Sheffield, and London
 - Inter-urban services between Norwich and Liverpool calling at a number of major towns and cities including Nottingham, Manchester, Sheffield, Grantham and Peterborough (as well as local centres in Nottinghamshire such as Mansfield, Newark, Bingham, Radcliffe and Netherfield)
 - Local and regional services centred on Nottingham, Derby and Lincoln providing connections to a range of regionally important destinations, as well as a large number of smaller rural locations. These services include the Robin Hood Line, the Poacher Line to Skegness and the Nottingham to Lincoln lines
 - London commuter services (using the same trains as the intercity routes) carrying commuters into London St Pancras by trains stopping at Corby, Kettering, Wellingborough, Bedford, Luton and Luton Airport Parkway.

East Midlands rail franchise timetable

3. Each franchise has a separate schedule and the East Midlands franchise was originally due to end in March 2015. The franchise has, however, been extended several times and is now planned to end in August 2019 (a proposed timetable for the franchise is shown in the table below). Consultation on the proposed East Midlands rail franchise from August 2019 until at least March 2026 was published by the Department for Transport (DfT) on 20th July 2017. The consultation period runs for 12 weeks from 20th July to 11th October 2017 and is seeking views on the East Midlands franchise network now as well as how to improve it in the years to come, covering topics such as:

- Changes to existing services
- Service enhancements (such as routes operated, frequency of services; journey time improvements; on-board capacity; and on-board facilities)
- Access to stations
- Ticketing and information
- Community rail partnerships.

Date	Activity
20 th July 2017	Start of public consultation
11 th October 2017	End of public consultation
April 2018	Issue invitation to tender to bidders
July 2018	Receipt of bids
Autumn/Winter 2018/19	Assessment of bids
Spring 2019	Contract award to winning bidder
August 2019	Start of new franchise

Consultation response

4. East Midlands Councils (EMC) commissioned specialist transport consultants to work with all of the councils to develop EMC's response. The work undertaken by these consultants, particularly on potential changes to services, has helped inform the County Council's response.
5. A summary of the County Council's response to the consultation is attached as appendix 1 but the following paragraphs highlight some of the key issues included in the Council's response.

Electrification of the Midland Mainline route

6. Government has suggested that the introduction of bi-mode trains (running on diesel and an unspecified non-diesel source) by 2022 which are to be required as part of the East Midlands Rail Franchise would mean that electrification of the Kettering to Nottingham and Sheffield section of the route is no longer required. Whilst there is no direct question relating to the electrification of the Midland Mainline route; a response to Government's decision to withdraw funding for this project in line with the 'High Speed 2 and wider rail issues' Policy Committee report of 13th September 2017 and the County Council Motion agreed at the 21st September 2017 meeting of the Full Council has been included in the consultation response.

Transfer of routes between franchises

7. The DfT is proposing to include the transfer of two routes from the Cross Country franchise to the East Midlands franchise:
 - Birmingham to Nottingham – as this could facilitate the restoration of some through trains, e.g. Birmingham to Lincoln
 - Birmingham to Leicester/Stansted – as this would allow bidders flexibility to offer new services, e.g. East Midlands Stations to Cambridge/Stansted Airport.
8. The DfT is also proposing to include the transfer of part of the existing Liverpool to Nottingham service from the East Midlands franchise to the TransPennine Express franchise, potentially including a split of the services at Nottingham or Sheffield. Transferring this service could offer more flexible journey opportunities within each franchise area; a more efficient, cohesive

service between cities (particularly on the north-western section of the route); and a more consistent on-board service.

9. The County Council would support these changes but only on the understanding that they will provide improved rail links and/or improved rail services for Nottinghamshire residents and businesses to help support local economic growth.

New, or changed routes

10. The consultation seeks views on a number of changed or new routes some of which would benefit the county, but one of which would negatively impact services to London.
11. There are various options available to change the existing Liverpool to Norwich line to offer improvements to this service, such as through splitting it to create two separate services, having the services spread at different more regular intervals (e.g. every 30mins), and/or missing out some of the local stations (outside Nottinghamshire). The service currently suffers from a lack of capacity between Liverpool and Nottingham, slow journey times, sharing the Sheffield to Manchester section with other operators and not connecting the East Midlands to the key market of Cambridge. The County Council would support the introduction of any of the options available to address these issues.
12. The County Council support the proposal to vary the current service to Norwich to call at Cambridge and Stansted as this has the potential to improve economic links with these two areas but would require alternative services to Norwich (such as a diverted Birmingham to Stansted service which could travel to Norwich instead).
13. The County Council does not support additional longer distance services, between London and Nottingham or Sheffield, stopping at Luton Airport Parkway station as this will add additional journey times to these services. Instead an enhanced, faster and suitably branded Thameslink service is seen as the better solution to meet the needs of the airport to serve the London market or utilising commuter services to Corby.
14. The consultation includes a specific question about support for the proposal to reopen the rail line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains. It also asks what sources of investment could be identified to fund this proposal. The County Council has already invested over £200,000 on feasibility work to help progress its opening (no other organisation has funded any of these works). It is estimated that it will cost a further £1m to undertake the remaining feasibility works which the Council is unable to fund. The feasibility work to date has identified the capital costs at over £20m and likely ongoing revenue costs approaching £1m per year to reopen the line and again the Council is unable to fund these itself. The Council therefore considers that it is up to Central Government, if it supports the scheme, to lead on the identification and pooling of funding resources for the remaining feasibility work, as well as the capital works and ongoing running costs. The County Council supports the reopening of the line but only should a funding package be assembled by the Department for Transport that does not require the County Council to fund the majority of the capital costs, and does not require the County Council to fund the ongoing revenue liability.

Service enhancements

15. A number of questions relate to service enhancements, including increased frequency of services, line speed improvements, overcrowding/capacity/rolling stock, and on-board facilities.

16. The County Council has identified that most routes require improvements to help ensure that services support economic growth, deliver continued improved performance of rail services, and have a passenger focused approach. Such improvements include:

- Improved journey times (particularly to regional and local centres where we would want to secure at least 60mph overall journey speed, meaning rolling stock must be able to travel at 90mph or faster for most of the journey)
- Service enhancements to increase the frequency of services (including later departure and arrival times)
- Either additional services, or increased rolling stock to reduce overcrowding on services throughout the day (including seasonal services)
- Better integration between services, especially between local and regional services
- Improved on-board facilities, such as baggage storage, information provision and Wi-Fi.

Access to stations

17. To improve the door-to-door journey, stations also need to be easy to access by all modes of travel and perceived as safe by users. Our rail network should be accessible for all people regardless of ability. The needs of people living with disabilities needs consideration both in accessing the rail network and also travelling on the rail network.

18. Therefore, all stations in Nottinghamshire should be accessible for all rail users and station investment funding should be made available to make access improvements at rail stations; prioritised on delivering step-free access without crossing tracks.

Ticketing

19. Ticketing options need to be easy to understand and clearly communicated. 'Smart' ticketing should be made available allowing multi-modal travel to/from the station as well as rail travel. Such smart ticketing should also be available on a pay-as-you-go and/or capped basis to encourage its use. Ticket machines at rail stations need to recognise all ticket types available.

20. Ticket options also need to be reviewed to help people access jobs and training, such as new ticket options for passengers who travel fewer than five days a week; and/or discounted ticket options offered for those in training, apprentices or those attending job interviews.

Community rail partnerships

21. There are currently two East Midlands Trains community rail partnerships (CRPs) within Nottinghamshire. CRTs and specifically community rail officers, could be utilised to increase patronage and community involvement elsewhere in the future. Funding of CRPs is, however, difficult and given that it is the rail operator that benefits from such patronage growth it is considered that they should therefore be funded by the successful franchisee should CRPs meet specific previously agreed criteria.

Other Options Considered

22. The other option is to not respond to the consultation. This, however, has been discounted as it is thought that the County Council should respond to the consultation to help ensure that the rail improvements believed to be necessary to support delivery of the Council Plan, and the emerging Place Plan, are considered as part of the next East Midlands rail franchise.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

23. The responses detailed within this report and its appendix have been developed to reflect a balance of member, public and stakeholder requests and priorities, evidence of need (including technical analysis) and to help ensure delivery of County Council priorities, national priorities and local transport goals and objectives.

Statutory and Policy Implications

24. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

25. The report and response to the rail franchise consultation has considered the potential implications of the rail services offered to all people including those with protected characteristics; and the proposals in the consultation response will not have a differential impact on a person/service user with a protected characteristic.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

26. The report and response to the rail franchise consultation includes specific references to the need for the environmental impact of all the services and facilities delivered by the operator to be considered by them and that they should be carried out in such a way that they consider environmental impacts and deliver environmental improvements (e.g. improve air quality, minimise waste and pollution, and improve the built environment).

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Committee:

- a) Approve the response to the East Midlands Rail Franchise consultation as detailed within this report and its appendix.

Adrian Smith - Corporate Director Place Department

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Sean Parks – Local Transport Plan manager

Constitutional Comments (SJE 26/09/17)

27. This decision falls within the Terms of Reference of the Transport & Highways Committee to whom responsibility for consultation responses regarding the exercise of the Authority's

functions relating to the provision of passenger transport services, including rail initiatives, has been delegated.

Financial Comments (GB 25/09/17)

28. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

- East Midlands Rail Franchise Public Consultation – Department for Transport, July 2017
- East Midlands Councils' draft East Midlands Rail Franchise response
- High Speed 2 and wider rail issues report to 13th September 2017 Policy Committee

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All