

Meeting:	JOINT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
Date:	12 th April 2024
From:	Joint Officer Steering Group

Transport Update

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the transport related issues across the Greater Nottingham conurbation. The report gives an update on items of interest to both authorities.

2 BACKGROUND

Train service developments

- 2.1 At a recent conference (Modern Railways : Rail in the Midlands) train operators disclosed that a review of services currently operated by Cross Country, is investigating with the Department for Transport a possible realignment of services on the Nottingham – Derby – Birmingham and Leicester – Birmingham corridors.
- 2.2 This would potentially include making the Nottingham – Derby – Birmingham – Cheltenham – Cardiff service more akin to an Inter-City type service with appropriate rolling stock: and adding an additional hourly service Nottingham – Derby – Birmingham – Cheltenham – Bristol to give a 30 minute interval service between Nottingham and Cheltenham and a 15 minute interval service between Derby and Cheltenham. Services to local stations between Nottingham and Birmingham would be transferred to either East or West Midlands Railway. There is potential to slightly reduce journey times between Nottingham and Birmingham.
- 2.3 An additional change would see an enhancement to services between Birmingham – Leicester – Peterborough – Cambridge – Stansted Airport, with local services between Leicester and Birmingham transferred to either East or West Midlands Railway.

Nottingham – Leicester – Coventry rail passenger and freight study

- 2.4 Midlands Connect are currently reviewing the business case and conducting a timetable study into developing a through rail service on the Nottingham – Leicester – Coventry corridor. This includes the possibility of a rail underpass at Nuneaton, and also assessing the implications for providing easier rail freight access to sites in the East Midlands from the ports of Southampton and Avonmouth.
- 2.5 For passenger services an hourly service over the corridor is being considered. The aim is to increase connectivity to Coventry from Leicester and Nottingham, where the modal share for rail is currently much lower due to the numbers of connections required and long journey times compared to journeys to other cities of a similar size and distance away.

Rail industry structure : publication of the Rail Reform Bill (2024)

- 2.6 On the 21st February 2024 the government published its' proposed Rail Reform Bill¹ that would establish a Integrated Rail Body (IRB) to oversee the industry. The government expects Network Rail to become the designated Integrated Rail Body. The Bill proposes that functions currently exercised by the Secretary of State would be transferred to the new body, this will include any current and future franchises or contracts for the operation of passenger rail services primarily in England (not Wales or Scotland or devolved to a regional authority). The IRB will be required to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for its' policies.
- 2.7 The IRB will be headquartered in Derby.
- 2.8 The Bill also proposes amendments to the role of Office of Rail and Road to reflect the transfer of powers to the IRB, to ensure competition and access to the network for private operators.
- 2.9 The Bill proposes amendments to the powers and duties of the consumer representative bodies Transport Focus and London TravelWatch to reflect the role of the IRB and give them new powers to refer matters to the IRB where they believe there has been a breach of either licenses, franchises or passenger contracts.
- 2.10 The Bill proposes that Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) should now also advise the IRB, as well as the Secretary of State on matters relating to transport provision for disabled people.

3 RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 3.1 It is recommended that the contents of this report be noted.

4 BACKGROUND PAPERS REFERRED TO IN COMPILING THIS REPORT

Speeches given at the Modern Railways : Rail in the Midlands Conference 24th January 2024.

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¹ [Draft Rail Reform Bill - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)