

An Integrated Rail Plan for the Midlands

Accelerating, maximising and securing
the benefits of HS2 Phase 2b



Midlands Connect
Transport | Investment | Growth

**MIDLANDS
ENGINE**

August 2020

Making the most of HS2

Now more than ever, the UK desperately needs an efficient, sustainable and reliable railway network. As we move to reboot the economy in the aftermath of COVID-19, investment in capital infrastructure will be an essential fiscal tool in supporting employment, encouraging development and restoring business confidence.

Although the last to be built, Phase 2b of High Speed Two (HS2) is central to its purpose and success, linking the great cities of the North to the Midlands and beyond, connecting millions more people to the high speed network, and freeing up capacity on the conventional railway across the UK, to the benefit of millions more.

This is a once-in-a-generation project, one that will create a railway fit for the next century. We must work collaboratively and conscientiously with Government to aid the development of its Integrated Rail Plan which supports promises to 'level-up' the UK

economy, maximising benefits and ensuring swift and effective delivery.

As the Sub-National Transport Body for the Midlands, Midlands Connect has worked alongside its partners to gather evidence, present technical expertise and gain consensus on the priority schemes the region needs to make the most of HS2 and fully realise the positive impacts it will bring. The recommendations outlined in this submission - if integrated with our new high speed network - will deliver benefits sooner, connect more communities, create more jobs and crucially, change more lives for the better.



Sir John Peace, chairman of Midlands Connect

“The construction of High Speed Two is a watershed moment for the UK regions, but in the Midlands, as in the North, the full benefits of our transformational new railway can only be delivered if it is integrated with other strategic improvements, namely Midlands Engine Rail.

The Integrated Rail Plan is our chance to reap the rewards of a decade’s worth of planning, to connect more people to the high speed line, and to bring benefits to local communities sooner. If this Government is going to level up the UK economy, it must heed the advice of its experts in the regions to deliver a truly first-class transport network.

We are committed to working with the Department for Transport to make this happen.”



Integrated Rail Plan – the story so far

In February 2020, after a detailed evaluation of the costs, benefits, challenges and opportunities presented by the construction of our new high-speed railway, Boris Johnson committed to building HS2 in full.

However, the publication of the eagerly-awaited Oakervee Review recommended that while the development and delivery of Phase One (from London to Birmingham) and Phase 2a (from Birmingham to Crewe) should continue as planned. It was confirmed by the Prime Minister that the Department for Transport would develop an Integrated Rail Plan (IRP) to consider how both Eastern and Western legs of Phase 2b could be best integrated within the wider network.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has been tasked with undertaking a ‘Rail Needs Assessment’ for the Department for Transport, outlining the options for rail interventions the Midlands and the North require to make the most of HS2. This assessment will inform the final IRP, which Government is due to publish before the end of the year.

In early spring 2020, the NIC launched a ‘Call for Evidence’; asking local authorities, businesses and transport bodies to respond to a series of questions, and to provide the data and figures required to justify their rail investment needs. In July 2020, the NIC published an interim report setting out the

methodology it proposes to use to undertake its review. It also shared emerging findings from the initial evidence gathering process. In the coming months, the NIC will undertake further stakeholder engagement and research into potential options for the IRP before the final assessment is published and submitted to the Department for Transport.

Our Submission

Midlands Connect built consensus across its partnership, which includes local enterprise partnerships and local transport authorities to submit a region-wide response to the NIC’s call for evidence.

The investments and interventions we have suggested form three ‘packages’ and are aimed at ensuring three outcomes; accelerating the benefits of HS2 in the Midlands; maximising the positive impacts and ‘reach’ of HS2; and securing the delivery of HS2 in its entirety.

Crucially, our response provides an account of how Phase 2b of HS2 can be fully integrated with Midlands Engine Rail, our rail programme composed of seven major interventions, including the flagship Midlands Rail Hub scheme.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson, addressing Parliament on 11th February 2020

“The review recently conducted by Douglas Oakervee leaves no doubt of the clinching case for High Speed Rail.”

“The cabinet has given high-speed rail the green signal. We are going to get this done.”

“Together, this revolution in local and national transport has the potential to be truly transformative for the entire country.”

Package West: Leveraging Phase One/2a (Incrementally delivered from 2025-2029)

This package will utilise the new high speed infrastructure delivered in Phase One and 2a of HS2, as well as utilising the additional network capacity HS2 will create on the conventional railway to improve journey times between economic centres sooner, enhance local connectivity and improve services for commuters.

Midlands Rail Hub



Midlands Engine Rail's flagship scheme will create space for 20 more trains every hour into and out of Birmingham Moor Street station, improving connections to the South West, Wales, and East Midlands. As Birmingham Moor Street will be adjacent to the new high speed station at Curzon Street, the scheme will allow communities in Cardiff, Bristol, Hereford and Worcester easy access to HS2, vastly enhancing its geographical reach.

The Midlands Rail Hub will also drive huge benefits for local commuters, reducing crowding and encouraging sustainable travel on a network that has seen demand double over the past decade.

**Andy Street,
West Midlands Mayor**

"The Midlands Rail Hub is a vitally-important project. It will transform connectivity across the region, establishing Birmingham Moor Street station as a major interchange, and opening up access to the new high speed network at Curzon Street. It's essential that we push ahead with these improvements."



**Cllr George Duggins,
Leader of Coventry City Council**

"Infrastructure investment is central to our future success, which is why it's so important that Midlands Connect's proposals are brought forward. This includes plans to reinstate direct rail connections between the cities of Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham and the Birmingham Airport Connectivity scheme, which will open up rail access to Coventry and Birmingham International stations for over two million people from Derby, Sheffield, Newcastle and beyond, as well as boosting local commuter links."

Birmingham Airport Connectivity



Birmingham Airport Connectivity will create new and more frequent links to Coventry and Birmingham International, on the doorstep of Interchange HS2 station, linking 2.2 million more people to the high speed network and Birmingham Airport. Derby, Sheffield, Newcastle, York, and Durham are among the places that would benefit from these new direct rail connections, while Leamington, Solihull and Coventry would be among those benefitting from enhanced local commuter links.

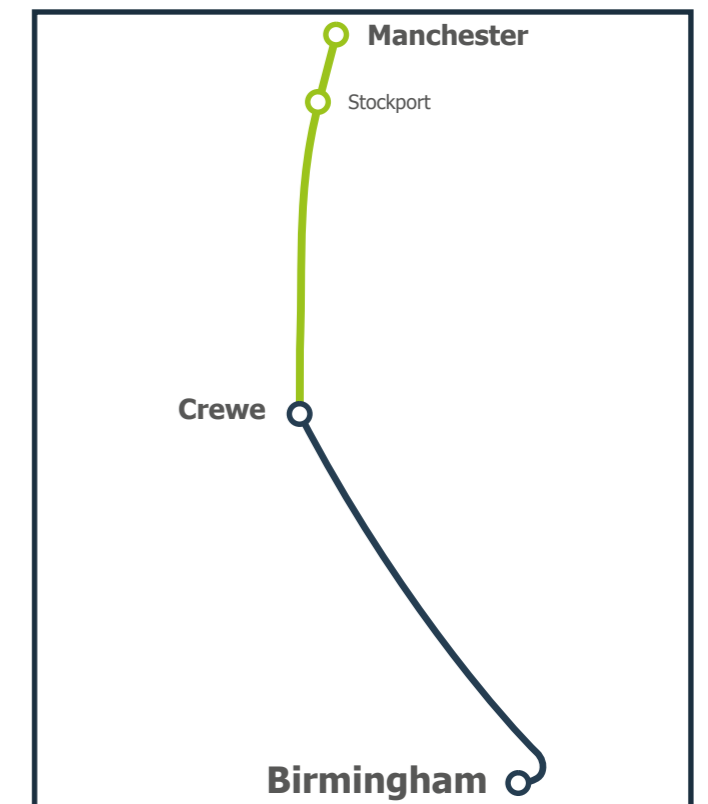


Accelerate Birmingham – Manchester

At present, there are no plans to enhance rail services between Birmingham and Manchester until the completion of the full HS2 network. In our response to the National Infrastructure Commission we have put forward a solution that could bring forward significant journey time savings between these two major economic centres, before the full HS2 network is operational. We suggest utilising the 60 miles of new high speed railway between Birmingham and Crewe, built during Phase 2a, combined with a set of capacity enhancements on the existing network between Crewe and Manchester. This combination will mean that conventional-compatible services, which run on the high speed line as far as Crewe then on existing track from Crewe to Manchester can provide much faster services than today before the full high speed line is up and running.

The improvements will create both short-term benefits to inter-regional connectivity and then once the full Western Leg of HS2 is complete, long-term benefits for commuters, with the new capacity being utilised by higher-frequency commuter services in Greater Manchester, which will also help to reduce overcrowding in the area.

Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) has led a study into rail capacity south of Manchester and the consensus between Midlands Connect, TfGM, Transport for the North and Network Rail is that many important network improvements can only be achieved if this major bottleneck is resolved.



Package East: Leveraging Phase 2b Eastern Leg (Incrementally delivered from 2027-2031)

This package focuses on accelerating the commencement of high speed services to the HS2 East Midlands Hub at Toton as well as the economic centres of Chesterfield, Sheffield, and Leeds, using HS2 as a catalyst for economic development, regeneration and sorely-needed regional transport improvements.

Access to Toton



This multimodal transport strategy is designed to support, accelerate and maximise the benefits of HS2 in the East Midlands by connecting towns, cities and villages across the region to the HS2 East Midlands Hub at Toton. The rail interventions in this plan include four shuttle services per hour from Derby, Leicester and Nottingham to the HS2 East Midlands Hub; plus reopening the Maid Marian Line to passenger traffic, connecting Mansfield to the HS2 East Midlands Hub. Phase One of the plan can be delivered in the next decade.

Cllr Kay Cutts MBE, Leader of Nottinghamshire County Council

“The arrival of High Speed Two in Nottinghamshire will bring with it widespread regeneration, development and highly-skilled jobs. This comprehensive plan ensures that communities in our towns and villages can access these opportunities, and that the benefits of this

MC Conventional Compatible Services

Midlands Engine Rail includes plans for two HS2 conventional-compatible services that will run direct from: Bedford – Leicester – East Midlands Hub – Leeds, and Nottingham – East Midlands Hub – Birmingham. These services would run on both electrified and high speed tracks, and would join the HS2 network at Toton via an alternative junction layout which allows direct connections onto the high speed network in both directions.

This solution would bring HS2 trains directly into Nottingham and Leicester city centres, without the need for interchange and more than halve current journey times between economic centres in the Midlands and the North. Our proposal would see journey times between Leicester and Leeds drop from 120 to 50 minutes and Nottingham to Birmingham fall from 72 to 33 minutes.



investment are spread far and wide. We are keen to work alongside Government to ensure that the East Midlands sees benefits as soon as possible, and that these improvements are included in its Integrated Rail Plan”

Accelerate Birmingham – Leeds



We believe that there could be an interim solution which would allow high speed services to run from Birmingham to the East Midlands Hub at Toton, Sheffield, Chesterfield and onto Leeds (via a connection to the conventional rail network ten miles south of the city centre) as early as 2031, up to nine years earlier than scheduled.

This could be achieved by accelerating the construction of the Eastern Leg of Phase 2b from Birmingham to the HS2 East Midlands Hub at Toton, all the way north to Crofton, just south of Leeds, as well as upgrading the conventional railway line between Sheffield and Claydon.

However, this option would require further work to consider capacity constraints on the conventional rail network. Construction of the Leeds HS2 Station in the Southbank and connection through the south east of Leeds to the conventional network would also have to proceed in parallel.

The running of these faster services up to Leeds would occur alongside the commencement of high speed services from a redeveloped London Euston station, currently scheduled for 2031.

This intervention would catalyse regeneration and development around the new HS2 station sites, generate operational income sooner and benefit communities in the East Midlands that have suffered from decades of underinvestment.

Lilian Greenwood, MP for Nottingham South

“The aim of the Integrated Rail Plan is to make the most of HS2; connecting more people into the high speed network. Not only can these plans bring high speed trains directly into Nottingham and Leicester city centres, but they would more than halve current journey times. It’s essential that Government provides Midlands Connect with the resources it needs to bring them forward.”

Midland Main Line Electrification

The plans outlined in Package East require the full electrification of the Midland Main Line, either to run (MC Conventional Compatible services and Accelerate Birmingham – Leeds) or to operate in a carbon efficient manner (Access to Toton). We ask that these vital plans are reinstated, and that Government commits to a truly carbon-neutral rail network.



CGI of planned HS2 East Midlands Hub at Toton, including on-site innovation campus and new housing development

Package Connect: Enhancing East – West connectivity (Incrementally delivered from 2021-2033)

This package includes the remaining elements of Midlands Engine Rail that are focused on promoting east – west connectivity across the Midlands region, often on routes where the proportion of journeys made by rail is woefully low, or where poor service levels are stifling additional demand. Many of these improvements utilise network capacity released by HS2 or have business cases that are strengthened by the increase in rail patronage our new high speed line will create.

Midlands Rail Hub (Coventry-Leicester-Nottingham)

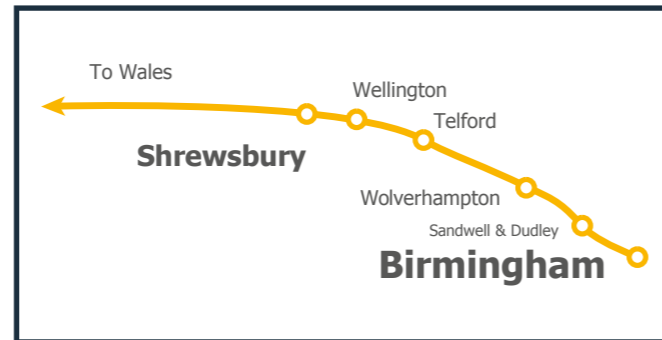


The remaining improvement planned within our Midlands Rail Hub scheme would reinstate direct services between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham via a dive under at Nuneaton. The slow, indirect service currently in place means that at present, only one per cent of journeys between these major cities are made by rail. This intervention will increase rail mode share on this important route.

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council

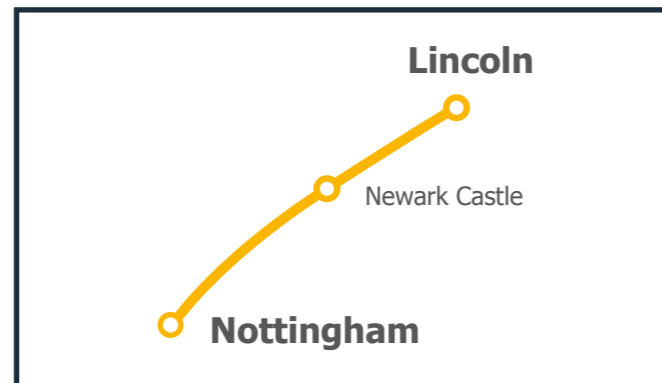
“Midlands Connect’s technical experts have put these plans together using industry insight, feedback from partners and crucially, evidence. Government should seriously consider these proposals as it writes its Integrated Rail Plan.”

Birmingham – Black Country – Shrewsbury



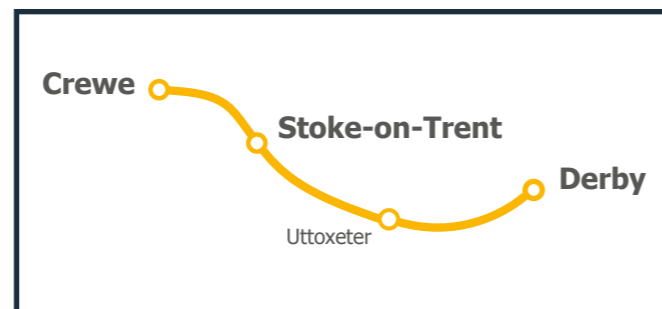
This scheme will increase the frequency of services between Birmingham, the Black Country, Telford and Shrewsbury, utilising the extra network capacity freed up by HS2. This enhancement would also see the reintroduction of direct London – Telford services, and link communities to the full high speed network via Birmingham Interchange station.

Nottingham – Lincoln



We are currently investigating the potential for line speed improvements, achieved through the installation of an enhanced signalling system, and additional services between Nottingham and Lincoln.

Derby – Stoke - Crewe



Travellers on the Crewe-Derby rail corridor suffer from a slow, infrequent service. Midlands Connect is currently examining the case for higher line speeds and more regular services – the latter is likely to be dependent on growth in demand linked to the opening of HS2 services at Crewe and at the HS2 East Midlands Hub

Darren Henry, MP for Broxtowe

“Levelling-up the UK economy means spreading the benefits of Government investment to all corners of the country. These plans will create a truly green and connected transport network for generations to come. Our new high speed network will be a game-changer for the Midlands, we must now ensure it is fully integrated with Midlands Engine Rail.”



What now?

The Midlands Engine Rail programme and this wider submission is the culmination of many years’ work, gathering in-depth evidence and building consensus amongst political, civic and business leaders from across the region. Midlands Connect now seeks an open dialogue with the Department for Transport as it drafts its final Integrated Rail Plan.

Our ‘asks’

That Midlands Connect is granted the opportunity to discuss its proposals with officials in the Department for Transport and National Infrastructure Commission

That Government provides the funding needed to bring forward the development of a number of important, and time-sensitive projects, in-line with its ambitions to accelerate the delivery of infrastructure projects, as part of ‘project speed’

Scheme	Development Stage	Funding Required
Access to Toton (Phase One)	Outline Business Case	£4.5 million
Birmingham Airport Connectivity	Full Business Case	£20 million
MC Conventional Compatible services	Outline Business Case	£2 million

Although not exhaustive, the ‘asks’ above relate to projects where the need for funding is most time sensitive.

£26.5 million

Rail scheme development lifecycle

