

# East Midlands Transport Activists Roundtable (EMTAR)



## Response to Draft December 2008 Timetable for East Midlands

Version 2 – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007

### Introduction

To meet targets for the initial consultation response, Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport quickly published Version 1 of this document. This version 2 has been prepared by Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport for EMTAR<sup>1</sup> and it expands upon the previous version.

This document is in two parts. Part 1 looks directly at the timetable and is directed to Stagecoach for East Midlands Trains plus Arriva for CrossCountry. We have purposely *not* produced separate documents for each TOC as it is important the concept of a joined-up, integrated railway is delivered and some failures of the timetable are not obvious when looking at one TOC in isolation. Part 2 has been written with a wider audience in mind looking at the new franchises relate to wider transport policy and will be copied to other stakeholders.

The perfect response is impossible to write, indeed, the perfect timetable is just as elusive. Quite rightly, local groups want the best for their local station or line, but many aspirations will be incompatible with the next station down the line. EMTAR will leave some 'micro' campaigning to local groups and this response tries to take a regional overview.

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<sup>1</sup> EMTAR is one of a network of similar Transport Activist Roundtables (TARs) covering the whole of England. TARs bring together local voluntary sector organisations with a keen interest in sustainable transport with the aim of addressing the regional policy agenda on transport and the related issues of land use planning, health, social inclusion and economic development. EMTAR engages with and tries to influence the work of EMRA, EMDA and the other regional bodies. Members are drawn from local environmental groups and transport groups such as Campaign for Better Transport, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), Railfuture, Friends of the Earth and Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC). The roundtables are administered nationally by the Campaign for Better Transport, but all voluntary bodies that support sustainable transport objectives are encouraged to join.

## **PART 1 – COMMENT ON THE DRAFT TIMETABLE**

### **1.1) Skegness – Nottingham**

For many communities the timetable is a disaster, although there are a few winners. This is best illustrated in tabular form that compares the number of departures now with what is planned. Overall the number of trains is little changed, so key stations such as Boston and Skegness have a similar service. However, few of those trains stop at the smaller communities.

#### **Monday - Friday**

	<b>WESTBOUND</b>		<b>EASTBOUND</b>	
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>
Havenhouse	2	1	3	1
Wainfleet	15	15	15	15
Thorpe Culvert	4	1	4	1
Hubberts Br	3	2	3	2
Swineshead	2	2	2	2
Heckington	15	15	15	15
Rauceby	10	5	11	5
Ancaster	6	2	7	2
Bottesford	11	10	12	12
Elton	2	1	2	1
Aslockton	10	5	11	6
Bingham	12	18	13	17
Radcliffe	10	5	11	5
Netherfield	6	3	7	2

#### **Sunday (Winter)**

	<b>WESTBOUND</b>		<b>EASTBOUND</b>	
	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>2009</b>
Bottesford	6	1	6	2
Elton	0	0	0	0
Aslockton	6	1	6	2
Bingham	6	7	6	10
Radcliffe	6	1	6	2
Netherfield	6	1	6	2

Most comment on this is covered by Part 2 as there are wider issues here surrounding the delivery of services to rural areas. There are some specific deficiencies that need addressing:

- The last train of the day from Nottingham to Radcliffe and Aslockton is 17:34. This is **not** acceptable. The 20:45 from Nottingham should

continue to provide a local service plus a later commuter service, the 17:50 and/or 18:45.

- The above comment applies to local stations east of Grantham, where the last train from Nottingham will be 16:45. What use is that to commuters? The 20:45 should provide a local service throughout. 17:50 should serve local stations east of Grantham.
- Westbound the a.m. commuter service is reasonable (although fewer trains than there were prior to 2005<sup>2</sup>) but later, the 20:26 arrival in Nottingham is the last stopping train of day, making return long distance journeys via Grantham impossible. A later stopping train is needed, ideally 22:22 arrival in Nottingham.

The proposed summer Saturday HST to Skegness is fully supported and an excellent use of resources. Stagecoach should be congratulated for this initiative. Winter Sunday services and establishing just when 'winter' is, needs reviewing though. Weekend traffic to Skegness can be busy throughout the year and although the HST is a step forward there are other issues on this route that have not been addressed. An enhanced Sunday service throughout the year is needed.

More trains go via Grantham which is supported. National Express advises us that their 2008 timetable will not have any major changes, so we have used the December 2007 East Coast timetable to check on connections at Grantham. We take into account the recommended seven minute connectional time. We still wonder if connections happen by design or by fortuitous chance. Highlighting a few examples:

- 06:45 Nottingham – Skegness. Misses 07:25 to Edinburgh (ex Kings Cross) by 4 minutes. In turn the 07:25 fails to feed into the Skegness, by 6 minutes. There is also a 07:25 to Kings Cross (ex Newcastle) which is missed by 4 minutes too and equally misses the train to Skegness by 6 minutes.<sup>3</sup>
- 13:45 Nottingham – Skegness. 13:10 from Kings Cross misses connection to Skegness by 1 minute.
- 20:45 Nottingham – Boston. Connection off 20:30 from Kings Cross completely broken and timing of this train needs reviewing.<sup>4</sup>
- 20:15 Skegness – Nottingham. Connection off 20:30 from Kings Cross to Nottingham missed by 2 minutes.

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<sup>2</sup> Such points are made elsewhere. The 2007 timetable along many lines is already a 'reduced' timetable when compared to 2005 and earlier, yet is considered the basis for the future.

<sup>3</sup> Historically such early morning trains from Nottingham called all stations feeding commuters into the East Coast via Grantham. Appalling timetables in recent years wrecked what were once robust connections, destroying the passenger base on the Nottingham – Skegness route. The trains still run but provide no meaningful service, whilst passengers now drive via congested A52 to Grantham.

<sup>4</sup> Central Trains had to make a last minute change to the 2006/7 timetable when the current 20:51 from Nottingham failed to provide the London – Boston connection. Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport suggested starting the 20:51 later to create connections in Nottingham from west. This was ignored and train still departs 20:51, but just sits in Grantham 17 minutes waiting the train from London. This is exceptionally poor timetabling.

## 1.2) Lincoln – Nottingham

This route is mixed, with Stagecoach to be commended for its improved service to Collingham. For some communities however, the comments above for the Skegness line can be repeated here.

### Monday - Friday

	WESTBOUND		EASTBOUND	
	2007	2009	2007	2009
Hykeham	11	9	11	8
Swinderby	10	9	9	8
Collingham	13	19	11	18
Rolleston	12	6	12	8
Fiskerton	10	6	10	8
Bleasby	10	6	10	8
Thurgarton	8	6	8	8
Lowdham	12	16	12	16
Burton Joyce	12	6	12	8
Carlton	11	5	11	8

### Sunday (winter)

	WESTBOUND		EASTBOUND	
	2007	2009	2007	2009
Hykeham	6	6	6	6
Swinderby	6	6	6	6
Collingham	6	8	6	8
Rolleston	5	0	6	1
Fiskerton	5	0	6	1
Bleasby	5	0	6	1
Thurgarton	5	0	6	1
Lowdham	5	6	6	6
Burton Joyce	5	0	6	1
Carlton	5	0	6	1

- The last stopping train from Nottingham is 18:16. This is **not** acceptable and later services are needed; 22:15 at least should call local stations.
- Westbound the a.m. commuter service has a problem. With the 07:10 ex Lincoln now a through train to London, stops at intermediate stations (other than Newark) are withdrawn. This robs the local stations of an important commuter train and a solution to this is required.
- The last stopping train westwards of day is the 18:33 arrival in Nottingham, which is unacceptably early. 22:35 arrival at least should call local stations.
- The Sunday service is curious. Is the lack of westbound train an error?

Looking at Newark North Gate connections, taking seven minute connectional time into account:

- 08:31 Newark – Lincoln misses 08:28 arrival from London by 4 minutes.
- Afternoon connections to London are poor, with 12:52/14:33/15:14 arrivals at Newark not making a connection.

The appalling Sunday service is discussed frequently, but we seem to be no nearer a solution.

### **1.3) Cross Nottingham Links**

Cross Nottingham City links would be highly desirable, but over the years such services have been axed. The one local service to survive is the Lincoln – Nottingham – Leicester service, yet this service does not stop at Beeston (or Attenborough). There are trains that call at *every* station between Leicester and Lincoln, but miss out Beeston and Attenborough. We note the comment from Stagecoach,

*“Some peak services also call at Attenborough and Beeston, but it has not been possible to service Beeston hourly owing to the timings of the Cross Country service between Nottingham and Birmingham via Derby.”*

This is unacceptable. This is something for the rail industry to solve and the constant ‘it cannot be done’ response cannot be allowed to continue.

### **1.4) Nottingham – Derby – Matlock/Birmingham (Monday – Friday)**

The through hourly Nottingham – Matlock service is welcomed. However, there is some exceptionally poor timetabling on this route. This table shows the repeated minutes past each hour of off peak service (London expresses excluded):

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Nottingham	04	08	11	35	37	
Beeston	10	14	17			
Attenborough			20			
Long Eaton			28		48	58
Derby		31	44		02	11

- 1 Nottingham – St Pancras stopper
- 2 Nottingham – Derby – Birmingham – Cardiff
- 3 Nottingham – Matlock
- 4 Lincoln – Nottingham – Leicester
- 5 Nottingham – Derby – Birmingham
- 6 St Pancras – Derby stopper

The restored third train per hour between Nottingham and Derby becomes nonsense if it runs just three minutes behind an existing Derby train, whilst the bunching of trains out of Beeston is ridiculous.

We suggest this is a better spread<sup>5</sup>:

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Nottingham	04	08	11	35	37	
Beeston	10		17	41	43	
Attenborough			20			
Long Eaton			28		50	58
Derby		31	44		02	11

This offers both Derby and Loughborough/Leicester trains at around 30 minute intervals out of Beeston and a regular approximately half hourly link is made between Beeston, Long Eaton and Derby. Running the Cardiff non-stop between Nottingham and Derby gives greater opportunity for a faster Nottingham – Birmingham time.

Eastbound is only marginally better with trains stopping at:

	1	5	6	3	2	4
Derby		06	19	24	40	
Long Eaton		15	29	34		
Attenborough				42		
Beeston	17			45	00	
Nottingham	26	28		57	06	14

The top row codes, 1-6, are the return workings of trains listed above.

Better would be:

	1	5	6	3	2	4
Derby		06	19	24	40	
Long Eaton		15	29	34		
Attenborough				42		
Beeston	17	26		45		05
Nottingham	26	35		57	06	14

Looking at times in this direction it is noticeable how much recovery time is injected into schedules approaching Nottingham, whilst the Leicester – Lincoln service sits in Nottingham between 12 and 16 minutes. So flexibility in the schedules does exist.

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<sup>5</sup> Obviously the timings will need adjusting to give correct headways etc and what is shown is just an overview of service structure.

## Evening Service

The bunching of Nottingham bound trains late evening when XC drops to hourly is poor:

Derby Depart	From
20:40	Cardiff – Birmingham
21:24	Matlock
21:40	Cardiff – Birmingham
22:40	Cardiff – Birmingham
23:30	Matlock
23:40	Cardiff – Birmingham (misses Long Eaton)

NCC trains from Plymouth direction are at Derby 20:44 and 22:41 – note the poor connection to Nottingham and this needs resolving.

## Matlock

We cannot see why some trains skip Cromford and Whatstandwell, as it seems not to change overall timings. Neither station is in the centre of population, but both are important tourist links and tourism must be central to plans for development of the branch.

Although Matlock hourly is welcome, there may be a good example here of the lack of transport integration found in UK. Public transport provision along the A6 corridor has always been a challenge, but government funding was made available recently to ‘re-launch’ the Trentbarton limited stop TransPeak (TP) coach service, a partnership between Derbyshire County Council and Trentbarton. Note the timings:

	EMT	TP
Nottingham	11	10
Derby Station	44/50	40
Ambergate	08	22
Matlock	23	35

	EMT	TP
Matlock	40	25
Ambergate	55	37
Derby Station	14/24	15
Nottingham	57	50

The tables show the repeated minutes past off-peak hours. Along part of this corridor there is no other public transport. Different government funding streams appear to have created two transport modes in pointless competition. There could be interchange between EMT and TP for travel to/from Bakewell and Buxton however and this depends on EMT bus links which we have not seen

details of yet<sup>6</sup>. Without such links there may be a competition issue where the coach and train run side by side.

## **Willington**

This relatively new station could have been an example of how to deliver behavioural change, but year after year has increasingly become an irrelevance. This too is covered in Part 2, re how rural areas are served. For reference note the drop in service:

Towards Derby/Nottingham

2007 07:16/07:45/08:16/10:25/12:56/14:47/17:26/18:25/23:50  
2009 07:48/12:48/18:25/22:25

Towards Birmingham

2007 06:45/08:13/10:15/11:15/12:45/14:15/17:45/19:14/20:21/21:11  
2009 07:43/13:16/18:16/21:16

### **1.5) Robin Hood Line**

We have always been unhappy with the skip stopping pattern here, especially as one of the stations skipped is Bulwell, one of the most important centres on the line. This local service should call all stations. When skip stopping was first introduced Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport commissioned a timetabling expert to review the service and his conclusions were that a half hourly service calling all stations is deliverable.

The late evening services are welcomed. We look forward to a Sunday service.

### **1.6) Liverpool – Norwich**

Northern Rail advises us that discussions are still in progress with DfT re the new Leeds – Nottingham, so it is difficult to comment on the Nottingham – Sheffield corridor. We assume that NR services will be plugging the gap created by less EMT trains on the Sheffield – Nottingham section and serving Langley Mill.

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<sup>6</sup> Once upon a time there was total ticket integration between Trentbarton and Central Trains between Derby and Matlock – CT tickets could be used on buses and bus tickets on CT. This was such a major leap forward that the scheme was launched by the then minister Glenda Jackson. The arrangement collapsed a year ago, with no government minister on hand to mark the occasion.

It is disappointing that 13:51 ex Liverpool still terminates at Nottingham, breaking the hourly service to Norwich at an illogical time.<sup>7</sup>

We are uneasy about capacity east of Nottingham if all trains will be 2-car 158, rather than 3-car which is necessary on a number of trains.

### **1.7) Ex-MML Route**

#### **East Midlands Parkway**

Although this yet to be built station was thought a jolly good idea, deciding just which services call at the station seems something of a challenge and without great care this could be another, but much bigger Willington. Currently we doubt that the stakeholders of EMP are getting value for money.

We are supportive of switching the stop from the Nottingham fast to the Nottingham stopper. Should Sheffield services call here? Without this we believe the station will not deliver its full potential.

There are occasional suggestions that EMP is a useful local park & ride for Nottingham and Derby. It could certainly offer some relief to the A453. However the current service will not deliver this. To Derby the first train of day arrives 09:12. To Nottingham is slightly better with arrivals at 07:25/08:14/09:05, but this way short of delivering a full p&r service.

It is unclear to us just what the target audience for EMP is. If it is a Bristol Parkway then every train should call. But we doubt it is a Bristol Parkway just as we question if it has any great relevance to East Midlands Airport traffic.

#### **London Services**

The draft timetable fails to meet all needs. The focus on providing capacity in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area and to restore services to Corby, plus a focus on fast services to Sheffield has not been beneficial to the East Midlands north of Kettering.

Traditionally, MML services provided links not just to London, but also 'local' trains within the greater 'Three Cities' area and the latter is missing in the new timetable. This table illustrates some of the changes:

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<sup>7</sup> This service did once run through, but there were capacity issues on commuter trains out of Nottingham and reluctantly the Norwich train was terminated to provide a unit to work a Coventry train, which would have been a single 153 otherwise (and the 153 released in turn no doubt strengthened another service). This was considered a temporary move until an extra unit could be resourced. The Coventry service disappeared completely long ago, but the 16:34 to Norwich has never been restored. Perhaps it is about time it was?

<b>SERVICE</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2009</b>
No of services daily from Kettering towards Leicester	43	25
Stopping service from south of Leicester arriving Beeston & Nottingham before 09:00	1	0
Stopping services from south of Leicester arriving Derby before 09:00	2	1
Departures from Beeston towards Leicester & London before 09:00 <sup>8</sup>	6	3
Departures to Derby from St Pancras between 16:00 and 18:00	6	4

One of the most serious changes is the lack of at least one return high speed schedule between Nottingham and London for business travellers, arriving London around 09:00. Nottingham is looking the poor relation when compared to Derby. For example, Derby has a 07:05 and 07:22 fast (both with four stops) to London, whilst Nottingham has a 07:10 (six stops) then nothing to 07:52 (two stops). Derby's 07:22 should start from Nottingham, restoring the existing 07:30 'The Robin Hood'.

It is similar on the return to Nottingham. The existing timetable is poor and it is remarkable that the business time trains in the draft are even worse. It is a commuter service to Northamptonshire that happens to carry on north to Nottingham. The fastest train is 17:15, which takes 1h 54m to reach Nottingham; this is not good enough.

Off peak Derby's stopping service to London (four stops – 1 hour 46 mins) can be quicker than Nottingham's fast service (three stops – 1 hour 45 to 50 mins), although this may depend on what stops at Parkway.

For the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the service to Nottingham is unacceptable.

Langley Mill and Alfreton get fewer trains to London and the one a.m. train does not arrive at St Pancras until as late as 10:20. This connects with comment above re 'The Robin Hood', which is still needed, starting back from north of Nottingham. We are uncomfortable that East Midlands Parkway is being used to reduce services along M1 corridor. This is not how to deliver modal shift.

We are supportive of later trains on a Saturday and the current service dictated by railway engineers, rather needs of passengers cannot be allowed to continue. Stopping patterns at Beeston and Long Eaton late at night daily needs reviewing. Although this may break repeated patterns, *all* trains either side of

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<sup>8</sup> Excludes East Midlands Connect stopping services on Ivanhoe Line.

midnight, when there is little connecting public transport out of Derby or Nottingham, should serve the smaller stations.

We note surprising fluctuations in schedules and presume the difference between Meridians and HSTs is being exploited, although we expected the shorter HSTs to do better?

Knowing the formations of trains is essential data too – there is obviously a great deal of difference between a 5 + 5 Meridian service and a single 5 Meridian service.

### **1.8) Joined Up Railway**

The rail network is so fragmented today that it is difficult to see how it can ever be restored. Poor connections were a regular criticism of Central Trains. Paragraph 1.4 illustrates this well, with the bunching of westbound trains. This is the mentality of considering each train in isolation – a train to Cardiff, a train to Matlock, a train to Leicester etc, without considering how those trains interact.

An example of poor connections in the draft timetable:

The Crewe – Derby – Nottingham – Skegness through west to east route was one that was axed in 2005. Of the fragments that remain, an eastbound journey on the repeated hourly service 'connects':

xx:07 Crewe – Derby xx:26  
xx:24 Derby – Nottingham xx:57 ('connection' missed by two minutes)  
xx:45 Nottingham – Skegness ('connection' missed by 13 minutes)

There are other Derby – Nottingham trains, but this just delivers passengers to Nottingham for a 39 minute wait for next Skegness train.

Westbound using same services:

xx:15 Skegness – Nottingham xx:22  
xx:11 Nottingham – Derby xx:44 ('connection' missed by 11 minutes)  
xx:42 Derby – Crewe ('connection' missed by two minutes)

Again, there is a better connection from Nottingham to Derby but this just delivers passengers to Derby for a 40 minute wait.

Remember, this example is on what was once a through route – no changing trains, no hanging around and end to end journey times around one hour quicker than today or in the future.

### **1.9) Lincolnshire**

Lincolnshire is already covered in part above. The other rural routes do not see very much change in the draft timetable. This is disappointing. The increasingly important centre of Lincoln would appear to be stuck for all time in a transport backwater. The through train to London is welcome, but does not make a complete transport network. Sunday services especially are disappointing. With Lincoln now a main university town and busy with Sunday shoppers, it is ridiculous the Sunday service some 20 years ago was better than it is today.

### **1.10) Rolling Stock**

There are a few mentions above, but across the East Midlands we are concerned that some capacity will be reduced rather than enhanced. The loss to EMT of all (?) 3-car units is an example.

It is unclear what will form some of the peak hour trains to/from London. What is situation on southbound trains ex Derby/Nottingham where if two Meridians are joined, half the train is locked out of use until Leicester? This is excessive safety and needs solving. Reservations could be located in the locked half of train too, but we are not sure if this was solved by MML or if still an issue.

Planned stock allocations to each train will be useful data for stakeholders.

### **1.11) Pocket Timetables**

Central Trains has done a good job on printed material, with the pocket timetables tending to show all trains on a route and not just those of CT. We trust this will continue, but where responsibility rests is unclear to us, especially north of Nottingham/Derby where NCC/EMT/NR all interact.

### **1.12) A Thank You!**

Stagecoach deserves congratulations on its commitment to consultation. Arriva too has given stakeholders full details of its plans. This is a positive start to the new franchises. Thank you.

## **PART 2 SUPPORTING COMMENT ON PROPOSALS**

### **2.1) Overview**

We are very disappointed by the draft timetable.

EMTAR published 'The Future of Rail Services in the East Midlands' in March of 2007, warning of what the future could bring. This paper seemed to attract little interest at the time, but at least we can now say, "We told you so".

We recognise that the timetables prepared by Stagecoach/Arriva will meet the DfT specified Service Level Commitment 2 (SLC2). Although the DfT has now released the Invitations to Tender (ITT) we cannot see the SLC2 in the public domain. We e-mailed DfT on 31<sup>st</sup> October asking if SLC2 could be released, but so far have received not so much as an acknowledgement.

We appreciate the opportunity to work with Stagecoach/Arriva towards delivering the best possible timetable allowed by SLC2 and it will be for EMTAR and the Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport and its partners to direct our dissatisfaction towards DfT.

### **2.2) Background**

The rural routes of ex-Central Trains do poorly in the new timetable. For over a decade the rural services have suffered grievously under Central Trains and at the minor stations, all but a few passengers have been driven from the railway. To then use this low passenger base as an excuse for axing stopping trains is unacceptable.

This extract from the EMTAR 'The Future of Rail Services in the East Midlands' summarised our fears back in March 2007. These fears have been realised:

### **3. FRANCHISES – WHY ARE WE CONCERNED?**

#### ***3.1 Central Trains Franchise History***

- *8<sup>th</sup> March 2000*                      *SRA invites bids for the Central Trains franchise replacement.*
- *7<sup>th</sup> February 2001*                *SRA halts the franchise replacement process and the status quo continues.*
- *19<sup>th</sup> October 2004*                *Alistair Darling announces the Central Trains franchise would be scrapped.*
- *18<sup>th</sup> October 2005*                *DfT announces planned new franchise structure for East Midlands.*
- *November 200 7*                    *Start date of new franchise.*
- *December 2008*                    *Start of new timetables decided by the new franchises.*

<p><b><i>So at the very time our rail services should have been enhanced to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, they have spent almost 8 years in limbo.</i></b></p>
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### **3.2 Service Reductions**

Through recent years there has been a significant reduction in services operated by Central Trains. Examples:

- 1) *The end of through Nottingham – Nuneaton – Coventry services.*
- 2) *The end of through Lincoln – Nottingham – Leicester – Nuneaton – Birmingham services.*
- 3) *The end of through Skegness – Nottingham – Derby – Crewe services.*
- 4) *The end of through Nottingham – Birmingham – Hereford services.*
- 5) *Key commuter trains withdrawn that serve Nottingham, Lincoln and Derby areas.*
- 6) *Poorly timed trains that miss vital connections.*
- 7) *Poorly timed trains that miss vital station stops.*
- 8) *Poorly timed trains that miss key flows of passengers (commuters, shoppers etc).*

***The declining and inferior level of service on many routes is the one going forward into the new franchises and may become the norm for the future.***

In fact the situation is *worse* than we feared. Not only has the inferior service become the norm, but at no time did we anticipate that the DfT planned massive cuts to services at certain rural stations. We can see no mention of this anywhere in any DfT document.

The following is a summation taken from the Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport submission to DfT during the franchise consultation bid:

- ***Services on rural lines in East Midlands have stagnated back in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. The status quo on this is not acceptable.***
- ***The DfT through the re-franchising process must give a lead on how the rural services can match the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.***

Not only has the DfT rejected this in totality but decided to deliver a rail service to many communities in East Midlands hardly fit for the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

'Wins' in the new timetable such as the third train per hour between Nottingham and Derby is only restoring what existed in the 2005 and earlier timetables.

We cannot help but notice similarities in the East Midlands with what has happened on the rural lines of the new First Great Western franchise, where SLC2 has offered an inadequate level of service. Insufficient rolling stock for the secondary lines has been a problem on First Great Western too and we wonder if similar problems could be in store for us in the East Midlands, but this will not become obvious to us until December 2008.

### **2.3) Rural Services**

The near abandonment of rail services to some communities is contrary to just about every local and regional policy document published in recent years and we are left speechless. A few key comments:

- With some stations only having trains at commuter times there will be *no* off-peak fares available, as these kick in after 09:00 or 09:30. This has very serious implications for social inclusion.
- The message seems to be that you drive to your nearest railhead. This has serious implications for congested roads such as A52 and A46. We can only assume that DfT has abandoned all pretence of delivering behavioural change.
- Following on from above there is another social inclusion message – you can only drive to the railhead if you have a car or a car available at home at off peak times. For many on low income this is not an option.
- We note the decimation of Sunday services to smaller communities. Central Trains has failed miserably due to staffing problems to deliver any semblance of a reliable service on Sundays and it is unsurprising nobody would consider CT to/from a local station on a Sunday. Again, to use the management failures of the outgoing TOC as a model for the future is unacceptable.
- What is the use of some stations such as Elton & Orston or Peartree, but even busier stations such as Carlton, Willington or Aslockton too? It is assumed that closing stations would be political suicide, so there is no debate over what are rural stations for and how they fit into a regional, integrated transport network. So we end up with the worst possible situation, with underused bits of infrastructure that are expensive to maintain and to serve, but deliver few tangible benefits. This is a waste of taxpayers' money. The lack of political courage from DfT on this is depressing – either provide funding to offer a meaningful service or admit that it is the intention to close down stations.
- The through Lincoln – London service was a useful headline in the media, but a second TOC is now to service Lincoln with a probably faster service. The EMT service has seriously compromised the a.m. commuter service from local stations (see above) and the net benefit to the East Midlands is questionable. This smacks of transport policy based on 'spin' with no focus on an integrated regional transport network.

### **2.3.1) Lincolnshire**

The rural railway is well represented in Lincolnshire plus the links to the county and the City of Lincoln. The road network is poor, although EMTAR sees this as a positive and should be a catalyst for developing environmentally sensitive public transport schemes. In practice the opposite is happening and comments above already show how the marginalisation of Lincolnshire is growing so far as public transport is concerned. Some more examples of confused thinking:

Nottingham – Newark – Lincoln runs parallel to A46. How have rail services here developed? The number of trains running between Nottingham and Lincoln and return, on weekdays:

2000	47
2007	32

The rail corridor is restricted to 60 mph over much of its length and is an early 20<sup>th</sup> century railway in the 21<sup>st</sup>. Recent re-signalling at Lincoln has been welcome, but this line remains an embarrassment as one of the main routes into one of the UK's great cities. Network Rail has estimated speed and other enhancements will cost around £50m. It is unclear where the funding will come from and rarely features as a top regional priority. Parallel to the railway, a top priority is the scheme to dual the A46 from Widmerpool to Newark at a cost of £205m<sup>9</sup> plus (and climbing?).

Further south the DfT has recently given the go ahead to a new road, the A1073 road between Spalding and Eye<sup>10</sup> at a cost of £80.3m. This road parallels the 'Joint Line' from Peterborough to Spalding and Lincoln. This double track once mainline is another route with early 20<sup>th</sup> century characteristics that should be a key freight corridor, but is not and EMTAR is unaware of any development proposals. An upgraded 'Joint Line' would vastly enhance Lincoln's connections to London and the south, as it would for Boston and other parts of Lincolnshire via Sleaford. The A1073 also follows the old March to Spalding railway line and the new road even seems to encroach on the disused track bed at one point. This line should never have closed being a vital artery to the East Coast ports. Funding is there for a brand new road to cope with freight from the ports, but nothing for the rail alternative.

In summary, transport policy appears unchanged in many decades. The new rail franchises offer Lincolnshire no solution to its transport isolation and the DfT can only offer yet more environmentally catastrophic roads as the only way forward.

## **2.4) Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Other Policies**

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is manifestly at odds with SLC2/DfT, especially in the rural areas and there are serious implications for the democratic process. Groups such as EMTAR participated in the Examination in Public (EIP) into Regional Transport Strategy (RTS). One has to take some 'givens' and the poor rural rail services in parts of East Midlands was assumed a starting point on which to build. At no time did we suspect that in secrecy the DfT was issuing a SLC2 that undermined the foundations. Our approach to RSS would have been different had we known. We question if policies 41/42/43 of draft RSS can be delivered.

Looking at other local/regional plans rail is not often mentioned because of the impossibility of at first the SRA and later the DfT agreeing anything significant on

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<sup>9</sup> Curiously, when researching this paper, using Google and Internet, the cost of the A46 scheme was not easily traced despite the wealth of data available. The thrust was how wonderful the road scheme will be, but let's keep quiet about the cost. Whilst the railway data puts cost up front and points out how it is probably unaffordable so is downbeat about the benefits of the scheme.

<sup>10</sup> The A1073 is described as a 'road improvement scheme' which seems a devious description given the amount of brand new road.

rail schemes. References in LTP2s across region have words of frustration about rail, rather than future plans. However, we believe that local government must have assumed some 'givens' just as did EMTAR. All assumptions have been shown to be false and how long term environmentally sensitive transport schemes that tackle congestion and climate change now go forward is a completely unanswered question.

EMTAR is also reviewing documents relating to Milton Keynes and South Midlands Growth Area. The massive drop in services linking Kettering (and south) with Leicester (and north) could be contrary to what we believe was the emerging policy. We believe it was repeatedly said that intra regional travel, not London commuting, was paramount. EMTAR predicted the imbalance that we now seem to have, with London commuter travel dominating the whole of East Midlands Region.

The Report of the EIP was published just as the paper was finalised. We note that the Inspector recommends that the RTS be considered an interim strategy and '*that a comprehensive reappraisal of the regional transport strategy should be undertaken*'.

We note too at 3.29 referring to the Three Cities, '*While we have no doubt that the policy of concentration is the only truly sustainable one for the region, we feel obliged to note that if it can be achieved at all, it can only be by dint of a substantial development of urban public transport. Such necessary development requires both action and resourcing. Without it, the effect of concentration will be only to worsen existing congestion to an intolerable degree, creating pressures for the sort of car-based strategy that prevailed in the 1960s and 1970s*'. We believe the thrust of the new franchises deliver exactly that stated in the last phrase and provide no sustainable vision for the future.

#### **2.4.1) South-North Divide**

We are uncomfortable with the focus on delivering capacity to the Growth Areas in the south of the region and ultimately Corby, when it could be at a disadvantage to the counties further north. We still wonder if more expansive thinking could have delivered better value for money with the Corby service continuing north to Oakham and beyond. This expansive thinking exists in the south, but withers once reaching Leicestershire and is unacceptable.

Compare the south with what is happening at Growth Points in the north. Both Newark and Grantham are Growth Points, yet some of the rural stations seeing the biggest cuts are in the hinterland of Newark and Grantham.

#### **2.5) Replacement Buses**

We wonder if any local authorities will suddenly have to find funding for bus services to plug the gap left by the withdrawn trains. In many instances there are no complimentary bus services. Radcliffe for example is well served by bus to

Nottingham, but less well served to the east, which was covered by rail. The A52 corridor east of Nottingham runs through Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Lincolnshire and providing bus links across county borders can be exceedingly difficult, but is not a problem for a stopping train service.

## **2.6) Cross Nottingham Links**

Further background data to the topic introduced at 1.3).

Multi modal studies and other reports have shown that commuter traffic does not just head into Nottingham city centre. There are significant flows that cross the city. The business park near Beeston station for example will be attractive to workers living east of Nottingham and this area will not be served by the proposed extension to Nottingham's tram.

If such cross city flows do not appear in current rail statistics is because Central Trains axed the cross city services. The EMSTAR 'The Future of Rail Services in the East Midlands' paper identified these and pointed out the lack of connections in Nottingham between surviving services.

## **2.7) Future Capacity**

With passenger numbers expected to rise significantly in future years how will the East Midlands cope? Other than in Growth Areas to south of Region where is the new capacity provided? The new franchises offer little and to some areas it is a capacity reduction. To summarise, with further comment on capacity restraint:

- Recent years have seen services *reduced* yet this is basis for future.<sup>11</sup>
- Three car units to be deployed outside of Region.
- Severely limited platform space at St Pancras for EMT restricts expansion.
- Number of paths south of Leicester and Kettering restricts expansion.
- What does this mean for Nottingham re-signalling? For years Network Rail has talked of a business case being needed to enhance Nottingham station capacity and EMSTAR is unclear what is currently proposed, although recent comment from NR has been positive. However, the new franchises define a service level hardly fit for the 20<sup>th</sup> century, let alone 21<sup>st</sup>. What does this do to the 'business case'? Does this suggest Nottingham will get signalling capacity fit for the last century too?
- Already DfT has given permission for unacceptably large fare increases and we assume capacity will be choked by the unaffordable fare box.

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<sup>11</sup> Many trains that were withdrawn were not axed because of empty seats, but because of DfT's demands of Central Trains to improve PPM or to accommodate track enhancements outside of East Midlands. The PPM target was achieved by just axing the trains that impacted on timekeeping, irrespective of how busy they were.

## **2.8) Conclusions**

What happens next?

Nottinghamshire Campaign for Better Transport will work with the new TOCs to deliver the best possible service within the parameters of SLC2. We are confident those TOCs are committed to delivering a quality service.

For the DfT however, it is a different story. We will campaign vigorously to highlight:

- Government policy appears to have abandoned behavioural change and encouraging modal shift.
- Government policy is failing to take any notice of the impact transport has on climate change.
- Transport investment is concentrated in the south in the London commuter belt, with the north of East Midlands left with little.
- Capacity will be constrained by massive year on year fare increases.
- The lack of transparency and a transport policy based on media 'spin'.

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