

Press release

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East Midlands

Release: 07/01

TravelWatch urges local MPs to maintain pressure for better rail services in the East Midlands

TravelWatch East Midlands has today urged local MPs to maintain pressure upon both the DfT and preferred bidder to address the undoubted concerns with the new franchise.

TravelWatch East Midlands board member Stephen Abbott said "***Whilst we have welcomed the broad outline of the franchise, passengers are unhappy with some features and fear that the train service specification does not meet current passenger needs or satisfactorily cater for future growth.***"

Whilst we welcome the positive developments, which include:

- Provision of a new service from Nottingham to Leeds and
- An option to serve a new station at Corby.

We are concerned that:

- The proposed reduction from four to three London trains per hour north of Kettering, with one train per hour splitting/joining at Leicester to serve both Nottingham and Derby. *We believe that this will extend journey times and introduce unreliability into what has become a well-performing service.*
- Market Harborough will have hourly, rather than half-hourly, trains for most of the day. Wellingborough, Kettering and Market Harborough will have worsened connections to Derby and the North. Whilst Loughborough will have two trains per hour, they will be at uneven intervals.

- There is no requirement for better interlinking of regional East-West services to facilitate through and connecting journeys.
- There is no requirement to provide through services or regular, reliable connections from Lincoln to London.
- There is no requirement to deal with crowding, in summer and at weekends, on the route to Skegness.

The re-franchising process is moving apace and the four selected bidders have this week submitted their bids to the Department for Transport (DfT). The franchise will come into operation in November and the preferred bidder will be announced in the summer.

We are asking MPs to pressing the Secretary of State to ensure that the needs of the Region are taken fully into account when awarding the new East Midlands rail franchise.

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Notes for editor.....

TravelWatch East Midlands is independent body with nearly 300 participants from some 60 organisations, we have been grateful for the support of the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), Regional Assembly (EMRA) and local authorities. Our aim is both to represent the interests and concerns of public transport passengers across all forms of transport AND to assist local and regional authorities' work towards an integrated and seamless quality public transport network for the East Midlands region.

TravelWatch East Midlands' mission is to champion public transport so that it becomes:

- Accessible to everyone – including the mobility impaired
- Affordable and socially inclusive
- Available when and where needed
- Acceptable to all, whatever mode is chosen
- Attractive – with high quality of services and reliable information

You can visit our website @ www.travelwatcheastmidlands.org.uk/

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