

News release

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EMPTUF seeks rail users' views

The East Midlands Passenger Transport Users Forum (EMPTUF) is seeking the views of rail users, community, voluntary and social groups and other stakeholders on the proposed new East Midlands rail franchise.

The East Midlands franchise will operate inter-city services to and from London St. Pancras (currently operated by Midland Mainline) together with regional and local services in the East Midlands (currently operated by Central Trains).

A new Cross Country franchise will incorporate the current Central Trains inter-regional services Nottingham-Birmingham-Cardiff/Hereford and Birmingham-Leicester-Standed Airport.

The new arrangements will come into effect in October 2007, but the specification process for the new franchises is expected to be completed in spring 2006, with invitations to tender to potential operators following during the summer.

EMPTUF with its partners will be lobbying for improvements in East Midlands rail services and is seeking the views of interested parties.

Anyone wishing to take part can do so by completing a questionnaire, which is being circulated widely and can be accessed on the EMPTUF website at www.emptuf.org.uk

EMPTUF Project Leader Stephen Abbott said "We hope that passengers, passenger groups, local authorities and other stakeholders from across the East Midlands will use this opportunity to express their views on requirements for rail services within and from the region. Now is the time to act – once bidding starts it will be very difficult to influence the pattern of train services"

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Notes for editors

1. EMPTUF (the East Midlands Passenger Transport Users' Forum) is an alliance of groups representing the consumer interest across all modes of public transport. Associated organisations include Railfuture, Bus Users-UK, Transport 2000, EMTAR and many local bus and rail user groups. It has also received support from EMDA, the Regional Assembly and local authorities.
2. Initially set up by the former Rail Passengers Committee for the Midlands, EMPTUF is an independent body which aims 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.
3. EMPTUF's 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
4. By bringing together for the first time within a single body, representative groups of bus, rail, light rail, air and other passengers, EMPTUF offers passengers a new opportunity for strong consumer representation and regional policy makers a route to engage with transport consumers on an integrated basis throughout the region.

For further information please contact:

EMPTUF:

- Chairman, Alan Meredith on 0116 230 3895
- Hon Secretary Stephen Abbott on 01858 466629
- Website www.emptuf.org.uk