



## CAMPAIGN FOR RAIL RESPONSE TO THE WEST MIDLANDS RAIL EXECUTIVE RAIL INVESTMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

### Q1 Your Details

Company or Organisation **Campaign for Rail**

**Q2** Has the Strategy identified the key drivers for change on the rail network and reflected the main growth areas in our service plans?

The strategy has identified the key drivers for change.

**Q3** Is the 6-4-2 trains per hour frequency aspiration an appropriate approach for improving services across the network?

Not always. There are routes that have a local, usually all stations service which is supplemented by a faster limited stop service, sometimes provided by a TOC other than WMR or LNR. Where this is not the case and there is only an all stations local service, service improvement by providing additional limited stop trains should be considered. For example, Stourbridge Line trains are slow for the distances covered. It might be appropriate to have 2tph into Birmingham that serve all stations, 2tph that are limited stop and 2tph that call only at Stourbridge Junction after Kidderminster. 2-4-6 is also too simplistic. Cross City already provides 3tph to Redditch and Bromsgrove and we do not advocate this changing. However, to Leicester and to Derby or Nottingham 3tph may be an appropriate aspiration.

**Q4** Does the Strategy respond appropriately to the opportunity that HS2 will bring to the West Midlands region?

In terms of feeding passengers in to Curzon, trains to Moor Street, including via Camp Hill, offer excellent opportunities. There is serious concern that transfer between New Street and Curzon can be made attractive enough for rail users to consider it 'one station'. We do not envisage much transferring between Birmingham International and Interchange after CfR's meeting with HS2 and Arup. Transfer time will use up much of the advantage of faster place to place journeys on HS2. In terms of capacity release on the classic network, we look forward to learning the details, given the report of 'no station having a worse service after HS2'.

**Q5** Does the Strategy appropriately identify the economic benefits to the region that rail can deliver?

Benefits will not be evenly shared. Some parts of the Black Country will have journeys to HS2 longer than journeys on HS2 to get to London. 40 minutes is currently being quoted from Dudley to 'Central Birmingham' by metro (even longer from Brierley Hill) and we note that Brierley Hill's faster route by heavy rail, reversing at Stourbridge Junction does not appear to be going ahead.

**Q6** Does the Strategy effectively identify the long-term development needs for the network in order to support both passenger and freight services?

The long term development needs require more vision. There is a limit to how many more trains can be squeezed in with the current infrastructure even using longer trains and this will only suffice for the short term growth. The strategy should advocate limited four tracking of the Coventry Corridor and Stour Valley to increase capacity. For freight, about which the strategy says insufficient, we would like to see electrification proposed from Nuneaton to Hams Hall/Washwood Heath/Ryecroft Junction. Detailed planning for reopening Walsall to Lichfield should be in the strategy, probably including a link to Burntwood, one of the largest communities in the country that is not rail served. Bold schemes such as a tunnel from Duddleston to Five Ways, with platforms under the Bull Ring area (accessing directly New Street, Moor Street and Curzon stations) should be promoted now.



**Q7** Are there any other key issues that you think the Strategy needs to address?

The strategy focuses mainly on the conurbation, with insufficient interest in the shire counties. Worcestershire for example is not well served here. In fact, the accompanying map is badly misleading. It shows the line from Bromsgrove going directly to Worcestershire Parkway, presumably drawn by someone who did not know there will not be a single train connecting the two stations! Rather than correcting the map, there should indeed be a service advocated by the strategy and clear planning for well timetabled interchange for journeys between Evesham/Pershore and the conurbation, including access to HS2. The fact that the line goes no further south than Worcestershire Parkway is also telling in that the strategy is not looking to Cheltenham/Gloucester and beyond. We believe it should.

On the subject of developing the rail network in the South Midlands, the Honeybourne to Stratford upon Avon link should be advocated for through journeys from Evesham, and also London/Oxford to Stratford upon Avon. Foreign tourists are amazed how poorly this major tourist destination is presently served by rail and new housing developments around Long Marston will add to road congestion and exacerbate parking in the region.