

LNE & EM Route: ECML Route Study Consultation
Network Rail
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please reply to:
Roger Blake
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For the attention of Senior Strategic Planner (ECML)

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Dear Sir/Madam

East Cost Main Line Route Study

Railfuture is a long-established national voluntary organisation, structured in England as twelve regional branches with two national branches for Wales and Scotland. Across Britain, rail policy issues are overseen by our Policy Adviser Ian Brown CBE, and infrastructure issues co-ordinated by the Infrastructure and Networks Group headed by Chris Austin OBE. Railfuture is completely independent of all political parties, trades unions and commercial interests, being funded entirely from our own membership. We campaign for improved rail passenger and freight services on a bigger rail network to support and spread prosperity.

The future of the East Coast Main Line, and the economic fortunes of the number and diversity of communities which it serves, are of interest to more than just our branches directly along the route – London & South East, East Anglia, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, North East, Scotland – but also others with services, freight as well as passenger, which use it for part of their journey – East Midlands, Thames Valley for example. The ‘reach’ of the ECML extends well beyond its physical route, and its network of stakeholder interests likewise.

This Route Study marks a clear departure in style and substance from its predecessors, responding to the changed institutional and organisational contexts in which its choices for investment will be decided and delivered. The similarly changed funding environment will require that Network Rail’s own skills for engaging creatively with the Combined Authorities, Sub-National Transport Bodies and Local Enterprise Partnerships, for example, will have to continue to adapt if the various and continually-evolving policies and practices of all agencies are mutually to be understood and brought into collaborative alignment in order to deliver agreed outcomes, first identified in the Market Studies, effectively and efficiently.

Railfuture broadly welcomes the emerging devolved structure of Network Rail itself, including the ninth and non-geographic route for Freight and National Passenger Operators. This new structure together with the new approach to developing and delivering enhancement projects – a steadily-flowing pipeline rather than five-year, Control Period-determined, packages – should we believe enable a more responsive and inclusive approach which of necessity will have to engage with new strategic stakeholders and funding partners.

On top of this mosaic of moving parts will now come the new East Cost Partnership as a yet-to-be-tested model for forging a stronger ‘one-industry’ approach to delivering the economic, environmental and social ‘offer’ of rail. The East Coast Main Line finds itself as a crucible under the spotlight for an array of innovations whose unifying purpose must remain demonstrable benefit to the railway’s operating customers and in turn their consumers who have ever-rising service quality expectations and expanding mode choices.

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www.railwatch.org.uk



In conclusion, we welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation, and are keen to engage further as necessary. We are content for our response to be published on the Network Rail website in due course.

Yours sincerely

Roger Blake
Railfuture
Director for Infrastructure