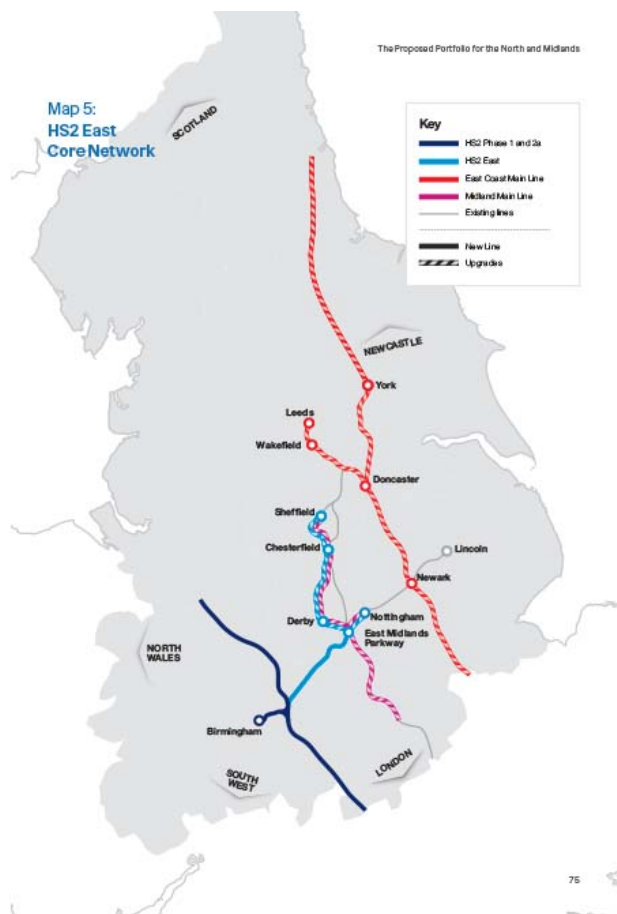


# IRP: the eastern leg changes in detail

November 18, 2021



It's no secret anymore that Leeds has lost its best chance of having a direct HS2 link, as part of the project's eastern leg.

The Integrated Rail Plan says that this has happened because of cost increases, "intermediate markets", "plans for other schemes" and a delivery timeframe that now looks longer than anticipated in 2017.

It says cash spent on HS2 would mean money taken from other areas the National Infrastructure Commission says needs funding. This includes east-west links across the Pennines.

The plan adds that the eastern regions could be better upgraded than those in the west.

The hope is its replacement plans will deliver rail connections to much the same effect, at a better cost and sooner, according to the report.

Called the East Core Network, a high-speed line will run to the East Midlands Parkway. The route will be designed to allow trains to access stations in Nottingham and Derby, enabling fast connections to the capital — less than 60 minutes.

The route up northward and west will benefit, the plan says, from further electrification of the Midland Main Line, which has already been completed as far as Market Harborough. The electrification, the UK Government says, will result in Sheffield and Chesterfield passengers reaching London about as fast as previous HS2 plans.

The work will, it said, decarbonise existing diesel services and speed up journeys along the Midland Main Line.

The East Coast Main Line will get investment for digital signalling and power supply upgrades. Maximum speeds, the plan says, could reach 140 miles per hour in some stretches.

The hope is, overall, the speeds to the former eastern leg area will be similar to the high-speed proposal (about eight minutes slower), as the East Coast Main Line is more direct than the previously-proposed HS2 line.

Listed under the heading “future possibilities”, £100m will be allocated to mass transit in West Yorkshire, subject to further funding. A study will also be undertaken on the best solution for Leeds station capacity.

The Government will also look into accelerating improvements at Toton, such as a station dedicated to local/regional services — subject to private investment and on a 50:50 matchfunding basis.

*Image credit: Integrated Rail Plan*