

Midlands Connect: “Let the train take the strain”

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New research shows that the rail enhancement project, the Midlands Rail Hub, will lead to 30 million more miles being travelled by passengers on our region’s trains each year.

The scheme, which would improve connections from Birmingham, to the East Midlands, the South-West, and South Wales, will see 29.3 million less miles travelled by car per year.

Late last year the Outline Business Case for the Midlands Rail Hub was sent to government by Midlands Connect and Network Rail. It includes proposals for faster, more frequent, or new rail links for over 30 locations across the country. These include Birmingham, Bromsgrove, Nuneaton, Worcester, Cardiff, Bristol, Cheltenham, and Leicester. If funded, works could begin by 2025 and be completed by 2030.

Better connectivity and shorter journey times make rail a more desirable mode of transport for travellers. The Midlands Rail Hub would make this a reality, leading to nearly 30 million car miles being taken off the road.

The proposed Midlands Rail Hub is Midlands Connect’s biggest and most ambitious rail improvement

scheme – a £900m – £1.5bn blueprint for faster, better and more frequent connections across the Midlands.

Detailed plans for the Midlands Rail Hub were launched in December to seeking approval for £1.5bn of improvements to the rail network. The proposals would see up to 100 extra trains in the region every day. The most significant upgrades will involve building two chords in Bordesley to allow us to unlock capacity for extra trains in and around Birmingham. Other engineering upgrades include reinstatement of platform 4 at Snow Hill station, partially double-tracking the line between Ledbury and Shelwick and freight loops between Nuneaton and Leicester. The scheme would also add more than 14 million more seats on the rail network each year. It would also bring 1.6 million more people to within an hour of the region's biggest towns and cities by public transport.

West Midlands mayor Andy Street said the Midlands Rail Hub plans were a “game-changing” scheme.

Andy Clark, Senior Rail Programme Manager, commented on the research said: “This figure shows why it’s so important the Midlands Rail Hub is built in full.

“This new research shows that we can make the train take the strain. The Midlands Rail Hub would deliver faster and more frequent journeys as well as 14 million extra seats on our railways.

“This key regional project will unlock the national rail network.”