

# MPs rally behind Coventry-Leicester-Nottingham rail improvements

June 15, 2022



MPs and regional leaders have gathered in Westminster today to call for the reintroduction of direct rail links between the major cities of Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham.

Event chair Alex Norris MP called for “urgent intervention to move these plans along and speed the route to delivery”.

Speaking at a roundtable discussion in Parliament, MPs cited new research which suggests that 75% of locals would be more inclined to travel by rail across the corridor if the journey was direct. Poor journey times between the cities and the need to change trains part way through the journey mean that just 3 per cent of trips from Leicester to Coventry are currently made by train.

The poll, which was carried out with 600 residents, also found that over a third of respondents cited the lack of direct services as something that put them off switching to rail.

Regional transport body Midlands Connect has drawn up plans that would see direct services run between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham for the first time in two decades. The scheme would see the creation

of a dive-under at Nuneaton, creating space for trains to pass through the station – at the moment, passengers have to get off one train at Nuneaton and onto another to continue their journey.

Once in place, the changes will allow a direct, twice hourly service between Coventry and Leicester, slashing journey times from 54 to just 38 minutes. It will also create new direct links from Coventry to Loughborough, East Midlands Parkway and Nottingham. Journey times from Coventry to Nottingham would also be cut from 108 minutes to 70 minutes – a 35 per cent reduction.

Local MPs, council leaders and businesses are now asking Government to support the creation of an Outline Business Case for the plans, which would provide more detailed analysis of the engineering work needed, costings and calling patterns.

Alex Norris, MP for Nottingham North, said: “These much-needed improvements have cross-party support from MPs and leaders across the Midlands – we’ve come together today to communicate this to Government – we want direct links between Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham as soon as possible. The research released today clearly demonstrates that connectivity is lacking, and that these plans will create the step-change in convenience and journey times that local people need to leave their cars at home. It’s essential that we now get the support we need to finalise these plans, so that they can become a reality.”

Colleen Fletcher, MP for Coventry North East, said: “Reinstating this rail link is an obvious solution. Given how poor the current service is – slow and indirect – it’s no wonder that so many people still drive between the major cities of Coventry, Leicester and Nottingham. These plans have been around for a while now, they will bring down journey times and open up green connectivity. We can’t afford to wait any longer, it’s essential that Government gets behind these improvements and gives us the support we need to move them forward.”

Jane Hunt, MP for Loughborough, said: “Since I was elected as the MP for Loughborough I have supported efforts to improve railway connectivity, in particular to major cities in the west midlands and in the north. We are fortunate to be served by a good service on the Midland Main Line, which provides a direct rail link to cities such as Sheffield, Nottingham and London, but I am always supportive of plans which seek to improve journeys to other destinations. That is why I am backing this proposal; it will create a direct rail link between Loughborough and Coventry and will help people living in my constituency to make greener travel choices.”