

# New campaign unveiled by Sustainable Transport Midlands to transform the East Midlands rail network

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Transport campaigning and innovation group Sustainable Transport Midlands (STM) has unveiled a new East Midlands-wide campaign called “East Midlands Commuter Programme”. The new project looks to transform the East Midlands rail and tram networks to something reminiscent of the “S-bahn” systems seen in mainland Europe and across the world.

The new commuter programme is split into four stages, each detailing which steps will be taken to develop the network if the scheme is approved by decision-makers. Proposals include Nottingham Express Transit tram extensions and a new S-bahn-style “Core” section through the current freight-only route in West Nottingham via Toton.

If approved, once the scheme enters Stage Four, STM hopes that a new railway line will be running from East Midlands Parkway to Castle Donington via East Midlands Airport with services running as far as Nottingham and Lincoln, as well as a new route from Derby to Ashbourne Town in the Derbyshire Dales, with those services running via Derby to Grantham and Chesterfield.

It's also envisioned that a freight-only line alignment between Burton-on-Trent and Coalville Town via Ashby-de-la-Zouch could be upgraded for passenger services, to prepare for the introduction of services running to Mansfield via Derby, Toton (the Core) and Ilkeston.

At its peak, by Stage Four, the "Core" via Toton could carry as many as 20 trains per hour, according to Sustainable Transport Midlands.

Thomas Haines, Project Executive at East Midlands Commuter Programme, said the scheme has taken months to develop. "The East Midlands Commuter Programme is a concept I have had for many years, constantly coming up with new fantastical versions of it, but until joining forces with Harry, had never got the chance to actually take it seriously. Now it has got off the ground, I cannot wait to help make this a reality, however long it takes. The East Midlands has long suffered from under-investment when it comes to public transport, and this plan attempts to go at the very least a small way to rectifying that.

"Of course there are several obstacles, such as the numerous other proposals by other rail personnel with more years of experience under their belts, and of course it would be easier and cheaper to deliver this if HS2 took it's originally intended route via Toton, but I am prepared to work hard with these other rail personnel, who will no doubt be invaluable to this project, to overcome these obstacles and deliver to the people of the East Midlands a public transport network they can be proud of, and a more than viable alternative to the car on many commutes throughout the region."

Harry Burr, Chief Executive at Sustainable Transport Midlands and Young Persons Ambassador at Rail Forum Midlands said: "I'm really pleased to be introducing this new campaign today. We have hardly touched the northern parts of the region during our campaign operations, but today, that all changes with a major new programme we're so happy to be leading."

If you're interested in finding out more about East Midlands Commuter Programme, you can visit their new website on <https://em.transport.click>, or you can learn more about Sustainable Transport Midlands by visiting their website on <https://transport-mids.com>.

*Photo credit: Sustainable Transport Midlands*