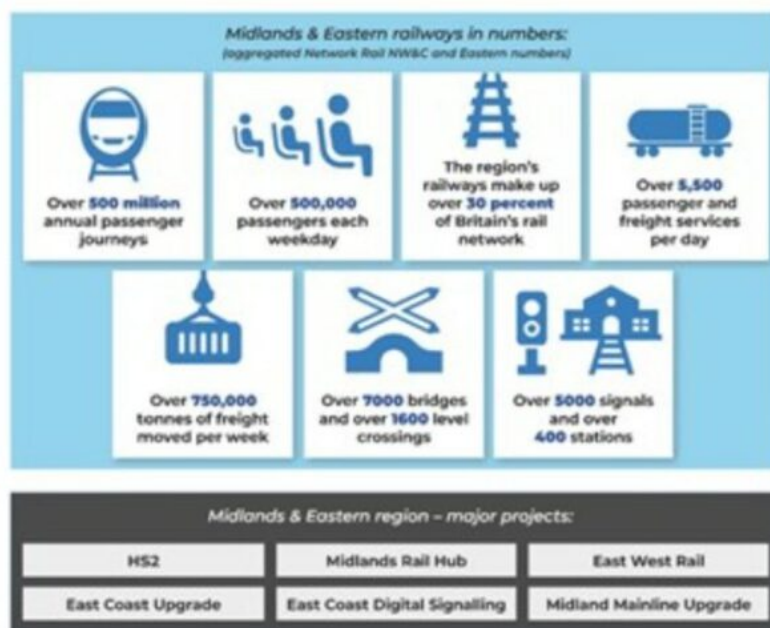
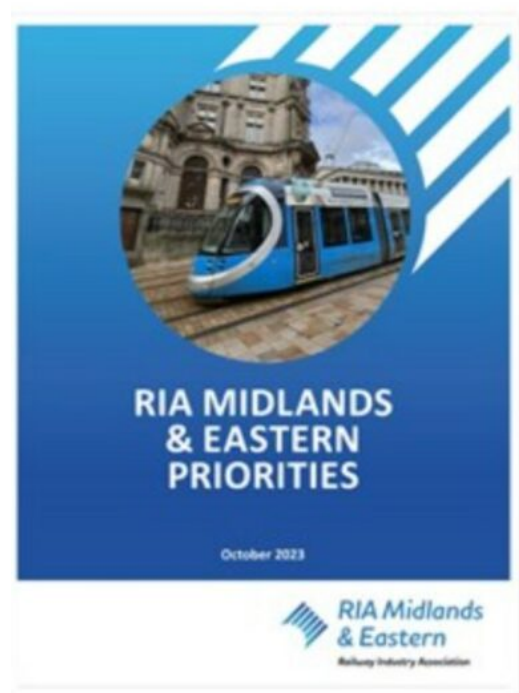


# RIA Midlands & Eastern Releases Priorities Paper to Address Core Regional Challenges

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The **Railway Industry Association (RIA)** Midlands & Eastern has published a new Priorities Paper, reflecting a collaborative approach with national and sub-national transport bodies to tackle key challenges and unlock the full potential of the regions' railways.

The Railway Industry Association (RIA) Midlands & Eastern has today published a new Priorities Paper, reflecting a collaborative approach with national and sub-national transport bodies to tackle key challenges and unlock the full potential of the regions' railways.

At a workshop held in July 2022 in Derby, RIA Midlands & Eastern members started the process of identifying key priorities, through conversations with the supply chain, regional railway clients, and national and sub-national transport bodies.

The four priority areas are:

- **Visibility & Stability:** Building strong relationships among regional stakeholders and suppliers for effective planning and delivery of rail projects, aligning with zero-carbon targets.

- Skills: Promoting well-paid green jobs, enhanced apprenticeship programs, and a robust skills base for better value delivery and productivity.
- Innovation: Supporting a highly innovative railway sector to drive the decarbonisation agenda efficiently, creating export opportunities and economic growth.
- Decarbonisation: Collaborating with the supply chain to lead Net Zero ambitions, facilitating job creation, investment, and economic growth.

The paper calls for clarity on major project delivery, such as clear timetables of work on the Midlands Mainline Electrification, visible to stakeholders and the supply chain, as well as safeguarding the route of HS2 Phase 2. Suppliers would also like to work with regional stakeholders to unlock visibility of projects funded through the Levelling Up and Sustainable Transport Settlements funds.

Sekoura Benissad, Chair of RIA Midlands & Eastern, commented: “The RIA Midlands & Eastern Leadership Group and its members have been key drivers of this paper. As rail policy devolves, industry must increasingly engage with the sub national transport bodies, Network Rail routes and the various local communities and stakeholders to deliver on rail.

“I am incredibly passionate about rail in the region and look forward to working with partners, colleagues and policy makers to strengthen the voice of the supply chain and support delivery of our regional priorities, ultimately to the benefit of passengers, freight users and the taxpayer.”

Karen Heppenstall, Head of Integrated Transport at Midlands Connect said: “We welcome the publication of this report, it highlights a clear appetite in the sector for a new chapter in the story of infrastructure investment.

“Suppliers, Network Rail and regional stakeholders are ready to come together and work with Government to deliver major rail schemes and limit the escalation of costs.

“We can boost economic growth, work towards decarbonisation, and improve skills and innovation, all while making sure projects are value for money. We know the Government is striving towards these goals with their Network North schemes and the rail sector is key to making this happen.”

*Photo credit: RIA*