

# Work begins on multi-million pound investment in Derby depot

March 9, 2022



Work has begun to transform East Midlands Railway's (EMR) Etches Park depot in Derby in preparation for the arrival of the train operator's new Aurora train fleet.

The £35 million pound project, which is largely funded by rolling stock company RockRail, will be delivered in two phases, firstly to upgrade the site to accommodate the new bi-mode Aurora fleet and secondly the construction of new train cleaning areas, replacement offices and staff facilities at the sites' South Shed.

Lisa Angus, Transitions and Projects Director at East Midlands Railway, said: "These massive improvements to Etches Park are great news for the city of Derby and the customers we serve.

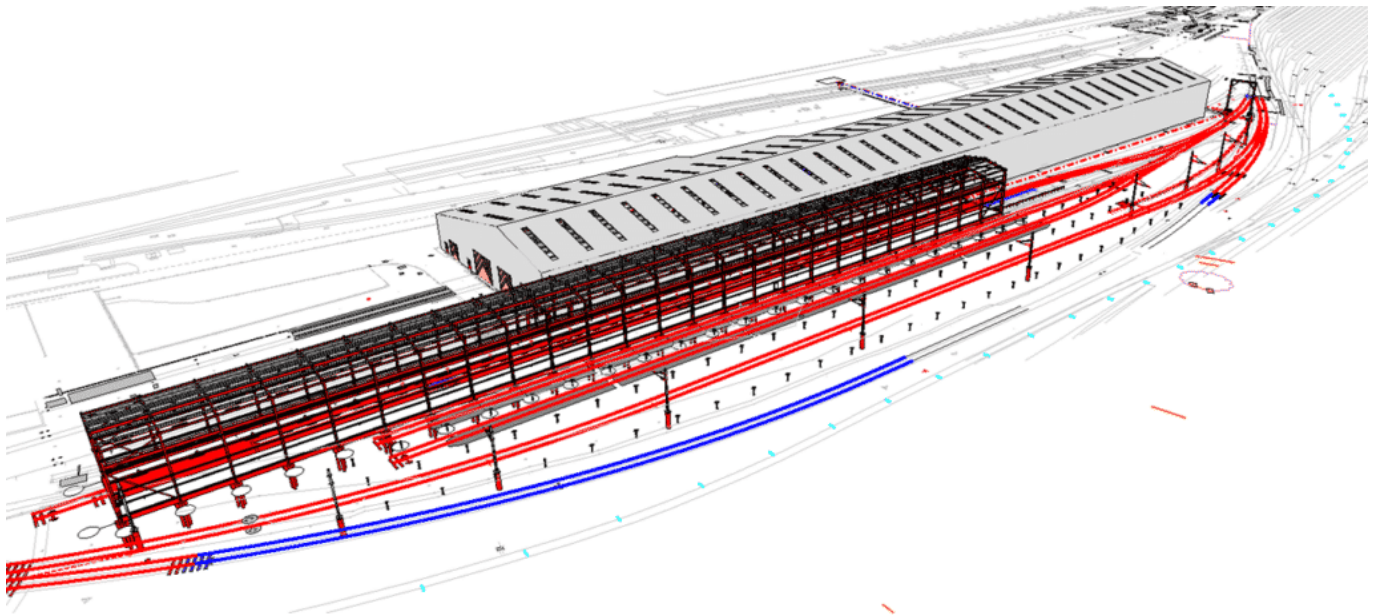
"Using the latest technology and techniques, we will be able to operate our new Aurora fleet as efficiently as possible, while also maintaining specialist engineering jobs in the city for decades to come – helping to cement Derby's proud railway heritage.

"Everyone at EMR is very excited to begin operating our new Aurora trains for our customers in the East Midlands and South Yorkshire and these new improvements are another important step on our journey to

bring the new trains to the regions we serve.”

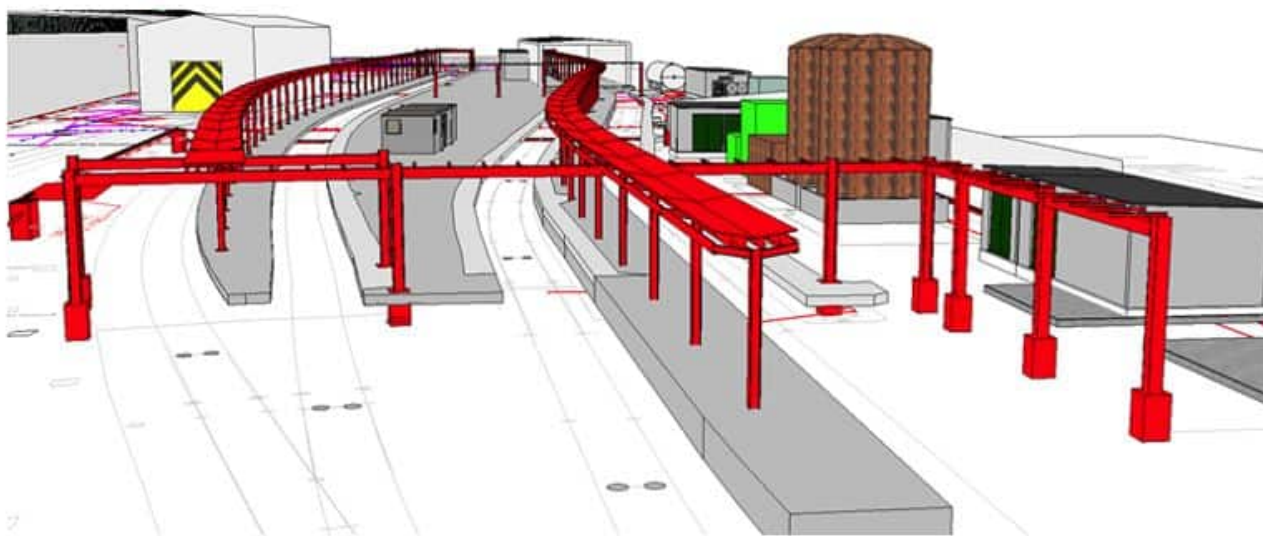
The first phase of works, which comes at a cost of £15 million and will be undertaken by Buckingham Group Contracting Ltd (Buckingham), will involve reconfiguring the current track layout at the site – helping to improve operational flexibility and greater train movements across the depot.

Alongside these works, the North Shed, where trains are maintained at the depot, will also be extended and a new electric overhead line will be fitted so the new bi-mode fleet can easily be tested.



*North Shed Extension Design*

Further to this, a new carriage wash system will be built at the site, all fuelling and servicing equipment will be upgraded, and the depots’ fuel road will be extended – helping to accommodate 2 x 5 car units.



*Fuel Road Etches*

New technology will play a key role in the future of the depot, including the use of a new Vehicle Equipment Monitoring System. This system feeds back numerous levels of detailed data to EMR so it can quickly monitor its trains in real-time – helping to plan preventative maintenance at the depot and leading to an enhanced performance of its trains.

Mark Swindell, Founder and CEO of Rock Rail, said the company is providing £30 million of funding in an innovative, flexible and customer focused manner.

He said: “Rock Rail is delighted to support EMR and this important investment into Derby Etches Park, which when coupled with the new Aurora units, will deliver a great improvement for customers and the railway.

“We are bringing together track and train investment to deliver a system improvement. Improvements to Etches Park will facilitate the new bi-modes unit and allow flexibility to operate in diesel or electric mode. Rock is committed to this flexible solution as the EMR network develops over time.”

When they enter service in 2023, the Aurora trains will offer significant advances on EMR’s existing fleet, with passengers benefiting from more seats and modern interiors. The new Aurora fleet is currently being manufactured at Hitachi Rail’s UK factory.

The trains, which will have the ability to run on overhead electric lines, will also include features that passengers have said they want to see, including air conditioning, free WiFi throughout, plug sockets and better passenger information screens.

Elaine Clark, Chief Executive Officer of Rail Forum Midlands, said: “It is great to see the preparations for the arrival of the Aurora fleet taking shape with the investment in the Etches Park Depot in Derby. This is great news, not just for passengers and EMR, but also for ensuring skilled jobs are retained and helping to encourage further investment for the city.”

Marc Riley, Managing Director, Rail for Buckingham, said: “Buckingham is delighted to have secured this important project and we look forward to working closely with East Midlands Railway and the team at the depot to safely deliver the improvements at Etches Park. We know that investments like this are essential to improve the passenger experience and the railway whilst at the same time protecting highly skilled engineering jobs.

“Our team will focus on delivering the improvements on time, to the quality standards demanded and work closely with the depot team to protect the ongoing operations of the depot and the safety of depot personnel.”

*Photo credit: East Midlands Railway*