



Dear Stakeholder,

We are writing to update you with the latest information on plans to improve East Midlands Railway services and the final stages of the transformative £1.5 billion Midland Main Line Upgrade. While we have been making good progress with the infrastructure and other preparations, coronavirus has, inevitably, caused a delay.

As you will be aware following discussions since the start of the East Midlands Railway franchise and the public consultation which followed, December 2020 was due to see a significant timetable change.

The December 2020 timetable delivers a fundamental uplift in capacity and frequency for services on the Midland Main Line. It provides the capacity for EMR to operate six (currently five) trains per hour between London St Pancras, the East Midlands and South Yorkshire as well as improving reliability and performance. This timetable change will also see the introduction of electric trains to the EMR franchise, making use of the newly installed overhead electric lines between Bedford and Corby.

EMR Regional services will have benefited too, with new journey opportunities and improved connectivity ahead of a more significant improvement in December 2021.

The impact of coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic has had a profound impact on businesses and industries across the UK—including the railway. As a result, the benefits to EMR passengers we were due to deliver in December 2020 are now planned for May 2021. Although this may not come as a surprise, we share your disappointment that this is unavoidable. It is due to three principal reasons:

- 1) The final stages of electrifying the line between Bedford and Corby has been delayed by the impact of social distancing measures. A new method of working had to be developed to enable working on the overhead lines at height and in confined spaces.
- 2) The requirements of social distancing has also affected the ability to deliver critical training, including driver training.
- 3) Supply chain issues, complicated by coronavirus, which have affected the whole industry. This has included delays to the cascade of electric units.

We are all immensely disappointed by this delay, but given the unprecedented impact of coronavirus and our commitment to ensure major changes in train services are delivered safely and effectively, we have no choice.

Next steps

The change to May 2021 does pose some challenging questions concerning EMR's train fleet, particularly the use of High Speed Trains (HSTs). Discussions are already underway and we will update you as soon as possible.



In addition, this also creates challenges for the successful introduction of an improved EMR Regional timetable in December 2021. Work is ongoing to understand the knock-on implications for these long anticipated changes.

In terms of the May 2021 timetable delivery, EMR and Network Rail are working together to develop a formal timetable submission for May 2021 and this will be submitted in late summer. At this point, EMR will also publish results of the public consultation which was completed earlier this year and details of the timetable submission to show the steps and decisions taken in response to feedback from customers and stakeholders.

Completion of the Midland Main Line Upgrade

Network Rail is continuing to progress the Midland Main Line Upgrade and expect to have completed the wire runs between Bedford and Corby in the coming months. This will enable the stretch between Bedford and Corby to be fully tested and commissioned this winter.

Further work was always scheduled to continue into early 2021, this includes at stations, some bridge work and maintenance depots. These items are an important part of the upgrade but not essential to the delivery of the timetable.

Conclusion

We are sure you will share our frustration at this news but hope you can appreciate the unprecedented impact the coronavirus pandemic has had on all of us in recent months. We will continue to work together to improve the rail service and will update you further in the near future.

Yours Sincerely,

Gary Walsh
Route Director, East Midlands
Network Rail Infrastructure Limited



Will Rogers
Managing Director
East Midlands Railway

