



### Response to Consultation: East Midlands Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION TO THE FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES

The Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) is the UK's leading non-party political lobbying group for UK small businesses. It exists to promote and protect the interests of all who own or manage their own business. With over 215,000 members, the FSB is the largest organisation representing small and medium sized businesses in the UK. The FSB has approximately 16,000 members within the East Midlands region.

#### 2. GAPS AND OPTIONS

##### 2.1 Option 1.1 - Long Distance High Speed (LDHS) Services

Whilst we recognise that increasing LDHS services to and from London must be a priority, the FSB believes that the draft East Midlands RUS places too much emphasis on London as an end-destination, to the detriment of intermediate stations in the East Midlands. An example of this is that commuters from Derby to Leicester have used the 07.27 service from Sheffield to St Pancras for convenience, but from December 2009 the service will no longer stop at Leicester. There is also a lack of direct train services from Bedford to Derby and Sheffield.

The FSB would welcome a greater focus in the East Midlands RUS on tackling the capacity issues of intermediate stations within the East Midlands. However, the FSB supports Option 1.1 as a short-term solution to overcrowding on routes to London.

##### 2.2 Option 1.4 – Higher Capacity Rolling Stock on LDHS Services

The FSB strongly believes that the long-term aim of the strategy must be full electrification of the route across the East Midlands, and the introduction of higher capacity electric trains.

In terms of sustainable economic development, we feel that Network Rail should be encouraging a modal shift from road use to rail. Indeed, this is an important feature of the East Midlands Regional Economic and Regional Spatial Strategies. A more efficient rail service, particularly between the three cities of Derby, Leicester and Nottingham will reduce congestion on the M1 motorway, whilst enabling individuals who live and work in different parts of the East Midlands to travel in a more sustainable and environmentally-friendly way. The FSB therefore supports the further development work outlined in Option 1.4.

##### 2.3 Options 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 1.8 and 1.9 – Train Lengthening

The baseline data gathered for the East Midlands RUS correctly highlights existing overcrowding between Alfreton and Sheffield, and Birmingham and Leicester. The FSB has received anecdotal evidence which suggests regular standing and overcrowding between Nottingham and Lincoln, particularly the 17.21 Nottingham to Lincoln service, and between Nottingham and Derby at peak times. The FSB was therefore surprised by

the projections for 2019/20 in Figure 4.6 which show that just one evening peak train to Derby will have standing passengers and that no trains to Lincoln will have any standing passengers.

The FSB supports the lengthening of the Leicester to Derby service in Option 1.5 to at least address the issue of overcrowding. The FSB also supports the lengthening of the services in Options 1.6 (Leicester to Nottingham), Option 1.7 (Leicester to Kettering), Option 1.8 (Nottingham to Worksop) and Option 1.9 (Nottingham to Leicester). The FSB would however welcome further consideration by Network Rail on strengthening the Nottingham to Lincoln service through train lengthening.

#### 2.4 Option 2.1 - Liverpool to Norwich

The Liverpool to Norwich route is a valuable inter-regional service, yet it suffers from severe overcrowding and the FSB believes that this is deterring some individuals from using it. The service is also considerably slow with an average speed of just 38 miles per hour. The East Midlands RUS suggests that there is little demand to travel to the North West (Figure 3.2 states that demand is only at 8%). However, vast numbers of commuters use this service, particularly between Chesterfield and Manchester. Anecdotal evidence also indicates that commuters from Sheffield are regularly advised to board the cross-country service to Derby instead because of overcrowding at peak times. The FSB believes that if sufficient rolling stock was made available, and if journey times were reduced because of a faster service, the predicted growth rate of 2.5% would be far exceeded. The FSB therefore supports Option 2.1 as a minimum standard. However, we ask that this measure is implemented in the very near future rather than before 2019.

#### 2.5 Option 2.4 - Birmingham to Stansted Airport

A significant proportion of FSB members in the East Midlands are required to fly overseas on trips for their business. Stansted Airport offers a broader range of European destinations than other UK airports, so many of our members travel to and from Stansted Airport on a regular basis. The FSB feels that the current service provides limited options for businesses and other individuals from the East Midlands who want to fly to and from Stansted Airport. The FSB therefore supports the service extensions from Birmingham to Leicester and Cambridge. However, the FSB recommends that the timetable for the service is extended to better match aircraft arrival and departure times. We also note that no provision has been made in the options to address the implications of the second runway at Stansted Airport, and we ask that this is taken into consideration in the finalised RUS.

In order to address current and future overcrowding, the FSB supports Option 2.4, and we ask that local authorities and Government agencies recognise the high value for money offered by this option.

#### 2.6 Options 4.2, 4.3, 4.5 and 4.6 - Improved Journey Times

Whilst the FSB appreciates that the service to London has become quicker, the journey times on all non-London routes from the East Midlands are not as quick as they should be. An example of this is the Nottingham to Leeds service which covers a distance of 74 miles at an average speed of 36 miles per hour. The journey takes 2 hours 3 minutes, but as the route to Leeds via Wakefield Kirkgate is also a freight line, the service is often affected by slower moving freight on the line. The alternative option for passengers is to

travel from Nottingham to Newark and then Newark to Leeds at a total journey time of 2 hours 6 minutes.

The FSB strongly supports the improved journey time specified in Options 4.2 (Birmingham to Stansted Airport), Option 4.3 (Nottingham and Derby to Birmingham) and Option 4.5 (Nottingham and Leeds). The FSB asks that these options are progressed quickly so that work can commence early in Control Period 5 (CP5), 2014 to 2019.

The FSB also supports Option 4.6. The FSB believes that there should be two trains per hour between Nottingham and Lincoln, preferably with one of these being a fast train. The FSB feels that this could be achieved by extending the Birmingham to Nottingham service and stopping only at Newark Castle. The slow train could then stop at all other intermediate stations. The FSB appreciates that the current flat crossing at Newark restricts the route to one train per hour, but we ask that development work on linespeed improvements is quickly progressed so that they can be swiftly implemented when the Regional Funding Allocations are made available.

#### 2.7 Option 4.8 – North Northamptonshire

The FSB supports the insertion of an additional stop at Kettering in the Derby semi-fast service as specified in Option 4.8.

#### 2.8 Option 4.9 - Lincoln

The most significant issue with the service from Peterborough to Lincoln is the timing restrictions on the section between Sleaford and Spalding. The section is currently only open from 08.00 to 18.00 which means that journey options are severely limited. Once the GN/GE Joint line upgrade is completed, the signal boxes are likely to be open for a longer period of time. The FSB firmly believes that services should start earlier than 08.00 and run until late evening so that passengers can make full use of the service for work and leisure. The FSB is therefore disappointed that Option 4.9 does not recommend any additional services between Peterborough and Lincoln.

The FSB understands that the unit which could run the Peterborough to Lincoln service in the evening is instead operating the Lincoln to Doncaster service instead. If an additional unit could be made available for Lincolnshire services, the FSB feels that it should be possible to operate both an evening service on the Peterborough to Lincoln route and a better daytime service from Lincoln to Doncaster.

The 2007 Regional Planning Assessment for the East Midlands states that a small number of trains between Doncaster and Peterborough are overcrowded with school age students at certain times of the day. The FSB is concerned that the draft RUS does not reference this, and we ask that this is considered in the finalised RUS so that there is consistency between the regional strategies.

#### 2.9 Option 5.1 - Loughborough

We agree with the statement in Option 5.1 that a new slow line platform cannot be recommended. As an alternative measure, the FSB proposes that the platforms on the fast lines are lengthened. The FSB would also support other improvements at Loughborough station to make it feel safer and more welcoming to passengers, and encourage greater use.

### 2.10 Option 5.3 – Newark Flyover

Lincoln has been identified in the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy as a growth point, and it is highly likely that additional housing will be developed in Newark over the next 15 years. The additional population that will be brought to Newark from the housing developments will create greater demand for more regular services to and from Newark, and the Nottingham to Lincoln service in particular. The FSB therefore fully supports further development work on a flyover at Newark as outlined in Option 5.3.

### 2.11 Option 5.4 - Derby

Derby is a bottleneck, with conflicting movements at the southern end of the station, and it has the highest number of reactionary delay minutes in the RUS area. The Nottingham to Birmingham route also requires a lengthy stop for passengers at Derby in order for the train to shift onto the southern track. Whilst additional platforms would be helpful in the short-term, the FSB believes that a complete remodel of the infrastructure at Derby station is needed to address the conflicts of movement. The FSB therefore supports Option 5.4.

## 3. EMERGING STRATEGY

### 3.1 Seven Day Railway

A considerable proportion of FSB members are involved in the retail, leisure and tourism industries. They require a regular and reliable weekend rail service as much as a regular and reliable weekday rail service. The FSB is concerned that the rail services have not adapted to Sunday trading hours during the last 10 years, despite the fact that Sundays are now one of the busiest shopping days of the week, and a day when people travel to access tourism and leisure facilities. An example of this is the Nottingham to Lincoln service on a Sunday which only offers a service from mid-afternoon.

The FSB does not consider replacement bus services as a viable solution, as these act as a deterrent to passengers because of the inconvenience of requiring a bus for part of their journey, and for the extra journey time it often entails. The FSB is therefore disappointed that the East Midlands RUS does not reference the implications of the frequent closures and blockades on important rail routes, particularly those routes between Birmingham and Stansted Airport, Liverpool and Norwich and Birmingham and Nottingham. The FSB therefore recommends that the finalised RUS adopts a policy of using alternative rail routes wherever possible and keeping bus replacement services to a minimum. The FSB does however welcome the proposal for an extra platform at Chesterfield as part of the Seven Day Railway programme.

### 3.2 30 Year Vision

Although the East Midlands RUS recognises the possibility of faster growth in the Milton Keynes-South Midlands area (MKSM), we are disappointed that there is no reference to other potential areas for growth that may be identified by the Partial Review of the East Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy. The FSB is particularly concerned that the East Midlands RUS does not mention the possible reintroduction of passenger rail services on the Leicester to Burton-on-Trent route. There is a possibility that the Partial Review will recommend additional housing development in North West Leicestershire which will encourage the reintroduction of passenger services between Leicester and Burton-on-

Trent. The FSB recommends that the finalised East Midlands RUS considers the findings from the Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy on where future housing and business park developments will take place in the East Midlands. The FSB also recommends that the track layout at Leicester is not changed in a way which would prevent the reintroduction of passenger services between Leicester and Burton-on-Trent.

**END**