

Friends of the Derwent Valley Line

Response to Consultation on new East Midlands Franchise

The sections and question numbers correspond to those in the published Response Form

SECTION A

This Consultation Response is submitted by Chris Darrall (FDVLSecretary@gmail.com) on behalf of "The Friends of the Derwent Valley Line" (FDVL)

The Friends of the Derwent Valley Line is a voluntary group representing passengers and local communities along the Derby to Matlock UK railway line. It works closely with the Derwent Valley Line Community Rail Partnership.

The views of the group have been gathered from regular meetings, and ideas previously circulated.

This document primarily includes responses that are relevant to FDVL and does not attempt to address all the other questions that have less relevance to that group.

SECTION B – Consultation Questions

1. How do you think closer co-operation between staff in Network Rail and the operator of the next East Midlands franchise can be achieved?

Establish and publish a common set of objectives, with financial incentives/penalties. Improve liaison between staff at local level. Network Rail must be involved with local stakeholder groups along with train operator.

2. How can the operator of the next East Midlands franchise engage with community rail partnerships or heritage railways to support the local economy to stimulate demand for rail services in the region?

Strengthen representation on community rail partnerships (CRPs) to ensure meaningful dialogue and support. Provide adequate financial support for the Community Rail Partnerships. Provide practical and financial support for station adoption groups, and funding for marketing, station enhancements and other local work.

This has happened during the current franchise, and helped to achieve a large increase in passenger numbers during that period. The result has been that many trains are severely overcrowded, and the new Franchisee must take steps to increase the amount and quality of the rolling stock provided on the services, in order to eliminate overcrowding.

Local Authority funding for CRPs may well diminish, and in any case the nature of this funding (committed annually) means that long-term planning is almost impossible. It is vital that the Franchisee makes a proper commitment for the duration of the franchise for funding of the CRP officer(s) and project work. (If the CRP did not exist, all these costs and the workload would be the responsibility of the Franchisee).

3. Do you think that the operator of the train service, stations and support services should take the following into consideration when they run the franchise:

- The environment? (Y or N + reasons)

Yes. The cancellation of the electrification to Nottingham and Sheffield needs to be reversed. New rolling stock is to be ordered for East Midlands services, and in the

current climate it cannot make sense to rely on diesel trains for the next 30 years. The new trains are understood to be heavier than the trains they replace (they will carry round electric traction equipment that will not be used for much of their existence) and it is understood that the diesel engines will deliver less power than existing trains, so will not be able to maintain the same schedules).

- Equality? (Y or N + reasons)

Yes. Apart from legal considerations, the Franchise should aim to reflect the gender and ethnicity of the communities it serves.

- Communities in the areas they operate? (Y or N + reasons)

Yes. Train Companies bring added value to their local communities; local procurement can bring economic benefits, and help to reduce the environmental impact.

4. Do you agree with our proposed approach, which could reduce journey times on long distance services and increase the likelihood of getting a seat? (Y or N + reasons)

Yes, subject to the provision of additional semi-fast services that will provide good connections to stations not served by the fastest services. We do have concerns, though, that the proposed new bi-mode trains will offer an inferior service in terms of ambience and travel time.

5. What are your suggestions about how to mitigate the potential loss of some direct services between Oakham, Melton Mowbray and London?

Not relevant to FDVL, but presumably the present limited service could be provided by bi-modes in the same way as at present.

6. What are the particular services, routes and times of day when you think additional seats for passengers are most needed?

The following comments refer specifically to the Matlock – Derby – Nottingham services, but there are other routes where overcrowding is as bad, if not worse.

- On which East Midlands services:

Services between Matlock, Derby and Nottingham, even when formed of 2 coaches, are often overcrowded

- On which East Midlands routes:

Matlock – Derby - Nottingham

- At which time of day?

Morning peak hour services between Matlock and Derby, and evening peak Derby – Matlock services. Some trains are formed with only 1 coach, and on this can lead to would-be passengers being unable to board. Apart from normal peak hours, this situation can arise with tourists travelling to Matlock during the summer, and with passengers travelling to watch Derby County football matches.

7. Which on-board facilities in order of preference (these are listed in the response form), are most important to you: Indicate preference from 1 – Highest to 13 – Lowest

	On short distance journeys (up to 60 mins).	On long distance journeys (over 60 mins).
Baby Changing Facilities	10	
Catering	12	
CCTV	11	
Cycle Storage	1	
First class areas	13	
Free wi-fi	9	
Luggage space	4	
Power Sockets	7	
Pushchair Space	2	
Seat-back tables	6	
Table seating	5	
USB sockets	8	
Wheelchair space	3	

(These priorities are relevant to the Derwent Valley Line only).

8. What other on-board facilities should be:

- Introduced?

The Derwent Valley Line is a scenic route within a World Heritage Site. Design and spacing of seats should afford the best view of the scenery for all passengers. Seats to be aligned with windows. Coaches to have wide windows, with “dead” spaces between them to be as narrow as possible. (Some current vehicles, with high-backed seats in “airline” layout, have very restricted views).

This also requires Network Rail to play its part in clearing a large amount of the lineside vegetation that has been allowed to grow up in the last 40 years.

- Improved?

Cycle storage facilities on trains need to be improved. Passengers are deterred from using cycles are part of their daily commute as they risk not being able to get their bike on the train. (Leaving a cycle in an uncovered rack at an unstaffed station is not something most people are prepared to do). Much emphasis is being placed on cycling as a leisure activity, with a number of trails starting from Matlock, and with only (currently) 2 spaces on each train, it will be unable to accommodate even a single family.

9. How could your local train services be changed to better meet your current and future needs?

- At peak and/or off peak periods?

Adequate accommodation must be provided – currently peak-hour trains require 3 or 4 coaches (the platform at Whatstandwell will require extending to allow 4

coaches). The present service is hourly throughout the day, 6 days a week. This is the minimum acceptable level, but with the increase in passenger numbers, consideration must be given to increasing the frequency of service between Matlock and Derby at certain times of the day (this will require additional infrastructure between Ambergate Junction and Matlock).

- During the early mornings, late evenings, or at weekends?

An hourly service between 06.00 (08.00 on Sundays) and 23.00 from Nottingham, Derby and Matlock should be provided, 7 days a week. This would use 100% of the branch's capacity, and reinforces the need for infrastructure works to allow for increases in frequency, and also for excursion trains that occasionally run to Peak Rail line at Matlock.

- At Christmas and New Year periods?

A service should be provided on Boxing Day, and New Year's Day, to meet the demands of shopping and sporting activities.

- During the Summer period?

Additional accommodation is needed during the summer months to cater for visitors to Matlock Bath and Matlock (prams and pushchairs are also an issue here). High loadings can occur every day throughout the week, not just at weekends

- For students travelling to local schools?

- To special events? (Let us know which events you are thinking of)

Additional accommodation and increased frequencies required for special events such as autumn Illuminations at Matlock Bath, Christmas Markets at Matlock, Derby County football matches etc.

- New housing, employment or retail developments?

Half hourly peak hour service to enable workers to access employment. Sunday service to provide opportunities for workers to travel by train.

- On journeys where interchange is poor?

More main-line trains to stop at Belper, so that passengers travelling north can avoid the extra journey into and out of Derby.

10. What additional services would you wish to see provided in the next franchise?

A regional service is required to provide better connectivity to the North West. This could start from Leicester and run to Manchester via Derby and the Hope Valley. Some of these services should call at Belper, thus providing a connection from stations on the Matlock line.

11. Do you support the proposal to reopen the line between Shirebrook and Ollerton to passenger trains? (Y or N + reasons)

- If so, what sources of investment could be identified to fund this proposal?

12. Do you think that the current number of services on the Midland Main Line to and from Luton Airport Parkway is adequate? (Y or N)

13. Would you like additional fast trains from London each hour to call at Luton Airport Parkway if this meant that, as a trade-off:

- Some services are withdrawn from other stations, such as Luton? (Y or N)
- Journey times to other stations may increase? (Y or N)
- Freight capacity and/or frequency is reduced? (Y or N)

No

- Your reasons for this

Freight traffic on the railway is important in removing traffic from the roads, so we would not want to see a reduction in the number of freight paths.

14. How could the train service be better at meeting the needs of passengers travelling to and from the airports within the East Midlands franchise?

The suggested regional service to the North West would provide access to East Midlands Airport, and could also be routed to Manchester Airport.

15. What ideas do you have for improving the current service on the Liverpool – Norwich route?

The through service should be maintained, not truncated at Nottingham, but increased accommodation is required on parts of the journey.

16. Would you support changing the destinations served by the existing Birmingham – Stansted Airport service, such as serving Norwich instead of Stansted Airport?

Strongly support / Support / Neutral / Oppose / Strongly Oppose + reasons

17. Are you in favour of any of these route changes:

- Liverpool – Norwich: Part transfer to Transpennine Express

(Y or N) **No**

- Birmingham – Nottingham. Transfer of local service from the Cross Country Franchise

(Y or N) **Yes**

- Birmingham – Leicester/Stansted. Transfer of local service from the Cross Country Franchise

(Y or N) **Yes**

Your reasons:

There is scope to better integrate the Derby – Nottingham service, with benefits in train diagramming.

Splitting services is just for operational convenience; from a passenger point of view, through services are almost always preferable.

18. Would you like to see any other routes transferred to or from the East Midlands franchise? If so, which routes?

19. Do you support increasing the frequency of train services in Lincolnshire despite the impact this may have on level crossing users? (Y or N + reasons)

20. How can we improve all aspects of your door-to-door journey experience?

Provide level, step-free access between train and platforms. Where this is not possible, consider equipping trains with at least one door with a ramp that can be deployed automatically by the passenger, improving the experience for those who are not wheelchair-bound, but nevertheless do have some difficulty in stepping from the train.

Consider how to reduce walking distances at stations; the modern trend seems to be to increase the distances that passengers have to walk (at the new St. Pancras, East Midlands trains are now 250yds further from the Tube platforms – much further if one needs to purchase a ticket; the new platform at Nottingham is sited as far as possible from the main entrance; under the Derby remodelling plans it appears likely that the opportunities for cross-platform interchanges will be much reduced).

21a. What more could be done to improve access to stations, including for those with disabilities or additional needs?

Provide disabled access (lifts or ramps) at Duffield station, and pickup/drop-off points (with improved lighting) at Belper station

21b. What more could be done to provide better facilities at stations, including for those with disabilities or additional needs?

See above

22a. How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for community purposes?

22b. How could the next franchise operator make better use of stations for commercial purposes?

23a. What could be done to improve the way tickets are sold?

Recognize that at unstaffed stations, some passengers do not know how, or are unable to use Ticket Vending Machines, and provide suitable guidance about purchasing tickets on the train.

23b. What could be done to improve the way tickets are provided?

Specify times that passengers need to allow to purchase/collect tickets from TVMs or booking offices: "Allow sufficient time" is not helpful to passengers unfamiliar with the station. At unstaffed stations, advise passengers what action to take if the TVM is not working, especially in regard to collection of tickets.

24. What changes to the fares structure would be of benefit to you?

Make provision for discounted tickets for passengers who travel regularly, but not necessarily every day. Enable all concessionary/discount tickets to be available via a TVM

25a. What additional information would be useful to you when planning or making your journey, such as seat availability, journey times and connections?

Better information regarding ticket restrictions that apply throughout the journey.

25b How would you like the additional information to be communicated to you?

Apart from by means of internet or smart phone, produce a more comprehensive printed timetable than those currently available.

26. How could staff be more effective in providing the service and assistance that passengers need on a modern railway network?

Ensure that staff are available and visible on all trains and stations.

27. How would you prefer the next operator to engage with: your organisation?

Together with Network Rail, attend meetings, and establish constructive dialogue with local groups and associations

28. What would make you feel safer and more secure on your journey in relation to:

- Trains?

Presence of staff on board train.

- Routes?

- Stations?

Presence of sufficient staff at stations. Consider how to provide a staff presence at stations that currently are unstaffed.

Take the initiative in working with outside bodies to ensure that access routes to stations are safe and well-lit.

- Other?

29. How do you think more investment might be put into the railways to match money already coming from government through Network Rail?

30. Are there any other areas that you think it is important for us to consider that have not already been discussed in this consultation?

Refer to the document that was submitted to DfT during initial consultation meeting in October 2016.