

FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 16 DECEMBER 2025

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

In accordance with Rule No. 3.3.3 the following question was submitted to the Council from Councillor Peter Harris:

The Leader is our representative to the East Midlands Combined County Authority. What influence does the East Midlands Mayor have at the Government for improving rail services in our area?

Reply from Councillor Paul Peacock – Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance

Thank you for the question, just to clarify my position in relation to Mayor Claire and EMCCA. I am one of two representatives of the Nottinghamshire District and Borough Council Leaders on the East Midlands Combined Councils Authority as a non-constituent member. I also sit on the Transport and Digital Connectivity Committee. I am not representing Newark and Sherwood District Council in these roles, I am representing all Nottinghamshire District and Borough Councils, these roles are not remunerated.

In answer to the question, Mayor Claire is in regular contact with Government Ministers, including the Secretary of State for Transport Heidi Alexander, Lilian Greenwood, Simon Lightwood and Lord Hendy (Rail Minister) and therefore is well placed to influence the Government's thinking and decision-making on rail matters. The Mayor has regularly raised issues such as Midland Mainline Electrification with the Government.

EMCCA is a member of Midlands Connect and an associate member of Transport for the North. This gives EMCCA a seat at the Midlands Connect Board and the Rail North Committee and the ability to influence Government through lobbying by both those bodies. EMCCA is also part of Transport for the East Midlands, a sub-group of East Midlands Councils which has a formal role with DfT in the management of the East Midlands railway franchise. EMCCA is also building a relationship with Great British Railways in readiness for rail devolution and the creation of GBR which is expected in 2027.

The Mayor has recently launched a consultation period regarding the emerging East Midlands Local Transport Plan, which includes all modes of transport including rail. Members have been invited to contribute to the council's response which will be agreed through the planning policy board, members can also make their own contributions directly to EMCCA.

Supplemental Question from Councillor Harris

The Government earlier this year suspended the completion of the electrification of the Midland Main Line from Wigston to Nottingham. The Government has now suspended, or is it ending, the construction of the Bordesley East Chord of the Midlands Rail Hub.

Most of the infrastructure such as rebuilding the bridge for the wires on the Midland Main Line has been completed. This has cost millions. The 'spark effect' on rail transport is well known and can be seen on the growth of passenger numbers of the East Coast Main Line.

The failure to complete the electrification is significant. Improved services from Nottingham to London and the Midlands Rail Hub for better services into the West Midlands will benefit many residents from Newark & Sherwood.

When will there be a timetable for completion of the electrification of the Midland Main Line using the workforce skills currently available, or is the Government happy to lose this opportunity and continue to use polluting bi-modal trains into Nottingham, and what are the plans for completing the Midlands Rail Hub including the Bordesley Chord. What has the EMCLA Mayor said or doing to address these failures?

Reply from Councillor Paul Peacock – Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Performance & Finance

I would reiterate that the Mayor is lobbying for the electrification of the Midland Main Line. I cannot say when that will be, but I can say that probably 30 or 40 years of massive under-investment in our railways across all political parties is one of the reasons why there is difficulty now extending those lines or improving those lines or bringing things in like HS2 because of the massive cost involved of upgrading. I will take those questions back and I am sure the Mayor is in exactly the same place as you are with those things and is fighting for that investment in the East Midlands. However, we have to acknowledge that this is something that has been going on for decades and it is going to take some time before our railway system is put right.