



Response to the System Operation Consultation by the Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities

The Consortium

The Consortium of East Coast Main Line Authorities (ECMA) is a cross party group of Councils, Combined Authorities and Regional Transport Partnerships throughout the area served from the East Coast Main Line (ECML), who are working together to secure economic growth and prosperity. We are calling for improved connectivity by rail in an area covering northern Scotland to London for both passengers and freight.

System Operation

The Consortium welcomes the investigation into system operation by the Office of Rail and Road. We would be supportive of a proposal for a safe railway network that is:-

1. More resilient and reliable than now.
2. Efficient, consistently giving both passengers and freight customers the lowest prices.
3. Able to meet the forecast demands placed upon it for both passenger and freight services by increased economic activity, with clarity over what the taxpayer and user are funding.
4. Co-ordinated to give a seamless journey experience for the customer, with improved connectivity as a prime objective.

The economic benefits

Our research¹ into the potential for agglomeration and labour market benefits through investment in the East Coast Main Line shows that such decision making could help unlock £5 billion for this route alone – a figure that rises to £9 billion with HS2 East services. We see railway services and infrastructure that connect people and places together safely, resiliently, comfortably and competitively as one of the building blocks for creating economically sustainable and prosperous regions in the United Kingdom.

The experience and democratic representation contained in local and regional government needs to be harnessed in a more structured consistent way by the rail industry. This will ensure that strategic choices about system operation and how to deliver them are integrated with economic and other plans to add value for the country.

A summary of our research is attached to this representation.

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¹ An online copy of the research is available at http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200802/consortium_of_east_coast_main_line_authorities/1498/consortium_of_east_coast_main_line_authorities