

Greater voice for rail passengers in new collaboration between government and East Midlands transport leaders

- government signs multi-year collaboration agreement with Transport for the East Midlands (TfEM) to give councils and local stakeholders a voice in the management of rail services
- two local posts created to focus on ensuring benefits delivered to passengers
- councils and local stakeholders can now review and address performance issues, positively influence decisions in the railway and promote service enhancements

Local leaders in the East Midlands will have a more influential role in deciding how rail services can support improvements across the region thanks to a new collaboration agreement with the government, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has set out today (3 September 2020).

The Department for Transport has signed a multi-year agreement with TfEM that provides local leaders with a formal voice in the management of the East Midlands franchise which has been run by East Midlands Railway (EMR) since August 2019. This builds on the close collaborative work which has been taking place between TfEM and EMR since the start of the franchise.

To ensure passengers see improvements and services work in the best interests of people across the region the government is jointly funding 2 local rail officers with TfEM who will work closely with the department and stakeholders.

Employed by TfEM, one of the posts will lead stakeholder engagement with the DfT and East Midlands Railway to secure better outcomes for local communities and businesses while the other is a support post to gather, analyse and present performance data to help make the case for improvement and or investment.

This new set up will enhance the department's management of the East Midlands franchise and provide a mechanism through which councils and local stakeholders can review and address performance issues, positively influence investment decisions in the railway and call for improvements to services.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

This bespoke collaboration agreement delivers a railway truly focused on meeting the needs of the passengers who use it. It provides councils and local leaders with a greater voice in the management of the services which matter to them, helping deliver positive long-term changes focused on what passengers want.

Our railways are at the heart of this country's transport links and it is essential that we work closely with Transport for the East Midlands to deliver the modern, punctual and reliable journeys people expect.

Will Rogers, Managing Director, East Midlands Railway, said:

Working in partnership with our local partners is absolutely vital to ensure the railway meets the needs and supports the aspirations of our cities, towns and communities.

We have worked closely with Transport for the East Midlands since the start of the franchise to develop and improve the service we provide. This further investment and formal collaboration agreement will further develop and strengthen our partnership as we invest to improve the railway across the East Midlands and beyond.

The collaboration agreement will last the length of the East Midlands Railways franchise, up to at least 2027, with a 12 month notice period on either side.

The department will continue to retain its existing role in monitoring and managing the delivery of the contractual deliverables and benefits and all financial responsibility and accountability for the franchise.

Sir Peter Soulsby, Chair of TfEM and City Mayor of Leicester said:

I am delighted that we have been able to sign this landmark agreement with the Department for Transport, which builds on a process of collaboration going back several years to the earlier franchise competition.

These are clearly challenging times for the railway but if we are to 'build back better' after COVID-19, then we will need to make sure that rail services enable local communities and businesses to thrive and that the local experience of rail travel is reflected in key decisions.

Cllr Richard Davies, Vice-Chair of TfEM and transport lead at Lincolnshire County Council said:

This collaboration agreement for the first time gives a direct voice to councils and local stakeholders in the management of our rail services. This can only be good thing for the urban, rural and coastal communities that make up the East Midlands. I look forward to working with government and EMR to unlock the potential of the railway to grow our economy and create jobs.

Recruitment for the new posts is currently underway. Further details can be found on the [East Midlands jobs website](#).