

Press release: Young people in Derbyshire have a say on what HS2 could do for them

In an interactive workshop run by HS2 Ltd, members of Erewash Youth Forum were tasked with taking on the role of station builders. They chose which elements to add to their preferred building design while also considering the customer experience, environmental impacts and managing the project – just like the real thing.

Administered by Erewash Borough Council, Erewash Youth Forum is supported by Derbyshire County Council and 9 local schools, including Bennerley Fields School in Ilkeston, who hosted the HS2-themed event on Tuesday 14 May.

Kim Soucy, Senior Engagement Advisor, HS2 Ltd, said:

We are building a railway for the next 100 years and, as our future passengers, it is vital that young people are kept informed of HS2's development whilst also having a say in what their future rail network will look like.

It's important we consider their forward-looking ideas to future-proof the railway for successive generations, and I was really impressed with the concepts suggested by members of Erewash Youth Forum. Not only were they well-thought out, mature and realistic, they offered innovative ideas about the railway design and passenger experience.

Wilsthorne School pupils deciding what elements to incorporate into their ideal HS2 station

From 2033, passengers in the region will be served by a new East Midlands Hub adjacent to Erewash in Toton, which will provide high-speed connections to core UK cities including Leeds, Newcastle, Birmingham and London.

As the best connected station on the new high speed network outside of the capital, and with enhanced classic rail, tram and bus services, the East Midlands Hub will ensure people in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire are well placed to benefit from HS2. In addition, HS2 services will also serve Chesterfield, ensuring that the whole region can benefit from new, improved and faster rail services.

Olivia Guy is a Year 9 pupil at Wilsthorne School in Long Eaton. She said:

As a group, we really thought about how we could make the station experience better for every kind of passenger who will use HS2. We

proposed a design that was eco-friendly yet not too expensive, but also offered entertainment while you wait for your train.

Train travel now is very hectic and it's often difficult getting a seat. HS2 will get you places quicker but will also ensure there is enough room for everyone to sit down on its trains.

Wilsthorpe School pupils deciding what elements to incorporate into their ideal HS2 station

Ideas

Some ideas for the East Midlands Hub suggested by the pupils included installing gender neutral toilets, utilising face scanners instead of physical tickets and incorporating wildlife habitats into the building's structure.

William Holt is a Year 10 pupil at Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy in Ilkeston. He said:

For people my age, HS2 offers incredible job prospects for the future. I am looking to go into engineering, a field which the UK already excels at, but HS2 really puts the cherry on top.

Other ideas generated at the event included offering colour coded and sound enhanced environments to aid visually impaired and hard of hearing passengers, utilising recycled materials to build the station and installing a community garden to provide produce for the station's cafés and restaurants.

Saint John Houghton Catholic Voluntary Academy pupils designing their ideal HS2 station

Erewash Youth Forum

Consisting of representatives aged 11 to 19, Erewash Youth Forum meets 5 times a year and aims to listen and speak for the young people of Erewash. The Forum aims to promote equality among young people, ensuring they are more involved in decisions that affect their lives and advance their participation in society and civic life.

Over 30,000 people will play a role in delivering Britain's new high speed railway, and HS2 is investing in young people now to leave a lasting legacy for the future.

HS2 Ltd's education ambassadors will be working with pupils – ahead of the choices they will make over whether college, work or university is the right path to take – knowing that today's teenagers are the ones that could be constructing HS2 as it extends from the Midlands to the North by 2033, or driving the high-speed trains of the future.

Wilsthorpe School pupil taking part in the HS2 workshop at Bennerley Fields School