West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy 2022-2050

West Midlands Rail Executive

Foreword
Planning Tomorrow's Railway

Rail is vital to the West Midlands. We are pleased to outline our updated rail investment strategy for delivering better rail services across the whole region over the next 30 years. It supports the exciting regeneration and growth plans of our partner authorities, recognising the role rail can play in connecting people, communities, economies and businesses.

In December 2018 we published our first rail investment strategy. Much has happened since. The whole country has had to face the challenges of a pandemic. For several months during 2020 the number of passengers travelling on our railway was down to 5% of its previous level. Whilst rail travel in early 2023 was approaching 80% of pre-pandemic levels, the previous core commuter market is now less important due to changing working patterns for many office workers.

The implications of the huge amounts of emergency Government financial support will be felt for some time. The rail industry is being asked for efficiencies and, whilst we would wish to see full services restored at the earliest opportunity, this means that timetables are unlikely to return to previous frequencies for some time on certain routes. We therefore continue to work closely with the rail industry to deliver the best possible level of train services across the West Midlands within current funding constraints.

Nevertheless, there is reason for optimism. HS2 is being built. Work to open new stations and routes in the West Midlands is underway. The government is actively considering investment to increase services in the Midlands through the Midlands Engine projects. Delivery of net zero by 2050 is also now a key government policy commitment that rail will need to help deliver.

Our objective remains to take more journeys off the road, and the fundamental advantages of rail still apply: clean, fast, frequent and easy to use services linking communities across the West Midlands as part of an integrated transport network.

Our focus in this updated strategy is on the rail connectivity required to support the needs of the region, underpinned by a view of how train services could develop in the future. This is one view, compiled with the support of our partner authorities and with input from industry stakeholders. It will evolve as ongoing changes in rail market conditions become clearer and we develop the strategy in more detail, informing the infrastructure and rolling stock projects that will be needed to make them happen.

As well as better train services, we know that passengers want to see a wide range of improvements when using the network. We are developing our approach to these modern passenger expectations to drive a transformation in reliability, punctuality, ticketing, value-for-money fares, customer care, information, stations and on-train facilities. We are working closely with our partners to better integrate our rail network with buses, trams, cycle and pedestrian facilities.

We have worked closely with our partners in development of this West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy which seeks to identify and address the key issues for the rail network in the West Midlands. This final version also reflects the core themes which emerged from our consultation exercise to which a wide range of over 330 stakeholders and individuals responded.

Contents

Executive Summary

West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) is a not-for-profit company, owned by 14 local authorities in the region. This means we are democratically run, accountable to elected representatives and act on behalf of people in the region. Our role is to specify and manage the West Midlands Railway train service contract, upgrade stations and build new ones, support improvements for passenger and freight train services and plan future network improvements in the region.

With a population of 6.47 million, an economy worth £128 billion each year, 3.2 million jobs and a key UK international airport, the West Midlands is vital to Britain's prosperity, and growing. By 2032 there will be 900,000 more people and 450,000 new jobs. Further major growth is anticipated in the 2030s and 2040s.

Delivery of our ambitions for faster, more frequent, better connecting and higher capacity rail services will be essential to accommodate and build upon this scale of growth.

Our strategy was originally published in December 2018. Since then, the pandemic has resulted in a significant reduction in rail travel and throughout 2021 it varied between 50% and 70% of its pre-pandemic levels. The rail industry has responded with a measured reduction in train services. Therefore, the baseline for considering future enhancements has changed. Greater emphasis is being placed on resilience and reliability of services and network performance. There is widespread discussion about potential long-term behavioural changes that may result, for example, in fewer people commuting 5-days a week in peak hours but more demand for off-peak and leisure journeys. Such changes in rail user needs and markets were already shifting, but the pandemic has accelerated these changes and introduced greater uncertainty over how people will want to use rail in the future.

Since 2018 the government has also announced ambitious plans to decarbonise the economy in line with its climate change obligations. Delivery of net zero by 2050, and the elimination of diesel-only trains by 2040, means the rail industry needs to start delivering a significant programme of electrification very quickly if it is to meet these targets.

Significant changes have also been announced in relation to HS2. Phase 1 is now proposed to open later in c.2030, with Phase 2a to Crewe shortly after. The Integrated Rail Plan was published in November 2021. It stated a revised opening date for the Crewe – Manchester leg of the early 2040s and a wholly new plan and programme for Phase 2b Eastern Leg.

We also need to recognise that the rail industry financial position has changed following the pandemic, and in the short to medium term there will be significant pressure to control costs. It will be important to balance these short-term funding challenges with the long-term requirements of the network.

These factors resulted in us deciding that an update to our strategy was needed.

In this document we forecast a circa two-thirds increase in rail travel across the West Midlands over the next 30 years compared to 2019 (before the pandemic), with overall travel returning to the 2019 level by 2026. Our rail services will continue to make a major contribution to the economy, businesses and communities of the West Midlands.

However, the region's rail network has significant existing challenges and in 2019 levels of traffic were operating close to capacity. Whilst HS2 will unlock capacity and connectivity on the core south east to north west corridors, there is a need also for further capacity enhancements for future passenger and freight growth on other key corridors, especially into central Birmingham and an investment strategy for improving local and regional connectivity, including through new or improved local rail services and stations. Because this is a time of major change, we have re-evaluated the priorities contained in our 2018 rail investment strategy and adapted them to reflect the key challenges we now face. Our eight strategic objectives are now:

ONE: To support the recovery from Covid-19.

The rail industry needs to recover from the major shock it has suffered during the pandemic. We need to encourage passengers to return and match our services to what passengers and potential future passengers need. The key to this will be to:

- demonstrate that we have a clean, safe and secure network
- develop robust timetables that serve passengers' changing requirements
- ensure that the railway is efficient and value for money for passengers, taxpayers and government
- complete delivery and introduction of the new train fleets on order
- deliver the new stations and routes already funded and agreed

To support these actions, we will continue to monitor rail usage closely and develop a greater evidence-based understanding of future demand. We are also producing a new Rail Customer Experience Policy and will keep this and our broader strategy under constant review in the light of changing passenger needs.

TWO: To contribute to net zero.

Rail has a high value as an environmentally sustainable mode of transport. We believe that encouraging growth in rail's market share – both passenger and freight - is a vital component of a net zero strategy. This means that our approach is to encourage growth in rail transport as a key lever on the route to zero emissions. This applies both to building back from the impact of the pandemic and in the longer term.

We also need to de-carbonise the rail industry itself. We strongly support a rolling programme of electrification and are working closely with Network Rail on their prioritisation process for the West Midlands. The key immediate electrification priorities are:

- Snow Hill Lines (Stratford/Leamington – Birmingham – Worcester – Great Malvern)
- Nuneaton – Birmingham

- Sutton Park Freight Line (Including services to new Aldridge station)
- Camp Hill Line, Bromsgrove – Droitwich Spa and fast/freight lines between Kings Norton and Barnt Green

followed by:

- Nuneaton – Coventry – Leamington – Oxford/London Marylebone
- Nuneaton – Leicester – Cambridge/ Felixstowe
- Wolverhampton - Shrewsbury
- Oxford - Worcester - Hereford

THREE: To deliver Midlands Rail Hub.

Midlands Rail Hub (MRH) is a transformational project that is essential to our strategy. It unlocks the national rail network's capacity bottleneck in central Birmingham, improves access to HS2 and delivers faster and more frequent connections across the West Midlands and beyond.

Delivery of MRH, in full, is critical to achieving a number of key national and regional outcomes:

- Providing much-improved connectivity between Birmingham and South Wales, the South West, Worcestershire and Herefordshire
- Creating a major new interchange hub between local, regional, inter-city and HS2 rail services and local transport modes at Birmingham Moor Street / Curzon Street station.
- Delivering new cross-regional rail connections, including direct access to the regeneration areas in Birmingham Eastside and Digbeth
- Maximise the benefits that HS2 will bring both locally and to economic hubs in the South West and South Wales by providing direct rail access to the HS2 Curzon station
- Enabling wholly new rail markets to be served through new services and stations

Crucially, MRH is the core building block which enables further rail network enhancement required to meet future transport demand across the West Midlands in a sustainable manner.

FOUR: To maximise the benefits of HS2 to the West Midlands.

We strongly support delivery of HS2 in full to both the North West and to the East Midlands and on to Yorkshire.

In our view the new high speed network, centred on the West Midlands, is an essential intervention under all potential future scenarios and it is imperative to ensure that its benefits are secured and maximised at the earliest opportunity.

This includes:

- Phase 2a HS2 services from the two West Midlands stations to Manchester and Scotland via Crewe
- HS2 services connecting Stoke and Stafford with the West Midlands Interchange station and Birmingham Airport/NEC
- the accelerated delivery of both:
  - HS2 Phase 2b from Crewe to Manchester
  - HS2 from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway for Birmingham – Nottingham services
- the continuation of HS2 to connect with the East Coast Main Line in Yorkshire and the West Coast Main Line in Lancashire

The delivery of the HS2 Growth Strategy around Curzon Street and Birmingham East Side and around Birmingham Interchange (UK Central) is essential to unlocking these benefits, as are identifying the best use of released capacity on the existing network and creating a local rail network that integrates with HS2.

Midlands Rail Hub's additional services at Birmingham Moor Street will also provide improved connectivity to high speed trains services from the adjacent HS2 Curzon Street station and help spread the connectivity benefits of HS2 across the wider region.

FIVE: To develop high growth corridors whilst reducing social deprivation and levelling up.

Central to our vision for rail services in the West Midlands is that they should provide the capacity needed for the region's growth in the future, connecting communities, businesses and people to jobs. In order to do this and support initiatives such as the West Midlands Combined Authority's "Plan for Growth", it is important that the services and the local needs of the areas within the West Midlands are considered together.

Whilst this strategy proposes improvements on all corridors, our forecasts show that three have the greatest potential for growth: towards Coventry, Worcester and Nuneaton/ Leicester. These are supported by the delivery of HS2 and the full Midlands Rail Hub scheme to provide additional capacity in central Birmingham.

SIX: To maximise access to the rail network.

This priority has a number of themes, all aimed at creating a vibrant, inclusive and accessible transport system, such as:

- putting stations at the heart of the community
- new stations that support economic growth and new housing
- local train service frequencies and capacities that encourage and support growth
- rail at the heart of a wider integrated public transport offer in the metropolitan area
- fares that are simple to understand and easy to pay
- improved access for all

SEVEN: To support the movement of goods by rail.

The West Midlands, both economically and spatially, is of vital importance to the freight sector in the UK. It is a significant generator of freight movements and its geographic location means that it is the setting of many freight-related businesses and those who rely on the supply chain.

There is also significant freight passing through the region. Of particular importance to the West Midlands economy is the intermodal logistics sector where new and expanded terminals are required to connect the region with UK domestic terminals and deep seaports. However, there has also been strong recent growth in the aggregates and steel sectors which will need to be accommodated and potential new high speed parcels trains have the potential to support decarbonisation of small-scale logistics operations in urban centres.

It is clearly important that any rail strategy takes full account of the needs of freight and its future growth, and new rail schemes need to do so as well.

EIGHT: To consider radical change in the long term.

HS2 and Midlands Rail Hub will offer substantial new capability to grow rail services along with the West Midlands economy into the 2040s. Looking further ahead the scale of economic and population growth will demand yet more significant growth of rail capacity. Major population and employment growth at new development locations such as the prospective UK Central Hub in Solihull will further alter the shape of demand for travel in the region.

We need to start radical planning now for what the West Midlands rail network needs to do and look like in thirty years time. We need to assess the case for new capacity that could separately support reliable local and longer-distance services and cater for growth on key routes such as the Wolverhampton – Coventry corridor.

Our work with our industry partners continues to scope, develop, cost and fund the schemes we need to unlock these major benefits essential to the future prosperity of the West Midlands.

About the West Midlands Rail Executive

The West Midlands Rail Executive was initially established to provide a strong regional voice over our regional rail network through the creation of a credible, democratically accountable body which had the authority to act for the wider West Midlands and the in-house expertise necessary to work alongside the Department for Transport (DfT) in specifying and managing the contract for our local West Midlands Railway train services.

WMRE membership includes 14 local transport authorities (plus the West Midlands Combined Authority for which WMRE undertakes the majority of rail responsibilities on behalf of Transport for West Midlands) with each local authority having a seat on the WMRE Board. The Mayor of the West Midlands acts as Chair. Two further local transport authorities also sit on the Board as non-voting affiliate members.

Our objectives are defined within three core work areas:

1. Leading Today's Railway

2. Building Tomorrow's Railway

3. Planning Tomorrow's Railway

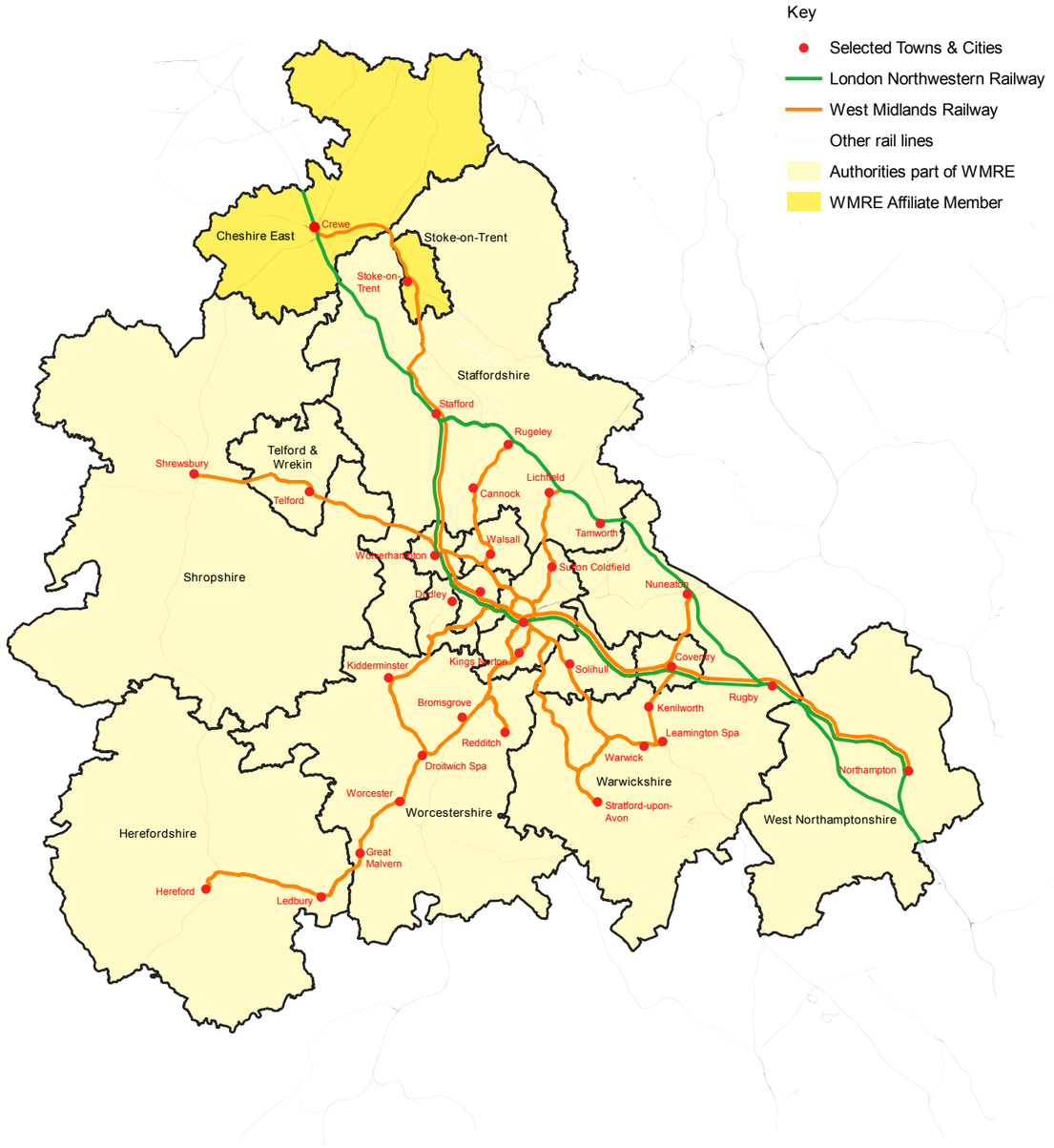
and the West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy sets out our vision for achieving tomorrow's railway.

Clearly this vision will only be realised through close partnerships with both our member authorities and Midlands Connect, and also with government and the new rail industry body, Great British Railways (GBR).

Both ourselves and our predecessor organisations have a successful history of working closely with the rail industry in respect of long-term strategic planning at both the regional and national level and has a proven track record of adding value to this process as a key regional industry partner.

We look forward to continuing this close relationship by supporting Great British Railways (and the current GBR Transition Team) and seeking to ensure that the railway's new 30-year Long Term Rail Strategy and our West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy are closely aligned.

West Midlands Rail Executive area and partner authorities



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Introduction

This strategy sets out the rationale for ongoing transformation of West Midlands rail services and connectivity to meet the region's forecast growth over the next 30 years to 2050.

It sets out and prioritises our core objectives for improved train services and for the infrastructure, stations and trains that will be required to make them happen. In turn these outputs have been sense-checked against deliverability, the magnitude of change and likely cost required, political context and volumes and concentrations of population and employment growth.

The 30-year West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy was originally published in December 2018. In the document it stated:

"Our focus in this investment strategy is on the rail connectivity required to support the needs of the region, testing the value of a wide range of train service options and choices to help us determine our overall strategic objectives. These options are not fixed, and will evolve as we develop the strategy in more detail, informing the infrastructure and rolling stock projects that will be needed to make them happen."

Since the document was published the pandemic has resulted in a significant reduction in rail travel, and throughout 2021 it varied between 50% and 70% of its pre-pandemic levels. As a result, the DfT has taken on the industry's revenue risk and has led a measured reduction and then gradual increase in train services. Therefore, the baseline for considering future enhancements to train services has changed. Greater emphasis is being placed on resilience and reliability as well as financial sustainability.

There is widespread discussion about potential long-term behavioural changes that may result, for example, in fewer people commuting 5-days a week in peak hours, and more people deciding to live further from their work as they are able to combine commuting with working from home. These behavioural changes need to be reflected in our long-term strategy.

Significant changes have also been announced in relation to HS2, the timing of which formed an important input into the modelling of our previous strategy. Phase 1 is now proposed to open four years later in c.2030, with Phase 2a to Crewe shortly after. The Integrated Rail Plan was published in November 2021. It stated a revised opening date for the Crewe – Manchester leg of the early 2040s and a wholly new plan and programme for Phase 2b Eastern Leg.

The rail industry's organisational structure is also changing significantly with the creation of the new Great British Railways organisation and the work by GBR, Network Rail and others to establish the industry's own Long Term Rail Strategy for the next 30 years.

These factors resulted in us deciding that an update to our strategy was needed.

In this document rail services across the West Midlands are considered by corridor as shown on the map on the next page.

Core Rail Investment Strategy Corridors

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Rail for a Dynamic Region

With a population of 6.47 million, an economy worth £128 billion every year, and 3.2 million jobs, the West Midlands is vital to the United Kingdom's economy and prosperity.

The region's economy is set to grow by 14% by 2032, with 900,000 more people and over 450,000 new jobs anticipated in committed local plans.

Population and employment growth is extensively distributed across the region as a whole, but with a significant focus on the West Coast Main Line corridor between Northamptonshire, Coventry, Birmingham, the Black Country and Staffordshire, and Worcestershire.

After 2030, aspirational development proposals are under consideration by multiple third-party promoters. Examples include UK Central Hub in Solihull and a new West Midlands Freight Interchange in Staffordshire. Together, these two uncommitted schemes alone would add a further 86,000 jobs to the region.

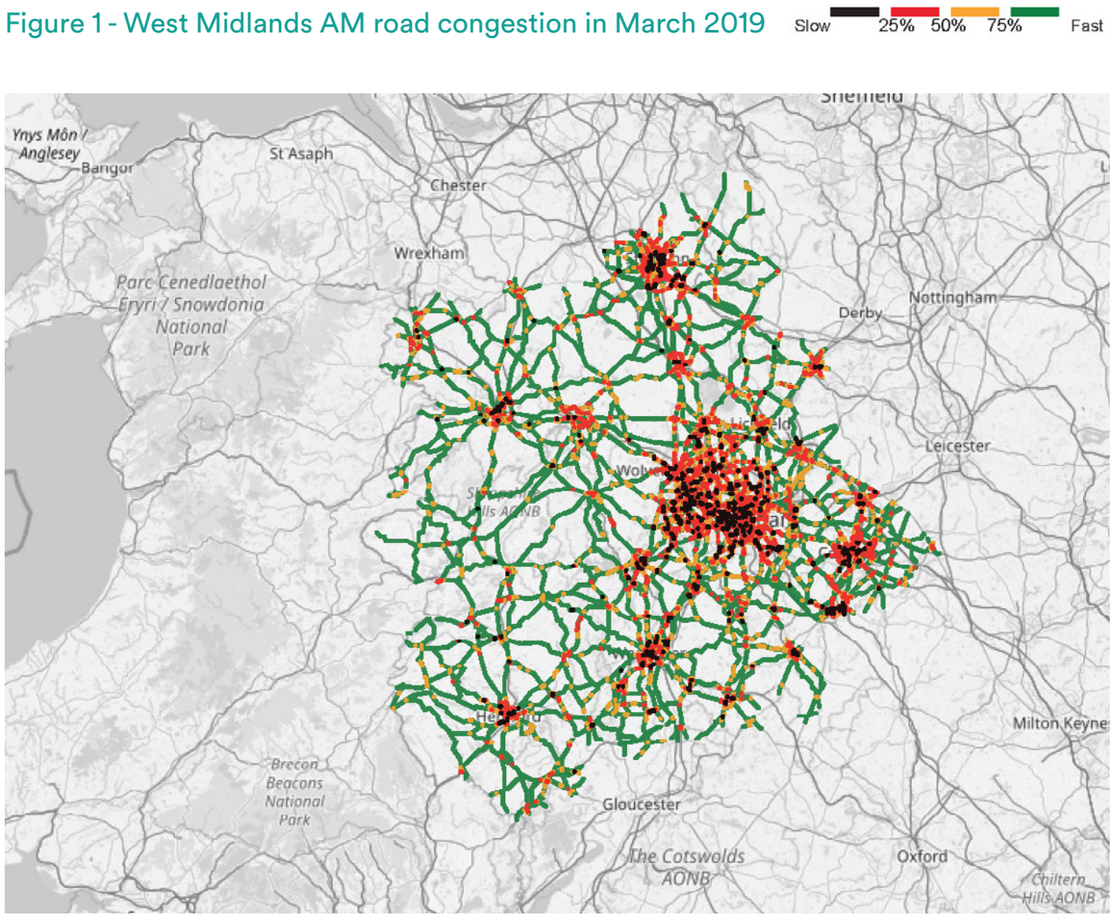
Post-2030 local plans are also likely to require substantial additional growth in housing and employment beyond such headline schemes.

The new local transport plans, currently being produced by Transport for West Midlands and other local transport authorities across the region, are also likely to include major revisions in terms of both approach and future policy recommendations and this strategy will need to adapt to reflect these emerging changes when progressing its objectives and priorities.

Rail is already a major player in moving people around the West Midlands. In 2017, rail became the largest mode for peak travel into central Birmingham for the first time, with over 38% of people using the train in the morning peak. It is key to logistics and distribution across the UK, with high volumes of intermodal rail-freight.

This increasing role for the rail network is set within the context of the challenges in managing congestion on the region's highway network, both in the West Midlands Combined Authority area and into our other key regional centres. 50% of road traffic is carried on 7% of the key route network, with an average weekday peak time road traffic speed of only 17.7 mph. By 2030, based on current travel habits, the West Midlands highway network will need to accommodate an additional 1.2million trips every weekday.

Figure 1 - West Midlands AM road congestion in March 2019



However, the scale of committed and potential growth in housing and employment volume and distribution, as well as freight growth, will directly challenge the capability of the region's rail infrastructure given its regional role and location at the heart of the UK rail network.

By 2031 the first two phases of HS2 will have delivered major new UK-wide rail capacity, and released capacity on the core south east to north west corridor through the West Midlands. HS2 will further cement the region's role at the heart of both the UK economy and its transport network.

However, HS2 needs to be complemented by investment in further schemes, which are already in development, to improve network capacity and regional connectivity on other core rail corridors including:

- Midlands Rail Hub, adding capacity to the congested central Birmingham rail network and improving connectivity to the north east (Tamworth, Coleshill, Nuneaton, Leicester) and the south west (Moseley, Bromsgrove, Worcester, Hereford, Bristol and Cardiff)
- Coventry - Leicester/Nottingham
- Coventry – Leamington Spa
- Birmingham – Solihull - Leamington Spa
- Sutton Coldfield/Lichfield – Alrewas – Burton – Derby
- Wolverhampton – Telford – Shrewsbury

The capacity opportunity that HS2 offers is one the West Midlands must take. But as this strategy illustrates, it is not the single solution to the challenges and opportunities we face.

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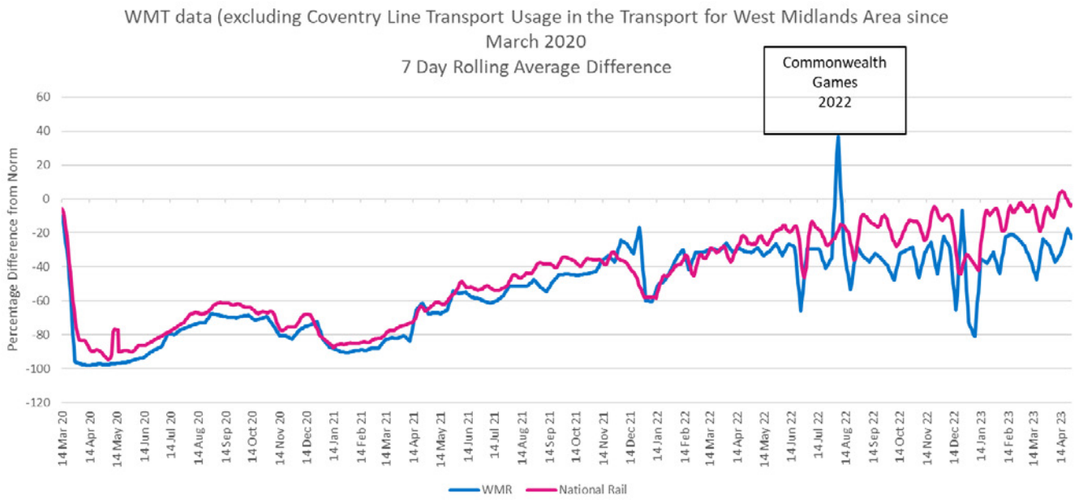
The Big Railway Challenges in the West Midlands

4.1 Recovery from Covid-19

Prior to the start of the pandemic and lockdown measures in March 2020, the number of rail passengers using the West Midlands rail network was at its highest level ever. 38% of commuters into central Birmingham used the railway for their journey to work.

The pandemic led to an immediate collapse in the number of passengers using the railway and this has only gradually reversed, as the graph shows.

Figure 2 - Regional rail usage data



There is significant uncertainty about the speed at which passengers will return to the railway. The Department for Transport forecasts that in a reasonably optimistic base scenario pre-pandemic levels of demand will be reached again in 2024, although there are a range of other potential outcomes. The volume of passengers clearly has a major impact on what the railway can afford to do, both in terms of running services and in the level of new investment.

Also important are the ways that people's travel behaviours may change. We are already seeing a significant reluctance amongst many employees to return to traditional 9-5 commuting every weekday, and many employers are welcoming this as an opportunity to introduce flexible working arrangements and save overhead costs.

This could have important implications for the railway, as its capacity – rolling stock and infrastructure – has previously been set by the historic period of highest demand: the rush hours into and out of central Birmingham.

There are also signs that some people are choosing to live further away from their workplace and commuting further but less often.

We will continue to monitor emerging travel requirements and trends and use scenario planning to explore how we can reflect future uncertainties in our evolving strategy.

4.2 Changing expectations of passengers and longer-term trends

Railways only exist to serve their customers, whether they be passengers or freight forwarders. By doing so well they also drive wider societal benefits, such as economic growth, regeneration and levelling up.

The pandemic appears to have accelerated trends that were already apparent in society: for example, in working patterns and use of digital technology; and in people seeking homes further out from Metropolitan centres.

In the West Midlands we need to seize these opportunities. Railways take a long time to plan, and it is therefore important that our strategy is routed in a long-term response rather than being seen through the lens of the aftermath of the pandemic. We want the railway to be proactive and stimulate growth rather than only to act in response to other dynamics.

So, for example:

- using fares policy constructively to shape demand to make better use of the network
- stimulating leisure markets
- designing a train service which is easy to understand, provides enough seats/capacity at the right times and builds in resilience so that the service is reliable
- investing in new stations where new housing growth is planned
- creating resilience in the logistics supply chain through setting the conditions to allow rail freight to flourish

Rail's competitiveness with other modes is also crucial: rail's fortunes are bound by how it responds to emerging trends in other modes. If we do not respond, the transition to electric cars may make the marginal cost and environmental impact of car travel more favourable relative to rail. This could directly affect the financial sustainability of the railway and the achievement of other objectives. Rail needs to be at the heart of an intelligent, integrated transport offer in concert with these other modes to ensure its relevance in the long term.

All these factors, together, mean that we must focus relentlessly on rail's customers, their needs and experiences when travelling or seeking to travel.

4.3 The cost of the railway

The railways have received unprecedented levels of public support throughout the pandemic, protecting the essential services that people, including commuting key workers, rely on. The funds to support the railway come overwhelmingly from only two sources: its customers and taxpayers by way of Government grants and subsidies.

It is in the interests of the West Midlands, as elsewhere, that our rail services are efficiently delivered. This strategy assumes that on many routes, services will remain at a reduced level (compared to pre-pandemic) for some time. However, WMRE continues to work closely with the rail industry to deliver further timetable improvements which will meet the changing requirements of our passengers and stakeholders.

4.4 Capacity in central Birmingham

Prior to the pandemic the railways in the West Midlands were full. As services build back and demand grows, they will be full again. Key to this is the infrastructure capacity that exists in central Birmingham. Whilst HS2 will provide a major uplift in capacity on some key routes, such as towards London, Manchester and Nottingham, it will provide more limited benefits for local journeys. Indeed, HS2 construction is already driving growth in rail freight into Birmingham and its opening will stimulate more journeys on the local network as people interchange with it.

Any rail strategy for the West Midlands must address this issue, and that is why we so strongly support delivery of the full Midlands Rail Hub project, developed by Midlands Connect, for all future rail investment scenarios.

In the 30-year horizon of this strategy even this may not be enough, especially if we also see growth in express logistics into urban centres, and we need to signal a bold future that is prepared to look at long term options to address this.

4.5 Performance and resilience

The poor performance of the over-ambitious May 2019 timetable demonstrated the need to ensure that future service plans are designed to provide a resilient and reliable service for passengers and freight customers.

There is a balance to be struck between filling available network capacity to provide more services or using spare capacity to support better performance. There is also a balance to be struck between providing new journey opportunities by linking services together or keeping services operationally separate to prevent delays being transmitted across a wide area.

The location of the West Midlands at the heart of the national rail network means that it is even more important to design infrastructure and services that can operate reliably as delays here can spread across the whole country.

4.6 Electrification

The UK Government ratified the Paris Agreement on climate change in November 2016. Subsequently the Government has established a target for the UK to achieve net zero greenhouse emissions by 2050.

Tackling climate change is at the heart of the West Midlands policy agenda with the West Midlands Combined Authority and many of our partner authorities having their own net zero targets or declarations of a “Climate Change Emergency”. Our transport systems have a key role to play in achieving this for the prosperity of our region and our people.

Decarbonising our railway is a transport measure fundamental to achieving this target, and Network Rail has proposed a sustained rolling programme of electrification through its Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy published in 2020.

In a world where there is limited money available for investment in the non-HS2 railway, our strategy needs to include electrification as a core part of the plan. Service improvements we advocate must be consistent with a reasonable view of what lines may be electrified and when.

4.7 Re-organising the railway

The 2021 Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail proposed a major change to the way the railway is organised, including through the creation of Great British Railways, and a move from rail franchises to new Passenger Service Contracts.

West Midlands Rail Executive currently has a key role working alongside the Department for Transport in specifying and managing the contract to deliver local services in the West Midlands. We are working closely with the Great British Railways Transition Team to ensure that these responsibilities are retained and enhanced under the emerging new industry structures.

However the railway is organised, it is important that WMRE is empowered to continue to maintain our focus on serving rail’s customers and on planning for a future in which rail plays a vital role in our region’s economy.

5

Our Priorities

5.0 Introduction

Because this is a time of major change, we have re-evaluated the priorities contained in our 2018 rail investment strategy and adapted them to reflect the key challenges the region's rail network faces. Our eight strategic objectives are now:

Strategic Objective		Desired outcomes
1	To support the recovery from Covid-19	Recovery of passenger volumes to pre-pandemic levels as soon as possible
2	To contribute to net zero	Modal shift from road to rail and a rolling programme of electrification
3	To deliver Midlands Rail Hub	Our key transport project that delivers improved connectivity across the region
4	To maximise the benefits of HS2 to the West Midlands	Improving access to HS2 from across the region and improving HS2 service offer
5	To develop high growth corridors whilst reducing social deprivation and levelling up	A train service on each corridor that matches demand whilst also providing access to jobs and education
6	To maximise access to the rail network	A network that is easy to use for all people, inclusively
7	To support the movement of goods by rail	A network that has the capacity and flexibility to carry more freight
8	To consider radical change in the long term	A plan that can be developed with industry support for the network needed in the 2050s

Each of these is discussed in more detail on the following pages.

5.1 ONE: Support the recovery from Covid-19

The rail industry needs to recover from the major shock it has suffered during the pandemic. We need to encourage passengers to return and match our services to what passengers need. Key to this will be to:

- demonstrate that we have a clean, safe and secure network.
- develop robust timetables that serve passengers needs not only through frequency and journey times but also by reinforcing reliable, resilient delivery. In particular, WMRE played a key role in developing the December 2022 timetable structure introduced on the West Coast Main Line and other routes in the West Midlands that brings better services for many stations in the region and supports future enhancements when demand recovers.
- ensure that the railway is efficient and value for money, controlling costs in a way that is consistent with the traffic on offer. This may mean in the short and medium term providing a service that is not at the same frequency as it was before the pandemic, but with on-train capacity that meets demand without overcrowding – less frequent but longer trains.
- completing delivery and introduction of the new train fleets on order for local services.
- delivering the new stations and routes already funded and agreed. Our role in developing the region's services in response to a need for improved connectivity has led to approval for two new services and five new stations through the West Midlands Rail Programme: Darlaston, Willenhall, Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road - connecting parts of the West Midlands that did not have a rail service.

To support these actions, we will continue to monitor rail usage closely and develop a greater evidence-based understanding of future demand. We are also producing a new Rail Customer Experience Policy and will keep this and our broader strategy under constant review in the light of changing passenger needs.

5.2 TWO: Contribute to net zero

There are two main ways in which rail in the West Midlands can be the backbone of a cleaner future transport system: through encouraging modal shift from forms of transport that damage the environment more than it; and through efforts to reduce the environmental impact of rail transport itself.

Rail as a sustainable mode of transport

Rail has a high value as an environmentally sustainable mode of transport. This can be seen in the West Midlands, where the growth in rail usage needs to be seen in the context of severe road congestion into central Birmingham. Without rail's pre-pandemic modal share, that road congestion, causing pollution in the form of particulates, would have been quite unsustainable. Even with rail's modal share, Birmingham City Council introduced a Clean Air Zone in June 2021, with the most polluting cars charged £8 per day and HGVs £50.

We believe that encouraging growth in rail's market share – both passenger, as a core part of multi-modal public transport offer, and freight, where even switching HGV traffic to a diesel hauled freight train can reduce transport emissions by circa 75% - is a vital component of a net zero strategy.

This means that our approach is to encourage and enable growth in rail transport as a key lever on the route to zero emissions. This applies both to building back from the impact of the pandemic and in the longer term. The priorities in this document are forecast to lead to a 67% increase in rail usage compared to 2019.

A rolling programme of electrification

The second point is the importance of de-carbonising the rail industry itself. This is clearly and thoroughly analysed in Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy (TDNS). It states that achieving the Government's net zero target will require a commitment to a long-term, stable and efficient programme of works which will last at least the next thirty years. It identifies, rightly in our view, that for most routes electrification is the only credible option, and that other options such as battery-only or hydrogen-only trains are only suitable for lightly used lines or where a bespoke solution is appropriate.

We strongly support a rolling programme of electrification across the entire region and are working closely with Network Rail on their prioritisation process for electrification in the West Midlands. The key priorities are:

- The Snow Hill Lines between Leamington Spa, Stratford-upon-Avon and Worcester.
- Nuneaton – Birmingham/Walsall which is core artery for freight to/from the electrified West Coast Main Line.

followed by:

- strategic Cross Country network, including Midlands Rail Hub and Leamington – Coventry – Nuneaton, for both local/national passenger and freight services to/from south west, north east and the deep sea intermodal terminals at Southampton.

- Nuneaton – Cambridge/Felixstowe for local/cross country passenger services and freight to/from the deep seaports at Harwich/Felixstowe
- Chiltern Main Line (passenger)
- Wolverhampton - Shrewsbury
- Worcester - Hereford

The Snow Hill Line and associated Chiltern Railways services have the greatest intensity of diesel train use in the region, closely followed by the Cross Country services, which generally use larger diesel engines. Any additional services introduced as part of the Midlands Rail Hub investment also ought to operate emissions-free within the central Birmingham area, and ideally be fully electric.

In order to support a programme of electrification a parallel rolling stock strategy is also required, as the two must step hand in hand. We are well-placed to support this process through our role in specifying the West Midlands Trains operation, working with DfT and with GBR in the future.

For example, the interim use of bi-mode rolling stock can bring decarbonisation benefits earlier than full electrification. These could be used to extend non-diesel operation beyond the extent of the overhead line on service groups that operate beyond their reach (and there are some of these in the West Midlands) or to reduce noise and pollution in built up areas and at stations.

Improving air-quality

In addition to moving towards net zero, the rail network also needs to support the delivery of improved air quality, particularly in central Birmingham. While the decarbonisation and air quality objectives are closely aligned, they should be considered as separate drivers of change.

Birmingham New Street station is a particular challenge for air quality, being partially underground and used by a large number of diesel trains. Research in 2018 by the University of Birmingham showed that NO2 particulates at platform level were above public health limits. Network Rail has indicated that it will not support any train service plans that potentially worsen the air quality at New Street, and therefore the industry needs to work to identify both technological and timetable solutions to limit the use of diesel trains in central Birmingham.

An example of a technological solution is to use batteries to power diesel trains within station environments, for example Chiltern Railways is trialling the installation of a battery in one of its diesel trains to test this hybrid technology.

5.3 THREE: Deliver Midlands Rail Hub

Midlands Rail Hub (MRH) is the region's biggest and most ambitious rail improvement scheme - a circa £1-1.3bn project which unlocks the national rail network's capacity bottleneck in central Birmingham, improves access to HS2 and delivers faster and more frequent connections across the West Midlands and beyond.

The core elements of Midlands Rail Hub are:

MRH West (Bordesley West Chord and Kings Norton – Barnt Green upgrade)

- Additional trains from Birmingham Moor Street to Bristol, Cardiff and Worcester/Hereford
- Restored 6 train per hour frequency on the Cross City Line.
- Improved journey times to Birmingham for our new 2 train per hour Camp Hill service
- Excellent connectivity with HS2 Curzon Street station via Moor Street station

MRH Central & West (as above plus Bordesley East Chord)

- Delivers a step-change in central Birmingham rail network capacity
- Facilitates the fundamental re-mapping of train services across Birmingham proposed in Network Rail's West Midlands Strategic Advice to deliver:

  o Further improved access to HS2 (notably for Nuneaton and Leicester)

  o Additional local services including new cross-Birmingham links connecting Wolverhampton and Walsall with South Birmingham

MRH East (Additional upgrades on Leicester corridor)

- Extra 2 Birmingham - Leicester trains per hour enabling separate fast/ regional services
- Helps support delivery of new stations in east Birmingham and Warwickshire (e.g. Castle Bromwich and Galley Common) and new services (e.g. Sutton Park Line)

Midlands Rail Hub is required in full

Delivery of both the West and Central elements of Midlands Rail Hub still has a strong strategic case and positive business following the publication of the government's Integrated Rail Plan and is essential to achieve a number of key national and regional outcomes:

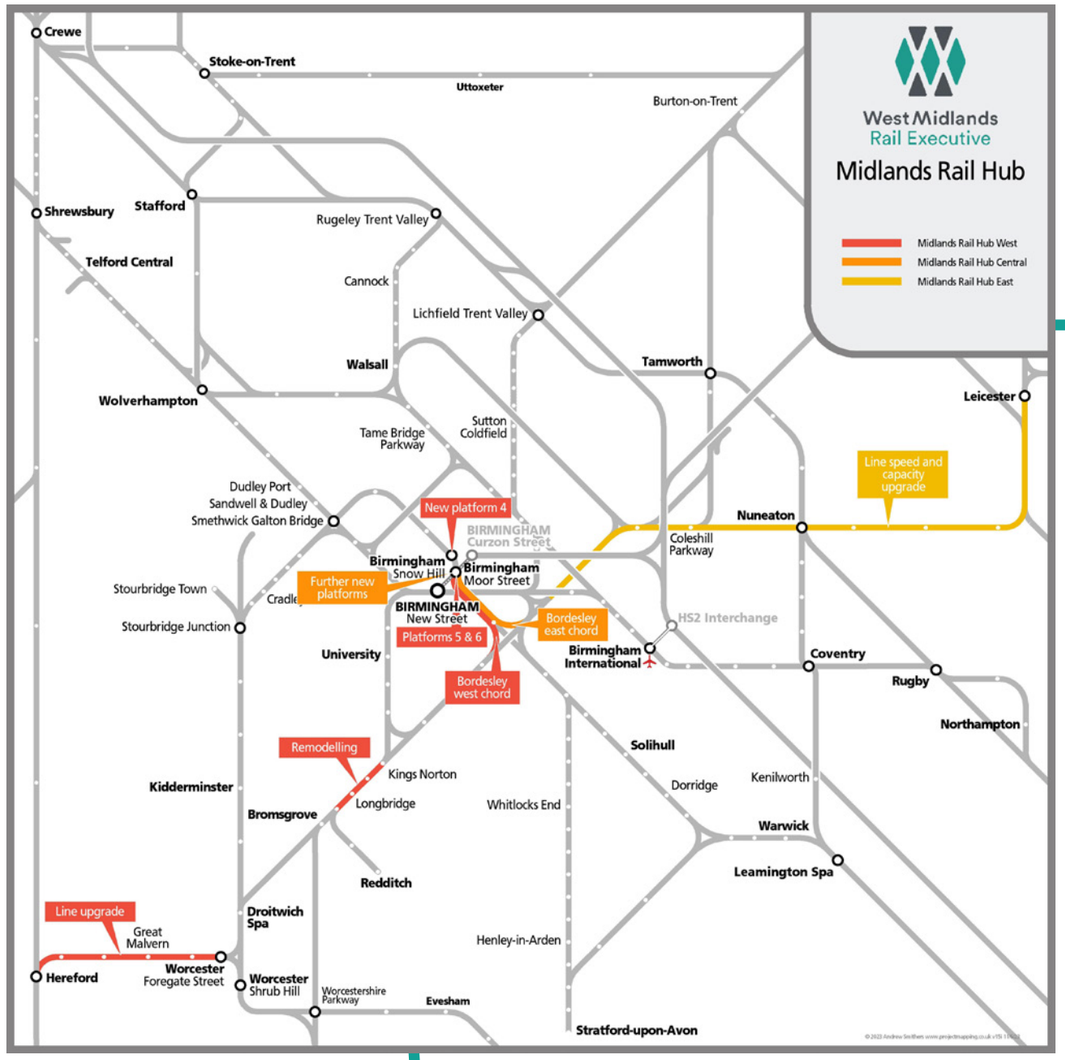
- Providing new cross-regional rail connections, including direct access to the regeneration areas in Birmingham Eastside and Digbeth
- Creating a major new interchange hub between local, regional, inter-city and HS2 rail services and local transport modes at Birmingham Moor Street / Curzon Street station.
- Enabling economic growth through greater business-to-business interaction, access to larger labour markets, new housing and by attracting inward investment and higher-paid jobs;
- Maximising the benefits that HS2 will bring both locally and to economic hubs in the South West and South Wales by providing direct rail access to the HS2 Curzon Street station.

Midlands Rail Hub is also the core building block which enables further rail network enhancement required to meet future transport demand across the West Midlands in a sustainable manner.

There is an overwhelming case to deliver MRH in full. In particular, there are also significant economies of scale from constructing both East and West Chords simultaneously which provides a both stronger business case and significant project cost savings.

There is a clear opportunity to deliver much shorter term improvements for passengers and for the capability, resilience and performance of the network by accelerating delivery of Birmingham Snow Hill station Platform 4.

There would also be local benefits if the Kings Norton - Barnt Green upgrade could be delivered at an early phase of the Midlands Rail Hub project.



5.4 FOUR: Maximise the benefits of HS2 for the West Midlands

We strongly support delivery of HS2 in full to both the North West and to the East Midlands and on to Yorkshire.

The proposals and phasing for HS2 have now been revised several times. The position outlined by Government in Spring 2023 is as follows:

- Phase 1 West Midlands - Old Oak Common (interchange with Elizabeth Line services to Central London, Canary Wharf and Heathrow Airport). Construction underway - opening by early 2030s
- Phase 1 Old Oak Common - London Euston. Construction underway, but design under review - opening 2035-41
- Phase 2A West Midlands – Crewe. Funding committed - opening 2030-34
- Phase 2B Crewe – Manchester. Forecast opening 2035-41.
- HS2 East West Midlands – East Midlands. Forecast opening mid-2040s
- HS2 extensions to North West (West Coast Main Line connection) and Yorkshire. Paused and under review

In our view the new high speed network, centred on the West Midlands, is an essential intervention under all potential future scenarios and it is imperative to ensure that its benefits are secured and maximised at the earliest opportunity.

This includes:

- The early delivery of fast HS2 services to improve connectivity between the West Midlands and Manchester and to North West England and Scotland via Crewe
- HS2 services connecting Stoke and Stafford with the West Midlands Interchange station and Birmingham Airport/NEC
- the accelerated delivery of both
    - HS2 Phase 2b from Crewe to Manchester and a new West Coast Main Line connection south of Preston
    - HS2 from the West Midlands to East Midlands Parkway for Birmingham – Nottingham services
- the continuation of HS2 to connect with the East Coast Main Line in Yorkshire and the West Coast Main Line in Lancashire
- Identifying the best use of released capacity on the West Coast Main Line, for both passenger and freight services, including on the corridor between Rugby, Birmingham and Stafford, in order to support our wider connectivity, decarbonisation, modal shift and broader socio-economic objectives.
- The delivery of the HS2 Growth Strategy around Curzon Street and Birmingham East Side and around Birmingham Interchange (UK Central) is essential to unlocking these benefits, as are identifying the best use of released capacity on the existing network and creating a local rail network that integrates with HS2.

- Midlands Rail Hub's additional services at Birmingham Moor Street will also provide improved connectivity to high speed trains services from the adjacent HS2 Curzon Street station and help spread the connectivity benefits of HS2 across the wider region.

5.5 FIVE: Develop high growth corridors reducing social deprivation and levelling up

Central to our vision for rail services in the West Midlands is that they should provide the capacity needed for the region's growth in the future, connecting communities, businesses and people to jobs. In order to do this, it is important that the services and the local needs of the areas within the West Midlands are considered together.

WMRE, and before us Centro (the former West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive) have a long track record going back to 1973 of locally conceived rail improvements. These include:

- The introduction of the Cross-City Line, including new stations at Five Ways, University and Longbridge
- The introduction of the Snow Hill Line services through a re-opened Birmingham Snow Hill
- Restoration of passenger services and new stations on the Chase Line between Walsall and Rugeley in partnership with Staffordshire Council

We have also secured industry approval for two new train services and five new stations – Darlaston, Willenhall, Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road - which are all currently under construction.

Our forecasts of rail demand over the next 30 years are shown in section Future Demand for Rail Services. What is clear from these results is that some corridors have greater potential than others. The graph shows the percentage growth of rail demand on each corridor.

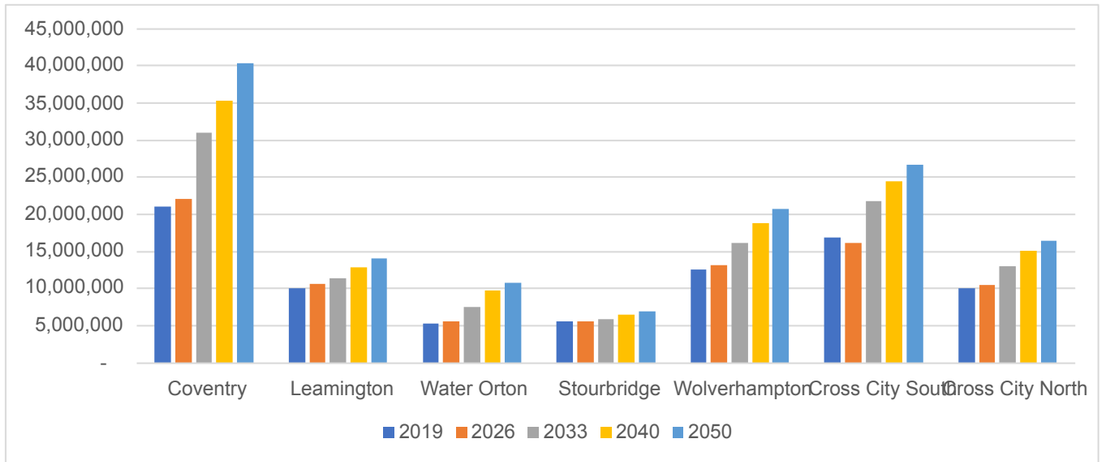


Figure 3 - Growth in passengers by corridor 2019 to 2050

The Water Orton corridor (services between Birmingham and Tamworth/ Derby and Nuneaton/Leicester) has the highest growth. This illustrates the potential for the following items included in the analysis:

- Levelling up the eastern side of Birmingham through potential new stations at Fort Parkway, Castle Bromwich and Galley Common
- Linking Coventry and Leicester by direct train service
- Improving local links to Nuneaton and Leicester
- The value of very fast HS2 services between Birmingham and Nottingham in the 2040s
- The opening of the Sutton Park Line to passenger services

These benefits depend on the eastern side of Midlands Rail Hub being delivered.

The Coventry Corridor (services between Northampton, Rugby, Coventry, Birmingham International and Birmingham) has the next highest growth and also has the highest absolute number of passengers. This growth is unlocked by:

- The released capacity benefits of HS2 and in particular the diversion of the second Cross Country service (pre-pandemic this was Newcastle to Reading) via Coventry
- A progressive increase in local services on the corridor
- Rugby Parkway station and other potential new stations to serve the east and south of Coventry

The third highest growth potential is on the Cross City South Corridor (services between Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester, Bromsgrove and Birmingham). This area is expected to see a particularly high level of housing growth (for example, 42,000 additional houses are proposed in the new South Worcestershire Development Plan). The growth in rail usage is also unlocked by:

- New services on the Camp Hill Line calling at the new stations at Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road
- Increase in frequencies between Birmingham and Bromsgrove, Worcester, Hereford, Worcestershire Parkway, Cheltenham and Gloucester

These benefits depend on the western side of Midlands Rail Hub being delivered.

We also need to ensure that the network supports future growth in and modal shift to rail freight and in particular supports growth on key strategic freight corridors into and through the region e.g. to/from the main deep sea ports.

There is a strong case for planning and developing infrastructure enhancements which meet the requirements of both passenger and freight markets in an integrated manner rather than progressing these in isolation.

The infrastructure investment required to support the benefits across all corridors is described in section Investment Priorities.

5.6 SIX: Maximise access to rail network

This priority has a number of themes, all of which are part of making the railway as easy to use as possible. The themes are: stations at the heart of the community, new stations, local frequencies, integrated transport modes, fares and ticketing and inclusive access for all. We are developing a new Rail Customer Experience Policy which will pick up these and other areas which are key to delivering a better network for passengers.

Putting stations at the heart of the community

Our vision for railway stations in the West Midlands is that we want them to be at the heart of communities that they serve and to be welcoming places that support the economy in the areas they serve. Making this vision happen involves:

- restoring unused facilities for shops, businesses and groups to use
- making it easier for all people to access and use the train
- improving the quality and feel of stations
- working closely with Community Rail Partnerships and other community groups

These initiatives help bolster local pride and contribute significantly to a sense of opportunity in the local communities. Importantly this level of granularity depends for its success on local collaboration and political will to ensure that the railway plays its part in the community's success.

Stations supporting housing growth

391,000 new homes are expected to be completed in the West Midlands by 2031. Rail has a vital role to play in supporting new housing development, especially if we can encourage high density developments around new or existing stations with good connectivity to a major metropolitan area.

As part of our work to update our strategy we have identified with our local authority partners 28 potential new stations that may be required to support improved connectivity to the rail network and, in many cases, to support housing growth. Some of these new stations form part of new rail corridors, such as the Sutton Park Line.

The potential stations are shown on the map on the next page.

Further work will be required to refine the list and to identify which stations have the strongest business case.

Local frequency enhancements

Within the metropolitan area a "turn up and go" rail service frequency is a core requirement for access to the railway. In the 2018 rail investment strategy this was defined as "6-4-2", reflecting the aspiration number of trains per hour depending on the station and its location. Whilst this aspiration cannot in most cases be delivered in the short term, an increase in frequency on local services remains an important objective and has been included in our modelling and forecasting.

Integrated transport system

Rail needs to be at the heart of a wider integrated public transport offer in the metropolitan area, including buses, the tram and last mile "active travel" modes such as cycling and walking. A key focus of TfWM as the statutory transport authority for the metropolitan area is the development and promotion of an integrated transport system to drive modal shift and support decarbonisation and the health of the region's citizens. Other member authorities have an important role to play in promoting an integrated transport system in the wider region.

Access to stations and Park and Ride

Particularly for stations in urban areas, we support improving access to these stations by sustainable modes and other public transport modes, to reduce short distance car journeys and their environmental impacts. We recognise that not everyone will be able to access the rail network by cycling, walking, bus or tram, and that different solutions will be needed in different areas (urban vs rural). It is therefore important that, particularly in locations where the car is likely to be the most effective (or indeed the only) way of accessing a particular station, that such stations are well connected to the highway network and have sufficient car parking and drop off and pick up facilities to encourage car users to drive to a railway station rather than driving all the way for their journey.

Stations such as Warwick Parkway and Worcestershire Parkway have been designed specifically to support car-based access to the rail network, and within the Transport for West Midlands Area, TfWM provide over 9,000 spaces at 36 local stations.

While Park and Ride is not appropriate for every location, providing convenient car-based access arrangements across the network is going to be important for supporting future rail growth.

Fares that are simple to understand and easy to pay

Users of rail services need to find it easy and convenient to pay for their journey, as well as being affordable. The current fares and ticketing arrangements have developed incrementally over the years resulting in a complex and confusing mixture of options for passengers to understand. Even within the West Midlands different ticketing arrangements exist in different parts of the region, and different routes can have very different price levels.

The rail industry is looking to reform fares and ticketing arrangements, and we are supporting this work to create a system that recognises the needs of passengers in our region in the future.

We will be working closely with TfWM in the development of its Swift ticketing products and the future roll-out of contactless bank card ticketing for local journeys.

Delivering a modernised fares and ticketing system alongside a modernised network will be essential in supporting future rail growth and delivering financially sustainable rail services.

Inclusive access for all

The rail network was largely built in the 19th century and access for people who have difficulty walking, seeing or hearing or for those with pushchairs was not built into the system. Our objective, working with the rail industry, is to resolve this issue, for example through the installation of lifts as funds allow. During 2022 active projects included schemes that provide step-free access at Kidsgrove, Wellington, Perry Barr and Smethwick Rolfe Street stations.

Within the TfWM area 87% of stations are already step-free leaving just 8 that need to be improved to provide a fully accessible network. It is recognised, however, that many technically fully step-free stations are still not easy for people to use, and more work needs to be done to fully meet the needs of all our users.

Inclusive access is not just about being able to get from the street to the train without steps. There are many other aspects, including provision for people with sight or hearing impairments, stations and station approaches that feel secure and are well lit, and adequate seating. Our plans need to encompass a holistic approach to ensure that our stations and services are available for all to use.

By the end of the period covered by this strategy, we would expect all stations in the region to be fully accessible and meet the needs of all users of the network in a consistent and convenient way.

5.7 SEVEN: Supporting the movement of goods by rail

The West Midlands, both economically and spatially, is of vital importance to the freight sector in the UK. It is a significant generator of freight movements and its geographic location means that it is the setting of many freight-related businesses and those who rely on the supply chain.

There is also significant freight passing through the region. Of particular importance to the West Midlands economy is the logistics sector.

It is clearly important that any rail strategy takes full account of the needs of freight and its future growth. We would also say that:

- new railway schemes should provide where appropriate more train paths for freight.
- business cases should fully capture the value of the rail freight benefits in a way that has not happened in the past.

In order to actively support the continued growth of the rail freight sector, we have been working with industry partners to agree to:

- facilitate closer working across the industry in timetable planning and capacity usage to meet both passenger and freight market requirements
- support enhancements to core rail routes connecting the West Midlands to deep-sea and major inland freight terminals including principal rail corridors to:
  - Southampton
  - Felixstowe/Harwich
  - London Gateway
  - Northern England and Scotland
- support improved access to principal West Midlands rail terminals (especially to Birch Coppice/Kingsbury terminal cluster which has very constrained access arrangements)
- support the market-driven development/expansion of “Strategic Rail Freight”, intermodal, stone and steel terminals
- support the development and delivery of small-consignment rail borne logistics solutions and, in particular, the use of stations, former passenger trains and secure carriage of parcels on existing passenger services
- maximise the potential for rail infrastructure enhancements by focusing on the benefits to both passenger and freight markets (e.g. Coventry – Nuneaton line speed enhancements, Coventry – Leamington capacity) and Water Orton and Coventry area remodelling

As national policy makers and the wider logistics sector get to grips with the scale of challenge of meeting the UK’s carbon reduction targets (and local “Clean Air” initiatives) we will actively champion the further decarbonisation of rail freight across the West Midlands area through supporting:

- the national prioritisation of in-fill electrification schemes which enable more freight to be electrically hauled for relatively little investment
- full electrification of core diesel operated deep-sea container routes
  - Southampton – Birmingham/ Coventry/Nuneaton
  - Felixstowe – Nuneaton
  - Nuneaton – Birmingham
- electrification of links into principal West Midlands rail freight terminals

In delivering this strategy’s passenger service ambitions we will work together with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to integrate these with its 2016 Freight Strategy and with Midlands Connect’s Freight Strategy.

We will seek to maximise the shared benefits for passenger and freight services of each of these opportunities and, in particular, the ways in which investment in individual corridors or schemes can bring value to both forms of traffic, facilitating enhancements where the case for a 'passenger-only' or 'freight-only' project may be more difficult to make.

5.8 EIGHT: Consider radical change in the long term

HS2 and Midlands Engine Rail projects such as Midlands Rail Hub will offer substantial new capability to grow rail services along with the West Midlands economy into the 2040s. Looking further ahead the scale of economic and population growth will require yet more significant growth of rail capacity to meet future passenger and freight demand and enable further modal shift to rail, including in new markets such as express logistics.

Major population and employment growth at new development locations such as the prospective UK Central Hub in Solihull will further alter the shape of demand for travel in the region. There will be a need for new rail travel opportunities across Birmingham, around and across the region as a whole, in some cases avoiding Birmingham.

As well as progressing Midlands Engine Rail projects we need to start radical planning now for what the West Midlands rail network needs to do and look like in thirty years time. We need to assess the case for new capacity separately supporting reliable local and longer-distance services. We need to consider how Birmingham New Street, Moor Street and HS2's Curzon Street station can operate in the most effective, integrated ways.

We need to investigate challenging and prospectively high-cost options which could include:

- infrastructure schemes - major new capacity e.g. 4-tracking on the Wolverhampton-Birmingham - Birmingham International- Coventry Corridor (noted as choices for funders in Network Rail's West Midlands and Chiltern Route Study 2017)
- new tunnel options under central Birmingham - allowing services to bypass capacity hotspots such as Proof House junction, linking in with Birmingham New Street, Moor Street and HS2 Curzon Street stations and enabling higher frequencies across the Metropolitan area
- development of new rail corridors for freight and passenger – such as Walsall - Lichfield, working with our partners to consider the potential for expansion of both existing and closed rail routes
- further development of the West Midlands Metro and other Rapid Transit options - particularly where expansion of heavy rail capacity may no longer be possible

Our view is that such radical change will be necessary after completion of HS2 and Midlands Rail Hub in 30+ years. However, this does not preclude development of these concepts before then. We can and should act with foresight and be flexible and swift in responding to and driving sustainable growth in the West Midlands.

6

Future Demand for Rail Services

6.1 Methodology

The methodology used for this updated strategy is similar in many respects to that used for the 2018 document.

Indicative train service diagrams have been developed for each of the corridors into central Birmingham for representative years within the 30-year timeframe of the strategy. These are included in part 2 of this document. The purpose of the diagrams is not to set out a certain view of the future, but as a basis for demand modelling work. The demand modelling enables us to assess whether the indicative train service changes are the right ones to meet future demand for travel, within an iterative process.

The representative years chosen are:

- 2026, representing a date by which short term changes resulting from the pandemic are likely to have settled into a stable position
- 2031, by which date we had assumed for the purposes of the modelling that HS2 Phases 1 (to London Euston) & 2a (to Crewe) and Midlands Rail Hub have been delivered in full
- 2040, by which date we had assumed that HS2 Phase 2b to Manchester has been delivered
- 2050, representing a long-term horizon

The inclusion of a new service at a particular date does not mean it is introduced on that date, but that it is assumed to be introduced at any point since the previous date in the series.

The DfT's strongest scenario for post-pandemic recovery has been used as our central case, as it reflects most closely our observation of trends in the West Midlands. This assumes that rail returns to pre-pandemic levels by 2024, but also that there is some change in travel behaviour as noted above.

The indicative train service diagrams are largely based on economic projections, on work developed by Network Rail, and on the results of discussions with our member authorities, Midlands Connect and West Midlands Trains.

The service diagrams have also been aligned with the Mayor of the West Midlands' rail priorities as set out in his 2021 manifesto, and with the emerging work of the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration.

6.2 Principles

The following general principles have been used in the development of the indicative service patterns:

- Keeping to the rail investment strategy's principle of six, four or two calls per hour at stations depending on their size ("6-4-2") as far as possible and where it might be justified as demand returns after the pandemic.
- Cross-Birmingham linkages of local services are desirable.
- Trying to strike the right balance between inner, outer, regional and long-distance services.
- Aligning service improvements to infrastructure schemes that are known or contemplated and with reasonable estimates of when they might be delivered, including Midlands Engine Rail projects.
- Not including service enhancements that would be unrealistic or have an unacceptable impact on performance.
- Using the Integrated Rail Plan, the HS2 business cases and PLANET Framework Model v9 (a transport planning tool which provides forecasts of transport demand and (generalised) costs) as a guide for service patterns on HS2 and for the long-distance service patterns on the classic network after its phased opening.

6.3 Demand modelling results

Even though the pandemic has reduced demand in the short term, other push factors such as demographics and house building and pull factors such as HS2 and planned service developments suggest that demand will grow by 67% compared to 2019 over the period to 2050. That means that the challenges of capacity faced by the railway will return.

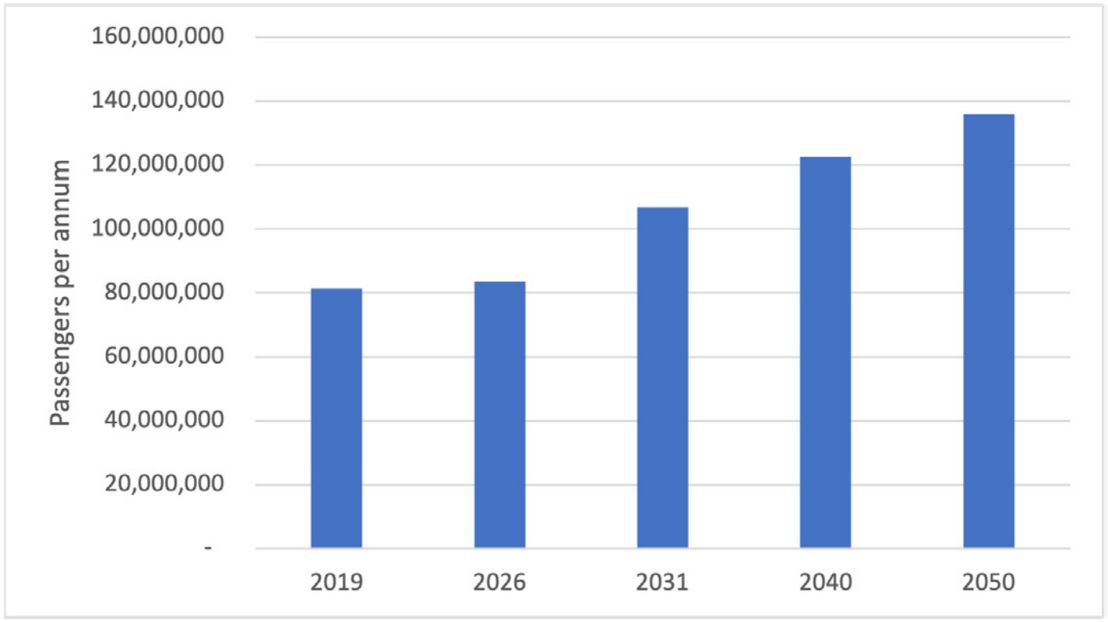


Figure 4 - Forecast passenger journeys across West Midlands rail network

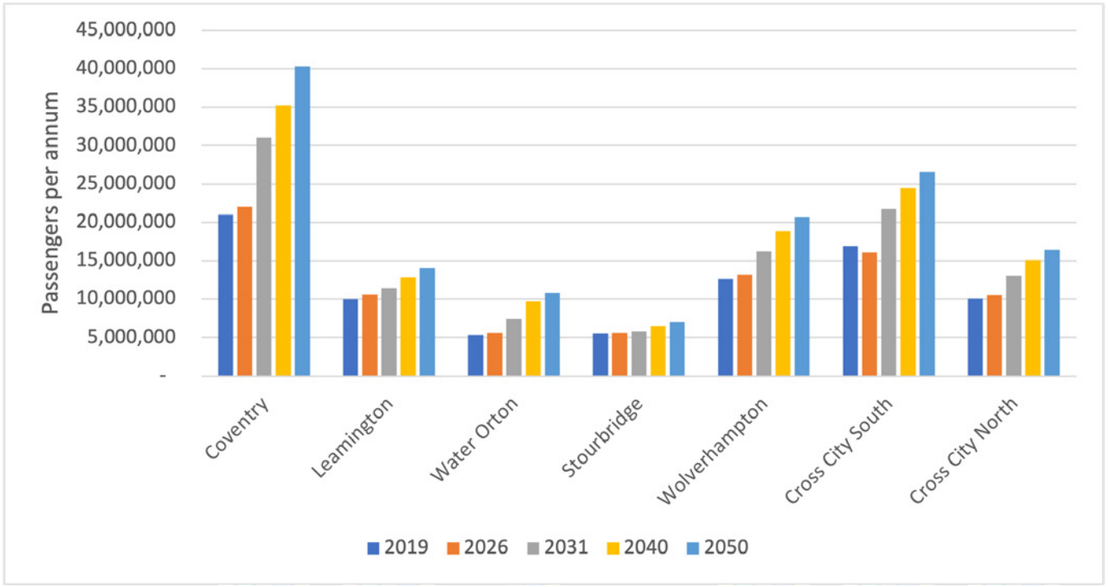


Figure 5 - Forecast passenger per annum by corridor

It can be seen that:

- in absolute volumes three corridors dominate: Coventry, Cross City South and Wolverhampton.
- all corridors other than Stourbridge show substantial growth over 2019 volumes over the next 30 years
- all corridors have returned slightly over their pre-pandemic (2019) levels by 2026

From this analysis it is evident that the capacity challenges of the West Midlands rail network have not gone away because of the pandemic but have only been delayed in time by it. This means that it remains important for us, Network Rail, Midlands Connect and other partners to continue to plan for future growth and, importantly, how to accommodate it.

It should be noted that the corridor definitions differ slightly from those in our 2018 rail investment strategy to reflect revised train service patterns and future assumptions. Similarly, our forecasts may not fully align with those used in other planning documents, such as local transport plans, due to the assumptions and methodology used.

We recognise that, in practice, demand is highly unlikely to grow in exactly the way we have predicted, and therefore will continue to use scenario planning to evolve our understanding of the case for investment beyond this singular assumed context.

Ultimately, the exact timing of our investment priorities outlined in the next chapter will need to be flexible to reflect emerging circumstances.

7

Investment Priorities

7.1 Overview

In this section we summarise the train service development priorities that arise from the work we have done with our partners to produce indicative train service diagrams, and then to model the passenger demand that would arise. This has been an iterative process, and the aspirations shown should not be viewed as firm proposals, but as one view of how the rail network can meet the challenges of the West Midlands and best achieve the objectives set out in this document.

The train service development priorities are shown by corridor, and in part 2 of this document more detail is included for each corridor separately.

Central to accommodating future demand is work to expand and release capacity in central Birmingham. Birmingham New Street station cannot accommodate any further train services without compromising performance. Therefore, a key part of our strategy is to address this challenge.

7.2 The importance of Midlands Rail Hub in unlocking regional and local growth

Ourselves, Network Rail and Midlands Connect have sought to identify ways to achieve more capacity in central Birmingham, and the analysis of all three organisations shows that the Midlands Rail Hub project is the best and most affordable way of achieving this.

This is not only because it provides an opportunity to run more services towards the East Midlands and the South West but also, crucially, because it releases capacity for other local services in Birmingham New Street.

The chords allowing access to Birmingham Moor Street, along with additional tracks and platforms are the key building blocks to allow service improvements across the West Midlands.

Other infrastructure schemes that unlock further service improvements included in this strategy can then be added incrementally based on their own business cases.

7.3 Summary of aspirational train services

The table below summarises the aspirational train services included within our modelling and also includes selected station, rail network or service enhancements which have been realised since the 2018 West Midlands Rail Investment Strategy. Note that there is also an overarching assumption that freight market growth requirements will also need to be accommodated.

This is not a definitive list of service proposals, but an illustration of what could be achieved. The strategy by corridor is included in the part 2 of this document.

Corridor	Coventry	Leamington	Water Orton	Stourbridge	Wolverhampton	Cross City South	Cross City North
Trains to	Coventry, Northampton and London	Stratford, Leamington, Oxford and the Chilterns	Leicester and East Anglia; and Derby and Nottingham	Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Worcester	Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, Stoke and Crewe	Bromsgrove, Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Bristol and Cardiff	Rugeley and Lichfield, and also Walsall to Wolverhampton and Rugby to Stafford
Since 2018 WMRIS	Coventry Station Masterplan (including new 2nd station entrance) completed Stechford station Access for All scheme completed Further expansion of DIRFT terminal near Rugby Direct service from Nuneaton to Leamington Spa via Coventry with newer, longer trains Refurbished Avanti Pendolino trains began entry into service Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts Improved 30-minute pattern from Dec 22	More regular service to Stratford-upon-Avon via Solihull Improved access to/from Tyseley Train Maintenance Depot Work started on Warwick station Access for All scheme Design for Solihull Station Masterplan agreed Second rail connected aggregates terminal opened in Small Heath area Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts	Additional train capacity provided for regional Cross Country services to Leicester and Nottingham Two new rail connected aggregates terminals opened in Washwood Heath area Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts	New Kidderminster station building and accessible footbridge Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts	Wolverhampton station Masterplan (including new station entrance) completed Smethwick Rolfe Street Access for All scheme completed Wellington station secured Access for All Funding New Birmingham – Crewe via Stoke-on-Trent service introduced Refurbished Avanti Pendolino trains began entry into service Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts	New Worcestershire Parkway station opened Major upgrade of University station completed New Park and Ride facilities opened at Longbridge station Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts	Major upgrade of Perry Barr station completed in time for Commonwealth Games New direct Rugeley – Cannock- Walsall to Birmingham International service Access for All scheme completed at Lichfield Trent Valley Lower frequency timetable introduced due to Covid impacts
By 2026	New, longer London Northwestern Class 730 trains New, additional longer Avanti Class 807 electric and Class 805 hybrid trains replacing Class 221 diesel trains Coventry – Nuneaton 2tph when infrastructure available New station: Rugby Parkway	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies Longer trains	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies Potential for longer trains if Class 222 sets are cascaded from East Midlands	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies Longer trains	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies New, longer Class 196 trains on Shrewsbury Line and new Class 197 TfW trains More services between London and Shrewsbury Birmingham - Crewe service routed via Darlaston and Willenhall new stations	Camp Hill Line reopens with new stations at Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road New, longer Class 196 trains on Worcester/Hereford line Cross Country frequency restored More calls at Worcestershire Parkway	New Walsall to Wolverhampton service calling at new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall Return to pre-pandemic frequencies at Lichfield New, longer Class 730 trains on Cross City Line

Corridor	Coventry	Leamington	Water Orton	Stourbridge	Wolverhampton	Cross City South	Cross City North
Trains to	Coventry, Northampton and London	Stratford, Leamington, Oxford and the Chilterns	Leicester and East Anglia; and Derby and Nottingham	Stourbridge, Kidderminster and Worcester	Wolverhampton, Shrewsbury, Stoke and Crewe	Bromsgrove, Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Bristol and Cardiff	Rugeley and Lichfield, and also Walsall to Wolverhampton and Rugby to Stafford
2026-2031 Assumes: (1) HS2 Phases 1 and 2a completed between London Euston and Crewe (2) Midlands Rail Hub delivered in full into Central Birmingham (3) Network capacity improvements in place between Kenilworth and Leamington (4) Dive-under West Coast Main Line at Nuneaton	Recast of services post-HS2 Phase 1 (1) Reading – Newcastle service to serve Coventry and Birmingham International (3) New Coventry - Leicester - Nottingham services (4) Direct Coventry – Tamworth/ Lichfield/Crewe service (1)	New Birmingham Moor Street – Oxford service (2) Second Birmingham – Whitlocks End train extended to Stratford	New Coventry – Leicester – Nottingham services (3) Additional services Birmingham – Leicester and Derby (2) New stations at Castle Bromwich and Galley Common	New Kidderminster – London services	Hourly service between London and Shrewsbury post-HS2 Phase 1 (1) New stations at Tettenhall, Shrewsbury Parkway, Brinsford and south Stoke area	New services between Birmingham Moor Street and Hereford, Cardiff, and Bristol (2) Local services return to pre-pandemic frequencies More calls at Redditch, Bromsgrove and Ashchurch (2) Frequency increase between London and Worcester (2) New stations at Balsall Heath and Rushwick (2)	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies on Cross City Line (2) New shuttle service between Lichfield and Burton with new station at Alrewas Extension of Walsall services to new station at Aldridge Extension of Rugeley trains to Stafford (1) London – Crewe semi-fast frequency increase (1)
2031-2040 Assumes above infrastructure and (5) HS2 complete to Manchester and East midlands Parkway (6) Additional network capacity between Coventry and Kenilworth)	Higher frequency local service to Birmingham International (1) Higher frequency Nuneaton – Coventry – Leamington (6) New stations: Coundon/ Foleshill, Coventry East and Warwick University	Local frequencies increased Birmingham Moor Street – Oxford service increased (2) More services Stratford – London (review Bearley – Hatton capacity requirements)	Sutton Park Line opens with new stations (2) New service pattern on Birmingham – Derby Line as Birmingham - Nottingham services provided by HS2 (5) New stations: Fort Parkway, Kingsbury and Nuneaton Parkway (5)	Local frequencies increased	Increase in Birmingham – Crewe services (5) New service pattern on Birmingham – Wolverhampton Line post HS2 Phase 2 (5) New station: Meecebrook (1)	Increase in Camp Hill frequency (2) Cross City services extended to Worcester	Increased frequency on Chase Line Sutton Park Line open with new stations Cross City extended to Burton New station: Polesworth Parkway
2040-2050	Further increase in local services	Review case for Stratford – Honeybourne Line	To be considered	To be considered	New link to Ironbridge	To be considered	New services between Chase Line and Wolverhampton Walsall – Lichfield Line reopened with new stations

8

Delivering the Strategy

We will be determined and proactive in driving implementation of this 30-year strategy. Our delivery partners include Network Rail (and in future Great British Railways), Midlands Connect, Transport for West Midlands (TfWM), Train Operators, local stakeholders and the private sector. Vital to success will be our close engagement with local communities and passengers themselves.

Our ambitions for West Midlands rail services cover a 30-year period seeing major economic and population change in our region and transformative rail developments such as HS2. We are already getting on with delivering many of our aspirations for services before HS2 and maximising the advantage the region has in co-managing the West Midlands Trains operation with the Department for Transport.

Our delivery plan confirms our ongoing commitment to these short-term developments, aligns with the programmes for HS2's phases and Midlands Connect's Midlands Rail Hub. It looks towards further radical change in the 2030s and towards 2047 to support both passenger and freight growth. It is consistent with the aspirational outputs set out in this strategy with the following core components:

Rebuilding after the pandemic

We are developing and delivering major station upgrades and new stations, including:

- masterplans for Wolverhampton and Coventry stations, and further integration with the expanding West Midlands Metro and other Rapid Transit schemes
- a major upgrade to Perry Barr station
- the reconstruction of University station
- new stations and services at Willenhall and Darlaston
- new stations and a re-opening to local rail services on the Camp Hill Line

West Midlands Trains continues with its project to introduce new rolling stock into the region providing capacity for growth.

We are working in close cooperation with other industry partners through the West Midlands Grand Railway Collaboration to develop timetables that match the need to rebuild demand after the pandemic with other objectives of efficient operation and resilience.

Midlands Rail Hub

This project is key to unlocking many of the improvements needed to meet future demand throughout the West Midlands.

It is being co-sponsored by Midlands Connect and the Department for Transport. Our role is to support our partners in the development of the project to ensure that a robust business case is submitted to Government and that the project is delivered. Planned early deliverables are the reinstatement of Birmingham Snow Hill Platform 4, and the delivery of upgrades between Kings Norton and Barnt Green.

Our role in future specification and management of Rail Passenger Service Contracts

We will further strengthen the local and regional value of the West Midlands operation through our partnership with the Department for Transport and Great British Railways in the future specification of the new rail contracts that have replaced the previous franchises.

We wish to see contract specifications which recognise the incremental aspirations this strategy sets out and a strengthened role for us in the management of contracts in the new Great British Railways industry structure, which supports our regional devolution objectives.

We believe that local needs should be identified locally and overseen by democratically elected local representatives who are best placed to make the investment choices based on the trade-offs available.

HS2

We will continue to actively engage with HS2, Network Rail, Midlands Connect, West Coast Partnership and the Department for Transport in service planning for future HS2 services, and for the best passenger and freight use of the capacity it releases on the existing network once HS2 opens. This released capacity offers key opportunities to develop and implement our high growth corridor aspirations. Timely delivery of all phases of HS2 will be essential in enabling delivery of our ambitious rail developments supporting the growth and sustainability of the West Midlands economy, communities and environment.

Cross boundary matters

Our strategy focuses upon the West Midlands, but also within the wider context of the East and West Midlands together, our region's location at the heart of the National Rail network, and national initiatives such as HS2. Our economic model extends widely beyond the West Midlands. We will actively engage with partner bodies developing routes outside of our boundaries but relevant to us, such as Midlands Connect, Transport for the East Midlands, Transport for Wales, West of England Combined Authority and England's Economic Heartland and Transport for the North and its constituent authorities.

Evidence

We will use the demand forecasting evidence developed for this investment strategy to support the development of strong business cases for our prioritised short and medium-term ambitions up to 2031. In looking towards 2050 we will initiate early high-level scoping work on longer term interventions considered within this strategy, particularly those that may be required following delivery of Midlands Rail Hub and HS2 Phase 2a.

Funding and project delivery

On behalf of the West Midlands Combined Authority, we are resourced to deliver many projects (such as station redevelopment) and we continue to develop our capabilities in this area.

Outside of the Metropolitan area some local authorities are active in developing and delivering their own schemes. An example is Rugby Parkway, being developed by Warwickshire County Council. In these cases we will provide support and advice, working with the promoter to mesh their plans with future service specifications.

We will also support our local authority partners in facilitating new or expanded terminals to facilitate freight growth and modal shift.

For larger projects (such as Midlands Rail Hub) we will support delivery by Network Rail (and in future Great British Railways), with funding coming from central Government.

We will work with Network Rail, the Department for Transport, Midlands Connect and TfWM to make the case for rail industry funding. We will actively seek both public and private sector funding opportunities in conjunction with our partner authorities to deliver the programme.

Today and tomorrow's operational railway

Successful delivery of reliable, on-time, safe train services, all day and every day, is an expectation of our passengers and key to ongoing growth in their use. We will work closely with the rail industry at every step of the evolution and delivery of this 30-year strategy to support innovation and best practice in performance delivery, recognising that our growth objectives will be asking more of the system and its people. We will support Network Rail's ongoing development of the 'Digital Railway' and schemes such as improving network resilience to climate change and electrification.

Rolling stock and depot strategy

New and longer trains form a key component of the current West Midlands Railway programme over the next few years and both Avanti West Coast and Transport for Wales are also introducing new, lower emission trains providing additional capacity on West Midlands services.

We recognise that the aspirations set out in this strategy will require significant investment in both quality and quantity of new rolling stock over time, respectively meeting modern operational and environmental standards and providing more capacity as passenger volumes grow over the next 30 years. New trains will also be required to support electrification or other decarbonisation schemes. We will work closely with our partners in the Department for Transport (and subsequently Great British Railways) and the rail industry to develop the right rolling stock strategy for the West Midlands.

Critical to supporting the delivery of future rolling stock and train service plans is having a clear strategy for the provision of depot and stabling facilities across the region. We will support Network Rail and train operating companies as they develop specific depot and stabling projects, such as West Midlands Trains plans for a new stabling facility at Bescot that will provide capacity for its additional new electric trains. We will also support Network Rail in developing a wider plan for increasing depot and stabling capacity for the new and additional rolling stock that will be needed for projects such as Midlands Rail Hub.

Communities, passengers and businesses

Meeting the evolving needs of communities, passengers and businesses, including rail freight customers, is at the heart of our ambitions for rail connectivity, services and customer experience. The level of projected demand for rail services for both passengers and freight is directly linked to the strength of the region's economy and to the confidence and prosperity of its people and businesses. This delivery plan will always need to reflect the views and experiences of our passengers and key stakeholders.

Part 2 – Train Service Development by Corridor

In this section the train service developments modelled for this strategy are shown for each of the corridors as follows:

- the train service now agreed for the December 2022 timetable
- the train service modelled for the year 2040
- a graph showing the modelled demand over time, divided between background growth, demand stimulated by HS2, demand stimulated by the aspirational train services modelled, and demand stimulated as a result of potential new stations
- a table summarising the key train service changes modelled and the main infrastructure schemes envisaged to support them

The key for the train service diagrams is as follows:

Long-distance high-speed services

Regional semi-fast services

Local stopping services

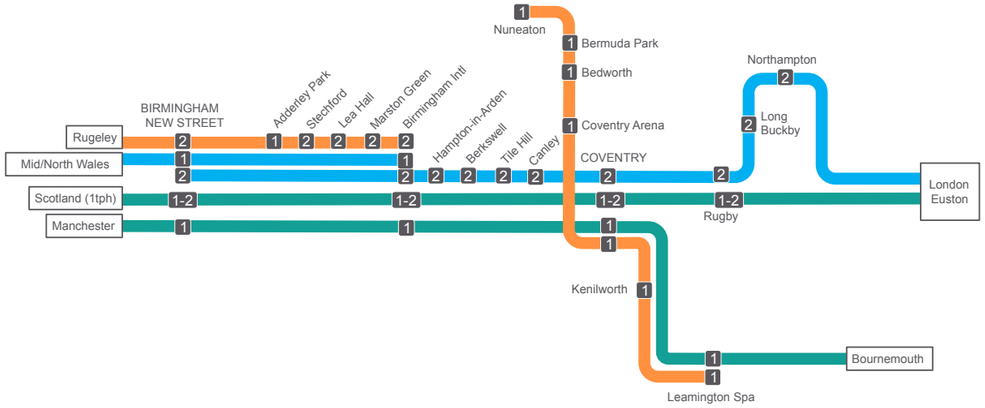
Limited service

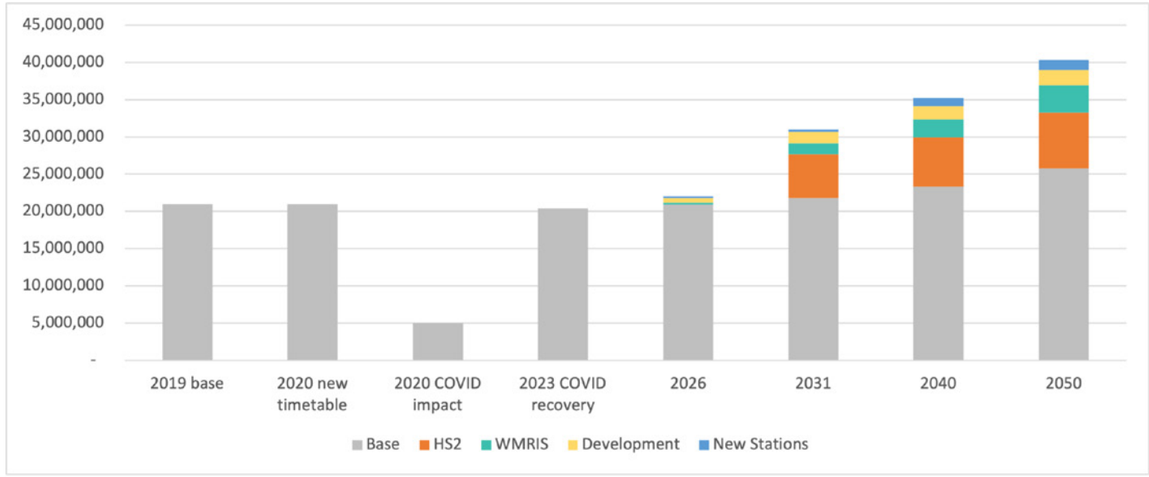
2 Number of station calls in a typical hour (one call every two hours is shown by ½, less than every two hours by <)

2 Potential new station and number of potential calls in a typical hour

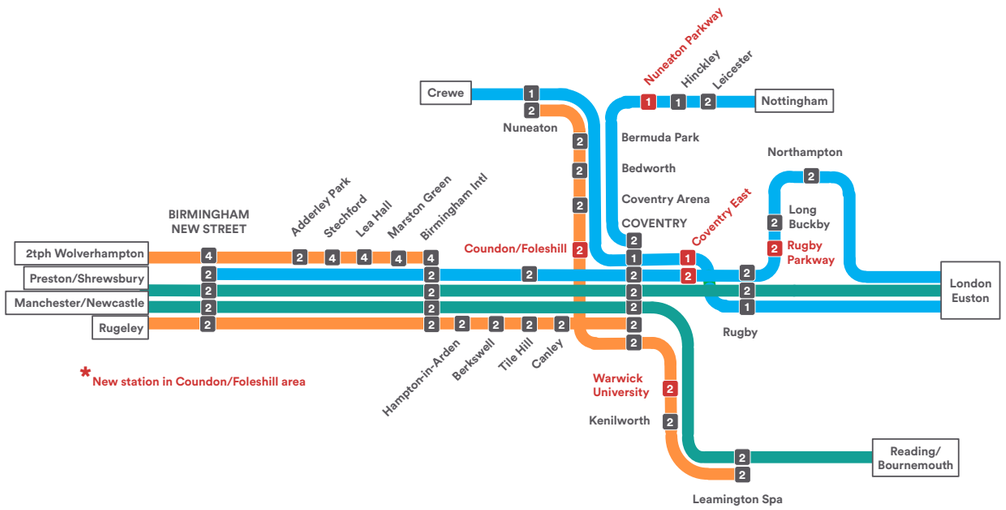
Coventry Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern





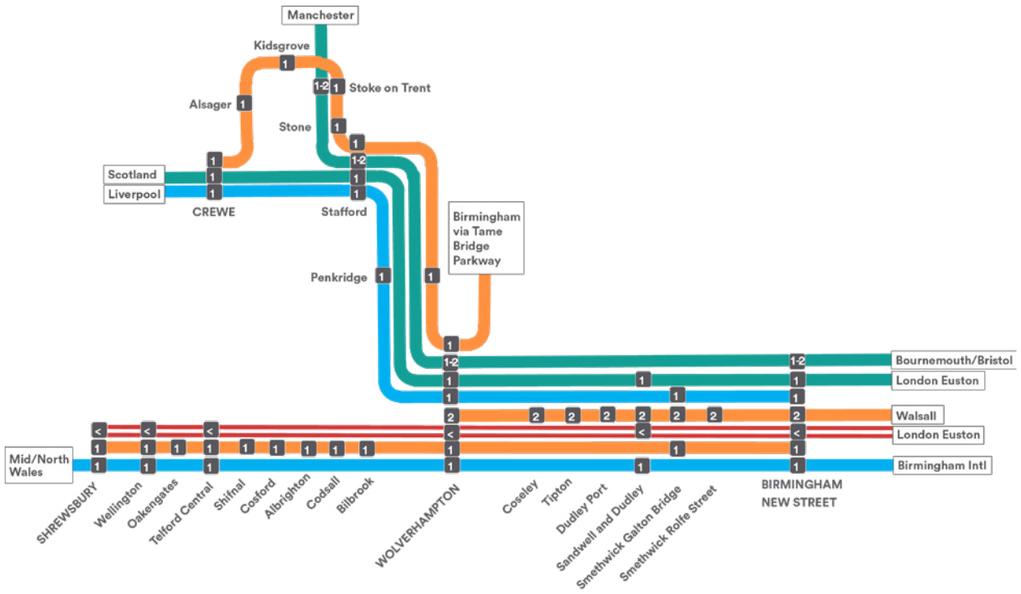
2040 Indicative Service Pattern



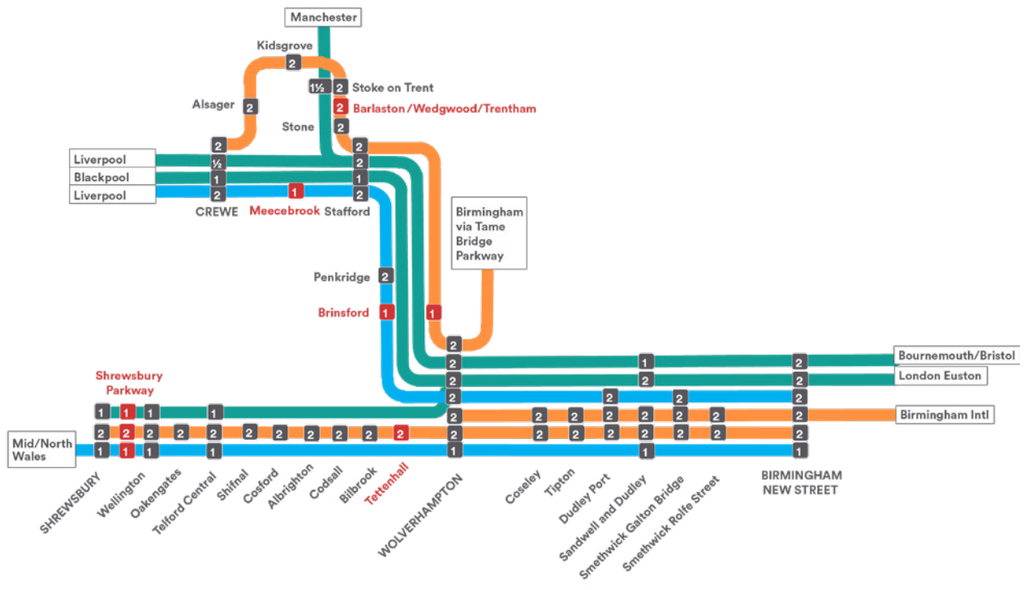
	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	New West Coast Main Line timetable structure from December 2022 moving services to regular 30-minute pattern	Coventry bay platform (option under review)
2026-2031	Recast of services post-HS2 Phase 1 Reading – Newcastle service to serve Coventry and Birmingham International New Coventry - Leicester - Nottingham services	HS2 Phase 1 Birmingham - London Nuneaton dive-under Line speed improvements Coventry – Nuneaton Kenilworth – Leamington doubling
2031-2040	Higher frequency local service to Bimingham International Increased frequency Coventry – Leamington. New stations: Coundon/Foleshill, Coventry East and Warwick University	Kenilworth – Coventry doubling
2040-2050	Further increase in local services	Four-tracking Birmingham International – Stechford

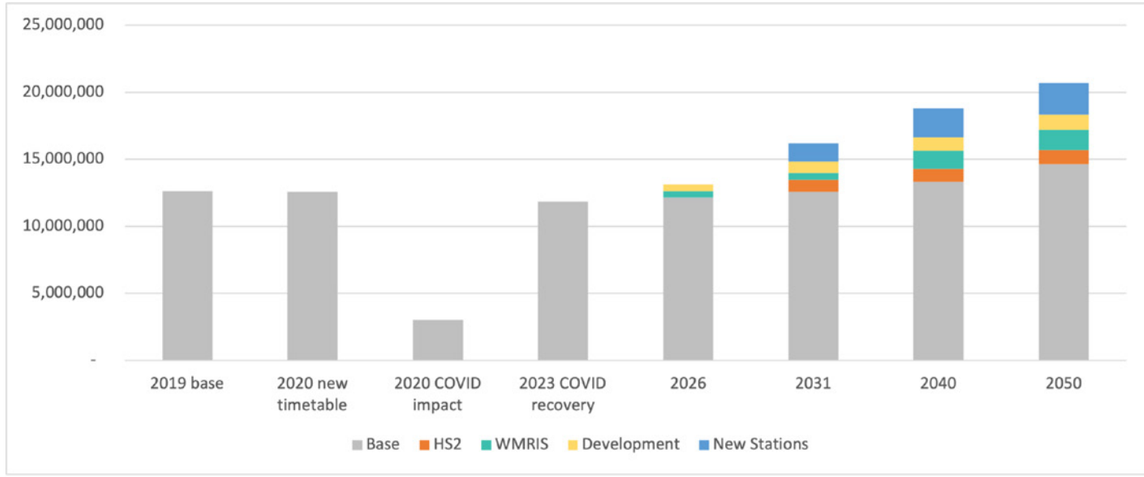
Wolverhampton Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern



2040 Indicative Service Pattern

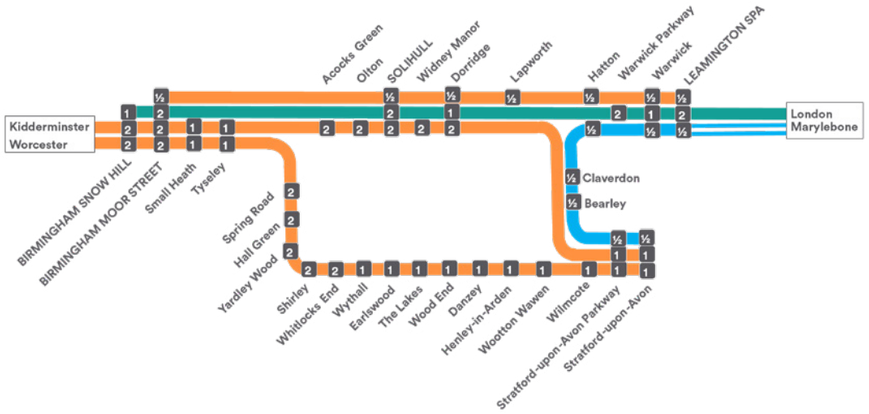




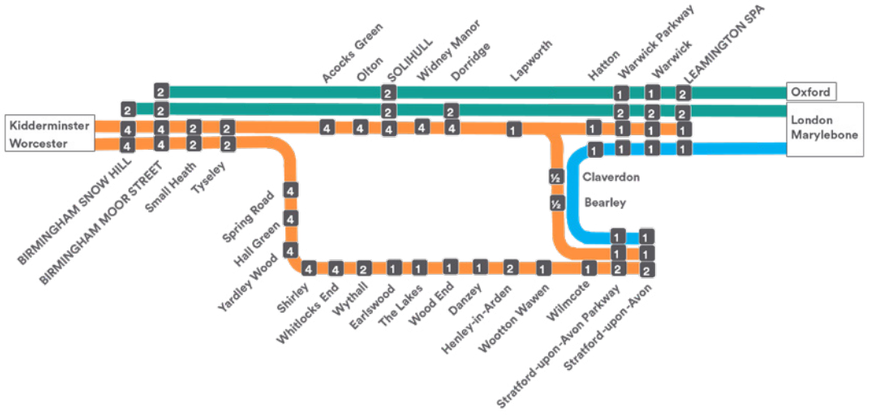
	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies More services between London and Shrewsbury Birmingham - Crewe service routed via Darlaston and Willenhall new stations	Wolverhampton - Shrewsbury line speed improvements New rail connections to West Midlands Interchange Strategic Rail Freight Interchange at Four Ashes Ironbridge branch upgrade
2026-2031	Hourly service between London and Shrewsbury (HS2 Phase 2a dependent) New stations at Tettenhall, Shrewsbury Parkway, Brinsford and south of Stoke	HS2 Phase 2a Birmingham to Crewe (now 2031)
2031-2040	Increase in Birmingham – Crewe services New station: Meecebrook	HS2 Phase 2b Crewe to Manchester Wolverhampton Area Remodelling Shrewsbury Line electrified Additional capacity between Alsager and Crewe
2040-2050	Shuttle services to Ironbridge	New fixed link to Ironbridge

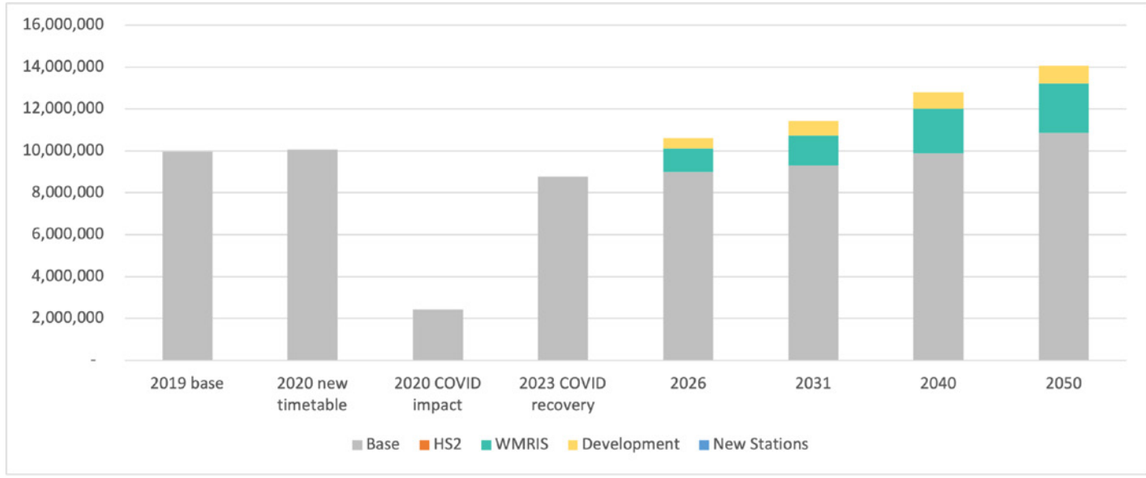
Leamington Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern



2040 Indicative Service Pattern



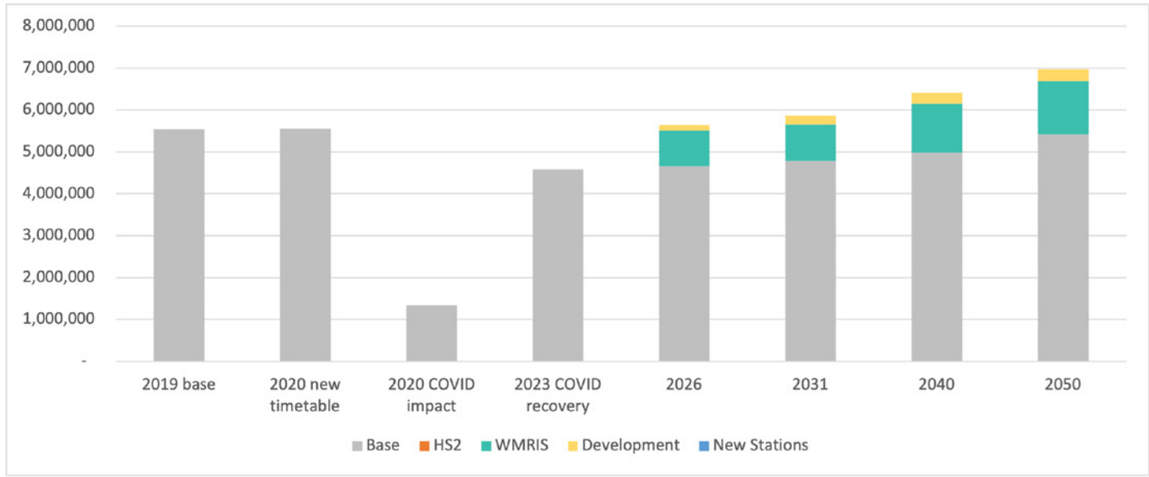


	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies	Reinstatement of Birmingham Snow Hill platform 4
2026-2031	New Birmingham Moor Street – Oxford service Second Birmingham – Whitlocks End train extended to Stratford	Leamington – Kenilworth doubling Leamington station remodelling
2031-2040	Local frequencies increased Birmingham Moor Street – Oxford service increased More services Stratford – London (review Bearley – Hatton capacity requirements)	Solihull route upgrade Electrification of Snow Hill Lines
2040-2050	Review case for Stratford-Honeybourne	No major change

Stourbridge Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern

2040 Indicative Service Pattern

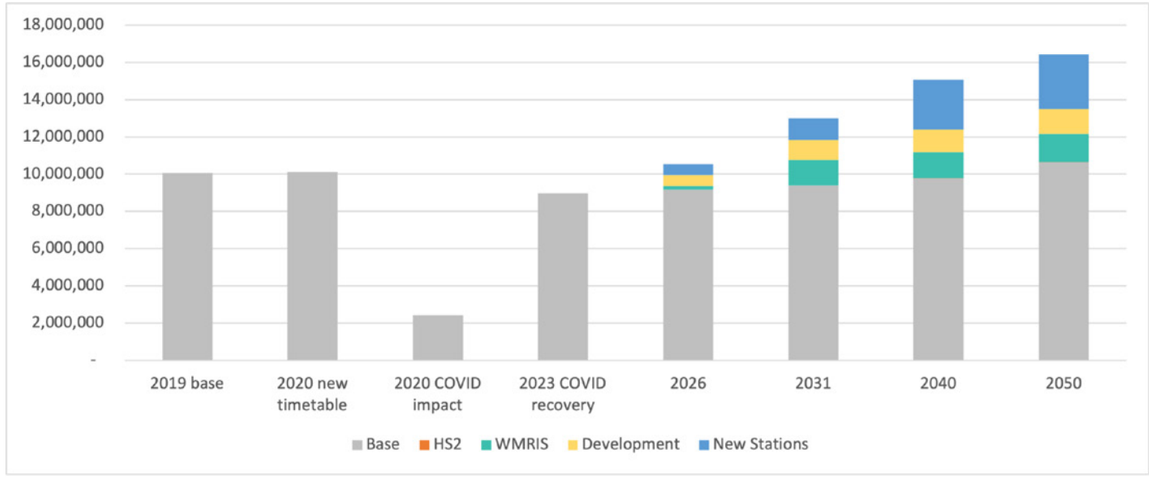


	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies	No major change
2026-2031	New Kidderminster – London services	Worcester area resignalling and upgrade North Cotswold Line upgrade (post resignalling)
2031-2040	Local frequencies increased Kidderminster – London service extended from Stourbridge Junction	Snow Hill Line electrification Stourbridge Junction remodelling New turnback siding at Rowley Regis
2040-2050	To be considered	No major change

Cross City North Corridor and Trent Valley

December 2022 Service Pattern

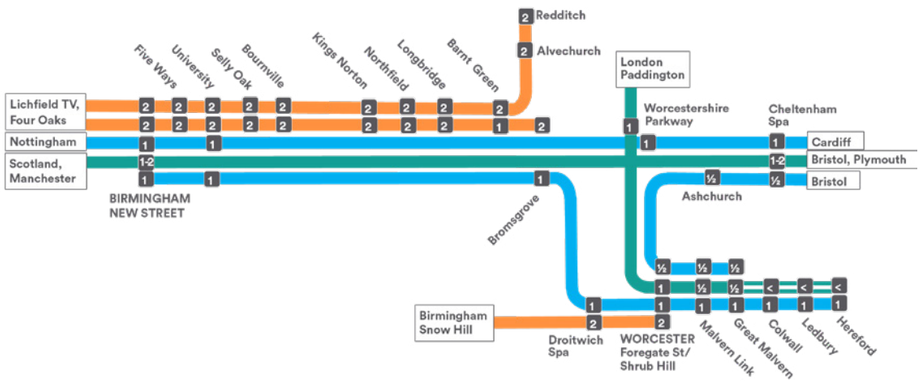
2040 Indicative Service Pattern



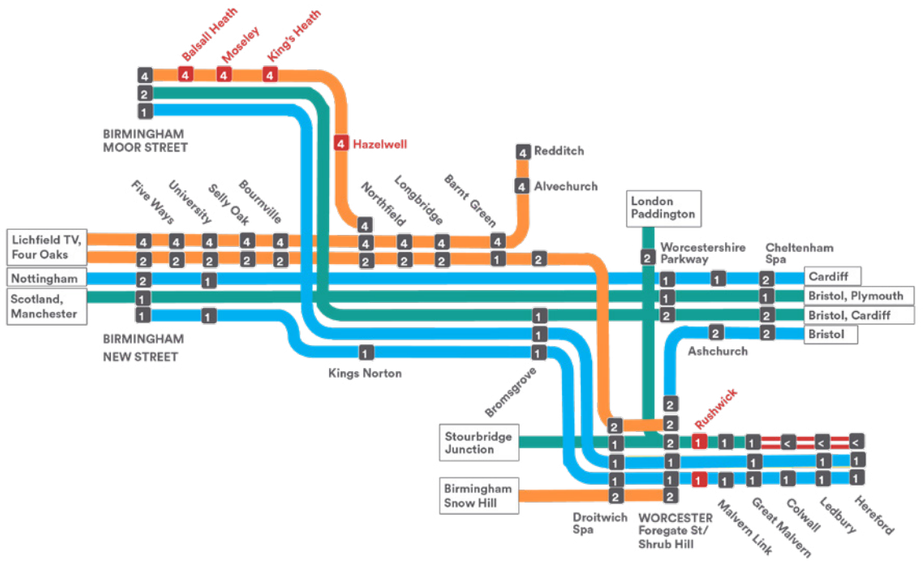
	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	New Walsall to Wolverhampton service calling at new stations at Darlaston and Willenhall. Return to pre-pandemic frequencies at Lichfield	New stations at Willenhall and Darlaston
2026-2031	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies on Cross City Line New shuttle service between Lichfield and Burton with new station at Alrewas Extension of Walsall services to new station at Aldridge Extension of Rugeley trains to Stafford London – Crewe semi-fast frequency increase New London - Coventry - Nuneaton - Trent Valley service	New bay platform at Burton-on-Trent Second platform at Lichfield Trent Valley Line extension to Aldridge
2031-2040	Extension of Rugeley trains to Stafford Increased frequency on Chase Line and Sutton Park Line open with new stations Cross City Line extended to Burton New station: Polesworth Parkway	HS2 Phase 2a to Crewe Sutton Park Line re-opens in two phases Lichfield – Burton electrified
2040-2050	New services between Chase Line and Birmingham International Walsall – Lichfield reopened with new stations	Walsall – Lichfield reopening

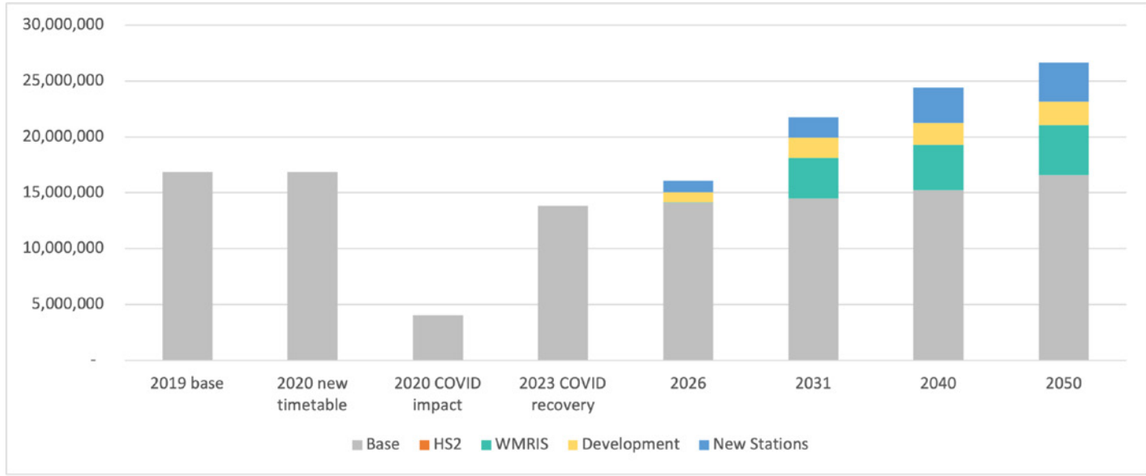
Cross City South Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern



2040 Indicative Service Pattern

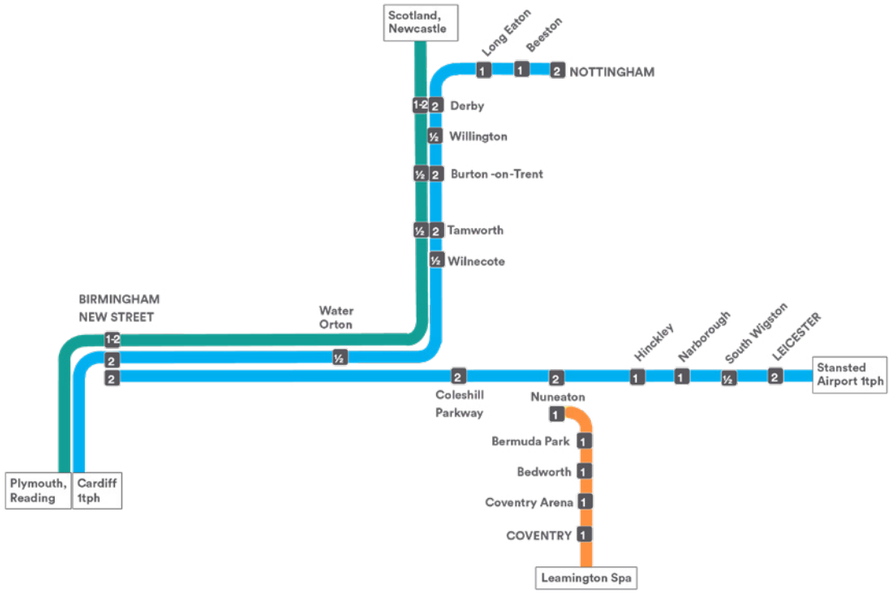




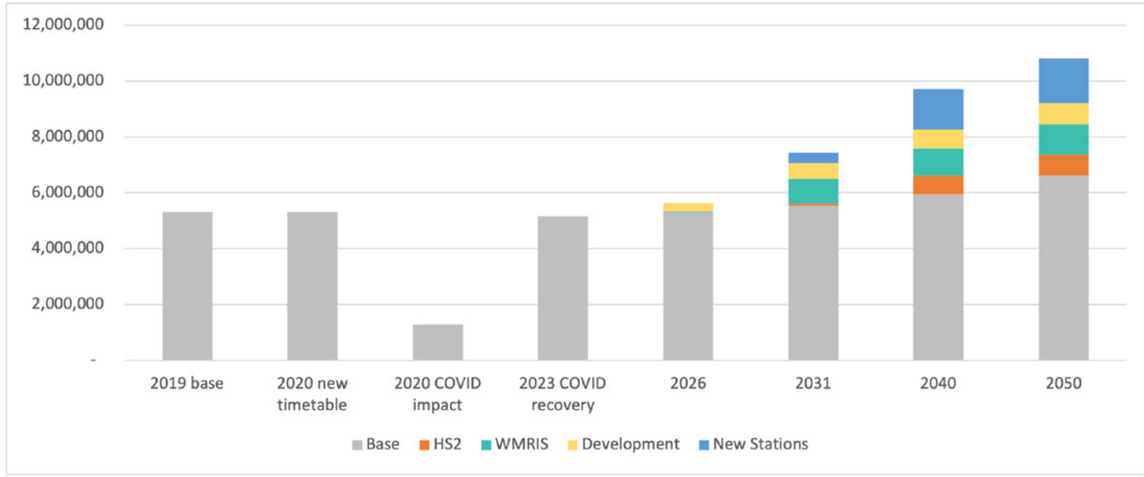
	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	Camp Hill Line reopens with new stations at Moseley Village, Kings Heath and Pineapple Road Cross Country frequency restored More calls at Worcestershire Parkway	Camp Hill Line reopens for local services
2026-2031	New services between Birmingham Moor Street and Hereford, Cardiff and Bristol Local services return to pre-pandemic frequencies More calls at Redditch, Bromsgrove and Alvechurch Frequency increase between London and Worcester New stations at Balsall Heath and Rushwick	Midlands Rail Hub: Bordesley West Chord and new platforms at Birmingham Moor Street Kings Norton and Barnt Green remodelling Worcester area resignalling Redditch station upgrade North Cotswold Line upgrade Hereford Line upgrade HS2 Phase 1/2a
2031-2040	Increase in Camp Hill frequency Cross City services extended to Worcester	Electrification and capacity works between Bromsgrove and Worcester Snow Hill Lines electrification Additional platform at Birmingham Moor Street
2040-2050	To be considered	No major change

Water Orton Corridor

December 2022 Service Pattern



2040 Indicative Service Pattern



	Service Changes	Main Infrastructure Enhancements
By 2026	Return to pre-pandemic frequencies	Coventry bay platform (option under review)
2026-2031	New Coventry – Leicester – Nottingham services Potential Journey time improvements Additional services Birmingham – Leicester / Derby New stations at Castle Bromwich and Galley Common	Nuneaton dive-under (design TBC) Midlands Rail Hub: Bordesley East Chord and new platforms at Birmingham Moor Street Water Orton signalling and freight loops east of Nuneaton Kingsbury freight access
2031-2040	Sutton Park Line opens with new stations New service pattern on Birmingham – Derby line as Birmingham - Nottingham services provided by HS2 New stations: Fort Parkway, Kingsbury and Nuneaton Parkway	Derby/Nuneaton – Birmingham electrification Lichfield – Burton electrification Sutton Park Line opens in two phases HS2 Birmingham to Nottingham Further Water Orton remodelling
2040-2050	To be considered	No major change

Glossary

WEST MIDLANDS RAIL EXECUTIVE (WMRE)
The partnership of 16 West Midlands Local Authorities co-managing the West Midlands Railway franchise with the Department for Transport, and planning the strategic future of the West Midlands rail network.

WMRE BOARD MEMBER AUTHORITIES
Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Herefordshire, Sandwell, Shropshire, Solihull, Staffordshire, Telford and Wrekin, Walsall, Warwickshire, West Northamptonshire, Wolverhampton and Worcestershire. The WMRE Board is chaired by the elected mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority.

WMRE AFFILIATE MEMBERS
Cheshire East and Stoke-on-Trent.

WEST MIDLANDS RAIL CONTRACT
The current West Midlands rail contract covers services operated by West Midlands Trains Limited across the West Midlands, as well as trains from London Euston to Crewe and from Liverpool to Birmingham. The contract covering local services within the West Midlands is jointly specified and co-managed by the Department for Transport and West Midlands Rail Executive, and is branded as 'West Midlands Railway'. Regional services between London Euston, Birmingham, Crewe and Liverpool are branded as 'London Northwestern Railway'. West Midlands Trains Ltd has been operating these services since December 2017.

WEST MIDLANDS COMBINED AUTHORITY (WMCA)
A local government partnership defined in statute consisting of the 7 West Midlands metropolitan district authorities and 10 non-constituent local authorities, 3 Local Enterprise Partnerships and a number of observer organisations. WMCA has the statutory powers of both a Passenger Transport Executive and Integrated Transport Authority and as such is the Local Transport Authority for the West Midlands metropolitan area. Leadership of the WMCA comes from the Mayor of the West Midlands and the leaders of the 7 constituent metropolitan district authorities.

TRANSPORT FOR WEST MIDLANDS (TfWM)
The transport arm of the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) set up to co-ordinate and deliver investment to improve transport infrastructure in the WMCA area and create a fully integrated, safe and secure network. It is also responsible for assessing and planning the WMCA's future transport needs so the network can meet the demands of businesses and a growing population. As well as a key partner in rail development and delivery in the WMCA's area, TfWM is also behind plans to expand a metropolitan rapid transit network - including new West Midlands Metro, Sprint (bus rapid transit), and Very Light Rail.

TfWM's broader transport investment in the WMCA area will be critical for rail access and interchange, and providing alternatives to short rail journeys in the future.

WEST MIDLANDS TRAINS LIMITED
West Midlands Trains Ltd is a joint venture of Abellio UK (subject to a management buyout by Transport UK), Japan East Railway Company, and Mitsui & Co Ltd that provides train and station services under the West Midlands rail contract.

NETWORK RAIL
Network Rail is the publicly owned organisation which owns, manages and is responsible for maintaining and developing Britain's rail network. It also operates 20 major British railway stations including Birmingham New Street.
The majority of the West Midlands rail network is part of the "Central Route" of Network Rail's "North West and Central Region".

DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT (DfT)
The Government department responsible for UK rail network development in England including managing Network Rail and train operator service contract procurement and co-management of the West Midlands Railway contract with the West Midlands Rail Executive.

Great British Railways (GBR)
Great British Railways is the proposed new organisation which has been tasked by Government to create a simpler, better railway which supports government priorities and delivers value for money for both customers and taxpayers. A GBR Transition Team is currently working on detailed proposals and it is envisaged that GBR will replace Network Rail and take over the rail operator contract management responsibilities of the DfT.

MIDLANDS CONNECT
The Partnership of 23 West and East Midlands local authorities, 9 Local Enterprise Partnerships, Department for Transport, Highways England, Network Rail, High Speed 2, Birmingham Airport, East Midlands Airport and Chambers of Commerce planning the strategic future of West and East Midlands regional rail connectivity.

MIDLANDS RAIL HUB (MRH)
Midlands Rail Hub the region's most important rail improvement scheme, which unlocks the national rail network's capacity bottleneck in central Birmingham, creates a new major rail interchange hub at Moor Street station, improves access to HS2 and delivers faster and more frequent connections across the West Midlands and beyond.

PLANET
Framework Model A transport planning tool which provide forecasts of transport demand and generalised costs

GROSS VALUE ADDED (GVA)
The value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

HS2

HIGH SPEED 2 (HS2)
HS2 is the UK's flagship transport levelling up scheme and is Europe's largest infrastructure project. The new high-speed line will connect two new West Midlands stations with London, Manchester and the East Midlands, with trains continuing on the existing network to North West England, Yorkshire and Scotland. The proposals and phasing for HS2 have now been revised several times. The position outlined by Government in Spring 2023 is as follows:

- Phase 1 Old Oak Common – West Midlands. Construction underway - opening by early 2030s
- Phase 1 London Euston – Old Oak Common. Construction underway, but design under review - opening 2035-41
- Phase 2A West Midlands – Crewe. Funding committed - opening 2030-34
- Phase 2B Crewe – Manchester. Forecast opening 2035-41
- HS2 East West Midlands – East Midlands. Forecast opening mid-2040s
- HS2 extensions to North West (West Coast Main Line connection) and Yorkshire. Paused and under review


COVENTRY STATION
Coventry