

Campaigns Page 1 Great Central Corridor Route:

The Great Central corridor was closed from 1966 and in the interim decades, much change has come to pass. In particular, the corridor has grown in population, the amount of new roads/upgraded roads and development with associated traffic has mushroomed. There being no rail between the Oxford-Leamington line and the West Coast Main Line until they link at Coventry, is a wide gap without any rail serving it. It is ERTA's view that such a rail link – a new 21st Century local-based, local serving communities by rail is needed to give an alternative to total road reliance and dependency.

Good social, economic and environmental reasons inform that we should as a nation, be, in policy terms, working our way back to more people and goods by rail and turning away from the indulgent, costly and pollution roads domination of the last 60 years. The closure of local rail lines locked-in roads monopoly and reliance. Rail routes have just been abandoned to the whim of speculative and other development.

What we are not saying: ERTA is not calling for every inch of the former Great Central Railway to be rebuilt. Rather we are calling for a new incremental local railway, where connectivity and modal choice is the hallmark not high speed per se and where local but growing places like Brackley, can access a train and wider network connectives access Brackley too by rail.

What we want:

1. Old Oak Common (OOC) to have bays for Chiltern Line Trains to terminate and connect plus a tunnel to link with other lines to Heathrow from Woking or off the Waterloo Lines radial from London for example. A 24x7 operational through railway could offer passenger and select freight to get around London and lure modal shift.
2. For a new-build from Grendon-Calvert to link the Chiltern Main Line with lines linking Aylesbury-East-West Rail for Milton Keynes, Northampton and Bedford for example.
3. For a new direct spur line or junction on East-West for a new-build line going on a new route to serve the growing Brackley area alias 'Brackley East Parkway' adjacent to the A43 and with linking buses arcing Banbury-Brackley-Station-Silverstone-Northampton/Milton Keynes via Towcester/Buckingham respectively.
4. For the Phase 1 Brackley line and station to new-build to serve the Woodford Halse area, Willoughby and reopen Rugby Central as a park and ride station with modern facilities.
5. These lines would link Rugby area with London, Heathrow, South Coast, Brighton, Bicester, Oxford, Southampton and Bristol and vice versa respectively.

6. A new link from south of Willoughby to either link with West Coast Main Line north of the Kilsby Tunnel area and run into existing Rugby and/or arc Rugby to link with the Northampton Loop Line, DIRFT and run on alongside M1 to serve Magna Park, one of the largest industrial warehouse complexes in Europe not served by a rail link and Lutterworth, where M1, M6 and A14 converge, again lacking a rail link and link ultimately with the existing Nuneaton-Leicester lines.
7. Now permission to proceed with reopening the Knighton-Burton-on-Trent rail line, freight north of Leicester could use that reopened rail link whilst a focus on passenger services near and far could serve Leicester, offering the aforementioned new destinations, currently not accessible from Leicester, a growing city and gateway for East Midlands generally.

This is what we wish to see minimally. It would in our view:

1. Alleviate existing main road plethora, reducing congestion, time and fuel cost-waste, cutting emissions, air pollution and associated health and hazards.
2. Offer more and new 'by rail' journey opportunities for people and goods. That saves time, cost and boosts efficiency.
3. Offer footfall and spend to the areas not currently served by rail and new flows of income and regeneration to existing places as well.
4. Cut the need to send everything via Birmingham and/or London, shaving off end-to-end timings and speeding up deliveries and transshipment of goods.
5. Make growth more sustainable and ensuring the balance of land use between housing, farming, employment and conservation is retained as much as possible, not ever-increasing encroachments whilst development sprawls unadulteratedly, impacting wider and wider areas as a result.

What you can do:

1. If you support our idea, please write to your MP, Council and local newspaper and give us support.
2. Join ERTA as a member yourself, every member counts and consider being a volunteer assistant to our growing team, find your niche, be flexible and negotiate of and around what is needed where, when and how.
3. Join our call on Government to legislate to protect and give priority for local rail reopenings and select new-builds and switch/top-slice from massive £billions allocated for new roads to investing in restoring local rail links; bringing people and Places back onto the national rail network and enjoying the benefits, not least a quality of life, currently under threat and eroded by a lack of rail access, availability, affordability and choice. Vote for change with feet, membership, wallets and action! We can't change the past, but we can all make a contribution to better shape all our futures.