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## **SIX FIGURE GRANT ENABLES FEASIBILITY STUDY ON GREAT CENTRAL GAP PROJECT TO GET UNDERWAY**

### **Consultants to be appointed shortly**

**The Great Central Railway is pleased to announce that feasibility study work for the “Bridging the Gap” project will begin shortly, following a significant funding announcement from the East Midlands Development Agency.**

The six figure grant will go towards paying for a consultant firm to study development prospects for the Great Central Railway corridor between Nottingham and Leicester. The “Gap” project is central to uniting the two halves of the GCR and unlocking the economic potential of a 17 mile railway route.

The southern section of the line would gain a main line connection, meaning it could expand the commercial services it already offers and the entire extended route could have potential uses far beyond tourist traffic.

It is expected the consultants will be asked to review other possibilities for development and expansion as part of their remit.

The East Midlands Development Agency said **“Through Leicestershire Economic Partnership (LSEP), emda has approved funding towards a feasibility study to be completed by Charnwood Borough Council to assess the transport, tourism and economic potential of the Great Central Railway link. emda is pleased to support this prestigious and exciting project. The Great Central Railway is a valuable regional asset steeped in rail history, which is of significant importance to the economy of the East Midlands. Expanding the use of the line will have far-reaching benefits for both the railway and the region, through greater connectivity to improve the overall experience for tourists, the local community and visitors alike.”**

A spokesman for the Great Central Railway said, **“We are delighted to have received a grant from the East Midlands Development Agency, through Charnwood Borough Council and Leicester Shire Economic Partnership. We should also thank Leicester Shire Promotions Ltd for their vital support. We have long believed the railway corridor through the East Midlands could be substantially developed, with potentially great reward for the local economy. The grant will be used towards these aims.”**

The GCR will itself need to raise a third of the funding to complete the feasibility study. The process of appointing a firm of consultants to carry out the study will begin shortly, with the study itself, expected to be underway by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009. The Great Central Railway will release more information about the breadth of the study and the timescales involved once work has begun.

Tony Sparks, a director of GCR and GC Link said **“This is the culmination of much behind the scenes work by a lot of people from the railways both sides of the “gap”.**

**The steering group “Greater Great Central Railway” has immersed itself in plans and presentations to reach this point. The work won't stop here, as the consultants will need support during the feasibility study.**

**Hopefully the feasibility study will prove our arguments about economic benefits to the region, but there will still be the massive task of convincing commercial partners to join us on this journey.**

**During that time the work of ensuring both halves of the separate railways remain viable also continues.**

**This is another step on the road to the reunited GCR. A feasibility study, which broadens into looking at economic potential, all helps towards building the business case for the project. We'll have more news once the study is underway”**

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