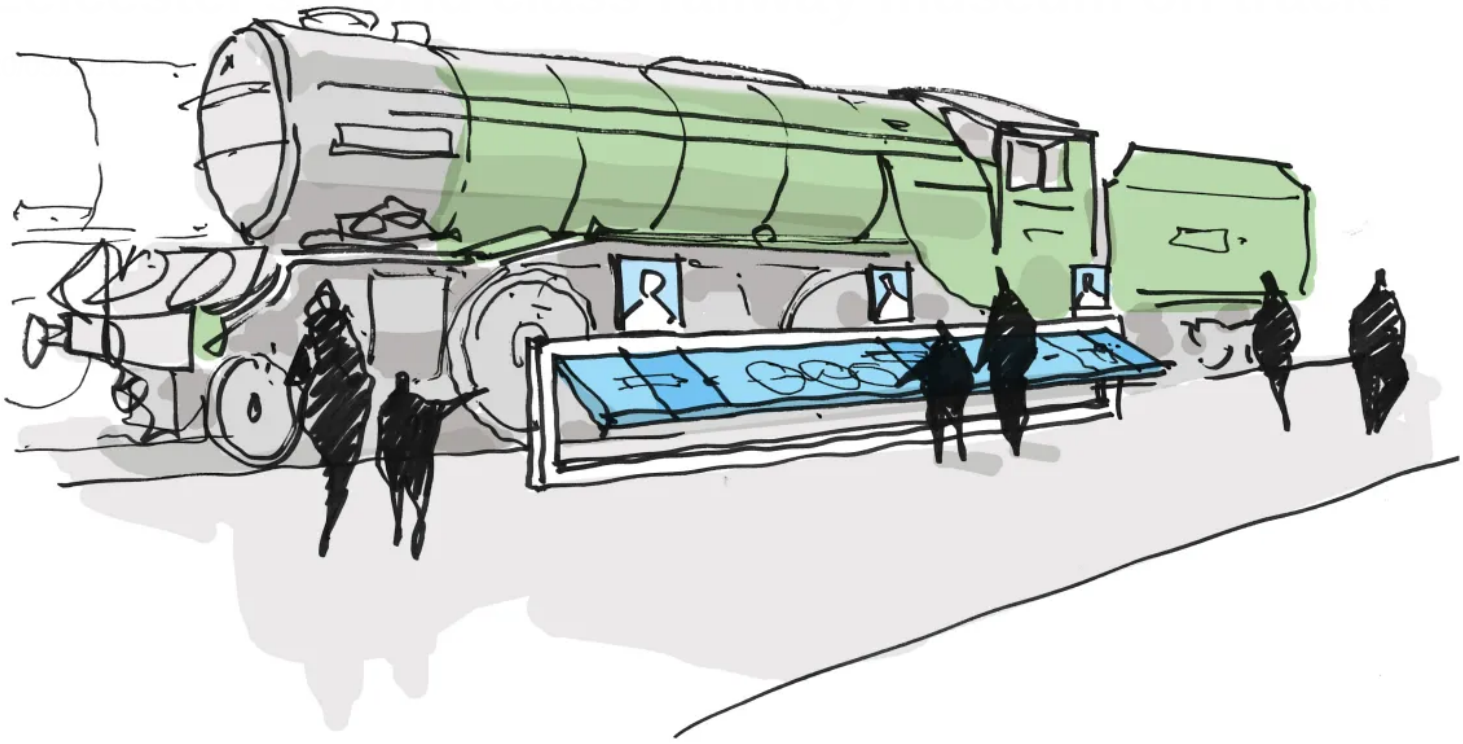


Green Arrow on display Event communication Ltd copy

The new attraction, Main Line, will see iconic locomotives on display and tell the story of how the railways changed the city. It has received earmarked funding of £9.5million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).

The building will sit alongside the Leicester North terminus of the Great Central Railway, with heritage trains arriving alongside the exhibitions. Development funding of just under £500,000 has also been awarded to help the partnership progress their plans to apply for a full grant at a later date.

“We are thrilled by the support from HLF”, said Bill Ford, Managing Director of the Great Central Railway. “Main Line will combine our award winning double track main line railway with a unique collection of priceless locomotives and objects, preserving them for future generations. The museum will not only tell railway stories, but will aim to engage people with their own history, so they are inspired to be heritage champions in future.”

The building will be designed with floor to ceiling glass windows. Close up views of trains arriving at the adjacent station will provide a dramatic context for the static exhibits. Personal histories and small objects will help interpret the railways’ role in everyday life and how they transformed the city, helping businesses boom and communities change.

Sir Peter Soulsby, the Mayor of Leicester, said, “Main Line will be a wonderful opportunity to preserve and showcase the city’s rich railway heritage. The project also offers a substantial economic opportunity. It will create jobs and will attract extra visitors to the city. It adds to the incredible tourism offer we have, which includes the King Richard III visitor

centre and the National Space Centre. We're proud to be part of the partnership and delighted by the support of HLF - this is another vote of confidence in the city."

300 short-term construction jobs will be created while the museum is built and nine full-time posts once open. As part of the bid process an economic impact study has been carried out which demonstrates the museum and railway will be worth £39million for the local economy over five years. In turn this additional spending could create more than 700 jobs in the area.

The exhibits will be drawn from the prestigious national railway collection, which is predominantly focussed on two sites in the north.

Paul Kirkman, Director of the National Railway Museum, said, "We're really looking forward to be able to place a significant number of locomotives and other priceless parts of the collection in the heart of the country. They will be closer than ever before to hundreds of thousands of people, making our collections more accessible. It will also release more room at our sites in York and Shildon so we can get more irreplaceable heritage undercover and put more on display. This is a project with strong local connections but with benefits that will be felt nationally."

Work has already been undertaken to ensure the museum properly reflects the diverse communities it will serve, with the project team recognising that valuable social history will be lost if it isn't recorded.

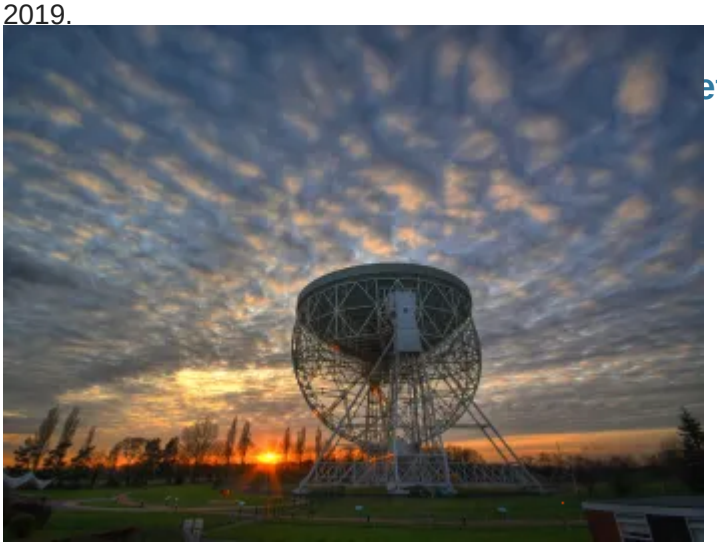
Atul Patel, HLF Trustee, said: "The Great Central has had a lasting impact on industrial and cultural life in this area and this investment will continue the railway's important role. Thanks to National Lottery players, a world class museum will now be created providing a new home to some of our most significant objects and archives which together tell the story of the British railways. Alongside nearby attractions, the new museum will help to establish the city as a major tourism destination, and attract wider audiences."

The Main Line museum will work in synergy with the Great Central Railway's event programme and provide greater opportunity for local schools and communities to engage in learning activities. A key element will be to demonstrate how the tremendous feats of Victorian engineering can still inspire the engineers of the future.

Following the completion of the separate Great Central Railway reunification project, the museum will be accessible by rail from right across the East Midlands and the country.

Bill Ford concluded: "Now the hard work really starts! We have a great partnership in place and will now look to secure match funding to develop the project to the point where we are ready to build it."

The partnership will be required to make a further bid to HLF to confirm the full grant award. Main Line could be open in 2019.



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The Lovell Telescope at Jodrell Bank at sunset Ant Holloway

Derby Silk Mill

jor heritage projects

Derby Silk Mill in the Derwent Valley

May brings £100m funding boost!