



Promoting Britain's
Railway
for Passengers
and Freight

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2nd February 2015

Dear Sir,

Response to Network Rail's draft Anglia Route Study

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better services for passengers and freight. A voluntary organisation to which many rail user groups are affiliated, the organisation is independent both politically and commercially.

The Anglia route runs through the area served by the Railfuture branches in East Anglia and London and the South East. The comments made are not confidential, and we would be happy for them to appear on your website and you are welcome to use them in discussion with funders and other stakeholders. We would be happy to enlarge on any of the points made above or to work with you to identify the best options for the future.

Scope and Objectives of the Study.

Railfuture endorses the long-term and strategic outcomes-based approach adopted in Network Rail's Passenger Market Study and followed through in this draft Route Study, looking ahead over a 30 year period which is the lifespan of many industry assets and over the lengthy lead-times necessarily involved in planning, funding and delivering significant if incremental development of the railway. In that context we also welcome the more focussed view over the next decade and the needs and opportunities anticipated to arise in the next rail infrastructure investment period, Control Period 6 to 2024. The study is comprehensive and the proposals to meet future demand are imaginative. We also welcome the inclusive process, which allows a wide range of stakeholders to contribute, and our comments are offered in that positive spirit. We express some reservations below, particularly around the need to look to meeting demand around cities such as Cambridge and Norwich as well as London, and we suggest some additional outputs, but that is offered in the spirit of creative, constructive challenge between fellow advocates of shared strategic goals and aspirations.

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Making the Case for Rail.

We are keen to see a programme based on the study delivered and will be making the case to opinion-formers, decision-makers, and funders for sustained investment in the region. The railway is a capital-intensive service industry, which delivers economic, environmental and social as well as transport benefits to wider society, nationwide, as well as to East Anglia. “Bringing communities and businesses closer together” is a rallying-cry to underscore the role of a higher-performing railway in delivering higher economic and environmental performance for this part of the country. It is one which Railfuture will be communicating in support of the case for that sustained investment.

Forecasts. We endorse the strong growth forecasts made and note that previous forecasts of demand have generally proved to be underestimates, with the consequent shortfall in capacity and overcrowding that we see today. East Anglia is growing strongly with 346,100 new homes proposed in the region by 2036. Consequently, we endorse the outputs listed for CP6, and regard these as the minimum required to address the forecast levels of demand.

We understand that the growth in commuting demand to London is the driver for most of the outputs proposed and that this is dictated by the high numbers of additional passengers involved. However, we would urge that this London focus should not exclude the development of routes that serve regional centres and in particular, Cambridge, Colchester, Ipswich and Norwich. Indeed, the growth figures for West Anglia might prove to be higher than forecast, given the vibrancy of the Cambridge economy. To meet this growth in demand, we support the concept of minimum half hourly frequencies on all routes together with the necessary enhancements needed to achieve this. We are confident that the latent demand for better services will quickly be turned into additional passenger numbers, and this will certainly be more likely to be delivered on those lines that have Community Rail Partnerships which have been so successful in driving growth on local services in East Anglia. In particular, we believe that priority should be given to the inter-urban routes:

- Cambridge - Norwich.
- Cambridge -Peterborough
- Ipswich - Cambridge.

Resilience. The draft study omits reference to the seven-day railway, although a number of measures are proposed that would contribute to it. In addition to these outputs, we would suggest inclusion of bi-directional signalling with crossovers on double track main lines, particularly when they are being resignalled, to allow overnight access for maintenance without closing both tracks.

Electrification. The proposed electrification of the route from Felixstowe to Peterborough and from Chippenham Junction to Coldhams Lane Junction is endorsed. We believe that Ely – Norwich should also be added to the list both for local and regional services and to provide an alternative route to ensure resilience between London and Norwich. Consideration should also be given to the Sudbury branch, as it is an outlier of diesel operation and remote from Crown Point depot. As a community rail line, this could be an opportunity to test a simpler, cheaper form of electrification. Such an extended programme would release significant numbers of diesel units for the remaining non-electrified lines (see below). Ideally, planning should be on the basis that over time, these remaining lines would be electrified, and passive provision made for this in the resignalling and other works planned.

Rolling stock. We are concerned that the present strategic plans for rolling stock deployment have resulted in a shortage of diesel multiple units and in East Anglia this is already resulting in some unreliability and considerable overcrowding. We are concerned that the national rolling stock strategy makes no provision for new vehicles and relies instead on a cascade following electrification. As growth is already ahead of that forecast for the strategy and there is a high risk of slippage with the electrification programme, the shortage is likely to be acute in East Anglia where the requirement for additional vehicles is now. In particular, the strategy appears to be inconsistent with the implementation of any of the options in the route study relating to increased service frequencies on any of the non-electrified branches.

Crossrail. This will form an important link from East London and East Anglia to both Heathrow Airport and to connect with HS2 at Old Oak Common. This will mean that Stratford will become an even more important interchange and the numbers will be larger than when Crossrail was originally planned. This will require further investment at Stratford to ensure that the interchange is as smooth and efficient as possible.

New lines, stations and depots. The only new line proposed in the study is the extension of the Gospel Oak – Barking line to Barking Riverside. However, studies are currently being undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridge & Peterborough LEP into reopening the March – Wisbech line for passengers and this proposal should be included in the study. The economic benefits of linking available housing and workforce in North East Cambridgeshire with the economic hotspot of Cambridge is the key driver of this scheme as well as the transport and accessibility benefits it would bring to the town.

We also believe that East-West rail should feature more prominently, as the route of the eastern section would impact on the operation of Cambridge and the lines around it, and it is related to the further eastward extension of the service to Ipswich (see below).

We would also support inclusion in the study of the Hall Farm curve to enable a through service from the Chingford line to Stratford to be provided. The growing commercial and leisure developments in the Stratford area are generating ever increasing journeys as demonstrated by the very successful Lea Valley to Stratford service. The journey for the eight miles between Chingford and Stratford takes an hour by public transport currently, and apart from reducing this significantly, the proposal would also provide greatly improved access to job opportunities in Docklands. Network Rail has recently calculated a cost benefit ratio of 1:2.9 for this proposal, which is also supported by the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Newham.

The proposals to provide new stations at Cambridge Science Park, Beaulieu Park, Soham and Beam Park are welcomed. We also believe the case for a station north of Waterbeach to serve major new housing development should be considered. Cambridgeshire CC has also proposed a station to serve Addenbrooke's bio-medical campus, a scheme which might require a third track, or four tracks between Cambridge and Shepreth Branch Junction. The County Council is also proposing a new station at Cherry Hinton or Fulbourn to improve access to the network, and both of these stations have considerable potential and should be covered in the study. The reopening of Junction Road station between Upper Holloway and Gospel Oak would open up access to the Gospel Oak – Barking line from a new area with an additional interchange point between London Underground and buses. A level site exists at this point which might facilitate construction.

Recognising the scarcity of land in the region and the difficulty in planning terms of gaining approval for new rail freight depots, the study should also consider with freight train operators, freight forwarders and local authorities any railway land that might be suitable for future sites, together with proposals to protect them.

There are connections with two heritage railways in Norfolk that are already visitor attractions in their own right, and bring in passengers from the national rail network. In the longer term, they might provide improved access to the national network via Sheringham and Wymondham. The latter in particular might provide a useful link with Dereham, and in the longer term Fakenham, both local centres with a wide catchment area. We would recommend showing these two connections on the map, identified as the North Norfolk and Mid Norfolk Railways respectively.

Infrastructure enhancement

We agree with the approach adopted in the study of looking for enhancement opportunities where renewals are due, as this often provides an opportunity for improvement at relatively low cost.

We would endorse the line speed improvements proposed for the Great Eastern and West Anglia main lines and would propose that planning should be based on the following assumptions for the other routes to allow faster journeys between main centres and greater flexibility for connections at key stations:

- Great Eastern Main Line: 110mph
- West Anglia Route: 100mph
- Ipswich- Cambridge/Peterborough: 100mph
- Ely to Norwich: 100mph
- All other routes: 75mph.

We would like to see the removal of temporary speed restrictions as soon as practicable, and that some priority should be given to a critical examination of permanent speed restrictions to enable them to be raised or removed where track geometry and braking distances permit or can be changed as track and signalling renewals are progressed

Level Crossings

We note and endorse the proposals to reduce the risk at level crossings and to eliminate a number of them. We believe, however, that this is a shared responsibility between the rail industry and highway authorities, and indeed road users. We are concerned that the great efforts being made by Network Rail to reduce risks and eliminate problems are not matched by equivalent commitments from the other parties, and that the high cost of the level crossing programme may squeeze out other important investments which would encourage a shift from road to rail, with significantly higher safety benefits.

Great Eastern Main Line and branches

The doubling of Trowse swing bridge is key to frequency and possibly line speed improvements on both the GEML and the route to Ely and Peterborough, and therefore is supported as a priority. This would be a contribution towards delivering the 'Norwich in Ninety' objective, which is also supported.

The other principal capacity constraint on the route is the double track section between Shenfield and Colchester with its mix of fast and stopping passenger trains and freight. The proposed loops at Witham would help to address this, as would the previous proposal of a third line between Colchester and Witham, associated with the new station at Beaulieu Park. It is not clear from the study whether or not this is assumed to have been delivered in CP5, or whether it has been omitted.

Doubling the Felixstowe branch is supported, and indeed is seen as essential to enable the Ipswich area to operate efficiently. Apart from the need for additional freight capacity, significant housing development is planned by the local authority at Westerfield. Early consultation with the council should enable developer contribution to providing a station with sufficient capacity and of a high standard to meet this additional demand. This development helps to underpin the case for two passenger trains an hour to/from Felixstowe.

On the East Suffolk line, the development of Sizewell C will require additional freight capacity on the line during construction. This will in turn require increased capacity on the single line section north of Westerfield, possibly best achieved through reinstating double track between Woodbridge and Saxmundham. This could reasonably be funded by EDF through a section 106 agreement.

Increasing frequency between Ipswich and Cambridge to 2 tph is a key requirement by local authorities and a high priority for rail user groups. More capacity may be needed if the route becomes the eastern section of the East/West Rail Link. Thus, this would give some priority to the line speed improvements proposed, but also underlines the need to consider reinstating double track between Coldham's Lane Junction and Newmarket, which would also be of value when it is used as a diversionary route, particularly for freight. This dramatic increase in use is also the basis for recommending its inclusion in a future electrification programme.

Enhancement of the route between Ipswich and Peterborough also includes provision of a passing loop at Haughley. An alternative approach would be to reinstate the through lines at Bury St Edmunds which would allow better regulation of trains through Ely and would also allow freight trains through at line speed, or alternatively to recess them if they need to be overtaken by faster trains at this point.

To provide greater capacity, including for the proposed new station at Soham, and for resilience, we believe that doubling between Ely and Soham is required.

Over the 30-year period under review, continued protection for additional tracks at the north side of Liverpool Street should be maintained pending a review of additional capacity required to serve the additional platforms referred to and to cater for further growth from the West Anglia route.

Ipswich station.

1. Additional platform capacity is required for existing and new services. Electrification of Felixstowe to Ely, Peterborough and on to Birmingham will introduce longer 4car EMUs which will make the current practice of platform sharing difficult in the future.
2. Space has been identified space for 3 additional platforms, one 4-car to the north and an island to the south offering a 6 and 8 car 'faces' using a 'future proofed' extension to the footbridge once the fuel point has been moved.
3. Existing platforms will require lengthening if additional platforms are not provided.
4. A second gate line opposite the new footbridge would ease flows through this cramped site.

Norwich station. Additional platforms are required to enable the increased frequency of passenger services. These could be created by splitting the existing platforms using the engine release line between platforms 4 and 5.

Sheringham Station. The existing platform is often congested which affects train departures and safety. It needs to be extended and widened.

West Anglia Route and branches

The study considers four tracking on the Lea Valley line, and we would strongly recommend this as the core of a bolder vision for the West Anglia route that will deliver the required capacity and reduced journey times required to meet the future needs of Stansted Airport and the growth in housing and hi-tech industries in the corridor between Stansted, Cambridge and Ely. This will make the direction of travel clear and future proof the route for the needs of Crossrail 2 and the new housing projections, which the study acknowledges have not been fully reflected in the forecasts used. It is essential to handle the additional freight from North Thameside that is likely to be routed this way and would otherwise require lengthened and new loops. It is also required for the provision of a more frequent and robust local service.

We understand that this may need to be phased and would therefore support the initial addition of a third track between Copper Mill Junction and Angel Road and the reconstruction of Angel Road in CP5. The reference in paragraph 0.5.10 on page 15 to the associated need for four tracking to Bethnal Green in the absence of Crossrail 2 should presumably be to Copper Mill Junction or to Hackney Downs? At Stratford, two additional platforms are likely to be required on the north side of the station for West Anglia trains, and planning the location for these could embrace the heart of the new development linked to the HS1 and DLR stations.

We endorse the need for double tracking the tunnel section of the Stansted Airport branch, both to allow an increase in services and to improve reliability. We also believe that the eastward extension of the branch to connect with Colchester and Ipswich, perhaps via Braintree, should also be considered.

Similarly, we support the proposal to reinstate an additional double track section between Littleport and Kings Lynn to support 2 tph and greater resilience as well as for possible future freight use.

The reopening of Barrington sidings at Foxton is a location just outside the area covered by the study, but the spoil or waste trains that will use it are likely to gain access via the West Anglia main line with a run-round at Cambridge, so would need to be considered in the context of the capacity enhancements being proposed.

Cambridge station. A number of proposals are listed below to help ease congestion at this busy listed station and to provide for future growth.

1. Extend canopies along platforms 1 and 4 to encourage passengers to use the full length of the platforms and aid speedy boarding and alighting.
2. Extend pedestrian footbridge to the first floor of the adjacent cycle park to aid flow through the new ticket hall. The latter is unlikely to be large enough for very long. The plans for the cycle park have passive provision for such a link.
3. Provide a second footbridge to platforms 7/8 towards the south end of the station and to provide an east-side entrance which would also access the Leisure Centre's multi storey car park (little used during the day) as an overflow to constrained station car parks. This footbridge would also ease pressure on the ticket hall.
4. Reserve all the existing former siding space to the east of the station for potential railway station extension/train stabling.

Ely station and approaches. Ely station to Ely North Junction will still be a severe constraint, even after current funded plans have been completed. We offer some suggested solutions to this with the benefit of improving the existing service pattern while maintaining connections as well as offering a logical 'electrification friendly' Ipswich/Stansted to Birmingham service pattern. It is a proposition which we and the local authorities support.

- Once the 'fast' Norwich-Cambridge is added, the Ely stop on the Norwich-Liverpool can be omitted saving 4 'paths' (two each way) by diverting it around the Ely West Curve, which also reduces journey time.
- The Ipswich to Peterborough could be combined with the Stansted to Birmingham service, saving 2 paths.
- The current peak hour 'relief' services between Cambridge and Ely would then no longer be required.

This would reduce the total number of passenger paths to seven in each direction, a total of just two more than are currently used. With the burgeoning freight requirement, however, this may still require an additional bi-directional line between the station and Ely North Junction and this will probably require further analysis and certainly safeguarding the alignment for the future, pending implementation.

Essex Thameside

We are concerned at the proposed reduction of the standing allowance for parts of the Essex Thameside network from 0.45 to 0.25 sq. metre per standing passenger (even less than London Overground trains, used predominantly for short-distance journeys). This change does not solve the capacity problem, but makes the trains more crowded with decreased passenger satisfaction. In planning the infrastructure strategy, it would not be sustainable in our view to base it on the assumption that this level of crowding will be acceptable to passengers in the long term. The 0.25 figure might be suitable for purpose designed rolling stock where the passenger journey time is less than 20 minutes, but this would be difficult to manage on Essex Thameside services where the rolling stock is interchangeable and the journey time to Southend is 46 minutes, even on a fast train, and many peak trains would then require passengers to stand for longer 20 minutes.

We endorse the proposals to examine options to expand capacity at Fenchurch Street station to cope with increasing passenger demand.

We trust these comments will be of use.

Yours faithfully,

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for Director of Policy