



**Department
for Transport**

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Dear Norman,

Thank you for your letter of 18 December to Patrick McLoughlin enclosing a copy of Railfuture East Anglia's document "Aspirations for the next Greater Anglia Franchise". This is their submission to the East Anglia Rail Passenger consultation and was copied to you by Peter Wakefield, the Chairman of 7 Hollymount, Cambridge, CB1 1QD. I am replying as Minister responsible for rail issues.

It is most timely that this document has been received from Railfuture at this exciting time for the East Anglia franchise as we launched our Public Consultation on 9 December 2014.¹ It will run until 16 March 2015. I have in fact already received a copy of this document myself separately and I passed it on to the project team for inclusion in the consultation.

Railfuture's suggestions will be considered as we develop the specification for the East Anglia franchise. I would like to thank Railfuture for their work in presenting their members' views. A key input for the franchise will also be Network Rail's infrastructure proposals. These are in the draft Anglia Route Study which is open for consultation until 3 February 2015.² Here they consider many of the issues that Railfuture raise and begin to make the case for possible infrastructure upgrades during railway Control Period 6 (2019-2024). For example the draft Anglia Route Study discusses the constraints which are associated with single line operations over Trowse swing bridge, and makes proposals for its doubling.

¹ www.gov.uk/government/consultations/east-anglia-rail-passenger-franchise

² www.networkrail.co.uk/long-term-planning-process/anglia-route-study/

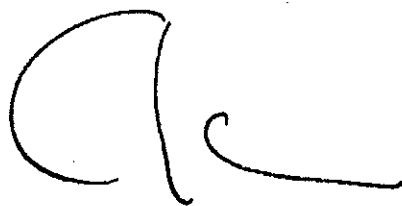
The project team are currently looking at the options for train services and station facilities with rail industry colleagues in order to maximise the opportunities available and meet future passenger demand. Options that are currently being considered include increased frequency on a number of routes and improving connections, as well as looking at the options for improving rolling stock and a minimum of station facilities that passengers should expect across the network. However, the consideration of these options will be subject to the final output of both the Department's and Network Rail's consultations.

I am aware of the campaign to reconnect Wisbech to the national network and I am sure that Fenland District Council will submit a response to our consultation on this proposal which the project team will consider subject to the Department's business case assessments.

Mr Wakefield may also be interested in a further consultation that Network Rail published in December 2014 on Improving Connectivity, using East Anglia as a case study. This publication is open for consultation until the 31 January 2015.³

I would encourage Railfuture and their members to respond to all of these consultations so that their views are fully represented and can be considered in developing the future franchise specification and infrastructure improvements.

Thank you once again for your letter. I am sure both you and Mr Wakefield will join me in recognising that Great Britain's railways are a great success story. Our railway is the busiest it has been since the 1920s, we have some of the safest and most punctual rail services in Europe and we are carrying out the biggest programme of railway modernisation in a generation. Network Rail will spend over £38 billion on the railways over the next five years, allowing it to continue maintaining and enhancing the railway, not counting the massive investment in the new HS2 rail link. It really is an exciting time for rail users and it is part of this Government's commitment to reinvest the proceeds of economic recovery in world-class British infrastructure across the whole country.



CLAIRE PERRY

³ www.networkrail.co.uk/publications/long-term-planning-process/improving-connectivity/?cd=2