

Railfuture East Anglia Branch

Aspirations for the next Greater Anglia Franchise

Introduction

This document sets out Railfuture's aspirations for Greater Anglia Franchise. The document has been compiled by the East Anglia and London and South East Branches of Railfuture with input from various local rail user groups.

East Anglia is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and is a net contributor to the Treasury. The existing rail franchise does not require a subsidy and pays a premium to the Government. Rail travel is growing on most routes and overcrowding is common on both the main lines and branch lines. However despite these factors, the level of rail investment in the region has been low compared with other areas. When investment has taken place, the results have been spectacular, for example the considerable increase in passengers since an hourly service was introduced on the Ipswich to Lowestoft route.

Significant passenger increases have also been recorded on the Cambridge to Ipswich and Norwich routes following improvements.

It is therefore essential that the new Greater Anglia franchise includes major investment within the specification that covers rolling stock, service improvements and enhanced passenger experience. Aspirations and priorities for these areas are detailed below and build on the ideas in the East Anglia Rail Prospectus developed by the LEPs, MPs, local authorities and rail groups.

Rolling stock

Investment in rolling stock must be the key element of the franchise specification.

Additional rolling stock is required to deal with current overcrowding, support the planned growth in housing and jobs, improve connectivity between key centres and between them and less economically developed areas.

New and refurbished rolling stock is needed to meet growing passenger expectations for information and therefore need to include displays that show connecting train information at key stations and notice of future engineering work etc. This information is especially important at times of disruption.

London – Norwich Route

New inter-city quality rolling stock is required for the London to Norwich service. Existing coaches and locomotives are over 25 years old. The new rolling stock needs to meet the following requirements:

- 10/11 coach formation
- Inter-city quality with end doors (powered doors for reduced station dwell times)
- Additional seating capacity over existing trains
- Catering facilities
- Enhanced acceleration and top speed for reduced journey times
- Wi-fi and power sockets at all seats
- Air-conditioning
- Enhanced information systems
- Space for cycles. Closed off area for parcels traffic off-peak

London outer-suburban routes

These routes cover services from London Liverpool Street to Cambridge, Hertford, Stansted Airport, Southend, Southminster, Braintree, Clacton, Harwich and Ipswich.

Existing services on these routes are operated by a mixture of units; classes 317, 321, 360 and 379. The class 317 and 321 units date from the 1980s and do not meet current passenger expectations. In particular the seats on these trains are too low and therefore uncomfortable for many users when seated over long periods of time. A fleet comprising fewer types would reduce maintenance costs and allow more flexible operation.

Peak hour trains are over-crowded and many services need lengthening from 8 to 12 coaches.

New and additional rolling stock is therefore required and need to meet the following requirements:

- Enhanced acceleration and top speed for reduced journey times
- A mixture of 2+2 and 2+3 seating as required having regard to the need to provide adequate seating for passengers in a mix of airline and bays. (We note however, surveys showing user dislike of 2+3 seating.)
- Mini-tables at all seats for drink cups, laptops etc
- Gangways between units to allow ticket inspection and for passengers to find seats
- Wi-fi and sockets at all seats
- Air-conditioning
- Enhanced information systems
- Space for off-peak cycle use.
- Toilets satisfying disabled access requirements and to be waste retentive.

Interurban routes

These routes cover services between and via the key centres of East Anglia:

Cambridge, Ely, March, Thetford, Norwich, Peterborough, Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and services to Felixstowe, Lowestoft, Great Yarmouth, Sudbury and Cromer.

Many trains of these routes have standing passengers during the morning and evening peak periods and also on Saturdays with shoppers and tourists. There is also a lack of spare units to cope with special events, for example, summer holiday traffic, football matches and horse racing at Newmarket. Spare stock is also required to deal with incidents where trains are struck by vehicles at level crossings (a frequent occurrence in the region).

Therefore as a minimum 3-4 additional 2/3 coach diesel units are required to maintain a robust existing service. Such units may become free following electrification elsewhere around the country. The Barking – Gospel Oak DMUs should be transferred to Greater Anglia on completion of the electrification project..

Electrification of the Sudbury branch would allow a diesel unit to be deployed elsewhere and provide a more robust service as spare trains would be available at Colchester and reduce empty stock working each day for the diesel unit to return to Ipswich for refuelling.

Additional trains will also be required to support enhanced services as detailed in the following section.

Additional Services

Additional train services are required on many routes to cope with overcrowding, support regional growth and to improve connectivity between the main centres.

The main routes out of London Liverpool Street are operating at close to full capacity in the peak periods. Although the Crossrail project may allow some additional services to operate, proposed investment in infrastructure such as additional tracks in the Lea Valley and on the Great Eastern Main line between Chelmsford and Colchester will be required to enable an increase in services.

Priorities for service enhancements are detailed below:

Ipswich to Peterborough hourly service – This route is the only one in the region that does not have an hourly service. Introduction of an hourly service will improve connectivity between two of the region's main centres and provide better links with the rest of the rail network at Peterborough.

The near doubling of the number of passengers following the introduction of an hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft shows the benefits of an enhanced service can bring. The service on this route would be limited stop.

London – Norwich – A third train each hour, with limited stops to achieve the Norwich in 90 aspirations of the local authorities and business groups.

Colchester – Clacton/Walton - A half hourly service all day for both local and London groups – The Tendring Peninsula is economically subdued compared with many parts of the region. Additional services will improve access to jobs and education in Colchester and encourage business to set up in the Clacton area.

Stansted Airport – Cambridge / Ely – Although second service commenced on this route as an off-peak service as recently as mid 2014, it is already very well used. The service needs to be extended to run all day to match aircraft arrivals and departures from the Airport. The service should also be extended to Ely to provide better connections to other parts of the region and to provide extra capacity on the Ely-Cambridge section where overcrowding is an issue in peak periods. This link is vital to economic growth in the region as the digital economy continues to develop.

Cambridge – Norwich - A half hourly service – Since the introduction of the quality regular through service, traffic has grown steadily. Many services are now running at capacity. A half-hourly service will improve links between these two centres and the market towns in between. The opening of Cambridge Science Park station and the continuing development of research parks in the Norwich area make this essential.

The franchisee must work with a Network Rail to increase line speed limits to match the capability of the rolling stock. The track has generally been rebuilt and is capable of higher speeds. The parallel road network has been upgraded, leaving the railway service disadvantaged.

Cambridge – Ipswich - A half hourly service – Many services on this routes suffer from severe overcrowding, especially to and from Cambridge in peak periods. Offpeak, the existing service is totally inadequate to cope with traffic to the Newmarket races. A half hourly service with a mixture of stopping and limited stop trains is required to meet this demand and to provide an alternative to the congested A14*. The level of service and inadequate rolling stock provision is causing severe overcrowding into Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds in the morning peaks as well as Cambridge.

*The franchisee must work with a Network Rail to increase line speed limits to match the capability of the rolling stock. The track has generally been rebuilt and is capable of higher speeds. The parallel road network has been upgraded, leaving the railway service disadvantaged. The Newmarket to Cambridge section needs to be speed enhanced urgently.

Increased frequency to half-hourly on other routes should be introduced to suit growth in particular towns on the route.

Norwich to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft is the next priority and this enhancement must be linked into changing patterns of longer distance service provision emerging in East Anglia to/from the Midlands and North. A direct service from/to Great Yarmouth is essential throughout the day to Peterborough and/or Cambridge via Norwich. Apart from supporting the economic growth of the offshore North Sea based industrial and primary material sectors, there is an important residual tourist base to be encouraged.

(Note the population of the continuous Caister/Great Yarmouth/Gorleston/Lowestoft conurbation is c146,000).

Although most stations have a regular service, there are some stations between Ely and Norwich which have a very limited service. Stations such as Spooner Row, Eccles Road and Harling Road should have a train service that enables people to access especially Norwich but also Cambridge each day for work and leisure. This can be achieved by either adding stops to existing services or a dedicated shuttle service making a number of trips each day.

We note that very large housing developments are planned for Attleborough and such a service could support those enabling the second Cambridge service run as a limited stop.

Existing peak hour services between Kings Lynn and London Liverpool Street should be maintained.

(London Liverpool Street) - Bishops Stortford -Cambridge locals - currently, peak stopping services are half hourly into Cambridge with appropriate by direction additional semi fast services serving The City of London in the morning and return evening services. Off peak services operate 1tph semi fast and 1tph stopping. To serve the increasingly important Cambridge market a second stopping services is needed. This could be provided by the extension of a stopping Stratford service north of Bishops Stortford. The limited track capacity south of Bishops Stortford makes additional services on this section difficult.

Lea Valley Services - It is currently impossible to run an all stations local stopping service on the Lea Valley line owing to Stansted Express trains running along this 2 track line at 100 mph every 15 minutes. The Network Rail Control Period 5 programme includes a third track between Coppermill Junction and Angel Road plus a new station at Angel Road to serve the new Meridian Water development. At minimum, the franchisee to work to include the extension of the third track north to Brimsdown with a passing loop north of Angel Road, in order to enable an all stations local service at a 15 minute frequency between London Liverpool Street/Stratford and Broxbourne. In the longer term, The Airport Commission's proposal for a 4 track railway between Coppermill Junction and the Hertford branch junction north of Broxbourne should be implemented....see also below.

Witham – Braintree - half hourly service - The service between Witham to Braintree Line should be significantly improved by the addition of an additional passing loop at an appropriate location. This would enable a half hourly service to operate along the branch.

Wickford – Southminster - half hourly service - The service between Wickford and Southminster should be increased to half hourly with the addition of appropriate passing loops.

Marks Tey - Sudbury - half hourly service - The service between Marks Tey and Sudbury should be increased to half hourly with addition of an appropriately placed passing loop. Investigate operating once an hour to Colchester Town.

Last Services

As a general aim, the last train arrivals to the branch termini (Yarmouth, Lowestoft etc.) should be between 00:30 and 01:00 and offer London departures up to 22:00.

Main line services should offer Ipswich a 'post 01:00' arrival and therefor a post 00:00 departure from London.

Elsewhere (notably Thameslink) there are services throughout the night. There is no reason why services should not move to all night at hourly intervals London to Norwich and Cambridge. Such a frequency could permit 'one line working' and not conflict with engineering works. Freight trains run at night.

Sunday Services & Public Holidays including December 26th

Sunday service timetable must move to at least 'Saturday' service timetable (that is, in the same timings) and be also operated on December 26th (Boxing Day). For families and football supporters Boxing Day is one of the busiest days for travel in the year.

New Services and stations

The franchisee must work with Cambridgeshire County Council, Fenland District Council and the local enterprise partnerships to develop the business case to reopen the **Wisbech to March line**. (Wisbech has an urban population of 33000 with additional 40000 in its immediate catchment. Railfuture arranged a local petition in support of this scheme signed by nearly 4000 people, with 95% of those people living along the route.)

The reopening should be included within the franchise specification as a priced option with a service between Wisbech, March and Cambridge.

Hall Farm Curve - Stratford – Chingford

The franchisee must work with the local authorities to develop the case for this link. Current journey times between Chingford and the Stratford by bus, are over an hour for an 8 mile journey. This will improve local connectivity towards Stratford with its Stratford City Shopping Centre, the Olympic Park and connections to Docklands, East Anglia and Kent. It is particularly important to improve access from Chingford and Walthamstow to job opportunities in the Stratford and Docklands areas. Network Rail has recently carried out a cost benefit analysis of this scheme which shows a promising ratio of 2.9%.

The franchisee must work with the appropriate authorities and Network Rail to develop plans **for new stations on the existing network at Cambridge Science Park, Beaulieu Park Chelmsford and Soham**.

The door to door journey experience

The franchise specification and scoring system for bidders needs to recognise the importance of the overall door to door journey. Areas to be considered include:

- Up to date running information on web-sites and other social media
- Alternative route information during times of disruption
- Print your own tickets at home – especially important in rural areas with generally unstaffed stations.
- Smart ticketing – integrated with local buses, encouraging people onto less busy train services
- Access to stations – adequate car parking*, bus links, cycle access and storage. *Car parking must always be available at hubs so more than is normally required should be provided.
- Station travel plans for all major stations
- Station staffing – major stations should have staff present from first to last trains* - these stations include the interurban hub stations such as Ely, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Thetford, Diss, Stowmarket, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft, Kirby Cross. All smaller town stations should have staff during the busiest periods. *Note - staffing should mean not only selling tickets but attending user's needs such as parking, taxi and bus links and where not in existence, operating refreshment and convenience stores, attending waiting comfortable lounges and quality toilets. A vital task would be making sure bus substitution services met the standards users expect at intermediate stations but currently do not receive. (One commuter recently stated in a television report regarding the latest disruption, that 'bus rail replacement', were the three saddest words in the dictionary.)
- Ability to purchase or collect tickets at stations

- All stations to have help points linked to CCTV
- All stations to have the ability to inform during times of disruption either through display screens and/or long line public address.
- Waiting shelters on all platforms
- Minimise the need for bus substitution and aim to run train services of as much of the route as possible. Consider alternative routes such as direct London to Norwich trains via Cambridge rather than bus for part of the journey.
- Regular senior management meetings with passengers at stations around the region
- Retention of the Anglia Day Ranger ticket and its promotion as the cheapest ticket for many journeys.

Infrastructure work associated with improved and new services

To achieve the new and improved services mentioned above will require the new franchise operator to work closely with Network Rail, local authorities and LEPs to deliver the following improvements to the infrastructure:

- Initiate electrification of the network that must include Felixstowe - Ipswich; Haughley - Bury St Edmunds - Cambridge/Ely - Peterborough; Ely - Thetford - Norwich. Apart from cheaper and more sustainable operation, this network electrification will release many dmu diagrams. Electrification of the Sudbury branch to free up a diesel unit, increase capacity and provide a more robust service
- 4 track section on the West Anglia main line initially in the Lea Valley area of London but eventually to Broxbourne (see section on Lea Valley above) and 2 tracks into Stansted Airport through the tunnel.
- Four track on the Great Eastern Main line between Beaulieu Park and Witham to allow for proposed new station and extra services.
- Double track to Trowse swing bridge outside Norwich station
- Extra platforms at Ipswich to cope with additional services
- Add an extra track and platform at Colchester Town to improve flexibility and allow additional services/stops at the town centre, for example, a service to and from Sudbury.
- Extra platforms at Norwich to cope with additional services. (The engine release track between platforms 4/5 can be adapted to enable those platforms to be divided for two additional platforms for short local trains.)
- Work to the Felixstowe line to enable a robust passenger service to be operated with increasing freight trains
- Doubling and additional passing loops are necessary to enable half-hourly service on the East Suffolk line, even if only on the southern (Saxmundham-Ipswich) section initially.
- Line speed improvements on ALL routes to reduce journey times, provide longer turnaround times and increase options for connections at key stations.

Rail Replacement Buses

Bus/coach operators should be subject to various standards of quality. Bus drivers must be trained on all routes. Vehicles must reach a minimum EU emission designs i.e. Euro 4 vehicles (Built from 2005 onwards). For emergency disruption the TOC must use available bus operators that are nearest to the main station of disruption, not necessarily the cheapest who may be located a considerable distance away. Rail replacement buses must all comply in accordance with legislation for bus and coaches. The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 states that buses used on registered services have to be compliant as follows: January 2015 – buses with a laden weight under 7500 kos, January 2016 all single deckers, January 2017 all double deckers and from January 2020 coaches. (Buses used on school contract and with under 22 seats are exempt).

Compensation - Delay Repay / refunds

This requires reform. The current scheme states that claims can only be made if the train is over 30 minutes late. Therefore, a train can be late every morning up to 30 minutes, with a monthly compound delay of several hours but the passenger is unable to receive any compensation. Payment by Travel Vouchers should be stopped. In line with other consumer products / service failures, compensation should be issued with a direct payment by either cheque or bank transfer. Travel vouchers cannot be used for on-line bookings or with ticket machines. There should be a minimum refund per journey. Amount to be agreed.

UK call centres

It is essential that all are UK based. Off-shore call handlers, apart from getting Trimley mixed up with Frimley and Derby Road with Derby, rarely have more reliable information about delayed and cancelled trains than already known by the media, the Internet and Twitter. Passengers must be able to engage with the TOC for the most reliable 'real time' details regarding service disruption.

Fares

We note at towns with two or more stations often have a single fare to all..Birmingham "stations" etc.. Work to provide same facility for Ipswich, Westerfield, Derby Road; Cambridge, Cambridge Science Park.

We support any national initiatives to simplify fares. The franchisee must significantly improve the experience of purchasing a ticket to ensure passengers buy a ticket which they are confident is best suited to their requirements, and also understand operator, route and time restrictions. Clear information is needed whether bought on-line, from ticket machines or from ticket offices.

Every season ticket purchased must accompanied with written explanation of what the ticket entitles the purchaser to by way of routing, such added value such as gold card etc..

The franchisee must actively promote fares and services on all routes.

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