

Suffolk Rail Prospectus



East Anglia Passenger Rail Service



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Suffolk Rail Prospectus

Foreword

Cllr Graham Newman, Suffolk County Council, Cabinet Member for Roads, Transport and Planning



This Suffolk Rail Prospectus sets out the county's rail priorities for the next 20 years. A decent rail service is vital to growing our county's economy, attracting investment, creating jobs and supporting a growing population. It is our ambition to improve rail services and infrastructure, and we will use the priorities contained within this document to make our case to Government and the wider rail industry.

A better connected Suffolk will deliver many benefits for the county, strengthening existing markets and opening new ones. The Centre for Cities Report identifies Suffolk's largest town, Ipswich, to be one of the ten fastest growing towns in the UK, and the fastest growing town in the East of England. High levels of growth are also occurring in Lowestoft, Felixstowe, Stowmarket, Bury St Edmunds and Haverhill. This potential needs to be supported by Government investment in Suffolk's railways and it is imperative that we demonstrate the value for money that investment will deliver.

Now is the opportunity to really campaign for improvements on the county's railways. Through joint-working with partners, we have already secured Government commitment to increase line speeds and improve frequency and rolling stock on the Great Eastern Mainline. However, we must not forget the importance of all of Suffolk's rail lines - they play a vital role to serving the county's economy and population. Our demands for improving passenger rail frequencies, line speeds and rolling stock are balanced with the current and future rail needs of the county's ports, particularly Felixstowe - Britain's largest container port.

Our desire to see rail enhancements that will benefit passenger and freight is also contained in the East Anglia Rail Prospectus. This excellent document has been co-produced by New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership and Suffolk, Norfolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire councils, supported by Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership. The prospectus highlights the importance of rail to the Suffolk and wider East of England economies and the need for substantial investment if the economy is to grow to its full potential over the next 20 years.

The Suffolk Rail Prospectus and the East Anglia Rail Prospectus are key documents in helping to shape our demands for a new rail franchise. The franchise, a 7 or 10 year contract, will commence in October 2016. We will make sure that the Department for Transport (DfT) fully understands the county's rail needs. In addition to the new rail franchise, we are also engaging with Network Rail on its Long Term Planning Strategy, which identifies rail investment priorities over the next 30 years.

We have a rare opportunity to achieve a step-change in rail improvements. This prospectus sets out the case for the improvements that the county needs. We can't expect to achieve all of the county's needs and wants immediately and so we have set out the key improvements to services and infrastructure we think are priorities for early delivery. These include:

- **Commitment by Government for new rolling stock on intercity services between Norwich and London Liverpool Street and for faster and more reliable journeys on that route.**
- **The introduction of a direct hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough.**
- **Capacity improvements and electrification of the line from Felixstowe through to Peterborough and on to Birmingham to improve freight and passenger services.**
- **Building on the introduction of an hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft by working towards shorter journey times and the restoration of direct services between Lowestoft and London.**
- **More capacity and better trains between Ipswich and Cambridge with a future aim of increasing the frequency to half-hourly.**
- **Working towards a fast and frequent rail service connecting the key centres of growth in the region: Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich.**

We cannot achieve these goals without the help and support of our key partners. They have helped to shape this document and identify the rail priorities contained within it. We look forward to continuing to work with our partners in addressing these priorities and providing a railway that enables the county to realise its full potential.



Graham L. Newman (Cllr)
Member for Felixstowe Coastal Division
Cabinet Member for Roads, Transport and Planning

Recent Progress

2012

A draft of the Suffolk Rail Prospectus was published in 2012. At the time of publication, there were a number of uncertainties about the timescales for the new Greater Anglia franchise and Network Rail's processes for future rail infrastructure planning.

In winter 2014, three key rail documents were

released. The Department for Transport published the East Anglia Rail Franchise consultation document, and Network Rail issued their Anglia Route Study and Improving Connectivity study for consultation. The Suffolk Rail Prospectus seeks to respond to all consultations, as well as set out the wider rail priorities for the future.

2014

Great Eastern Mainline

In November 2013, the Chancellor of the Exchequer established the Great Eastern Mainline

Taskforce, which has representation from Members of Parliament from Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex; the New Anglia LEP; Network Rail; Abellio Greater Anglia and the Department for Transport. The County Council has worked to support the taskforce by assisting with the development of a strong business case for improving rolling stock, frequency and line speeds on the Great Eastern Mainline (GEML). The business case has been welcomed by the Secretary of State for Transport and will inform both the Greater Anglia franchise and Network Rail's long-term rail investment plan (the Anglia Route Study).

Suffolk County Council is also working with Ipswich Borough Council and Abellio Greater Anglia to redevelop Ipswich Station building and forecourt, providing a much improved gateway to Suffolk's largest town.

Partnership working

Suffolk County Council continues to work with its partners, including other local authorities, Members of Parliament, Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP), the rail industry and businesses to lobby on key priorities for rail. We have been successful in achieving a number of rail improvements

East Suffolk Line

Work is ongoing to build upon the hourly Ipswich to Lowestoft passenger service, secured as part of the capacity infrastructure at Beccles. Meetings have taken place with Network Rail to identify options for increasing line speeds between Ipswich and Lowestoft. In addition to this, the County Council has worked with the franchise provider and the East Suffolk Line Community Rail Partnership to improve facilities at stations. This includes building a new transport interchange hub at Lowestoft train station, providing funding for new ticket vending machines and supporting better bus connections to stations. The County Council continues to work with the East Suffolk Line Community Rail Partnership to improve stations and passenger rail services on the East Suffolk Line.

The County Council is also working with Network Rail, the Port of Felixstowe and Suffolk Coastal District Council to consider options for providing additional capacity on the line between Ipswich and Felixstowe. In addition to this work, discussions must take place between Suffolk County Council, Network Rail and EDF Energy to ensure that the construction of Sizewell C will not have a detrimental effect on rail capacity on the East Suffolk Line. The opportunity to achieve a passenger service for Leiston should also be considered as a legacy from new development at Sizewell.

East West Rail Line

Suffolk County Council is assisting in the development of a business case for a new rail link between Cambridge and Oxford. Suffolk County Council is a member of the East West Rail Consortium which commissioned research to identify the economic value of services between Cambridge and Oxford. The study has enabled the project to progress, with Network Rail working closely with the consortium in the development of a business case. The business case will be presented to Government for inclusion in the next rail funding period, due to commence in 2019.

Summary

Improvements to rail services and infrastructure are vital for the development and growth of a modern economy. This prospectus sets out the rail improvements necessary to support the economy of Suffolk over the next 20 years. These improvements are summarised below.

1 The Great Eastern Mainline (GEML)

- An early commitment to high quality new trains from the start of the new franchise.
- Re-modelling of Bow Junction (between Stratford and London Liverpool Street) to make use of the capacity released by Crossrail – commitment has been made within Network Rail's Control Period 5 Enhancement Delivery Plan for delivery in 2019.
- Provision of additional track on the GEML between Colchester and Shenfield. This will improve reliability and reduce journey times. Our aspiration is to have a service that can have average journey times from Norwich to London in 90 minutes and Ipswich to London in 60 minutes.
- A review to be undertaken by Network Rail into signalling infrastructure, power supply, and platform clearance issues all along the GEML, to identify improvements that can increase line speeds.
- Consistent service 7 days a week with minimal need for Sunday bus replacement.
- A more reliable and punctual service.
- Improvements to Ipswich Station and forecourt and to Stowmarket Station.

2 The Ipswich – Peterborough Line

- A direct hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough from the start of the new franchise.
- High quality rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Capacity improvements and future electrification of the line between Felixstowe and Peterborough/Birmingham to speed up services and reliability.
- Capacity improvements to Ely junctions, between Ely and Soham, and south of Ely station to support Suffolk's aims.
- Improvements to level crossings.

3 The East Suffolk Line

- A better than hourly service between Lowestoft and Ipswich.
- Improved journey times between Lowestoft and Ipswich with the longer term aim of achieving a 60-minute journey time.
- Future electrification of the East Suffolk Line.
- Improved line capacity between Woodbridge and Saxmundham, and Oulton Broad and Lowestoft.
- Renaming of Wickham Market Station to Campsea Ashe Station.
- Future aspiration of a direct passenger rail service between Lowestoft and London Liverpool Street.
- Improved bus connections at stations.
- High quality rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Station improvements.

4 The Lowestoft – Norwich Line

- Increased frequency.
- High quality passenger rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Faster journeys between Lowestoft and Norwich.
- Hourly Sunday frequency. Aspiration for 30-minute frequency.
- Direct rail service between Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth.

5 The Ipswich - Cambridge Line

- High quality rolling stock on all services with more seating capacity.
- Faster journeys between Ipswich and Cambridge.
- Future electrification of the line.
- Half-hourly frequency between Ipswich and Cambridge
- Hourly Sunday frequency.

6 The Cambridge – Norwich Line

- Increased frequency.
 - Level crossing improvement at Brandon.
 - Regular weekday and weekend trains stopping at Lakenheath.
 - Norwich – Peterborough service stopping at Brandon.
 - High quality rolling stock on all services with more seating capacity.
 - A rail-bus link from Mildenhall to connect to trains between Cambridge and Norwich.
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7 Moving more Freight to Rail

- Additional capacity on Felixstowe to Birmingham route.
- Electrification of the Felixstowe to Peterborough / Birmingham route.
- More freight trains to travel cross-country.
- Line speed improvements.
- Capacity improvement at Ely to support freight and passenger rail growth.
- Capacity improvements to Felixstowe Branch Line.

8 Commitment from Government to extend the East West rail link from Oxford to Cambridge

- The Government has already approved funding for the western section of the route between Oxford and Bedford. Commitment is now sought for the development of the central section between Cambridge and Bedford stations. This will better connect people in Ipswich and Norwich to Oxford and the West of England.

9 Railway Stations and other Infrastructure – Minimum standards

Urban Railway Stations – Ipswich, Lowestoft, Bury St. Edmunds and Stowmarket

The minimum requirements for these stations should be:

- Improved security and perception of security, taking opportunities to increase staff presence at these stations.
- High quality DDA compliant waiting facilities with additional seating on all platforms.
- Refreshment facilities available on all platforms.
- Real Time Passenger Information, including bus information.
- DDA compliant toilets.
- Improved forecourts for pedestrian access.
- Additional ticket machines.
- More covered and secure cycle parking. Cycle hire.
- Improved accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.
- Improved signage to town centres.

Market Town Stations

- Part-time staff at some stations.
- Real Time Passenger Information, including bus information.
- High quality DDA compliant waiting facilities with additional seating on all platforms.
- DDA compliant toilets.
- More cycle parking – covered and secure.
- Ticket machines.
- Tourist information and some commercial retail facilities available.
- Improved accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.

Rural Stations

- Improved sheltered waiting facilities.
- Adequate cycle parking – covered and secure.
- Additional car parking.
- Tourist information leaflets available.
- Safe accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.
- Real Time Passenger Information Systems.

10 Public Transport Links to Railway Stations

- A commitment within the franchise to provide virtual railways through the provision of rail-bus connections from market towns without a railway station including Haverhill and Mildenhall.

11 Ticket Purchasing Infrastructure and Information

- A commitment by the current and future train operating company to improve ticket machines at some stations; address the cost of fares where discrepancies occur; and improve the quality of information given to passengers concerning discounted tickets.
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Introduction

Major decisions on rail investment are taken nationally by central Government. In summer 2012, the Government published its infrastructure requirements (High Level Output Statement) and indicated how much money it wanted to invest (Statement of Funds Available) for the 2014 – 2019 Network Rail spending period. £38bn has been allocated for funding rail infrastructure across the UK during the 2014 - 2019 five year funding period.



The Greater Anglia franchise is one of only two profitable franchises and it generates revenue for the Treasury.



In March 2012 the Department for Transport published its rail command paper which sets out the direction of government policy on rail for the next 15-20 years. The key points include:

- A move to encourage longer term strategic investment from train operating companies (TOCs) and more collaborative working between TOCs and Network Rail.
- The rail industry as a whole delivering £3.5 billion of efficiency savings by 2019/20 (about 30% of total government funding for the period 2014-19) without reducing the coverage of the network.
- Increases in regulated rail fares to be limited to RPI + 1% for 2013 and 2014, with a longer term objective of ending above-inflation increases in average regulated rail fares.

The command paper indicated the financial challenges faced by Government and the rail industry. After the collapse of the re-franchising of the West Coast Mainline services, the DfT commissioned a review (The Brown Review) of the department's rail franchising process. The key recommendations of The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme include:

- an initial 7 or 10 year rail franchise term with further terms of 3 to 5 years subject to agreed franchise criteria being met
- emphasis should be placed on assessing the financial robustness and deliverability of rail franchise bids
- bids should be scored on their proposals for improving service quality for passengers.

In response to The Brown Review of the Rail Franchising Programme, the Government established the Rail Executive to manage the franchise process. Work to start the process for the new East Anglia rail franchise began in early 2014.

The East Anglia region is only one of two net contributor regions to the treasury. Our view is that investment into the East Anglian rail network to support the local economy (amongst the most dynamic in the country) will generate substantial wider economic benefits through growth of local businesses, as well as produce greater financial contributions to UKplc.



The East Anglian Rail Prospectus

A Rail Prospectus was produced in July 2012 by Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex county councils together with all of the East Anglian MPs, district councils and Local Enterprise Partnerships. The prospectus was recently updated to reflect the changes in rail policies and take account of new studies and strategies.

The East Anglia Rail Prospectus contains the high level priorities for the regional rail network. It identifies the importance of rail to helping the region's economy grow and connecting key cities and towns. For Suffolk, the East Anglia Rail Prospectus identifies the following priorities:

- The introduction of a direct hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough.
- Shorter journey times on the GEML.
- Better than hourly service between Lowestoft and Ipswich.
- Felixstowe to Birmingham rail line improvements.
- Electrification of line between Ipswich and Cambridge.
- Implementation of the East-West Rail Link.
- New rolling stock.
- Services that are more reliable and punctual.
- Refurbished stations.
- Smartcard ticketing.
- Increased parking capacity and accessibility to platforms at stations.





The Challenges ahead for Suffolk and the Importance of Rail

An improved rail service can help an economy to grow by:

- Improving the density and connectivity between businesses and workers.
- Providing a 'mobile work space' allowing workers the space and facilities to be productive whilst travelling.
- Making it cheaper and easier for a worker to commute to a job in a particular place, thereby increasing the number of potential workers in that area who are prepared to work for a certain wage.
- Enabling people to commute to more productive jobs, thereby increasing the amount of Gross Value Added in the economy.
- Enabling people who are unemployed to find work in areas of the region they might not have otherwise been able to travel to.
- Helping bring forward the development of residential and employment sites in settlements containing a railway station.
- Facilitating uplift in house prices in settlements that contain a railway station.

Suffolk's population is expected to increase significantly within the next 20 years with around 60,000 new homes and a similar number of jobs. Much of this growth is expected to take place within and around the main urban areas of Ipswich, Lowestoft, and Bury St. Edmunds and other rail connected towns. Improved local rail services between these towns and to regional centres such as Cambridge, Colchester, Norwich and Peterborough will be important to increase the opportunities for business and employment across Suffolk.

Our vision is for a high quality fast and frequent rail service between the three dynamic and growing regional centres of Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich.

Improved rail services help relieve the burden on the main trunk roads that run through Suffolk by enabling commuters and business users to take the train to work instead of using the congested road network such as the A12 and A14.

Port and Logistics is a key sector of the Suffolk economy and improved facilities for rail freight between Suffolk's ports, particularly Felixstowe, and its markets in the London and Midlands area will help relieve traffic congestion caused by heavy goods vehicles on the strategic road network.

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Our vision is for a high quality fast and frequent rail service between the three dynamic and growing regional centres of Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich.

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Table 1: Suffolk's Key Economic Sectors and How an Improved Rail Service can Support Them

Sector	Districts/Boroughs	Rail requirements
Finance & Insurance	Ipswich and Bury St. Edmunds.	Frequent connections and faster services to London connecting back offices to corporate centres.
Food & Farming	Food manufacturing is mainly prominent in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk Coastal and Waveney. However, crop and livestock farming has a presence over all districts and boroughs.	Freight connections to transport grain and food products to ports and rest of the UK. Passenger connections to rural stations for tourism.
Information & Communication Technology	Ipswich, Suffolk Coastal (in particular Adastral Park – home to BT) and Waveney.	Good passenger connections to Cambridge, South East and London.
Ports & Logistics	Suffolk Coastal (Port of Felixstowe), Ipswich and Waveney. Businesses associated with logistics, such as hauliers, are mostly located in Mid Suffolk.	Good freight connections to Birmingham and London. Capacity for more freight cross-country services to reduce demand on passenger lines.
Energy	Suffolk Coastal and Waveney.	Passenger connections to towns between Ipswich / Norwich and Lowestoft. Freight access for Sizewell.
Advanced Manufacturing	Bury St Edmunds and Babergh.	Freight to move commodities. Frequent passenger services to transport commuting workforce.
Tourism	Suffolk Coastal, Babergh, Ipswich, Forest Heath, Waveney and Bury St Edmunds.	Passenger services linking to rural stations. Bus connections linking stations with tourist attractions and events. Improved stations providing an appropriate gateway to Suffolk's historic towns
Creative industries	Suffolk Coastal, Ipswich and Babergh.	Passenger services linking to rural and urban stations.
Life Sciences & Biotechnology	Suffolk Coastal, Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury.	Frequent passenger services linking to Cambridge.



Consultation on the Suffolk Rail Prospectus

This prospectus has been produced following an intense period of stakeholder and public consultation, culminating in the Suffolk Rail Conference on 26 October 2012. Since that time, Suffolk County Council held two more rail conferences and has continued to work with its partners to review and reaffirm the county's rail priorities. A passenger survey was undertaken in 2012, which has helped to inform this prospectus. Despite changes being made to rail policy and the rail industry since the County Council's passenger survey in 2012, responses to the survey are still consistent with rail passenger priorities identified in Passenger Focus research undertaken in 2013.

Survey: Headline Findings

Suffolk County Council surveyed passengers at Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St. Edmunds railway stations and invited response through the Council's website. There were 733 replies and the results were as follows:

36% of respondents who usually travelled from Lowestoft rated direct train services to London as a high priority.

36
PERCENT

33% of respondents usually travelled from Ipswich. For them, London was by far the most popular destination. About half of these respondents rated faster services as a high priority.

33
PERCENT

47% of respondents said they used the train at peak times. A high number of these said they usually travelled between Ipswich and London but many people also travel to Cambridge, Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket and Ipswich.

47
PERCENT

55% of respondents said they used the train for leisure purposes. For these respondents, Ipswich is the usual journey starting point and London the usual destination. This helps make the case for improvements on the GEML and indicates that the commuter market is not the only important one.

55
PERCENT

Concerning improvements to railway stations in Suffolk, 58% of the total number of respondents said they need better waiting facilities at stations. Suffolk County Council is working with the current train operating company to identify station improvements for Ipswich, Lowestoft and Bury St. Edmunds railway stations.

58
PERCENT

Overall, 37% of respondents said they rated more punctual and reliable train services as a high priority. Of these, 41% travelled from Ipswich and 59% travelled to London.

37
PERCENT

Norwich, London and Ipswich were the most popular destination for passengers who said they usually travelled from Lowestoft. 38% of this group rated faster train services as a high priority.

38
PERCENT

Over 45% of respondents overall said they used the train once a month or less. A frequent complaint articulated nationally and locally is that high ticket prices act as a disincentive to use the train.

45
PERCENT



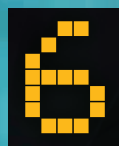
Suffolk Rail Conferences

Annual rail conferences hosted by Suffolk County Council have allowed stakeholder discussions about Suffolk's rail service and infrastructure priorities. The events brought together rail industry experts and delegates from Suffolk's district and borough councils, neighbouring councils, businesses, Members of Parliament, Rail Ministers, Government representatives and user groups. Discussions that have taken place at the rail conferences have identified the following:

- Planned improvements at Ely Junction must benefit services for passengers and freight from Suffolk, as well as improving services from Norfolk to Cambridgeshire. Government need to commit to delivering all promised infrastructure improvements at Ely (in particular double tracking Ely to Soham) within the 2014 to 2019 period.
- Businesses should be more involved in local rail partnerships, both as lobbyists for improvements to local services, and as tenants of commercial property in or close to stations to help make them into local community and/or travel information hubs.
- A rail-bus service could connect people in towns without a rail station to the rail network (e.g. Haverhill and Mildenhall).
- Bus and rail operators should work together to take advantage of existing and imminent technological improvements (e.g. real-time information and on-board scanning devices on buses) so as to provide a multi-operator, multi-modal solution.
- There needs to be extra rolling stock and a minimum of an hourly service on local lines, and a longer term consideration given to building a railway station at Leiston as a legacy from the development of a proposed new power station at Sizewell.
- Network Rail is examining the case for improved infrastructure in light of upcoming work at Sizewell. This must include double-tracking between Woodbridge and Saxmundham.

The Rail Minister, Claire Perry MP (centre), Suffolk Members of Parliament (far right) and the Chairman of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (far left) were some of the many speakers that delivered presentations at the 2014 Suffolk Rail Conference hosted by Suffolk County Council and chaired by Councillor Graham Newman.





Rail Improvements for Suffolk

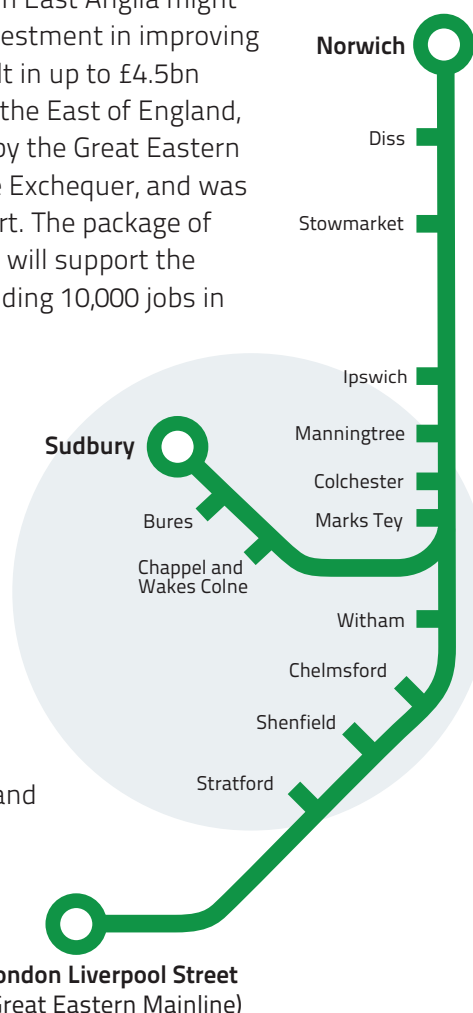
This section of the prospectus considers each rail route serving Suffolk's towns and businesses and identifies the improvements that we need to see. It also sets out minimum standards for stations that should be provided by Government and the rail industry.

The Great Eastern Mainline (GEML)

The GEML is the intercity route connecting Norfolk, Suffolk and Essex with London Liverpool Street. It is well used by passengers travelling for business purposes. The urban areas of Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester and Chelmsford all contain companies in the financial services sector that have their headquarters in the city of London and back office functions in these 4 towns. All of these towns are expected to see an increase in employment of 10-15% by 2028. This is without taking into account the employment growth that will occur in London over the same period, which residents in East Anglia might benefit from. A recent study has shown that £476m investment in improving infrastructure on the GEML, outlined below, would result in up to £4.5bn return in conventional and wider economic benefits for the East of England, and more than £75bn in GVA. The study was overseen by the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce, established by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was submitted in 2014 to the Secretary of State for Transport. The package of improvements proposed for the Great Eastern Mainline will support the provision of 184,000 homes and 205,000 new jobs (including 10,000 jobs in Ipswich) in the East Anglia region.

What the Problems are and what needs to be done

The challenges affecting passenger services on the GEML are laid out in the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce Business Case. The issues identified echo the concerns of Suffolk passengers, which were recorded by the September 2012 passenger survey conducted by SCC. Passenger concerns focus on the need to upgrade old rolling stock, provide more track capacity to improve line speeds and service frequency, and that rolling stock and infrastructure provides a more punctual and resilient service.





Rail passengers told us that punctual and reliable services were priorities for them.



In the survey SCC conducted in September 2012, 63% of passengers that used the GEML to commute to work rated faster journey times as a high priority.

A study commissioned by the county councils of Suffolk, Norfolk and Essex, undertaken by Atkins Consultants, shows that rolling stock is capable of doing speeds of up to 110 mph on the GEML. However, it is prevented by inappropriate infrastructure. Sixteen automatic half-barrier level crossings need upgrading; train warning protection systems need to be adjusted; and low-bridge train clearance issues need rectifying at the 114 bridges on the line. Network Rail is replacing the overhead electrical lines between London Liverpool Street and Chelmsford within Control Period 5. However, this will not result in dramatic improvements in line speed due to the sheer number of trains that use the Chelmsford – London stretch of track.

The GEML operates with some of the lowest subsidies in the UK – Greater Anglia is the second least subsidised service in the country, receiving only 1.5 pence per passenger mile, against a national average of 12.5 pence per passenger mile. Alongside this, the GEML has some of the oldest carriages (average age is 25 years) and is one of the slowest main lines in the UK.

Fifty-eight per cent of peak-time passengers told us that punctual and reliable services were priorities for them. The current public performance measure for Greater Anglia inter-city services highlights the relative poor performance with only 84% of trains arriving at their final destination within ten minutes of the advertised time against a target of 93%. This reflects the issues associated with operating older carriages and infrastructure which is in need of investment.

The line between Shenfield and Norwich is double-tracked and contains a high number of short loops. This results in lack of flexibility in timetabling and limits the ability of the train operating company and/or Network Rail to act quickly in the event of a train breaking down. Suffolk County Council believes that the installation of additional tracking between Colchester and Shenfield would help solve this problem and would help speed up journey times by allowing faster intercity trains to pass slower local ones more easily. The commercial and strategic benefits of this work means that this would represent very good value for money. We want to see funding committed to the development of the scheme in the period 2014 –19 with implementation to follow soon afterwards. The development of the new Beaulieu Park Station, north of Chelmsford, will help to alleviate passenger congestion at Chelmsford Station, as well as provide passing opportunities for faster trains to overtake slower passenger and freight trains. The new station has been granted planning permission; however, the scheme still needs additional track capacity which is not yet agreed and requires additional funding.

Forty percent of GEML passengers told us that more seating capacity, particularly at peak times, is required. It is estimated that there will be a shortfall of 3,000 seats at peak times by 2031 if no action is taken to increase seating capacity. The remodelling of Bow Junction to use the capacity released by Crossrail would allow 28 trains per hour out of Liverpool Street Station. Although the remodelling of Bow Junction has secured development funding within the 2014 –2019 funding period, we will continue to work with partners to ensure that further funding for this project is allocated so that it can be delivered by the time Crossrail opens in 2019. This will also help improve capacity on West-Anglia services travelling from London Liverpool Street to Cambridge via Stratford.

Although Crossrail will provide many opportunities for Suffolk, such as direct connections via Stratford with London Heathrow Airport, Thames Valley towns and London's West End, it will also present many challenges. Crossrail trains will be required to use the line between Shenfield and Bow Junction, meaning that rail services from Suffolk will be required to share the already congested double tracked line with other passenger rail services. This issue must be resolved to ensure that Crossrail services are not prioritised to the detriment of Suffolk passengers.

Fifty percent of GEML passengers told us they would like to see improved train carriages. The intercity services currently used on the GEML are Class 90 electric locomotives dating back to 1987/90. Passenger carriages consist of the Mark 3 units, which date back to the 1980s. These have manual doors and are fitted with toilets that are not DDA-compliant. This creates problems for people getting on or off the train who are disabled, or for those that have heavy luggage, or are travelling with small children. All trains are required to be DDA compliant after 2019; trains that do not meet this standard must be modified or replaced.

Total InterCity revenue growth between London Liverpool Street and Norwich has averaged 4.6% over the seven years to 2013. This is significantly below average UK InterCity sector revenue growth of 5.3% over the same period.





“
Journey time
improvements on
the GEML are are
estimated at
delivering annual
financial benefits
of £8.9m.

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Suffolk County Council is supportive of the GEML Taskforce’s campaign to see new and improved rolling stock; faster line speeds; and half-hourly passenger rail service frequencies between Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and London. A list of analysed recommendations for achieving the Taskforce’s vision is set out in the GEML Taskforce Business Case. New trains will be essential to achieving faster journey times, making Suffolk more accessible and competitive. The financial benefit of journey time savings alone are estimated at £8.9m annually, making the investment in rolling stock and infrastructure very high value for money. New and improved trains should be made available early in the next franchise. This would enable faster line speeds and would significantly improve passenger comfort.

The County Council also agrees with the recommendation in the GEML Taskforce Business Case that improving track capacity and electrifying the Felixstowe to Birmingham line is a priority for supporting additional freight growth from Suffolk’s ports and reducing the need for further freight demand on the GEML.

Network Rail should also investigate the availability of passenger capacity and facilities at Stratford, as the station becomes a major interchange between Crossrail, the Great Eastern Mainline and other rail routes. Such investigation would also ensure that capacity is available for international services. This would offer improved connectivity between Suffolk and the rest of Europe. A later train from London Liverpool Street to Ipswich (than the current 22:30 departure) would enable passengers to take advantage of Stratford as an international interchange, as well as enjoy the London evening economy.

Suffolk County Council has been working in collaboration with Ipswich Borough Council to support the current franchise holder and part fund its £1.9m project to renovate Ipswich Station. The project includes redevelopment of Ipswich station and the station forecourt to improve passenger facilities and make the station safer and more accessible.

Stowmarket Rail Station requires better DDA access between platforms. A steep stepped bridge provides access between the two platforms, meaning that cyclists, disabled people, and passengers with pushchairs or heavy luggage must walk along the main road to access the other platform.

The Sudbury Branch Line

Sudbury station provides a key role connecting residents with Essex and London via a platform change at Marks Tey. Passenger footfall shows that 329,000 passengers used the stations between 2013 – 2014 (a growth of 50% over 16 years).

Sudbury is a growth location, and will be experiencing high levels of housing and jobs over the next 20 years. This includes the Chilton Woods development, expected to be one of the largest housing schemes in Suffolk, which will deliver 1,250 homes alongside employment (2,500 jobs). Sudbury also plays a significant role in Suffolk's tourism sector.

Connecting rail services at Marks Tey can be unreliable, leaving passengers stranded if connecting trains are cancelled. Marks Tey station is in desperate need of a new or improved footbridge with lifts or an underpass to enable disabled passengers, cyclists and those travelling with small children or heavy bags to cross between platforms to catch connecting trains to Sudbury.

A direct service between Sudbury and London would open the town to further investment, as well as encourage more visitors to come to Sudbury's historic villages and town. An aspiration is for electrification of the Sudbury branch line to be included in CP6. A direct service to London should be considered as soon as capacity becomes available on the Great Eastern Mainline.



A direct service between Sudbury and London would open the town to further investment, as well as encourage more visitors



GEML Key priorities

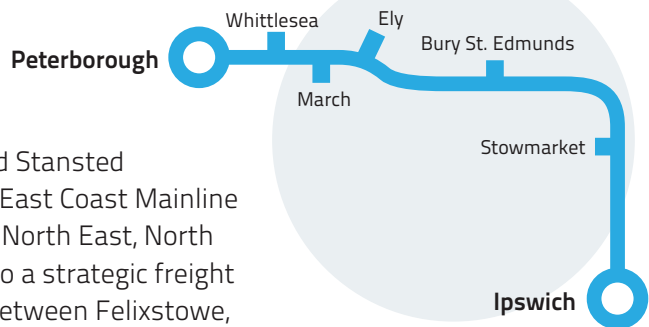
- A commitment to provide new and improved trains early in the new franchise.
- Government committed funding for the re-modelling of Bow Junction to be delivered within the CP5 period to make use of the capacity released by Crossrail. Additional track capacity will be needed between Colchester and Shenfield to improve reliability and reduce journey times. Our aspiration is to have a service that can have average journey times from Norwich to London in 90 minutes and Ipswich to London in 60 minutes.
- Capacity improvements and electrification of the Felixstowe – Birmingham freight route to help reduce freight use of GEML.
- Future provision of a direct service between Sudbury and London.
- Electrification of the Sudbury branch line in CP6.
- Lifts installed at Marks Tey Station.
- A review to be undertaken by Network Rail into signalling infrastructure, power supply, and platform clearance issues all along the GEML, with a view to improving line speeds.
- Half-hourly passenger service frequency, consistent service 7 days a week with minimum need for Sunday bus replacement.
- Improved waiting facilities, toilets, ticketing foyer and redevelopment of the station forecourt at Ipswich Station. Improvements should also be made at Stowmarket Station to make platform crossing more DDA compliant and improve bus waiting facilities and the forecourt.
- A more reliable and punctual passenger rail service.

The Ipswich – Peterborough Line

This line provides access to Peterborough on a current two-hour frequency. It has connections at Ely to Cambridge and Stansted Airport, and at Peterborough to the East Coast Mainline (linking Suffolk to the Midlands, the North East, North West and Scotland). The route is also a strategic freight route for goods being transported between Felixstowe, the East Coast Mainline and the West Coast Mainline at Birmingham. Both passenger and freight services travel through Ely.

Work to improve capacity at Ely North Junction is scheduled for delivery in May 2017. Plans to provide additional track capacity between Soham and Ely is also included in the CP5 period, however no fixed dates have been committed. In addition to this, further capacity improvements are required at Ely if it is to support more passenger and freight services. It is vital that this work is comprehensive; delivered within Control Period 5 and makes possible all of the required improvements for passenger and freight movements from Suffolk.

The route shares a corridor with the A14 trunk road through Suffolk. Increasing the use of the line for passengers and freight will help to reduce traffic growth on the congested A14.



The economic significance of the line

In its economic assessment of 2011, Cambridgeshire County Council concluded that, although it has a resilient economy, and that Cambridge city is a centre for skilled employment, there are disparities in skills and earnings between the north and south of the county which are exacerbated by transport links. A study commissioned by Suffolk, Norfolk



and Cambridgeshire county councils concluded that improvements to the rail services for passengers and freight passing through Ely would generate some £220 million in wider economic benefits in addition to rail revenue. Some of this would be generated by the creation of additional jobs in Peterborough, Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket and Ipswich. Spatial inequalities between different parts of these localities would be reduced. The study also forecasts that the rail improvements would help bring forward the construction of new housing and increase the value of housing in settlements along this line. For Suffolk, the passenger service provides a critical link between the county's towns. Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds are areas that will be experiencing high levels of economic and housing growth. Good transport links to and between the towns will support the growing economies and attract investors.

What are the problems and what needs to be done?

Of the respondents who travelled to Peterborough from stations within Suffolk, 50% said they would like more frequent services to Peterborough and more available seating. The Ipswich to Peterborough service is the only service in the region to run at such a poor frequency. This is unacceptable and we want a commitment from Government to provide a direct hourly service as early as possible. This will provide a step change in the economic opportunities for communities and businesses along the line, and add to the attractiveness of this service to business users and leisure users alike.

The HLOS also commits to improving the rolling stock, capacity and speed of the East Coast Mainline Service. The remodelling of Peterborough station has created more capacity, and an opportunity for increased frequencies between Ipswich and Peterborough, and from Suffolk to the Midlands and the North. It is important that more and higher quality rolling stock is procured for the Ipswich to Peterborough service when it becomes available. The Rail Executive's consultation on the new East Anglia rail franchise, sets out options which could potentially limit the current two hourly service to Ely, with changes for onward journeys to Peterborough. This would be completely unacceptable. A direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough is required to support population growth and the expanding economy. Proposals within the Anglia Route Study for the Ipswich to Peterborough rail service also includes an option for the service to split and join at Ely. This raises concerns about how the service will operate if connecting services are late or cancelled, and, ultimately, the impact this will have on passengers and the future travel choices they will make.

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... improvements to the rail services for passengers and freight passing through Ely would generate some £220 million in wider economic benefits in addition to rail revenue.”

Key priorities

- Hourly direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough from the start of the new franchise.
- High quality rolling stock (air conditioning, automatic doors, Wi-Fi, and power sockets) with more seating capacity.
- Electrification of the line between Ipswich and Birmingham to speed up services and improve reliability.
- Capacity improvements between Ely and Soham within CP5.
- Capacity improvements to Ely junctions to support Suffolk's aims.



Freight

This line is critically important for the Port of Felixstowe – it is the link to the port’s markets in the North, Midlands and North West. We want to see a commitment to electrify the route between Felixstowe and Peterborough / Birmingham as early as possible to accommodate the ambitions of rail passengers and get more freight on to rail.

The Port of Felixstowe is the largest container port in the UK. In 2014, it handled in excess of 4 million TEU (twenty foot equivalent units). It is also the country’s largest intermodal rail freight terminal. 41% of the UK container rail freight is transported from the Port of Felixstowe.

Over 30,000 people in Suffolk rely on Ports and transport for their livelihoods. The Port of Felixstowe is a key driver of economic growth and vital to the Suffolk, East Anglian and UK economy. Rail connectivity is a fundamental element in ensuring the Port’s continued success. Investment in the Strategic Freight Network is welcomed, in particular continued investment in the strategically important Felixstowe to Birmingham route (to include additional capacity works between Felixstowe and Peterborough and early electrification).

We are pleased that the Government is supporting the improvement of the line between Felixstowe and Birmingham through the Strategic Freight Network Fund. This has previously helped to fund the development of the Ipswich Northern Chord and re-signalling at Kennett. However, other short term improvements are desperately needed. They include capacity improvements to the east of Ely and improvements at Bury St. Edmunds. The opportunity to move the freight sidings out of the town centre should also be considered to reduce HGV impacts in the town. Serious concerns have arisen for Felixstowe to Birmingham projects not

just in Suffolk but in other counties, such as Leicestershire – which forms part of the Strategic Freight Network. Work at Leicester, which is being developed as part of the Midland Mainline electrification programme, cannot be completed within CP5. Although ‘stop gap’ solutions are being sought, the full outputs for freight will not be delivered until CP6.

We also understand that work at Ely is slipping into CP6, and there are significant costs to upgrade level crossings which are presently entirely unfunded. It is unclear whether any enhanced capacity can be delivered without the full scheme in place. There are also concerns over the plans for the necessary re-signalling between Peterborough and Helpston, which is deferred pending European Rail Traffic Management System (ERTMS) fitment. And finally, there is little or no progress on the future development plans for electrification of the route. Such infrastructure is critical to support growth at the Port of Felixstowe, which will increase the number of freight trains to 48 trains per day by 2019, and 60 trains per day by 2024.

The intention to increase freight trains from Felixstowe will deliver £49 million to the county and the expansion of the port will deliver £44 million to the local economy. Significant enhancement of the Felixstowe to Birmingham freight route is essential.

The rail network around Ely junction is an important constraint to our aspirations for additional freight capacity and for enhanced passenger services. An improvement scheme is included in the Government’s HLOS for the 2014 – 2019 period. It is important that the improvement is comprehensive and allows for growth of both freight and passenger services through the area and along the Felixstowe to Birmingham route.

Proposals for capacity improvements to the Felixstowe branch line are being considered by Network Rail. It is important that these improvements are sufficient to support planned freight growth and to support better and more reliable passenger services.

At the same time it should be recognised that given forecast demand and the need to access electrified routes, existing freight paths on the Great Eastern Mainline will need to be retained.

For the most part, passenger and freight services share the same lines, so increasing frequencies for passenger services has to be balanced with increasing frequencies for freight, unless further capacity is provided. In particular the line between Felixstowe and Ipswich is single-tracked, which causes capacity issues for the hourly passenger service. Electrification of the line to Peterborough would provide a short-term solution to capacity issues, as well as provide economic benefits.

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The Port of Felixstowe is also the country’s largest intermodal rail freight terminal. 41% of the UK container rail freight is transported from the port.

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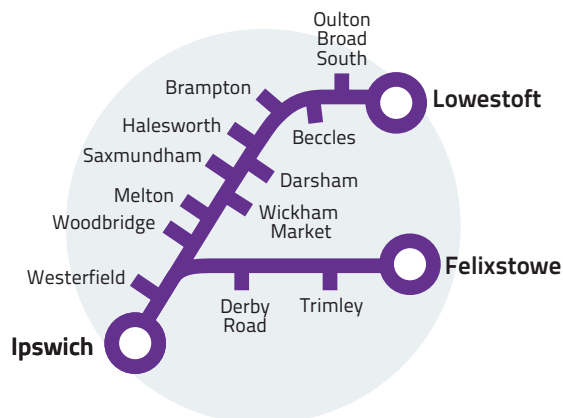
Key priorities

- Significant capacity improvements on the Felixstowe branch line.
- Ely infrastructure improvements.
- Additional capacity on Felixstowe to Peterborough.
- Electrification of the Felixstowe to Peterborough line to support freight growth.
- Line speed improvements.
- Upgrades at Leicester and between Peterborough and Helpston to be delivered within CP5.

The East Suffolk Line

The East Suffolk Line runs between Lowestoft and Ipswich. A passenger service currently operates hourly, and connects 10 Suffolk stations.

In December 2012, the service frequency increased from two hourly to hourly. This step change in the level of service presents a unique opportunity to develop the economic potential of the railway to serve tourism and other businesses in East Suffolk. Working with the Community Rail Partnership, local communities and bus operators, we will promote the use of rail, work towards improving bus/rail connectivity and encourage more commercial use of station buildings.



Our aim is now to ensure that the additional frequency is supported by improvements to the journey time between Ipswich and Lowestoft



The line has seen much increased usage, with passenger numbers at Woodbridge up 52% to over 200,000 over the past four years, and at Oulton Broad South a 101% increase in numbers to nearly 43,000 over the same period.

Our aim is now to ensure that the additional frequency is supported by improvements to the journey time between Ipswich and Lowestoft with a long term target of a 60-minute journey. Meeting that objective will require significant improvements to track infrastructure and rolling stock, and the modernisation of the level crossings along the route. We will work with Network Rail and the franchise operator to ensure that the necessary improvements are made, without local residents' access to routes being compromised.

The Felixstowe branch line connects at Westerfield and provides an hourly passenger service between Felixstowe and Ipswich. The line is part of the key national rail freight route from the Port of Felixstowe to the East Coast and West Coast mainlines.

The economic significance of the line

Ipswich to Lowestoft

The line between Ipswich and Lowestoft contains a number of stations that are within walking distance from residential areas and centres of employment. A study commissioned by the Council in 2006 found that the residential population of the Oulton Broad – Lowestoft rail corridor is expected to increase by 6.2% and the number of jobs by 5.2%. We anticipate that Lowestoft will become a key centre for energy-related employment, and a centre for education and training linked to the energy industry in the future. Good rail connections to and from Lowestoft will help to ensure that the town can make the most of its economic opportunities.

The residential population of the Woodbridge – Melton corridor is expected to increase by 14% by 2021 and the number of jobs by 9% so it is likely that commuting pressures will increase. The improved connectivity offered by the increase in frequency will help to reduce traffic growth on the A12.



Rail services can also help alleviate deprivation by helping to widen access to more highly paid, productive jobs for residents of a certain area. For example, in 2011, full-time equivalent median annual earnings in the Suffolk Coastal district were nearly £3,500 more than in the Waveney district. Waveney residents can only benefit from the opportunities improved rail services will give them to commute to take up better paid jobs.

The line also plays a key role in assisting Suffolk's tourism industry. Lowestoft Station is within fairly easy walking distance of the sea-front with its wide range of accommodation and leisure. The line also has a number of stations that act as important public transport interchanges for tourist destinations. For example, trains stop at Halesworth to enable tourists to catch a bus to Southwold. Woodbridge and Saxmundham operate as public transport interchanges where tourists can catch bus services to Aldeburgh and Thorpeness. The increase in frequency gives the opportunity to also improve connecting bus services so that the overall public transport offer for passengers to the coastal resorts can be made far more attractive.

What are the problems and what needs to be done?

Fifty-four per cent of people in Suffolk County Council's survey who said they used this line said they wanted more frequent services. The £4 million Beccles Loop (partly funded by Suffolk County Council) provides a passing track for trains between Halesworth and Oulton Broad. The installation of the track has enabled the two-hourly frequency to be changed to hourly. Suffolk County Council aims to use this step-change in service provision in order to achieve additional growth in the passenger market and ensure that rail travel is given more prominence as a means of people travelling for leisure and tourism to Suffolk.

Double tracking between Woodbridge and Saxmundham will be required for the movement of construction materials to the proposed new nuclear power station at Sizewell and this will also help to improve journey times. Wickham Market Station is located in Campsea Ashe, two-miles away from Wickham Market. The route between the two villages consists of narrow roads, without adequate footpaths, and no taxis or buses are located within close proximity to the station. The station name causes confusion amongst passengers who want to get to Wickham Market, only to discover their mistake when they arrive at the station in Campsea Ashe. Suffolk County Council expects the station to be renamed to

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Fifty-four per cent of people in Suffolk County Council's survey who said they used this line said they wanted more frequent services.

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The £4m Beccles Loop opened in December 2012



'Campsea Ashe Station'. This should occur as soon as possible, or at the very least at the start of the new rail franchise.

Fifty four per cent of passengers on the line told us they would like to see faster services between Ipswich and Lowestoft. Although existing rolling stock is capable of travelling at an average speed of 75 mph along the line, it is prevented from doing so by large sections of the line that are single tracked, and the level-crossings along the railway line which is only 49 miles long. We will work with Network Rail to identify improvements along the line to reduce journey times with a longer term aim to achieve an average journey time between Lowestoft and Ipswich from its current 90 minutes to 60 minutes. We believe there is scope to double-track the section of line between Lowestoft and Oulton Broad South and between Saxmundham and Woodbridge. In the long term, electrification of the whole East Suffolk line would facilitate faster journey times and improved reliability of services.

Until recently, Sizewell A nuclear site, formally the Magnox Power Station, was moving freight north of Westerfield Junction. The movement of freight saw an interaction with passenger services at Westerfield Junction. Freight trains from the Sizewell A site are no longer in operation. However, plans to use the East Suffolk Line to transport construction materials between Leiston and Ipswich for the development of the proposed new Sizewell C power plant are being considered and will add pressure on current track capacity. It is

therefore essential that work is undertaken with Network Rail to mitigate any possible future conflicts at Westerfield Junction. The County Council does acknowledge that the development of Sizewell C will present opportunities for a new station at Leiston and a passenger service, as well as double tracking between Woodbridge and Saxmundham. However, it is imperative that the design of the signalling system for any dual-tracked section between Saxmundham and Woodbridge ensures that freight trains are not held at signals adjacent to housing developments situated close to the line. For example at the currently named 'Wickham Market' station.

The area surrounding Westerfield Station is earmarked for residential development (estimated to be over 3,000 homes) over the next ten years. The position of the station should be relocated west of Westerfield Road to better serve the new development and improve access across the railway track, linking the new development with Ipswich Town Centre. All East Suffolk Line passenger services should stop at Westerfield Station in order to serve residents at the new Northern Fringe development.

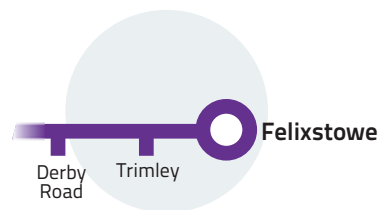
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It is essential that work is undertaken with Network Rail to mitigate any possible future conflicts at Westerfield Junction

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The Felixstowe Branch Line

The Ipswich – Felixstowe branch line also plays a vital role within the Suffolk community by enabling people to commute to work and to access the popular seaside resort of Felixstowe, thereby taking unnecessary congestion from a stretch of the A14 that is well used by HGVs. We believe it is vital to maintain an hourly (or better) passenger service as well as support the growth of freight from the Port and encourage the maximum use of rail for freight movements to reduce pressure on the A14. In the shorter term, the Council believes that capacity improvements between Felixstowe and Ipswich are required as soon as possible and these should be of a sufficient scale to support planned growth at Felixstowe and to enable an improved passenger service.



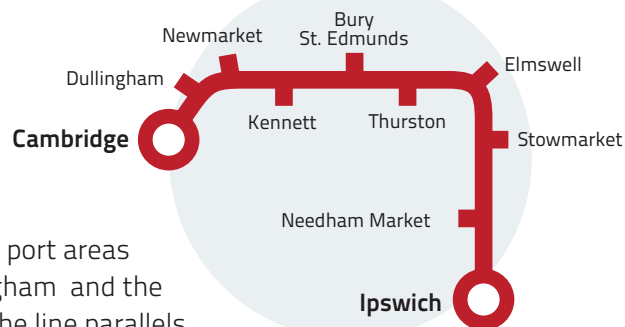
Key priorities

- Major refurbishment of Lowestoft Station.
- A better than hourly service connecting Lowestoft and Ipswich, with a future aspiration to provide a direct service between Lowestoft and London Liverpool Street.
- Improved journey times through electrification between Lowestoft and Ipswich, with the aim of achieving a travelling time of 60 minutes.
- Improved line capacity between Lowestoft and Oulton Broad South and Woodbridge and Saxmundham.
- High quality passenger rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Improved capacity on the Ipswich – Felixstowe branch line within CP5, with an urgent need to electrify the line between Felixstowe and Peterborough.
- Relocation of Westerfield Station.
- Network Rail to further assess capacity at Westerfield Junction.
- Electrification of the East Suffolk Line.



The Ipswich - Cambridge Line

The line connects seven Suffolk stations: Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds, Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market and Ipswich with Cambridge. The line east of Newmarket is also a crucial part of the rail-freight network connecting the port areas of London and Felixstowe with Birmingham and the West Coast Mainline service. Much of the line parallels the A14 trunk road, and shifting traffic on to rail will help to relieve future growth pressure on this route.



Our aspiration is for fast and frequent rail services connecting the key regional economic centres of Ipswich, Cambridge and Norwich.

Much of the line parallels the A14 trunk road, and shifting traffic on to rail will help to relieve future growth pressure on this route.

The economic significance of the line

The line connects Ipswich and West Suffolk with the thriving economic area around Cambridge, a regional employment centre specialising in higher education, life-science, pharmaceuticals, computer software development, and tourism sectors. Rail widens access to the labour market along the whole Ipswich – Cambridge corridor. A study commissioned



by Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire county councils in July 2012 showed that the number of employee jobs within the Cambridge district area is due to increase by 38% by 2021 whereas the population in the area is forecast to grow by only 24% in the same time.

Because of the wider range of skilled jobs available in the Cambridge area, the average annual salary is approximately £6,500 more per annum than in Ipswich for example. A more frequent rail service would open up these opportunities to people living in Suffolk (the County Council has a future aim of achieving a half-hourly rail service frequency between Ipswich and Cambridge). The study also indicates that there are significant wider economic benefits arising from clustering of businesses around the rail corridor.

Ipswich and Cambridge both have strong growth potential which is acknowledged by Government in the signing of City Deals. Improving the connectivity between the two towns and their hinterlands will support both City Deals.

What are the problems and what needs to be done?

In the survey we conducted in October 2012, 58% of passengers who said they used this line said they wanted to see more frequent services and 34% faster journey times between Ipswich and Cambridge. There is a significant trade-off to be made between more frequent services and faster journey times. Despite the close proximity of Cambridge to Suffolk, the journey time is 1 hour 20 minutes. Because of this, the Council feels it is more realistic and desirable to prioritise faster journey times. The installation of new signalling equipment at west of Kennett will help enable this. However, the Council also believes that the section of the line between Dullingham and Cambridge should be double-tracked in order to improve journey times and reliability. Future electrification of the Felixstowe – Birmingham freight corridor raises the possibility of electrification of the section of line to Newmarket and Cambridge.

The popular peak-time service into Ipswich is overcrowded. Other rolling stock, although refurbished, is worn out and old. More and better units need to be deployed on this line to increase the availability of seats and improve the overall passenger experience. A study commissioned by Suffolk County Council to assess the benefit of a half-hourly service between Ipswich and Cambridge found that it would generate over £35m in economic and associated benefits. A later passenger rail train between Suffolk and Cambridge will also help to boost the counties' evening economies.

The frequency of the Sunday service is two-hourly, which leaves passengers with a long-wait for a connecting train. An hourly service on a Sunday would significantly benefit leisure passengers.

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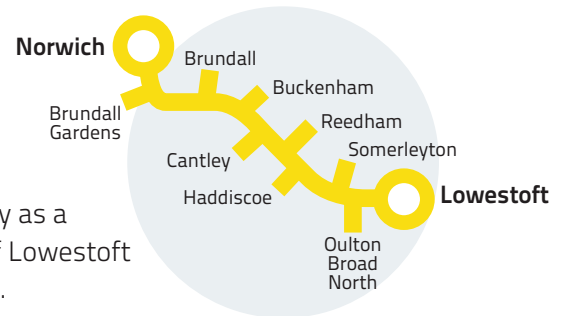
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Key priorities

- Faster journeys between Ipswich and Cambridge.
- High quality rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Future electrification of the line.
- Introduction of a half-hourly frequency between Ipswich and Cambridge
- Hourly Sunday frequency.

The Lowestoft – Norwich Line (Wherry Line)

This line connects Lowestoft with Norwich, and Norwich with Great Yarmouth. It is a key passenger route for the tourism industry and for employment. The line is very important for the Lowestoft economy both for the tourism industry and the town's future prosperity as a centre for energy investment. The poor quality of Lowestoft Station is discussed elsewhere in the prospectus.



The level crossing at Oulton Broad North Station causes considerable delays to road traffic because of the length of time it remains closed. Suffolk County Council has been working with Network Rail and local partners to try to improve the situation. Re-signalling is scheduled for 2016 and will bring about some reduction in barrier down time. In the



meantime the County Council is improving the information given to motorists about delays. A review of the level crossing is required, especially if there is an increase in the number of passenger rail services using the Wherry Line.

The economic significance of the line

Norwich is a key destination for people living in Lowestoft as a key centre of employment. It also provides a wide range of retail and leisure facilities. Norwich provides key rail links to the popular tourist destinations of the Norfolk Broads and North Norfolk. The number of employee jobs within the district is expected to increase by 9% by 2031 (based on 2010 levels). Four mixed development sites within easy walking distance of Norwich station have been earmarked for development by 2031. The service also connects people from Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth to passenger trains to Liverpool and Manchester.

The line also has a role to play in the development of the off-shore energy sector within the areas of Lowestoft and Great Yarmouth, as it can help connect the often transient workforce to Norwich Airport and therefore other key centres for this industry, most notably Aberdeen and Humberside.

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Norwich is a key destination for people living in Lowestoft as a key centre of employment.

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What are the problems and what needs to be done?

Thirty-six percent of passengers surveyed told us they used this line and said they want to see faster services between Lowestoft and Norwich. Travelling between Lowestoft and Norwich by train is only five minutes quicker than by car. There is an hourly service on weekdays, but the service runs two-hourly on a Sunday, when most people may choose to take day trips. A faster and hourly Sunday service could encourage more people to use the train, assisting in boosting both economies in Norwich and Lowestoft.

Network Rail has indicated in its Improving Connectivity consultation document that additional track capacity would not be needed between Lowestoft and Norwich to enable a half hourly Lowestoft to Norwich service. We will work with Norfolk County Council and Network Rail to investigate further what can be achieved to facilitate incremental improvements in journey times between Lowestoft and Norwich within future funding periods.

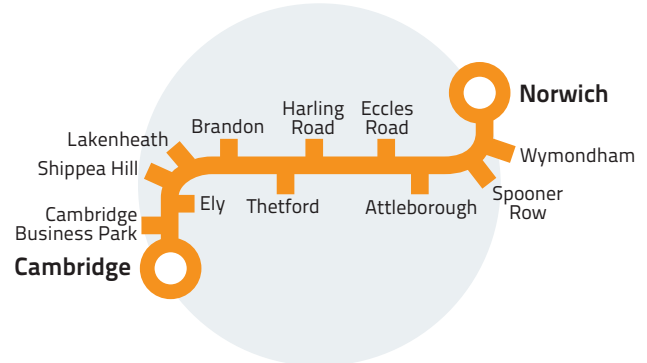
Old rolling stock (consisting of a two car Sprinter unit) is used on the line, and should be replaced as a point of urgency. A study undertaken by Mott MacDonald suggests that by 2027 seating capacity would be reached on the service.

Key priorities

- Major refurbishment of Lowestoft Station.
- High quality passenger rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Faster journeys between Lowestoft and Norwich.
- Hourly Sunday frequency.
- Reduce the impact of the level crossing on road users.
- Network Rail to further assess Oulton Broad North Level Crossing.

The Cambridge – Norwich Line

The Fen Line connects Norwich to Cambridge via two Suffolk stations: Lakenheath and Brandon. The train currently provides an hourly service from Brandon, but the service from Lakenheath is poor with only one train stopping on a Saturday and two trains stopping on a Sunday.



The economic significance of the line for Suffolk

Brandon is a key market town that enables people living in remote areas to access jobs and services. However, its workforce is one of the most static, with 30% of people travelling less than 2km to work. Median annual earnings in the Forest Heath district also rank as the lowest in Suffolk. Improving journey times and the frequency of the service between Brandon, Cambridge, Chesterton Station (which links to Cambridge Business and Science Park) and Norwich will improve access for residents to labour markets containing jobs that pay higher wages. It will also widen the pool of potential employees from which businesses can recruit.

A study commissioned by Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk county councils in 2012 highlights that Forest Heath district is due to see an 18% increase in the number of employee jobs by 2021 and an 11% increase in its population. Again, businesses will need a more frequent rail service to enable them to fill vacancies that the indigenous population cannot.

Increasing the frequency of this service would help bring forward further growth in the settlements of Brandon, Thetford, Wymondham, and Attleborough and would add an aggregated property uplift value of over £14 million for houses close to stations. Improved frequency will give residents a regular connection into a key regional centre of employment.

What are the problems and what needs to be done?

Over half of the passengers who responded to our survey, who used the Norwich – Cambridge line said they wanted to see more frequent and faster services. However, as with the Ipswich – Cambridge line, the Council is aware of the trade-offs between these two improvements and believes that, with the service already running on an hourly basis, faster journey times should be prioritised. The County Council needs Network Rail to conduct further research to see what can be done within CP6 and CP7 to make incremental improvements to journey times.

The level crossing at Brandon station exacerbates congestion from traffic travelling through the town, and adds to rail journey time. Significant work to the level crossing would be required to alleviate congestion and reduce journey times. This will be particularly important as Norfolk County Council has the aspiration to increase the hourly Norwich to Cambridge frequency to half-hourly.

The Government has indicated in the High Level Output Specification that improvements to Ely North Junctions will be made, but they need to facilitate the improvements mentioned above to benefit passengers living in Suffolk as well as Norfolk.

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Although the Norwich to Peterborough service passes Brandon, it does not stop at the station. An aspiration should be for the service to serve Brandon to increase journey choice from the town.

Lakenheath is a very lightly used station but this is not surprising as it is only served with a two hourly frequency and only on Saturdays and Sundays. The station is located two miles from town. Increasing the level of service and improving connectivity between the station and the town will be important in supporting the future development of the town.

It is important that both Suffolk and Norfolk county councils work together to ensure that increases in frequencies complement passenger services travelling from Suffolk and Norfolk and do not cause delays or reduce services.

Key priorities

- Level crossing improvement at Brandon.
- Regular weekday and weekend trains stopping at Lakenheath.
- Norwich – Peterborough service stopping at Brandon.
- Reconditioned rolling stock and carriages within the period of the current franchise.
- A faster, more direct bus link from Mildenhall to the nearest available station which has an hourly service between Cambridge and Norwich.

The East West Rail Scheme

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A study commissioned by the East West Rail Consortium demonstrated that there would be significant economic value in the provision of services between Cambridge and Bedford.

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The East West Rail Scheme is a stretch of new line connecting Oxford with Cambridge. To date no definitive route has been set, but the scheme will connect to Ipswich and Norwich. Once developed, it will provide an electrified route for freight and passenger services.

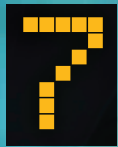
In July 2012 the Government approved to fund the construction of the £270 million Western Section (Oxford to Bedford), expected to deliver £38 million annual uplift to the South East economy. Work is currently being undertaken to develop the business case for the Central Section (Bedford to Cambridge). Suffolk County Council and Ipswich Borough Council are members of the consortium promoting this work.

A study commissioned by the East West Rail Consortium demonstrated that there would be significant economic value in the provision of services between Cambridge and Bedford. An outline business case is now being undertaken by Network Rail to consider costs and identify a route. The business case will be presented to Government for inclusion in the next rail funding period, due to commence in 2019.

The East West Rail Scheme will also provide opportunities for improving the Ipswich to Cambridge line, presenting a business case to electrify the line and improve track capacity and rolling stock.

East West Rail
western section
between Bletchley
and Bedford.





Rail Stations and Other Infrastructure

There are 27 stations in Suffolk, many of which are poorly maintained. The train operating companies are responsible for the management and maintenance of stations which are leased from Network Rail. Suffolk County Council will expect improvements at all stations and will work with the train operating company to implement these.

There are different types of rail stations, from those that act as urban public transport hubs or interchanges to those in comparatively remote rural areas. Specifications for improvement will vary depending on the station. For example, the larger urban hubs will require a greater staff presence, more pedestrian friendly forecourts, toilet facilities and waiting rooms. Smaller and more remote stations will require high quality sheltered waiting facilities, safe access to platforms, ticket machines, more cycle parking/car parking spaces and real time passenger information.

Train operating companies are responsible for making best use of any property they manage. Many stations in large urban areas and market towns contain buildings that could be used to generate commercial business such as retail, coffee shop, or tourist information facilities.



Train operating companies are responsible for making best use of any property they manage.



Stations that act as urban transport hubs

Ipswich

In the survey Suffolk County Council conducted, 56% of passengers who use Ipswich station rated improved waiting facilities as a high priority. The facilities on platforms 1 and 2 could be of a higher standard. The comparatively small main foyer also becomes crowded at peak times. Further investigations into platform capacity at Ipswich Station should be undertaken to ensure that future platform space is available for additional passenger service frequencies.

Forty-one percent said they wanted to see improved toilet facilities. These are only available on platform 2.

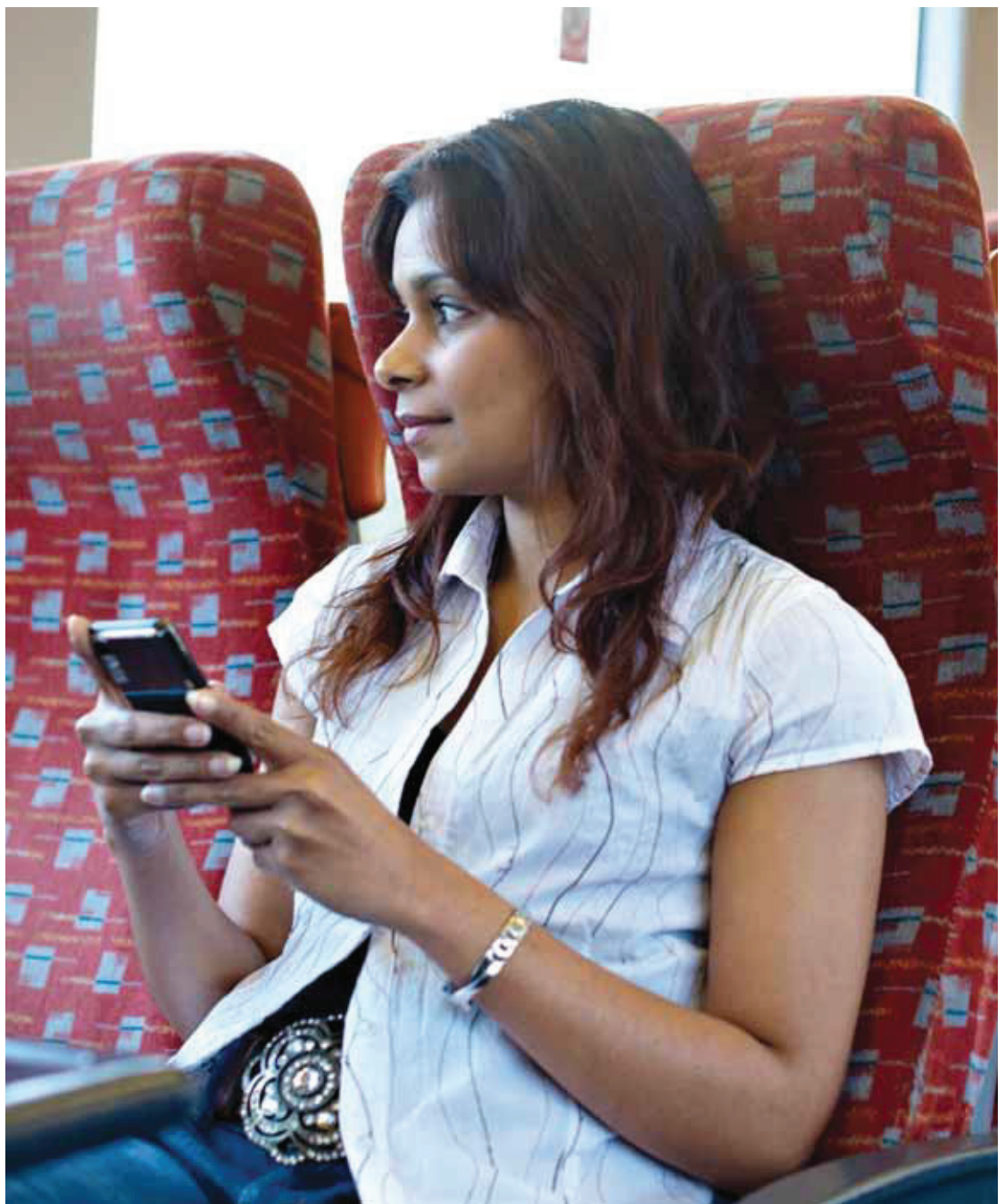
The station forecourt is also in need of redevelopment. The forecourt has narrow pedestrian walkways which lead onto a very busy station entrance where pedestrians come into contact with vehicles. Some improvements have been made, a new cycle compound with key fob access was installed in 2014 and provides space for 108 bicycles (bringing the total cycle parking capacity to 160 spaces). The new cycle compound, along with 10 cycles for hire as part of the Bike and Go Scheme, are located in a more secure part of the forecourt and is covered by CCTV. The use of the compound has been popular with all fobs issued and a waiting list in place.

Suffolk County Council, Ipswich Borough Council and Abellio Greater Anglia are working together to implement a project that will redevelop Ipswich Station and its forecourt. The project will improve station waiting facilities, station toilets, and the ticketing foyer. Work on the forecourt will seek to improve safety, accessibility and the appearance of the space.

Lowestoft

Lowestoft Station is in an appalling state; its condition is completely unacceptable as the gateway to Suffolk's second largest town and does nothing to encourage the tourism and inward business investment necessary for the future prosperity of Lowestoft and the wider economic area of East Suffolk. There is a need for a complete overhaul of the station in order to provide modern facilities and to ensure that its internal and external appearance is appropriate to its role as a gateway to the town. These improvements should be a requirement within the rail franchise.

Fifty-two percent of respondents to Suffolk County Council's rail survey said they wanted to see improved waiting facilities. Thirty nine percent said they wanted more retail facilities. The appearance of the main station building is tatty and requires renovation. The Lowestoft



Renovation Project Group is doing much to breathe new life into Lowestoft Station, so much so that a new retailer has moved into one of the commercial units. A £10,000 Heritage Lottery Fund has helped to kick start work on the station to identify renovation works and develop a business model for the long-term sustainability of the building. Suffolk County Council will work with the Lowestoft Vision Group, Network Rail, East Suffolk Line Community Rail Partnership and the franchise holder to progress the Vision Group's outcomes for the station.

There is seating for 15 people in the station foyer which is only open from 06.40 – 17.05 between Monday and Saturday and 08.00 until 16.15 on Sundays. There is also limited sheltered seating on the station platform. Other than these, the station platform is completely open to the elements. There is currently only one toilet in the station, a further disincentive to want to wait there for a train out of Lowestoft or a bus to one of the surrounding areas. The installation of more sheltered seating and better toilets are just some of the measures that need to be delivered as part of the renovation of Lowestoft Station.

A new secure cycle compound providing 40 cycle spaces, with key fob access and CCTV coverage, was installed at the station in 2014. 10 hoops are also available for cycle parking. The new compound is also accompanied by the Bike and Go cycle hire scheme. Registration is required for using the Bike and Go scheme, with a £10 annual subscription, and a daily rate of £3.80 per day.

Fifty-two percent of Lowestoft Station users who responded to the Council's survey said they wanted to see a greater staff presence. The station is staffed by one person, who is responsible for tidying the station, selling train tickets and getting travel information to customers. The member of staff is employed from 06.40 – 17.05 between Monday and Saturday and 08.00 until 16.15 on Sundays. Unfortunately, because of current financial constraints, extra members of staff are unlikely to be employed at the station within the present franchise. However, this is something Suffolk County Council is keen to see within the timescale of the next franchise. In the meantime, Suffolk County Council, the current train operator, and Waveney District Council are looking at shorter term measures to improve station security, and the public's perception of it. Options include improved CCTV camera coverage and lighting.

The new £1m interchange hub at Lowestoft Station was provided by Suffolk County Council, in conjunction with key partners, and opened in 2013. The scheme provides better bus waiting facilities, as well as safer access to the station for pedestrians and cyclists. The project also included the provision of bus shelters on both sides of Denmark Road.

Suffolk County Council is installing a new real time bus information system for the interchange and other places in the town, to replace the aging system introduced some years ago.

Bury St. Edmunds

Sixty-one percent of respondents to Suffolk County Council's survey who use Bury St. Edmunds railway station said they would like to see improved waiting facilities and 31% said better retail facilities. Forty-seven percent of respondents said they would like to see a greater staff presence. One member of staff is currently employed at the station between 05.45 and 18.15 from Monday – Friday, between 06.50 and 17.30 on Saturdays and between 08.15 and 16.00 on Sundays. Because of this, the café, the waiting rooms, and toilets have to close earlier than at other stations. The lack of staff might also add to the perception of a lack of station security. Suffolk County Council will work with the current and future train operator to investigate the possibility of funding for a greater staff presence at the station.

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The new £1m interchange hub at Lowestoft Station was provided by Suffolk County Council, in conjunction with key partners, and opened in 2013

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Bury St. Edmunds Station

The forecourt requires redesign to make it more user friendly for pedestrians, as there is no clearly signposted or marked sustainable transport route from the station to the town centre. There is a sheltered waiting area for people requiring bus services in the forecourt but improvements should be made to providing public transport information and direct passengers to the additional bus stop (which should also be sheltered) on Station Hill for travel into the town centre. Cycle parking provision should also be improved. Sixteen cycle stands are provided at the station, 6 of which are uncovered.

There is a Goods Yard located just south-west of the station which is used to store seeds and heavy goods. Opportunities should be explored to relocate this facility elsewhere, which could allow redevelopment and remove lorries from this part of the town.

Suffolk County Council will work with the franchise holder, St. Edmundsbury Borough Council, Network Rail and other partner organisations to identify ways to improve Bury St Edmunds Railway Station and tackle some of the problems mentioned above. Such improvements will help to encourage people not only to use the station more but to travel to and from it by sustainable means. Measures to tackle some of the problems mentioned above will require funding from the train operating company.

Stowmarket

Stowmarket is a growth location and the station plays a vital role in connecting local residents, both in the town and in neighbouring villages with London, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and the rest of Suffolk. Footfall figures for 2013/14 show that over 940,000 passengers used the station – making Stowmarket one of the busiest stations in Suffolk.

Demand at the station will rise with further economic and housing growth. Investment is therefore needed at Stowmarket to improve the forecourt, cycle parking provision, bus waiting areas, toilets and platform access.

Access between platforms at Stowmarket is obtained by a steep stepped bridge. Cyclists, disabled people, people with pushchairs or heavy luggage must walk along the main road to access the other platform. Investment should therefore be targeted at providing lifts to make access between the platforms more DDA compliant.

Toilets are only located on platform 2. This causes problems for passengers, in particular those waiting on platform 1 who would have difficulty using the stepped bridge to access the facility.

The station forecourt is in urgent need of redevelopment. Passenger transport waiting facilities are poor, no shelters or seating exists. Pedestrian paths into and out of the station are inconsistent, and no designated cycle paths exist, meaning that pedestrians and cyclists are in direct conflict with vehicles.

The station does have cycle parking for 67 bicycles, but the majority of cycle parking spaces are located away from the station and are in need of modernisation and coverage by CCTV.

Stowmarket has one train per hour stopping at the station, in each direction to London Liverpool Street and Norwich as opposed to Diss Station, which has two trains per hour. Stowmarket also has an hourly service in each direction between Ipswich and Cambridge, and two hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough.

Passenger footfall at Diss for 2013/14 was recorded as 675,000.

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Footfall figures for 2013/14 show that over 940,000 passengers used the station – making Stowmarket one of the busiest stations in Suffolk.

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Table 2: Requirements for urban stations**Ipswich****Improvements required**

- Assessment of platform capacity
- Relocation of fuelling yard
- Improvement of station forecourt, widening of pavement outside station and removal of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians
- Improved public transport waiting facilities, information and signage from the station
- Redesign of the ticket foyer to prevent passenger congestion at the ticket barriers and doors
- Toilet facilities on platforms 3 and 4
- Higher quality waiting facilities with additional seating on platforms 1 and 2.

Stowmarket**Improvements required**

- Lifts to provide access between platforms
- Improvement of station forecourt, removal of conflict between vehicles and pedestrians
- Toilets to be located on platform 1
- Improved security and staff presence at the station
- Improve cycle parking facilities
- Improved bus waiting facilities
- Two trains per hour stopping at Stowmarket.

Bury St Edmunds**Improvements required**

- Relocation of Goods Yard
- Improved security and greater staff presence at the station to ensure that toilet facilities and waiting room facilities can be opened
- Improve waiting room, refreshment and toilet facilities
- More covered cycle parking
- Improved station forecourt providing a decent route and signage for pedestrians to walk from the station into the town centre
- Additional ticket machine
- Improved public transport information and shelter provided on Station Hill.

Lowestoft**Improvements required**

- Complete renewal of the station to support the town's economic regeneration.
- Improved waiting, retail, and refreshment facilities.
- Improved security and staff presence at the station.

Market Town Stations

Key market towns, such as Newmarket, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Brandon all operate as centres for employment and provide key connections for people living in rural areas with national rail services. They also act as centres for tourist information.

All of these towns require improvements to their railway stations. For example, Newmarket Station can be considered as part of the gateway to the horse racing industry and Newmarket Races. It is even more significant now with the opening of the £12.8 million horse racing attraction. Yet the station consists of a single platform that, until recently, could only take two car trains. Waiting facilities on the platform are poor, consisting of a plastic bus shelter. Neither a ticket machine or toilet facilities are available. Cycle parking, car parking and public transport waiting facilities are also poor.

Like Newmarket station, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Brandon stations are unstaffed and have poor waiting facilities and bus waiting facilities/information is also poor.

Much investment has been made by Suffolk County Council in conjunction with the franchise holder to install more ticketing machines. This work has seen new ticket machines at Woodbridge, Beccles, Saxmundham, Felixstowe and Halesworth.

Access between platforms at Brandon and Woodbridge stations are mainly by a footbridge with stairs, which means that disabled passengers must access the platforms by crossing the railway line.



Rural Stations

The rural stations in Suffolk provide an important role connecting the county's countryside with urban hubs and vice versa. However, some stations have been neglected and are in need of improvement.

Stations such as Elmswell, Sudbury, Somerleyton, Oulton Broad North, and Darsham do not have real time passenger information. Some rural stations in Suffolk also have pedestrian crossings over the tracks, where passengers are reliant upon a traffic light system. This is particularly dangerous at Thurston where fast moving freight trains and the Peterborough train travel through the station. At Needham Market train station, the link between the two platforms is not DDA compliant and access can only be achieved via a stepped subway. This means that wheelchair users must board a train to Stowmarket train station in order to access the rail line to Ipswich. Not far from Needham Market train station, the Gipsy Lane level crossing provides access across the Great Eastern Mainline for people in the north part of Needham to access Creting St Mary, the Gipping Valley Path and with the town's nature reserve. The level crossing is being considered for closure, and Suffolk County Council is in discussion with Network Rail to provide a suitable crossing alternative that is DDA compliant and appropriate for the landscape.

Cycle parking and bus waiting facilities at some rural stations are also poor. Good bus provision is particularly important to the rural stations, firstly to link the station with rural areas, but also to link tourists with key attractions.

There are some good examples of rural stations, such as Oulton Broad North, where there is a café, and Halesworth where there is a museum and community bus service that links with the station. Trimley Station is another good example of community groups working together to restore and make use of historical buildings. The Trimley Station Community Trust is renovating the Victorian station building to offer it as commercial use as a café. However, Suffolk County Council is aware that more needs to be done in this area and will continue to work with the four community rail partnerships it is involved in, as well as with the current train operating company, district and borough councils, and other community based organisations to better equip stations in market towns and rural areas to act more as hubs for the communities they serve.

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Much investment has been made by Suffolk County Council in conjunction with the franchise holder to install more ticketing machines.

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Halesworth Station

Railway Stations and other infrastructure – Minimum standards

Urban Railway Stations

- Improved security and perception of security, taking opportunities to increase staff presence at these stations.
- High quality DDA compliant waiting facilities with additional seating on all platforms.
- Refreshment facilities available on all platforms.
- Real time passenger information, including bus information.
- DDA compliant toilets.
- Improved forecourts for pedestrian access.
- Additional ticket machines.
- More covered and secure cycle parking. Cycle hire availability.
- Improved accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.
- Improved signage to town centres.

Market Town Stations

- Part-time staff at some stations.
- Real time passenger information, including bus information.
- High quality DDA compliant waiting facilities with additional seating on all platforms.
- DDA compliant toilets.
- More cycle parking – covered and secure.
- Ticket machines.
- Tourist information and some commercial retail facilities available.
- Improved accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.

Rural Stations

- Improved sheltered waiting facilities.
- Adequate cycle parking – covered and secure.
- Additional car parking.
- Tourist information leaflets available.
- Safe accessibility to the station and platforms.
- Improved bus links and waiting facilities at stations.
- Real Time Passenger Information Systems.

Market towns with no rail connections

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A rail-bus link could provide an express service between railway stations and market towns.

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There are a number of market towns in Suffolk that do not have direct access to rail services, and have sporadic public transport links to other towns that do. Examples include Haverhill, Mildenhall, Hadleigh, Aldeburgh, Leiston and Southwold.

Because of the current financial climate, many of the areas in the vicinity of the towns above do not have access to regular bus services to a rail station. The buses that do run are often slow and have to stop at a lot of destinations meaning that journey times are often unpredictable. Demand-responsive transport services are available across rural Suffolk but are not often used to get people to a railway station for the same reasons.

One solution could be a rail-bus link, which would provide an express service between railway stations and market towns. The buses would link up with arriving/departing trains so that passengers do not have a long wait for the next bus. Real Time Passenger Information boards would also show the departure times of the rail-bus. The vehicle would be of appropriate comfort for a rail passenger, who would be able to purchase their rail ticket on the bus. The service should be a commercial venture funded by the train operating company.

Bus and train companies in Oxfordshire have worked together to run a rail-bus. The Cotswold Line Rail-bus serves rural villages, connecting them with trains travelling to Oxford, London and Reading.

Haverhill and Mildenhall are good examples of where a rail-bus arrangement would enable residents to use the train.

Haverhill's close proximity to Great Chesterford train station provides many opportunities for rail access to the Cambridge and London economies. Suffolk County Council is mindful that a robust business case must be presented to reinstate rail links between Haverhill and Cambridge. The scheme to reinstate the line remains a long-term objective.

Although it is not a market town, Great Blakenham has seen a large increase in population and is in need of a new station to support its growth, and the growth of the surrounding villages. Decent bus links to stations in Stowmarket and Needham Market will provide an interim solution to addressing rail demand, but a new station is necessary as a long-term objective.



Level Crossings

There are 157 level crossings in Suffolk, consisting of footpaths and public roads. For some routes, such as the East Suffolk Line, level crossings slow down services, in other areas such as Brandon they contribute to causing congestion on the local roads.

For rural stations, some pedestrian level crossings do not have barriers. This causes a safety issue for passengers needing to cross between platforms. It also means the train driver has to be more cautious, as it is his or her responsibility to stop the train in any event of a road user disobeying the signal to stop and wait.

Suffolk County Council will work strategically with Network Rail and local communities to assist with level crossing safety improvements. This closer working will ensure that communities are fully consulted (not just in isolation) and that all options are considered for improving safety at level crossings, without removing resident's access to local routes. Suffolk County Council will be responding to Network Rail's Level Crossing Strategy in consultation with local stakeholders.

In instances where these crossings fall in key pedestrian or road areas, the council will work with Network Rail to upgrade them so they can be remotely operated, and have electronic barriers, telephones, and signals installed.

Connectivity

Suffolk County Council will continue to work with its partners to improve rail connectivity within the Suffolk and across neighbouring counties. New rail connections will do much to improve access to markets and employment, and reduce demand on local highways





Suffolk County Council would like to see the reinstatement of the intercity service that operated from Cambridge to London Liverpool Street via Bury St Edmunds



Network Rail has indicated that they are considering the potential to link Newmarket with Peterborough via the connection of Warren Hill Junction to Snailwail Junction. Suffolk County Council supports this concept, but views it as a long-term objective. A rail link such as this would also provide better rail connectivity for Mildenhall, albeit by bus link to Newmarket Station, to Norwich and Cambridge.

In addition to this, Suffolk County Council would like to see the reinstatement of the intercity service that operated from Cambridge to London Liverpool Street via Bury St Edmunds railway station. This service provided a direct rail link for St Edmundsbury with the London economy.

Efforts should also be made to connect Suffolk with new stations such as Great Chesterford, Soham in Cambridgeshire and Beaulieu Park in Essex.

Facilities/infrastructure for buying tickets

In the short-term, the county expects a more convenient and more user-friendly system. This can be achieved by providing a variety of options to purchase tickets, such as mobile ticketing and 'print off at home tickets'. However it can also include ticket machines at smaller stations.

More importantly, passengers must be given the right information to purchase tickets at the best price. Through-tickets are more expensive than tickets purchased at certain intervals throughout the route even though the passenger will be on the same train. Most passengers are unaware of this and often pay more for their tickets than they might otherwise. The price of tickets has become more expensive as the Government has withdrawn subsidy of running the rail service. Although it costs over £10bn to run the railways, £6.5bn of the cost is borne from passenger fares, and £4bn from the taxpayer. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in fares, even though service levels or quality of trains have not improved across all franchises and routes.

Suffolk County Council expects the industry to assess ways to reduce running costs and pass on those savings to the customer. In addition, we expect the industry to also make it clear to passengers how they can get the best value on rail tickets. This includes discounted rates on ticket machines for those who purchase their tickets in advance.

The cost of non-regulated single rail fares should also be reviewed to ensure that passengers are paying a reasonable price for their journeys. The current price of non-regulated single rail fares is only marginally cheaper than the cost of a return ticket.

The County Council responded to the Government's consultation on its Rail Fares and Ticketing Review. This included proposals to offer a wider choice of ticket pricing. One proposal was to increase ticket prices during peak times to encourage commuters to use the train when more seats are available. The County Council welcomes proposals to offer a wider choice of cheaper ticket options, but expresses that this is not at the expense of commuters who need to travel during peak times. The County Council also expressed that clearer information must be provided to allow passengers to make more informed choices when purchasing tickets. This is particularly important when passengers are purchasing 'through-tickets'; separating the journey reduces the price of the fare.

The high cost of fares from London outbound services during peak times on the Great Eastern Mainline does much to deter people from accessing East Anglia and the economies and results in a number of empty carriages leaving London Liverpool Street. The price of rail fares should be reduced for these services.

Conclusion

The Suffolk Rail Prospectus sets out what is needed if the county is to get the best deal from the future franchise agreement and investment in rail infrastructure. These improvements are essential for the future economic development of Suffolk. In order to take these improvements forward the Council will take the lead in consistently lobbying Government so that the improved rail services and infrastructure that we need are properly funded. We will continue to work with partners including Network Rail, train operating companies, local councils and the business community for the economic benefit of Suffolk.

The prospectus is intended to be aspirational but achievable over the next twenty years.

