

Your Ref:
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Date: 16th March 2015
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East Anglia Franchise Consultation
Rail Executive
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
London
SW1P 4DR

Dear Sir or Madam,

Suffolk County Council Consultation Response to the East Anglia Rail Franchise Consultation

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to the Rail Executive's East Anglia Rail Franchise Consultation. In addition to the consultation response, I have attached the Suffolk Rail Prospectus as a broader response for further information/detail, as well as studies to demonstrate the business case for improving services. The Suffolk Rail Prospectus has undergone extensive consultation. It is supported by our partners, including local authorities, business groups and rail user groups, and has been informed by rail passenger surveys.

Suffolk is part of a region which generates amongst the highest numbers of passenger and freight miles in the UK; both of which are expected to grow significantly over the next five years.

Rail demand in Suffolk will be further impacted by the high levels of housing and job growth, the county will be experiencing over the next ten years. Ipswich, Suffolk's largest town, is identified in the Centre for Cities report as being one of the ten fastest growing towns in the UK, and the fastest growing town in the East of England. By 2026, Greater Ipswich is expected to grow by 13,000 new homes and 17,000 new jobs. A major extension to a business park in Bury St Edmunds will generate up to 15,000 jobs, whereas in Lowestoft, Enterprise Zones are attracting new investors and strengthening its energy sector (worth £994 million to Suffolk and Norfolk economies). Martlesham, anchored by the BT research laboratories, is the place fibre optic cable was invented; it is now the largest software development complex in Europe.

To further exploit Suffolk's economic successes and support growth, good transport links to London, Cambridgeshire, Norfolk and the rest of Suffolk must be maintained. It is therefore imperative that the measures set out in the new rail franchise supports Suffolk's growing economy.

Question 1: Please select 3 of the Passenger Focus recommendations set out in paragraph 4.6 which you believe require particular attention in order to improve your end to end journey

It is difficult to select only three key rail priorities from the Passenger Focus list provided. It is the county council's view that all the recommendations require particular attention. We know

from our own surveys of Suffolk rail passengers that key issues identified in the responses included the need to:

- improve punctuality of services (in particular on the Great Eastern Mainline);
- improve frequency and direct services (in particular between Ipswich and Peterborough, Ipswich and Cambridge, Lowestoft and Ipswich, Lowestoft and Norwich, and Brandon and Cambridge);
- improve staff presence at stations (in particular at Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft). When train staff are not on site, facilities such as waiting rooms and toilets are locked – this is a particular problem at Bury St Edmunds train station, where facilities are locked from 6pm on weekdays; 5:30pm on Saturdays and 4pm on Sundays. It also means that passengers feel vulnerable at stations, and are unable to seek assistance when boarding trains or accessing platforms;
- provide additional seat capacity. This is another key priority raised by our survey of Suffolk rail passengers, but also from discussions with key rail stakeholders and businesses. Seating capacity issues exist on mainline services into London Liverpool Street, but also on peak services between Ipswich and Cambridge. Research shows (study undertaken by Mott MacDonald) that by 2027 seating capacity will be reached on passenger rail services between Lowestoft and Norwich. The Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy claims that there will be a shortfall of 3,000 seats on Great Eastern Mainline passenger services. Additional seat capacity could be provided through new and improved rolling stock;
- improve comfort on journeys. This is a key issue for all Suffolk railway lines, and can be achieved through the provision of new and improved rolling stock. New rolling stock can help to address a number of issues, including comfort and accessibility for people with impaired mobility. New rolling stock also provides on-board facilities necessary for working on the trains (such as Wi-Fi), as well as improving reliability and punctuality, journey time, and seating capacity.
- improve the ease of buying tickets. This is essential to Suffolk residents, especially those that live in rural areas. It is important that information is provided in order for passengers to get the best priced ticket for their journey – this service needs to be available on all facilities for purchasing rail tickets.

The county council considers that consistent effective management of rail disruption is crucial to passengers and the choices they make in using the train. Requirements upon train operating companies for addressing rail disruptions should include the provision of information and rail replacement when services are significantly delayed or cancelled. The current approach to cancellations and delay is somewhat inconsistent, especially at stations on local lines where replacement services are often not provided. Contingencies should be put in place to address these issues so that passengers do not incur further delay whilst the train operating company addresses the problem.

The question asks about end to end journeys but the recommendations do not consider journeys to and from the station. Suffolk County Council would expect the new franchise to contain measures for improving access and facilities at stations for sustainable transport. In particular, the county council expects covered and secure cycle parking at stations, designated paths for pedestrians and cyclists, clear signage and decent waiting facilities for public transport.

Question 2: Are there any examples of outstanding customer service experiences, related or unrelated to passenger rail services, which you believe the new East Anglia rail franchise should aspire to?

Suffolk County Council is aware that there are other train operators providing innovative approaches to customer service. This includes:

- staffing at all stations until the last train has arrived/departed;
- passenger groups: allowing passengers to have a say on where funding should be spent at stations;
- personalised travel reports for each passenger making regular train trips (includes details of seat availability);
- two month's free travel for people unemployed who are re-entering employment;
- improved offers for peak travellers;
- compensation scheme that makes a direct 'penalty fee' payment to passengers after 2 minutes of delay
- working with other businesses to find more convenient ways to pay for train tickets, such as contactless payment through Barclays 'bPay' bracelets.

Suffolk County Council would like to see the new franchise provide a more innovative approach to providing information and incentives for travel. This has been achieved elsewhere in the country, and has helped to encourage more rail travel and satisfaction amongst passengers.

Question 3: Are there any changes to the current passenger rail service, as set out in paragraph 5.8, which you feel should be included?

Ipswich to Peterborough

Suffolk County Council has long campaigned for a direct hourly passenger rail service between Ipswich and Peterborough. It is the only rail service in the whole region to operate at such a poor frequency, and enhancements to the service are long overdue.

From our studies, we know that an hourly direct Ipswich to Peterborough passenger service will deliver over **£60m** in economic benefits for the Suffolk economy (see study attached to this response). It will support housing and jobs growth planned for three growth locations along the line: Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds. It will also greatly benefit business and enable more access across Suffolk to Stansted (via Ely), the Midlands, the North East, North West and Scotland. This will make it easier for the business community from all over the UK to visit, and invest in, the growing economies of Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds. Such improved frequencies would also enable Suffolk to better connect with a new Northern economic powerhouse.

Great Eastern Mainline

The county council agrees that a half-hourly rail service frequency is essential to enabling the county unlock economic potential that improved access to Norfolk, Essex and London will bring. The results from the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce business case shows that an improved,

faster service will deliver £4.5bn in economic benefits for the East Anglia region. It is imperative that the faster more frequent services between Norwich and London Liverpool Street are not at the detriment of Suffolk, for example skipping Suffolk stations to achieve faster journey times.

Improving the frequency of passenger services between Sudbury and Marks Tey will do much to improve connections with mainline services to Essex and London.

Ipswich to Cambridge

The county council has an economic need for a half-hourly Ipswich to Cambridge passenger rail service. Such a service would enable Suffolk to benefit from Cambridge's strong economy, especially its £12bn world leading high tech industries. This would also better link West Suffolk's growing Research and Development industries with Cambridge and the rest of Suffolk. A jointly commissioned study by Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire 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. A more frequent rail service is needed to open up these opportunities to people living in Suffolk. A study commissioned (see attached to this response) by Suffolk County Council to assess the benefit of a direct half-hourly service between Ipswich and Cambridge found that it would generate over £35m in economic and associated benefits.

Improving the passenger service frequency will also enable Suffolk to benefit from future links to the south west via the new East West Rail Link.

Increasing the Ipswich to Cambridge passenger rail service will better serve Newmarket and its multi-billion pound horse racing, breeding and bloodstock industries, as well as its bid for royal status, which, if awarded will honour the town's links with the royal family.

An hourly Sunday rail service should be made available in the new rail franchise to improve connectivity for tourism and leisure across Suffolk and to Cambridge.

Lowestoft to Ipswich

A half-hourly passenger rail service between Lowestoft and Ipswich, or a direct service between Lowestoft and London Liverpool Street is needed. This will open up East Suffolk markets and improve connections with the rest of the county, as well as with the capital. It will also greatly assist East Suffolk's tourism industry and the enterprise zones.

Both the economy and population are set to grow significantly, increasing the rail frequency between Ipswich and Lowestoft will help to support this growth and reduce demand on the A12. Suffolk County Council's joint funding of the £4m Beccles Loop has enabled an hourly service between Ipswich and Lowestoft. As a result of the improved frequency, passenger numbers using the service have increased dramatically. Six months after the hourly service was launched passenger numbers increased by 30,000, and are still increasing.

Felixstowe Branch Line

Suffolk County Council also has an aspiration to provide better rail connectivity between East Suffolk and the strong Cambridge economy. We have considered the benefits of a direct hourly passenger rail service connecting Felixstowe with Cambridge (via Ipswich), which could act as the additional hourly service (creating a half-hourly service on the line between Ipswich and Cambridge). A recent study commissioned by the county council shows a direct hourly service between Felixstowe and Cambridge would generate a combined economic and revenue benefit of over £140m over a 60-year period. It therefore presents good value for money.

The county council also demands that the new rail franchise contains an hourly Sunday service.

Lowestoft to Norwich

The county council expects the new rail franchise to deliver a half-hourly passenger rail service between Lowestoft and Norwich, as well as an hourly Sunday service, and to deliver new and improved diesel multiple units. The line provides a vital link between Lowestoft and Norfolk's key centre of employment in Norwich. Norwich also provides a wide range of retail and leisure opportunities. Job growth in Norwich is expected to increase by 9% by 2031. This provides employment opportunities for the Lowestoft, as well as providing a connection to Lowestoft's growing off-shore energy sector with Norwich Airport and therefore other key centres for the industry, most notably Aberdeen and Humberside.

Question 4: Results indicate that rail is not the preferred mode of transport when travelling to Stansted Airport. What improvements do you believe should be made to the rail service in order to make this your first choice of travel?

There is no direct rail link between Suffolk and Stansted Airport. The county's rail links are obtained by changing trains at either Cambridge Railway Station or Ely Railway Station. The hourly passenger rail service between Ipswich and Cambridge and two-hourly passenger service frequency between Ipswich and Peterborough does little to encourage Suffolk residents to use rail. In addition to this, the poor two-hourly Sunday rail service also deters passengers from using rail.

If passengers have very early or late flights, services from Suffolk do not run during these times, so rail passengers have little choice but to take the car.

A direct service between Suffolk and Stansted Airport would encourage more Suffolk residents to access it by rail. However, a more cost-effective solution could be to improve service frequencies, providing a half-hourly service between Ipswich and Cambridge and an hourly direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough, as well as improved Sunday services. This will do much to encourage more Suffolk residents to access Stansted Airport by rail.

Question 5: What direct service would you most value?

A direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough

As previously mentioned, Suffolk County Council and its partners have long been campaigning for a direct hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough.

Suffolk County Council, alongside its business and local authority partners, remain concerned about proposals for rail services between Ipswich and Peterborough. Both the Anglia Route Study consultation document (produced by Network Rail) and the East Suffolk Rail Franchise document contain proposals to potentially replace the direct service with one that is limited to Ely. This is totally unacceptable, especially if the service is to remain two-hourly, and if passengers are expected to disembark one train to board another connecting train to Peterborough.

If the Norwich Liverpool Lime Street passenger train becomes an indirect service (with a change at Nottingham) Suffolk passengers would have to change trains twice in order to access the North East, North West and Scotland.

We understand that Ely is a constraint for improving the service frequency between Ipswich and Peterborough. There is a desperate need to improve infrastructure at Ely to accommodate the 48 freight trains per day by 2019 (growing to 60 freight trains per day by 2024) that will travel from the expanding Port of Felixstowe. We are pleased that the Government has committed to upgrading the freight route between Felixstowe and Birmingham, using the Strategic Freight

Network fund. However, we understand that work at Ely is in danger of slipping into CP6. Improvements to Ely North Junction are due to be delivered by May 2017, yet no date has been given for providing additional track capacity between Ely and Soham and there is a need to upgrade level crossings, which are presently entirely unfunded. It is important that infrastructure being delivered at Ely does not favour one service over another, and is mutually beneficial to all services.

Norfolk County Council has been successful in achieving an hourly frequency between Kings Lynn and London, as a result of the improvements to Ely North Junction. Suffolk County Council is also aware of Norfolk County Council's ambition to improve its hourly Norwich to Cambridge passenger rail service to half-hourly. Network Rail has informed Suffolk County Council that there isn't enough capacity at Ely to cope with rail frequency increases for all three services, as well as freight increases. It is imperative that demands at Ely for rail service frequency is balanced, and is mutually beneficial to all services.

A jointly commissioned study with Cambridgeshire and Norfolk county council's showed that improvements to service frequencies would deliver over £220m in wider economic benefits in addition to rail revenue.

Question 6: Do you have any proposals to improve Community Rail Partnerships so as to deliver more of the beneficial outcomes for passengers achieved so far?

Suffolk has two community rail partnerships (East Suffolk Line Community Rail Partnership and the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership) both play an outstanding role in improving stations and services on Suffolk railway lines.

Suffolk County Council would like to see the community rail partnerships have a more active role in station-investment decision-making (as part of National Station Improvement Programme applications) and bringing redundant, often historical, station buildings back into use. Community rail partnerships have the ability to work locally with passengers to identify station investment needs and priorities that fit with passenger needs.

Question 7: Do you wish to submit a proposal for a future third party promoted scheme that would involve a change to the current rail service in the franchise?

Not applicable.

Question 8: How can the franchise operator help you better during a) planned disruption, such as engineering works and forecasted bad weather, and b) unplanned on-the-day disruption?

- a) **Planned disruption:** The provision of information for passengers is key, as well as clear details about rail replacement options available. Provision of information for passengers should go further than being displayed on a board at the urban station. Rail staff should also be available to advise about the length of the disruption and the alternative transport options available. Every effort should be made to ensure that transport alternatives (which causes minimal disruption to passengers) is in place. Passengers at rural stations should not be ignored, and efforts should be made (even more so) to provide information and transport alternatives.
- b) **Unplanned disruption:** Information to be provided across all communications channels as soon as possible. Details about rail services operating later in the timetable that could be subject to disruption from the incident should also be available.

Information about rail replacement options should be provided immediately, and franchise operators should have robust consistent contingency plans in place to deal with disruption so that passengers at rural stations have the same quality of information and transport options as those at urban stations. The provision of staff should also be made available to inform passengers directly and help them access rail replacement services. Where possible, the franchise operator should be prepared to fund taxis.

A clear and easy system for claiming compensation should also be put in place, with accessible information about how passengers can make a claim.

Question 9: To improve the railway's ability to match growth in demand, with appropriate levels of capacity, we recognise that an increase of carriages per train, or in the number of services per hour, would help. However, we are confined by limited timetabling and infrastructure constraints and are therefore looking for other innovative ways to resolve the issue. When travelling on a service where capacity is stretched, what opportunities do you see which would improve your on-board experience?

The county council believes that every effort should be made to provide each passenger with a seat. In the event of standard class carriages being full, franchise operators should be ready to open first class carriages to standing passengers. Ticket conductors should also be more prevalent during times of congestion; this will help to ensure that passengers are comfortable and that all available seats can be used. Luggage storage should also be more innovative to make better use of space on carriages.

Timetabling should be further reviewed to identify opportunities for additional carriages to be provided during peak periods. Passengers who do not have a seat should pay a reduced fare for the rail ticket.

Information about seating availability should also be accessible by passengers when choosing their train, this would allow passengers with more flexibility to travel during less busy times, creating more capacity on peak services.

Question 10: What are your views on removing first class seating in order to provide more overall seating and reduce standing?

Suffolk County Council supports any initiative that provides additional seat capacity, however this must be balanced with providing suitable facilities for commuters to work whilst on the train. The views of passengers and businesses should be sought before first class seating is removed.

Question 11: Are there any specific stations or services that you feel could improve on reliability or punctuality?

Felixstowe Branch Line

Improvements should be made to address the punctuality and reliability of passenger rail services between Ipswich and Felixstowe, which are currently marred by cancellations and delays. The Felixstowe Branch Line forms a key part of the Strategic Freight Network and is an important route for the UK's biggest container port, the Port of Felixstowe. The Port of Felixstowe, together with the Haven Gateway, provides over 30,000 jobs to the county's workforce; contributes an annual £780 million to the economy; and over £1 billion a year in wages. The Port of Felixstowe is expanding, and more freight services will be using the rail route between Felixstowe and Birmingham.

The passenger rail service linking Felixstowe to Ipswich provides an important economic link for the Felixstowe workforce with the employment centre of Ipswich and further afield to the rest of Suffolk, Essex and London Liverpool Street. It also provides a key link to Felixstowe's tourism industry. The single line between Felixstowe and Ipswich means that passenger services are often cancelled or delayed when freight trains are late or broken down. However, infrastructure, such as additional track capacity and electrification is required along the line to allow more passenger and freight trains.

Great Eastern Mainline

The Great Eastern Mainline also suffers from delayed and cancelled services. This is due to aging and old infrastructure and rolling stock, but also late-running and broken down freight trains. The mainline service is vital to the Suffolk economy and measures should be made to address the unreliability of services. Moving more freight onto cross-county routes is essential. However, this would involve infrastructure investment at Ely and electrification between Ipswich and Peterborough. It is important that the findings of the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce helps to shape the new rail franchise (and are delivered within the franchise period), in particular the need to provide new and improved rolling stock and infrastructure, including additional track capacity, remodelling of Bow Junction, replacing Overhead Electric Lines and upgrading signalling between Chelmsford and Norwich.

The Norwich to Liverpool Street route is currently the only principle main line service in the UK to deploy coaching stock which requires passengers to operate door handles through an opened window. This is totally unsatisfactory and will not be DDA compliant after 2020. New coaching stock is needed to be delivered during this franchise period to address this issue and the persistent reliability problems associated with the current train sets.

Question 12: What sort of improvements would you like to see prioritised at the station(s) you use?

Suffolk has three different types of railway station: Urban Stations (serving the growth locations of Lowestoft, Ipswich, Stowmarket and Bury St Edmunds); Market Town Stations (serving key market towns, such as Stowmarket, Newmarket, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Brandon) and Rural Stations (serving villages, such as Needham Market, Elmswell, Sudbury, Somerleyton, Oulton Broad North and Darsham).

Urban Stations

We know from our surveys of rail passengers at urban stations that they would like to see facilities for passengers (such as waiting rooms and toilets located close to platforms) prioritised for investment. Ipswich Station requires redevelopment to modernise the station, provide better waiting facilities and toilets on platforms 3 & 4, and open up the crowded ticket foyer. Work also needs to be undertaken on the station forecourt to address narrow walkways, improve public transport waiting facilities and access to the station by sustainable transport (removing conflicts between vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists).

Both station buildings at Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft also require investment. Again, rail passenger survey responses tell us that passengers would like to see improved waiting and passenger facilities (including new toilets and retail facilities). County council investment in the forecourt at Lowestoft Station has provided an interchange hub for passengers. It provides a modernised bus waiting facilities and safe access to the station for cyclists and pedestrians. However, Lowestoft Station is in an appalling state and its condition is completely unacceptable as a gateway to the town.

The current franchise holder has invested in new secure cycle compounds at Lowestoft and Ipswich (which has been very successful in encouraging cycling, as the compounds are full). However, cycle parking facilities at Bury St Edmunds and Stowmarket are poor and investment is desperately needed to address the forecourts at the stations to improve safe access for pedestrians and cyclists. In addition to this, investment should be made at Stowmarket station to improve access between its two platforms, which are presently only accessible by a stepped bridge. Access for people with impaired mobility, heavy bags or small children is via a busy highway. Investment should be provided to make access between platforms more DDA compliant

Investment in more staff presence on platforms at urban stations is also required to improve security and safety of passengers. The county council would like platform staffing to be one of the priorities contained within the franchise criteria.

Market Town Stations

Market town stations in Newmarket, Felixstowe, Woodbridge and Brandon operate as centres for employment and access to services for people living in rural areas, also connecting them with mainline services. All of these market town stations require improvements to station buildings and passenger waiting facilities.

Improving Newmarket Station is a high priority for Suffolk County Council. Newmarket Station consists of a single platform that until recently could only accommodate two coach trains. Waiting facilities on the platform are poor, consisting of a plastic shelter, no toilet facilities or ticket vending machines. Cycle parking, car parking and public transport facilities are also poor. Investment should be prioritised to address these issues, as well as make the facilities more DDA compliant.

Investment should be provided to make access between platforms more DDA compliant. Access between platforms at Brandon, Woodbridge and Marks Tey are by stepped bridges.

Rural Stations

Rural stations connect the county's countryside with urban hubs. However some stations have been neglected and are in need of improvement. Stations such as Elmswell, Sudbury, Somerlayton, Oulton Broad North and Darsham do not have real time passenger information. Other stations have pedestrian crossings over tracks, where passengers are reliant on a traffic light system. This is particularly dangerous at Thurston, where fast travelling trains move through the station.

At Needham Market, links between the two platforms are not DDA compliant. Passengers must pass through narrow, poorly lit disused cattle tunnel to access the platform they need. Investment should be targeted at addressing this issue, as well as improving waiting facilities for rail and bus, cycle parking and car parking.

Wickham Market Station causes a problem to passengers, in namesake only. Wickham Market Station is located in Campsea Ashe, two-miles away from Wickham Market village. The route between the two villages consists of narrow roads, without adequate footpaths, and no taxis are located within close proximity to the station. The station name causes confusion amongst passengers who want to get to Wickham Market, who only discover their mistake when they arrive at the station in Campsea Ashe. Suffolk County Council expects the station to be renamed to 'Campsea Ashe Station'. This should occur as soon as possible or, at the very least, at the start of the new rail franchise.

Suffolk County Council also expects that the new franchise operator has a commitment and innovative approach to working with bus operating companies to improve public transport links at railway stations - especially from those areas without a rail hub, such as Haverhill and Mildenhall.

Question 13: Do you have any proposals to improve security and safety at stations or on trains that you would like us to consider?

Staff presence at stations from the first to the last train will do much to improve security and passenger's perception of safety at stations. In addition to staffing, CCTV and good lighting should be available at all stations and on all trains.

On late train services, where the number of passengers is much reduced, the presence of the train conductor in the carriages is less so than at other times of day when the service is busier. This can leave passengers feeling vulnerable, especially where passengers do not know where to locate the train conductor. Efforts should be made to make more train staff available on late/very early services or for the train conductor to be placed with passengers during late night/very early services.

Passengers should also be made aware of emergency procedures in the event of an incident that requires the train to be evacuated.

As previously mentioned, pedestrian crossings over tracks should be made safer.

Question 14: Are there areas of improvement in customer information and engagement you would like to see before, during and after your journey?

Information about the best possible rail ticket price, seating availability and journey options should be provided to all passengers through all information and ticket purchasing channels. Information to reaffirm train connections with passengers, in particular where they need to alight and the status of their connecting train, will do much to assist.

Question 15: On a scale of 1 to 9, how would you rate the following on board passenger facilities (1 = not important; 9 = very important)

Luggage holds: The county council considers luggage space on trains to be of high importance. Passengers require a safe place to store their luggage. This is a particular problem on local lines where storage space is limited, which forces passengers to store heavy items in parcel racks and gangways, which poses safety risks. Score: 8.

Cycle storage: Again, the county council holds cycle storage in high regard. Demand for cycle storage on trains in Suffolk (in particular between Ipswich and Cambridge, and between Ipswich and Lowestoft) is growing. The current franchise operator has been required to restrict non-folding bikes on some peak services. The demand for on train cycle storage should be included within the new franchise so that no restrictions are required during peak times. Score: 9.

Audio Passenger Information: The provision of Audio Passenger Information is vital as it is the only means of communication between the train conductor and passengers. The Audio Passenger Information system is not only for informing passengers about the stations the train will stop at but is also used for safety purposes.

The existing public address systems on the life-expired main-line coaching stock, and some of the rural Diesel Multiple Unit services are of extremely variable quality, and frequently passengers with even good hearing are unable to understand the garbled and muffled announcements.

Score: 9.

Visual Passenger Information: The new franchise should maintain the use of Visual Passenger Information. This is important to passengers who may have impaired hearing. It also serves a valuable purpose in reconfirming the location of the train and its stopping pattern.

Score: 9.

Provision of different classes of service: The county council rates this facility lower than the others listed in the question; this is on the basis that decent facilities enabling on-train working (such as tables and Wi-Fi) are available.

Score 2.

Catering: Catering services are not required on short distance services such as Ipswich - Felixstowe; Sudbury - Marks Tey; or Lowestoft - Norwich.

Score 0.

They are essential on the Norwich-Ipswich-Liverpool Street mainline service.

Score 9.

A trolley service on longer distance services like Ipswich-Peterborough or even Ipswich Cambridge would be highly desirable as this is often mentioned by passengers.

Score 6.

It should be noted they are available on Stansted - Birmingham and on part of the Liverpool-Norwich service. An early attempt is required to trial a service on these routes.

Tables: Tables are important, as they provide a place for passengers working on the train to rest laptops and papers, and for passengers to place food and drinks – preventing the need for them to balance everything on their laps. Leg space at table seats is limited, and efforts should be made to improve this. We therefore score this as an 8.

Staff presence: As mentioned throughout this response, Suffolk County Council rates the presence of train staff both at stations and on trains as high.

Score 9.

Baby changing facilities: The county council would like to see trains provide more changing facilities for babies. However, changing facilities must be safe, considering that parents would be changing babies on a facility in a moving train. An innovative approach would be welcomed.

Score: 7.

Plug sockets: These are important to enabling people to work or charge devices on the train. The county council rates this facility highly.

Score: 9.

Question 16: What areas of customer service within your end-to-end journey would you expect to see monitored and reported on in the new franchise, in order to improve the service quality for passengers?

We require more detailed reporting on individual services - quoting figures for cancellations and

delays on categories such as “rural services”, so that a true representation of train performance is given rather than the network as a whole

Suffolk County Council would like to see franchise operators recording feedback from passengers to evaluate their customer service experience when trains are delayed or cancelled so that future contingency plans can be improved.

Regular passenger surveys on rail station facilities, train journeys/connections and train facilities.

Question 17: Based on your experience or knowledge of rail passenger services, do you have any observations that may assist us in our commitments to have due regard to the Environment, Equality, Social Value and the Family in the development of the specification of passenger services for East Anglia?

The county council agrees that rail plays a valuable role in connecting people with employment, education, health and leisure. Good rail links are vital to supporting and growing local economies, reducing deprivation and encouraging investment. For some people, rail is their only link with family and friends, so rail also plays a vital role in promoting social wellbeing.

Suffolk has a number of un-electrified lines. The county council believes that every effort should be made to electrify lines, in particular the Strategic Freight Network between Felixstowe and Birmingham, Ipswich and Cambridge and Ipswich and Lowestoft. This will do much to provide cleaner and more resilient rail travel. New and improved rolling stock will also improve the environmental impact. The county council's Suffolk Rail Prospectus contains a priority for new and improved rolling stock on all Suffolk lines. Not only will new rolling stock provide environmental benefits, it will also reduce line speeds and improve seating capacity. The better braking capability of new trains will enable them to run closer together, providing additional track capacity. The county council agrees that all rolling stock should be DDA compliant.

Question 18: In summary, what three aspects of the current East Anglia rail journey would you like to see improved to enhance your overall travel experience?

Frequency: Improving the frequency of services, in particular the provision of a direct hourly service between Ipswich and Peterborough will prevent passengers waiting for long periods at stations for connecting services. This adds unnecessary time onto journeys and deters passengers from using rail for future journeys. Poor frequency of passenger rail services is also a particular issue on Sundays, when travellers are more likely to be returning home from weekend travel.

Rolling stock: Suffolk has some of the oldest rolling stock operating on its lines. The average age of rolling stock on the Great Eastern Mainline is over 25 years.

Facilities on some of the current rolling stock (in particular inter-city services) are not DDA compliant. In some instances, rolling stock provides little passenger comfort. New and improved rolling stock could also provide more seating capacity, plug sockets and plug doors, controlled emission toilets, climate controlled carriages, improved Audio Passenger Information systems, Wi-Fi, and space for holding luggage and bicycles.

Suffolk County Council would expect to see 2 x 2 seating formation on all trains, and particularly its retention on the flagship Norwich to Liverpool Street service – to ensure passenger comfort is not compromised.

The county council urges the Rail Executive to include the benefits of new and improved rolling stock on all Suffolk lines.

Connectivity and Frequency: Services connecting at Ipswich between Felixstowe-Ipswich and Ipswich-Peterborough/Cambridge/Lowestoft are poor at most times of the day in one direction or the other. The poor connectivity and frequency of service dissuades people from using rail to make these journeys.

More effort needs to be put into integrating these services, or at least improving connections at Ipswich to no more than 10 minutes duration. The hourly Sunday Felixstowe-Ipswich service is particularly poor in this respect as it does not connect outbound with either Liverpool Street or Norwich hourly main-line services, leaving totally unsatisfactory waits of up to 55 minutes on Ipswich Station.

Question 19: Please indicate if there are any additional areas that you think it is important for us to consider and that have not already been addressed in this consultation?

The Rail Executive's consultation paper does not provide the opportunity to set out rolling stock requirements or consider the benefits that faster line speeds and improved passenger rail service frequency will have to rail passengers. This should be further considered.

Network Rail's long-term planning for rail infrastructure now focuses on passenger service routes, frequency and demand, when planning infrastructure requirements. The consultation on the East Anglia Rail Franchise should also consider the type of infrastructure needs required to improve passenger rail services, so that franchise operators can make future plans for rail services. As mentioned at the beginning of this response, I have attached a copy of Suffolk's Rail Prospectus (agreed county-wide by partners and businesses), alongside research undertaken to consider the business case for improving passenger rail service frequency on Suffolk lines. A summary of our rail priorities is attached 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 tracking of the GEML between Chelmsford and Witham. 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 Liverpool Street in 90 minutes and Ipswich to London Liverpool Street 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 bus replacements.
- 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

- Strengthening of the 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
- Improved bus connections at stations.
- High quality rolling stock with more seating capacity.
- Station improvements.

4. Lowestoft – Norwich

- 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.
- Hourly Sunday frequency.

6. 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.

7. Moving more Freight to Rail

- Additional capacity on Felixstowe to Birmingham route.
- Electrification of the Felixstowe to Peterborough / Birmingham route.
- More cross country routes for freight into London.
- Line speed improvements.
- Capacity improvement at Ely to support rail and passenger growth.
- Capacity improvements to Felixstowe Branch Line, notably double-tracking.

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 this route between Reading and Oxford. 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, Stowmarket, Lowestoft and Bury St. Edmunds

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

- 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 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, and to improve the quality of information given to passengers concerning discounted tickets.

I hope the Rail Executive uses the issues raised within this response in developing the criteria for the new East Anglia rail franchise. It is imperative that our demands are taken seriously, as all of the rail priorities contained in the Suffolk Rail Prospectus have been selected based on how rail can future proof the county's railways, support demand and enable economic growth.

Yours faithfully

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