

**London & South East Branch
East Anglia Branch**

16 June 2011

Comments and Aspirations for the Greater Anglia Franchise

Introduction

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for both passenger and freight. Our local branches and volunteers campaign, among other objectives, to get stations and lines reopened, for the benefit of the community, economy and environment. We have had a major part in getting 300 new and reopened stations to join the network since 1970.

This document is being sent to the three shortlisted bidders for the new "short" Greater Anglia Franchise. It sets out the aspirations of Railfuture for both the short and subsequent longer franchises and has been compiled jointly by the London & South East and East Anglia Branches.

The December 2011 Timetable Changes

Consultation on the timetable changes for West Anglia services to be introduced in December has been a particularly fraught process. While we support the service improvements the changes are designed to bring about, we strongly disagree with the removal of peak hour calls at many London suburban stations, which was not mentioned in the original consultation. Strong representations against this aspect of the changes have partially alleviated the problem but there are still significant planned reductions in peak hour calls on the Enfield Town/Cheshunt services, particularly affecting Stamford Hill, Cambridge Heath and Bethnal Green, and on the Lea Valley line, particularly affecting Angel Road and Northumberland Park stations. A minimum half hourly frequency at these two stations is a priority in view of the forthcoming Meridian Water development, which will provide up to 5,000 new houses and 3,000 new jobs in the area. We are particularly disappointed that the additional Bishops Stortford – Stratford trains will not stop anywhere between Waltham Cross and Tottenham Hale when what is needed is a regular service to and from the intermediate stations to enable local people to access Stratford City and the many transport links available from Stratford.

Objectives for the Short Term Franchise

- Generally, we expect the new franchisee to improve upon the current standard of service.
- Reduction of overcrowding and standing should also be a key part of the franchise commitment.
- Improved cleanliness of stations and rolling stock, especially the DMU fleet – currently badly maintained interiors.
- The extension of the Ipswich - Saxmundham service to Lowestoft on completion of the Beccles passing loop.
- Restoration of peak hour calls at London suburban stations as outlined above.

- Ensure that the recently approved pedestrian link between Walthamstow Central and Walthamstow Queens Road stations is opened on its completion.
- Reopening of Lea Bridge station to service new development, to be financed by time limited planning gain receipts from the development of Stratford City.
- In consultation with user groups, review cycle storage facilities at all stations and, in particular, provide enhanced and better-managed facilities at Cambridge.
- Support bids for DfT Access for All Mid Tier funding for lifts at Hackney Downs and Edmonton Green stations.
- SFO responsibility for the overall management of Stratford station is unclear. This needs to be resolved before the start of the new franchise.

Aspirations for the Long-Term Franchise

Train service levels have increased on many routes in recent years: there is scope for further enhancements to services to match increased demand and new development in the region.

Over the long-term franchise, we would like to see:

- Improvements to the London – Norwich service, involving both new Inter City style EMUs and infrastructure improvements, with the overall objective of a 90 min. journey time for fast trains.
- Extension of the existing London – Ipswich service to Norwich to give 3 trains per hour on the route, to allow speeding up of the Inter-City service while still providing direct services to intermediate stations.
- Delivery of a new station at Chesterton, north of Cambridge, to serve the Science Park, together with the extension of Liverpool Street – Cambridge services to serve the new station.
- A 20-minute frequency on the Romford to Upminster service. This could be achieved by quicker turn round times.
- A minimum 30 minute frequency of trains calling at Hatfield Peverel, consistent with all other stations between Shenfield and Ipswich.
- An additional hourly stopping service between Colchester and Clacton, timed to run 30 minutes before/after the existing Colchester – Walton on the Naze train, so as to provide a combined half hourly frequency. This would improve access to jobs and help to relieve traffic congestion around Colchester.
- Introduction of an hourly Ipswich – Peterborough service, linked to the construction of a new station at Soham, as already planned by Network Rail and the local County and District Councils.
- Work towards linking the Great Yarmouth – Norwich service to the Norwich –Cambridge service to provide a through service between Great Yarmouth and Cambridge.
- Review of stops at minor stations on regional routes to ensure a service suitable for workers and shoppers.
- Provide a 15 min. frequency all stations Sunday service between Liverpool Street and Edmonton Green. This can be achieved by stopping the Hertford East trains at the intermediate stations.
- A minimum 30-minute frequency daily service on the Lea Valley line linking Stratford with Tottenham Hale and serving all stations at least as far as Enfield Lock. This would radically improve access to Stratford City and other new developments in East London and Docklands and also facilitate convenient links to other services from Stratford.
- Divert fast off peak London – Cambridge services to call at Stratford.

In the longer term we would like to see the railway network expanded and additional services provided as follows:

- Through route from Stansted Airport to Braintree
- Stratford to Chingford service via reinstated Hall Farm Curve
- Work to provide an additional hourly service from Cambridge to a reopened station at Wisbech and serving a park and ride station at Manea for Chatteris and Manea.
- East –West Rail between Cambridge and Oxford.

We would like the new franchisee to contribute to the development of these new services.

Service Patterns and Connections

Sunday services should run to the same times as weekdays to ensure that connections are maintained. At present some routes operate different departure times on Sundays which results in missed connections.

Bank holidays are popular travelling days so services on these days including Boxing Day should operate to a Saturday timetable rather a Sunday timetable.

We would like the new franchisee to conduct a review of the entire timetable across the franchise area with a view to improving service connectivity at all junction stations, both with other East Anglia services and with those run by neighbouring franchises.

Working with Network Rail

We would like the new franchisee to work with Network Rail to deliver the following improvements:

- Track improvements to increase line speeds on routes to achieve faster journey times in order to reduce turn round times, enable additional intermediate station stops and improve connections at key transport nodes
- Infrastructure improvements required to deliver a 90 min. journey time for fast London – Norwich trains
- Work to provide dynamic loops between Shenfield and Colchester to enable speeding up of London – Norwich services and provide additional capacity.
- Delivery of the new station at Beaulieu Park, north of Chelmsford, to serve new development.
- Four tracking of the Lea Valley line between Coppermill Junction and Broxbourne to facilitate service improvements on this route.
- Electrification of the lines between Ipswich and Felixstowe, Stowmarket and Cambridge/Ely and between Ely and Peterborough. This would enable environmentally friendly electric operation of freight trains on this route, with the attendant benefits of more frequent passenger services.
- Electrification of the line between Marks Tey and Sudbury to enable a through Sudbury – Colchester- Walton on the Naze service.
- An average speed of 100 kmh for Norwich/Cambridge/Peterborough services.
- Work to improve line speeds on all routes to match speed capacity of rolling stock, especially Cambridge to Norwich and Ipswich
- In conjunction with TfL and the London Borough of Hackney to achieve the early implementation of the strategically important Hackney Interchange project restoring the direct pedestrian connection between Hackney Downs and Hackney Central station platforms.

Station Improvements

We would like the new franchisee to continue to improve facilities at stations to provide a consistent level of service across the network. Possible areas for improvement include:

- Ensure all platforms at all stations have real time information, help points and long line public address.
- Ensure that the franchisee's lease of all stations covers the entire premises, including forecourt areas. There are problems currently because the operating company has no rights over peripheral areas.
- Work with local authorities to make stations accessible for disabled customers and to provide/improve secure cycle parking facilities.
- Link station CCTV systems to the local authority systems.
- Ensure that London inner suburban stations have adequate lighting and covered shelters on platforms and that exposed staircases are well lit and covered. Ticket machines should be located under covered areas.
- All stations to have local area maps and information on local buses, taxis etc.
- Extra platform shelters and covered waiting areas at Stratford, Colchester, Cambridge, Lowestoft, Newmarket and Great Yarmouth.
- Resist proposals to move Lowestoft station away from the town centre.
- Improve Bury St. Edmunds station, bringing in to use all closed/boarded up buildings.
- Improve Newmarket station including ticket machines and better car parking. Also provide extra capacity for Newmarket race meetings.
- Provide full-length platform canopies and improved cycle storage and parking at Cambridge. Also construct a footbridge linking the new island platform to a new eastern pedestrian entrance.
- Improve Great Yarmouth station and links to the town centre.
- Repair Attleborough and Brandon stations, bringing empty buildings into use for commercial or other purposes and enlarge Attleborough car park. Work with Friends of Brandon Station to bring station buildings into community use.
- Numerous busy London area stations (e.g. Cambridge Heath and others where the platform screens are not visible from the main concourse) need summary departure indicators at ground level. This is especially urgent since the advent of Oyster PAYG as it often transpires that passengers touch in only to find when they reach the platforms that train services are disrupted or severely delayed.
- As a general principle numerous stations need to be repaired, deep cleaned and have graffiti removed.
- Cambridge Heath and similar inner London stations require greater surveillance by British Transport Police to eliminate anti social behaviour problems – London Rail Concession stations are a good example of what can be achieved.
- The development of Station Travel Plans should continue.
- Commit to working actively with rail user groups and Community Rail Partnerships.

Ticketing

The existing complex fare structure (especially on the Great Eastern Main line) should be simplified. At present, many good value fares are not available at ticket machines or it is difficult for passengers to find them.

A move should be made to zonal ticketing and the new franchisee should introduce ITSO based smart ticketing, integrated where appropriate with Oyster, within 24 months of the commencement of the longer franchise.

Working with TfL, London Travelcards and Oyster PAYG should be extended to cover all London outer suburban services to Bishops Stortford, Hertford East and Shenfield. This could perhaps be achieved by an extension of the existing TfL zonal system to cover appropriate stations. Railfuture has already suggested this to the Mayor of London, and TfL has entered such discussions with TOCs at the recent London Rail summits.

New radial fare zones should be created around the regional centres, for example Cambridge, Chelmsford, Colchester, Ipswich and Norwich. Apart from some local fares between adjacent stations, single; PAYG and multiple zone tickets should become the norm. The scope of Anglia Plus tickets should be extended so as to cover all stations from the boundary of the London Oyster and Travelcard zones.

There is considerable scope to improve revenue collection and protection, particularly on the rural branches.

Bus replacement services

We would like the new franchisee to run bus replacement services as a last resort only and to work with Network Rail and other train operators to minimise the use of buses by use of diversion routes or single line working. For example if there is work on the Great Eastern Main Line, passengers between London and Norwich could travel via Cambridge with local services strengthened as required.

When replacement buses are unavoidable, train operator staff should be present on buses to provide advice and to issue/check tickets.

Consideration should be given to offering cheaper fares to passengers when replacement buses are in use.

Rolling stock

Improved standards of cleaning, both inside and out, should be put in place.

For a 15-year franchise, replacement of the rolling stock used on London - Norwich services is expected, in the form of electric multiple units with an "Inter-City" feel, including appropriate catering facilities.

The Class 315 rolling stock is now over 30 years old and we look to its replacement within the first 6-8 years of the longer franchise. The new stock should be air conditioned and perhaps similar in internal layout to the new Class 172 units.

The new franchisee should procure some additional DMU vehicles for rural routes. This is to relieve overcrowding on some services, have spares available to cover failures and service disruption and to cater for special events such as racing at Newmarket. It is worth noting that, following the delivery of the new Class 379 units on order, there would be enough EMUs available to operate the entire franchised service, except London – Norwich, if all the lines were electrified.

We would also look to the early procurement of additional Class 379 units to further strengthen services on the London- Cambridge route and allow in the medium term (9-12 years) for the replacement of Class 317 and 321 units during the life of the longer franchise.

All new rolling stock should provide adequate space for bicycles

Franchise Name

The name of the franchise should include the geographical term "East Anglia".

Conclusion

Railfuture would welcome the opportunity to meet with bidders to discuss the comments in this paper and other aspects of the franchise.

Should you wish to meet with us or if you require any further clarification about comments contained in this paper, please contact Peter Woodrow of the London & South East Branch by e-mail at peter.woodrow@railfuture.org.uk