

# Railfuture East Anglia response to the New Anglia LEP Integrated Transport Strategy for Norfolk and Suffolk

## 1. Introduction

As an independent voluntary body for rail users, Railfuture East Anglia welcomes the opportunity to study this report.

We have members throughout Norfolk and Suffolk, while our members in neighbouring counties also use the services in these counties.

## 2. Aspirations

The Foreword and introduction contain many aspirations with which we would agree, notably on easy access to regional, national and international hubs and how transport can drive social inclusion and skills, enabling people to "access education, training and labour market opportunities."

Access for all to public transport is fundamentally important for individual social inclusion, quality of life and general economic development with benefits of the latter for the individual and society in general.

We would expect protection of the environment and wise use of natural resources to figure more prominently in the aspirations as well, however; and therefore, further rail electrification. Modal shift also needs to be an aim in this context.

We are therefore concerned that all the future projects under "Regional Connectivity" are road schemes. If public transport is to be the "go to" option, local authorities must be encouraged to fund integrated transport facilities and service improvements.

We suggest that projects promoting alternatives to car commuting should have precedence over purely tourist projects. For example, give "Safe Routes to Stations" higher priority than "Greater Broads Cycling Country." A hierarchy of "active travel" planning must be developed. The aim must be to create quality safe walking and cycling routes between all railway stations and neighbouring places of employment and settlements served by stations. The report rightly states that, for shorter journeys (such as to and from stations) sustainable choices must be easy to use, to the benefit of health and wellbeing.

## 3. What is Integrated Transport?

The term "Integrated Transport" is, in our experience, used in two distinct ways: integration of transport with land-use; seamless interchange between different modes.

The report does deal with development along existing road and rail corridors and at one point refers to "multimodal hubs". We suggest qualifying this by "actual and potential" rail corridors, since major economic and housing development should be encouraged along the future East West Rail

link as well as, for example, along the existing Norwich - Cambridge growth corridor. We also counsel against ribbon development, but favour concentrating on centres along the corridors.

We are pleased that the report recognises the role of good inclusive transport in unlocking resources and driving productivity and that "more needs to be done to make sure our transport network is truly integrated."

## 4. Evidence

The report includes interesting statistics on percentage mode share for travel to work but these do not appear to show multimodal journeys to work - such as a commuter walking, cycling or going by bus to the station and then catching a train. Similarly, a figure of 6% using public transport needs to be set in a wider context. For how many of the 94% is public transport a possible option for a particular journey, and what percentage of journeys had a public transport element as distinct from being by car or bicycle from door to door?

We question the inclusion of predictions without evidence concerning autonomous or hydrogen-powered vehicles. Instead, trends for which there is clear evidence should be included, such as continuing growth of urbanisation and commuting to centres; the growth of road traffic and degradation of air quality, exhaustion of North Sea oil and gas, plans for airport expansion and the introduction of genuine smart travel cards (not contactless tickets). All of these are expected during the 2020s.

Furthermore, it is stated that "local rail services will have more reliable and higher capacity rolling stock post 2040." In fact this is already planned for 2020.

## 5. Information and Journey Planning

We are pleased that the report refers at various points to "Mobility as a Service" or "MaaS". Digital means of planning a journey by a blend of modes can indeed be expected to become more prevalent and it already exists in some places (such as Helsinki); but first the transport systems and infrastructure need to be in available to that MaaS can direct people to them.

## 6. "Seamless Public Transport in East Anglia"

In our own report "Seamless Public Transport in East Anglia" issued in February 2018 (and available on [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Seamless+Public+Transport](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Seamless+Public+Transport)) we point out, among other things, where that infrastructure already exists and where it still needs to be created or improved. We are using this report to have dialogue with train and bus operators in Norfolk and Suffolk and with tourist destinations. The LEP report has very little to say about buses, but we are pleased to note that it recognises the role of smart ticketing.

## 7. The Rail Network

We are pleased that the report assumes the existing rail network will be maintained (and that East West Rail will be built), and that it recognises the role of Community Rail Partnerships on regional lines. We should like to see commitment to improving the capacity of the network - for example by more than just a dynamic loop on the Felixstowe branch - and building of additional stations (such as three in the Norwich area) with easy access for pedestrians, cyclists, bus passengers and motorists. Single track sections on the Cambridge - Newmarket and Ely - Kings Lynn routes should be redoubled.

We welcome the LEP's support for digital signalling. This should be introduced on all of the East Anglian network, starting with the main lines from London Liverpool Street to Norwich and Kings Lynn and the Felixstowe - Bury St Edmunds - Peterborough route. All of the new rolling stock being introduced by 2019/20 will be able to take advantage of this capacity enhancing technology immediately.

## 8. Service Levels

Given the expected population growth in Norfolk and Suffolk, we believe that there should be a clear aim for every rail line (unless there are exceptional circumstances) to have a passenger train every thirty minutes. Increased frequencies introduced in recent years (e.g. from 2-hourly to hourly on the Ipswich - Lowestoft line) have led to increased usage

## 9. More Scope for Integration

Transport integration must also cover rail and air. Stansted Airport already has good rail services into London, but an improved service is needed along the corridor from the airport to Cambridge, Ely and Norwich and indeed on to Lowestoft and Gt Yarmouth, which are identified by the report as Priority Places.

The LEP should work with others to ensure that capacity constraints are resolved on the railway through the single line tunnel leading into Stansted Airport station. Indeed, this station also has good bus facilities and so has potential even for passengers from south Suffolk not intending to catch a plane.

The Harwich - Hoek van Holland ferry has adapted, played to its strengths and survived while some other ferry services to the Continent have ceased. It is rail-served at either end and has potential for many journeys between East Anglia and the Netherlands.

## 10. East Anglia's Wider Links

East/West connectivity is also essential and we are pleased that the report recognises this. The LEP should work with Network Rail and others to ensure that speed limits are raised on the Norwich - Ely - Peterborough route and that more suitable rolling stock for long-distance travel is introduced.

## 11. Freight

We urge that there must be protection of sites for future rail and multimodal freight growth, and are pleased that the report accepts the potential of Lowestoft and Yarmouth in this respect.

The raw material in the form of high quality silica sand is vital to the UK glass industry based in Yorkshire and Merseyside. This is currently carried by rail from Leziate near Kings Lynn. If and when other deposits of this national resource near Dersingham are exploited, they too must be taken out by rail.

This will provide the opportunity to reinstate the Kings Lynn - Hunstanton railway that can also be used for passenger services and relieve the chronic congestion on the Kings Lynn and North West Norfolk road network.

Two intermodal depots should be developed to enable trains to bulk-in goods for onward distribution by road. Supermarket traffic from the Midlands "Golden Triangle" hubs is ideal to bulk-in trainload containers. The proposed trainload terminal at Rackheath near Norwich should be progressed and a site sought near Ipswich, possibly near the Sproughton sugar factory site. Tesco,

Asda, the Co-op and Sainsburys already distribute to their shops via such terminals in other parts of the UK.

Only with the development of proper rail-based intermodal hubs can a start be made to move general goods from road to rail. This is important not only for environmental reasons but also to tackle the growing problem of a shortage of HGV drivers.

## 12. The Delivery Plan

Finally, we welcome the intention of the LEP to "work up and publish a 3-year Delivery Plan" which should be based on the principles of this report. We trust that the consultation towards this Plan will include statutory bodies such as Transport Focus and English Nature, as well as the voluntary sector, including rail users' organisations such as our own. We certainly look forward to working with the LEP in this respect.

Railfuture East Anglia [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia) @RailfutureEA

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