

Railfuture East Anglia response to the Great Eastern Mainline Dec 21 Timetable Consultation

Consultation details:

www.greateranglia.co.uk/travel-information/great-eastern-mainline-dec-21-timetable-consultation

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

Please note that this response to the Consultation is on behalf of Railfuture East Anglia Branch. Our area covers all of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex south to Kelvedon, and Cambridgeshire.

It is difficult to comment on this new timetable as there is not an actual timetable to study. However, the written description of the general proposal for each mainline station and for each branch is referred to.

Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the planning for the new GEML timetable.

We note and support that the new timetable is to be constructed around your description below:

- All services operated with new trains, with air conditioning, free Wi-Fi and plug/USB points.
- Increases in capacity on many services as our new trains offer more seats.
- Some quicker journey times, wherever practical, usually of a couple of minutes, but in some cases by as much as 5 to 7 minutes for some longer journeys, such as Norwich to London.
- Similar service frequency to the normal timetable in place before the changes prompted by the pandemic.
- Some slightly later last services on certain days on some routes, if practical, where there is a potential demand or need for a later train (though this will also depend on whether there is scope for additional services alongside essential overnight infrastructure maintenance work).
- Continued focus on providing a punctual and reliable service. Two other specific points to highlight are that: Amongst the general speeding up of services between Norwich and London, the weekday Norwich in 90 services will all be scheduled at times that suit day trips to London and back with two morning services at 08.00 and 09.00 from Norwich and two return services – one between 17.00 and 17.15 and the other between 19.00 and 19.15 – from London.

From the above, we assume and welcome that the new timetable will be constructed around a complete revision of all sectional timings reflecting the improved operating characteristics of the new train fleet. We look to this timetable revision to demonstrate that users of the service will see benefits to them both in reliability and reduced journey times.

We understand that there will be no additional infrastructure to support many if any additional services, particularly at capacity pinchpoints at Trowse Single Line Bridge; Haughley Junction; around Ely; between Chippenham Junction and Cambridge.

However we assume that this rare opportunity to adjust the timetable will be taken advantage of, to ease out current service bunching and create additional paths.

We believe that the population density, continuing population and economic growth of East Anglia plus the urgent need to decarbonise, to support modal shift from car to train, will quickly require a minimum 2 trains per hour in the longer term, linking the major centres. These additional services need not call at all stations to provide more attractive journey times. The proposed 2021 timetable should, make provision for these services to be added at a future date.

But in the mean time we support minimum service levels on all services of 1 train per hour off peak, Monday to Sunday (7 days per week), that is with no deviation from standard clock-face timings on Sunday.

Specific service interventions:

Ipswich-Peterborough

We acknowledge the difficulty in providing the promised hourly service. Until sufficient new capacity can be provided we urge that as an interim, an additional train be operated Ipswich-Ely in the alternate hour to the current service. The down reception sidings off platform 1 at Ely are often used to layover empty passenger trains waiting their next duty. A particular additional reason for this service to be provided is to support growth at the new Soham station.

To support the need additional capacity stations to Bury St Edmunds in the morning peak, stop the 08.03 service Ipswich to Peterborough all stations to Bury St Edmunds.

Sudbury-Marks Tey

Extend the service all-day-long to Colchester Town. This is a commitment yet to be fulfilled from the current franchise. It must be honoured to enable a decent service to be provided from Sudbury to Colchester and better serve the population growth at both towns.

Given this is a new timetable to be operated by a brand new fleet of high performance trains and have just 5 miles to cover between Marks Tey and Colchester this is not a big ask.

Moreover, there is a little used dive-under at Colchester to access the Clacton line. The risk of importing unreliability onto the Sudbury branch seems to be the classic railway operating complacency taking precedence over growing the business. We agree that there is an infrastructure problem at Marks Tey in that the foot crossing to the carpark needs some protection. As a temporary solution in the down direction a train will be starting at very slow speed across the crossing so little danger. In the up direction, a station person charged once an hour to stand with a flag to warn pedestrians or a temporary train worked klaxon "no light=safe to cross."



Marks Tey, north end of platforms 2 and 3



Marks Tey foot crossing to car park at north end of platform 3

Colchester-Clacton

This route will see population growth all along it so that over the next 15-20 years new home build will see for over 50,000 more people living at Clacton, Hythe, Frinton/Walton, Great Bentley and Weeley. Hythe sees over 9,000 homes planned nearby with eventually the possibility of a developer funded new station between Wivenhoe and Hythe. Many new jobs will be created.

To ensure that people moving into these new homes have a good train service available from day one, we urge you to introduce an additional stopping train service from Colchester via Colchester Town and all stations to Clacton. This to provide a half hourly service that will help attract more people onto the trains before buying another car.

We suggest that to partly resource this new service, the Sudbury train be extended to Clacton each hour via Town station.

Ipswich-Newmarket-Cambridge

This route has the fastest growing footfall in East Anglia. We will support additional services in both peaks to via Bury to/from Cambridge and in the slightly longer term, work with NR to find ways of supporting 2tph all day.

All services should stop at Kennett to serve the fast growing communities close to that station. But there is strong population growth all along it in Suffolk alone:

Location	Number of new homes
Newmarket	700
Bury St Edmunds	5740
Thurston	1000
Elmswell	350
Stowmarket	1368
Needham Market	63

Connections

In general adjust service patterns to create easy to remember all day connections with all services at Marks Tey; Colchester; Ipswich; Stowmarket; Norwich; Ely; Cambridge. This to enable “the network” work more efficiently.

Norwich-Colchester Mainline

There is no mention of the third London to Norwich service included in the original franchise agreement. Railfuture would see this third service, assumed to be a slower stopping service, as a way of increasing the number of places with a direct service to Diss and Norwich and could facilitate the creation of a new station between Diss and Norwich to serve major new housing in the Long Stratton area. We ask that passive provision be made for this train once any infrastructure difficulty is overcome.

Railfuture East Anglia www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia

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