

Anglia Route Study Consultation
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Traffic / Highways Delivery Group

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Date: 05-02-2015

Dear Sir or Madam,

Newmarket Vision Traffic / Highways Delivery Group Response to the Draft Anglia Route Study Consultation

Thank you for providing the opportunity to respond to Network Rail's consultation on the Draft Anglia Route Study.

Newmarket Vision Transport Delivery Group (NVTDG) has representation from Newmarket Town Council, the horseracing industry, local businesses, Forest Heath District Council and Suffolk County Council. The transport delivery group is responsible for addressing the transport priorities, as identified in Newmarket's agreed delivery plan.

This response contains the views of all of the parties listed, as well as the views of the Newmarket Vision Steering Group.

We welcome Network Rail's long-term planning approach based on evidence that dictates where market demand will exist over the next 30 years. Newmarket is a growing town, which has a number of key industries and sectors. One of the biggest is Newmarket's multi-billion pound horse racing, breeding and bloodstock industries. The town's close proximity to Cambridge also enables it to benefit from the City's strong economy, especially its £12bn world leading high tech industries. This link is essential to support the growth in related service, high tech and manufacturing businesses in Newmarket.

Newmarket also plays a significant role in Suffolk's tourism sector. Our role has been strengthened further with the construction of the new £12.8 million horse racing exhibition centre, which is expected to attract more than 50,000 visitors a year. Newmarket's retail and leisure attractions also bring a number of visitors to the town. The Vision Steering Group is currently bidding for royal status, which, if awarded will honour the town's links with the royal family.

Newmarket Station

Newmarket railway station provides an important gateway to the town. Passenger footfall at the station is recorded at almost 300,000 during 2013-14, an increase of 100,000 over a four year period. Despite the high usage, the station has very poor facilities. It consists of a single platform, which takes three carriage trains; parking for 12 cars; and plastic shelters acting as platform waiting rooms, which are in urgent need of upgrade. The large station building and car park was sold a long time ago and the station is now used for office accommodation.

There is a pressing need to address the facilities at the station. Network Rail should identify ways in which it can bring the station building back into use so that decent waiting facilities and toilets are available to passengers. Additional car parking spaces and safer access to

the station for pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities is also required, alongside better bus waiting facilities and signage showing routes between the station and the town centre/racecourse.

Improving Newmarket Railway Station will be integral to plans for future services operating on the line between Ipswich and Cambridge.

Ipswich – Cambridge

There is a real need to improve connectivity between Newmarket and Cambridge, and Newmarket and the rest of Suffolk for commuting and tourism. The hourly passenger service frequency to Cambridge (two-hourly on Sundays) does little to encourage sustainable travel by rail, with commuters opting for the convenience of the car to travel the short distance. A half-hourly direct service between the two areas, with an hourly service on Sundays will do much to encourage rail use. Providing a half-hourly weekday service will also improve connectivity between Suffolk economies. Extending the services into the evenings would also support access to the night-time economies in Bury St Edmunds and Cambridge. Meeting the high level of demand for rail travel on race days and for evening services for Newmarket Nights events would also significantly support sustainable travel in the region.

We would like to see a half-hourly service commence before Control Period 7 (as indicated in the Anglia Route Study). The route study proposes that electrification of the Felixstowe branch line could be possible in the next rail funding period (Control Period 6). As part of this work, we would like to see the whole of the line between Ipswich and Cambridge electrified, and additional tracking between Newmarket and Dullingham.

Such infrastructure improvements would help to future proof the line for a direct service from Suffolk to the South West via the East West Rail Link. It is our understanding that the East West Rail Consortium is keen to see the rail link funded in Control Period 6. Electrifying the whole of the line between Ipswich and Cambridge will also provide an alternative freight route, reducing demand on the Great Eastern Mainline and at the congested Ely Station.

Newmarket – Peterborough

We understand from Network Rail's Improving Connectivity document that Newmarket Station could be a future interchange hub for a 'split and join' or a 'cross platform' service to Peterborough via the Warren Hill Junction and Snailwell Junction Chord. Whereas we are supportive of a link between Newmarket and Peterborough, further detail is required on the reconstruction proposals for Newmarket Station. The proposals for non-direct services between Ipswich and Peterborough via Newmarket could do much to detract rail users, making the service financially unviable. We therefore believe that a direct service between Ipswich and Peterborough via Newmarket would be better placed.

To enable a new service between Newmarket and Peterborough, it is imperative that capacity improvements are made to provide additional track between Ely and Soham and that level crossings are upgraded. A new station at Soham is also required. This infrastructure is needed to provide the capacity for the new service and to accommodate the 48 freight trains per day by 2019 that will travel from the expanding Port of Felixstowe. It is important that infrastructure being delivered at Ely does not favour one service over another, and is mutually beneficial to all services.

West Anglia Mainline

Cambridge Railway Station is Newmarket's nearest mainline station. Cambridge will be growing significantly over the next decade, and it is imperative that additional track capacity is provided

on the West Anglia Mainline, in particular between Tottenham Hale and Broxbourne, and between Shelford Junction and Cambridge Station.

Great Eastern Mainline

We are supportive of the Great Eastern Mainline Taskforce's recommendations that additional tracking is required on the Great Eastern Mainline (either north of Chelmsford or at Witham) to provide additional track capacity. The remodelling of Bow Junction in Control Period 5 will also enable the GEML to benefit from the additional track capacity into London Liverpool Street, which is expected from the delivery of CrossRail in 2019.

We know that such improvements (predicted to cost £476m), alongside new rolling stock, will deliver £4.5bn in economic benefits for the East Anglia region. It is essential that commitment to improve infrastructure is timed to happen within the new East Anglia rail franchise period.

Rolling Stock

We are supportive of new and improved rolling stock on the GEML. However, we also expect the Anglia Route Study to explore more widely the merits of new and improved rolling stock on all Suffolk lines to reduce journey times and create additional track capacity. Improved rolling stock for Newmarket services would make the route more attractive for commuters and tourists and would also remove the need for carriages to discharge effluent onto the tracks.

Level Crossings

The Anglia Route Study indicates that further information about level crossings will be included in the final document. We feel passionately that the Weatherby level crossing should remain open as it provides an important and well used pedestrian link between two parts of the town.

In Suffolk there is a desire for faster line speeds and more frequent services, but this has to be balanced with demands for access.

We hope that Network Rail incorporates the issues raised within this response in the final draft of the Anglia Route Study. All of these priorities are essential for future proofing and enabling growth in Newmarket and across the county of Suffolk.

Yours sincerely



Lisa Chambers

Chairman of Newmarket Vision Traffic / Highways Delivery Group