

**For the attention of the Office of Rail Regulation:**

I write in response to the current consultation on Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan for the period 2014-2019. The comments contained in this submission are made on behalf of both Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council. Both districts are served by the current Greater Anglia Franchise route between Ipswich and Cambridge/Peterborough with the Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket stations located within our areas.

Both local authorities are signed up and fully supportive of the content of the Rail Prospectus for East Anglia published in 2012 by an alliance of business leaders, local authorities, local enterprise partnerships, MPs and rail groups. To this end, I am looking for the SBP to reflect these local aspirations and have specifically examined the Anglia Route Summary Business Plan to inform my response to the consultation.

We support the strategy for continuing to support real improvements to journey times and line speeds on both the Great Eastern Mainline from London to Ipswich, Stowmarket in particular, as well as the West Anglia route from London to Cambridge and Ely. However, our main concern is the need for continued investment in infrastructure and services on the Ipswich to Cambridge/Peterborough line. We welcome the long term aspiration for the electrification of the Ipswich/Peterborough route and acknowledge the potential benefits that this investment will bring for freight movement. However, we would urge that this is not at the cost of investment of passenger services. We are aware that capacity between Chippenham Junction and Cambridge is limited by the existence of a single track that limits line capacity. Increasing capacity along this route would help deliver the aspirations for continued economic growth in West Suffolk as part of the wider ambitions for Greater Cambridge.

The close proximity of the A14 to the Felixstowe – Nuneaton freight corridor between Bury St Edmunds and Chippenham Junction may also present options for rail freight transfer. The local authorities would welcome the opportunity to consider options for relocating existing strategic sidings in Bury St Edmunds with options for the long term improvement of this corridor in this area.

Ian Gallin  
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St Edmundsbury Borough Council  
and  
Forest Heath District Council