

Dear Mr Larkinson,

Suffolk Coastal and Waveney District Councils welcome the opportunity to comment on Network Rail's strategic business plan for control period 5.

As stated in "Once in a generation – a rail prospectus for East Anglia" there is a critical need for greater strategic development of the railway in East Anglia. This prospectus has been produced by a strong cross-party and multi-agency alliance of MPs, county councils, Local Enterprise Partnerships, other local authorities, businesses and rail user groups – across the four counties of Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire.

The SBP does contain some very welcome and significant plans for our region but does not include any detailed commitments to delivering any line speed upgrades on the GEML. We request that a commitment is made to improve journey times by at least 5 minutes on the GEML by 2019. All trains should be enabled to run at 110 mph.

We also request more recognition of the increasingly important role that freight plays on our rail network, particularly given the key national role played by the Felixstowe container port and the opportunity that improvements to the Felixstowe to Nuneaton rail corridor present to reduce road congestion. We request completion of the agreed Network Rail upgrades for CP4 and 5 on Felixstowe to Nuneaton to improve freight capacity and passenger services. Longer term, an electrified, 100mph two-track railway from Peterborough to Felixstowe, which facilitates faster and more frequent passenger and freight train services is essential.

The poverty of local transport infrastructure is a major restraint on Suffolk adding all it could to the wide United Kingdom economy. We are confident that relatively modest improvements in our rail links would significantly improve Suffolk's ability to grow and compete.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Carolyn Barnes MIEEM

On behalf of:

Stephen Baker, Chief Executive

Cllr Geoff Holdcroft, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Economic Development

Cllr Andy Smith, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning

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