

EAST SUFFOLK LINES

Stations Investment Plan



**Produced by the
East Suffolk Lines
Community Rail Partnership**

Updated February 2016

1. Introduction

1.1 This document (originally produced in 2010, updated in 2015, and again in early 2016) is intended as a statement of what the principal players to development of the East Suffolk Lines will aim to deliver in the way of improvements to stations on the route. In doing so, they will seek the involvement of external funding partners wherever possible, and will investigate options for funding. The principal players are:

- Abellio Greater Anglia, currently the train operator (TOC)
- Network Rail, the infrastructure owner and maintainer (NR)
- Suffolk County Council (SCC)
- East Suffolk Lines (ESL) Community Rail Partnership (CRP)

will aim to deliver in the way of improvements to stations on the route. In doing so, they will seek the involvement of external funding partners wherever possible, and will examine any options for funding, whether transport related or otherwise, that might arise.

1.2 The document specifically covers the immediate period of development up to 2018, although some of the larger projects may take longer to deliver. With the announcement of a new franchise to start in October 2016, this document will also serve as a statement of aspirations for ESL stakeholders that can be shared with DfT and the franchise bidders.

1.3 The document will also be used to arrive at a consensus for the CRP Action Plan covering the 3 years from mid 2015.

2. Route Description

2.1 The East Suffolk Lines are the rural routes between Ipswich and Lowestoft, including the following stations:

- Ipswich
- Westerfield
- Woodbridge
- Melton
- Wickham Market
- Saxmundham
- Darsham
- Halesworth
- Brampton
- Beccles
- Oulton Broad South
- Lowestoft

and the Felixstowe Line, with stations at:

- Derby Road
- Trimley
- Felixstowe

- 2.2 The two termini of Ipswich and Lowestoft have been included because they represent major destinations for ESL customers, and because they are also important interchange points for onward travel. The aim is therefore to ensure that the facilities for interchange are as seamless as possible.

3. Route Development

- 3.1 As outlined above, the East Suffolk Lines are targeted for development of infrastructure and services in a series of linked improvements to be delivered over the next 3 years.
- 3.2 With the commencement of an hourly service in December 2012 the East Suffolk Lines have seen tremendous growth. Passenger numbers between Lowestoft and Ipswich have increased by 99% (from 345,000 journeys to 688,000 journeys) since 2010 when the first edition of this report was produced.
- 3.3 The aim is therefore to ensure facilities are fit to handle the increase in footfall with small scale investment at each station. This will also raise the railway's profile in the local community and encourage increased use of the service. Each of these elements shows a close match with one or more objectives of the DfT's Community Rail Development Strategy.
- 3.4 On 03 March 2015 The East Suffolk Lines received Designated Community Rail Service status from the DfT following a consultation with stakeholders.

4. Improving Station Facilities

- 4.1 Stations are the first point of contact between the customer and the railway. The accessibility of stations, both in relation to the journey to the station within the catchment areas and the way they meet the specific needs of the individual customer once there, will have considerable influence on whether people choose to use the railway.
- 4.2 As a railway serving a very rural catchment area, the East Suffolk Lines have many unstaffed stations serving scattered communities. Even so, it is important to provide a consistent standard of provision, so that the stations appear to be well-maintained and customer friendly. Customers need the reassurance that the basic elements – shelter, information, access and security will always be there.
- 4.3 One of the aims of this document therefore is to ensure that as far as possible we have that consistent standard. We have carried out an update to the original audit of 2010 of facilities at each station on the route, and identified areas for improvement. The audit summaries for each station are attached in Appendix A to this report.
- 4.4 As part of the audit process, we have paid specific attention to the needs of customers at the terminal stations, particularly those who will be changing onto other train services to continue their onward journey.
- 4.5 In carrying out the audits, we have been mindful of a standard specification for facilities at unstaffed stations. Although this is not a formal standard, it has been useful to help

us set out what should be provided in the future. The audit process is a much simplified version of that promoted by ATOC for new station travel plans that are being taken forward at various locations across the country. Although we will not have formal travel plans in place for any of the ESL stations, the methodology is transferrable in this simplified form.

4.6 The basic elements of station facilities should be:

- *Access to the station, by various modes:*
 - Car parking for rail customers
 - Facilities for pick-up and set down
 - Bus services to stops as close as possible to the station, with a safe and secure walking route to the station
 - Facilities for taxis
 - Secure cycle parking
 - Secure motor-cycle parking
 - A clearly signed walking route to and from the town or village centre
- *Access onto the station, including DDA compliant facilities:*
 - Step-free access from the highway or forecourt to each platform on the station
- *Facilities to purchase a ticket:*
 - Station booking office, or similar staffed facility, open at least during peak periods, or
 - Automatic ticket machine (TVM) at each point of access to the station, or
 - Facility to buy tickets on the train, which is clearly advertised at the station.
- *Customer service provision on the station:*
 - All public areas of the station well lit
 - A safe sheltered area to be provided on each platform
 - Clear signing of station name and station facilities
 - Option to include CRP branding, where possible
 - Help points
 - CCTV where appropriate
 - A clean, smart, and well cared-for appearance at all times
- *Information for customers – train services:*
 - Clear signage of direction of travel on all platforms
 - Clearly marked information point, with full timetable, fares and marketing information where appropriate, and contact details for Area Manager and Customer Services team, adjacent to help point
 - Customer information systems (CIS), where appropriate
 - Long-line public address, or similar, where real-time messaging not possible
- *Information for customers arriving by train:*
 - Clear direction signage to onward bus service
 - Clear signage to village / town centre, local landmarks and facilities, including advertised local walks
 - Bus timetables as part of centralised information point
 - Community notice board, including contact details for local station adopter
 - Promotional information on CRP activities

4.7 Comparison of the audit information in Appendix A with the above checklist has produced a list of facilities which need to be provided at each station.

Investment Opportunities for External Funding

4.8 From the audits, we have been able to identify a number of themes for future investment, which may be of interest to local third party groups. These are as follows:

- Car parking improvements
- Secure cycle and motor-cycle parking
- Better links to local bus services
- Branded 'Information Points' at stations
- Improved signing between the stations and local amenities
- Customer facilities at stations (shelters, seating, etc.)
- Energy saving technology to reduce station operating costs

4.9 For the guidance of investors, the above themes have been assessed to give the following summary, including the scope for investment; the process involved to action it; and the indicative costs. It should be noted that the costs are for guidance only, and that detailed specifications will need to be drawn up for each proposal.

4.10 Theme 1: Car Parking Improvements

Scope	Various station specific improvements, including capacity enhancements or simple resurfacing and lining. Projects may involve land acquisition or the provision of parking facilities by third parties.
Process	SCC, Town and Districts Councils, and the TOC to lead on projects. Proposals and process will need to be tailored to suit each individual location.
Indicative costs	Broad range of costs (£30k - £300k), depending on scope.

4.11 Theme 2: Cycle & Motor-Cycle Parking

Scope	Existing cycle and motor cycle parking is generally underused. A new specification needs to be developed that provides secure and sheltered parking, coupled with incentives for customers to use it. The aim should be to achieve a consistent approach, which has sufficient flexibility to account for variations in the requirements of users and funders.
Process	TOC to identify a range of solutions, and seek local funding for implementation at each station.
Indicative costs	From £100 for individual cycle hoops for the smallest stations, rising to £50k for larger schemes at intermediate stations such as Halesworth.

4.12 Theme 3: Bus service integration

Scope	Project to determine the scope for integration at each station, and a package to provide the appropriate infrastructure (stops and shelters) and customer information, signage and marketing. Integration should encompass scheduled bus services, demand responsive transport (DRT) and community transport.
Process	SCC to produce an outline costed proposal for each station, with the TOC providing railway industry input for schemes on its leased area. TOC and SCC to determine options for funding.
Indicative costs	Bus shelter and bus stop flag - £5k Timetable panel and basic signage to and from bus stop - £1k

4.13 Theme 4: Branded information points

Scope	There is currently a basic provision of three poster boards at each station, carrying welcome information, timetable and engineering works information. This provision needs to be extended to include bus information, locality map, community information and links to local signage. Consideration could be given to using digital technology to provide scrolling sheets to replace the conventional paper posters, with the advantage of more information being held in a smaller space. The initial cost could be partially recovered through advertising for local amenities and businesses.
Process	SCC and the TOC to develop an amended standard for branded information points, which reinforces the line and CRP identity. Options for funding at each station will then be identified.
Indicative costs	£5-10k per station for basic specification. Digital equipment will need an initial study to determine costs and feasibility.

4.14 Theme 5: Signing

Scope	Improvements are required to the signing in the area around stations, to establish the station within the community it serves. This includes both highway and waymarking signage. In particular there is a missed opportunity to sign the ESL advertised walks from stations.
Process	SCC to lead, as highway authority and determine the requirements for each station.
Indicative costs	£5k per station.

4.15 Theme 6: Customer facilities

Scope	Whilst most stations on the route have the basic customer facilities, there is a need for investment in renewals, to improve the quality of the station environment. This covers waiting shelters, seats, Help Points and CIS, CCTV as well as station painting. Consideration could be given to the feasibility of delivering long-line PA between Woodbridge and Ipswich.
Process	TOC to determine a wish list for each station. Improvements to be delivered by third party investment, the new franchisee's franchise commitments, or a combination of both.
Indicative costs	Platform shelter £??k DDA compliant seating £??k Help Point £??k Upgraded CIS displays £??k CCTV £??k

4.16 Theme 7: Energy saving

Scope	Work on the Bittern Line in Norfolk has identified that the energy costs of stations can be reduced by the installation of simple voltage regulators on station lighting. Indications are that the cost of such equipment can be recouped in 2-3 years through lower power consumption. Larger wind turbine schemes might also be possible to deliver carbon neutrality for stations across the whole route.
Process	TOC to advise SCC on the outcomes of the Bittern Line project, with a view to a similar package being developed on the ESL.
Indicative costs	Voltage regulators £5k per station.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The East Suffolk Lines are seeing record passenger numbers following the commencement of the hourly service that started in December 2012. Within the next three years, there is the potential to seek local investment in stations.
- 5.2 The new franchise presents an opportunity for the local community to make a clear statement on what it wants from its railway, and the railway industry has an opportunity to deliver a product which encourages sustainable access and travel.
- 5.3 A change of franchise by October 2016 is also an opportunity for the relationship between the TOC and Network Rail to be reviewed. In particular the responsibilities for enhancement and maintenance of stations could be adjusted to ensure that the best quality of repair and new build is delivered in the most cost effective way, possibly by the TOC undertaking more of this work in return for reduced lease payments to Network Rail. Because of the strength of partnerships between the train operator and the local community, the TOC is perhaps best placed to optimise the financial involvement of third parties, and to work with them to deliver real customer benefits for users of the line.
- 5.4 This Stations Investment Plan is therefore an important document. It maps out where improvements are needed and the processes for achieving them. It also gives external investors an indication of the opportunities that are available.

5.5 As a community railway in every sense, the lines have a strong base of support, which can readily identify the priorities for improvement. The Community Rail Partnership continues to play a vital role in bringing those views together and will also be a catalyst for change through this important period in the line's history.

5.6 The East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership looks forward to working with a wide range of partners to deliver improvements to our local railway.

6. **Contacts**

If you would like to explore any of the investment opportunities in this document in more detail, or offer comment on the document, please contact one of the following:

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7. **How to Respond**

Responses should be sent in writing or by e-mail to Tracey Vobe or Sally Harper at Suffolk County Council (address above).