

**Committee: Environment**

**Agenda Item**

**Date: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011**

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**Title: Formal consultation on the May and December 2011 National Express East Anglia timetables**

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## Summary

1. This report seeks the Committee's view on some new ideas that National Express East Anglia (NEEA) is putting forward for changes to the West Anglia timetable in either May or December 2011. Any comments that the Committee has will be sent as part of the Council's formal response. The response is due by 11<sup>th</sup> February 2011. Officers will also be taking part in the discussion on these proposed changes at the next meeting of the West Anglia Routes Group, which should be in January.

## Recommendations

2. That the Committee identify any issues that it would wish to see raised in the response to consultation.

## Financial Implications

3. None. There are no costs associated with the recommendation.

## Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author.

"Proposal to deliver increased capacity" – timetable consultation paper from National Express East Anglia (attached as an appendix)

West Anglia train timetable for December 2010

## Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	The Council has been invited to comment on these new ideas for West Anglia timetable improvements.
Community Safety	None

Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	Capacity improvements brought about by timetable changes should assist sustainable travel
Ward-specific impacts	District wide
Workforce/Workplace	Part of officers' normal transport liaison duties

## Proposals

6. The consultation paper summarises the main West Anglia and Stansted Express service improvements which will be delivered following the arrival of the 30 new 4-car Class 379 Electrostar units in 2011. In the section of the paper entitled "*Issues on which your views would be welcomed*" further improvements which NEEA aim to deliver are set out. These improvements would require alterations to other services. If implemented, some of these improvements would commence from the May 2011 timetable, others from December 2011.
7. The Committee will be aware that the Government granted NEEA an extension to its Greater Anglia franchise until at least the end of October 2011, pending a review of the franchise competition arrangements. The DfT has now announced that the new franchise will start from 2013, with a "stop gap" arrangement in place until then to cover the Olympics in 2012.
8. The remaining part of this report describes the further improvements that NEEA is proposing. Some comments have been added by officers to help the Committee. The comments use the December 2010 timetable as the comparison.
9. *To introduce a faster, hourly off peak train between Cambridge and London, using the new Class 379 trains, which calls only at Whittlesford, Audley End, Bishop's Stortford and Tottenham Hale*

The off peak service between Cambridge and London in both directions is one train an hour non-stop between Liverpool Street and Tottenham Hale, and calling at all stations between Tottenham Hale and Cambridge (1hr 22mins total journey time) and one train per hour calling at selected intermediate stations only (1hr 13mins). It is presumed that the faster service would be

achieved by taking out further stops from the 1 hr 13mins service, namely stations south of Bishop's Stortford (Sawbridgeworth, Harlow Town, Broxbourne and Cheshunt).

For Uttlesford passengers, this would leave only one direct off peak train an hour each way between Audley End and Harlow Town. There would be the opportunity to interchange at Bishop's Stortford with the Stratford service which does stop at Harlow (or use the Arriva 510 bus). Rail interchanging at Bishop's Stortford would be improved if the change set out in the next paragraph is also implemented.

10. To switch the hourly Stratford to Stansted Airport service to twice an hour Bishop's Stortford to Stratford service with connections to Stansted Airport (except for special services during the Olympics and Paralympics period)

This service runs between the morning and afternoon peaks and in the evening on weekdays. It is also hourly all day on Saturdays (1hr 6mins approx travel time). For Uttlesford this would affect passengers at Stansted Mountfitchet who would lose the service, but it would increase the frequency of the service between Stratford and Bishop's Stortford.

The Stansted Express services which stop at Stansted Mountfitchet during weekday peak hours and hourly at weekends would continue to do so.

11. To reduce Stansted Express journey times by looping the Hertford East service at Broxbourne to allow a Stansted Express service to pass it (this will add around 3 to 4 minutes into the journey time of the Hertford East service)

The Hertford East to Liverpool Street service is half hourly, and takes about 50 minutes. It is not clear what the time saving to the Stansted Express would be. Adding 3 to 4 minutes to the Hertford East service is unlikely to be popular with passengers who use it. However, the time saving would benefit Uttlesford passengers who use the Stansted Express.

12. To run, in the morning peak, 3 x 12-car services with new trains from Cambridge to London or, alternatively use the same new trains to run 2 x 12-car services from Cambridge and 1 x 12-car service from Stansted Airport

The former would appear the more obvious benefit for local commuters to London, because the new Electrostar units will be a modern, superior product. It is understood that once the inbound service has been run, the units would then form an outbound Stansted Express service.

13. To introduce a new service from Cambridge or Ely to Stansted Airport on the opposite half hour to the Cross Country service

This improvement would be possible because the change set out in Paragraph

9 would free up one of the six train paths in both directions through the airport rail tunnel. These train paths are a scarce resource, and no more are available. There is no current prospect of a second tunnel being constructed now that the second runway project has been cancelled as a result of the Coalition's new airports policy.

It is unclear whether the new NEEA service would stop at all intermediate stations in Uttlesford between the airport and Cambridge / Ely, or just Audley End. An hourly direct service to the airport from all intermediate stations could be a valuable and convenient local service enhancement worthy of support, but the issue for NEEA would be whether there is a business case for it. The Committee need to judge whether the benefits from this new service would outweigh the disbenefits from the withdrawal of the Stratford service from the airport and Stansted Mountfitchet.

An option might be to use the train path to provide a second service to the Midlands. This option would enhance the one train per hour service currently provided by Cross Country Trains (which goes from the airport to Birmingham). However, this may not be within the scope or willingness of NEEA to achieve, who may just want to provide competition for Cross Country Trains from Cambridge / Ely.

## Risk Analysis

14.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Council fails to identify key issues of potential significance to the local community.	1. Officers are engaged with other stakeholders such as the West Anglia Routes Group.	2. NEEA is proposing improvements to the West Anglia service.	Discuss the Committee's views with other stakeholders before responding to the NEEA consultation by the 11 <sup>th</sup> February 2011 expiry date.

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.