

Essex Chambers of Commerce
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London Southend Airport
Southend on Sea
Essex, SS2 6YF

11th March 2013

Valentina Licata
Office of the Rail Regulator
One Kemble Street
London
WC2B 4AN

Dear Ms Licata

Network Rail's strategic business plan for control period 5

Further to my letter of the 6th February regarding the above, I would also like to take the opportunity to highlight the need to provide additional capacity on the branch line between Braintree and Witham, which is an important feeder route to the Great Eastern Main Line.

As this line is currently only single track the frequency of services is limited with the minimum time between trains an hour at peak times. As a result many passengers from Braintree who wish to use the Great Eastern Main Line will travel to other stations on that line itself where a greater frequency of service is available. Braintree District is itself a growing district and this existing line would be unable to cope with the envisaged growth in housing and jobs.

Braintree District Council commissioned a report from consulting engineers Mott MacDonald to look at the economic benefits of constructing a passing loop on the line from Braintree to Witham. This concluded that there would provide "high value for money" under the Department for Transport's criteria for assessing business cases in such cases.

The benefits of proving a passing loop would include the following;

- Provision of two trains an hour on the Braintree Branch Line resulting in an improved frequency of service for passengers
- Reduced traffic and congestion on the B1018, A131, A120 thereby reducing carbon emissions
- Promotion of economic development opportunities in Braintree itself and support of further growth across the rest of the Braintree District Council area
- Provision of opportunities to develop a future link from Braintree to Stansted Airport improving connections between Stansted and the Great Eastern Main Line

In addition to these benefits, the Great Eastern Main Line Capacity Study identified that providing an increase in capacity on the Braintree branch is necessary to deliver faster and higher capacity on the Great Eastern Main Line itself. As such we would ask that consideration is given to including the passing loop in your strategic business plan.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Denise Rossiter". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'D'.

Denise Rossiter
Chief Executive

cc: David Higgins, Chief Executive, Network Rail