



# The Essex Thameside Franchise: a further submission from Passenger Focus

February 2012

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# **The Essex Thameside franchise: a further submission from Passenger Focus regarding a 15 year franchise from 2013 onwards.**

## **1. Passenger Focus**

Passenger Focus is the independent public body set up by the Government to promote and protect the interests of Britain's rail passengers, England's bus and tram passengers outside London and coach passengers in England on scheduled domestic services. We are funded by the Department for Transport (DfT) but operate independently.

Our mission is to get the best deal for passengers. With a strong emphasis on evidence-based campaigning and research, we ensure that we know what is happening on the ground.

We use our knowledge to influence decisions on behalf of passengers and we work with the industry, passenger groups and government to secure journey improvements.

Passenger Focus welcomes the opportunity to provide an initial analysis and recommendations for the franchise. We will make a further submission during the consultation period drawing on further analysis relating to Essex Thameside routes.

## **2. Introduction**

In line with revised franchise policy the Government has indicated that it intends to let Essex Thameside as a 15 year franchise and also issue less central specification, giving bidders greater flexibility in how they specify/develop the service offered to passengers.

Passenger Focus believes that when the requirements of the franchise are established, it is vital that the needs of passengers who use and pay for rail services are placed squarely at the heart of the contract. We will identify and vigorously promote the passenger agenda and will work closely with DfT and short-listed bidders to ensure passenger requirements are evidenced and addressed both during the franchise competition and at all stages of the ensuing contract term.

The specification must build on the existing framework of services and seek progressive improvements in all areas of performance. It is important that the franchise ensures that existing demands are adequately addressed and, that at appropriate stages, franchise reviews can respond to any changes or inaccuracies in planning assumptions.

It is envisaged that longer franchises will bring the welcome prospect of increased investment. It is equally important that, throughout its duration, the franchise remains responsive to changing passenger needs. This means that not only must there be a clear understanding of passenger requirements at the outset but that there is an ongoing emphasis on consultation and engagement

with stakeholders and a set of output measures that reflect passenger satisfaction. The National Passenger Survey (NPS) should be included within the franchise monitoring mechanisms.

Longer franchises require firm commitments to be met by the operator on given dates and these must be transparent, clearly defined and monitored. The franchise should focus on outcomes for passengers and ensure that there are sanctions available to reflect any failure in delivery. The ultimate sanction should be termination.

Competition for the Essex Thameside franchise was originally announced in January 2010 before being cancelled later that year. However, as part of the original consultation Passenger Focus submitted a response<sup>1</sup> setting out what passengers wanted from the new franchise. The main recommendations from that report are included as Appendix 2 and should be read in conjunction with the current submission.

### **3. Overview of the franchise**

The Essex Thameside franchise is compact and, largely, geographically discrete. Passenger rail services are provided on the mainline to London (generally Fenchurch Street) and also around the Tilbury Loop.

Whilst serving diverse markets in different communities, this is, at heart, a commuter-orientated franchise, with attendant emphasis on punctuality and reliability and the provision of peak capacity.

Over recent years the franchise has shaken off its status as the 'Misery Line'. On the back of infrastructure renewals and new trains it has delivered higher punctuality and reliability (PPM) and has become a consistently high performer in National Passenger Surveys (NPS).

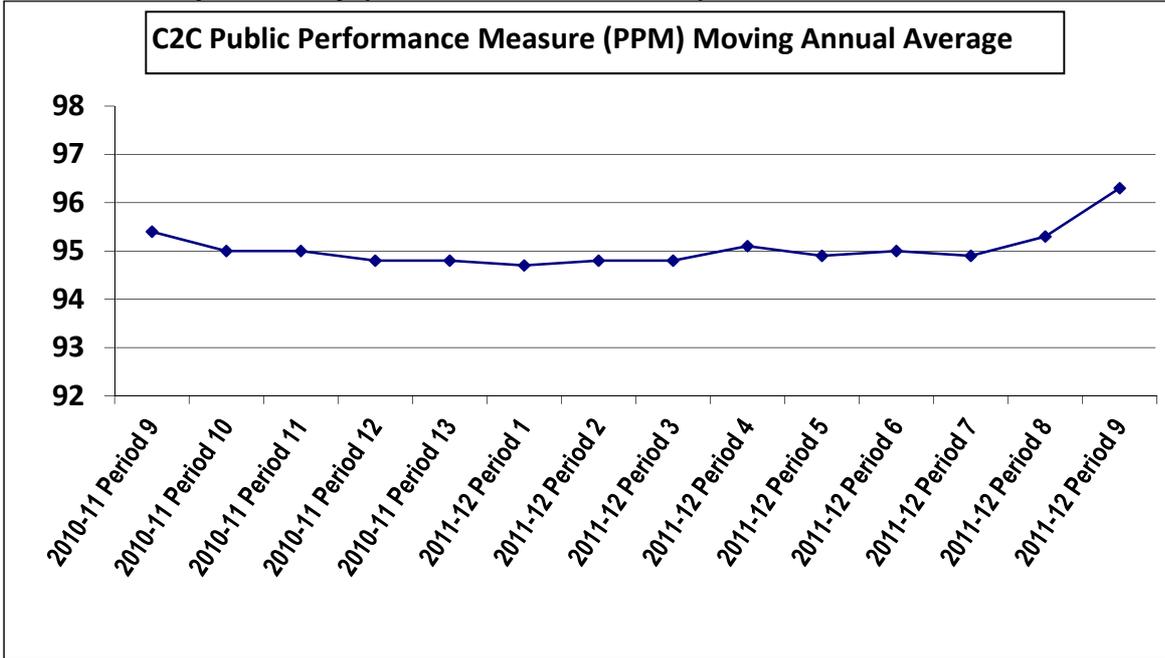
The recent extension of the current c2c franchise has been largely steady state with no fundamental change to the nature, services<sup>2</sup> or performance of the franchise.

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<sup>1</sup> [Passenger Focus response to the Essex Thameside Franchise - June 2010](#)

<sup>2</sup> December 11 enhancements to West Ham frequencies are acknowledged

**Chart 1 - C2C punctuality (14/11/2010 – 10/12/2011)**



Source: Office of Rail Regulation data portal

#### **4. Passenger research and implications for the franchise**

This submission is informed by comprehensive work previously undertaken by Passenger Focus for the earlier scheduled franchise replacement<sup>3</sup>.

##### **4.1 Passenger priorities**

Our original input<sup>4</sup> was based on research with 1078 passengers using c2c rail services which provided clear feedback about their priorities for improvement on the franchise. These are set out in Table 1, alongside a comparison with the results of a national study of Passenger Priorities<sup>5</sup>. This illustrates some differences that should be considered in assessing the requirements for the new Essex Thameside franchise.

<sup>3</sup> [DfT consultation - January 2010](#)

<sup>4</sup> [What passengers want from the Essex Thameside rail franchise](#), Passenger Focus, November 2009

<sup>5</sup> [Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services](#) Passenger Focus, 2010

**Table 1 - passenger priorities for improvements**

	National priorities*	All c2c passengers' priority	main line passengers' priority	Tilbury loop passengers' priority
Punctuality / reliability of the train	2	1	2	1
Frequency of trains on the route	3	2	1	2
Value for money for price of ticket	1	3	3	3
Being able to get a seat on the train	4	4	4	5
Your personal security at the station	14	5	5	6
The provision of information about train times/platforms during times of disruption	5	6	6	4
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take (speed)	11	7	7	7
Personal security while on board the train	12	8	8	8
<i>Ease of getting to/from the station</i>	<i>n/a*</i>	9	9	9
Facilities for car parking at the station	27	10	10	10
Connections with other forms of transport	15	11	12	11
<i>Buying your ticket from a member of staff at the booking office</i>	<i>7*</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>13</i>
Facilities available at the station	23	13	13	12
<i>Buying your ticket from a ticket machine</i>	<i>7*</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>14</i>

\* Note: The two passenger priorities surveys were not identical and factors in italics indicate questions asked of c2c passengers that were not included in a directly comparable format in the national research. Where available the priority for the most appropriate related factor has been used. The full list of national priorities is shown in Appendix 1.

#### **4.1.1 Core priorities for Essex Thameside**

The core priorities the Essex Thameside franchise must address are the fundamentals for all passengers. These are:

- providing a punctual and reliable service
- provision of sufficient capacity, both in terms of frequency of service and sufficient seating on the train
- delivering value for money
- effective management of any disruption, especially through information to passengers
- making available accurate information about trains and platforms.

#### **4.1.2 The importance of personal security factors**

The significance of personal security factors to c2c passengers is an additional and striking local priority.

Priorities for improvement to personal security at the station ranks 5th and security on train ranks 8th. These are still important at national level but somewhat lower, at 14 and 12 respectively. This suggests that improvements to personal security should be another identified priority for the new

franchise to address. Other work by Passenger Focus<sup>6</sup> has demonstrated the importance of staffing to passengers' sense of personal security.

## 4.2 National Passenger Survey data

We have supplemented and updated the assessments used in our original submission by analysis of the most recent National Passenger Surveys (NPS). Together with an analysis of the current drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction on Essex Thameside, this is another comprehensive source of information about prevailing passenger perceptions.

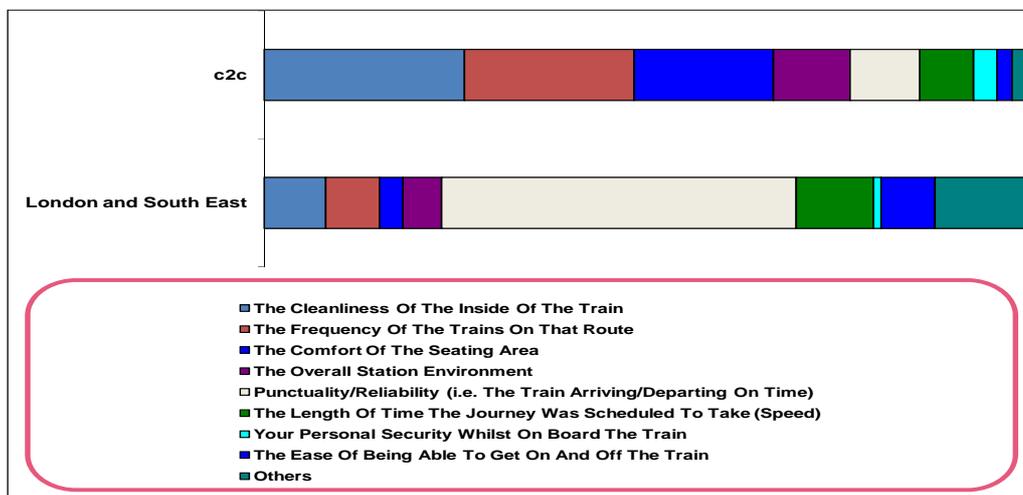
### 4.2.1 Drivers of satisfaction and dissatisfaction

Multi-variate analysis of NPS reinforces the importance of some of the highest passenger priorities identified for the franchise and also highlights other factors that impact on passenger satisfaction.

The drivers of satisfaction for c2c passengers (Chart 2) are somewhat different to the usual patterns for London and South East operators. Punctuality and reliability is still an important factor but it falls fifth, rather than first, and this will be a reflection of the high levels of punctuality and reliability delivered quite consistently by c2c for some time.

As a consequence, c2c passenger satisfaction is influenced to a higher degree by train factors, notably; cleanliness of the inside, frequency, comfort of seating and, again, personal security. The station environment and length of journey are also drivers of satisfaction.

**Chart 2 – drivers of customer satisfaction autumn 2010 – spring 2011 (bar size shows share of overall satisfaction due to factor)**

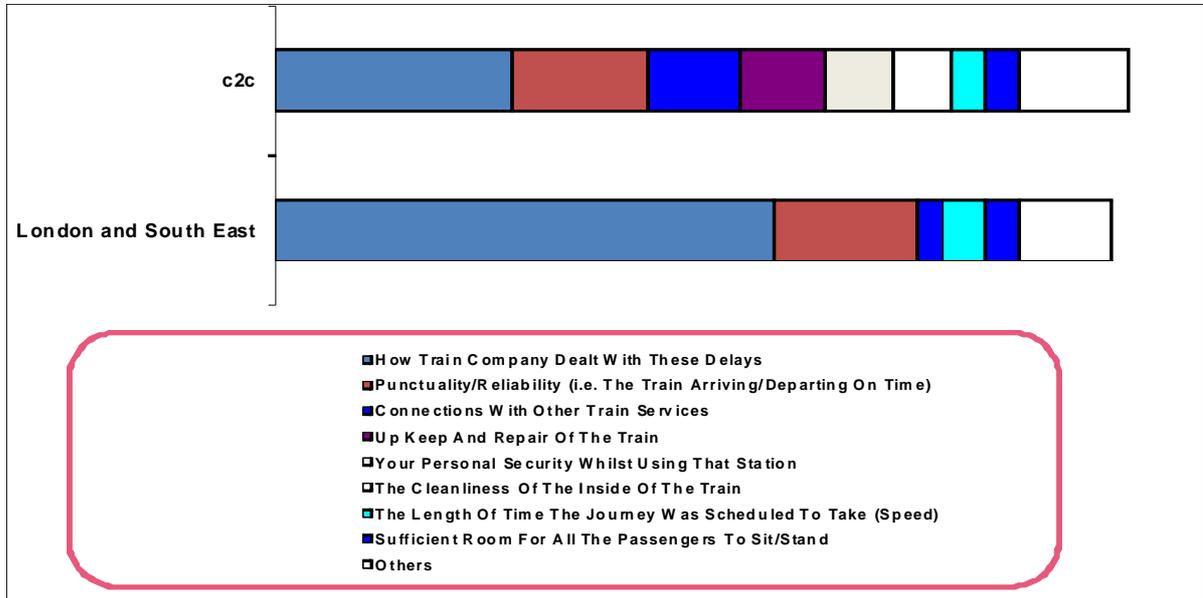


An analysis of the factors that drive passenger dissatisfaction also echoes the importance of key factors to passengers. Where delays are not dealt with well and there are poor perceptions of punctuality and reliability, passengers will be dissatisfied. For c2c passengers, connections with other train services, upkeep/repair and cleanliness of the train and personal security at the station

<sup>6</sup> [Passenger perceptions of personal security on the railways](#) Passenger Focus. March 2009

also notably influence dissatisfaction. Other factors that clearly influence passenger dissatisfaction are speed of journey and sufficient room for passengers to sit or stand.

**Chart 3 – drivers of customer dissatisfaction autumn 2010 – spring 2011 (bar size shows share of overall satisfaction due to factor)**



#### 4.2.2 Updated National Passenger Survey scores

Table 2 compares the scores for the two Spring waves of NPS undertaken since our original submission based on Spring 2009 data. It shows overall satisfaction steady at 91%.

**Table 2 – a comparison of c2c NPS scores april 2009, 2010 and 2011**

NPS Factor	Spring 2009	Spring 2010	Spring 2011
Overall satisfaction	91	91	91
Ticket buying facilities	77	75	77
<b>Provision of information about train times/platforms</b>	85	85	87
Upkeep/repair of station buildings/platforms	70	69	71
Cleanliness of stations	77	76	78
Facilities and services at stations	44	51*	53
Attitudes and helpfulness of staff at stations	75	75	74
Connections with other forms of public transport	69	70	72
Facilities for car parking	42	49*	53
<b>Overall station environment</b>	69	67	<b>72*</b>
<b>Your personal security whilst using the station</b>	61	62	65
Availability of staff at the station	63	64	66
How request to station staff was handled	88	89	83
<b>Frequency of trains on that route</b>	86	85	86
<b>Punctuality and reliability</b>	90	<b>94*</b>	92
Length of time the journey was scheduled to take	90	91	93
Connections with other train services	78	<b>83*</b>	78
<b>Value for money for the price of your ticket</b>	40	<b>46*</b>	43
<b>Upkeep and repair of the train</b>	88	90	90
Provision of information during the journey	73	80*	80
Helpfulness and attitude of staff on the train	29	31	37
Space for luggage on the train	47	50	48
Toilet facilities on the train	47	52	55
<b>Sufficient room for all passengers to sit/stand</b>	62	65	61
<b>Comfort of the seating area on the train</b>	78	80	79
Ease of being able to get on and off the train	82	84	84
<b>Your personal security whilst on board the train</b>	67	<b>72*</b>	72
<b>Cleanliness of the inside of the train</b>	89	91	89
Cleanliness of the outside of the train	85	87	86
Availability of staff on the train	16	19	22
<b>How well train company deals with delays</b>	53	51	50
<b>Key:</b> * indicates a statistically significant improvement in the scores since preceding spring <b>Red</b> = core passenger priorities <b>Bold</b> = additional factors influencing satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction			

Spring 2010 results show statistically significant improvements in a number of factors, including punctuality and reliability, value for money and personal security on the train. Nevertheless, there remains plenty of scope for improvement on most of the key factors influencing passenger satisfaction and, as we identified in 2009, the time is now right to build on c2c performance and move towards the first 'right time' railway.

Overall, Passenger Focus concludes that there is little to suggest that the priorities for the new Essex Thameside franchise should change from those set out in 2009 and we confirm the majority of our previous recommendations which we set out in Appendix 2<sup>7</sup>.

### **4.3 The core factors**

#### **4.3.1 Value for money**

Passengers are paying an increasingly high proportion of the costs of the railway and this makes the delivery of value for money a significant challenge. Passenger Focus's fares and ticketing study<sup>8</sup> investigated the influences on passenger perceptions of value for money. It found that whilst intrinsically linked to the price of the ticket, value for money is also influenced by several other significant factors. These link directly to the findings of priorities research and NPS drivers and are:

- Punctuality and reliability
- Being able to get a seat
- Passenger information during service disruption.

Improving passenger satisfaction with these core elements of the train service must be a high priority for the Essex Thameside franchise.

Another important factor to assist in delivering value for money is to ensure that fares and ticketing processes are fair, impartial and clear, enabling passengers to purchase the cheapest appropriate ticket for their journey. Other high-level recommendations relating to fares and ticketing are addressed in section 4.3.6. Please also note Recommendation 4 in our 2009 submission<sup>9</sup>.

#### **4.3.2 Punctuality and reliability**

Satisfaction with punctuality and reliability on c2c was 92% in Spring 2011. The Moving Annual Average (MAA) for punctuality was 96.6% in October 2011. These impressive figures must be maintained or improved during the life of the franchise.

Research by Passenger Focus<sup>10</sup> found that commuters appear to notice lateness from the first minute, not just after the five or ten minutes allowed by Public Performance Measure (PPM). It was also found that the average passenger lateness in the evening peak was worse than the average train lateness. This was because of the effect of cancellations and because many trains were late arriving at intermediate stations even if on time at their destination.

Passenger Focus's principal conclusion from the research is that Britain's railway must in future focus on 'right time' arrival at all stops. The consistent performance that is delivered on this part of the network indicates that our recommendation<sup>11</sup> for a right time railway is a realistic aspiration and should be a vision for the new Essex Thameside.

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<sup>7</sup> We recognise that there may be some areas where lifestyle, technical and other changes over the course of a fifteen year franchise may lead to the need to adapt and review the way services are delivered and we will discuss these further with DfT and bidders during the next stages of the franchise replacement process.

<sup>8</sup> [Fares and Ticketing Study Final report](#) February 2009

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>10</sup> [Towards a 'right time' East Anglian railway](#) . March 2010

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 2

### **4.3.3 Transparency**

Another study<sup>12</sup> found passengers felt that increased transparency of information about punctuality and reliability, as well as other aspects of rail services, would assist in the scrutiny and accountability of the rail industry. They were aware that overall averages masked highs and lows on different services and wanted information broken down into meaningful measures that would reflect the experiences of their own rail travel.

The measures that passengers felt captured their experience were punctuality and reliability, investment, comfort, fares, staff, station facilities and journey times.

Passenger Focus recommends that steps to increase the transparency of information about a range of service factors, particularly performance, should be a requirement of the new franchise. Information should be disaggregated as far as possible and efforts made to present data in a simple and easily understandable manner.

### **4.3.4 Capacity and frequency**

Overall passenger satisfaction for sufficient room to sit or stand scored 61% in Spring 2011. However, for peak passengers this fell to just 41%. The new franchise must address the capacity challenge, particularly in the high peak.

Recommendations 2 and 3 from our 2009 submission<sup>13</sup> set out important issues relating to improvements to the timetable and additional peak capacity. It is imperative that provision of an effective response to capacity needs throughout the term of the contract is made a core requirement of the new franchise.

The franchise should also consider passenger aspirations in planning future service provision. There must be a requirement to consult fully and meaningfully with the range of stakeholder groups and demonstrate that the needs of differing groups of passengers have been considered when timetable proposals are brought forward.

### **4.3.5 Dealing with disruption and provision of information**

Effective management of disruption and keeping passengers informed must be a key requirement for the next franchise. Spring NPS scores between 2009 and 2011 show no significant improvement in passenger satisfaction with dealing with delays and in Spring 2011 only 32% of peak passengers were satisfied with this factor. This is despite an ongoing programme within the industry to tackle and improve the management of disruption.

Passenger Focus supports efforts by the industry to tackle the challenge of improving the management of disruption and also to raise standards of information provision. Research into a number of aspects of disruption and passenger needs for information<sup>14</sup> has identified the problems to be addressed and shown how solutions may be found.

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<sup>12</sup> [Putting rail information in the public domain](#), Passenger Focus and Office of Rail Regulation, May 2011

<sup>13</sup> See appendix 2

<sup>14</sup> [Delays and Disruption – Rail passenger have their say](#) Passenger Focus, December 2010

[Reading station engineering works – what passengers want](#) Passenger Focus, May 2011

[Information: Rail passengers' needs during unplanned disruption](#) Passenger Focus and Southern, August 2011

We recommend the next Essex Thameside franchise includes a requirement to fully adopt all elements of the ATOC Approved Code of Practice on passenger information during disruption and information Good Practice Guides and sets challenging targets for year on year improvement in passenger satisfaction with management of disruption and the provision of information.

The next franchisee must also be required to show what practical steps they will take to improve how passengers are looked after during service disruption, particularly demonstrating their focus on people rather than simply processes<sup>15</sup>.

#### **4.3.6 Fares and ticket retailing**

Passengers have experienced years of above-inflation fare increases and that is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Passenger Focus supports the concept of fares regulation as it provides some degree of protection to passengers, many of whom are captive consumers. For the next Essex Thameside franchise, Passenger Focus recommends:

1. The level of flexibility that can be applied to increases in individual fares should be restricted to a maximum of +/- 2% which will allow the train operator to correct any anomalies between fares and address market issues where appropriate but will limit the ability to drive large differences between fares relating to specific routes/stations.
2. Increases to unregulated fares should be capped at the same level applied to regulated fares.

The next Essex Thameside franchise must make ticket purchase easier for passengers, many of whom are confused by the complexity of the fares system. Clear information about the validity of tickets and any applicable restrictions must be readily available. Passengers should be able to buy the most appropriate ticket for their intended journey, regardless of whether this is purchased at a ticket office, on-line, at a ticket machine or through any other method. Research has identified a number of issues with both ticket vending machines (TVMs) and websites and these problems are set out, with recommendations about how to improve retailing through these channels, in:

- [Ticket vending machine usability](#), Passenger Focus, June 2010
- [Ticket retailing: website usability](#), Passenger Focus, June 2011

Passenger Focus recommends that the next Essex Thameside franchise incorporates these recommendations on ticket retailing within the requirements.

The new franchise should provide a wider-range of tickets for passengers. Developments in ticketing such as smart-cards and mobile telephone products should be incorporated into the franchise. The franchise should also require the introduction of innovative new products such as carnet-style tickets that will enable passengers who cannot benefit from season ticket discounts to achieve some economies from repeat travel. Schemes to spread the cost of annual season tickets should also be available.

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<sup>15</sup> See recommendation 7 in Appendix 2

#### **4.3.7 Personal security at stations and on trains**

NPS and passenger priority research highlight the significance of this factor for the Essex Thameside franchise and a strategy to deliver improved passenger satisfaction with personal security whilst using the railway must be a core objective for the new franchise.

The report, Passenger Perceptions of Personal Security on the Railways, highlights a number of areas which should be considered in framing the specification for the new franchise<sup>16</sup>.

### **5. Equity and access**

The new franchise must incorporate requirements to ensure that the needs of all potential passengers are recognised and addressed. The specific needs of passengers who are disabled or who have other access needs must be considered and appropriate adjustments made to ensure stations and trains can be utilised safely at all stages of the journey, with necessary assistance provided when required.

### **6. Conclusion**

This initial submission on the next Essex Thameside franchise considers the key requirements of passengers and sets out our high-level recommendations on core elements of the service.

#### **6.1 Further input**

Passenger Focus will consider in detail the consultation on the Essex Thameside franchise when it is published in the New Year. We will consider the Autumn 2011 NPS satisfaction scores which will shortly be available and will also look at further analysis of the differences between the Mainline and Tilbury Loop services. We will provide this information at the earliest opportunity to DfT and bidders and will also utilise the findings in our more detailed response to the franchise consultation.

### **7. Contact for further information**

For further information about this submission or other aspects of Passenger Focus work on the Essex Thameside franchise please contact:

Sharon Hedges, Passenger Issues Manager  
[sharon.hedges@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:sharon.hedges@passengerfocus.org.uk)  
07918 626126

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<sup>16</sup> [Passenger Perceptions of Personal Security on the Railways](#) Passenger Focus. March 2009

## Appendix 1: Passengers' Priorities for improvements in rail services - 2009

Service attribute	National ranking
Price of train tickets offer excellent value for money	1
At least 19 out of 20 trains arrive on time	2
Sufficient train services at times I use the train	3
Passengers are always able to get a seat on the train	4
Company keeps passengers informed if train delays	5
Information on train times/platforms accurate and available	6
Maximum queue time no more than 2 mins	7
Trains consistently well maintained/ excellent condition	8
Seating area on the train is very comfortable	9
Station staff are available whenever required	10
Journey times reduced by 5 minutes, on average	11
Passengers experience a high level of security on the train	12
The inside of the train is cleaned to a high standard	13
Personal security improved by CCTV/ staff at stations	14
Good easy connections with other forms of transport	15
All trains have staff available to help passengers	16
All train staff helpful and have a positive attitude	17
Connections with other train services are always good	18
Useful information is provided throughout the journey	19
All station staff are helpful and with a positive attitude	20
The train travels at a fast speed throughout the journey	21
Always a quick response to information requests at stations	22
Station facilities and services plentiful and good quality	23
There are good quality toilet facilities on every train	24
There is sufficient space for passengers' luggage	25
All station building cleaned and maintained to a high standard	26
Car parking available and at reasonable cost	27
Train companies reduce pollution/ carbon footprint of travel	28
Accessibility station entrance to boarding train step-free	29
The outside of the train is cleaned to a high standard	30
Safe and secure cycle parking available at station	31

Attributes listed in order of importance – 1 being the most important priority for improvement

Source: [Passengers' priorities for improvements in rail services](#). Passenger Focus. March 2010

## Appendix 2: Original recommendations from Passenger Focus's 2010 submission on the C2C franchise consultation

### Summary of recommendations

#### Recommendation 1: Punctuality and reliability, moving towards a Right Time Railway

Passenger Focus recommends that further **improvement in punctuality and reliability** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- an explicit vision that Essex Thameside becomes Britain's first Right Time Railway, with challenging but achievable targets for increasing the number of trains arriving 'right time' without resorting to extended journey times.
- an obligation to report the percentage of trains arriving 'right time' at key intermediate stations. We suggest Barking and West Ham on trains to London and Barking and Benfleet on trains from London.
- challenging but achievable targets to continue the downward trend in the number of trains that are significantly late or cancelled. Among other things, this may require the train operator and Network Rail to tackle the high level of delay caused by 'external factors, excluding weather'.

#### Recommendation 2: Improving aspects of the current c2c timetable

Passenger Focus recommends that **improvement to aspects of the current c2c timetable** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- that services on Sundays from all Tilbury loop stations should start earlier than at present, with a much earlier first train from Purfleet, Rainham and Dagenham Dock.
- that the last train from London on Mondays to Fridays and Saturdays be later than at present. We suggest between 0100 and 0130 to all destinations.
- that trains be provided on 26 December for a period of 5 years from December 2012, at which point demand will be assessed and a decision made about making the service permanent.
- that bidders are asked to propose how they would align the timetable with passengers' aspirations for more frequent services, including improved connectivity with London Underground, Docklands Light Railway and London Overground services.

#### Recommendation 3: Additional peak capacity

Passenger Focus recommends that delivery of **additional peak capacity** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- that sufficient capacity is provided in the high peak hour when the largest volume of passengers wish to travel, not just on average across the three hour peak period, in order that passengers joining peak trains at Basildon or east of Basildon are not forced to stand.
- that the High Level Output Specification (HLOS) requirements for c2c – longer trains, platform lengthening – be implemented as quickly as possible so that passengers do not suffer as growth resumes.

- that plans are developed to deliver capacity in addition to the current HLOS proposals for implementation in the event that demand grows more strongly than expected.

#### **Recommendation 4: Increasing passenger satisfaction with value for money**

Passenger Focus recommends that measures to improve passenger satisfaction with **value for money** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- that the fares regulation regime allows prices to rise by no more than Retail Prices Index (RPI) plus 1% per annum and that restrictions continue to be placed on fares basket flexibility to prevent excessive increases on individual fares.
- that the facility to pay for an annual season ticket in 12 instalments, without a charge for credit, is developed and actively promoted. This will allow more passengers, and potential passengers, to benefit from the value offered by the 52 weeks for the price of 40 on annual season tickets and will bring the railway in line with other public and private sector organisations.
- that carnet-style multiple journey tickets be introduced for the majority of origin and destination flows.
- that erosion of the times at which Off-Peak and Super Off-Peak tickets are valid is specifically prevented.

#### **Recommendation 5: Making ticket purchase easier for passengers**

Passenger Focus recommends that **making ticket purchase easier for passengers** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- that the current c2c Ticketing and Settlement Agreement Schedule 17 ticket office opening hours be maintained and delivered consistently at all stations, with a formal requirement to report adherence levels to DfT station by station, period by period.
- that Ticketing and Settlement Agreement standards for queuing times of three and five minutes be met at all stations, with a formal requirement to report adherence levels to DfT station by station every six months. At stations where 'tickets for today' and 'tickets in advance' have separate queues, they should be reported separately.
- that there are contractual targets for NPS satisfaction with ticket buying facilities at ticket offices managed by the franchise.
- that a 'smartcard' system similar in concept to Oyster within London be introduced across the c2c network
- that to facilitate onward travel within London, ticket offices at all stations should sell Oyster cards and allow Oyster 'pay as you go' top up, the latter also to be available from ticket vending machines at those stations.
- that in addition to the full range of National Rail and TfL destinations, ticket vending machines operated by the franchise must offer monthly season ticket renewal, discounts for all railcards, GroupSave, PlusBus add-ons, Travelcard boundary extensions and the facility to buy tickets for the following day.
- that ticket vending machines and automatic ticket gates be programmed to make tickets available and allow access to platforms in sufficient time for passengers to travel on the first train on which Off-Peak tickets are valid.

### **Recommendation 6: Increasing transparency and trust in the fares system**

Passenger Focus recommends that delivery of a **ticket and retailing strategy that will increase transparency and trust in the fare structure** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- that on flows controlled by the franchise, applicable restrictions should be printed on passengers' tickets to remove confusion over validity.
- that all ticket vending machines operated by the franchise must clearly display outward and return ticket restrictions on the screen prior to a passenger committing to purchase.
- that posters be displayed at all stations advertising the cheapest walk-up fare to key destinations.
- that fares on 'walk up' interavailable flows controlled by the franchise, the official through fare must never exceed the sum of 'walk up' interavailable fares for individual legs of the journey except where a journey takes place partly at peak time and partly not.

### **Recommendation 7: Improving the management of service disruption and provision of passenger information**

Passenger Focus recommends that improved **management of service disruption and provision of information to passengers** be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- contractual targets to improve NPS satisfaction with the provision of information during the journey, and that a strategy be developed and implemented to improve NPS scores for "how well train company dealt with delay" and "usefulness of information during a delay".
- targets to reduce the impact on passengers of Network Rail maintenance, renewal and upgrade of the railway and, in particular, measures to prevent the operator choosing to receive a 'schedule four' compensation payment even when opportunities exist to run at least some trains.
- a facility for passengers to receive SMS text alerts free of charge warning them if disruption will, or is likely to, affect their journey – with an associated requirement to achieve a strong level of sign up through marketing of the service.
- compliance with the ATOC Approved Code of Practice: Passenger Information During Disruption and Good Practice Guides on provision of passenger information, together with a programme of audit and mystery shopping.
- that active co-operation be required with proposals developed by the industry Passenger Information During Disruption (PIDD) Steering Group to feed station customer information systems directly from Darwin, the national real time train running database.

### **Recommendation 8: Increasing satisfaction with personal security while using the railway**

Passenger Focus recommends that development and implementation of a **strategy to deliver improved passenger satisfaction with personal security** while using the railway be one of DfT's key objectives for the Essex Thameside franchise. The specification should include the following requirements:

- contractual targets to improve NPS satisfaction with personal security on board trains and at stations.
- measures to increase the visible presence of staff on trains and at stations, particularly at times of the day when passenger satisfaction with personal security is lowest.

- provision of comprehensive CCTV coverage within each coach of each train operated by the franchise.
- achievement and maintenance of Secure Stations accreditation at all stations.

### **Recommendation 9: Passengers' charter**

Passenger Focus believes that the Essex Thameside operator should be required to introduce a new Passenger's Charter. Drawing on best practice from around the industry, we recommend that it contains the following provisions, including protection for season ticket holders who could experience a large number of sub-30 minute delays but receive no compensation under 'delay repay' Charters:

- an 'irrespective of cause' delay repay scheme giving compensation to the value of 50% of either the outward or return portion for a delay of 30-59 minutes; compensation to the value of 100% of either the outward or return portion for a delay of 60-119 minutes; and compensation to the value of 100% of the outward and return portions (where applicable) for a delay of 120 minutes or more.
- compensation to the value of your ticket in the event that an APRS booking is not honoured.
- in the event of a missed connection because of delay to or cancellation of an Essex Thameside train, a commitment to arrange alternative transport to get passengers to their final destination if the next connecting train is more than 60 minutes later and the alternative transport will result in an earlier arrival than waiting for the next train.
- in the event that delay to or cancellation of a Essex Thameside train makes it impossible for a passenger to get to their destination at a reasonable time by train or alternative transport, a commitment EITHER to get the passenger back to their origin point and let them travel again the following day OR arrange overnight accommodation and let them continue the following day, in either instance without additional charge.
- a commitment to provide refreshments at stations in the event of severe delays.
- protection for season ticket holders in the event of poor punctuality in the peaks over a sustained period. Our suggested wording is "Should customers on any Essex Thameside route experience a sustained period of poor punctuality on peak services we will compensate Season Tickets holders over and above the Delay Repay arrangements". Agreement would be needed about an appropriate delay threshold and trigger level and, based on research conducted previously on this subject we suggest a 10 minute threshold.

### **Recommendation 10: Meeting the needs of disabled passengers**

Passenger Focus recommends that DfT includes the following requirements in the specification of the Essex Thameside franchise:

- that an annual action plan be developed and implemented to enhance the service provided to disabled passengers using the Essex Thameside network and to improve customer satisfaction among those using the APRS system.
- that the new operator participates in the 'railways for all' process including a quantified commitment to improve access to stations over the life of the franchise.
- that sufficient post-journey customer satisfaction surveys are conducted each period to give a robust indication of the views of Essex Thameside passengers who used APRS when making their journey

- that all passengers with an APRS booking whose journey will be affected by amendments, cancellations or disruption to services will receive a telephone call to help them re-plan their journey.

#### **Recommendation 11: Getting to the station**

Passenger Focus recommends that DfT includes the following requirements in the specification of the Essex Thameside franchise:

- that alongside assumptions about growth in passenger volume during the franchise term a strategy must be developed for how passengers will get to and from Essex Thameside stations, including implications for car and bicycle parking. This should include a requirement to implement station Travel Plans at key locations.

#### **Recommendation 12: On train environment**

Passenger Focus recommends that DfT includes the following requirements in the specification of the Essex Thameside franchise:

- that all additional rolling stock brought into the franchise is refurbished to a standard comparable with the existing Class 357 fleet.
- that the operator meets contractual targets for NPS satisfaction for train cleaning, train toilets and upkeep/repair of the train.

#### **Recommendation 13: Station environment**

Passenger Focus recommends that DfT includes the following requirements in the specification of the Essex Thameside franchise:

- that the operator meets contractual targets for NPS satisfaction with up-keep/repair of stations, station cleanliness and station facilities and services.

Source: [What passengers want from the Essex Thameside rail franchise. A submission from Passenger Focus](#). November 2009



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Passenger Focus  
FREEPOST (RRRE-ETTC-LEET)  
PO Box 4257  
Manchester  
M60 3AR

0300 123 2350  
[www.passengerfocus.org.uk](http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk)  
[info@passengerfocus.org.uk](mailto:info@passengerfocus.org.uk)

Passenger Focus is the operating  
name of the Passengers' Council