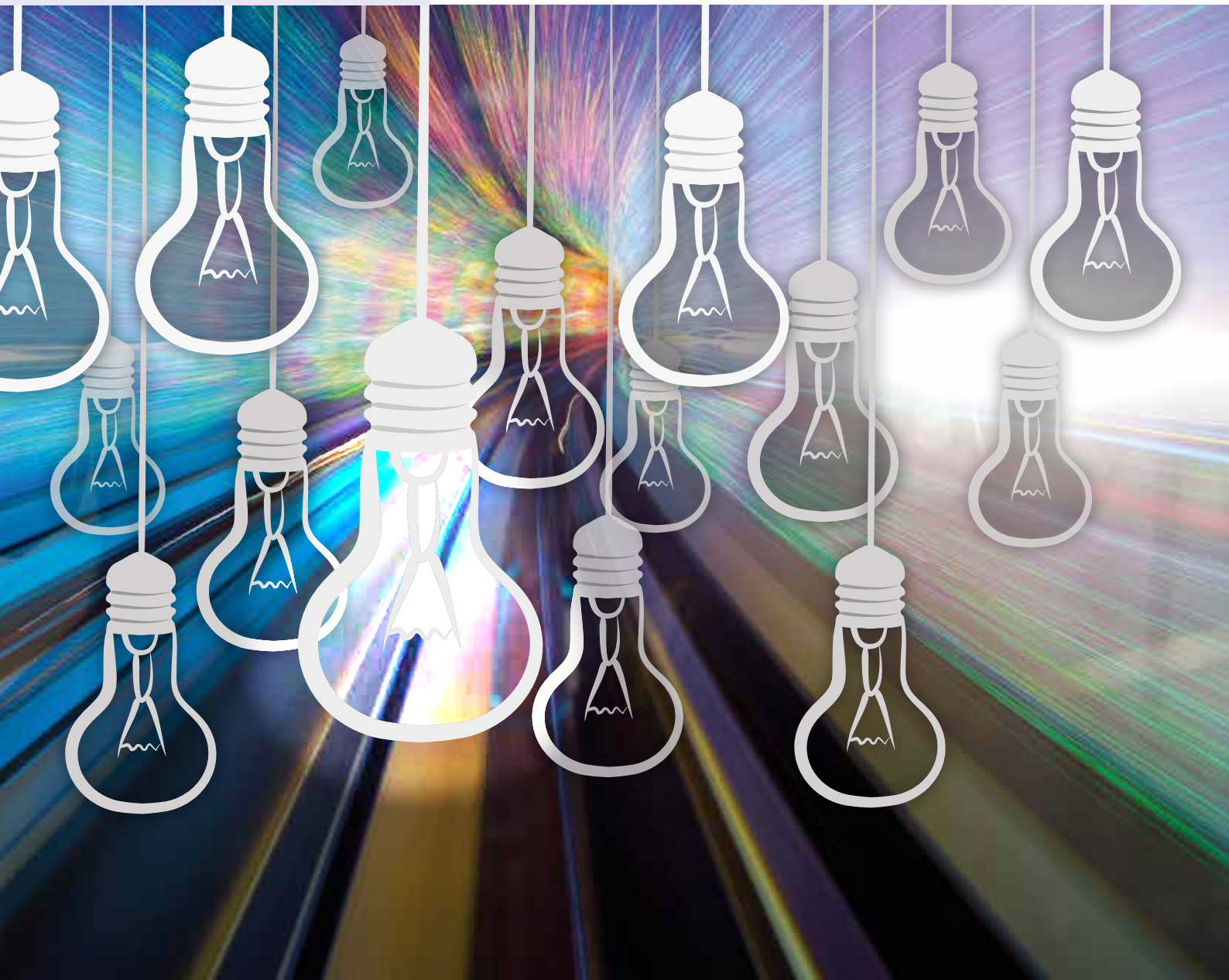


EXPLORING  
INTELLIGENT  
MOBILITY

# East Anglia Rail Franchise

**Innovation Consultation Report**  
May 2015





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# Foreword

Transport Focus believes it is vital that effective passenger consultation takes place before a new franchise is let and that the interests of passengers are placed at the very heart of rail services.

This will help to build the trust of passengers in the service they receive from the rail industry. We welcome initiatives that get passengers involved in the development of ideas and decision making. We were pleased to partner with Transport Systems Catapult on finding out how innovation can achieve this. Transport Focus hopes that franchise bidders and the wider rail industry will take into account what passengers want when planning future rail services in East Anglia and beyond.

**David Sidebottom**

**Passenger Director, Transport Focus**



transportfocus 

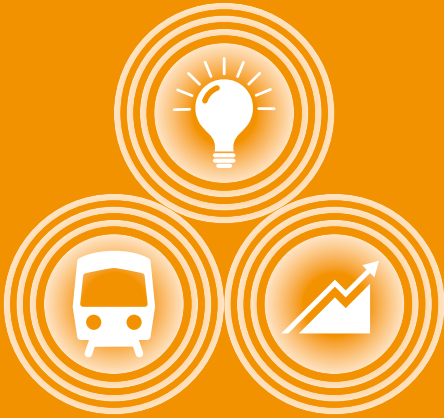
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Figure 1: East Anglia Rail Franchise Innovations Map

## Executive Summary

The Transport Systems Catapult conducted an independent qualitative study with the support of Transport Focus about **innovation needs and issues** for the East Anglia franchise in February 2015.



This report highlights the key opportunities and issues highlighted by this study which aimed to open up the franchising process to more **service, process or technology driven innovation** opportunities.

Not all data from this study is innovation, or necessarily new, but is the start of a dialogue that bidders can seek to build upon to develop a stronger franchise that will drive economic growth and service.

The headline findings include:

- The need to **provide 'Smart' ticketing**. There is perception that the overall technology ability available is not being fully exploited to enable either end to end journeys, reduce customer planning and information issues, to address cross modal ticketing purchasing. With technology advancing rapidly, greater use of partnering approaches can be made to enhance both the market offering and the customer experience
- Delays, complaints and refunds are a core area that drove the need to **provide a fairer deal** or 'fare deal' as participants called it. This included the use and integration of technology to move away from the perception of outdated, paper driven refund processes to live more instant, cumulative, refunds based on better use of customer information as part of building greater customer relationships and a better sense of fairness
- Customers want and **expect to have seamless cross modal journeys** where opportunities to purchase through tickets that include taxis and buses are 'the norm' or that parking costs become an integral integrated ticket purchasing choice. Participants felt that this needed to be underpinned by excellence in customer service and stronger local partnerships to exploit the potential of the region
- The **opportunity to build greater customer loyalty** through personalised information, offers and individual knowledge of customers was seen as a key area where mutual benefit can be secured. This reflected the comparative experience participants had with other sectors where they saw strong best practices being transferable to rail
- A more diverse, **flexible on board experience** is sought. Participants saw potential in some new on board offerings that could be experimented with and opportunities to provide better customisation for different types of passengers
- Finally, other business sectors have strong transferable practices that can help meet and exceed service expectations. Participants see the ability to **go the extra mile, providing timely and accurate information, convenient services and rewards for loyalty as core** to helping raise customer service delivery and meeting expectations



# Introduction

## Innovation in Rail Franchising – The journey so far

Established in 2013, the teams’ purpose is to promote innovation, sustainability, industry leadership and workforce capability through the franchising process.

The **Innovation in Rail Franchising Group**, works in partnership with the Department for Transport (Rail Executive), Transport Systems Catapult, Future Railway, the National Skills Academy for Rail Engineering (NSARE) and the Rail Safety Standards Board (RSSB).

A number of key actions to date have included:

- Identifying cross industry ‘barriers to innovation’ to provide an evidence based action oriented programme
- Establishing a pilot innovation in rail franchising fund worth £50m to enable funding and ambitious demonstrators
- Implementing innovation strategy requirements in invitation to tenders to drive actual in life innovation and capability
- Launching the industry capability maturity model to build industry wide skills and commitment to innovation
- Supporting the development of a new residual value mechanism
- Via Future Railway launching a series of significantly funded innovation competitions

This recent work has realised significant additional investment for innovation, enabled the lifting of innovation capability, and been the catalyst for positive changes to franchising policy. The Transport Systems Catapults future focus is to help position rail as an exemplar for customer led innovation in end to end journeys and intelligent mobility.



**Figure 2:** Innovation in Rail Franchising Group partnership organisations

“We continue to work with Innovate UK, Future Railway, Transport Systems Catapult and RSSB to build a comprehensive support framework for innovation in the rail sector.

We expect the East Anglia franchise to demonstrate those values and behaviours that will deliver the most innovative franchise to date”



Department for Transport (Rail Executive)  
East Anglia Prospectus – Delivering Transformation and Growth for Passengers  
February 2015





## Purpose of Consultation

The last two years has seen significant progress in **injecting innovation** into the rail franchising process.

The Department for Transport has high expectations for the franchise and this consultation supports that ambition.

### Objectives

The key objectives for this consultation were to:

- Gather customer insight, through an evidence based consultation, to stimulate additional investment in innovation
- Capture great ideas from passengers and stakeholders that will really make a difference to the customer experience
- Support the next steps on the innovation in rail franchising journey

This study was conducted as a small research project as a precursor to much larger and statistically robust surveys for future franchises as a means of piloting innovation research from a customer perspective.



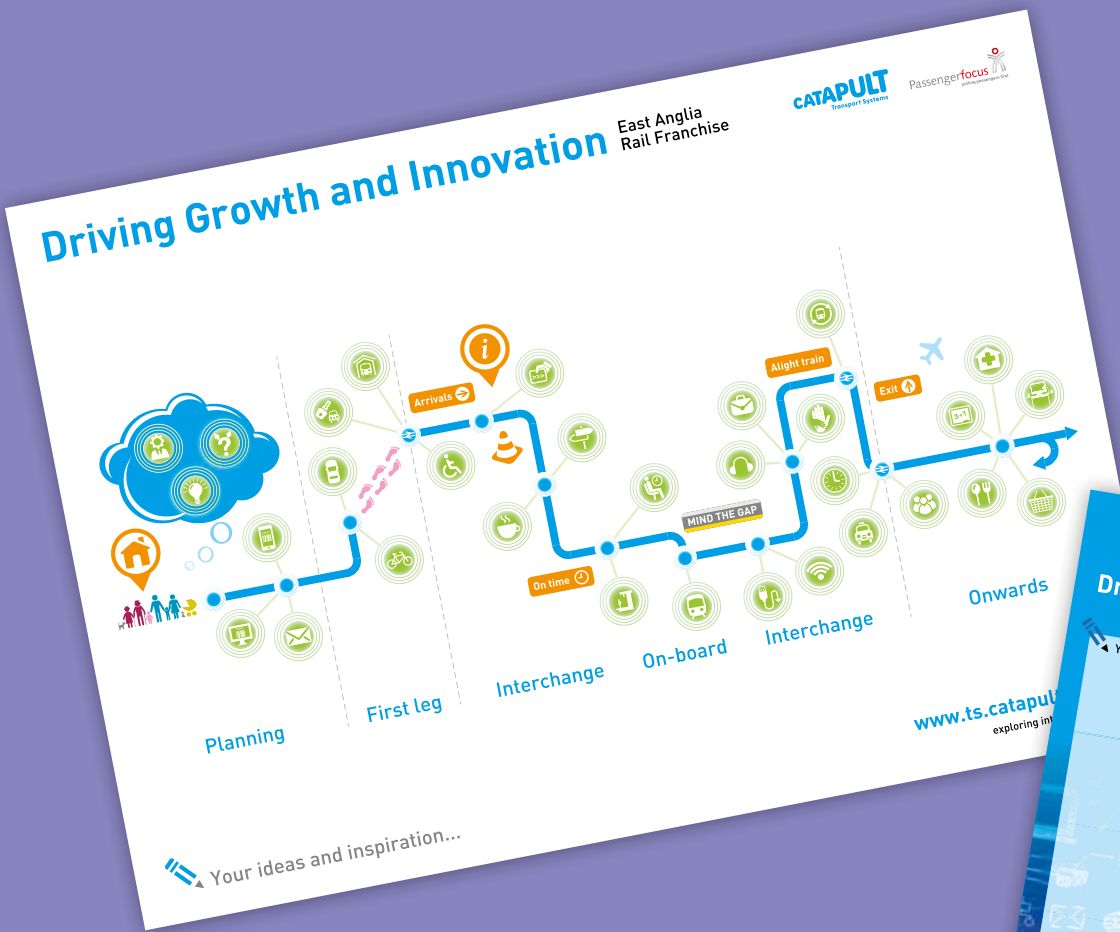
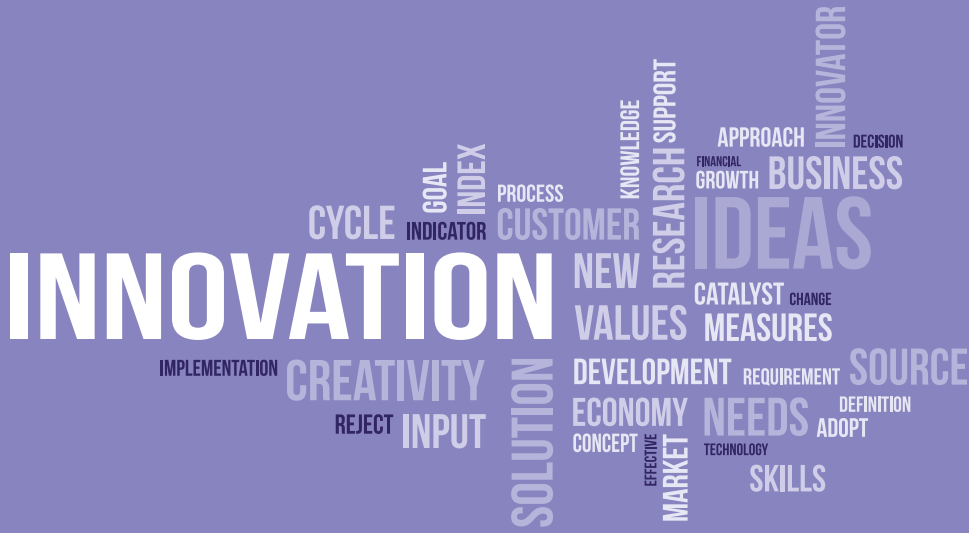


Figure 3: Consultation workshop material – ideas poster and postcard

# Consultation Process

In partnership with Transport Focus we held four innovation consultation workshops across East Anglia in February 2015.



## Participating organisations

- Bittern Line
- Burnham Town Council
- Burnham-on-Crouch Town Council
- Cambridge Autonomous Mobility
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Chelmsford Commuters and Rail Travellers
- Chelmsford City Council
- Colchester Borough Council
- Deltarail
- Department for Transport
- Essex County Council
- Essex Highways
- East Norfolk Transport Users
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Felixstowe Travel Watch
- Fenland District Council
- First Group
- Hertfordshire County Council
- The Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind
- Norfolk County Council
- 'ontrack'
- Plymouth University
- Rail Future
- Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
- Suffolk County Council
- Transport Focus
- University of Birmingham
- Utlesford District Council
- Association
- Visit East Anglia
- Visit Norfolk
- West Norfolk District Council

## Participants, locations and process

The consultation workshops were highly interactive and based on a focus group approach aiming to draw out a small number of key themes.

The aim was to ensure a wide range of stakeholders from the community, private sector, public sector could contribute to the innovation potential for the East Anglia franchise, and, more importantly, develop ideas to dramatically improve the customer experience **based on innovation**.

A broad cross section of stakeholders were invited to participate and a number of targeted approaches were made to ensure as many interested parties as possible were given the opportunity to share their views.

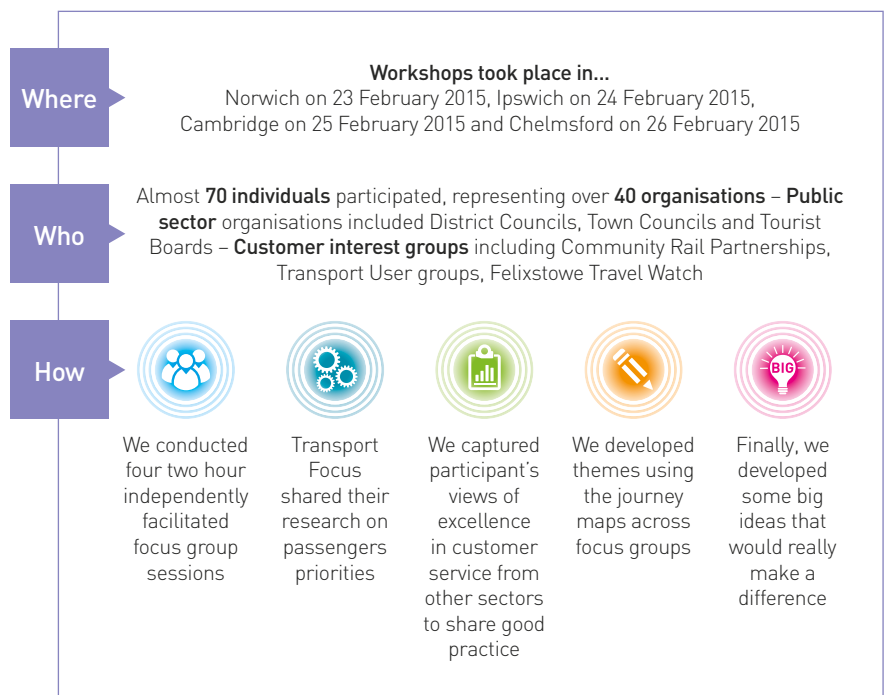


Figure 4: An overview of managing the consultation process

## Passengers priorities – Transport Focus

Transport Focus continues to build extensive research into passenger priorities and the factors that influence these priorities. Twice each year they publish the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) to measure passengers' satisfaction with various aspects of their rail journey. From time to time Transport Focus also conducts research into passengers' priorities for improvement, irrespective of their current level of satisfaction with a particular factor.

This update was an important element of the consultation in order to focus the dialogue around **innovation** rather than duplicate recent valuable market research. Readers should consider this report in the context of this and other recent Transport Focus research.

Figures 5 and 6 reflect the latest research. This research was carried out at stations through Great Britain during March and April 2014 with more than 3,500 passengers took part.

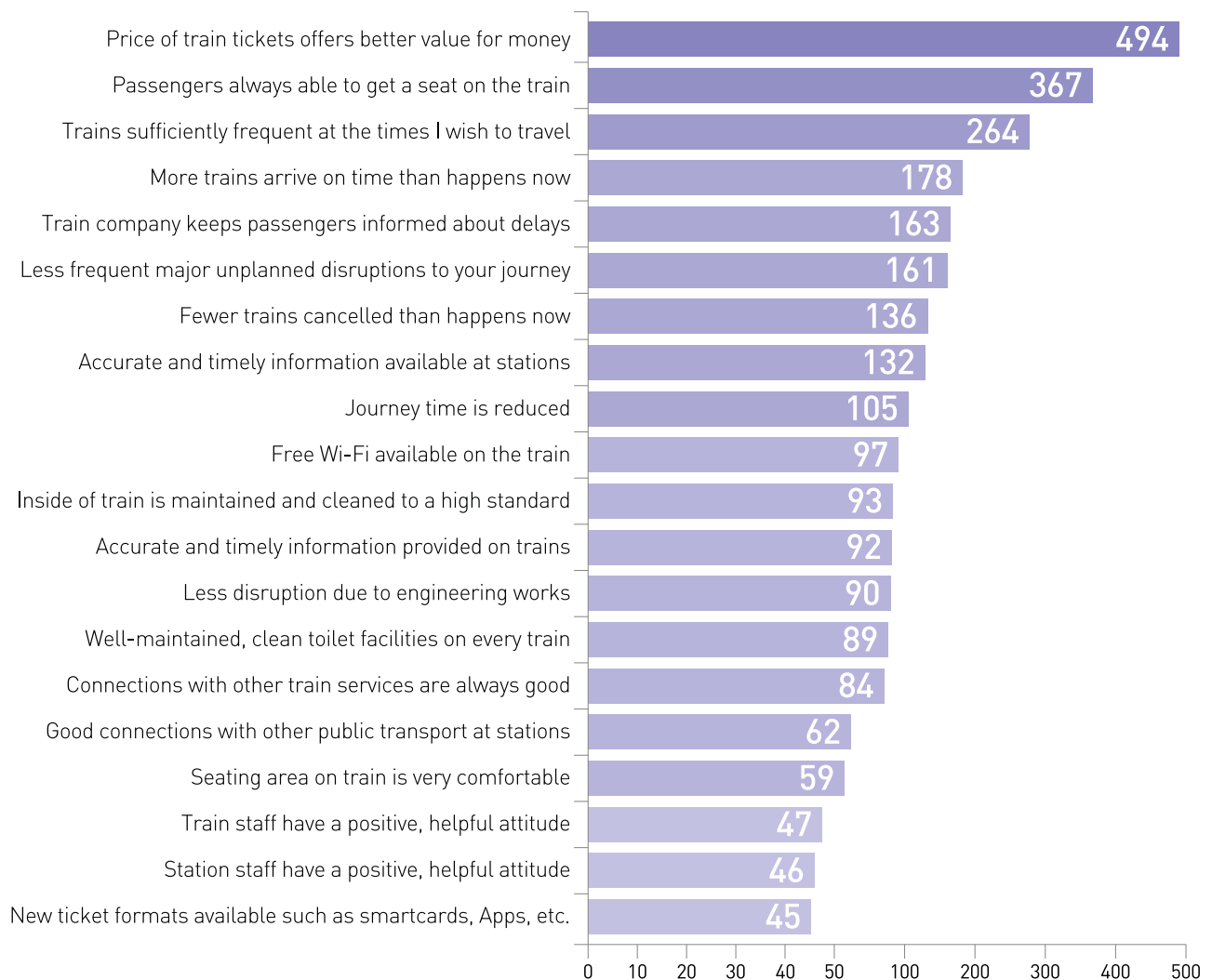


Figure 5: Transport Focus Top 20 – Passenger Priorities October 2014

Increasingly priorities are being influenced by softer, less tangible issues that build **affinity and trust** with passengers. At the pinnacle of brand experience, **personalisation and feeling valued**, coupled with **feeling in control** have a strong role in ensuring a dialogue with customers’ to build trust. Innovation and technology have high potential to impact these and other key areas valued by customers.

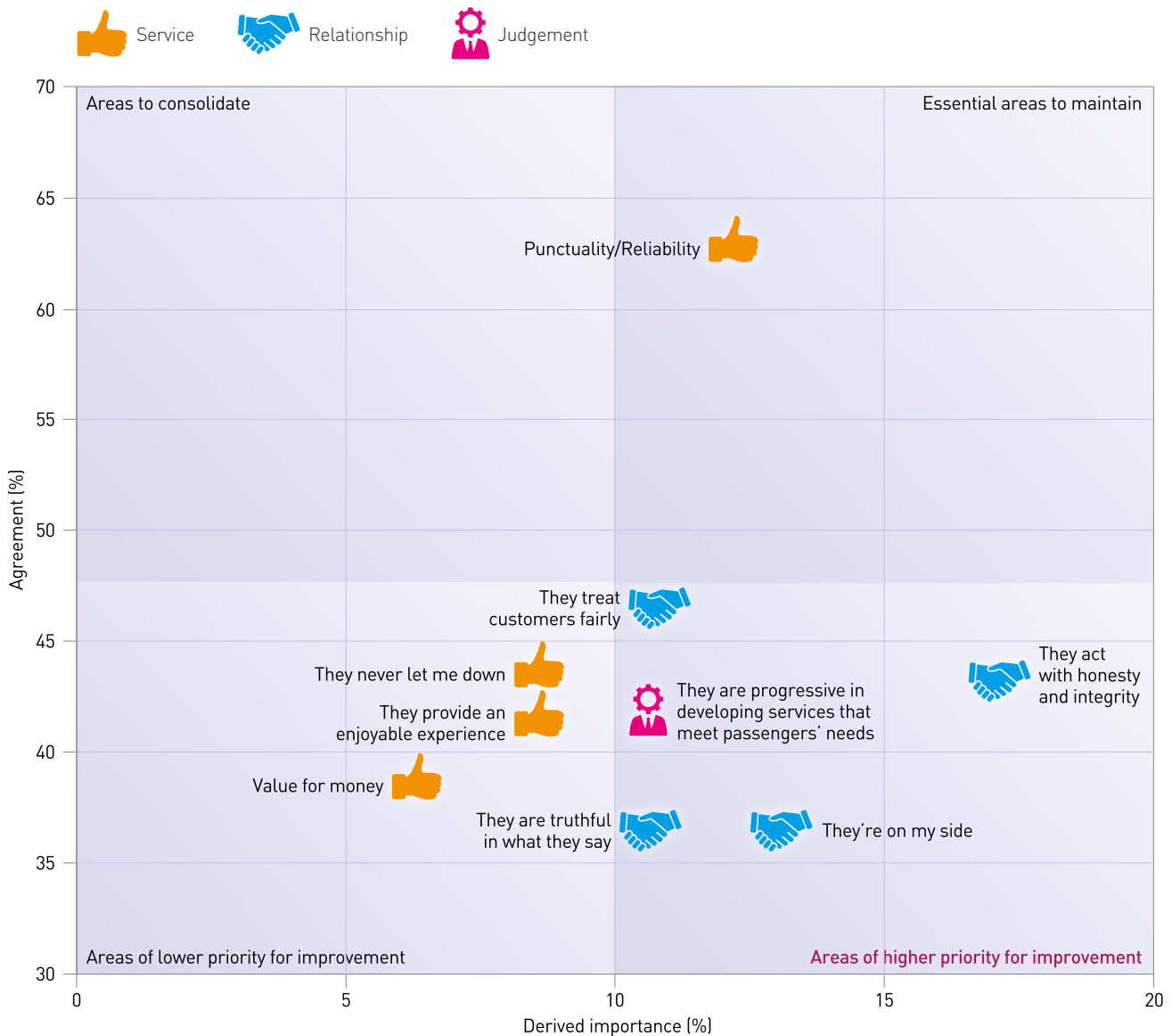


Figure 6: Top nine areas to build trust – Transport Focus

## Comparative innovation in customer service

Customers have wide ranging experiences across industries and they make regular daily comparisons of the differences in customer experience. The following issues identify a few key areas where respondents felt they had experienced **exceptional service delivered through innovation**.

### ISSUE

1

#### 'Going the extra mile'

Simply meeting expectations often isn't good enough for today's consumers. Instead, **customers look for 'above and beyond' services and experiences**. The best companies strive to exceed expectations, provide superb customer service and 'go the extra mile'. It's an area for differentiation that's open to train operators to grasp.

Crucially organisations that go the extra mile are perceived to proactively seek to understand customer needs, and often translate that need into a personalised experience. This builds trust with the customer.



### ISSUE

2

#### Timely and accurate information

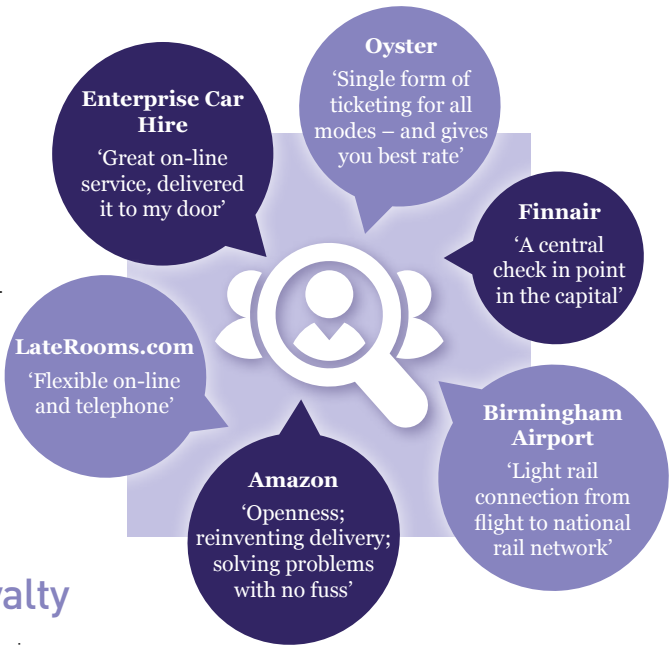
Customers today can access information from a wide range of sources. The best companies 'tailor' and 'push' information to their customers in a way that meets the profile of the individual and enables them to respond accordingly, especially at times of disruption. This is underpinned with the appropriate use of technology to complement other means of communication.

The organisations frequently highlighted by participants had used **personalised customer data** to develop a better customer service and new offerings.

The process of considering innovation from other sectors was designed to help stimulate participant's ideas that could be transferable to rail and also to **encourage rail companies to seek out the very best in customer service and innovation globally.**

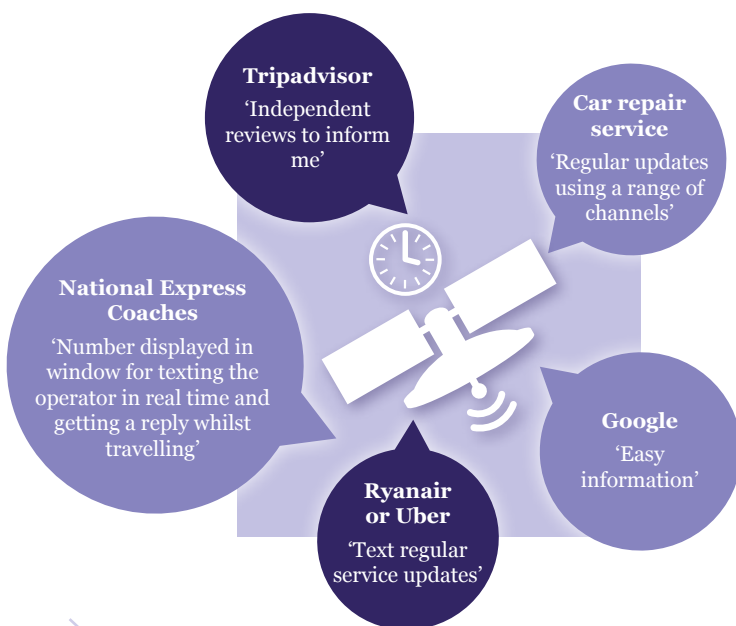
## ISSUE 3 Convenient services

The best companies enable easy access to services for their customers, often with a **single point of contact** or an **experience of knowledge of the individual** customer. These companies can offer a seamless service, with simple means of payment and ticketing.



## ISSUE 4 Rewards for loyalty

Customers expect companies to reward them for regular use. The best companies build loyalty with their customers and **provide rewards that are meaningful to their needs**. They understand how loyalty affects recommendation and long term business performance. Many respondents felt this was a key issue and made regular day to day comparisons' across modes and sectors when looking at customer service.



# Innovation for East Anglia

## Key themes

Identifying positive customer experiences from other sectors helped to stimulate participant's ideas beyond the standard service factors normally examined.



The emerging innovation themes for the East Anglia franchise were aligned to some of the issues that made customer experience in other sectors 'great'.

The key themes included:

- Ticketing and ensuring how the customer always gets a fair deal
- Seamless end to end journeys
- Loyalty and reward
- Ideas to stimulate new ways of developing 'great on board' experiences

These themes are opportunities for innovation, with the consultation process leaving it open to industry and the Department for Transport about how to respond.





“I’d love to have a train operator who knows who I am”

## Ticketing and ‘a fare deal’

Customers want the industry to provide a **simpler and fairer pricing structure** for tickets. There is a strong perception amongst customers that the way ticketing is managed is often overly complicated, inflexible and unfair.

This theme is underpinned by:

- A desire to see new technology as a driver to enable smarter with more ‘joined-up’ ticketing, incorporating automatic refunds, instant delay repay compensation systems and journey flexibility where connections are missed. Participants also saw staff who are empowered to ensure passengers to get the best deal regardless of how they buy a ticket as an essential
- A better deal for all passengers, including a more transparent pricing structure and choice of ticketing to accommodate season tickets holders, part time workers and families, to help reduce peak congestion and maximising off peak capacity

### Consultation ideas for the East Anglia franchise

A wide range of ticketing issues emerged, focused on ticketing themes of **flexibility, utilising capacity better, modernising the refund system** and **developing more customer understanding** about the needs of people with different disabilities.

Respondents identified opportunities to **improve capacity**. This included improving the use of empty seats from London in the morning peak, greater use of last minute offers to fill seats, a wider offering on family tickets with children travelling free, or jointly with Tourist Boards and regional businesses promoting and marketing the potential of the region.

The issue of fairness and adequacy of response when things go wrong, or when a refund is due, was a source of concern. This related strongly to a sense of fairness and frustration that smaller delays are not recognised as ‘time penalties’ to passengers and that **the refund system is generally out of date**.



#### Flexibility and pricing

*“Simpler pricing structure that’s fair and reasonable”*

*“Smart ticketing to enable journey changes and best price”*

*“Commuter tickets – bulk purchased through employers – personalised to each workers needs and priced accordingly (volume, time of travel etc.)”*

*“More intelligent ticket vending machines where regular customers can have a personalised account”*

*“One ticket for the whole journey”*

*“Flexible tickets, cross TOC and cross routes’ with better through tickets to cover other modes as part of the same journey”*

*“Something between a ‘season ticket’ and a regular ‘one off’ ticket”*

*“Time limited ‘Carnet’ of tickets”*

*“More flexibility if you miss a train”*

*“Train / bus connections and through tickets”*

*“Ticket staff trained and empowered to offer full info and genuinely best value tickets for all enquiries”*



#### Customer understanding on disability

*“Tickets for vision impaired – different feeling tickets”*

*“Book and travel on the day for journeys requiring assistance”*

*“On-line bookings – better accessible features i.e. colour contrast, large text”*



#### Modernising the refund system

*“Service compensation paid proactively”*

*“Move away from forms”*

*“Refunds onto a Smart Card”*

*“Seamless cash back and auto compensation”*

*“Instant refunds informed by text messages”*

## Innovation insight on ticketing

Stakeholders and customers are demanding a step change in systems and processes that they perceive have been slow to change. They recognise that other sectors are making stronger progress and can see variable service levels across the UK transport system.

The following summarises some critical areas for action under this theme:

- Smarter ticketing to enable flexible journey changes and a guarantee of obtaining or being offered the lowest possible price. Fairer and more transparent ticket pricing so customers always get the best deal and are offered it straight away
- A range of offerings that reflects the ability for customers to have breaks in journeys, and new offerings between a 'season ticket' and a regular 'one off' ticket, such as a 'Carnet'
- Making use of spare capacity on trains by introducing offer and deals
- Better 'through tickets' to cover other train companies and modes of travel which are part of the same journey including taxis, buses and other modal options that can be built into one main 'end to end' ticket
- Embracing new and available technologies to deliver rapid, hassle free refunds for delays and moving beyond the 30 minutes delay limits to recognise the value of time to the travelling public

## 'The Big Idea'

Develop a hassle free 'East Anglia Door to Door Smartcard' fully multi-modal smart ticketing.

The key features ensure that service is personalised to my needs, offering a flexible approach to ticketing including carnet, season or pay as you travel choices.

Customers are valued and receive information with live updates on capacity and final leg information.

Loyalty rewards tailored to my preferences on offers discounts, 'train miles' and refunds direct to my card.



“Customer profiles to inform the service you receive”

### Innovation insight on seamless end to end journeys

Respondents want not just better and more accurate information about the whole journey, but the whole capability to book end to end services as part of the whole journey. They see better value to be achieved from reinventing how stations are used as a more integrated part of the community, helping make them thriving hubs. They wanted to see much improved information on connections and wayfinding within stations, and appropriate for different mobility needs of passengers.

## Seamless end to end journeys

The need to facilitate seamless end to end journeys for customers is seen as **essential**.

Respondents are looking for an easy multi-modal journey from home to their destination that encompasses end to end information and much more imaginative use of stations and integration with other transport services.

The end to end journey is not just seen as the modes of transport that will get them from A to B, it is much more holistic than this and covers all interactions or ‘touch points’ the customer has, from awareness to advocacy.

This theme is underpinned by a whole **seamless journey** planning and delivery experience, **exploitation of the modes** through a **partnership approach** and **delivered by highly customer focused staff**. Respondents across the consultation identified with strong examples of customer service and constantly emphasised that it was people who were a key element of delivering an innovative service.

### Consultation ideas for the East Anglia franchise



#### Seamless journey experience

“Seamless – flowing; joined-up; no hiccups from planning journey through buying tickets, route to station, station to train, off-train and beyond – a hassle free simple initiative”  
 “Tram, train and bus integration”  
 “End to end journey planning ‘app’”  
 “Understanding your personal journey each day and options to enhance the experience when things go wrong”



#### Exploit the modes better

“Car share schemes at stations and in towns”  
 “Car clubs at stations and community car schemes for rural locations”  
 “‘Bike and Go’ schemes extended”  
 “Real time car parking info-on-line capacity and booking”  
 “One stop payment (car parking, coffee, train)”



#### Empowered customer focused employees

“Improve quality and consistency of staff service and increase staffing on trains and stations”  
 “Customer experience champions –harness the experience of Ipswich ticket staff in a app!”  
 “Multi-functional and empowered staff on stations and train”  
 “‘Data alchemist’ that knows where seats are to tell staff”



#### Stronger and wider partnerships

“Partnership / collaboration to enhance facilities at stations”  
 “Stations being hubs for people to meet and work – scalable”  
 “Work with tourist boards, make more use of local food on board, exploit the potential of the region”

## Building customer loyalty

Customers are looking for the industry to build and sustain loyalty that not only extends beyond the physical franchise boundaries, but that is also **tailored to individual's needs**.

Rewarding loyalty appropriately can give people a reason to return and, be in a variety of forms. Building loyalty through linking rewards to customer insight or profiles can ensure the incentives are appropriate for customer needs and tailored. Loyalty and reward was also seen to work hand in hand with the need for a revitalised and speedy system to address payment for compensation events that reflected a more balanced and modern approach to customer relationships.

## Innovation insight on loyalty

While loyalty schemes are now not perceived as innovative across the UK, the idea of something new and refreshing in this area offers operators an opportunity to provide greater service innovation.

The wider concept of smarter 'joined-up' commuter loyalty is an issue. This includes car parking, reserved seat, links to incentives that can be tailored to different customer segments with some element of transferable reward. These rewards should reflect peoples whole journey or travelling experience and not that just that of a single mode. This need links closely to the ability to understand customers' from a personal basis and actively use data and information to enhance the whole experience.



## Consultation ideas for the East Anglia franchise



### Loyalty works for everyone

*"Smart Commuter Experience – car parking, reserved seat, links to incentives and money off, coffees"*

*"Customer lounge (rather than a meeting room)"*

*"Tailoring – miles; treats; upgrades; discounts"*

*"Personalised offers"*

*"Train Miles scheme"*

*"Upgrades to 1st class for regular users"*

*"The idea of a loyalty scheme for travellers, offering giveaway and other incentives to all not just to regular users or commuters. Money off, say a 10th journey or free coffee, newspaper"*

*"Nectar Points or something – it adds up to give you a benefit"*

*"Use established (loyalty) people and companies"*

*"If a (loyalty) schemes extends beyond the franchise use a 'network gold card'"*



“Help the local economy, use local produce in the buffet cars and trolleys”

## A great on-board experience

Customers are looking for the industry to raise the bar for on-board experience whilst embracing the **latest technology** to deliver a more **flexible approach** to the use of trains.

In a number of instances the issues of cycle capacity, more and safer luggage storage and a demand for more locally sourced and produced food with a concierge service for seating are small challenges that can be resolved in new ways. The sense of a better and **more flexible use of space** and **responding to the technology trends** and needs on board emerged regularly.

### Innovation insight on on-board experience

These issues are not new, but the response needs to be. The overall sense of dynamism and flexibility and how to respond is the key challenge. Respondents were looking for improved connectivity on trains through a step change in provision of free Wi-Fi, charging points and stronger Wi-Fi that supports on-train streaming of media. The need to be able to use mobile devices is becoming the norm with expectations and usage patterns only likely to increase.

### Consultation ideas for the East Anglia franchise



#### Greater on board flexibility

“Singles carriages, family carriages”  
 “Fun spaces for children, better soundproofing”  
 “Personal pods”  
 “More working space”  
 “More flexible use of 1st class space”  
 “Using 1st Class as a bookable meeting space”



#### Responding to technology trends

“USB charging points”  
 “On board streaming ability”  
 “3 / 4 G on trains”  
 “Free Wi-Fi and charging points for all”  
 “Help points on trains so you can access information if you have no way to find out”  
 “Real time capacity checks”



## Collective views on the big ideas

In summarising each workshop's contributions, a number of **'big ideas'** were developed by participants working in small groups. Each group considered all of the outputs from the consultation exercises, to identify scope to be even more innovative for East Anglia.

These 'big ideas' identify how participants would like the key themes identified through this consultation to be turned into reality. The majority of the big ideas are under each key theme.

The examples are included against key themes where relevant.



### The Big Idea – 'The Accessible Smartcard'

The Norfolk and Norwich Association for the Blind had some key insights and creativity in developing a big idea they called the Accessible Smartcard. The need is to address ticketing challenges, ensuring people can be easily met and communication that's suitable to blind people's needs.

The key elements included:

- Have chip in the card so when a blind person is travelling the operator can be advised
- Help passengers by enabling them to pre-programme regular journeys, and where an accessible journey is not pre-booked enable a proactive phone alert to contact the traveller
- Put braille on the back and where a card number is used make it short with the individual name and no more than four numeric digits
- Link the card to a whole end to end journey, including taxis and buses to remove the stress of these interchanges. It's the confidence of being met that helps ease the passenger journey
- Where possible enable a sound where the passenger boards the right carriage and is in the right seat
- Be imaginative, offer some customisation feel to the card and some key areas of good practice referred to are the these websites: web accessibility software such as used at Gatwick Airport ([reciteme.com](http://reciteme.com)) or innovative work by Barclays Bank with contrast cards ([accessibility](http://accessibility))



## Lessons from other sectors

The participants from the consultation were able to demonstrate readily where they had received great service, and examples of innovation from other sectors. Many of the examples cited from other industries are simple but effective good practices to give their customers what they expect, and often go the extra mile. Most of these are transferrable to any other sector and rail also offers good transferable service innovation to other transport modes.

Customers today look for 'above and beyond' services and experiences, and it is evident that the best companies strive to exceed customer expectations. They use a wide range of means to understand customer needs, and often translate those needs into a personalised service.

Rail users are used to accessing information on other services from a wide range of sources. The rail industry is responding to needs for accurate and timely information, but can do much more.

Our participants considered that the best companies tailor and push information in a way that matches individual profiles. In particular, other industries are adept at keeping customers informed when things do not go to plan.

Customers also value convenience. The best companies enable easy access to services, often through a single point of contact, offering simple and varied means of payment. Reward also features highly on how great companies go the extra mile. The best companies build loyalty with their customers, and provide rewards tailored to their needs.

The key messages from our participants was that the two key elements of a great customer experience, and an enabler to innovative services in rail, are; feeling connected, and feeling valued.

# Conclusions

Passengers and stakeholders have great ideas, and can contribute significantly to achieving **innovative rail franchises**. In developing proposals for this franchise more use needs to be made of customer insight to develop innovative solutions.

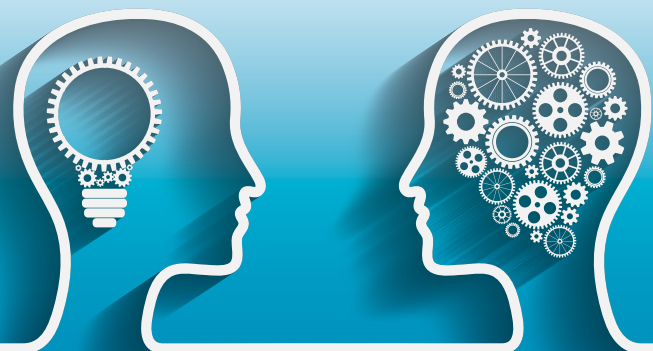
## Challenge to the industry

The challenge from passengers and stakeholders, is for bidders for the franchise to build upon, and exploit this insight, and **make the East Anglia franchise the most innovative to date**, including:

- Respondents expect to see customer excellence really woven throughout their delivery plans, with transferrable ideas from other sectors
- There is a significant need to take real ownership of the door to door journey, becoming a single point of contact for multi-modal connections to and from the stations. Again, technology enabled solutions will be crucial but at the heart respondents emphasised that truly service oriented people make a difference every day
- They expect new partnerships to emerge that will advance technological solutions to ticketing, integration and the on board experience. The supply chain from both within and outside the rail sector can play a large part in advancing these challenges.

The customer insight contained within this report augments the evidence from other sources, including research undertaken by Transport Focus. It is not exhaustive and was conducted as a qualitative research study. We encourage further research to continue to identify exploitable innovation opportunities.

Finally, an innovative train operating company will have innovative leadership and staff. Building capability in innovation, and creating the right culture, will ensure customer and stakeholder led innovation ideas can be realised.





# Contacts

Should you require further information on Innovation in Rail Franchising, or the outputs from this research, please contact one of the Transport Systems Catapult team:

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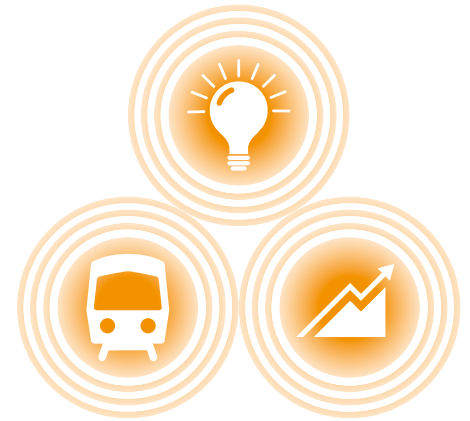
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