

Rail enhancements to support growth at Stansted Airport

“Stansted is an important economic asset to Essex and a big part of what makes our county such an attractive proposition for businesses.”

Cllr Louise McKinlay
Deputy Leader
Essex County Council

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Delivering faster, more frequent services between Stansted, London, Cambridge and the wider region

Overview of scheme

- Currently, four trains per hour run between Stansted and London throughout the day, and up to two services run between Stansted and Cambridge, some of these services continue to other destinations. Delivering additional early and late services would enable passengers on the first and last flights of the day to reliably use rail.
- There is also a need to develop the case for more direct and frequent services between Stansted and other destinations, such as in Norfolk and the Midlands, this will include assessing any additional infrastructure required; as well as the benefits which could be

Delivering Government Missions

- The opportunity to grow at and around Stansted airport is strongly aligned to the **Economic Growth** mission. The airport has committed to a £1.1bn investment programme which can support 5,000 new jobs and £2bn in GVA growth. Rail infrastructure investment can help support this growth achieve even better public transport modal share.
- Enhanced connectivity to Cambridge, a globally renowned research and innovation centre. The line between Stansted and Cambridge serves the new Cambridge South station providing links to the Bio Medical Campus

Deliverability in this Parliament

- ✓ Additional early-morning and late-night services between Stansted and London are deliverable in the short term.
- ✓ Development funding will support a major growth plan through additional services north of the airport, linking to Cambridge.

Estimated Cost

Additional services without infrastructure enhancements could be delivered at a low marginal cost and be revenue neutral or positive.

Next Steps

Partnership working with the rail industry to understand the potential impacts in more detail.



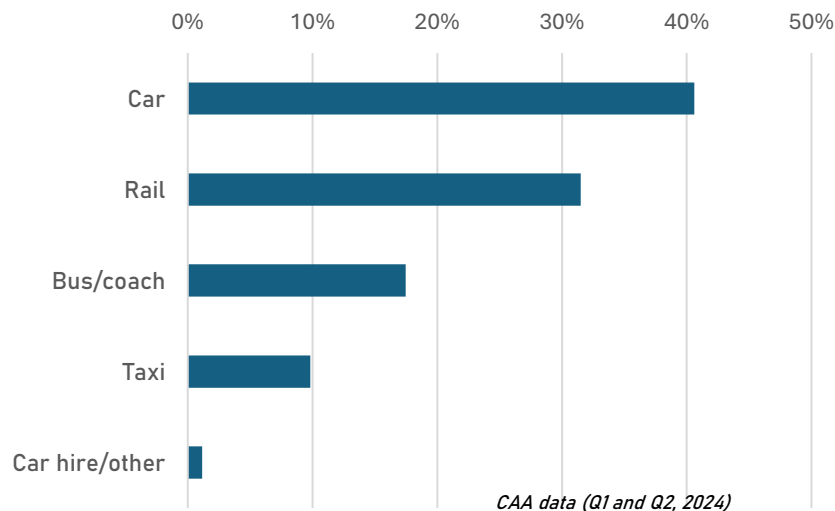
32% of 28m passengers arriving or departing Stansted airport use rail. However, there are several user groups where rail is not an attractive proposition. The first and last rail services of the day do not allow time for passengers to connect to the first and last flights of the day. A lack of direct services from Norwich with large gaps in the timetable lead to a higher likelihood of these passengers driving instead.

Improvements will make rail services to Stansted Airport a more attractive proposition for travellers and employees, boost international connectivity and support the airport's ambitions for sustainable growth.

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TRANSPORTEAST

Of the almost 50% of people using sustainable transport options to access Stansted, 32% of passengers access the airport by rail. With the airport's passenger numbers set to rise from 28m to 43m annually, delivering rail enhancements can support further shifts towards sustainable modes.



Alignment to Transport East Aims

Scheme aligns with Transport East pathway of **'Unlocking International Gateways'**, and specifically support the goal to **'Improving connectivity, journey time and reliability for freight, passengers and employees to ports and airports'**.

The case for change

The Stansted Investment Plan outlines a £1.1 billion programme to enable the airport to serve up to 43 million passengers a year and create over 5,000 new jobs. Enhanced rail services can support sustainable transport goals in two ways: firstly, additional early and late services between Stansted and London (deliverable now) can further build rail demand and support mode shift, particularly as passenger numbers grow. Secondly additional capacity serving Cambridge and beyond in the short and medium term is needed to support bold aspirations for jobs and international connections.

Why now and what happens if we don't deliver?

Initial early and late services are deliverable now and would see an immediate impact. There are several user groups where rail is not an attractive proposition. As of February 2025, the first weekday service from London to Stansted Airport departs at 04:40, arriving at 05:39. This eliminates rail as an option for any travellers departing before 07:00. Additional early-morning and late-night services would provide greater confidence for these passengers to reliably use rail.

As the airport grows it is focused on serving Cambridge, Norwich and the East of England as well as London – however sustainable mode choices from these other areas will be limited unless rail services are improved

Importance to the Transport East Region

Transport East's Connectivity Study has carried out a comprehensive assessment of the importance of schemes in the Strategic Investment Plan to the goals of the Transport East Strategy. This study quantified the importance of different corridors against a range of strategic metrics linked to the Strategy. Schemes were assessed against their likely ability to support the Strategy Goals and how important the corridor they sat within was to regional connectivity.

At present, whilst rail mode share to the airport is growing, there is scope to increase this a further with targeted service enhancements which can be developed and delivered alongside ambitious airport expansion plans. It will help to meet the region's decarbonisation ambitions whilst also delivering productivity and agglomeration benefits to the wider economy, with benefits realised by those living, working and visiting the Eastern region, London, the Midlands and beyond.