

1. Executive Summary

1.1. Overview

The Greater Anglia (GA) Annual Business Plan (ABP) is designed to achieve the wider rail industry objectives set for GA, by delivering strategies, actions and a financial plan which achieve local targets, as well as underpinning and supporting national rail objectives.

The overarching aim is to provide a positive customer experience which accelerates demand and drives revenue growth, whilst continuing to operate as a financially sustainable railway. In 2023/24 that will include both the opportunities presented by the completion of the transition to full new trains operation and revenue recovery, and the challenges presented by wider economic issues and the specific financial constraints facing the rail industry, with the need for cost efficiencies they necessitate.

Historically, GA has been a healthy, profitable and premium-paying franchisee performing well against its customer, financial and contractual measures. This strong performance and commitment to continuous improvement was maintained throughout the pandemic emergency contracts and the first year of the National Rail Contract (NRC) - and was recently recognised with GA being named Passenger Operator of the Year at the National Rail Awards 2022.

Furthermore, as well as delivering an entirely new fleet of trains and investing significant capital in the largest TOC-delivered infrastructure change programme the industry has ever seen, GA returned to being a positive net contributor to the industry's finances in 2022, as a result of excellent operational performance, customer service, revenue generation and cost reduction activity.

This well-established high performance provides the foundation for GA to deliver against the Secretary of State's industry objectives, including new initiatives and actions to further enhance the customer experience, optimize all opportunities to accelerate revenue recovery and support further sustainable efficiency.

In summary, therefore, GA's strategic objectives are as follows:

- Creating a truly customer-centric organisation, with an engaged and motivated workforce focused on delivering high levels of customer service and performance.
- Securing the full positive impact of completing the new trains' introduction across the entire network. As a once in a generation opportunity, this transformation will be achieved through an enhanced customer experience strategy, highly effective collaboration with partners and stakeholders, plus best in class marketing and brand activity to drive customer trust and loyalty. By genuinely transforming people's perceptions of rail, GA will fast-track revenue growth and further boost rail's recovery.
- Sustained delivery of excellent, robust operational performance, achieved through an industry-leading approach to continuous improvement which identifies and delivers meaningful actions to enhance service recovery and mitigate the risk of future performance-impacting issues.
- Continuing to operate in a cost-efficient, cost-effective manner, delivering for customers, taxpayers and to Department for Transport (DfT) targets, whilst still meeting customer service and performance targets.
- Delivering a step change in Diversity & Inclusion to ensure GA becomes one of the region's employers of choice, attracting talent for future growth, at the same time as positively promoting the industry and further increasing engagement with the communities GA serves.
- A relentless pursuit of equality of opportunity in accessing rail services. GA is committed to providing robust accessibility support to ensure a culture of inclusion and prevent direct or indirect discrimination.
- As environmental awareness increases and starts to significantly inform the way people travel, GA will capitalise on this trend by implementing meaningful actions towards becoming a carbon neutral rail network and making train travel the most sustainable choice.

As a key collaborative partner to DfT, Transport UK Group (formerly Abellio Transport Group), GA's parent company, will continue to leverage its expertise and scale to amplify the benefits flowing through the GA ABP. This includes centres of excellence in Transport UK's ancillary businesses (including rail replacement, shared services, property, station advertising, car parks, and corporate travel) which not only deliver better quality, lower cost services to GA, but also help GA focus on continuously improving rail service delivery for the benefit of customers and the DfT.

1.2. How GA will deliver its Annual Business Plan 2023/24 targets

Before, during and beyond the pandemic, GA has implemented innovative commercial initiatives to ensure that all income opportunities were fully maximised. These strong foundations will be built upon in the coming months to drive further revenue growth, utilising the marketing budget available, building on the scope for income generation presented by both the ongoing recovery in passenger demand and the transformation provided by completion of the switch to all services being operated by new trains.

The proactive strategy to enhance the overall customer experience will be maintained, always looking to increase customer satisfaction through the delivery of service enhancements, improvements and high standards in general (including in those areas measured under the Service Quality Regime), overseen through a Customer Experience Board and with year-round, independent, helpful, insight, guidance and input from the rail industry's statutory customer watchdog, Transport Focus.

Also central to GA's strategy is to cost effectively provide an efficient, high-performing operation that delivers the right capacity at the right time in order to build public trust in the railway as a safe and preferred method of transport, whilst providing consistently high standards of punctuality and reliability – building on the excellent performance results of the last three years.

GA has frequently and successfully flexed its timetable to match demand, overcoming uncertainty around growth projections and sustained industrial action. By utilising advanced demand data analysis, facilitated by technology on the new trains, GA was able to implement incremental changes to the timetable, adjusting seating capacity in line with emerging and ongoing demand. Through this approach a more efficient service was operated, and savings were realised, while still providing a good service for customers.

This strategy will continue and, to achieve full timetable optimisation in 2023/24, GA's strategy focuses on enhanced Driver deployment and unit efficiency through specific, targeted rewrites of the timetable, matching capacity to demand in the most efficient way possible.

As a result of its long-term focus on commercial viability, timetable optimisation and driving efficiency, GA is well placed to meet the challenging budget targets of the year ahead. The effective strategy which has seen GA meet its 2022/23 cost budget target, will be mirrored by a similarly relentless approach in achieving the 2023/24 ABP targets.

GA will again seek to achieve savings (across both large-scale and smaller spend areas), without adversely affecting service quality, utilising a successful marginal gains approach established during the emergency contracts.

In summary, through the further development of a diverse, highly skilled and engaged workforce, GA will seek to become a truly customer-centric organization, that delivers a journey experience which builds and retains passengers' loyalty, thereby accelerating recovery and demand.

GA will be relentless in ensuring there is equality of opportunity in accessing rail services for people across the broad spectrum of access needs. GA is therefore committed to providing positive accessibility support to achieve a culture of inclusion that prevents direct or indirect discrimination.

Forging strong collaborative relationships with key industry partners, GA will be at the forefront of developing a "One Railway, Our Railway" approach, that is fully focused on passengers' requirements, as well as building on the positive partnerships we have with communities and stakeholders across our region to help us meet their ongoing aspirations for their railway.

Finally, GA will again prioritise the highest standards of customer service, with the aim of achieving equally high levels of customer satisfaction, by also delivering excellent performance, maximising the positive impact of the new train fleet, attracting more passengers to drive revenue growth, whilst in parallel focusing on further efficiencies, financial prudence and cost effectiveness. Our clear aim is to be a very successful train operator, by meeting, and wherever possible exceeding, the needs and expectations of our customers and stakeholders.