



East Anglia: Chancellor George Osborne announces £550m rail boost for the region – and promises 60-minute journeys from Ipswich to London on most services

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Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne today unveiled a £550million package to transform the region's main rail link to London within the next decade.

By 2023 almost all trains between Ipswich and London will take just 60 minutes to complete the journey – part of a major speed-up which will see trains from the capital to Norwich taking just 90 minutes.

Next year a programme of upgrading existing trains on the route will start – but by 2020 a fleet of new trains should be operating on the London line.

Mr Osborne set out plans for a new expert group to find ways of speeding up rail services to the East of England by as much as 25 per cent.

He said: "East Anglia is one of the fastest growing regions in the country and is establishing itself as a world leader in science, technology and manufacturing. To support this growth we need to have modern, efficient rail services and improved connections.

"I am absolutely behind the region and that's why I've set up a taskforce to see how we can build on the excellent work by Chloe Smith, Ben Gummer, and Priti Patel."

The new taskforce will be made up of Department for Transport officials, experts from Network Rail, and local MPs.

They will identify practical and affordable options to improve services to stations on the Great Eastern Main Line.

This will include examining the potential for cutting journey times by up to 30 minutes could be achieved under the new franchise due to start in 2016.

Next year Greater Anglia is start modernising the current fleet. It will update interiors and provide improved facilities, such as power sockets so travellers can work more easily as they travel by train.