

Innovation between Greater Anglia and local construction company helps cut carbon emissions

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An innovation between **Greater Anglia** and a local construction firm has helped to cut carbon emissions during a project to build a new platform at a north Norfolk railway station.

Coping stones – large slabs of concrete which are laid to create a railway station platform – typically weigh 312kg each.

But thanks to a new design, created between Greater Anglia and Norfolk-based contractors RG Carter, new coping stones used to build Sheringham station's new platform weighed almost half.

This meant smaller machinery was needed to move the stones and it was quicker and safer to move and install the stones.

The stones are built with a waffle-like profile underneath, creating a more hollowed effect. Despite the reduced weight, the stones have the same strength and have met and exceeded all of the stringent testing required by Network Rail to ensure compliance with the required safety standards as the regular coping stone.

They were produced locally in Sheringham, rather than from another site hundreds of miles away, meaning further emissions were saved when transporting them to the site.

It's the first time these coping stones have been laid in this country.

The new 80 metre platform is wider and twice the length of the previous, supposedly temporary platform, which was installed in 1967.

Simone Bailey, Greater Anglia's Asset Management Director, said: "We are always looking for new innovations on the railway, and this project was a great collaboration between the railway and a local business.

"The new platform at Sheringham was needed to accommodate our new trains. We are very pleased with the finished result and even more delighted that we were able to reduce carbon emissions and lessen our environmental impact while carrying out this project.

"We're very pleased to have delivered this major station improvement for Sheringham to benefit rail passengers and the town."

More than £1 million was invested in the project, which has seen improved lighting and a new, bigger and better customer shelter installed.

The station can fully accommodate the new trains which started to enter service last year. The new bi-mode trains are all 3 or 4 carriages long, meaning that Greater Anglia can provide more capacity for special events such as the Cromer Fireworks and Worstead Festival, and the busiest days during the holiday season.

Passengers with luggage, buggies and those using wheelchairs all benefit from the improved facilities, complimenting the new trains which are also much more accessible, including a special automatic retractable step, which comes in to use at stations and enables level access at most stations, including Sheringham.

Annual passenger numbers on the line have grown from 200,000 a year to over 700,000 in 2018/19 – an increase of more than 300% – after a series of service improvements, including more frequent train services and station enhancements, combined with promotion from train operators and the Bittern Line Community Rail Partnership.

Photo credit: Greater Anglia