

Fen Line Users Association
More and Longer Trains

The background to our responses to 'Network Rail's Investment Programme - the Hendy Report Consultation' and 'A New Approach to passenger rail services in London and the South East'

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"Ely North Junction. This scheme will be delivered now in CP6 [2019-2024] to allow co-ordination with safety critical level crossing works nearby. Despite this Network Rail is aware of the strong aspiration of the DfT and local user groups and MPs to see improvements to services on the Cambridge to Kings Lynn corridor as soon as practicable."

Page 23, Report from Sir Peter Hendy to the Secretary of State for Transport on the replanning of Network Rail's Investment Programme, 26 November 2015.

"Network Rail's obligation is to develop a solution to enable 8-car operation of Peak services between Kings Lynn and Cambridge (and onto London Kings Cross)."

Page 35, Report from Sir Peter Hendy to the Secretary of State for Transport on the replanning of Network Rail's Investment Programme – draft Enhancements Delivery Plan Update, 21 January 2016. (Some 8-car trains do run from/to Kings Lynn, but are unable to stop at short platforms at Watlington, Littleport or Waterbeach).

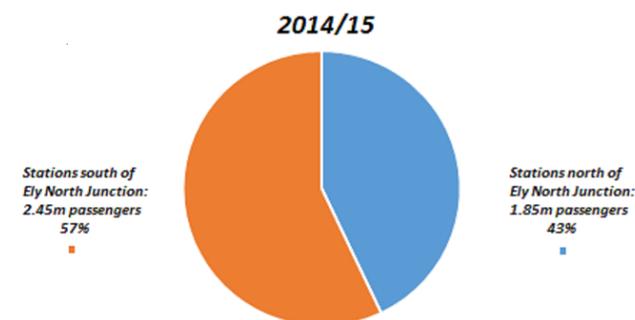
More and longer trains: that's been our call for longer than we care to remember.

More and longer trains: that's the **government's promise** too.

More and longer trains: it's really that simple.

Only it isn't. Network Rail is over-committed. Fact.

And its boss, Sir Peter Hendy, has **recommended** the government to **halt all work** on Ely North Junction and **restart in 2019**. East Anglia's big bottleneck affects a **big proportion** of Fen Line passengers.



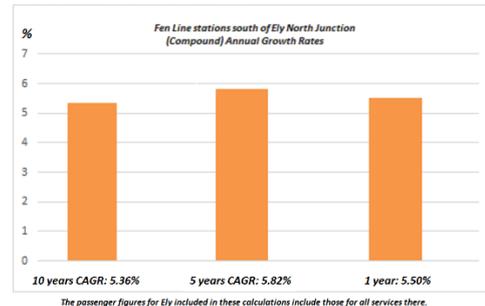
Source: estimates from Office of Rail and Road

Almost half of Fen Line passengers travel from/to the four stations **north** of Ely North Junction. (Kings Lynn, Watlington, Downham Market and Littleport).

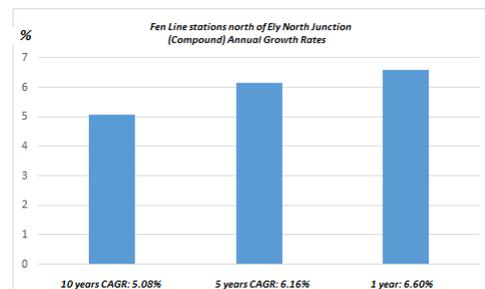
Compared to 10 years ago, Fen Line trains are now carrying **over 1.7m more passengers a year** - about **17 trains*** extra every day.

* based on estimated 270 seats per 4-car train

There is strong passenger growth **south** of Ely North Junction (5%+) but recently the **rate** of growth on that section has **stabilised**:



However, it is Fen Line passenger growth **north** of Ely North Junction that is now **growing most** (6%+) and its **rate** of growth is **accelerating**:



Now the faster growth is north of Ely. For full, detailed statistics, email: fluasecretary@flua.org.uk

The government knows this, and so it **contracted** Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) to run **half-hourly** Great Northern Kings Lynn-Kings Cross services (with air-conditioned trains) from **21 May 2017**.

Contracted MINIMUM Train Service Requirement for Fen Line from May 2017									
From TSGN Franchise 'Train Service requirements' published in May 2014 by DfT)									
Mondays to Fridays	TOTAL 0200-0700	TOTAL 0700-0800	TOTAL 0800-1000	TPH 1000-2000	TOTAL 2000-2100	TOTAL 2100-2200	TOTAL 2200-0159		
Southbound to Kings Cross	0659	0959	0859	1959	2059	2159	0159		
Kings Lynn	1	6	2	2*	18	2	2	5	
Watlington	1	6	2	1	10	1	1	3	'Half-hourly' (2 tph)
Downham Market	1	6	2	2*	18	2	2	5	shown in YELLOW
Littleport	1	6	2	1	10	1	1	3	-and on Saturdays
Ely	1	6	2	2	20	2	2	5	too!
Waterbeach	1	5	2	1	10	1	1	3	
Cambridge North **	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Cambridge (CEx only)	1	6	2	2	20	2	2	4	
Royston (CEx only)	1	6	2	0	0	0	0	2	
Letchworth (CEx only)	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	

(2 trains per hour, Mon to Sat, from Kings Lynn, Downham Market and Ely as a minimum, but up to two gaps for freight trains).

It's little surprise the trains are very busy – the Kings Cross area and Cambridge itself (both served by Fen Line trains) are rich with knowledge industry jobs - but you have to be moneyed to buy a house nearby.

"Cambridge house prices now outstripping London says report": in a survey of 20 cities, land value experts Hometrack says "Cambridge the UK's top property hotspot." Cambridge News 20 January 2016

Broadly speaking, the further north, the lower equivalent house prices are. **Big house price differentials** drive Fen Line passenger demand.

Kings Cross is an important destination, but here we concentrate on Cambridge. 8 Kings Lynn trains arrive at Cambridge in the AM Peak (0700-0959) *Mon to Fri*.

Arrivals at Cambridge 0700-0959 Current service (December 2015)														NOT to be used as a timetable			
Southbound	CEX	LE	CEX	LE	LE	CEX	XC	CEX	LE	CEX	LE	XC	CEX	LE			
Monday to Fridays																	
Kings Lynn dep	0610	0617	0651	-	-	0714	-	0725	-	0754	-	-	0827	0857			
Watlington dep	-	-	0624	0658	-	-	0721	-	-	0801	-	-	0834	0904			
Downham Market dep	0622	0631	0705	-	-	0728	-	0737	-	0808	-	-	0841	0911			
Littleport dep	-	-	0640	0714	-	-	0737	-	-	0817	-	-	0850	0920			
Ely dep	0647	0650	0722	0730	0733	0748	0752	0756	0802	0826	0839	0852	0858	0928			
Waterbeach dep	-	-	0659	0732	-	-	0757	-	-	0811	0836	-	-	0908			
Cambridge North** dep	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**			
CAMBRIDGE arr	0703	0708	0739	0747	0753	0804	0807	0810	0820	0843	0859	0908	0915	0945			
Kings Cross arr	0807	(0825)	0837	(0920)	-	0910	0910	0910	(0950)	0945	-	-	1013	1043			

** New station due to open on 21 May 2017
 CEX Cambridge Express (no more than two stops between Cambridge and Kings Cross) - operated by Great Northern (GTR)
 LE Abello Greater Anglia XC Cross Country Trains Times in (brackets) show Liverpool Street - through trains only.
 All through trains to King's Cross (and Liverpool Street) are formed of 4 cars north of Cambridge (except 0610 Kings Lynn-Kings Cross: 8 cars).
 London trains strengthened to 8 or 12 cars at Cambridge. All other trains are normally formed of 2 or 3 cars.

These trains are so popular that some services are normally **grossly overloaded** on arrival at Cambridge.

"Teen elbowed off crowded train to Cambridge as angry mother demands 'urgent action'" [the 0651 Kings Lynn-Kings Cross, at Waterbeach]. Cambridge News 26 October 2015

There are problems at Cambridge in the PM peak (1600-1859) too. With **fewer services** for homeward-bound people (service gaps are highlighted below) trains are **extremely overcrowded**.

Departures from Cambridge 1600-1900 Current service (December 2015)														NOT to be used as a timetable			
Northbound	XC	LE	GN	CEX	XC	LE	LE	CEX	XC	CEX	LE	LE	LE	CEX			
Monday to Fridays																	
Kings Cross dep	-	-	-	1544	-	▼	▼	(1558)	1644	-	1714	-	(1707)	-			
CAMBRIDGE dep	1601	1612	1619	1635	1701	▼	▼	1712	1722	1740	1801	1806	1812	1817			
Cambridge North** dep	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**			
Waterbeach arr	-	-	-	1626	1642	▼	▼	1728	1747	-	▼	▼	1823	1829			
Ely arr	1614	1626	1635	1651	1714	▼	▼	1726	1739	1756	1814	1821	1826	1833			
Littleport arr	-	-	-	1700	-	▼	▼	-	1804	-	▼	▼	1840	1903			
Downham Market arr	-	-	-	1650	1710	▼	▼	-	1813	-	▼	▼	1850	1912			
Watlington arr	-	-	-	1715	-	▼	▼	-	1819	-	▼	▼	1856	1918			
Kings Lynn arr	-	-	-	1724	-	▼	▼	-	1827	-	▼	▼	1908	1927			

** New station due to open on 21 May 2017
 GN Great Northern (GTR) applies to 1619 Cambridge to Downham Market only.
 Missing PM peak departure from Cambridge to this station
 CEX Cambridge Express (no more than two stops between Kings Cross and Cambridge) - operated by Great Northern (GTR)
 LE Abello Greater Anglia XC Cross Country Trains Times in (brackets) show Liverpool Street - through trains only.
 All CEX and other GN trains, 4 car north of Cambridge (except 1714 Kings Cross to Ely: 8 cars).
 LE trains formed of 4 cars north of Cambridge (except xx12 depts from Cambridge, which are formed of 2 or 3 cars). XC trains are 2 or 3 cars.
 Trains arrive at Cambridge from London with 8 or 12 cars. All other trains are normally formed of 2 or 3 cars.

As from **21 May 2017**, we welcome access to the new **Cambridge North station** (located close to the Business Park, Innovation Centre, Science Park, etc).



The opening day for Cambridge North gets ever closer.

More in the pipeline? Cambridgeshire County Council and business group Cambridge Ahead have contracted consultants John Laing to see how a Cambridge South station at Addenbrooke's/Cambridge Biomedical Campus: "around 10,500 new high value jobs being created"* could be brought forward quickly.

* Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy, July 2015

The East-West Rail project (Cambridge to Oxford) which is under study could mean a faster, uncongested route to Kings Cross.

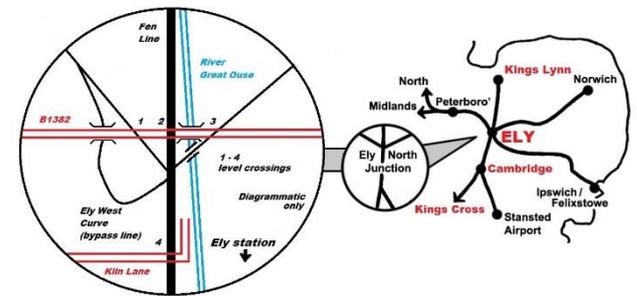
It's good, then, to see that **Cambridge to Kings Lynn 8-car project** recommended as a priority. **When do these 'get-us-to-work-and-back' longer trains start?**

And **more trains**, (not an 'aspiration' but a big, public, **political commitment**) what's happening there?

The bugbear is fitting them into the already congested Ely bottleneck: Ely North Junction and its wider area. **All five** routes converging at Ely, East Anglia's rail crossroads, are designated **Trans-European Network** routes. The lines to Cambridge, Felixstowe and Peterborough are part of Britain's **Strategic Freight Network** as well.

Network Rail has established that if train numbers expand the level crossings in the area may be too close to each other to ensure road safety.

So, although specified and funded by government for CP5 [2014-2019] the Ely North Junction project has now **increased greatly in scope**, in part to cope with potential road user risk the crossings could pose.



Twice an hour short, capacity hungry, 2-car trains go into Ely, reverse, and go out again **through Ely North Junction for a second time**. Some could go via the **bypass line** (no level crossing) to avoid this; some do already. Could **existing capacity be more efficiently used** to introduce the contracted **half-hourly Kings Lynn-Kings Cross** trains without new works?

SAMPLE 30 mins at Ely (passenger and freight trains) from 'WTT' published by Network Rail. Illustrative only														NOT to be used as a timetable			
December 2015	Freight	Freight	Freight	Pass'r	Pass'r	Freight	Pass'r	Pass'r	CBG	Pass'r	Pass'r	CBG	Pass'r				
Sample 30 mins at Ely stn	1133	1046	1202	0742	1177	1029	1154	1212	Cambridge	1554	1554	Cambridge	1554				
Monday to Fridays	W'moor-	Harlow	Ely PS	LIV-NRW	SSD-BNS	Felixstowe N	KLN-KXG	CBG-NRW	B'Ham	BNS	B'Ham	NRW-MCR	NRW-MCR				
plus 1554 NRW-MCR Sundays	Parkeston	Bardon H	Peak Forest			Selby							SUNDAYS				
Some freight trains only run if required																	
KINGS CROSS	depart																
KING'S LYNN	depart																
Norwich	depart												1554				
Thetford	depart												1621				
Peterborough	depart					1141	1127										
Stansted Airport	depart																
Ipswich	depart																
Cambridge	depart																
Ely North Junction	pass	11/58		12/04	12/10												
ELY STATION	arrive				1212%	1215	12/19	1224%	1226				16/41				
Ely	pass	12/01	12/04	1208	RR												
ELY STATION	depart				1216%	1216		1225%	1228				MCR				
Ely North Junction	pass		12/07	RR	12/19	12/18%	12/22%						12/31				
Cambridge	arrive								1241								
Ipswich	arrive												NRW				
Stansted Airport	arrive												Norwich				
Peterborough	arrive						1249%						1712				
Thetford	arrive				1237%								PBO				
Norwich	arrive				1308								Peterboro'				
KINGS LYNN	arrive																
KINGS CROSS	arrive								1335				SSD				
													Stansted Air				

No of times via ENJ 1 1 2 2 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

ENJ = Ely North Junction RR = reverses direction (Ely Goods Line) and departs northwards at 1232, crossing Ely North Junction for a second time

Visit www.flua.org.uk for useful weblinks, news and developments

Finally, a **wait until 2019** to re-start work at Ely? Hitchin flyover design work started in January 2007, services didn't start until June 2013, over six years later. Given the inevitability of **very long lead times** like this, particularly where they involve statutory processes where the timescales are **outside** the railway's control, **can we afford yet more delay?**