

The Fenman

Newsletter of the Fen Line Users Association
www.flua.org.uk fenman@flua.org.uk

- * Opening day for Cambridge North gets ever closer
- * King's Lynn just 30,000 short of a million users

How do you solve a problem like East Anglia? Is it, as the song would have it, akin to catching moonbeams in your hand? Why East Anglia, what's the problem and **what's all this to do with the Fen Line, anyway?**

Euston (well, King's Cross) we have a problem. Cambridge North is due to open next year, it's almost impossible to get on some of our trains as numbers keep growing, and now, to cap it all, it seems Ely North Junction is near to capacity.

Ely North Junction, the Crewe of East Anglia, all lines lead there, don't they? It coped in the old days, before it was ripped up and simplified, didn't it? 11 April to 10 May 1992, twenty-nine days of bulldozers and buses, job done. Just put it back as it was, roll out the promised half-hourly service (a clear political commitment if ever there was one) and the Fen Line success story can roll on unabated. Now with **4.3 million users**, nobody wants it to stop, after all.

Two decades or so ago, there were 126 daily passenger train movements through the *old* junction, now there's 193 over the *slim-line* one.

If you watch those container trains thunder by, you'll know freight flows are heavy too. And road traffic has grown immensely, a problem with those oh-so-close level crossings at Adelaide. That's why the great and the good of Cambs, Norfolk and Suffolk met at Downham Market to get a solution under way. They pledged not moonbeams but **cash for a £5m feasibility study.**

Colin Sampson, Chairman 01366 388003
Ken Hubbard, Treasurer

Contact us:
Andy Tyler, Secretary

67 Goodwins Road, KING'S LYNN, Norfolk, PE30 5PE
07803 459 043 fluasecretary@flua.org.uk

Issue 1/2016

Calling for the earliest delivery of the
'half-hourly' King's Lynn-King's Cross commitment

- * Fastest growth rate north of Ely North Junction
- * The Lady in the Luggage Rack: Cambridge crush



"Class 377 Electrostars with air conditioning, automatic service announcements and the latest in accessibility features for disabled passengers will run on the Cambridge/King's Lynn and Peterborough services to and from King's Cross."

Great Northern, 27 January 2016

2014/15 Passenger estimates (ORR) - Ely (all lines) 2,068,240 +4.7%;
King's Lynn 970,890 +6.3%; Downham Market 491,744 +6.9%;
Waterbeach 381,202 +10.6%; Littleport 238,062 +5.8%;
Watlington 143,904 +9.2%. Fen Line 4,294,042 +6.0% (GB +4.5%)



East Anglia convenes at Downham Market on Friday 26 February.
FLUA was represented at the Summit by Chairman Colin Sampson.

And introducing FLUA's new Vice-Chairman:

"I commute **daily** to King's Cross. My station, Downham Market has now overtaken Great Yarmouth to become Norfolk's **fourth busiest** station, making the **promised 8-car trains essential.**"

Fen Line 4,294,042 +6.0%; North of Ely North Junction 1,844,600 +6.6%
South of Ely North Junction 2,449,442 +5.5% (GB +4.5%)

Andy Gibbs, Vice-Chairman
Robert Stripe, Hon. President

www.flua.org.uk – useful weblinks, statistics,
news and developments,
and members' section

www.flua.org.uk/membership from £4.50 a year

The Fenman Issue 1/2016
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'
 For an A3 print version email fluasecretary@flua.org.uk

"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).

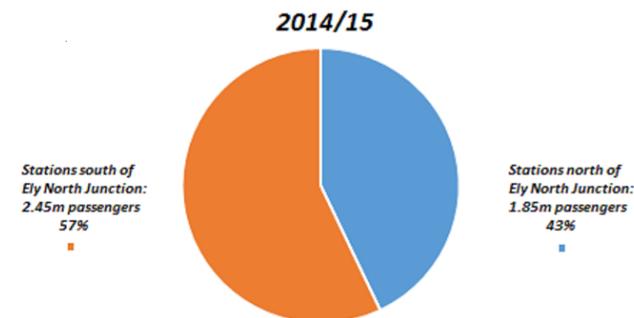
More and longer trains: that's been our call for longer than we care to remember.

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

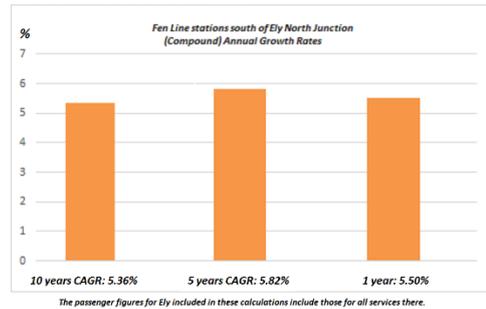
Almost half of Fen Line passengers travel from/to the four stations **north** of Ely North Junction. (Kings Lynn, Watlington, Downham Market and Littleport).

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

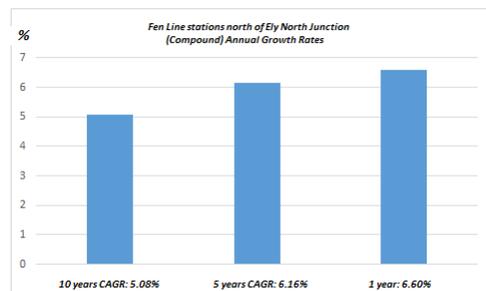
* based on estimated 270 seats per 4-car train

The DfT's consultations on the Hendy Report and on A New Approach to London & the South East both close on Friday 18 March 2016

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 1000-1700	TOTAL 1700-1900	TOTAL 1900-2000	TOTAL 2000-2100	TOTAL 2100-2200	TOTAL 2200-0159
to Kings Cross	0659	0959	0859	1959	1959	2059	2159	0159	
Kings Lynn	1	6	2	2*	18	2	2	5	
Watlington	1	6	2	1	10	1	1	3	
Downham Market	1	6	2	2*	18	2	2	5	
Littleport	1	6	2	1	10	1	1	3	
Ely	1	6	2	2	20	2	2	5	shown in YELLOW
Waterbeach	1	5	2	1	10	1	1	3	and on Saturdays
Cambridge North **	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	too!
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	

** New station due to open on 21 May 2017 (not part of contracted service) TPH = trains per hour
 * in up to 2 off-peak hours - 1 tph (1 freight train per hour may run instead)
 CEX - Cambridge Express - max 2 stops between Cambridge and King's Cross

(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	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	0939	
Waterbeach dep	-	-	0659	0732	-	-	0757	-	-	0811	-	-	0908	0938	-	
Cambridge North** dep	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
CAMBRIDGE arr	0703	0708	0739	0747	0753	0804	0807	0810	0820	0843	0859	0908	0915	0945	0959	
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	CEX	CEX	LE	
Monday to Fridays																
Kings Cross dep	-	-	-	1544	-	▼	(1558)	1644	-	1714	-	-	(1707)	-	1744	
CAMBRIDGE dep	1601	1612	1619	1635	1701	▼	1712	1722	1740	1801	1806	1812	1817	1823	1839	
Cambridge North** dep	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	
Waterbeach arr	-	-	-	1626	1642	▼	-	1728	1747	▼	-	-	1823	1829	1846	
Ely arr	1614	1626	1635	1651	1714	▼	1726	1739	1756	1814	1821	1826	1833	1840	1855	
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.

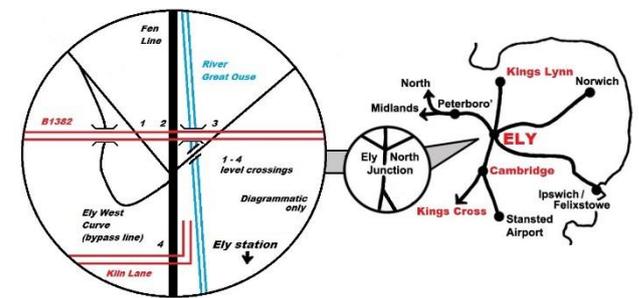
It's good, then, to see that **Cambridge to Kings Lynn 8-car project** recommended as a priority. **When do these 'get-us-to-work-and-back' longer trains start?**

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?

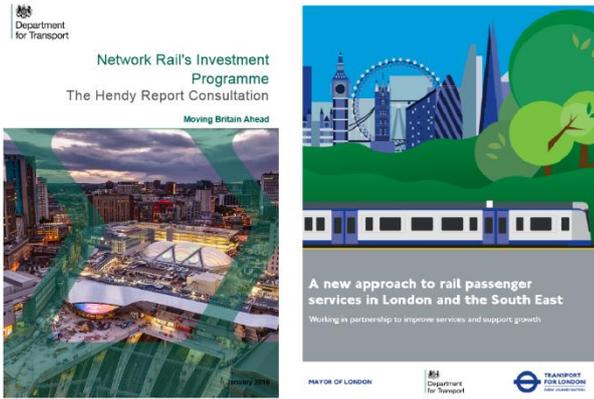
SAMPLE 30 mins at Ely (passenger and freight trains) from 'WTT' published by Network Rail. Illustrative only													NOT to be used as a timetable			
December 2015	Freight	Freight	Freight	Pass'r	Pass'r	Freight	Pass'r	Pass'r	CBG	Pass'r	Pass'r	Pass'r				
Sample 30 mins at Ely stn	1133	1046	1202	0742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

Two consultations



They always seem to come in batches, consultations. This time the government wants to know what we think about the Hendy Report and about its new approach to passenger services in London and the South East.

It's the Hendy Report that suggests putting a stop to all work at Ely North Junction, but which also puts forward the Fen Line 8-car scheme. It's the other which promotes the idea of Transport for London taking over inner suburban services, with safeguards of no detriment for outer services. GN Fen Line services are 'Cambridge Expresses' or are classified as 'GN Outers.'

With proper safeguards, we have no big issue with 'A New Approach'. And the Hendy Report consultation? Hendy's not all bad news, but it's not what was promised either. So, under the new circumstances, we say:

Deal with the crowds

Run 8-car King's Lynn-King's Cross trains (maintaining existing stopping patterns where appropriate) in the morning and evening peaks (i.e. in both the London peaks *and* the Cambridge peaks) ASAP. Remove those remaining fragile connections at Cambridge by running *all* our trains direct to King's Cross. Fill the big gap in the afternoon high peak at Cambridge with a King's Lynn train leaving Cambridge about 1710-1715 and extend the 1714 King's Cross-Ely to King's Lynn.

Stop where the jobs are

Make all Fen Line trains call at Cambridge North from May 2017 and speed up a Bio-medical Campus station.

Start the necessarily lengthy planning process now

Continue work on the feasibility and planning stages of the delayed Ely North Junction project and all associated works and projects (including level crossings), so as to hit the ground running by the time we reach 2019, the start of the new railway funding period, CP6.

No more nasty surprises

Publish the timetable of works necessary to achieve the full half-hourly King's Lynn-King's Cross service, as promised contractually for 2017 – on a building block by building block basis – and stick to it, making sure eyes are firmly kept on the ball.

We will be basing our consultation responses around the above, but also making some more detailed points. If you would like to tell us what you think, email or write, with your reasoning, to Andy Tyler, Secretary by 5pm on Friday **11 March 2016**. We will take everything received from members into consideration before sending our formal responses to the Dept. for Transport.

Lady in the Luggage Rack

by Mawrenna Gleid

Half term, Christmas. Half term, Easter. Half term, summer holidays. And then back round to another half term, and the cycle starts again.

This is the rhythm of the commuting year.

Not all commuters are students, or have school or college-age children. Many of them are, or do, but that's not why school holidays make such a difference. And it's not because the students who take the train are a disruptive bunch. Mostly they spend the journey working, or sharing the same kind of quiet gossip as everyone else, just with 'behind the bike sheds' substituted for 'at the water cooler'.

It's because you can breathe out.

Taking any large group of commuters off the line for a while would have the same effect. The few days between Christmas and New Year are always a blissful time to travel, for those of us who have to. Everyone shares a sense of camaraderie, which usually gets trampled out of existence by other people's elbows and fold-up bikes.

It's not just the time spent on the actual train itself. Commuters aren't travelling for pleasure: they're people in a hurry. So they file off the train in an optimal fashion, with those in the middle of the carriage waiting for those nearer the doors to exit first. All nice and neat and organised. Only then, at Cambridge at least, do they hit a wall.

A wall of *people*. Pity the poor souls trying to cross the footbridge to reach the train at platform seven, as four carriages' worth of people swarm towards the exit. It's like watching salmon trying to swim up Niagara Falls. Even moving with the flow is painfully slow, as the vast crowd is funnelled into a space barely five people wide. So when are we going to get *another* footbridge at Cambridge, so that each can be reserved for one direction only?

It'd be nice to think it'll happen *before* someone has a serious accident on the stairs.

King's Lynn resident Mawrenna is a regular on the Cambridge Run.

Next year

We intend to hold the 2017 AGM at Waterbeach to celebrate the opening of **Cambridge North** station.

Ten years ago

Using the theory of constraints, Network Rail had analysed bottlenecks on the East Coast Main Line and pinpointed the 'Hitchin effect' as enemy number one. We concurred, asking for "1 x Hitchin flyover please!"

FLUA diary 2016

Saturday 19 November 2016 – AGM, King's Lynn.