

Response of Railfuture East Anglia to the Greater Cambridge Partnership Foxton Travel Hub Proposal

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this proposed travel hub at Foxton.

consultcambs.uk.engagementhq.com/foxton-consultation-2019

About Railfuture

Railfuture is the UK's leading independent organisation campaigning for better rail services for passengers and freight. Railfuture is a voluntary group representing rail users, with 20,000 affiliated and individual members. ... Railfuture Ltd is a not-for-profit Company Limited by Guarantee.

This response is being given behalf of our large membership throughout Cambridgeshire.

Introduction

We welcome this proposal that will enable flows people using cars along the A10 road leading into Cambridge to be intercepted and the opportunity be given for them to take a quality train service into Cambridge stations.

Background

Office of Rail and Road latest footfall figures show that in the year 2017/18 Foxton station had a footfall of 102170, a rise of 16.1% since 2013.

The station was modified during 2018 to enable it to accommodate 8 car fixed formation trains at half hourly intervals.

Each train has capacity of 427 seated and 719 standing passengers, total 1146 (2292 each hour into/out of Cambridge.)

It is noted that there has been a rapid rise usage since the recent introduction of these trains.

The current train service at Foxton

Currently the half hourly service serving Foxton start at London King's Cross calling at Finsbury Park, Potters Bar, Hatfield then all stations via Royston and Foxton to Cambridge. Foxton to Cambridge takes 10 minutes.

Alternate trains continue to Cambridge North although this is planned to finish in December 2019 for operational reasons in the Cambridge area. Also sometime in 2020, the southern end of the journey will be re-routed via London St Pancras and London Bridge to Maidstone.

The northbound service runs from 06.45 to 01.15 and the southbound service from 05.27 to 23.15.

There is an additional semi-fast service which passes non-stop through Foxton every half hour linking London with Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock, Royston and Cambridge, giving Royston 4 trains an hour to both London and Cambridge.

Platform availability at Cambridge is very tight so that some morning peak hour Cambridge-bound trains have to turn back at Royston. This is not satisfactory.

Current issues at Foxton Station

Access between the two platforms is by the controlled foot crossing adjacent to the level crossing. 12 trains an hour, mostly non-stop, pass over the controlled crossing. The signalling system is such that several minutes are required of barrier downtime to make sure each of the frequent fast-moving trains is not impeded.

Consequently it is all too easy for the current users to be held on the wrong side of the crossing for several minutes for several trains to pass. There is no certainty that any potential user can catch the train they have set off for.

Crossing the A10 road at any point is hazardous.

For both these reasons a fully accessible footbridge is needed now to enable current users to have certainty.

What we like about the proposal

1. Providing a car park at Foxton is a good idea.
2. The proposed cycleway to Barrington is a good idea.
3. The indicative greenway cycleway to Harston is a good idea.
4. The general concept to cut car use into Cambridge that will bring less pollution, better air quality and safer streets.

What we have reservations about are

1. that the cycle parking provision for 75 bikes is far too small.
2. access to the station is by crossing the A10 on the flat. See the comment about current access to the station above.
3. that the car park is too large. Why? It is too close to Cambridge and will encourage continued car use to that point rather than using local train services or local bus further out. It takes up a very large amount of space (land) for just the needs of 750 people. Where are these people coming from?
4. that focussing on a large car park at Foxton will encourage people to drive there from the whole area between Foxton and Royston and beyond rather than leaving the car at home and cycling or walking to the local stations at Shepreth, Meldreth, Royston and Ashwell & Morden, all of which should have enhanced pedestrian and cycle links to all their local communities and good user facilities.
5. that this large car park and others nearby are hardly indicators of an effort to discourage car use and encourage public transport use.

What we would like you to do

What we would like you to do is take a look at Ashwell & Morden station which is in Cambridgeshire but west of Royston Herts. This station is adjacent to the A10 and is equally well placed to intercept road users but much further out from Cambridge. There is no level crossing to impede the movement from any car park and the railway station. The GCP should consider a larger car park at that station and a smaller one at Foxton.

We would like you to continue to build quality cycle and pedestrian ways from the greenways and from nearby villages to local railway stations at Meldreth, Ashwell & Morden, Shepreth and Foxton.

We would like you to work with the local train operating companies, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority, the district councils and create and promote the concept of **bike+train** and **bike+train+bike** with appropriate common logos across the whole GCP area (also **bike+bus** with appropriate facilities).

We would like you to fund and build fully accessible footbridges at each of these local stations to enable all residents to access the railway easily.

What we would like you to do is urgently work with the CPCA, Network Rail and the TOCs to urgently develop and build Cambridge South, an Eastern Station Entrance at Cambridge station and an improved track layout at Cambridge North that enables all stopping trains from south Cambridgeshire to terminate there. All these interventions will enable modal switch from car to rail to continue smoothly.

Other Reservations

We do have reservations concerning the timing of these proposals.

The East West Rail Central Section from Cambridge South to Bedford will probably be routed through Foxton and care must be taken that either proposed car park does not impinge on its route nor get in the way of any widening of the current rail right of way or the A10 bridge/underpass that will be certainly needed to mitigate the arrival of EWR on the current railway and road.

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