rail east

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

SPOTLIGHT ON FARES & TICKETING
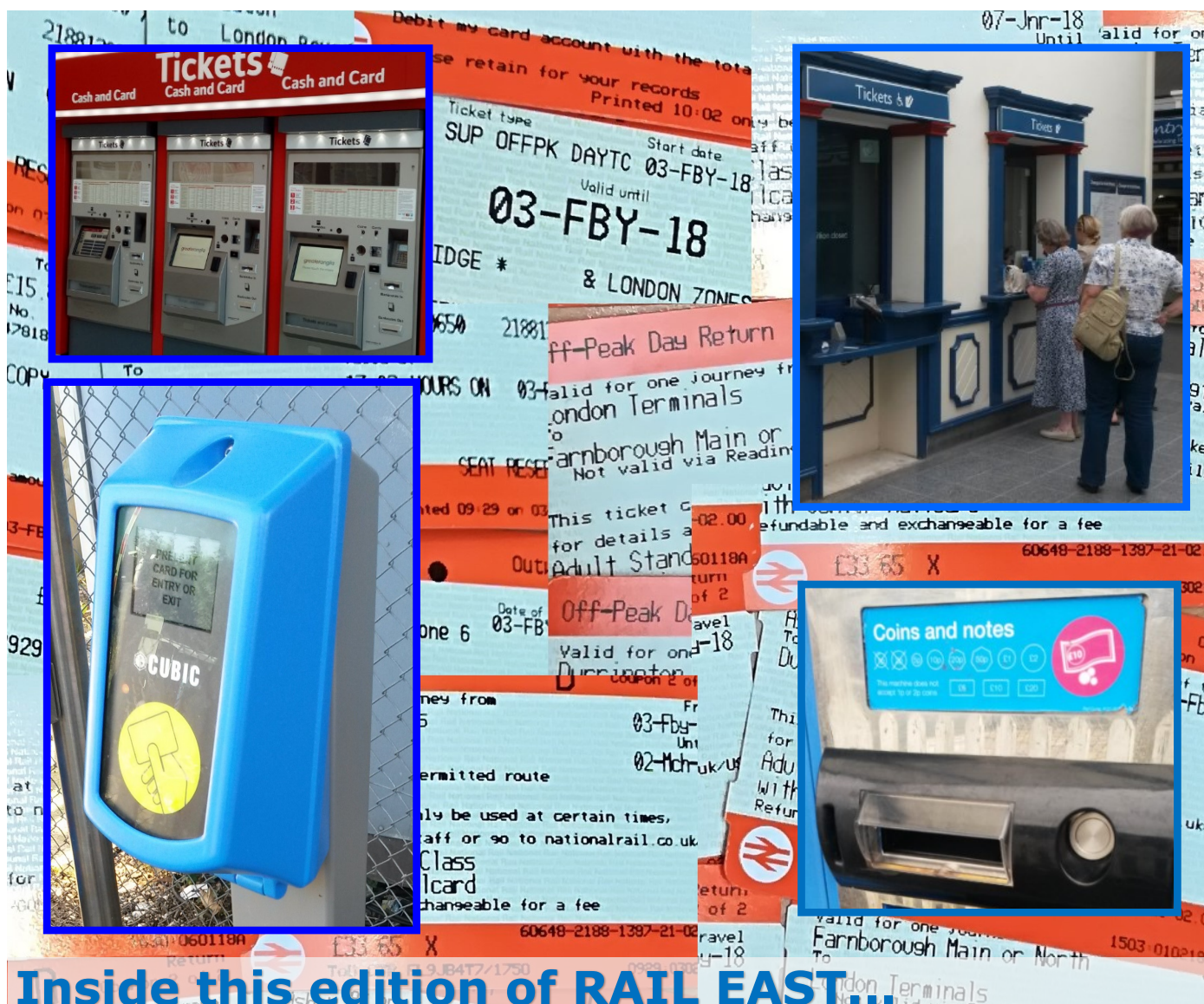
Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- Train fares rising too much?
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RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA REVIEW OF 2017

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR

Last year was a good year for the railways in our area with a number of positive developments that Railfuture both nationally and locally has been involved in, helping shape the outcome. May 2017 saw the opening of Cambridge North station. Despite a few initial problems with the ticket machines and parking, the new station has proved popular and is seeing a growing number of users. The opening of the general store and coffee shop and progress with the surrounding development will further enhance facilities for passengers. Cambridge North station took many years to develop. However, the signs are that a new station south of Cambridge to serve Addenbrooke's Hospital and new development will be delivered much more quickly following encouraging remarks in the Government's autumn statement. The statement also confirmed a commitment to East West Rail, another long campaign, and a study into the future rail infrastructure needs around Cambridgeshire. Railfuture East Anglia has recently submitted its comments. In Cambridge itself, studies are underway into a possible light-rail system or equivalent for the city. Updates on these and other initiatives can be found elsewhere in this issue of RAIL EAST.

We helped arrange the national AGM in Peterborough where we heard from Greater Anglia about its plans for the new franchise. Later on we were able to review the designs of these trains and look forward to seeing them progress. The lesson from the recently introduced Class 700 trains on the Great Northern route is that passenger comfort needs to be given a higher priority, since to ensure more space for standing passengers the seats have become too close together. It's worth remembering that the number of seats and their spacing are effectively specified by Government.

Railfuture East Anglia carried out a number of station audits around the region at Thorpe-le-Soken, Whittlesea and Shelford. These audits make recommendations for simple improvements that are passed onto the train operator and local authorities. These reports are beginning to see results. Following our 2016 audit at Whittlesford Parkway station, a recent planning application for a major research park near the station has included funding for station improvements mentioned in our report.

Commenting on local authority development plans provides an opportunity to encourage new development close to stations or to improve public transport links to existing stations. We have submitted comments on the area plan and are working on our response to the Norwich area plan. We have also been speaking to developers regarding a possible new (relocated) station at Waterbeach to serve a major new settlement.

There is a lot to be positive about, but it's not all good news. The latest national passenger figures (presented and analysed in the centre pages of this issue of RAIL EAST) show a slowing down in passenger growth and a decline in some areas, especially commuting. The reasons are unclear. Is it linked to the economy or changes in working patterns or to higher fares and uncomfortable trains? Certainly, the recent rail strikes have not helped. In the case of the dispute regarding the future role of guards/conductors, the Rail Safety & Standards Board (RSSB) has issued figures that show that driver-operated doors do not increase the risk to passengers. There have been assurances from both train operators and Government about retaining a second member of train crew indefinitely. With the new trains not due into service for another 18 months, there is time to sort out the matter of when drivers can take trains out on their own when a conductor is not available. It is not Railfuture's policy to take sides but simply to urge both sides to get together to resolve the dispute in a way that benefits passengers. As a group that represents rail users, our position is that strikes and cancelled trains are not in the interests of passengers.   On page 8, Jerry Alderson outlines the official Railfuture position and Trevor Garrod presents some thoughts on the value of staff.

Finally I would like to thank the Branch committee and other members for their hard work over the year. Let's hope that 2018 turns out to be a good year for the rail network.
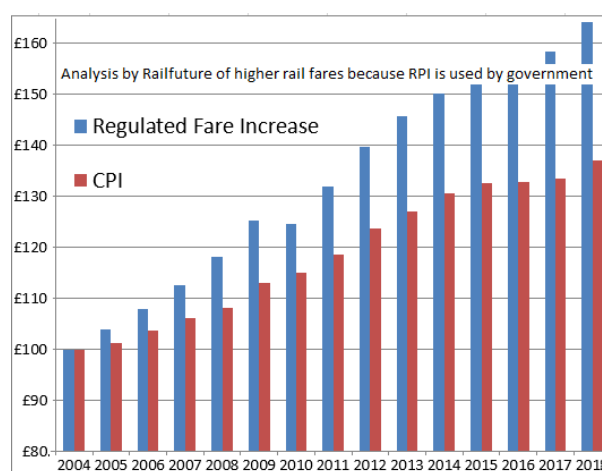
FARES AND TICKETING
JERRY ALDERSON REPORTS

ANNUAL FARE RISES

The Westminster Government really knows how to shoot itself in the foot. Each year it gives a hostile media four opportunities to criticise the railway: in August when the July inflation figures are announced; when fare rises are confirmed in the Autumn Statement / Budget; in December when individual fares are announced; and lastly on 2 January when the fare rises take place. At least it gives Railfuture four chances to put across its view.

As always, Railfuture got a lot of publicity over the New Year. In addition to press coverage (nationals and rail journals such as RAIL), our national media spokesman, Bruce Williamson, who is a regular radio presenter when not representing Railfuture, was interviewed by several radio stations including BBC Radio Five Live (listen to recordings at https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Railfuture+in+the+news).

- Fares are rising faster than most people's wages so are taking a larger slice of their income – this is unsustainable
- Regulated fare rises should be limited to CPI (red in chart on right) rather than RPI (blue)
- Fuel duty for car drivers has been frozen, but not rail fares
- Rail industry should contain its costs so that limiting the rise to CPI does not result in increased support from taxpayer
- Rail industry must provide value for fares in the form of much better customer service, clearer ticket choices, better punctuality and reliability, more seats, and more frequent services when and where people wish to travel.

Analysis by Railfuture of higher rail fares because RPI is used by government
- Regulated Fare Increase
- CPI

FARES THAT MAKE SENSE TO PASSENGERS

Customers expect the price to make sense for the product they are buying. They are prepared to pay more for one loaf of bread than another based on type, size, appearance, quality and length of life, for example. That applies to large items such as a car. It equally applies to train fares and in the British Rail days fares were increased once a route was upgraded to provide better, faster and more frequent trains. But the relationship between different regulated fares (roughly half of all tickets sold, which by implication influence the price of unregulated fares) has been frozen or restricted by law for more than two decades, so following investment the differential prices today often make no sense to the traveller. Taking a simple East Anglian example, at the weekend the cheapest day return for Cambridge to Peterborough is much more expensive than the cheapest day return to both King's Lynn and London (the latter being a longer distance but much faster-per-mile), where there is a 'super off-peak', and this is before considering the 34% discount (from Network and Gold Cards) denied to single travellers aged 25-60 between Ely and Peterborough.

Railfuture is not alone in believing that the train fares are a complete mess. The entire rail industry and all governments are aware too. It must be resolved sooner or later – and perhaps the slowing down/stalling of rail growth will focus minds – but an incremental change rather than big bang is most likely in order to protect passengers from increases that will be necessary to balance out reductions.

Fares are the number one concern of passengers in every survey (overcrowding is often at number two), and only a minority believes rail travel is value for money. Railfuture plans to put more effort into campaigning for change. Our key concerns include, but are not limited to, points made on the next page.

- Wide perception that rail travel is expensive – passengers want value for money
- Fare rises linked to higher RPI, so fares taking increasing proportion of passengers' income
- Change in travel patterns – reducing use of season tickets, more people travelling fewer than five days per week
- Lack of explanation of the wide range of fares available for some journeys
- Inconsistent value for money between routes as fare levels were frozen at privatisation so don't take account of changes in journey quality since – and taking away the 'flex' (which was often abused to maximise revenue rather than correct anomalies) means that this cannot be resolved
- Wide variation between some advance, super off-peak, off-peak and anytime fares owing to fares regulation
- Inconsistent restrictions for off-peak and super off-peak tickets
- Inconsistent restrictions for railcards
- Unclear terminology eg 'Any Permitted Route' - the Routeing Guide is complex so most passengers don't understand the choice available
- Fare anomalies, which create the impression of unfairness, lead to split ticketing and will make pay-as-you-go smartcards impossible to deliver. Resolving this means either less revenue or higher fares and is more difficult to achieve due to loss of flex
- DfT pushing 'dumbcards' (smartcards which aren't pay as you go) which add cost but provide little benefit
- Advance on the day tickets which for Cross Country can reserve a seat from under you
- Rail Delivery Group pilot proposals (routeing changes, end-to-end ticketing and single-leg pricing) would simplify ticketing but risk reducing choice and flexibility – passengers need a clear explanation of fare options (at the point of purchase) which will enable them to exercise choice, not simplistic ticketing

A small working group (including Paul Hollinghurst and Jerry Alderson from East Anglia branch) met in London in February to identify issues with fares and suggest an approach. It was felt that any changes need to be based on very simple principles, which are easy for the public to understand, and that Railfuture should make these the basis for campaigning, such as: "A journey by train should always be cheaper than the same journey by car." Of course, this raises a number of issues, not least the perception by car users that only the cost of the petrol matters, ignoring the fact that every mile travelled is reducing the life of tyres, brake pads and every moving part, plus increased mileage pushes up insurance premiums, never mind the car purchase/leasing and possibly loan cost.

PASSENGER PROBLEMS

Railfuture increasingly finds itself conducting mystery shopper exercises following feedback by members and the public (often by Twitter) that, sadly, the railway is not providing the service that passengers expect. Without doubt, most criticisms Railfuture hears about concern ticketing.

Poor signage and information can be irritating. We're not talking about the "10 items or less" aisles at supermarkets (all good pedants know it should be "fewer") but when it causes confusion. Information printed on tickets is one of the biggest disappointments.

UK Train Ticket Redesign
Categorised by audience the same way on all ticket types
© Erinaceidae
sadhedgehog.com

See http://sadhedgehog.com/2018/01/07/practically-redesigned-british-train-ticket/ for a cogent critique on the redesign of the Tangerine Tickets that was introduced in 2014. It makes a really good point that there are three sets of information to be displayed on the ticket: a) what a ticket inspector needs; b) what the traveller needs; and c) accounting information in case a refund or Delay Repay is required. These can generally be split into three sections with the ticket validity at the top, the travel advice in the centre (in the largest typeface size) and the rarely used accounting detail, such as unique ticket number with location and time purchased, at the bottom with the smallest text. Its proposal is shown on the previous page.

Paul Hollinghurst of Railfuture East Anglia has his own thoughts on this subject and a demo of ticket layouts can be found at https://www.railfuture.org.uk/demo/tickets/.

Unfortunately the new ticket format has done nothing to help passengers (other than reduce the number of tickets to carry by combining seat reservations on the same ticket) and makes it more difficult to read, with some essential text, such as reservation seat number, so small that a magnifying glass may be needed.

The new tickets provide a link to a website defining the ticket validity but the page is generic and therefore quite long, possibly complicated and not suitable for reading on a mobile phone. It should not be difficult to provide a nine-character code (at most, probably less) for that specific journey that would generate a page showing precisely when and by which routes the ticketholder could travel.

RELIABILITY OF TICKET MACHINES

Jerry Alderson reports: "I've used a ticket machine on more than a thousand occasions (average of once a week over 20 years) and it has never failed to give me a ticket. However, a friend recently picked me up from Cambridge North one evening so we could go for a beer. He tried to buy a travelcard in advance for later this month. Unfortunately the machine took his money and gave him a credit card receipt but nothing else. There were no staff present to witness this. However, I'm very pleased to say that the Greater Anglia ticket counter staff at Cambridge station resolved it the next day with no fuss whatsoever in less than five minutes. It was very efficient indeed. Perhaps the staff were aware of the problem from other customers."

Railfuture remains concerned by the frequency at which TVMs are out of order. For example, although Cambridge has around a dozen machines it is not unusual to find five or more are out of order.

MONTHLY SEASON TICKET RENEWAL VIA TICKET VENDING MACHINES

The ticket vending machines (TVMs) at stations managed by Greater Anglia (GA) now have a feature for rail passengers to renew their monthly season tickets by entering their rail photocard number and the postcode of the address at which their monthly season ticket is registered. Great Northern (GN) TVMs have offered this facility for some time.

Railfuture has tried to do so with both GA and GN machines and has failed with both operators. The screen shot alongside shows an attempt (using a real postcode and card number, although a dummy value is used in the photo) at King's Lynn station that resulted in an error message.
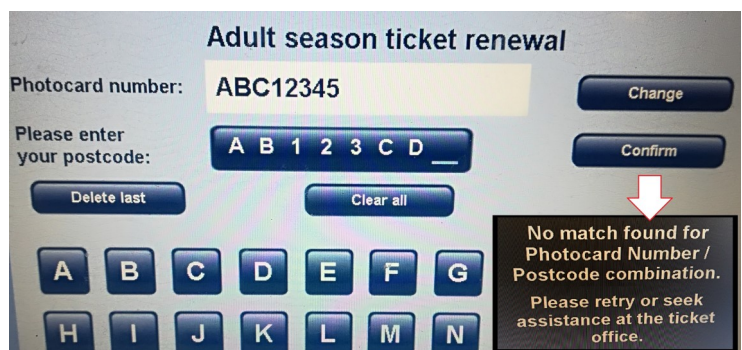
Feedback requested
We are interested in feedback from readers who have renewed or attempted to renew a monthly season ticket using a ticket vending machine. Please let Railfuture know how well it worked by sending an email to the Railfuture East Anglia Secretary at paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk.

SEAMLESS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST ANGLIA
HOW WELL INTEGRATED ARE TRAINS AND BUSES?
AN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY BY TREVOR GARROD

How well can train and bus services provide seamless travel in our region?

A new 16-page Railfuture East Anglia report examines through ticketing and other ways of easy booking and payment. For example, 20 towns and cities are in the PlusBus scheme, through which you buy your train ticket with a bus add-on to take you to your final destination.

There are also longer bus journeys, such as from Halesworth to Southwold or Peterborough to Wisbech, where a multimodal ticket is available; and some Ranger tickets which are valid on both train and bus.

However, a smart ticketing system can still encounter obstacles if staff are unaware of it or tickets are difficult to book. Furthermore, the best ticketing and payment system in the world cannot reach its full potential if the transport infrastructure puts obstacles in the way of the customer. For example, buses do not always serve the railway station and you may have a long walk from train and bus stations.

This report, based on members' experiences, aims to spread good practice and examines eight towns and cities in Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Cambridgeshire.

It also refers to new developments such as smartcards and contactless payment, websites and apps, which should make seamless travel easier.

Railfuture then makes five recommendations:

1. Some modest extension of PlusBus – consideration should be given to introducing it in Felixstowe, Sudbury, Thetford and March, for example
2. Investigation of the potential for through ticketing on longer links to large settlements not served by rail, and perhaps to tourist attractions
3. Improved staff awareness in both the rail and bus industries
4. Real-time information at rail stations and on trains about connecting buses
5. Investigation of improved bus links, shelters, signage and bays at stations which do not have these at present.

This report is not intended to be the last word, but to spread good ideas and help towards the development of a user-friendly and more integrated public transport system. Railfuture will send it to train and bus operators, county councils, stakeholders including Local Enterprise Partnerships and Community Rail Partnerships, local rail users' associations and other relevant bodies. The full report is available at www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Seamless+Public+Transport and some paper copies will be available at the branch AGM in Bury St Edmunds.

The taxi rank and bus stop are right next to the entrance at Audley End station. Photos by Peter Wakefield
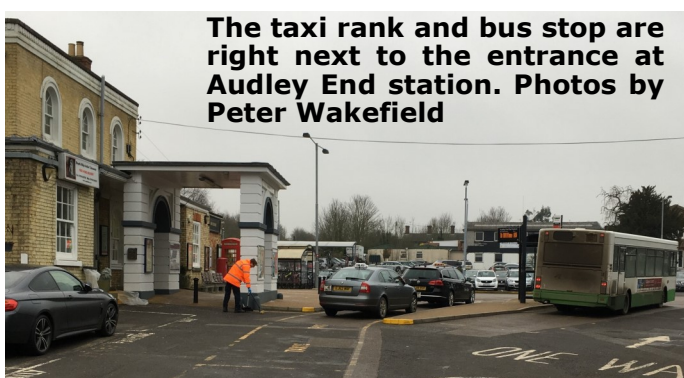
PLANNING FUTURE PASSENGER SERVICES

EAST WEST RAIL COMPANY—A MAJOR STEP FORWARD?

East West Rail is a scheme that has been keenly supported by Railfuture East Anglia from the outset. Peter Austin, Delivery Director of the East West Rail Company, updated Railfuture members into the scheme's progress at our Cambridge meeting in December 2017. Member **Chris Wright** provides a report of a very positive talk.

The East West Rail Company (EWR) is the result of various reviews into the rail industry and the need for competition and contestability and the removal of barriers to entry into the rail market. The East West Rail corridor is seen as a test case. The scheme was first proposed by Railfuture in the 1990s. There has been significant progress in 2017 with the latest National Infrastructure Commission report, a funding commitment in the Budget and a desire to speed up work. A strategic vision for the Cambridge to Oxford Arc is being developed.

The EWR Company is being set up specifically to develop central section proposals. Once established, its role is to secure permissions, and design, build and operate the route as part of an integrated system where the Bedford to Cambridge section is the main focus. Key concerns are to maintain customer focus to serve population growth areas, secure effective delivery and include private sector finance.

The Oxford-Bicester section was completed in 2016 with passive provision for electrification. The successful new Oxford Parkway station gives a flavour of future EWR stations. Network Rail has appointed contractors to deliver the western section from Bicester to Bedford. The line around the Claydon Junction area is to be remodelled as part of HS2 (Calvert Waste Depot will be relocated). Development of these works is a priority so as not to delay either scheme. Funding will come from the HS2 project. Winslow is to have a new two-platform station, with a similar style to Oxford Parkway. Bletchley flyover is a concern and costings are being examined on ways to provide new platforms but also with freight connections in mind.

The Bletchley-Bedford section has a range of constraints including many crossings and speed limits that will need to be addressed.

Bedford-Cambridge will need innovation, to ensure efficient delivery and value for money. Funding options for the section will have to include developer funding realised from increased land value and house prices. Various route options are being explored. The original route was closed in 1967 with only two through trains per day and has subsequently been built on in places. The route needs to be shaped by limited stop and serve growth areas as determined by local authorities along the Bedford-Cambridge corridor. Full consultation will be undertaken prior to a Development Consent Order being sought.

The two corridors being investigated are a high cost option at £3.5 billion involving 53km with 30 minutes timing and a lower cost option of £2 billion of 41km which offers journey time of 25 minutes and uses Shepreth Junction. The environmental impacts and mitigation measures arising will affect costs.

On 31 January 2018 an All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Oxford-Milton Keynes-Cambridge Corridor launched in Westminster. It consists of Members of both Houses of Parliament. Building on the East West Rail APPG, with a wider remit that reflects the challenges and opportunities of the region, which has the potential to become the UK's answer to Silicon Valley, it will promote the corridor on a cross-party basis, working closely with local authorities, local enterprise partnerships and businesses. The new group is also chaired by Iain Stewart MP, who spoke to Railfuture at our national AGM in Milton Keynes 2016. He is viewed by many as the corridor's official champion.

THE VALUE OF ON-TRAIN STAFF BY JERRY ALDERSON

It must be said that the French term **accompagnateur**, which is used to describe the second person on Belgian trains, does not translate well into English. Website translators come up with mate, partner, chum, companion, pal and friend. None of these fits the bill for a conductor or any customer service personnel, although one would hope they are all friendly (as well as visible and easy to find).

The railway needs to be run for the benefit of today's passengers, not for operational convenience or because of long-established practices. That mantra relates not just to train design and quality or speed and frequency of services but also to the customer service both at stations and on-board the trains. Able and confident staff, in sufficient numbers, are at the heart of delivering good customer service.

Some 7,000 new carriages are being introduced onto Britain's railway between 2017 and 2021. That includes a 100% fleet replacement by Greater Anglia between 2019 and 2020, bringing state-of-the-art technology with support for modern ways of working that exist across Europe and indeed much of the world. These days it is common in many industries for operational activities to be separated from customer-service ones, allowing people to focus on one particular role that they are best suited to. Every single train being introduced will allow train drivers to concentrate on the operation of the train with the other on-board staff focusing on the face-to-face relationship with passengers.

Greater Anglia is one of several operators intending to enhance the driver's role because all the new trains will, like its existing electric trains, have controls in the driver's cab to operate doors and train-mounted cameras to see if the door area is clear. Conductors will no longer be interrupted *every* time a train calls at a station, having to walk away from passengers, then returning a few minutes later. This will undoubtedly improve the service to passengers on-board the train; more passengers being served will hopefully result in more tickets being sold and less ticket-less travel because the conductor's current door-operating role reduces their opportunity to go through the whole of the train. Of course, conductors will still have to assist passengers needing help boarding and alighting, and it is vital that the driver-conductor relationship works well to ensure that people needing assistance receive it immediately.

The contentious issue arising from drivers taking full control of the train (known as Driver Controlled Operation) is that the conductor's role may be axed in the future. This was what happened in the 1980s when cash-strapped British Rail introduced DCO (then known as Driver Only Operation) and today some 80% of Greater Anglia's passengers travel on a train where a second person is not necessarily present (revenue protection is performed on a percentage of services in a 'random' manner that passengers shouldn't be able to guess). Greater Anglia insists that every service currently having a conductor will continue to have one rostered (paid for, in simple terms) until its franchise ends in 2025. Railfuture values the second person and will hold Greater Anglia to its promise (see right).

Front cover of a Greater Anglia leaflet provided to passengers explaining its proposals.

There is a caveat in what Greater Anglia is guaranteeing. Although it will pay for the

conductor to be on every relevant train, if that person or a replacement is unable to do so for a variety of reasons then the train may depart with just the driver. Given the alternative of the train service being cancelled (not just that train but also the return service, so passengers in both directions suffer) or being delayed until the conductor or replacement arrives (potentially disrupting services for the rest of the day), it's probable that most passengers will accept the occasional train operating without any on-board service.

This proposed change by at least five operators (including Scotrail which abandoned its proposal after several days of strikes) has led to industrial action by the RMT. Greater Anglia's passengers have been unaffected as management has operated the train doors during strike days.

Trevor Garrod, whose journeys to and from Lowestoft are currently guaranteed to have a conductor on every train, makes some pertinent personal points.

"Train conductors have three important roles: selling/checking tickets, customer care and safety. At busy times they can be overstretched, but the spread of automatic ticket machines at stations will relieve the pressure.

"It is not in the interests of the vast majority of rail users that some avoid paying their fares, and so on-train staff have a role here, especially because most stations in Norfolk and Suffolk have no barriers. Indeed, a late member of Railfuture, who was a travelling ticket inspector, always used to say that he collected more than enough to pay his wages when he spent a day travelling at will and doing spot checks on local and Inter-City trains.

"Greater Anglia has a varied network. Sheringham is rather different from Ely, which is rather different from Shenfield, for example. Greater Anglia management has repeatedly said that it will retain conductors on services in Norfolk, Suffolk and surrounding areas for the length of the franchise. Yet it has also said that in "exceptional circumstances" a train could run with just a driver. Much depends on how one defines "exceptional circumstances". These should only be unexpected events totally beyond the operator's control. It should not be just because, for example, someone forgets to roster a conductor."

A major concern of passengers is unnecessary **overcrowding**. Reducing cancellations owing to staff unavailability and displacement may help alleviate this but the rail industry needs to 'up its game' generally and not focus on minimising costs. On Sunday 4 February there were engineering works between Letchworth and Stevenage with bustitution instead. Unsurprisingly passengers chose Greater Anglia's trains to Liverpool Street instead but unbelievably GA chose to run a four-car train all the way from Cambridge. The aisles were filled for the whole journey with passengers barely able to board at intermediate stations. With self-destructive cost cutting such as this, no wonder that some people are suspicious that job cuts are on the horizon. GA is not alone in running short trains, though Great Northern can probably blame the DfT. JA.

Photo by Jerry Alderson of an unnecessarily overcrowded Greater Anglia train (when plenty of carriages were in the sidings earning no revenue).

On the next two pages we present the April 2016 to March 2017 patronage figures for every station in East Anglia. High fares and overcrowding will hinder growth.

Raw figures from the Office of Rail and Road. Presented here, with inclusion of prior years' figures, by Mike Farahar of Railfuture East Anglia.

Can you recognise all of the East Anglian stations in these photos?

EAST ANGLIA STATION USAGE ESTIMATES 2012-2017

Station name	Year ended 31st March			% change 2017	
	2012	2016	2017	to 2012	to 2016
Norwich	3,911,508	4,048,984	4,111,338	5.1	1.5
Salhouse	6,250	12,998	13,350	113.6	2.7
Hoveton & Wroxham	113,896	133,314	125,282	10.0	-6.0
Worstead	21,906	23,956	24,652	12.5	2.9
North Walsham	222,306	246,660	251,382	13.1	1.9
Gunton	16,740	14,422	15,848	-5.3	9.9
Roughton Road	13,648	12,814	15,998	17.2	24.8
Cromer	185,278	192,100	201,300	8.6	4.8
West Runton	23,798	27,804	26,186	10.0	-5.8
Sheringham	189,004	195,104	209,952	11.1	7.6
Brundall Gardens	10,964	12,176	14,360	31.0	17.9
Brundall	88,986	104,734	108,202	21.6	3.3
Lingwood	48,252	45,502	49,208	2.0	8.1
Acle	52,596	48,660	47,714	-9.3	-1.9
Great Yarmouth	441,456	409,432	399,182	-9.6	-2.5
Cantley	16,174	21,530	23,216	43.5	7.8
Reedham (Norfolk)	43,868	43,080	50,302	14.7	16.8
Berney Arms	1,436	1,016	1,126	-21.6	10.8
Haddiscoe	9,524	12,754	13,098	37.5	2.7
Buckenham	100	134	122	22.0	-9.0
Somerleyton	10,580	10,092	11,638	10.0	15.3
Oulton Broad North	118,972	118,852	117,920	-0.9	-0.8
Lowestoft	413,984	455,434	449,864	8.7	-1.2
Oulton Broad South	21,796	50,918	48,616	123.1	-4.5
Beccles	78,822	108,800	109,906	39.4	1.0
Brampton (Suffolk)	6,052	8,630	7,842	29.6	-9.1
Halesworth	76,790	95,968	100,186	30.5	4.4
Darsham	44,522	56,262	55,880	25.5	-0.7
Saxmundham	123,026	147,346	152,074	23.6	3.2
Wickham Market	33,144	44,332	46,392	40.0	4.6
Melton	55,558	63,510	68,340	23.0	7.6
Woodbridge	170,476	202,554	204,654	20.0	1.0
Westerfield	14,792	8,538	9,580	-35.2	12.2
Derby Road	43,216	42,972	49,014	13.4	14.1
Trimley	37,746	32,102	32,888	-12.9	2.4
Felixstowe	196,532	193,776	198,934	1.2	2.7
Ipswich	3,159,348	3,284,934	3,342,366	5.8	1.7
Mistley	63,370	77,110	77,606	22.5	0.6
Wrabness	20,120	24,338	25,172	25.1	3.4
Harwich International	93,014	91,024	90,506	-2.7	-0.6
Dovercourt	137,188	173,004	173,364	26.4	0.2
Harwich Town	176,856	135,396	134,614	-23.9	-0.6
Diss	621,728	675,036	685,326	10.2	1.5
Manningtree	983,054	1,124,876	1,068,642	8.7	-5.0
Colchester	4,584,110	4,460,848	4,475,581	-2.4	0.3
Colchester Town	464,398	772,418	774,969	66.9	0.3
Hythe	100,428	158,564	204,786	103.9	29.2
Wivenhoe	354,152	383,030	393,050	11.0	2.6
Alresford	58,734	68,436	69,720	18.7	1.9
Great Bentley	65,430	74,710	81,140	24.0	8.6
Weeley	21,220	32,104	31,820	50.0	-0.9
Thorpe-le-Soken	124,362	137,476	134,164	7.9	-2.4
Clacton	752,666	804,508	824,270	9.5	2.5
Kirby Cross	42,266	41,618	46,332	9.6	11.3
Frinton	175,884	203,396	208,252	18.4	2.4
Walton-On-Naze	123,358	121,466	132,296	7.2	8.9

Station					
Marks Tey	437,006	523,218	557,456	27.6	6.5
Chappel & Wakes Colne	38,176	41,420	37,408	-2.0	-9.7
Bures	53,942	61,586	62,838	16.5	2.0
Sudbury	313,510	320,994	320,042	2.1	-0.3
Kelvedon	827,358	878,096	865,706	4.6	-1.4
Needham Market	77,554	88,242	91,706	18.2	3.9
Stowmarket	884,962	956,202	951,396	7.5	-0.5
Elmswell	68,810	71,498	71,566	4.0	0.1
Thurston	53,932	71,930	69,258	28.4	-3.7
Bury St.Edmunds	490,154	603,518	633,362	29.2	4.9
Kennett	20,238	35,692	37,150	83.6	4.1
Newmarket	233,234	324,592	363,784	56.0	12.1
Dullingham	27,464	45,812	40,376	47.0	-11.9
Cambridge	8,823,236	10,954,212	11,424,902	29.5	4.3
Shelford	145,900	174,954	182,138	24.8	4.1
Whittlesford	343,772	493,004	509,744	48.3	3.4
Great Chesterford	118,656	109,846	114,146	-3.8	3.9
Audley End	751,194	928,532	930,960	23.9	0.3
Newport (Essex)	210,846	180,136	176,142	-16.5	-2.2
Elsenham	176,222	200,088	219,542	24.6	9.7
Stansted Airport	3,723,836	6,012,526	7,632,108	105.0	26.9
Stansted Mountfitchet	458,130	540,510	569,860	24.4	5.4
Foxton	83,364	88,236	92,908	11.4	5.3
Shepreth	82,422	105,852	110,756	34.4	4.6
Meldreth	204,582	278,044	269,934	31.9	-2.9
Royston	1,217,514	1,434,684	1,483,338	21.8	3.4
Ashwell & Morden	130,196	144,158	150,384	15.5	4.3
Baldock	517,036	658,208	648,738	25.5	-1.4
Letchworth	1,513,292	1,861,902	1,890,116	24.9	1.5
Hitchin	2,641,482	3,199,352	3,213,416	21.7	0.4
Arlesey	503,446	667,602	693,548	37.8	3.9
Biggleswade	788,120	992,082	1,029,086	30.6	3.7
Sandy	461,884	527,172	522,584	13.1	-0.9
St.Neots	1,138,698	1,340,514	1,351,480	18.7	0.8
Huntingdon	1,673,200	1,805,532	1,840,936	10.0	2.0
Peterborough	4,208,166	4,697,874	4,774,744	13.5	1.6
Whittlesea	22,538	28,456	30,474	35.2	7.1
March	336,240	386,610	395,950	17.8	2.4
Manea	3,050	12,020	13,452	341.0	11.9
Ely	1,824,036	2,131,818	2,209,350	21.1	3.6
Shippea Hill	376	12	156	-58.5	1200.0
Lakenheath	390	416	518	32.8	24.5
Brandon	89,638	106,302	112,670	25.7	6.0
Thetford	258,510	300,286	302,920	17.2	0.9
Harling Road	4,224	1,872	3,022	-28.5	61.4
Eccles Road	1,242	824	1,294	4.2	57.0
Attleborough	171,018	153,804	159,466	-6.8	3.7
Spooner Row	338	664	1,256	271.6	89.2
Wymondham	156,860	180,246	188,224	20.0	4.4
King's Lynn	869,006	973,660	998,316	14.9	2.5
Watlington	129,146	148,928	144,114	11.6	-3.2
Downham Market	432,014	500,442	523,846	21.3	4.7
Littleport	199,804	229,628	242,814	21.5	5.7
Waterbeach	312,216	420,730	440,142	41.0	4.6
Total	57,237,564	67,086,090	70,041,064	22.4	4.4

Trouble reading the text?

Read the PDF version on the Railfuture website at:

EAST ANGLIA STATION FOOTFALL ANALYSIS — UP 4.4%

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) published its estimates of station footfall at the beginning of December 2017. They show East Anglia's stations handled a hefty 4.4% more people during the year 2016-17. This is an extra 2,954,974 journeys made on our trains last year! And 12,803,500 more over the last five years!

The accompanying table, compiled from figures extracted from the ORR files, shows that nearly every line and station have seen increased use. The growth on the three western lines, operated by Great Northern/Thameslink, is being met with a considerable uplift in available capacity in terms of trains run every hour and train length over this and next year. So far Greater Anglia indicates that it will not enhance the frequency of its train services, though the existing services will be provided with longer trains from 2019.

For example, the growth in passenger numbers on the Ipswich to Cambridge line indicates the need for a half-hourly service for most stations, and volumes on the Cambridge to Bishop's Stortford line demonstrate the time has come to enhance the service to half hourly at all stations for most of the day. Considerable housing and industrial development is taking place along both lines.

Of course, there has to be capital expenditure on more track capacity between Cambridge and Newmarket as well as between Littleport and Downham Market. But the railway industry must rise to the challenge of working with the Government, local authorities and the Local Enterprise Partnerships, to find funding for these urgent enhancements.

The disappointing figures are those for Great Yarmouth, a town of about 100,000 people. True, a substantial 399,182 users passed across the station platforms but this is a drop of 9.6% over five years. Its train service to Norwich is generally hourly and competes with various bus companies that provide up to seven buses an hour. The train service should be enhanced to two an hour. Let's have innovation and added value by extending many of the long-distance trains across Norwich so that there could be a Great Yarmouth-Cambridge-Stansted Airport service and/or Great Yarmouth-Peterborough-Nottingham-Sheffield-Liverpool. This would bring back growth to the line.

INITIAL EFFECT OF TICKET OFFICE CLOSURES

BY TONY BAXTER ("ONTRACK" RAIL USERS ASSOCIATION)

Tony Baxter reported in Rail East 176 on Greater Anglia's proposals to close seven of its ticket offices — all bar one (Great Chesterford) are in Essex. He now provides an update following implementation of the controversial proposals, which Railfuture had raised concerns about with the operator. He writes...

Closure of ticket offices at Dovercourt, Harwich International, Walton-on-the-Naze. Thorpe-le-Soken, Great Bentley and Alresford took place on 8 January 2018. Roving station "hosts" are present from time-to-time to assist with use of ticket machines although not always successfully. The consultation process conducted by Transport Focus for the Department for Transport and Greater Anglia lasted around three weeks, which is far less than the three months typically undertaken by local government. Ontrack would like community organisations to be able to run local stations and enjoy commission on ticket sales.

The lack of staff at Thorpe-le-Soken was made apparent on 22 January. An incident at about 16.30 on the Great Eastern main line resulted in much disruption.

At Thorpe-le-Soken, there were no trains for Walton for two hours (when the timetable specifies two per hour); during that time no fewer than six trains went to Clacton – including the sole evening through Liverpool Street – Walton train, diverted from Thorpe-le-Soken. The number of Walton passengers steadily increased; the precise number is not clear but our recent headcount for Frinton indicates that at this time there would be around 120 for Frinton alone. With no staff at the station, eventually Greater Anglia became aware of the situation and arranged two(!) taxi minibuses for Walton passengers. This was hopelessly inadequate so that the vast majority of passengers were forced to make their own arrangements, many having to arrange lifts from friends or family due to the lack of an adequate number of taxis in the area. Thorpe-le-Soken is a small, remote, country station with no facilities whatsoever; taxis have to be summoned from Clacton or Walton, five miles away. The 70-mile journey from London to Walton took nearly five hours, an appalling standard of service, with half the delay attributable to the wait at Thorpe-le-Soken.

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH AGM — 24 FEBRUARY 2018

GUEST SPEAKER— LISA BARRETT OF NETWORK RAIL

Lisa Barrett is Senior Programme Development Manager Network Rail for the Anglia route based in Stratford East London. Ms Barrett is an eloquent speaker, completely on top of her brief. Please do come and listen to her fascinating explanation of the many projects underway throughout East Anglia. We are very privileged that she is giving up Saturday afternoon to speak to us.

AGENDA

The Branch AGM will take place at the Friends Meeting House, St John's Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SJ, starting at 14.00 Only branch members may vote.

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest speaker: Lisa Barrett
4. Minutes of the 2017 AGM and matters arising
5. Branch report
6. National report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Appointment of examiner
9. Election of branch officers and committee
10. Questions on local rail issues
11. Date and place of the 2019 AGM

The existing branch officers and committee are willing to stand for re-election. If other members would like to join the Committee, please contact the Branch Secretary (paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk) by 21 February and there will be a vote by members at the AGM.

Don't forget that the "Mind the Gap" exhibition detailing the history of the railway in Bury St Edmunds at Moyse's Hall, which was promoted in Rail East 176. It is just a few minutes' walk from the AGM in the Market Square, will still be open and is worth a visit. Admission charges apply (see http://www.moyseshall.org/).

Address for the lottery-funded exhibition: Moyse's Hall Museum, Cornhill, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 1DX. Enquiries: 01284 706183

CAMBRIDGESHIRE TRANSPORT HUBS

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) previously known as the Cambridgeshire City Deal, has produced many ideas to tackle the chronic traffic congestion in and around the City. Most have proved unpopular.

In the first week of 2018 the GCP published "an innovative proposal" for "rural travel hubs". At long last these are proposals that seem to have hit a positive chord with the public. The proposals are certainly not innovative to us as they are something most of us in Railfuture have been on about for ever, but credit to GCP...it may be on the cusp of integrating transport. The hubs are something we have frequently campaigned for and very much fit in with the seamless travel report summarised elsewhere in this issue. Good examples of the Transport Hub can be found at Audley End at one end of the scale (photo by Peter Wakefield of bicycle racks with bus shelter in the background) and Halesworth at the other. Audley End (as shown in the article about Seamless Travel on page 6) is almost state of the art...Essex County Council just needs to crack on with getting more bus services to visit it.

Four hubs are proposed: at Oakington, Sawston/Shelford, Whittlesford and Foxton. The GCP says of them that they will help provide resilience in our rural areas and remove reliance on the private car. South Cambridgeshire is projected to grow by 35% to 80,000 households by 2031 and it is unsustainable for people to be car-dependent going forward. The GCP goes further by stating that they (the hubs) will develop stronger communities by connecting villages with each other and with the city along with access to employment, leisure and key services throughout the region.

- The first, at **Oakington**, is on the guided busway. This is a significant site as it will bring the guided buses serving Cambridge North into connection with the citi6 service via Girton as well as car parking.
- **Sawston** will be alongside the West Anglia mainline with proposed links to Shelford station and bus routes as well as car and cycle parking.
- **Whittlesford** will link into the station and bus routes. We have proposed the development of a master plan for the station area and the GCP tells us that is what Cambridgeshire County Council is to undertake to inform the size and location of the hub... but the station is central to it. The proposals at Sawston and Whittlesford are another indicator to GA that it must enhance stopping train frequency to 2tph along this line.
- **Foxton** is another location that we have long supported, an ideal position to intercept traffic on the A10 road as it crosses the railway. We urge that the proposals to bridge the A10 over the railway are urgently pursued as part of the hub project.

No doubt you are already thinking of other possible hubs in other parts of East Anglia. Two that come to mind are at Long Stratton where we are proposing a new station to service south Norfolk, and at Kennett to serve Red Lodge and other nearby developments.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor James Palmer issued a statement on 4 January 2018 through the Cambridge Independent newspaper welcoming progress in finding funding for Cambridge South station, adjacent to the Cambridge Bio Medical Campus. We welcome the urgency he is

showing but urge that the station will be built along with four tracks from Shepreth Branch Junction to Cambridge station from day one in order to provide adequate capacity and reliability approaching Cambridge.

Although the report that Steer Davies and Gleave is undertaking has not yet been published, the Mayor alluded to it, stating that the high level report backs tunnelling under Cambridge and his view that busways are not the answer. Exciting stuff!

The Cambridge News report published at the same time rather oddly showed a picture of a Chinese promoted 'bus' masquerading as a tram. This is a bit like the Caen (Normandy) guided bus. YouTube videos of the Chinese vehicle show it to be an odd hybrid that runs on tarmac (and is guided by optical sensors automatically following lines on the road) very much like the Caen vehicles just now being abandoned in favour of good old trusty and smooth rails. I hope we are not going to reinvent the wheel that the French have just given up on as unworkable.

Wikipedia tells us: "Viacités confirmed on 14 December 2011 its plans to abandon the TVR [*Transport sur Voie Réservée* i.e. a *guided bus*] in favour of light rail by 2018, owing to its unreliability. The light rail is set to take 18 months to construct and has an approximately €170 million price tag... In late 2014, the French government pledged €23.3 million towards Caen's light rail conversion project, which is now expected to cost approximately €230 million."

Apparently the rubber-tyred vehicles corrugate and rut the surface of the road, giving an unpleasant ride.

The photo below from Caen shows the importance of having full protection from the rain and wind. In Britain, sadly, Network Rail prefers shelters scattered along the platform (that's where there is more than one) rather than continuous canopies. Harwich Town station is the latest station to have its, admittedly dilapidated, canopy replaced with a new Accoya wooden shelter, which NR considers adequate.

RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES TO THE RAIL NETWORK

MARCH-WISBECH REINSTATEMENT— BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership (GCGP LEP) has been abolished and its functions handed to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA). The Chief Executive of CPCA, Martin Whiteley, is now leading the residual GCGP LEP. The funding for GRIP 3 of the Wisbech-March Rail reinstatement project was held by the LEP, which it appeared to be withholding despite the elected members of the County Council promoting the project. Some unelected members of the LEP appeared to have taken against the project.

However, Mayor James Palmer has repeatedly backed the restoration of the railway to Wisbech (see his recent tweet, right) so no doubt the planning for the project will get underway again very soon. It is hoped that Network Rail will enable the work to go ahead in a timely, sensible and thus affordable manner. We reiterate that most of the work will be done without the usual expensive 'possessions' and that costs, as currently known, will include up to 60% government imposed contingency costs. The GRIP 3 work will further refine those costs. The current planning for the huge new works needed in and around Ely will include work to accommodate a 1tph/2tph Wisbech -Cambridge train service.

James Palmer @MayorJPalmer 31 Jan 2018
In Westminster this evening @SteveBarclay and I met with Secretary of State for Transport Chris Grayling where we agreed funding for the next phase of Wisbech Rail. We will carry out a GRIP3 study for rail and investigate light rail and tram options.

RAIL HAVERHILL—"LISTEN" TO THE PEOPLE SAYS PETER WAKEFIELD

Over 6,000 people have now signed the petition organised by Rail Haverhill for the restoration of railway passenger services between Haverhill and Cambridge. Proposals for improved roads between the two towns are currently being mooted which will certainly improve the roads' capacity and, maybe, safety. However, as the City of Cambridge is desperately casting around to reduce road-based traffic coming across its boundary such proposals seem counterproductive. Time to listen to the people?

THREAT TO RAILWAY FROM GUIDED BUS PROPOSAL

Britain has lost three mothballed rail routes to guided busways, most significantly the Cambridge to St Ives line, but also Luton-Dunstable and Fareham-Gosport. All have been controversial and none has been undeniably successful. The so-called maintenance free Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is being closed over the school holidays for yet more urgent repairs, after only 6.5 years in service.

No operational railway line has been affected to date, although Hertfordshire County Council studied converting the St Albans Abbey line as a "cheap" alternative to providing a passing loop. As reported on the next page, there is a threat to two lines. Thankfully both Network Rail and Greater Anglia are vehemently opposed, unlike the St Ives line where Railtrack greedily looked at charging buses access fees!

REPORT BY TONY BAXTER

GARDEN COMMUNITIES: Three "Garden Community" developments have been proposed for Essex — west of Braintree, West Tey (west of Colchester) and Colchester/Tendring border, effectively an extension of Colchester eastwards into Tendring. None of these sites is conveniently situated for a railway station. Essex County Council is keen to show its "green" credentials by attempting to ensure that the new residents travel by bus. To this end it is proposing what appears to be a network of guided busways, connecting these garden communities together and to the Great Eastern main line. This would involve taking over the Witham to Braintree and the Hythe to Colchester Town railways and converting them to guided bus. The stations at Braintree, Braintree Freeport, Cressing, White Notley and Colchester Town would be closed. It is also suggested that Marks Tey station be moved a short distance towards Kelvedon to be in a more convenient location for the West Tey development, a process which Network Rail stated would be very expensive.

Colchester Town station building—photo by Tony Baxter

The most detailed transport plans are for the Colchester/Tendring border. Initially a conventional bus service is proposed; however, there is serious road traffic congestion in east Colchester with no scope for improvements, hence the desire to convert the railway to a busway. This would involve developing Hythe station as a bus/rail interchange, which would require a turnback platform, possibly a crossover and modifications to signalling. But the platforms at Hythe are very narrow and safety considerations could require widening, while a footbridge would also be desirable. Thus the total cost could be well in excess of the £7 million estimated. A station for Essex University is also proposed. It is claimed that all this could be ready by 2026.

However, the bulk of the traffic at Colchester Town comprises Tendring residents travelling into central Colchester for work, shopping, etc. They would all be required to change mode for the last 1½ miles of the journey – and at times a bus would be inadequate to carry all the passengers. There could be significant delays to journeys and, no doubt, a loss of traffic from the railway. Current residents of the West Tey area have been very vociferous and organised themselves into a protest group, proposing that instead of West Tey, development should take place around the village stations along the Colchester to Walton railway, giving better access to transport. We understand that at a meeting, Greater Anglia was asked whether it was carrying out any studies into improvements to the train service along this line; the reply was, "No." Both Network Rail and Greater Anglia have stated that they would oppose conversion of railways into busways. A consultation into the Colchester/Tendring site is currently taking place.

Greater Anglia Class 360 emu departs Colchester Town station for Colchester North. Photo by Tony Baxter.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE: FREIGHT

REPORT BY PETER WAKEFIELD AND PHIL SMART

Freight Investment

It is good to report on the significant investment into freight in our region. Planning continues apace to increase capacity on the Felixstowe Branch, at and around Ely. The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, has visited Ely again recently to state that the work there is a priority for both freight and passenger traffic. As significant is the delivery of new wagons (photo right, by Peter Wakefield) for the long established sand traffic between West Norfolk and the glass making factories at Barnsley, Doncaster and Goole. This is a very significant investment in West Norfolk industry.

Meanwhile the development of the aggregate terminal at Brandon continues with an additional siding being recently laid. East Anglia absorbs thousands of tonnes of upland England each year through large depots at Cambridge, Ely, Brandon, Eccles Road, Trowse, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds, and Barham near Ipswich. (PW)

'Lorry platooning' – a case of back to the drawing board?

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) likes to keep us guessing, doesn't it?

One minute it is championing the cause of East West Rail and the next backing the case for 'lorry platoons' on our roads to free up capacity on the rail network!

Many will remember studying the back of the Highway Code, which shows the safe braking distances between vehicles at various speeds. The governing formula was S = $(m^2/20) + m$, where 'm' is the speed in mph and 'S' the overall stopping distance in feet. Developing the formula for fixing the length of a 'platoon' we multiply by the number of vehicles (say 50, to compare with a freight train of mixed size intermodal boxes) and allow for each lorry to be 50 feet in length. At 60 mph each platoon works out to be about two miles long. Imagine 60 of these leaving Felixstowe each day!

Presumably overtaking would be prohibited. One platoon travelling 2 mph faster than the one in front would take two hours to complete this manoeuvre!

So keeping to the inside lane it is then, but given the disproportionate damage inflicted on our roads by 44-tonne vehicles, who pays for the maintenance of the 'lorry lane', the road haulage industry or other motorists? Thought so…

How would other road users leave and join the motorway at intersections without hopping into the space between lorries? Another safety case waiting to be written!

How do we prevent a platooned lorry from being hi-jacked by a computer hacker?

Then there is the subject of suicides. A determined person might leap into the space between driverless lorries in the knowledge they would not swerve to avoid them. Would we then need to fence the highway as we do the railway?

I am sure the NIC has taken all this into account and will reassure us that everything will be just fine as long as no one mentions 'level playing field'. (PS)

There is an informative blog covering some of these issues by Philippa Edmunds at: http://www.bettertransport.org.uk/blog/better-transport/nic-report-undervalues-rail-freight

RAIL USER GROUP NEWS AND ACTIVITIES

Railfuture East Anglia is happy to promote news from affiliated Rail User Groups in the region (and even the non-affiliated ones). Space is limited in RAIL EAST, and so perhaps our Twitter account (@RailfutureEA) is the best place to promote RUG events. Please email relevant information to paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk.

Space for just one group this time…

Nearly every year since 2002 members of the East Suffolk Travellers' Association (ESTA) have undertaken a month-long survey of train and bus journeys and issued a report. This is, effectively, a snapshot of good and bad aspects as experienced by ESTA members. The results of their October 2017 survey will have been published by the time you read this issue of RAIL EAST and are available (on paper) from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

ESTA will also hold its Annual General Meeting on Saturday 12 May 2018 in the Quay Street Church, Woodbridge, starting at 14.00. The venue is only three minutes' walk from Woodbridge station.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAIL EAST

RAIL EAST is what you make it. Railfuture couldn't campaign effectively without the news and information provided by its members, along with rail users.

Please send articles for possible inclusion in RAIL EAST to Peter Feeney, who collates all submissions and prepares them for the newsletter. Good quality photos are appreciated, and really are essential in order to make RAIL EAST visually attractive. No need to crop them. Email items to raileast@railfuture.org.uk.

All submissions by 31 May, please, but articles covering late news will be considered a few days prior to sending to the printer two weeks later.

Rail East is formatted by Jerry Alderson.

Join us in **BURY ST EDMUNDS** at the Friends Meeting House in St John's Street (just 10 minutes' walk from the railway station) on **Saturday 24 February 2018 from 14:00**. Our guest speaker will be Lisa Barrett, Network Rail's Senior Programme Development Manager for East Anglia. Her presentation promises to be an informative, revealing and realistic view of what Network Rail will be delivering for passengers and freight users in the coming years.

The ambitious travellers amongst you may wish to venture north of the border to Edinburgh for the Railfuture national AGM at the prestigious Holyrood Hotel on Saturday 12 May 2018.

The national summer conference will be in Carlisle on 23 June 2018 and the autumn conference is in Reading on 10 November 2018

Please do follow Railfuture East Anglia on Twitter
https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA

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railfuture East Anglia

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MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 24 FEB 2018	**SATURDAY 16 JUN 2018**	**SATURDAY 29 SEP 2018**
Friends Meeting House	St Mary's at Stoke	*Provisional Date*
St John's Street	Church Hall, Stoke Street	*Venue TBC*
BURY ST EDMUNDS	**IPSWICH**	**NORWICH**
IP33 1SJ	IP2 8DA	