

raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 178 • Jun 2018

www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia

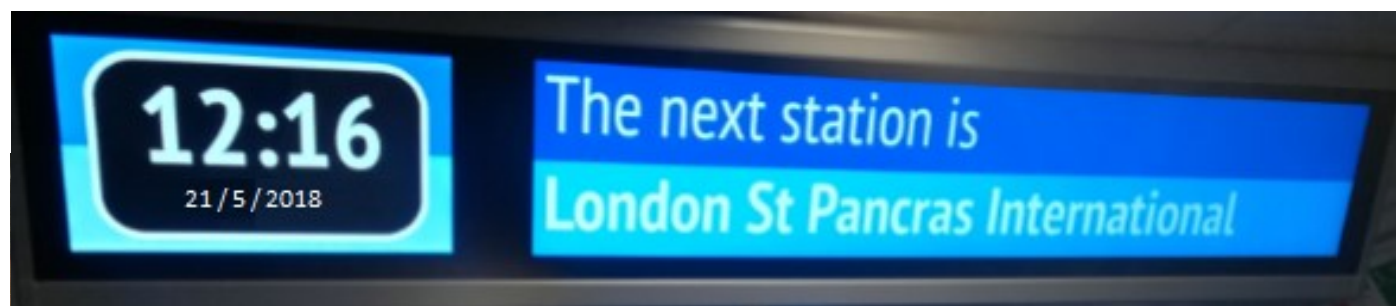
twitter.com/RailfutureEA

Railfuture campaigns for a bigger and better railway for passengers and freight.

Join us from £14 per year

www.railfuture.org.uk/join

THROUGH LONDON SERVICES BEGIN



London Bridge station rebuilding was vital for trains between East Anglia and the south coast

This train terminates at Brighton



We explain the new services that began in May 2018, what to expect by December 2019, and how the Thameslink Programme evolved

14:24 On time
Brighton
Calling at:
Gatwick Airport,
Three Bridges, Balcombe,
Haywards Heath
& Brighton.
Great Northern

1st train
12:49 Cambridge
Calling at:
Blackfriars ⊖
City Thameslink
Farringdon ⊖
St Pancras Intl ⊖
Finsbury Park ⊖
Stevenage
Hitchin
Cambridge

Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- New timetable: new services
- Network Rail breaks exciting news at Railfuture meeting
- Latest on East West Rail
- Mid-Anglia route - upgrade?
- Wisbech reopening progress
- Essex rail strategy
- Greater Norwich transport plan
- Latest on fares & ticketing

NETWORK RAIL ANNOUNCES AT RAILFUTURE MEETING THAT CAMBRIDGE SOUTH STATION IS ON ITS WAY

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

Lisa Barrett (pictured right), Senior Programme Manager Network Rail, surprised and delighted members at our 2018 AGM in Bury St Edmunds by announcing that Network Rail had given approval for development studies into the proposed new **Cambridge South** station to go ahead. Originally planned for a two-platform station, the present thinking is that a four-platform station is needed, with four tracks from a grade-separated Shepreth Branch Junction (where the Liverpool Street and King's Cross lines diverge) to Cambridge station itself. Lisa told the meeting that a two-platform station would not be able to cope with the expanded train service, especially if East West Rail trains were included.



During the Q&A Lisa acknowledged that many important lessons had been learned from Cambridge North station to make sure that passengers were the priority in its design.

Development work for the new station is typical of her job of developing the early stages of railway projects, looking at the requirements and then considering different options. Approved projects are then handed over to the route engineering teams for delivery.

The structure of the rail industry is changing following various reviews. The present five-year funding cycle is not working and is likely to change to a rolling programme where schemes are funded once they have gone through the outline business case stage. In the future the Department for Transport will fund schemes when the business case has been developed rather than try to fit funding within a five-year cycle.

Projects in the region that are currently on site include the upgrade to the **Felixstowe line** (to run more freight trains thereby removing lorries from the roads), Gospel Oak to Barking electrification and eight-car platforms on the **King's Lynn line** (running longer trains will reduce overcrowding). The latter scheme had highlighted issues of creating new platform access at **Littleport** to allow closure of the barrow crossing and longer sidings at King's Lynn for eight-car trains, which involved amending old mechanical interlocking on the signalling when such skills were fading from the rail industry.

Funding of £8m from the Local Enterprise Partnerships is helping to pay for a study into rail enhancements at **Ely**, where the inefficient track layout prevents more passenger and freight trains running. It is due to report in 2019. Unlike previous studies this will look at future aspirations for services. The study will need to balance what is achievable against what is required. The likely output is to increase the capacity of the area from 7/8 trains per hour to 11 by creating double junctions, new signalling and some track work. Flyovers and expanding the amount of track work whilst delivering more capacity are unlikely to be affordable.

New housing development at **Waterbeach** will require improvements to the railway infrastructure. However, the existing station, with short platforms, adjacent to a busy level crossing and with limited space for parking is not considered suitable for an upgrade. The proposal is therefore to build a new station north of the existing site. The new station will have eight-car platforms, but be extendable to 12, along with full length shelter, a new footbridge with lifts, bus interchange and taxi bays. A larger 200-space car park is proposed. See RAIL EAST issue 176 for a detailed article. Other projects being considered include Haughley Junction (where Bury St Edmunds trains join the **London-Norwich line**), doubling Trowse Swing Bridge in Norwich, Cambridgeshire Area Study and concourse/platform expansion at London Liverpool Street.

DECIDING PRIORITIES: THE CHAIRMAN'S THOUGHTS ON CURRENT ISSUES – FEEDBACK WELCOMED!



As stated on page 2, there was a pleasant surprise for members at our AGM with the announcement that studies into a new station south of Cambridge had been given the go ahead by Network Rail (NR). With supporting comments from the government in the autumn statement, it is hoped that the station will appear in a much quicker timescale than the Cambridge North station. But there was also a warning for members with respect to work that may happen further up the line at Ely. Yes, capacity at Ely North Junction would be increased, but perhaps not as much as we would like. However, with existing franchise commitments for an extra train to King's Lynn, an hourly Ipswich to Peterborough service and a bit more freight, the extra capacity is already used up without considering the aspirations of local authorities and groups like Railfuture. How do we deal with additional Cambridge to Norwich services as suggested by the East West Rail Consortium, or the proposed Wisbech to Cambridge route currently being investigated? In the Railfuture response to the NR

Cambridgeshire Rail Study further services were suggested. So how do we fit them all in, and if that is not possible, how are priorities decided? Should they be based on the most profitable service or the ones that have most benefit to society? How do you calculate such benefits? Perhaps it comes down to who shouts the loudest. One factor that does appear to interest the government is growth, so extra services linked to new housing and jobs is likely to be an important element. In that case, East West Rail and Wisbech would come out on top. *Do you agree?*

Please let me know your thoughts or your choice if we are limited to just 11 services in each direction per hour. My email address is nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk.

THAMESLINK - A LEAP FORWARD FOR PASSENGERS IT'S NEARLY THERE AFTER 30 YEARS, SAYS PETER WAKEFIELD

Like most railway projects Thameslink has been a long time in the making. It's 30 years since the only north-south cross London (Snow Hill) tunnel was re-opened to connect the London Widened Lines at Farringdon to the then BR Southern Region at Blackfriars station. It was opened to passenger trains again, after being out of use to all traffic for the previous 18 years. The track was re-laid in 1988 and electrified by extension of 750V third rail from Blackfriars to Farringdon where a changeover to the existing 25kV overhead catenary of the Widened Lines Moorgate-Bedford Midland Main Line took place. Services restarted using the new dual-voltage class 319 electric multiple units in May 1980, linking Bedford, Luton and St Albans across the Thames to south London, Gatwick Airport, Brighton and Guildford.

Of course, none of this happened by rational planning but rather in the teeth of the usual nay-sayer commentary of "it will never work, it isn't needed". But it did – partly thanks to Railfuture promoting the idea to the rail industry – and was an immediate success. With the Midland Main Line services revolutionised, footfall soared, with many new users travelling to the range of destinations either side of the Thames. They were joined by others who came onto Thameslink from the East Coast Main Line via the short walk across Pentonville Road from King's Cross Mainline station. Expansion was clearly needed but Southern Region capacity was at its limits, as exemplified by the single-lead junction approaching London Bridge station as well as the many flat junctions a little further south.

Expansion plans were drawn up in the late 1990s with the futuristic and very optimistic title "Thameslink 2000" to deliver a radically improved service for passengers. Planning continued for the project until at the turn of the millennium this moniker (Thameslink 2000) seemed more a hostage to fortune. Even so in 2004 the term was still



in use as the Network Rail environment statement for the project (image of front cover on previous page) listed these objectives of Thameslink 2000:

- Help with the dispersal of passengers from the terminus at St Pancras of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL), now called HS1
- Reduce overcrowding on Thameslink and other London commuter services
- Reduce overcrowding on the Underground
- Reduce the need for interchange between mainline and Underground train services
- Provide for the introduction of new cross-London services, so improving public transport accessibility in southeast England, particularly to areas of expected demand growth such as the London Bridge development area, Docklands, the land adjacent to King's Cross/St Pancras Stations and Luton and Gatwick airports. As a major new public transport service, Thameslink 2000 will encourage people to travel by train rather than by car and so reduce congestion on the roads.

Fourteen years on, just consider what the Thameslink Programme has offered passengers, having met all of the objectives listed above:

- St Pancras Thameslink (Low-Level) station opened
- Farringdon station reconstructed ready with links to Crossrail below
- Blackfriars station reconstructed over the River Thames
- London Bridge station completely reconstructed with dedicated Thameslink platforms
- Borough Market viaduct doubled to four tracks and the single junction lead doubled
- Bermondsey Flyover grade separates all lines south of London Bridge
- Canal Tunnels connecting St Pancras Thameslink with the East Coast Main Line
- 115 new trains ordered and now all built (although not all in service)
- New train depots at Three Bridges and Hornsey
- Hitchin flyover, improving punctuality as trains no longer wait to cross tracks.



Without these massive projects (photo left is the Canal Tunnel heading down from the East Coast Mainline to St Pancras International) along with numerous smaller interventions, the delivery of the final objective listed above just would not have been possible. The stimulus to the national and regional economy has been immense. From the 21 May 2018 timetable change, the three services that run through the Railfuture East Anglia

branch area have operated to new timetables (albeit with some well-publicised teething problems) that will be further amended in December 2018 with a full implementation in December 2019.

'TASTER' SERVICE

Passengers were able to sample the new long-distance through-London service in the weeks leading up to timetable change. This was primarily for staff familiarisation and to iron out potential problems. Railfuture was on the first service from Cambridge (see Class 700 at Cambridge on the front cover). We also spotted a problem with the information displays at Cambridge station. The public displays (pictured right) showed internal station codes "STPBOX" for St Pancras low-level and "LNDNBDE" for London Bridge. We contacted Greater Anglia, who asked GTR to fix it, and it was done within days. But why wasn't it spotted?



MAY 2018

A. The 2tph Peterborough all stations to Stevenage then King's Cross service was diverted to operate through the Canal Tunnels to London St Pancras-Farringdon-Blackfriars-London Bridge-East Croydon-Redhill-Gatwick Airport to Horsham and return. Both services will run fast from Stevenage to Finsbury Park. These trains will be formed by 12-car class 700/1 units. In the peaks the current 13 fast additional services will remain running to and from King's Cross albeit to new timings.

B. The current off-peak 1tph all stations service from Cambridge to Hatfield then Potters Bar, Finsbury Park and King's Cross and return will double to 2tph. Cambridge departures are at 26 and 56 minutes past each hour. These trains will be formed by eight-car class 700/0 units.

C. An additional service will operate at 54 minutes past each hour from Cambridge to Royston-Baldock-Letchworth-Hitchin-Stevenage-Finsbury Park-St Pancras-Farringdon-City Thameslink-Blackfriars-London Bridge-East Croydon-Gatwick Airport-Hayward's Heath-Brighton. This service will be operated by 12 car class 700/1 units.

D. The current off peak 2tph Ely-Cambridge then non-stop to King's Cross services will continue with both services now calling at Cambridge North all day. In the peaks these services will call as now additionally at Royston and/or Letchworth and — surprisingly— occasionally at Ashwell & Morden. All services will be formed by class 387 units in 8- or 12-car formations.

DECEMBER 2018

E. An additional service will operate (presumably) at 24 minutes past each hour from Cambridge to Royston-Baldock-Letchworth-Hitchin-Stevenage-Finsbury Park-St Pancras-Farringdon-City Thameslink-Blackfriars-London Bridge-East Croydon-Gatwick Airport-Hayward's Heath-Brighton. This service will be formed by 12 car class 700/1 units.

DECEMBER 2019

Service B above will divert from King's Cross to the Canal Tunnels to St Pancras, all stations to London Bridge then fast to Bromley South and Maidstone East.

Note 1. Basic off-peak B and C services will operate also during the peaks supplemented by additional services to and from London King's Cross starting/terminating at Baldock or Royston.

Note 2. Frequency to and from Ely-King's Lynn Line stations remains as now, although many London to King's Lynn end-to-end timings are sadly eased.

Over the next 18 months the gradual increase in service level will mean many more seats and services, particularly between Royston and Cambridge, as well as new routes. Everybody needs to work hard to fill this additional capacity.

Saturday services will operate to the basic Mon-Fri off peak service level. Sunday service levels will be hourly in all of ABCD above.



THE TRAINS

The entire train service will operate with two new fleets plus some stalwart class 365 units for peak hour additional services.

The class 700 (photo above) comprises a fleet of 60 eight-car (class 700/0) and 55 twelve



-car trains (class 700/1). Maintenance depots have been built at Hornsey and Three Bridges. The first train was delivered in late July 2015 and the last is built but has not yet been accepted into traffic.

Class 700/0 units have 427 (52 first, 375 standard) seats, 719 standing (8-car) and the 700/1 units have 666 (52 first, 614 standard) seats, 1,088 standing (12-car).

Class 717 units will join the fleet from the end of 2018. These fixed 6-car units will operate Stevenage-Hertford North/Welwyn GC-Finsbury Park-Moorgate Northern City services. They will replace the elderly 313 units currently in use. The 717 interiors are identical to the 700s but lack toilets.

Class 387 units (photo left at King's

Cross) operate the express London King's Cross to Cambridge services and all stations continuation onto King's Lynn. They have a top speed of 110mph, a useful attribute south of Hitchin. Each 4-car unit has 219 seats, 438 for 8 and 657 for 12. Note that a 12-car 387 has six driver cabs compared to just two for the class 700. These cabs eat up capacity.

GTR says there will be "better deals on fares" and it is "bringing in more great deals on our tickets", with "more money-saving Advance tickets on our routes, Super Off-Peak fares during the week from 2018, flexible season tickets for part-time workers in selected areas". We await information on these with interest.

FARES FOR THE THAMESLINK STATIONS – BEWARE !

Jerry Alderson travelled on the preview service in April, buying what he thought was a valid return fare from a ticket machine (TVM) Cambridge North station to London Bridge station. Not knowing what fare was needed he entered "London Bridge" on the TVM using the 'Other Stations' option and selected a fare. However, the TVM chose to ignore this and printed tickets for 'London Terminals' which is limited to Liverpool Street and King's Cross, and now, through necessity, St Pancras International. Greater Anglia informs Railfuture that London Bridge, Blackfriars and Farringdon had been added as destinations to the TVM at Cambridge North (previously they were unknown). Clearly the fares were not properly programmed.

Fare guru and former Railfuture vice president, Barry Doe, explained that one could buy a "London U1" ticket but that adds £6 return as it's basically adding a tube singles each way that covers use on Thameslink. There has been a cheaper "**London Thameslink**" ticket when travelling as far down as down to London Bridge or Elephant & Castle. However, with the opening of the new service they have brought in fares to named stations – including London Bridge – routed "**via City Thameslink**" and the Day Return with Network Railcard is £18.10 – only £1.35 dearer than to London. TVMs may not offer this, so beware.

Cambridge North 05/04/2018 14:39	
Your journey details	
Departure station:	Cambridge North
Destination:	London Bridge
Date of travel:	05.04.2018 14:39
Route:	ANY PERMITTED
Ticket type:	Off-Peak Day Return
Valid for 1 outward and 1 return journey on the day of purchase	
Restrictions:	VALID AS ADVERTISED
Railcard:	Network Railcard
Passengers:	Adult(s) 1

To understand the range of fares available, the independent brfares.com website is useful.

Railfuture has met the rail industry, DfT and ORR to stress the need for fares to be clearer and for differences to make sense to passengers. We welcome the Rail Delivery Group's fares consultation, which supposedly seeks "root and branch reform" (see page 13 article).

EAST WEST RAIL DECISIONS

BY PHIL SMART



Work on the East West Rail (EWR) link (joining Oxford with East Anglia) has continued to generate interest and create press stories.

A ministerial statement in early 2018 that East West Rail would be 'just a commuter railway' spread alarm among supporters of the project. Putting the project in the hands of the 'East West Railway Company' also raised, in the minds of many, the prospect of the railway being built down to a price rather than 'up to a specification'. The East West Rail Consortium of local authorities, however, maintains the original vision for a mixed-traffic line suitable for both longer distance services as well as for freight, so its recent meeting in Bedford gave them the chance to hear at first hand the Chair of the EWR Company, Rob Brighouse, as well as receiving presentations from Network Rail.

The meeting heard that the company would 'Design, Build, Finance and Maintain' (but not operate) the line. This appears to run contrary to earlier reports that it would run services under its own 'mini franchise' and 'unite wheel and rail under a single ownership'.

Attendees were also told that the Bletchley flyover would be fully restored and made capable of taking freight. This was good news as earlier reports suggested the poor condition of this 1960s structure would require a weight limit. Although freight adds little to the overall business case for the line, making it freight capable adds little to its design cost.

Another new line?

Speculation followed recent press reports that the company favoured a separate line between Bedford and Milton Keynes. This would overcome the problem of overlaying inter-regional services on the Marston Vale line which is characterised by stopping trains and multiple level crossings. The consortium was reassured that any decision about this could be taken independently without impacting on route selection east of Bedford or affecting project timescales.

Route selection between Bedford and Cambridge

This work continues to be undertaken by Network Rail as 'system operator'. The current timescale envisages an informal public consultation between October and December 2018. Final route selection will follow early in 2019 with alignments developed from next April.

Service pattern

The National Infrastructure Commission report envisaged four trains per hour (tph), a view shared by the EWR Company. The likely service pattern is 2tph Oxford-Milton Keynes (MK), 2tph MK-Cambridge, 2tph Oxford-Cambridge (through) via MK. A further 1-2tph would operate between Aylesbury and MK.

Cambridge South and developments east of Cambridge

As Railfuture East Anglia heard at its AGM in February 2018, Cambridge South will be built to accommodate the four EWR tph as well as the Thameslink, King's Cross, Liverpool Street and Stansted services. The laying of new sidings at Cambridge will allow for the future addition of a further island platform (9/10). The DfT is keen to see services extend beyond Cambridge towards Ipswich and Norwich and acknowledges Railfuture's proposals for upgrading the Mid-Anglia line as 'a practical way forward'. In particular there is increasing interest in doubling the track between Cambridge and Newmarket.

Western section

Progress continues apace with Network Rail's GRIP3 governance process having been completed in July 2017 and the GRIP4 70% complete at the time of writing and due for completion in March 2019 (brought forward from December 2019). A further round of Transport and Works Act Order Consultation (TWAOC) took place between January and February 2018, attracting 569 visitors and 422 responses. A second phase of enabling works has been priced and scoped, consisting of work which can commence in advance of the TWAOC in support of the acceleration of delivery timescales, and the project remains on track to integrate construction timescales with HS2. The Transport and Works Act order is expected in autumn 2019 after which the main works can commence with final commissioning expected by January 2024.

JAM TOMORROW? PLEA FOR SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS ON THE “MID-ANGLIA” CAMBRIDGE–IPSWICH ROUTE

BY HARRIET POWNEY

Despite 2017's 'wobble' in national passenger numbers, ORR figures – as reported in the last RAIL EAST – reveal East Anglia's stations handled a healthy 4.4% more passengers during 2017. As detailed below, this again included a significantly higher increase on the western section of the Ipswich-Cambridge line:

Station	2012	2016	2017	% change from 2012	% change from 2016
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
Total	773,102	1,011,630	1,076,689	39.3	6.4

This increase, however, has occurred despite the service being far from ideal, with the main problem one of frequency. Currently there's only one train to Cambridge per hour, with the option for commuters of arriving at 08.19 or 09.39 – although the former stops at both Kennett and Dullingham, the latter only stops at Dullingham – and returning at 16.44 or 17.44. (Both of which stop at Kennett and Dullingham before the alternating service resumes.)



It's also a pricey £9 for a day return from Newmarket (£7.40 off-peak) and, as the line doesn't fall within the Network South East region, no network discounts are available. Even for those travelling beyond Cambridge – to London, for example – as no period return between Newmarket and Cambridge exists, using a Network railcard for the Cambridge-London leg brings no advantages.

On Sundays – against a backdrop of **all** Sunday bus services between Newmarket and Cambridge being axed a few years ago – 'frequency' drops to one train every two hours, a disincentive compounded by connections for onward travel. The 10.01 from Newmarket (Bury passengers have the option of travelling via Ely), for example, arrives at 10.25, just missing the 10.20 fast service to King's Cross and the 10.28 semi-fast, and leaving almost an hour's wait until 11.20.

Although the return connections are better – a wait of only 11 minutes – in the case of delay there's no consistent approach to holding the Ipswich train. As a result, on the last two occasions I've had visitors from London, rather than leaving them sitting in Cambridge for two hours I've driven over to pick them up. As a ticket to King's Cross costs £41.80 (off-peak return) or £66.80 (peak return) for a journey of around 70 miles it would be cheaper and, at 50 minutes little longer, to pick them up from Redbridge in the first place. Insult is then added to injury if compensation is applied for as Thameslink only offers £5.30 as its train was only 16 minutes late while, as far as Greater Anglia are concerned, its train left on time so no refund is due at all.

Frustratingly, and despite the growth in passenger numbers being expected to continue – or even increase – in response to the new Thameslink services to Gatwick, the proposed Cambridge South station, and the huge growth in housing along the line, there are no

current plans to enhance the service. 'Kennett Garden Village', for example, a development of 500 new homes, will more than treble the current village's population of 340. Although it will be just to the north of the railway station and include a new station car park, and the developers state on their website that they "are engaging with key stakeholders to explore the possibility of enhancing train services", there is no commitment to improving infrastructure *before* the houses are built.

Red Lodge has seen similar growth (from a population of 1,600 in 2001, to an estimated 5,394 in 2016) – which probably accounts for much of the growth in passenger numbers at Kennett – as has Fordham, where developers of 150 new homes have been asked to contribute £84,000 towards improvements to the A142/Newmarket Road roundabout.

While it is undoubtedly up to councils to be more effective in demanding access to public transport rather than their current default of asking for improvements to roads, TOCs could also do more. Granted many current limitations are due to the single-track section between Newmarket and Cambridge, and that the new trains expected in 2019 should improve reliability (reducing the number of times passengers are forced to sit at Cambridge station for an hour while the last vestiges of a pleasant evening drain slowly away!) but, in last year's Annual Review, Chair Chris Page listed Railfuture's national campaigns for 2018 as:

- Passengers first
- Fares and ticketing
- Route modernisation
- A bigger railway.

Apologies if this sounds negative, but I'd argue that the current service fails on each of these points and that 441,310 passengers from the last three stations on the line (not including those who travel direct to Ely to pick up onward trains to avoid the tortuous route via Cambridge or Bury) are receiving a particularly raw deal.

One way in which Greater Anglia might immediately start to put the customer first is by offering transparency and consistency in their approach to holding trains; to 'delay repay'; and to fares in general, as well as by improving the ticket machines which have been consistently unreliable since installation. Longer-term, and while waiting for improvements to infrastructure, they could also investigate more creative approaches to improve the service. If it proves impossible to reinstate the Newmarket West Curve line, for example, stopping trains to and from Ely at Kennett (less than five miles from Newmarket) would open up many more opportunities for travel.

Another lever the operator has in its power is to get a move on with its franchise commitment to develop a Community Rail Partnership (CRP) for the Mid-Anglia line – this would allow regular informed discussion of service issues between the operator and communities served by the route at a level where effective solutions to passenger frustrations might be developed and implemented. In addition, Peter Cogar produced a document in 2016 detailing several promising scenarios to improve frequency on this route, one of which suggested that the improved acceleration of the new trains entering service from the 2019 timetable might make it possible – just – to increase the service to two trains p/h based on the existing infrastructure:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/external-docs/lpswich-Cambridge-line-capacity-Dec-2016-by-Peter-Cogar.pdf>

Sadly, if Greater Anglia and other stakeholders fail to explore more creative possibilities such as these – in other words, to offer a little carrot with the stick – a new generation of train users might be lost and even formerly staunch supporters of public transport will eventually lose heart and return to their cars.

NB Since writing this article, the May 2018 timetable refresh has been announced – and it compounds some of the issues raised here. See Peter Wakefield's article on page 10.

Peter Cogar's analysis, mentioned above, is just one of many documents about rail in East Anglia available on the Railfuture website. They are listed, along with many of the branch's pages, on the East Anglia dashboard.

Go to www.railfuture.org.uk/branches and click on the East Anglia icon (pictured right) to see the dashboard.



SUMMER TIMETABLE...THE GOOD AND THE VERY BAD

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

Greater Anglia told Railfuture in advance that the extra summer Sunday services will operate on the Norwich, Ipswich and Colchester to London route and between Norwich and Lowestoft, Ipswich and Peterborough and Ipswich and Felixstowe, as well as additional summer services on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays on the Norwich to Great Yarmouth line. Many of these services have also run during past summers. This is the **good**.

A very useful service

On the West Anglia Mainline a useful new service will add a later 'last' train on Friday and Saturday nights from Cambridge to all stations to Bishops Stortford. Catering for the Cambridge night economy, it will leave Cambridge at 23.27. A good connection will be available to Harlow and Liverpool Street too. Currently the last Friday and Saturday service is at 22.51.

Not only is Fenland to London slower but Mid-Anglia too

The new Thameslink timetable seems to have very detrimental repercussions on Bury St Edmunds and Newmarket connections to King's Cross at Cambridge. From 21 May 2018 trains from the Mid-Anglia line follow the King's Lynn to King's Cross trains into Cambridge rather than preceding them. This means only a three-minute connection will be available, albeit across the footbridge to platform 7 or 8 rather than hoofing along through the crowds to platform 1.

Trains will arrive at Cambridge from Ipswich at xx.41 and their 'connection' will now leave for London King's Cross at xx.44. Less agile users for London will now be directed onto the new xx.54 service to Brighton via St Pancras. This of course stops six times before London St Pancras compared to the preceding non-stop run to King's Cross **and will add 25 minutes onto the journey from Mid-Anglia**. The problem is caused by the GN King's Lynn-London King's Cross service now waiting for eight minutes at Cambridge from xx.36 to xx.44. Previously it was xx.45 to xx.51. It is a shame the Mid-Anglia timetable cannot be tweaked so that trains left Ipswich a couple of minutes earlier with the return journey to Newmarket, etc., starting back earlier too, as it leaves xx.47 compared to xx.44 to enable the trains to cross at Chippenham. However, any major change is ruled out by the need to make important connections at Stowmarket and at Ipswich.

Lesson...total flexibility needed, so:

- **Redouble the Newmarket Line quickly and reinstate the former independent line into Cambridge.**
- **Redouble the Downham Market to Littleport Line**

SEAMLESS PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EAST ANGLIA

BY TREVOR GARROD

Railfuture received several useful responses to our report "Seamless Public Transport in East Anglia" first published in the February 2018 issue of RAIL EAST.

We've had a promise to display bus timetables in the empty bus shelter outside Thetford station. Others were wider ranging and more general – particularly from Journey Solutions, the consortium which administers PlusBus. They told us that the great majority of bus add-ons in East Anglia are sold to rail passengers going to just five centres: Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester, Chelmsford and Cambridge. The priority should therefore now be to encourage more travellers to medium-sized towns such as King's Lynn, Great Yarmouth, Lowestoft or Clacton to make use of it.

Thus, for example, a ticket from Cambridge to "Lowestoft Buses" enables you to catch a bus outside the station at Lowestoft to take you to Africa Alive (a wildlife park) in Kessingland or the popular East Anglia Transport Museum in Carlton Colville. At least two buses an hour pick up outside the rail station and drop customers at the entrance to the museum. Others stop a few minutes' walk away.

What we would now like members to do is send in further examples of visitor destinations which are situated a convenient bus ride from the station, but where PlusBus is not promoted. This includes not just museums, but also cultural, sporting and education venues, and indeed hospitals and major employers. We can publish a list in a future RAIL EAST and on our website, but I shall also contact as many destinations as possible and urge them to promote PlusBus on their own leaflets and websites. Please send details of such destinations, and whether or not they currently mention PlusBus, to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ – or email Trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk

Meanwhile, as one more example of what can be done, the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership did a special promotion of Lowestoft PlusBus at the Community Rail in the City event at Liverpool Street station on 16 May. This has become an annual event to encourage Londoners to take the train for leisure trips into our region.

SMALLER STATIONS – BURSTS OF IMPROVEMENTS

BY SUSAN VAN DE VEN : MELDRETH, SHEPRETH AND FOXTON USERS

Thameslink timetable – making local rail people’s transport of choice. Our main aspiration in the creation of the Thameslink timetable has been the introduction of half-hourly services at the three village stations, for the purpose of making rail a far more attractive proposition for short distance commuters considering making the switch from private car to train. So, these half-hourly services will be a transformative moment.

CRP Project Officer. We’ve now blossomed into a fully-fledged Community Rail Partnership supported by a paid Project Officer, to ensure opportunities are consistently seized. Sarah Grove started in post in February and in a short space of time has provided much needed support and structure to the overall rail campaign. The post has been well supported not only by the Association of Community Rail Partnerships (ACoRP) and South Cambridgeshire District Council, but also by parish councils, whom we now look forward to working with in scoping out our action plan. We anticipate an emphasis on developing work with schools and business, fleshing out Railfuture’s station audits, and contributing to more strategic long-term planning for access to rail at our fast-growing village stations. That means a big push on cycle parking and walk/cycle links from surrounding villages – and making this happen will depend on collaboration with local authorities.

Foxton and Meldreth station shelters. At long last the Cambridge platforms at these busy stations are set to acquire modern enclosed shelters. The absence of any rain cover on the Meldreth platform was on the original Rail User Group’s list at its inaugural meeting nine years ago.

Shepreth Level Crossing. The installation of full level crossing barriers, to be in place before the Thameslink roll-out, will mean a safer crossing but also changes for the village community in which the crossing sits, as people will need to adjust to longer barrier down times. A ticket machine on both platforms is needed (as it is at all three stations) – and Network Rail tells us that GTR expressed agreement on this point. To be pursued.

Shepreth water butt – more than meets the eye. British Transport Police tell us that station gardens mean more orderly station environments, with significantly fewer reports of criminal and anti-social behaviour. We’ve been angling for a water butt on the Cambridge platform for even longer than the full level crossing barrier has been in gestation, and at last it’s in place. This makes the task of tending flower tubs extending to the new longer platform far more feasible. Without water, platform gardens don’t really work. Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme volunteers are now an established presence at our stations and make a tremendous difference to keeping station gardens well-watered in the summer months. However, the additional form filling now required by GTR for all volunteers is daunting.

Live train times at the pub. The Plough Shepreth, a five-minute walk from Shepreth Station, now boasts live train times on display (see photo on right) – the best way of appreciating this is, of course, to come and visit.



NEEDHAM MARKET ACCESS CAMPAIGN—UPDATE

MEETING THE MINISTER — BY PETER FEENEY

An article in RAIL EAST issue 176 (November 2017) highlighted the plight of travellers using Needham Market station for whom the prospect of engaging with 49 sub-platform steps to reach services bound for Ipswich represents a real challenge – or for wheelchair users, an impossibility. The article mentioned the efforts being made by local campaigners to secure Network Rail Access for All funding in the 2019-2024 funding round, including a petition evidencing the strength of local feeling about limited access at the station.

As a result of steady lobbying, and with the active support of the local MP, Jo Churchill, a small group of campaigners travelled to London on 28 March 2018 to present the petition to Chris Grayling at the Department for Transport. The short meeting enabled the campaigners – one of whom as a wheelchair user himself is all too aware of the problems posed – to summarise their case and look for ministerial support in making a bid for the necessary funding. As a result of this meeting (see photo below), the campaigners now have a follow-up meeting in June with Nusrat Ghani, parliamentary under-secretary of state at the department with special responsibility for disability issues.



Whilst recognising the reality of a funding context where resources are limited and decisions about allocations are made against metrics not necessarily favouring Needham Market – e.g. annual footfall – the campaigners remain determined to pursue their goal of having a local station where the elderly, the disabled and parents with prams can access the train service as readily as any other traveller. Railfuture has confirmed that a combined facilities audit and footfall count will be undertaken in the near future at the station.

The petition in support of the campaign is still live, with the current aspiration to get it to a round 2000 signatures. The total at the start of May was approximately 1600, including over 400 online – if you would like to sign, please go to tinyurl.com/needhamstation.

RAIL FARES REFORM—IS CHANGE FINALLY ON ITS WAY?

BY PAUL HOLLINGHURST

Everyone agrees that fares need transforming from the current complex, irrational mess, full of bizarre anomalies and rules which even railway staff don't know or understand, damaging passenger satisfaction, into a system which is understandable, fair, and leads the way to a future with smart ticketing. The government has been acknowledging this for seven years but has so far has achieved nothing. The Rail Delivery Group has announced a consultation in conjunction with Transport Focus starting on 4 June 2018, stating "We want to make rail fares regulation fairer and simpler for our customers".

It is unbelievable that proposals such as single leg ticket pricing (singles are priced at half the equivalent return fare) have been repeatedly identified over seven years as desirable, but the government and rail industry appear paralysed in even making the first step. With the report due in autumn 2018, we can only hope that a way forward is finally found.

Here is a timeline outlining the lost opportunities, as the 2018 consultation has stated aims which look not dissimilar from those identified by Sir Roy McNulty in 2011.

May 2011: Sir Roy McNulty report on the 'value for money' of the railway published, recommending "The DfT should undertake a full review of fares policy"

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/realising-the-potential-of-gb-rail>

"Fares policy, with the exception of changes to the Retail Prices Index....cap on permitted increases, has remained largely unchanged since privatisation, despite significant changes in rail markets. The DfT should undertake a full review of fares policy and the current fares structure, addressing the overall complexity, anomalies, regional imbalances, season ticket pricing and all other relevant factors as these are affected by regulation. The overall aim would not be to see fares rise overall, but to move towards a system which is seen to be less complex and more equitable, and that provides information which passengers can understand and have confidence in."

March 2012: Formal Consultation on Rail Fares and Ticketing

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review>

March 2013: The rail industry claims it is rolling out "Simplified Fares".

http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/times_fares/46442.aspx

But the reality is soon revealed: this is just a very superficial renaming exercise, for example Saver Tickets to be renamed Off-Peak. It could even be argued that the new names were more confusing as 'Off-Peak' tickets are valid on many 'Peak' services – perhaps 'Saver' would be a better name! So no progress, or even backward progress.

October 2013: DfT publishes "Rail Fares and Ticketing: Next Steps" with a foreword by Patrick McLoughlin MP, Secretary of State for Transport

www.gov.uk/government/consultations/rail-fares-and-ticketing-review

"This rail fares and ticketing strategy sets out the other actions we will take to give passengers a better, more modern and more flexible deal on fares. We plan on doing this by:

- Reducing the current fares flex from 5% to 2%, thereby limiting the extent of the annual fares increases.
- Trialling a scheme to regulate longer-distance off-peak tickets on a single leg basis to remove the situation where single off-peak tickets cost nearly as much as return tickets.
- Trialling more flexible tickets that are more suited to the needs of passengers with modern working patterns. For instance, commuters who travel fewer than five days a week or outside the peak hours can be provided with a more attractive ticketing offer that saves them money."

2014: The DfT had produced a Specification for the single leg ticket pricing trial and was looking for an operator to try it out.

https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/off_peak_single_ticket_pricing_t?nocache=incoming-99680#incoming-699680

First Great Western were already commercially supporting a scheme where singles were set at 60% of the return (rather than a more typical value of a few pence less than the return) so it didn't appear to be all that challenging to run a trial with single fares set to 50% of the return. "The trial... is likely to be summer 2014."

2016: Ticketing reform back on the agenda with a rail summit to discuss fares.

<http://www.railwaygazette.com/news/passenger/single-view/view/summit-to-discuss-ticket-reform.html>

2017: A series of ticketing reform trials are announced.

<https://www.raildeliverygroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/2017/469771790-2017-02-01.html>

"Radical changes to rail fares that would guarantee customers simpler fares and the best possible deal every time they travel are set to be trialled by train companies." "Single-leg pricing will be tested on the London-Glasgow and London-Edinburgh routes." "Trials are due to start in May this year" ...but then months of silence until May 2018...

Consultation announced. www.raildeliverygroup.com/media-centre/press-releases/2018/469773920-2018-05-08.html

WISBECH RAIL REINSTATEMENT PROGRESS

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The Railfuture East Anglian branch has joined forces with others in the Wisbech area by forming the Wisbech Rail Consultative Group, chaired by Railfuture East Anglia vice chairman Peter Wakefield. The Group aims to provide focus initially on the need to plan for the station to be as near Wisbech town centre as possible. We have produced two papers that have achieved wide press and social media coverage and much support for the concepts put forward. We believe plans are being revised by the local authority that will show the station in the town centre.

The Group also aims to draw attention to ways of keeping the costs affordable and importantly to ensure that the prize of through services to Cambridge is achieved. We believe that the reinstatement is vital not just for Wisbech but also for March and Fenland right along the rail corridor into Cambridge. We show that housing already committed in local plans along the railway will bring the population served by the railway between Wisbech and Waterbeach to 170,000 people, 46,000 in Wisbech alone.

Relatively few people currently travel by train in the peaks from March to Cambridge even though March is in the travel-to-work area of Cambridge, as are King's Lynn and the other three stations on the King's Lynn-Ely Branch. Yet nearly 3,000,000 passengers travel annually on trains from King's Lynn as against only around 400,000 from March.

Why do so many people travel from the King's Lynn branch compared to the March branch? Simply because there are more trains running. Thirteen trains arrive in Cambridge from King's Lynn before 09.00 compared to just one from March. That equates to 54 train carriages from the Lynn Line and just two from March. All 56 carriages are full and standing on arrival at Cambridge. About 100 carriages will be provided soon for the King's Lynn branch stations — but there are no plans to add anything to the two from March.

It is clear that it is train service frequency that drives growth from the latent demand. Over 50% of trips between Ely and Cambridge are by rail because of the excellent service. Services are frequent and urgently need the lengthening soon to be provided.

Regarding Wisbech, the detailed Mott MacDonald feasibility/business case study shows a BCR (benefits to costs ratio) of over 4:1 for the mooted 2tph through service to Cambridge. This study was for GRIP2 but consultants believe its detail virtually completes GRIP3, even though the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor is putting the tender out to complete GRIP3 in September. NR is factoring in at least 1tph from Wisbech for the Ely Area Capacity Study to which the Combined Authority (CA) is contributing £9m. This is over and above the £3m the CA is to spend on the further Wisbech study.

Railfuture East Anglia will submit to the forthcoming timetable consultation that GA run at least 1tph Cambridge-March to build traffic in a timetable that will allow extension on to Wisbech when the branch becomes available. Scotrail terminated Glasgow-Alloa services at Stirling and then extended to Alloa once that restoration took place.

Potential site for a Wisbech town centre station



The Wisbech Rail papers (including map, above) may be viewed on the Wisbech Rail website at: wisbechrail.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/wisbech-rail-consultative-group.pdf

LOCAL AUTHORITIES HELPING GROW OUR RAILWAY

ESSEX RAIL STRATEGY (ERS)

BY MARTIN COOPER

Alastair Southgate, Head of Future Transport Strategy, Essex County Council (pictured right) welcomed a short paper prepared by Railfuture East Anglia as a contribution to developing a new Rail Strategy for Essex. He noted there were many common themes such as the increasingly important role of the railways in facilitating housing growth along main transport corridors and stimulating economic development supported by a sustainable transport network.



It is intended that the new document will set out the importance of the railways for Essex as part of an integrated transport network. It will set out a direction of travel for the County Council in working with DfT, Network Rail and TOCs to deliver existing priorities such as Norwich in 90 and Beaulieu Park Station as a North Chelmsford transport hub supporting new homes and office developments. The Strategy will address the need for better inter-town connectivity along the Great Eastern Mainline (GEML)/A12, West Anglia Mainline (WAML)/M11 and the Essex Thameside corridors. The latter's trains are operated by c2c.

The ERS will not be a shopping list of infrastructure projects but a document setting out over the short (3-5 years), medium (5-15 years) and longer (15-25 years) term ways in which the existing rail system could be improved e.g. making stations work better for all travellers; delivering the existing pipeline investment priorities, and identifying longer-term capacity enhancements and aspirations for the continuing development of stronger regional connections, thereby reducing the reliance on travel via London.

The latter point is increasingly important as Essex sees the need to develop a strong Sub-National Transport Body if East Anglian authorities are to carry influence with Highways England and Network Rail. Essex believes that the electrification of the Felixstowe to Nuneaton (F2N) route and the extension of EWR services from Ipswich to Colchester deserve serious consideration. These are both ways to reduce pressure on the GEML south of Chelmsford to release capacity and improve reliability.

Come and meet Alastair at Railfuture public meeting in Ipswich

Alastair is drafting the strategy for agreement by Essex County Councillors. It will serve as the basis for discussions and engagement with a wide group of stakeholders, of which Railfuture will be one. Alastair will address the East Anglia branch meeting on **Saturday 16 June 2018 at 14.00** to set out the broad principles and thinking on the future of rail in Essex. Our venue is **St Mary's at Stoke, Church Hall, Stoke Street, IPSWICH, IP2 8DA**

GREATER NORWICH LOCAL PLAN—UPDATE

BY IAN COUZENS

The draft Greater Norwich Local Plan has gone out to consultation, and Railfuture East Anglia made its formal submission in March 2018. We have also sent copies of our submission directly to local council leaders and other stakeholders. In an encouraging response South Norfolk Council invited us to make a presentation to explain our proposals in more detail. This is particularly relevant as our new station proposals (see below) lie in the South Norfolk area.

Under the draft plan, it is expected that 43,000 new homes will be delivered across the three local authority areas of Norwich City, Broadland and South Norfolk in the period up to 2036. We argue that with the scale of growth predicted, rail will have to play a significantly greater role than at present in meeting the transport needs of a growing population. There are of course already commitments for improvement and expansion under the new Greater Anglia franchise with new stock, Norwich in 90, Norwich to Stansted Airport, and a third hourly train to London. Beyond that we look to delivery of East West Rail by the mid-20s for

a further step change. This would create opportunities for improving local services in the Norwich area by moving to half hourly frequency on all lines, benefiting both commuting and leisure travel.

A study carried out by Atkins identified potential benefits and opportunities for the eastern section of East West Rail. Under these proposals there could be three trains per hour between Norwich and Cambridge, two of which would be fast trains for onward destinations such as Oxford or Milton Keynes. Atkins also makes the case for extending East West rail improvements to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft, with the economic benefits that could bring to both towns. It sees scope for up to three trains per hour on both lines in the long run, with perhaps some running beyond Norwich. It is important that the potential for these improvements is recognised in the plan and that the participating authorities lobby for them to happen.

As far as the Bittern line is concerned, we look to further progress being made on the new station proposal at Dussindale/Broadland Business Park, which would go hand in hand with a new half hourly service from Norwich to North Walsham.

Railfuture has made proposals for two further new stations. One of these would be close to Long Stratton on the Great Eastern Mainline, at or near the old Fornsett station site. Long Stratton is expected to grow to a population of some 10,000 under the plan. The town is sited midway between Norwich and Diss, a distance of some 20 miles – a long interval by UK standards with no intermediate station. We envisage that the new third train per hour under the new franchise could stop at Long Stratton without compromising Norwich in 90. The other station proposal is at or near the old Hethersett station on the Cambridge line and near to the Thickthorn interchange on the Norwich Southern bypass. This would benefit new housing growth planned for that area, the western suburbs of Norwich generally and, with a good bus link, connect up with the Norwich Research Park.

Local plan policies feed through into the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS), which is also being updated. It is good that the current strategy makes reference to the Dereham line, and the possibility of looking into a future passenger service. We have asked that this provision is retained at minimum, and that we would like to see a feasibility study carried out sooner rather than later. We have also asked for improvements in train-bus integration at Norwich and the development of the bus rapid transit routes projected by NATS. In particular, attention should be given to the ever-busier Rail station-City Centre-UEA-Hospital-Research Park-Thickthorn axis. With air quality increasingly becoming a serious issue, the introduction of electric buses should be on the agenda.

LEARNING LESSONS FROM “THE BEAST FROM THE EAST”

BY PETER FEENEY

Those living in the east of the region will have cause to remember the arctic blasts that brought extreme cold, easterly winds and significant snowfall during the last week of February 2018. Train services, both mainline and regional, were significantly disrupted, despite the best efforts of staff to maintain them. The situation was aggravated by some imprecise weather forecasts, which led to services being scaled back early in the week when the worst weather didn't materialise, only to be re-instated later when the severe weather did appear. The branch committee discussed the industry response to the extreme weather and subsequently wrote to Network Rail to express concern under three key points:

- *Preparation* – specifically the perceived slowness in getting snowploughs operational, possibly aggravated by current logistics – why not consider re-locating them, like the autumn RHTT trains, to Stowmarket, a central node in the regional



network, rather than keeping them in the west, at March?

- *Aim to keep the trains running* – why were regional train services suspended when adjacent roads were often free running? Not a good advertisement for the industry!
- *Improved information* – as an operational premise, aim to maintain a full service whilst ensuring travellers receive maximum advance information of potential disruption linked to an evolving weather picture

The feedback from Network Rail only partly responded to the specifics raised in the branch letter. Signed by Meliha Duymaz, route MD for Anglia, it emphasised the difficulties posed by the unpredictable pattern of the severe weather experienced, but also significantly spelt out that NR's "key route strategy" for extreme weather involves shutting down regional services in order to focus workforce energies solely on maintaining mainline running – although even here, the evidence from February is that results were very mixed. Just as significantly, her reply makes no reference at all to the practical point raised in Railfuture's letter about snowplough operations and logistics. The letter concludes by commenting that the passenger voice in a review being undertaken of industry effectiveness during this spell of extreme weather will be heard via engagement with Transport Focus. We can only hope that Railfuture's concern about the interests of travellers using regional services will be taken seriously, and that at some point the assumption that impending bad weather triggers a default shutdown of many services will receive some robust challenge.



Ipswich station - photo by Phil Smart

CROSS COUNTRY FRANCHISE—SOME KEY ISSUES

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The current franchise covers much of the United Kingdom, from Penzance to Dundee and Cardiff to Nottingham/Stansted Airport, Bournemouth to Manchester....all routes centring on Birmingham. Because of the complexity of the network, Railfuture generally comments on issues through Dr Stephen Wright, Cross Country Trains Liaison Officer on Railfuture's Passenger Group and Chairman Railfuture West Midlands, who is based in Birmingham. We in East Anglia have also had occasional meetings with Cross Country stakeholder managers to discuss local issues.

Dr Wright comments:

"Later this year the DfT, unless it decides to go for another Direct Award, will start consultations on the future Cross Country Trains franchise – currently due to commence in October 2019. Clearly much has already been written about the shortcomings of the

present franchise – trains with insufficient seats or space, expensive walk-on fares, no or inadequate service provision to some cities, poor refreshment facilities, on (some) trains smelly toilets, on-the day reservations, poor stakeholder involvement. Some of these were addressed, at least in part, in the present Direct Award agreement, although almost all require further attention.

It may be recalled that Railfuture submitted a quite comprehensive set of aspirations prior to the present arrangement, following consultation with branches, and it plans to commence a similar process in the next few months. However, before delving into the detail of aspirations for 2019 there are a number of fundamental questions that need to be addressed.

Firstly, just what should be the role of Cross Country Trains? Should it be a high quality, long distance express service, serving only the most significant conurbations? Or should it provide a frequent inter-urban service as now? Should the local-type service between Birmingham and Leicester or Nottingham be assigned to a different TOC? What should be done about the semi-fast Cardiff to Nottingham and Birmingham to Stansted Airport services?"

Our East Anglia Branch's direct interest in the route 'ends' at Peterborough, so we should not get involved in discussing the philosophy behind the national XC network but just the part route that provides a fundamentally important service to our region - the service provided from Stansted Airport through Cambridge, Ely, March, Peterborough to Leicester and the West Midlands.

Dr Wright continues: "The service does provide a useful, if not very fast, connection between the cities of Birmingham, Leicester, Peterborough, Cambridge and on to Stansted Airport. So, should this service be retained as is, and if so by which operating company? Or would it provide a better service if split up between two or more local operators?"

Board Member Roger Blake, in charge of overseeing Railfuture responses to various consultations, reminds us: "We need to be mindful of other franchise changes impacting on Cross Country. I'm thinking for example of the next East Midlands franchise, on which Railfuture has already committed itself to a certain position on some issues affecting Cross Country: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display1608>. In particular, we've said switch the Cross Country Birmingham-Stansted to Birmingham-Norwich, and correspondingly switch the East Midlands away from Norwich to Stansted.

On a franchise timing point, the latest, July 2017, Rail Franchise Schedule from DfT has the current Direct Award expiring December, not October, 2019 but with the possibility of extension by up to 11 4-week reporting periods i.e. up to autumn 2020. Expressions of Interest were due to be invited from potential bidders last month [can't say I noticed that happening!] then the ITT published this October, with contract award in August next year ready for the December 2019 start of the new franchise. All that said, everything is always moving to the right so I fully expect the next thing we hear on Cross Country to be an announcement that the SoS is exercising his right to extend the present Direct Award. That at least gives us the benefit of added time in which to draft, and maybe consult and garner wider support for our Prospectus."

Focussing on the East Anglian context, what should be our priorities for the XC Stansted to Peterborough and West Midlands service? I feel they should be these.

1. Serve the catchment area of Stansted Airport as efficiently as possible. Given the nature of the airline business out of Stansted, its hinterland can by some estimates extend to the West Midlands.
2. Provide a fast service from Cambridge, Ely, March to Peterborough for good connections to and from East Coast Main Line long distance inter city services.
3. Serve the important towns along its route in Cambridgeshire. It is the only through service between the two largest towns in Cambridgeshire.
4. Provide the useful link to Stamford, Melton Mowbray, Leicester and Birmingham.

What are our main requirements of any future service?

1. Very much earlier morning services from Birmingham, Leicester, Peterborough to

- Cambridge and Stansted Airport. Currently only one train arrives at Cambridge and Stansted Airport by 09.00. Hundreds of flights have left the Airport by that time (the service between Cambridge and Stansted starts very early and is quite good.)
2. Later evening services from Stansted Airport and Cambridge to at least as far as Leicester but probably onto Birmingham too. Currently the last train from the Airport to March and Peterborough is at 20.21 and from Cambridge at 21.01. This is too early for hundreds of arriving flights and the night economy of Cambridge. There should be at least two additional services at 21.21 and 22.21 from the Airport. A service at 23.21 to Peterborough and beyond does not seem an unreasonable ask given the ever-growing numbers of Airport users. The last service to Cambridge from the Airport should be at 00.21.
 3. Sunday services currently start in the late morning so a standard seven-day service must be provided throughout. Connections to the ECML are an imperative.
 4. Longer trains on all services is another imperative. Currently services are made up of a mixture of 2- and 3-car class 170 diesel units. These are well presented and generally comfortable though there is a sub group that have very cramped seating. These units need upgrading to provide a standard offer. The 2 car units run at some of the busiest times and thus the most overcrowded services. Little effort during the whole of the current franchise period has been made to address overcrowding.
 5. There is much talk of "remapping" this route and certain elements of the East Midlands franchise (code for should another franchise take over a certain route?) Following discussion between the Railfuture branches concerned, our position is that if "remapping" occurs it should be based on evidence from the DfT and others involved. Currently we are content with Stansted to Birmingham and Norwich to Liverpool. However, if evidence suggests that Stansted to Peterborough to Nottingham and beyond and Norwich to Peterborough and on to Leicester and Birmingham makes sense we would consider the proposal on its merits and the evidence. What we certainly do not want would be for one train from Stansted to go to Birmingham, the next to Nottingham and so on, alternating routes every hour.
 6. Another question is how will the proposed hourly Colchester-Ipswich-Bury St Edmunds-Peterborough service fit in with all this. Should it attach to one or other of the two cross country services at Ely and go on to Liverpool or Birmingham? Or just stand alone in the hope reasonable connections are maintained. Who should operate these three services? Would one TOC be best?

EAST ANGLIA BRANCH MEETING — 16 JUNE 2018

GUEST SPEAKER: ALASTAIR SOUTHGATE OF ESSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

As Head of Future Transport Strategy at Essex County Council, Alastair Southgate will set out the broad principles and thinking on the future of rail in Essex. Includes Question & Answers afterwards. It's always good to have a full room so please join us.

A flyer for our next meeting can be found at: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings>
This includes a map of the venue and directions from the station.

Turn into Burrell Road past the multi-storey car park on your right. Take the right fork up Willoughby Road, at the top of which turn left into Belstead Road, which becomes Stoke Street with the venue in sight.

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 August, please, but articles covering late news will be considered a few days prior to sending to the printer two weeks later.

railfuture East Anglia

MEDIA CONTACTS

Chairman: Nick Dibben

24 Bure Close, St Ives PE27 3FE

Tel: 01480 495101

nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk

Vice-Chairman: Chris Burton

Tel: 01223 352327 / 07780 856212

cfb79ten@gmail.com

Vice-Chairman: Peter Wakefield

Tel: 01223 352364 / 07738 085307

peter.wakefield@railfuture.org.uk

OTHER CONTACTS

Secretary: Paul Hollinghurst

110 Catharine Street, Cambridge CB1 3AR

paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk

Contributions for RAIL EAST: Peter Feeney

raileast@railfuture.org.uk

East Anglia Membership Secretary: Peter Bayless

3 Queens St, Spooner Row, Wymondham NR18 9JU

petlinbay@btinternet.com

MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 16 JUN 2018

St Mary's at Stoke
Church Hall, Stoke Street

IPSWICH

IP2 8DA

SATURDAY 29 SEP 2018

Friends Meeting House,
Upper Goat Lane

NORWICH

NR2 1EW

SATURDAY 1 DEC 2018

Provisional Date
Venue TBC

CAMBRIDGE

Follow Railfuture East Anglia on Twitter <https://twitter.com/RailfutureEA>

Railfuture Ltd is a (not for profit) Company Limited by Guarantee.
Registered in England and Wales No. 5011634. Registered Office:- 24 Chedworth Place, Tattingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND

RAIL EAST 178 — JUNE 2018 Railfuture East Anglia www.railfuture.org.uk 20