

raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

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**HOW CAN SOMETHING
SO SMALL**

**HAVE SUCH A BIG
IMPACT ON OUR LIVES?**

Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- Impact of COVID-19 on railway
- The post COVID-19 railway
- Major shift in transport policy?
- Ely Area Capacity Enhancement
- Station Improvements
- Looking gift horses in the mouth
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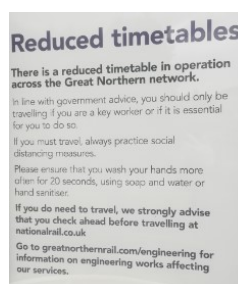
Good news for Fenland rail users and passengers needing better access elsewhere in the region

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The COVID-19 lockdown is just the latest in a long series of operational challenges for Alan Neville of Greater Anglia



RAIL SERVICES AND COVID-19 – WHAT NEXT?

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH



As these notes are being written, in May 2020, the country remains in lockdown and there is as yet no clear date on when this situation will change. Rail passenger numbers have dropped by well over 90% and train companies are operating a reduced service. The government has announced that it will take on the financial risk to keep train services



going, effectively nationalising the railway. (Jerry Alderson considers whether the government could use its control of the railway to make changes on page 8.) Freight services continue their role in delivering essential supplies to keep the country going. We should all thank railway managers and staff for the work they are doing and encourage society to recognise them for the “essential workers” that they are. (See further Alan Neville’s reflections on the pandemic crisis from the perspective of an experienced railway manager on page 21.)

Like many people, I am working at home. When this is over, will I want to re-join other commuters in going back to the office? Probably yes, but like many, I might consider working at home one or perhaps two days a week. If lots of people are of the same view, that could ease overcrowding on trains and congestion on the roads, a positive move. However, this will represent a loss of income to train operators and fuel duty to the Treasury at a time when there will be large debts to pay off. What will this mean for the future of the railways and how will this influence the still awaited Williams review on the future of passenger franchises?

The general opinion is that the country is changing and we will not go back to how things were before Covid-19 struck. What will happen, no one can be certain, but in this issue of RAIL EAST Phil Smart considers some of the potential implications of the lockdown (see page 5). We also include views on page 7 from some of our rail user groups as to the likely future.

One development that could help the railways is the government’s paper on decarbonising transport. The paper recognises that we have to reduce our dependency on the car and acknowledges the benefits of railway electrification. More on this on the following page.

Away from the virus, the Branch has responded to the Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority Mayor’s consultation on the CAM network for Cambridge. Whilst Railfuture supports the concept of improved local public transport for Cambridge and better links to the existing railway station, we have major concerns about the practicalities of the proposals. We consider that a light-rail scheme has a similar cost but a much lower risk. More on this on page 13.

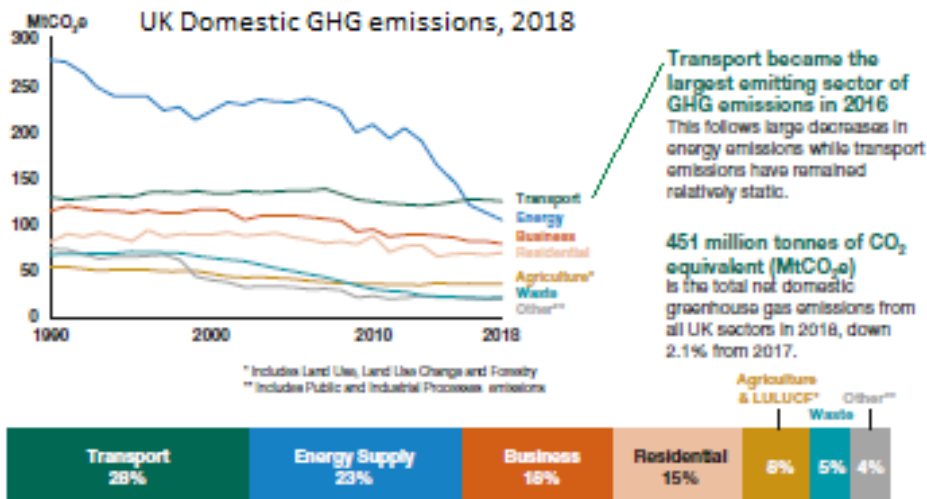
In the last issue we looked forward to the next 10 years of development. We did, however, miss out one important improvement, the half hourly service to King’s Lynn. Our apologies for this omission. This is a franchise commitment by GTR and with the current works to extend platforms along the route will deliver a major improvement to the eastern side of Norfolk.

Finally with the current situation, we will not be having our normal June meeting in Ipswich, but we aim to be back at Norwich in September – pandemic restrictions allowing. I hope to see you then and that in the meantime you are keeping safe and well. **UPDATE: Norwich meeting also cancelled because of COVID-19.**

A MAJOR SHIFT IN GOVERNMENT TRANSPORT POLICY?

BY NICK DIBBEN

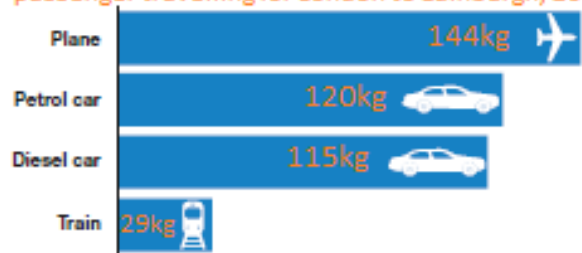
As part of the commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, the government has issued a paper on decarbonising transport. Transport is now the largest sector for carbon emissions in the UK with 28% of the total compared with 23% for energy production. Whilst energy emissions have been falling, transport emissions have remained constant as shown in the graphic below, left:



Within the transport sector, any savings due to fuel efficiencies of cars, buses and trains has been offset by a large increase within aviation. The paper notes the efficiency of the rail network and uses the comparison of a journey between London and Edinburgh using different modes of transport as shown in the second graph, below:

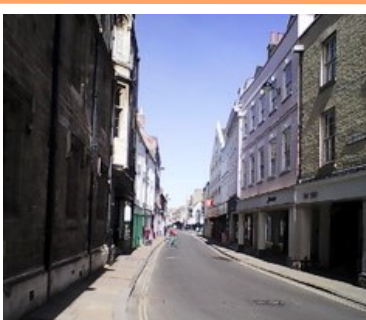
In a major shift in direction, the document notes that, as a society, we have to reduce our dependency on the car and increase use of public transport and active modes such as walking and cycling. However, graphs in the paper appear to tell a different story, with a predicted 35% increase in car km travelled and bus km staying level. The importance of changing planning policies to improve the non-car accessibility of new development is strangely missing from the document.

Indicative greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for a passenger travelling for London to Edinburgh, 2018



When it comes to rail, the paper predicts increasing passenger journeys and notes that major investment in infrastructure and rolling stock is needed to achieve this. Elsewhere GTR have announced that the regenerative braking on the new Class 700 and Class 717 trains puts around 5.6GWh of electricity back into the national grid each month. This is the equivalent energy used by a small city in a week. The government now appears to recognise that further electrification of the railways is needed to achieve its targets and there is pressure on the rail industry to reduce the costs of such schemes.

With pandemic stories continuing to dominate the headlines, climate change has dropped down the agenda – but Railfuture will be monitoring the government's actions to follow up this document as things start to return to normal.



Two Cambridge scenes.

Deserted city centre streets (John Henderson), left, whilst trains "stay at home" in their sidings (Zoe O'Connell).



ALL CHANGE PLEASE – THE IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS ON OUR RAILWAY

BY PHIL SMART

Our article in RAIL EAST 185 is perhaps a lesson in the futility of predicting future events in the light of what has happened since February 2020. Most of our hopes for investment in the 2020s remain valid, of course, but the impact of the coronavirus pandemic has had several significant repercussions on our railways, some of which could last for some time.



Keeping spirits up with humour - artwork found on the internet (copyright free)

In issue 185 (February 2020) we celebrated another record year (2018/19) for the railways in the measure of station footfall. While 2019/20 is likely to have been another good year, the travel restrictions in the final week or so, together with the cancellation of sporting fixtures, is likely to cancel out any good news such as last summer's Ed Sheeran concerts in Ipswich.

Footfall numbers for 2020/21 will have dropped significantly. At the time of writing (May 2020), we are witnessing only 5% of normal rail travel and it is difficult to see a return to pre-virus travel patterns for at least another 2-3 years. While there is likely to be a short-term boost to the economy with suppressed/deferred spending, few trips to the shops, restaurants or pubs require a rail journey and people may be slow to recover confidence in using mass transit to get around.

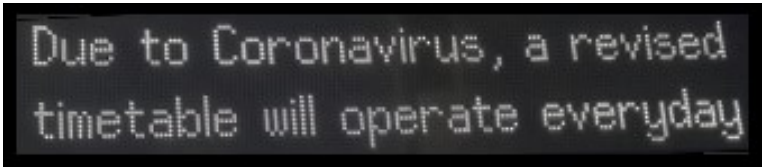
In the medium term most informed commentators are predicting an economic slowdown, and for those in work the trend towards working from home has been given a boost as firms adapt to more remote ways of organising their workforce. There are likely to be fewer season tickets sold and rail companies will have to promote alternative products such as 'carnet' tickets. Given the reliance of recent growth on services to Stansted airport, much also depends on the future of aviation as well as rail travel.

'Nationalisation'

Although as covered elsewhere by Jerry Alderson (see p.8), the railways have not quite been nationalised on the old British Rail model, the state has now taken on both the revenue and costs risks by converting existing franchises to 'management contracts'. The companies will continue to manage front-line staff but will no longer be required to return a premium to the Treasury or be in breach of franchise commitments for running a reduced level of service. This move has come at a convenient time for many franchise holders who had bid for contracts on assumptions of straight-line growth that have exceeded reality. Greater Anglia was already in talks with the Department for Transport over the 'London Employment' component in the formula used for determining payments to the Treasury. It is very likely that several train operating ventures were on the verge of handing back the keys even before the pandemic. The Williams review was widely predicted to recommend management contracts as the way forward in any case, but whatever the outcome it is certain that franchising has had its day and that the pandemic has hastened its demise.

Fewer trains, better reliability

It has often been said in the past that 'if only we didn't have passengers we could run the railway on time' and



Due to Coronavirus, a revised
timetable will operate everyday

this certainly has a ring of truth about it. Fewer passengers boarding and alighting from trains reduces the amount of time taken at station stops (dwell time) making it easier to keep time. Fewer trains also means that any late running is less likely to impact on other services that pass at junctions or on the following train on the same line. Greater Anglia has made a virtuous claim about improving punctuality but it is a very different game now. Newer, faster trains are arriving and we will only see journey time improvements once their capabilities can be exploited in a timetable review. This may have to wait until passenger numbers return and confidence is gained under more normal operating conditions.

New trains – a lucky escape?

Although the new trains that are already in service for Greater Anglia are showing good timekeeping, this is less true of train manufacturers. New trains can conveniently be thought of in three groups. The first to appear were the three- and four-car bi-modes and issues with getting these into service at the end of 2019 and early in 2020 were more to do with teething troubles (particularly interfacing with the lineside equipment) than with delivery delays from the manufacturer, Stadler.

The second group, also supplied by Stadler, are the 12-car inter-city trains for the Great Eastern Main Line and Stansted Express. The former was of greatest concern since none of the locomotive hauled sets they replace were compliant with disability regulations and had already been granted a three-month exemption until the new trains were in service. The switch to a 'Sunday plus' timetable relieved overnight the pressure on train fleets and the need for a further exemption was avoided.

The third group are the Bombardier *Aventra* electric trains for suburban commuter services. Delivery of these is already up to a year behind owing to computer software issues and further delay is likely as the lockdown impacts on testing and mileage accumulation. These trains mainly replace a mixture of class 360 and class 321 multiple units. The 360s are all DDA compliant but only some of the 321s which have undertaken the *Renatus* refurbishment are close to full compliance. Compliant units, however, are in demand in order to replace older trains in other parts of the country and the knock on effects of this delay will have industry wide implications.

Maintenance and renewals

So, with a reduced timetable and very few people to inconvenience, you could be forgiven for thinking that this is a golden opportunity for Network Rail to catch up with engineering works. If only it were that simple!

Engineering possessions have to be booked up to 18 months in advance. Equipment such as ballast trains is shared among regions and if it's someone else's turn for a particular item of specialist plant, then you have to wait. Many engineering contracts are undertaken by private companies for specific tasks and preparing these contracts takes time – even assuming there is a pool of spare labour with the necessary qualifications, to undertake signalling work for example.

Indeed, the coronavirus could have an adverse impact on works already planned. If a key worker has to self-isolate at short notice, it may result in the work over-running or being cancelled altogether, where it cannot be performed safely. Then there is passenger safety to consider. It is easier for 50 people to practice social distancing on a 700-seat train than on a 50-seat bus!

Long-term infrastructure investment

As we have reported in recent issues, there are a number of medium- and longer-term projects that have to go through statutory processes. Cambridge South station, the Wisbech reopening and East West Rail are all examples of schemes requiring consultation, project development and design decisions made by people in public forums and project teams that are themselves affected by lockdown. Our job as members of Railfuture is to maintain pressure to ensure the current crisis is not used as an excuse for further delay, so that once the threat of coronavirus has receded we can get back to shaping our transport network to meet the continuing threat of climate change.

COVID-19 LOCKDOWN – SOME USER GROUP REFLECTIONS

"Unprecedented" is a fair term to apply to a developing crisis which has found the technical language previously the preserve of doctors or epidemiologists suddenly part of everyday discourse – terms like "social distancing", "self-isolation", "co-morbidity", "herd immunity", "the R number" have become depressingly familiar as we try to cope with a situation where a route back to where things were at the start of 2020 seems more than elusive. Alongside the articles touching on the topic in the current issue from Railfuture East Anglia's chair Nick Dibben, Phil Smart and Alan Neville, we invited comment from rail user groups about the current impact and possible longer term consequences of the pandemic.

Mark Collins from **FLUA**, in noting the abrupt change from severely overcrowded commuter services to often largely empty trains on a reduced schedule, also observes, rightly, that *the rail industry can adapt quickly when it has to, with timetables which would normally take 18 months to change being introduced almost overnight and then fine-tuned on a daily basis*. He sees a very practical immediate benefit in the Feline platform lengthening programme: *We are fortunate that works to allow longer trains on the Fen Line are already in hand; delivery has slipped relative to the plan when work began, but with short notice timetable changes now being possible maybe the longer trains, which will be needed to maintain social distancing as lockdown ends, can be introduced earlier than December 2020*. In common with others, he argues that simpler and more attractive ticketing structures will be essential if the railway is to recover anything like its previous market share for both business and leisure travel. (See articles in this issue by Jerry Alderson expanding on these points.)

A common theme was the potentially permanent reduction in regular commuter business as employers as well as employees opted for more working from home, and what that meant for the railway. In the light of reduced passenger revenue, John Drake from **MARPA** speculated about the industry's readiness to tackle projects such as Haughley Junction and the new station at Soham. He also wondered about the likelihood of significant changes to services in the December 2021 timetable, given the extent of uncertainty about future passenger numbers.

On a more hopeful note, Susan van de Ven of **Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Rail User Group** echoes what is doubtless a common perception here in the east: *The astonishing upsurge in cycling during lockdown... has proven to many people that lots of our ordinary destinations are actually reachable by bicycle. The cherry on this cake has been the chance to breathe cleaner air for weeks on end*. In stressing this positive development for individuals and the wider environment, she adds that *there is a golden opportunity now for Transport Authorities to consider practical measures to improve active travel access to local stations, with so many people having discovered how simple that can be*. In the much bigger context of the climate emergency - which of course, despite the relentless and understandable media focus on COVID-19, hasn't gone away or become less pressing - she urges *let's hope for a thoughtful and convincing case for returning to rail travel*.

We are keen at RAIL EAST to have the thoughts of readers on what the pandemic is likely to mean for transport generally, especially rail. Contact details on page 24.

CHANCE FOR CHANGE – LET’S GO NATIONWIDE

BY JERRY ALDERSON



Britain’s so-called privatised railway has continually evolved since its creation in the mid-1990s, with each change giving the government increasing control. Even so, there is general agreement that:

- a. The industry structure (primarily franchising model) is no longer fit for purpose
- b. Fares and travel conditions are in desperate – and urgent – need of reform.

The railway has been frozen since the mid-1990s because fragmentation led to the government having contracts with many companies, with different conditions, ending on different dates. In turn those companies had differing contracts with staff. Trying to harmonise anything was a nightmare, if not impossible. It would have needed agreement by them all to make nationwide (England, if not Britain) changes. Where TOCs were in a strong position they would have driven a hard bargain.

That changed on 23 March 2020 when government absorbed all revenue and cost risk from the franchised TOCs. Despite the granting of direct awards to Great Western Railway and Southeastern a few days later, the takeover is, in effect, a permanent change. There is no chance that after the six-month (minimum) bail-out it will revert to the previous situation as many franchises were struggling.

Although the government has separate contracts with each TOC, they are essentially the same arrangement – up to 2% of pre-pandemic costs based on performance – and the fragmentation that has so seriously constrained the rail industry has effectively been ended. The government is now fully in charge. It can decide what deal it wants and give the TOCs the choice to accept it or walk (and it could stagger the deadline for TOCs to respond to allow it to ramp up its operator of last resort).

The remainder of 2020 offers the chance to start implementing changes to create a more standardised railway system – one that is in the interests of passengers and one that they can understand. The government could, for example, announce that every operator will introduce Delay Repay (full model) with a 15-minute threshold. No negotiation needed. Likewise it could harmonise the time when off-peak fares start, along with evening peak restrictions where they apply, and harmonise railcard validity times as well. The start-time variance was something that Sir Patrick McLoughlin, former Secretary of State for Transport, criticised in a speech in February 2020. His greatest regret, he said, was failure to introduce fares reform.

Fares...Distance isn’t the key driver. Fares will remain linked to passenger demand, train and route capacity constraints, service quality and other factors. However, many anomalies have been exacerbated over a quarter of a century. Railfuture has worked with Transport Focus and the Rail Delivery Group, in face-to-face meetings, correspondence and written submissions to consultations, to formulate proposals to simplify and create common-sense fares. Some of these are, in the words of Boris Johnson, “oven ready”, particularly in the areas of single-leg and aggregate pricing, which are formulae applied to existing base fares (widespread setting of new base fares would take considerable time). Government could introduce a nationwide season-ticket model for part-time workers similar to one around Exeter: Saturday, Sunday and three other specified days of your choosing using a common percentage of the seven-day season. A cap on the maximum fare for any single journey, say, £250 (standard class), could be introduced. Some other European countries do so. It would avoid the damaging absurdity of a (book-ahead seat-limited) flight to the United States being cheaper than a walk-on peak-time train fare within Britain.

Other than renaming fares, such as Savers to Off-Peak Returns, which caused almost as much confusion as it solved, clarifying routes (e.g. changing “London Terminals” to the destination station if there was only one allowed), introducing a new Two Together railcard, and similar for 16-18 and 25-30 ages, the train operators have collectively only implemented changes where it brings them revenue, such as imposing a minimum fare on a Network Railcard (currently £13). If one TOC

said no, then nothing changed, unless government greased their palms, leading to more operators holding out their hands. With government now in total control this blockage is at an end. It would be insane to revert to that situation without seizing the opportunity to implement previously impossible revenue-impacting changes.

Unfortunately, there were two blockages. The second was the government, which insisted that changes to fares must be revenue neutral. Given heavy subsidy of the railways, this is not unreasonable but expecting payback in year one is. Businesses look to the medium term. The government should aim to grow demand over, say, three years, reducing the number of people for whom rail travel is unaffordable, so that by year four the changes are not revenue neutral but revenue positive.

Customer notice: Trains still for essential travel only

Passenger travel habits will change permanently...But COVID-19 has destroyed any possibility of the railway's finances staying the same, never mind about improving. The government must now mitigate the damage done, and what better way than tailoring the fares according to the public's future need and willingness to travel. Sales of season tickets giving unlimited travel *all-week* have been declining for years and are no longer the bulk of the railway's income. With video conferences currently common, high levels of business travel are not assured either. But *part-week* seasons, off-peak seasons, bespoke seasons and business carnets, along with leisure travel will contribute an increasing proportion of revenue.

People in manufacturing and those doing other physical work, such as construction and farm labourers, along with logistics, hospital staff, emergency services, hospitality, entertainment, and certain other jobs, need to travel to work. A level of customer-facing services will remain, because not all financial transactions can be done online, although most high-street businesses (other than coffee shops) have experienced reduced footfall in recent years. For office workers, who make up a considerable number of rail passengers, working from home is now the *norm* and the return to hours of commuting *every day* (plus the cost of travel and childcare) will not be widely welcomed. For them the genie will not go back inside its bottle.

Employees value social interaction but it could come from neighbours and friends just as much as work colleagues. They are going to expect the ability to work from home part of the time and will, if necessary, move to employers who offer it. Most employers will find it difficult to deny their employees the chance to work from home when their COVID-19 communications to customers have said how they are still able to offer a great service by doing so, and after they have operated that way of working successfully for months. Employers will have also invested to ramp up their infrastructure (e.g. bandwidth on their networks) to support it. With every business taking a financial hit that no government could fully compensate, many will be looking to save money by reducing office space permanently, probably by introducing or expanding hot desking. Car parking spaces could be reduced as well.

The government realises that rail patronage will be impacted for a long time. Will it simply cut services to meet reduced demand or will it positively encourage more people onto rail, partly achieved through fares reform? UK governments haven't tried to drive growth before, merely attempting to cope with demand. Climate change has been off the headlines but it is not going away, and rail will remain part of the mitigation. In a post-coronavirus world Railfuture will focus campaigning on:

1. Attracting the passenger back to rail – improving the travelling environment
2. Climate change and modal shift – rail can reduce transport's carbon footprint
3. Restoring Your Railway – line and station reopening
4. Fares and ticketing – making the system easier and fairer
5. Industry structure and Williams – opportunity for devolution and concessions.

The Railfuture policies for these campaigns may differ from the views in this article.

OVERCROWDING – A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

BY JERRY ALDERSON

RAIL EAST has often covered overcrowding, whether caused by infrequent services, insufficient carriages, cancellations, short-formations or the inability/failure to cater for unexpected demand. How much overcrowding remains an issue depends on the extent to which pre-pandemic travel patterns, critically commuting, resume.

Until the lockdown, more rail journeys were being made in Britain each year than ever before. Nationally the 10,000 carriages in the mid-1990s have grown to 14,000 in 2020, much less than the 120% increase in passenger numbers during that period. What seems incredible, though, is that today's fleet is only a third of the 40,000 carriages that British Rail had in the 1950s (and an astonishing 55,000 in pre-BR days), despite carrying far more passengers these days. How come?



This implies much more overcrowding on today's railway. Older RAIL EAST readers will know if people were regularly forced to stand for much (or all) of their journeys in the past but it's certain that (pre-lockdown) carriages paid their way much more.

When Dr Richard Beeching arrived at British Railways in 1961 he discovered that a huge number of carriages stored in sidings were only used for a few weeks a year – for holidaymakers in high summer. They were an early and easy target.

Carriage utilisation has improved. Trains are faster (top speed and acceleration) and turnaround time at the terminus reduced as self-powered (diesel and electric) trains replaced (steam) locomotives hauling carriages. Automatic doors, and drivers taking full control of the train, reduced dwell time at intermediate stations. More people can be carried per carriage per day. Society changed as well, with Sunday becoming as busy as other days and greater demand for evening travel (e.g. returning from London late). The leisure market has grown partly thanks to BR introducing railcards to encourage off-peak travel and private operators heavily promoting train-specific advance fares to fill empty seats. Trains proportionally spend less time in sidings.

People now prefer to buy food and drink before boarding, so there is less 'lost' space from buffet counters and formal restaurant cars, which were inefficient as people left their seat empty to dine, returning later to their original seats. Nowadays people are scared to leave valuable laptops in their bag or risk their seat being occupied.

Trains have also changed. Britain now has longer carriages than ever before (26-metre-long inter-city train carriages) with Greater Anglia's new 10-carriage *Aventura* trains equivalent in length to 12 previously. Passengers can now sit immediately behind the driver with guard's vans being a thing of the past. Fixed-length units with continuous gangways, such as Great Northern's class 700 trains, create more space for people. Trains consisting of compartments with gangways have been abolished.

Some space creation is more controversial. Seats may be closer together - often not aligned with windows – with airline seating and 3+2 seating (a horror, dictated by the government, awaiting those using GA's *Aventura* trains from 2020). Several operators decided, again with prodding from the government, that First Class is not sustainable. Greater Anglia has abolished it on all except London-Norwich trains.

In East Anglia many trains are at their realistic maximum length (unless the new rolling stock is changed again, with platforms lengthened further) so Railfuture's priority to ease overcrowding will focus on more frequent services, including earlier and later ones to spread the load, plus more appropriate stopping patterns and, of course, increased capacity through infrastructure upgrades to create more paths. Resolving Ely North Junction is vital – on which, see the following item.

ELY AREA ENHANCEMENT — NETWORK RAIL DEVELOPS CASE BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The railway at Ely is running at the limits of its capacity. As a result, this constraint is holding back the development of our passenger railway throughout East Anglia and as importantly, holding back the full development of the strategic freight network. Moreover, it also constrains the national effort to reduce our transport system to zero emissions of CO₂.

Readers will probably be aware that the original planning four or five years back was to undo the 1986 rationalisation of Ely North Junction and work towards doubling all or part of the Ely – Soham line. This turned out to have a poor business case as addressed neither the level crossing risks accruing from increasing train movements nor the needs of a very rapidly developing Cambridgeshire and East Anglian economy as alluded to elsewhere in this issue of RAIL EAST (see p.16). The problem obviously didn't go away.

To recap, the junction needs to cope with these demands:

- *Passenger train developments* to feed the fast growing Cambridge economy with increased train moments to 2tph to / from Norwich; 2tph to / from King's Lynn, all day; 1tph to / from Peterborough-Norwich each train 2 movements; 1tph to / from Ipswich-Peterborough; 2tph to / from Wisbech.
- *Freight train developments*: up to 60 paths each way each day.

Network Rail (NR) and the hugely supporting local authorities, in particular the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), had come up with a business plan that captured all the wider benefits to the nation as well as to the CPCA and the rest of East Anglia. The scope of the project was greatly enlarged and consequently the benefits of the project grew too. Just look at this diagram, comparing the green shape against the dotted line around Ely North Junction...

Why Ely?

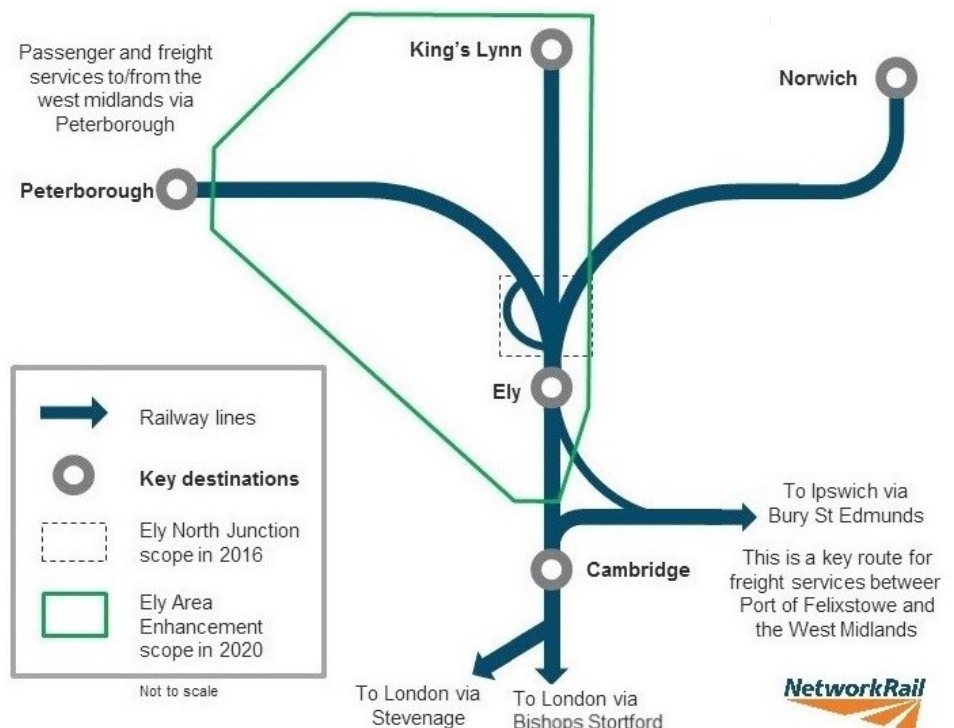
Network Rail says it:

Unlocks regional and national constraint for freight and passenger growth

Reduces road vehicle dependency and assist in decarbonisation

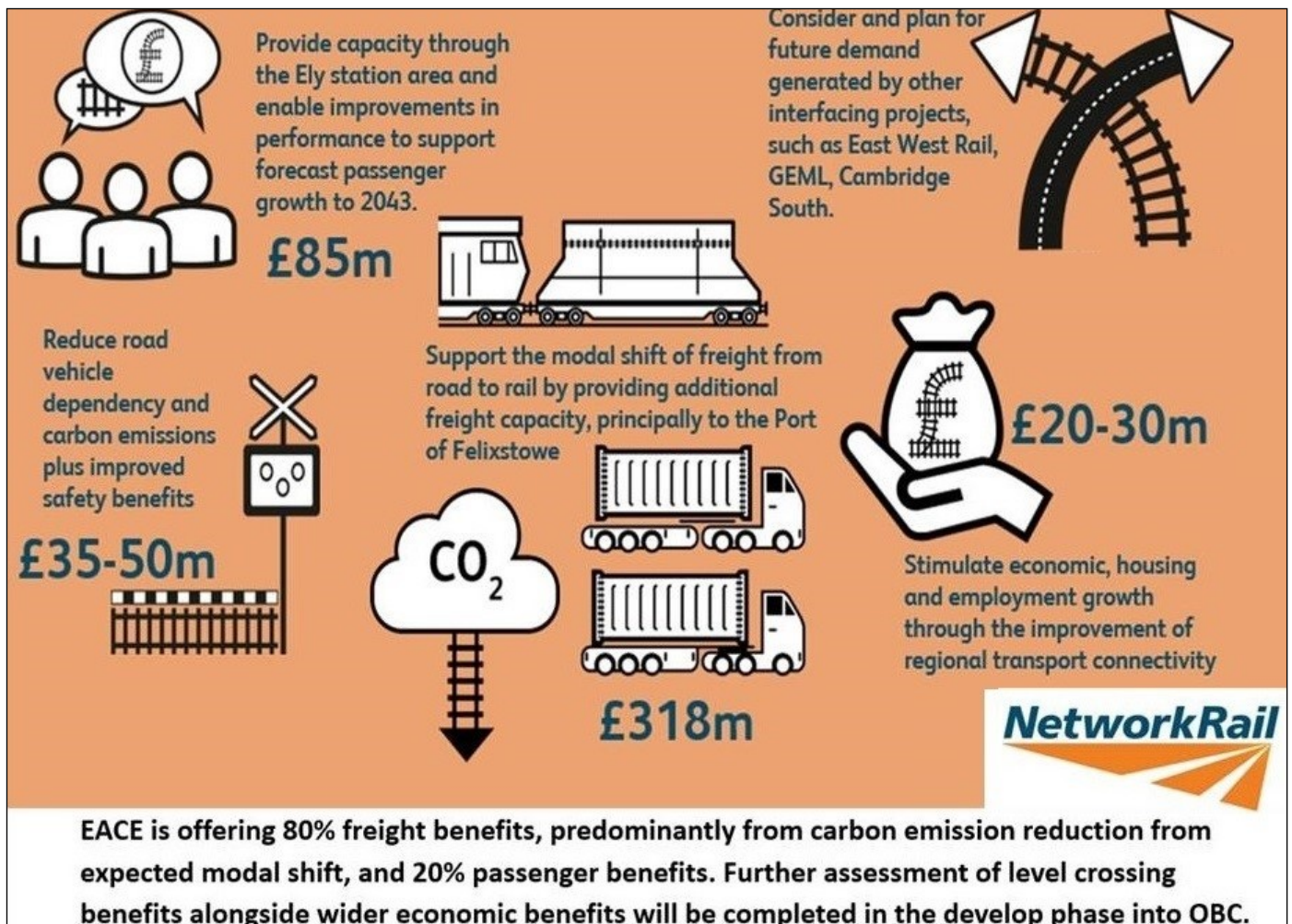
Assists stimulating economic, housing and employment growth through improvement of regional transport connectivity

Enables longer-term growth and connectivity e.g. additional passenger services and up to 60 freight paths per day



On the next page, look at the Network Rail graphic showing the summary business case for investment. The numbers are impressive – passenger benefits of £85m from improved working through Ely station and a

massive near £380m benefits for more freight on rail and off the roads. And 80% of the benefits accrue to freight! Up to £30m benefits accrue from the enabling of housing developments at places such as Waterbeach and Wisbech. "EACE" in the graphic stands for "Ely Area Capacity Enhancement".



The area under development has now been given a much wider boundary, right up to the outskirts of Peterborough and Cambridge. It is to be hoped that this will mean redevelopment of the signalling on the line between Ely and the fringe with York IECC at the eastern edge of Peterborough and include some remodelling of the March / Whitemoor area, which would also enable the Wisbech line restoration.

The costs of this much larger project can now be seen in some clearer prospective. It isn't just "Ely" but has a regional scope that will be hugely rewarding for the whole of the national and regional economy, so not just Yarmouth to Sizewell, Norwich, Ipswich, Bury, Newmarket, Peterborough, Cambridge and the Fens but out to the north and north east of England, the East and West Midlands.

Network Rail tell us that "We have recently had some good progress on this as our Strategic Outline Business Case was submitted to local partners, funders and operators at the end of March. On the 1 May DfT, operators, NR and the ORR took part in a meeting that endorsed the progression of the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement and looked at setting the overall strategic direction of the project. This will be put in front of ministers for their comment and decision over the coming weeks, before approval by Treasury."

Railfuture urges every East Anglian Member of Parliament to get behind this incredibly important "once and for all" national and regional project.

Post the COVID-19 crisis, this will be a "shovel-ready project", urgent to get on with if we are serious about economic renewal and implementing modal shift for people and goods that is critical for a decarbonising world.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTONOMOUS METRO SUB STRATEGY CONSULTATION BY PAUL HOLLINGHURST



The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority has run a number of consultations about the proposed Cambridge Autonomous Metro (CAM), a "Metro Style" system comprising tunnelled lines under the city centre linked to an overground network stretching out to St Neots, Alconbury, Waterbeach, Mildenhall, Haverhill and Hauxton (see route map below).

Earlier in 2020 it asked for feedback about:

1. The need for and benefits of CAM
2. The potential route alignments for the City Tunnel Section of CAM

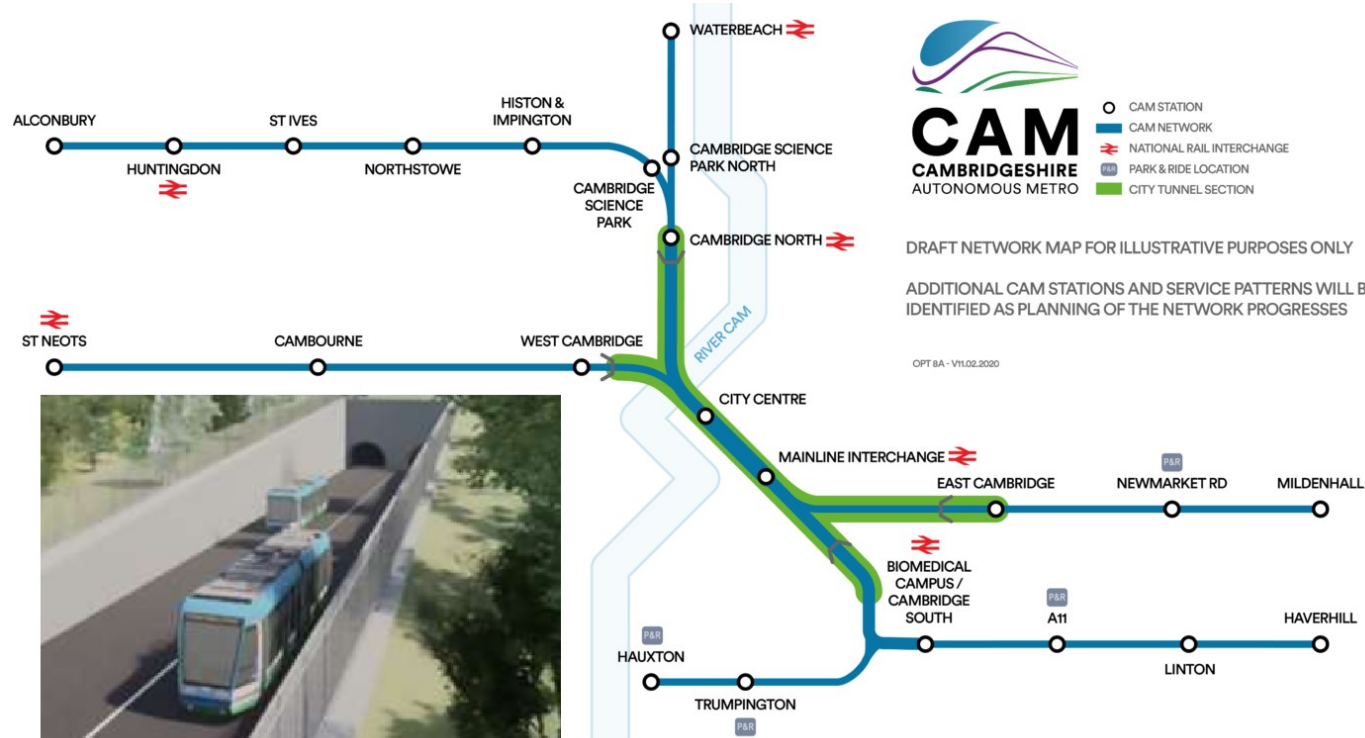
In the results published on 2 May 2020 there was broad public support for CAM, and Railfuture's preferred option where all services travel over a common section between the city centre and Cambridge railway station was the one preferred by the majority of respondents.

This time is it the turn of the "Sub Strategy" for comment. This ensures that the individual components of the CAM network are fully integrated into the overall vision for the metro. Railfuture is working on a response to this, but is pleased that this document is the first time we have seen CAM not explicitly being associated with rubber-tyred vehicles (although the graphics in the video frame captured, shown below, imply it) – in fact the sub strategy could be applied to a light-rail solution, which is a positive shift in emphasis.

The consultation covers such key issues for a future CAM as the economic case, wider environmental concerns – and specifically improving air quality and the use of zero emission vehicles – and the provision of stations on the network.

Railfuture urges individual readers to respond to the consultation, running until mid-July 2020, and available at: <https://cam.consultationonline.co.uk/>

<https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/about-us/programmes/transport/cam-sub-strategy>



RAILFUTURE RESPONDS TO NORFOLK TRANSPORT CONSULTATIONS — BY IAN COUZENS

In the weeks prior to lockdown Railfuture responded to two Norfolk consultations, one to the County Council's draft Norfolk Rail Prospectus, and the other to a new consultation for the Greater Norwich Local Plan. In our response to both of these we call for substantial investment and development of local rail services within Norfolk over the next two decades.

Long after COVID-19 has run its course the same major challenges we faced previously will still be there. What role can rail play in meeting the transport needs of a county where huge numbers of new homes are planned over the next 20 years, including 44,000 for the Greater Norwich area alone? How can we use our rail system to best effect in the fight against climate change?

There is no doubt that the aftermath of the virus will present problems with its economic fallout and resulting pressure on railway finances and new investment in the network. However, we continue to call for more rail services and stations to adequately serve new housing growth, to play our part in combating climate change, and to improve travel options for Norfolk residents as a whole. Within the Greater Norwich area the two consultations cover much common ground and we can summarise our main responses as follows:

Delivery of half-hourly interval service

We want to see half-hourly services delivered on all lines into Norwich, apart from the GEML where three trains per hour are already committed. While the draft Prospectus does aspire to half-hourly services there are no specific proposals as to how and when these will take place. Railfuture would like to see a strategy incorporated for bringing these improvements about and have put forward two possibilities.

Firstly, the feasibility of a new Bittern Line service from North Walsham to Norwich in conjunction with a new station at Broadland Business Park was looked at by Broadland Council a few years ago. We would like to see such a service incorporated as part of the next franchise agreement (or whatever model post-lockdown and Williams review might replace franchising!), and that the local authorities should prepare their case and lobby accordingly. We would also argue that such a service could be extended to Thetford. This is not a new concept, but with substantial housing planned both to the north east of Norwich and to the south west along the A11 corridor, the idea of a cross city service should now be looked at.

Secondly, the implementation of the eastern section for East West Rail will offer increased frequencies and speed on the Cambridge line. Extension of some of these services to Great Yarmouth and Lowestoft would offer the prospect of increased frequencies with a mix of fast and stopping trains. The Prospectus should set out how East West Rail can help bring about improvements to Wherry Line services.

We have stressed that the replacement of the Trowse swing bridge with a double-track bridge must remain a top priority. Without this most of the benefits from East West Rail and other frequency improvements won't be realised.

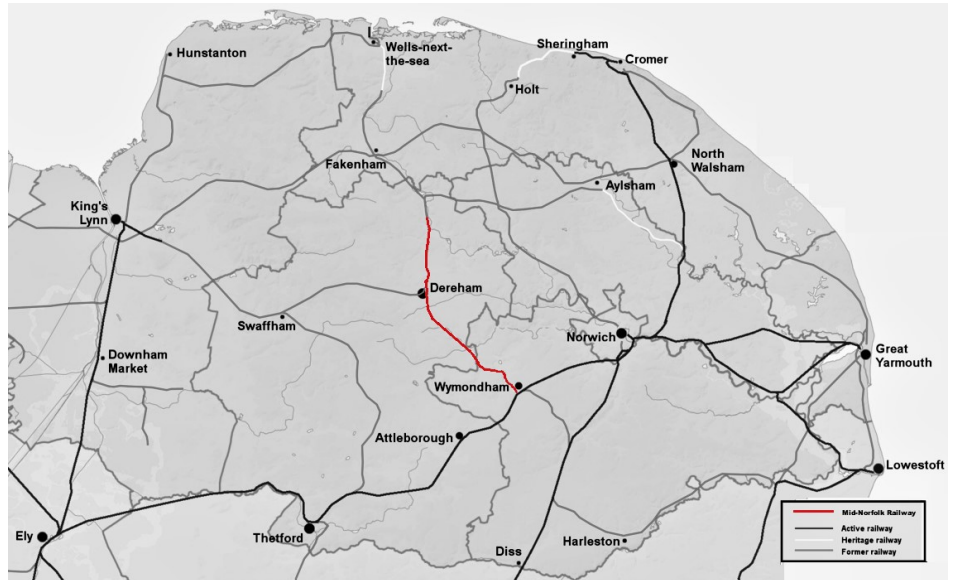
New stations – Greater Norwich

Given the significant growth in house building over the next two decades we have asked for a detailed examination to be carried out to identify the potential for new stations.

Although a new station site had already been identified at Broadland Business Park, action by the local authorities to progress this station has unfortunately stalled. We have called for the station proposals to be revisited and taken forward. We have also restated our proposals for new stations at Long Stratton, on the GEM, and Thicket/Hethersett on the Cambridge line. Long Stratton in particular, which lies close to the GEM, is presently 10 miles from the nearest railhead at Norwich or Diss, yet is projected to grow to a town of some 10,000 inhabitants.

Dereham line

Railfuture is pleased to see that the draft Prospectus believes there is potential for restoring a daily passenger service in the future along the Mid-Norfolk Railway (shown in red in this map from the MNR website) and has suggested that an outline feasibility could be carried out. We have encouraged Norfolk County Council to proceed with this study since Dereham is one of the largest towns in the East of England not on the national network. Restoring the passenger service would allow the town to develop further and permit additional housing growth in a sustainable manner.



Accessible Stations

We support the County Council's desire to see fully accessible stations at Wymondham, Diss and Thetford but would like to see outline schemes put forward and a timeframe for delivery.

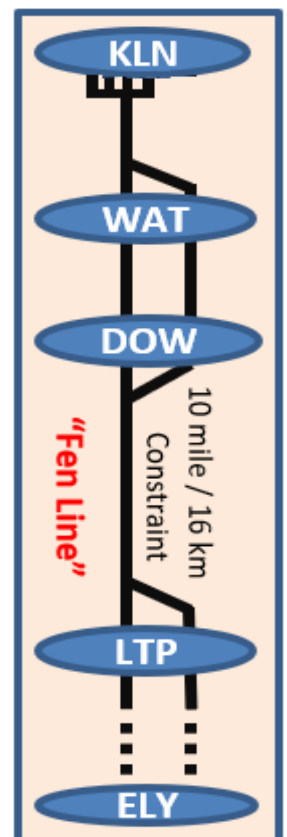
King's Lynn and West Norfolk

We have proposed that the Prospectus should call for double tracking the long section between Littleport and Downham Market (as shown in the route map on the right). The track singling in the 1980, prior to electrification, was extremely short sighted and passengers have paid the price both in delays and a non-optimum timetable. Doubling would enable a two train per hour service to be operated to King's Lynn in both directions with a sufficient degree of resilience. Journey times would be cut as a result of such an improvement. We have also requested that the case for a new station south of King's Lynn should be re-examined in view of housing growth planned nearby.

The Prospectus has backed an outline study into the prospects for reopening the line from King's Lynn to Hunstanton for which we have expressed our support.

Railfreight

We have called on the County Council to identify sites for road/rail interchange, and to work with freight carriers to identify the potential for intermodal terminals. Norwich and Yarmouth in particular lie at considerable distances from existing distribution centres located in the Midlands.



FUTURE CONNECTIVITY AND COMBINED AUTHORITY RELOCATION – THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

BY PETER WAKEFIELD



Lots of eyebrows were raised when the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority announced it was setting up its headquarters at Alconbury, a fledgling new town just off the A1 trunk road between Peterborough and Huntingdon. This surprise was due to the fact it was not an easy place to get to by any form of public transport. The decision to move there sat uneasily with its otherwise very interesting public transport plans. In April 2020, to its great credit, the Authority recognised it had made an error and announced a move to Ely, its former temporary home. Good transport planning recognised Ely for what it is, a place of great railway connectivity. Well done to CPCA for not being afraid to admit a mistake, a decision that bodes well for the future.



Cambridgeshire County Council is moving to Alconbury too, closing its historic site on Castle Hill, Cambridge. Alconbury is not any more accessible for its activities, especially as it does not have anything to do with the Peterborough Unitary Authority. When the move to Alconbury was first mooted, the usual simple geographical connectivity tests as to a place with the best location showed that Cambridge North was by far the best site in Cambridgeshire. We have nothing against change but maybe a move to Cambridge North might just be a change for the better?

So planning is crucial if we want to provide the best connectivity possible provided by public transport. Let's look at EWR and Cambridgeshire and then East Anglia as **now is a good time for reflection...**

We have time to plan for arrival of East West Rail, so let's start on it now.

Let's start thinking about Cambridgeshire, its links to the west and southwest... East West Rail Central Section will not arrive in Cambridge for a few more years yet but the generalised indicative route recently announced does give us time to think about how it will impact on connectivity in Cambridgeshire and nearby places ...and on other transport planning. **We must make full use of this revolutionary new link and achieve a railway network that serves all Cambridgeshire.**

A timetable for the future

First, we now know that the route will leave Bedford station in a northerly direction and parallel the Midland Main Line for a few kilometres then turn east, towards St Neots and Cambourne before turning to the south-east to Cambridge South station.

What will be possible journey times over the new route of about 30 miles/48kms between Bedford and Cambridge South? With at least two new stations, at St Neots and Cambourne, likely journey times over what we assume will be a well-engineered route with electric trains including stops:

Bedford to Cambridge South ...25 minutes
St Neots South to Cambridge South about 15 minutes
Cambourne to Cambridge South 10 minutes



These timings will, conservatively, halve journey times possible on the congested local road network. There will be huge modal transfer to rail on this section of the new route. Indeed, with careful planning we can get a lot more from this new link... Just think of the new travel opportunities available from Arlesey, Biggleswade, Sandy, Huntingdon, the proposed new stations at Alconbury and Hampton (think South Peterborough Parkway), Peterborough, Stamford.

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority transport planners must work closely with the East West Railway Company, Network Rail and GTR-Thameslink now to make sure that fast, frequent journeys are available by using connections at the proposed St Neots South station. No huge connectional times built in, but frequent long trains running to a **reliable resilient timetable** with interconnections within seconds. Similar connections must be available at Cambridge stations to all other routes including the busway.

A Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Network

Completion of the new railway will present Cambridgeshire with a network giving it excellent connectivity unique among our eastern counties:

Peterborough — Huntingdon — St Neots South — Cambourne — Cambridge Central — Cambridge North — (Histon—Northstowe—St Ives—Huntingdon busway) — Waterbeach — Ely — Littleport — March — Wisbech — Whittlesea — Peterborough.

All the major Cambridgeshire settlements enjoy quality links, mainly railway. Only Chatteris, (pop 10,000) and Ramsey (pop 8,500) miss out. We recommend that Chatteris be linked to the railway at Manea and March, with Ramsey linked to Huntingdon station via Warboys, by quality and dedicated bus links.

Planning for the arrival of the new services must include quality pedestrian and cycle paths from all the communities serviced by new and all existing stations. Car parks must be provided strategically for those who have “to railhead” but minimising the use of the car for any journey.

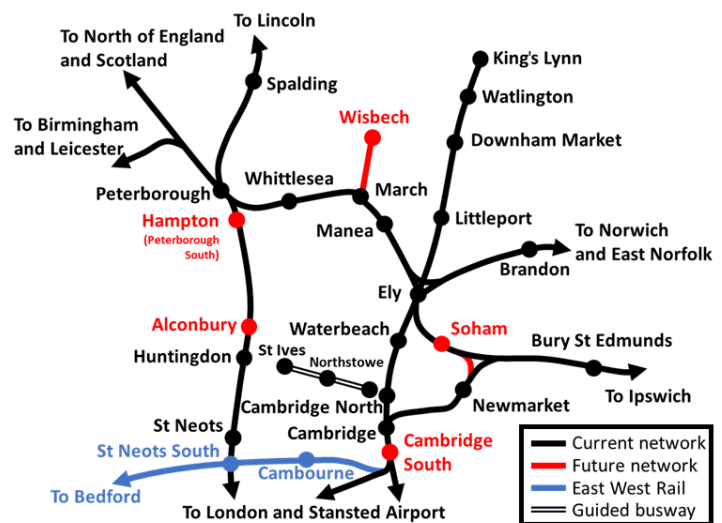
Let’s start thinking about East Anglia and its links to East West Rail...

Local authorities throughout East Anglia have long supported the concept of East West Rail. The idea is now becoming reality. They must now start thinking and then announcing loudly and clearly what they want from it.

For example, Railfuture wants at least:

- one fast train an hour between Norwich and Oxford and beyond (Bristol?) in addition to the current semi-fast service from Norwich to Stansted Airport;
- one fast train an hour between Ipswich and Oxford and beyond (Bristol?) in addition to the current stopping train service from Ipswich to Cambridge.

Additionally – if our local authorities (and the government) are really serious about inclusivity and bringing in the peripheral towns so that they have at least a chance to participate in the economic activity of Cambridge and the South Midlands, surely the Norwich fast service should be starting at Yarmouth?



Freight must not be forgotten. Already rail carries over 50% of the volumes of container traffic out of the Port of Felixstowe. Just think of the effect on air pollution and noise in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Cambridge if more went onto the railfreight trains. Only greater capacity at Ely and providing one freight train path an hour over East West Rail will be enable that.

Again planners...get planning now!

Network Rail together with Greater Anglia, GTR and intercity LNER are re-writing their respective timetables as you read this. It is, of course, one timetable. They must engage with the CPCA, EWR Company and all our local authorities to make sure it is one timetable that works for all.

FENLAND RAILWAY LINE — STATION IMPROVEMENTS

BY PETER RISEBROW

Three new waiting shelters have recently been installed at Manea and Whittlesea stations as part of a large-scale investment programme into Fenland's railway stations and improvements beckon at March.

The bespoke shelters - one at Manea and two at Whittlesea - are the first of many planned upgrades through the £9.5 million investment by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority into Fenland's railways and were installed as part of the Fenland Stations Regeneration Project, driven by Fenland District Council on behalf of the Hereward Community Rail Partnership.

The design of the station shelters was chosen by the public as part of a consultation in August 2019. Respondents had the choice between modular rail shelters crafted from durable and renewable accoya wood, an anti-vandal stainless steel structure or a similar stainless steel and aluminium shelter. The public opted for the natural accoya wood shelters provided by Natural Shelter, which are low carbon sustainable structures and will be 100% recyclable when they come to the end of their service lives. The accompanying images (right) show what an attractive addition to the platforms the new shelters are proving to be.



For rail users, these shelters are a welcome start to a programme of long-awaited improvements at March, Whittlesea and Manea stations, although it is unfortunate that Manea and Whittlesea will still only have a two-hourly service. Railfuture will continue to press for the introduction of an hourly service on the Ipswich - Peterborough line, and the introduction of a Sunday service at Manea.

The Whittlesea Station Masterplan encompasses a range of further improvements to the station, including new station lighting, improved car parking, platform lengthening / repositioning, provision of an accessible footbridge, and installation of new CCTV. At the time of going to press the new lighting was being installed. The Manea Station Masterplan includes provision of a station car park, platform lengthening, new station lighting and CCTV.

Positive news at March station

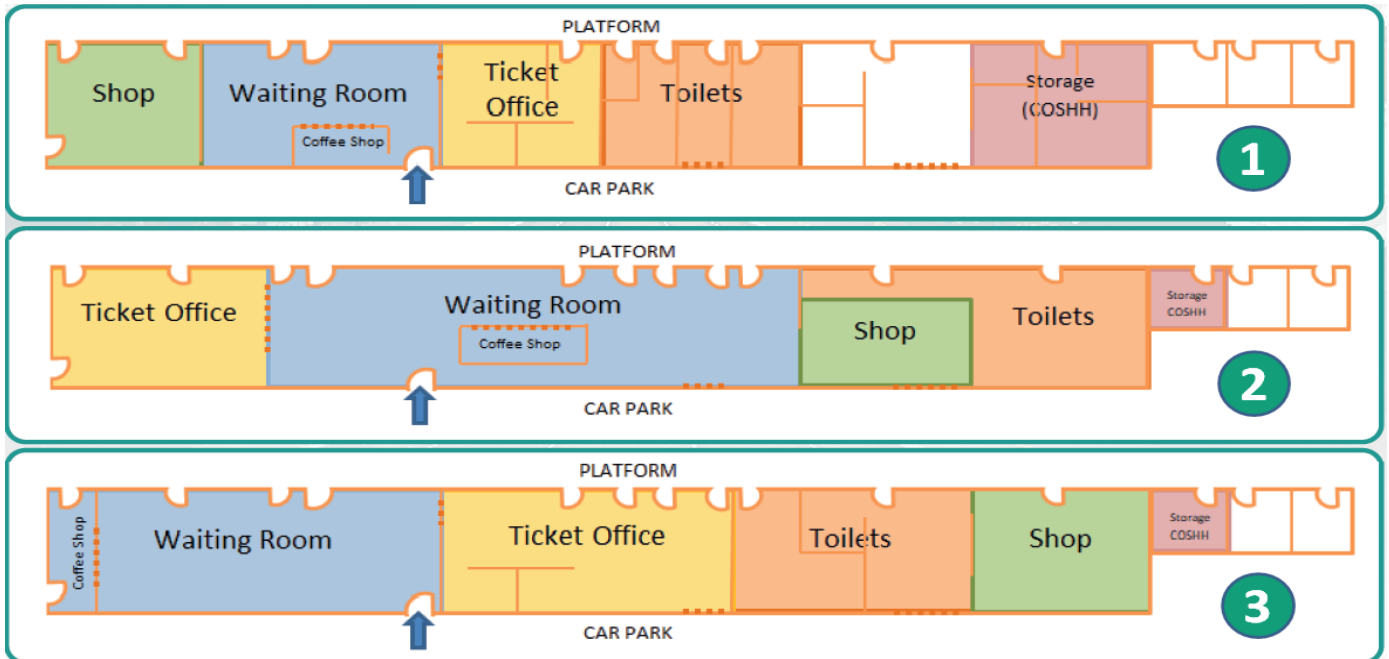
A consultation on improvements to the platform one buildings at March Railway Station (photo right, from Phil Smart) was launched in April 2020 to seek people's views on three different layout design options. At March, the current rooms look tired and in need of improvement to meet the standard of a modern-day railway station. This will also be funded as part of the Fenland Stations Regeneration Project.



The station is recognised as a building of significant local interest with historical charm and character that is important to the local community.

The main entrance to platform one remains the same throughout the three designs, but there are different options for the location and size of the waiting room, ticket office and toilets, as well as space for the creation of a new shop or business premises.

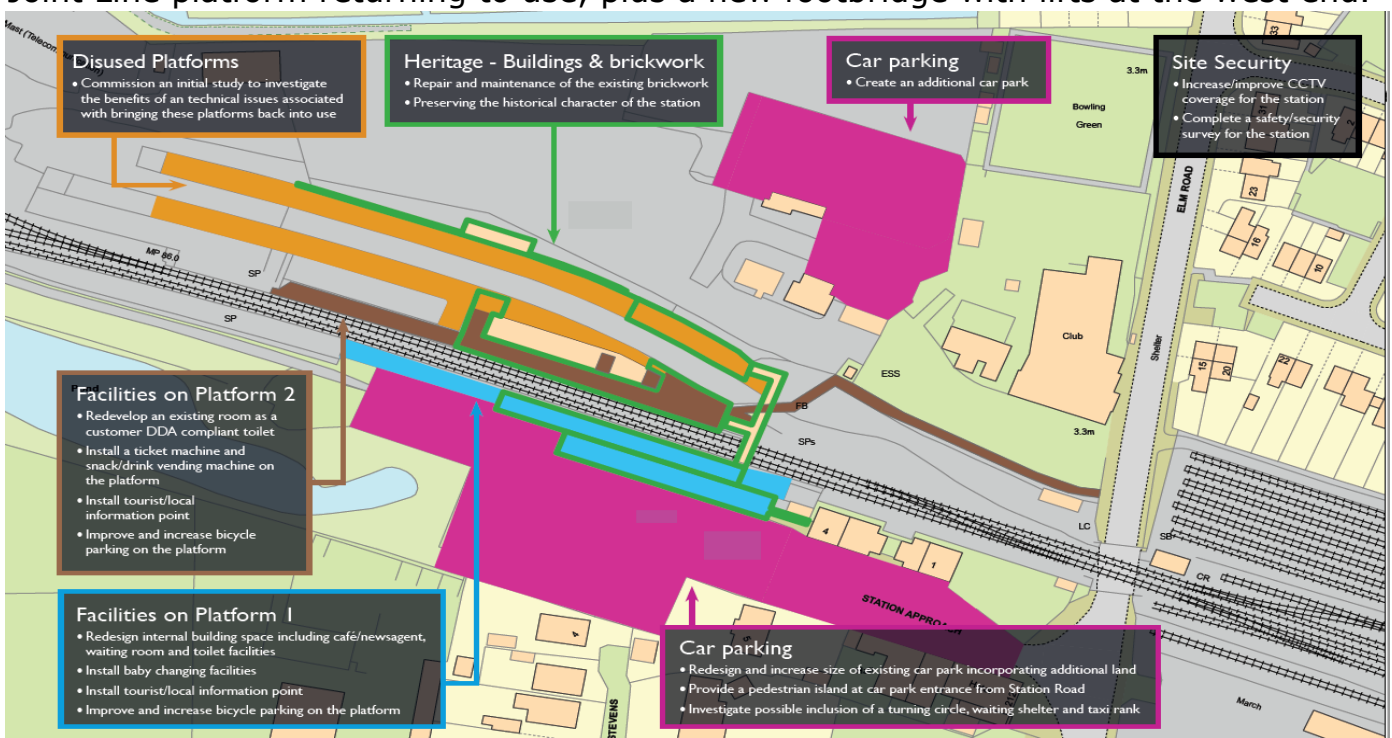
The three options for the March station platform 1 building refurbishment



Mayor James Palmer, of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, said: "We're investing heavily in Fenland rail services, and that money is all about creating a better journey for passengers along this line. Whether it's fit-for-purpose new buildings at March, or shelters at Whittlesea and Manea, it's fantastic to get improvements that make a difference to people's travel and will help the area feature more on the tourist map."

The March Station Masterplan encompasses a range of further improvements to the station, with improved parking including a new car park on the northern side, refurbishment of buildings and facilities on platform 2 and the disused former "Joint Line" platforms, and installation of new CCTV. Railfuture East Anglia responded to an online consultation held in April & May 2020 supporting Option 2 above as the scheme that provides the maximum flexibility for future changes. The scheme will provide a larger waiting area, better toilets, a larger shop and improved facilities for staff. Once an option is selected, detailed design work can start.

Longer term, the proposed reopening of the March to Wisbech line would see the Joint Line platform returning to use, plus a new footbridge with lifts at the west end.



LOOKING A GIFT HORSE IN THE MOUTH

BY JERRY ALDERSON

We are getting a bigger and better railway – Railfuture’s strapline, covering not just the size of the network but the utilisation of it – but at a slower rate than we should.

Taxpayers have gifted £27 million via the government for work to allow eight-car trains to King’s Lynn. It took years to get off the ground but work to extend the platform lengths at Waterbeach (photo right by author - driver’s mirror will need removing) and Littleport stations has taken only eight months and little more than the final surfacing of the platforms and fitting of lights to the lampposts is outstanding. Related work, such as signalling, remains. But, as soon as it is done, the eight-car trains will run the next day. Right? No, wrong!

During the lockdown demand for rail travel is currently extremely low. But even before the pandemic, the railway did not intend to get any immediate return on the £27m investment. Any sensible business would have wanted to use its new assets as soon as possible to get additional revenue, market share and profit. But the railway is not sensible (in the eyes of many passengers) and being heavily controlled by the government it’s not a business either.

So, given a desperate pre-pandemic need for longer trains, where was the problem?

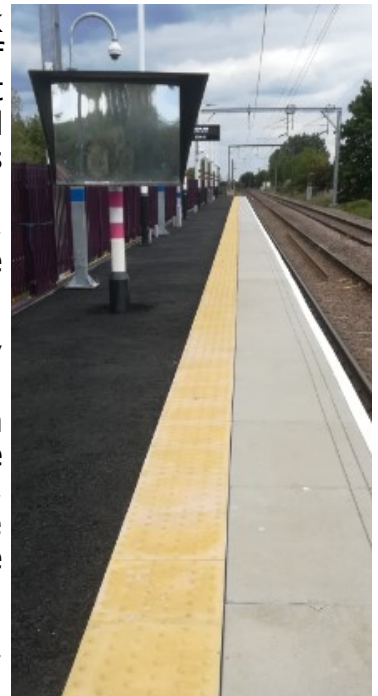
The eight-car King’s Cross to Ely trains that currently skip Waterbeach could call at the longer platforms. It would add two minutes to the journey, although the layover time at Ely would easily allow this. But the railway bureaucracy is such that it is easier to change everything at the same time, so the simple must wait for the difficult. Running an eight-car train is different to running a four-car train. Sure, but every Great Northern driver knows how to handle both and selective door opening.

But splitting and joining trains at Cambridge is fiendishly complicated. Units have to occupy a platform while waiting for another unit to arrive and couple up; they also have to go in and out of sidings – both have to fit reliably around the timetable. Train drivers must get in and out of cabs. Intervening doors are locked and unlocked. Announcements must be made to passengers. The last time GTR (Great Northern and its Thameslink sister brand) and Network Rail changed something – the major timetable change in May 2018 – there was total chaos with many cancelled trains; disruption lasting months made the railway look incompetent. That change failed disastrously, so this change *might* fail disastrously as well.

Really? But Great Northern intends to stop splitting and joining trains at Cambridge and instead they will run every train as eight carriages to King’s Lynn. The railway cannot seem to tell the difference between a *massive* change that *complicates* everything and a *small* change that *simplifies* everything. Even a simplification needs planning, so start planning, risk analysis, contingency and mitigation early.

The railway had been busy planning the May 2020 timetable change. That never happened, of course. We assume that there will be a timetable change in December 2020, which is when passengers were originally promised eight-car trains – six months after it would have been possible, meaning six months of unnecessary overcrowding, although both Great Northern and Network Rail had promised stakeholders that they would “make every effort” to implement it earlier. Given that social distancing will reduce carriage capacity to just 10%, longer trains will still be required, and the sooner the better.

Details of the £27m scheme at: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/kings-lynn-service-enhancement> (last updated February 2020).



THE PANDEMIC AND OTHER CRISES HOW THE RAILWAY RISES TO THE CHALLENGE

BY ALAN NEVILLE

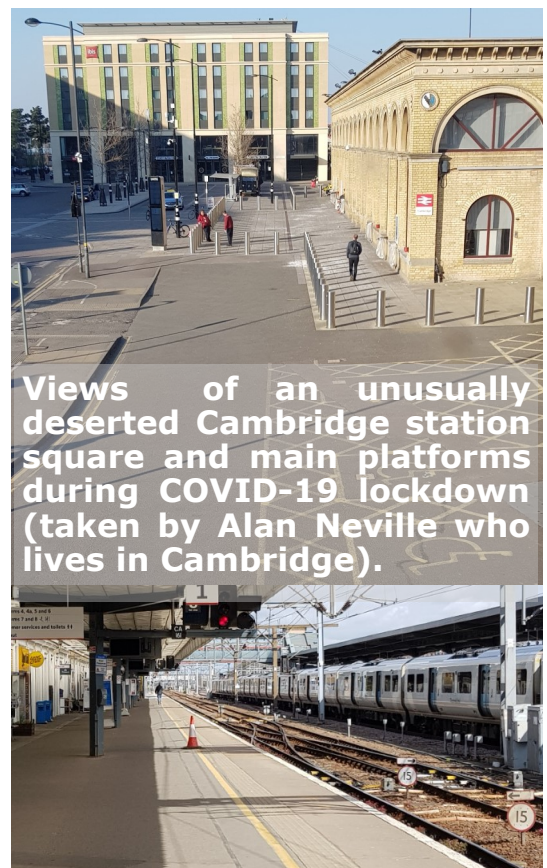
During a railway career of forty years thus far, it would be impossible to expect everything to go according to plan or to be problem free! A career, rather like life itself, will have its “ups and downs”, good times and bad.

Without a doubt the “the good has outweighed the bad”. Challenges yes, but so many great times in every respect. Impossible to grade in terms of ranking (apart from Number 1!), and difficult to mention them all but following are “absolutes”.

- Experiencing the railway’s growth – from stagnation to national asset. Observing and playing a small part in this tremendous growth in safety, quality, compliance, service provision and patronage – a railway we are proud of. Better services in East Anglia in recent years are one of hundreds of examples
- Managing successful teams and achieving good results in many geographical areas – including coaching staff at stations such as King’s Cross and Liverpool Street and station areas such as Broxbourne to Tottenham Hale
- Managing and influencing quality, consistency and “attention to detail” in every facet of work, e.g. station standards and compliance projects
- Combining work and business interests with hobbies e.g. community rail, station adoption and sustainable transport
- Building win-win alliances – promoting the railway in the wider community
- Customer and Stakeholder engagement at individual and group level
- Meeting Her Majesty the Queen and other members of the Royal Family!
- Contributing individually and as part of a team in major event planning such as the 2012 London Olympics
- Reaching the final of the 2010 National Rail Awards “Manager of the Year” award for community involvement
- Contributing to and working in excellent management teams.

The crisis facing us all in spring 2020 is rather different from the other crises that I have experienced during my career, noticeably in terms of its widespread effect, but the other events – the Hatfield crash, the Potters Bar disaster and the London bombings – also had a direct impact on my work at the time, and indeed the work of many of my then colleagues for some considerable time afterwards. I was new to management in the early 2000s and was managing (in time order) the Hertford Loop line (directly impacted by the Hatfield crash of October 2000), Potters Bar station in 2002 (likewise) and King’s Cross station (for WAGN) in 2005. At all three locations tragedy came so quickly and unexpectedly. None of the above events were foreseen and adaptation and change had to come very fast indeed.

COVID-19 was not foreseen either. The first news about the virus only trickled through from China in early January 2020. This event has very quickly affected every stratum of society, not only transport systems. I have no doubt, however, that the railway will bounce back and quite possibly be stronger and more resilient in the future. There



are, even so, lots of unknowns as I write this article at the end of April 2020. Nobody knows how long the lockdown will last, or what will happen next or for how long. Lots of big questions. For the first time we have had to turn passengers away from the railway system – but we will be encouraging them to return when the times comes, and with Railfuture's help!

However, throughout the UK the crisis is bringing out the best in humanity and changing attitudes for the better. The nation is justifiably proud of all its key workers, including, of course, all our rail employees. Within Greater Anglia staff are reporting for duty every day on the front line, doing what they do best – providing an excellent service for fellow key workers and putting everyone else first. Supporting such people and working amongst them is not just a job, but a privilege.

So how has life changed for the railway apart from the temporary governance change?

- A huge decrease in footfall and the first ever plea NOT to travel – for the present – unless it is essential
- The temporary revision to timetables to reflect the above, but critically adjusted to ensure key workers can travel
- Changes to opening and closing hours of ticket offices to reflect changing demand
- Some redeployment of workers to other essential areas such as cleaning
- An unprecedented appeal by Network Rail to recently-retired workers to return
- Increased transportation of vital freight, especially key consumables.

Adaptation and change have been key during the whole of my career in terms of both external and internal events which have created that change, and my own "decision making" to bring about change. Many staff, myself included, are seeing our roles change due to the current crisis. As I write, it is indeed possible that I may get called upon to help with cleaning or train dispatch – or something else entirely! Tomorrow or the day after may bring bigger changes – we do not know. But we will be prepared – railway staff always are!

During my time as a manager, working with "stakeholders and society" has always been very dear to me. Thus, during my years in station management, I was encouraged to reach out into communities around the stations which were under my oversight in order to establish key links, publicise the railway, expand business and build win-win alliances for the railway and the community. This was part of the original WAGN Group Station Management concept in 1999 and an area which was essential for the railway business and one where I felt I could make a contribution. I have been lucky along the way, from 1999 onwards, that managers encouraged this wholeheartedly and supported me in this goal.

Moving out of direct station management I joined Greater Anglia's Press and Public Affairs team in 2017, and my existing role of Customer Engagement Manager was enhanced, taking on the support role for all station adopters and adoption activities in Greater Anglia. At the beginning of 2019 these areas of work were extended further with the addition of Stakeholder and Community Rail liaison for the company. I can say that promoting the railway, building those all-important alliances with user groups, stakeholder groups and individuals, and supporting those who help us day in day out to improve our stations is absolutely the best job I have ever had!

And to the future. I write this during this strangest of periods. Normality will at some point resume, and we will be prepared for that and maybe even be the stronger after what we have gone through. Certainly it will have been a "watershed" time for myself and for the railway. I am reminded at this time of a couple of the tenets of management which I hold dear:

- Be resolute and keep the faith
- Be positive – because positivity breeds positivity.

STATION IMPROVEMENTS IN EAST ANGLIA

Continuing the theme of investment in stations from page 19, it is welcome news that Greater Anglia has been successful in three bids for better passenger access.

At **Colchester** funding will enable the construction of a new passenger lift linking the platforms and subway to the main booking hall and car park. Although there is a lift on the other side of the station, disabled passengers arriving at the main booking hall currently have to use a stairway fitted with a wheelchair stair lift to access the platforms. A step-free Colchester station stands to benefit an estimated 52,000 people a year who require lift facilities because of restricted mobility. At **Bury St Edmunds** the plan will see the creation of a fully accessible entrance to the north side of the station, linking the newly built car park with the station lobby.

And at **Needham Market**, where regular readers will know a vigorous local campaign has lobbied for better access for a number of years, funding will enable an ambitious project linking station, town and nearby Needham Lake visitor centre to proceed. The three schemes together have attracted 10% of the DfT £20 million Mid-Tier Programme budget.

RAIL EAST understands that Greater Anglia is working with Network Rail to finalise the funding agreements necessary for design work to commence on the schemes, and that a project manager will be appointed post COVID-19 restrictions with a timeline for design finalised in summer 2020.

RAILFUTURE PUBLIC EVENTS

As Nick Dibben mentioned in his column, the planned June meeting in Ipswich has been cancelled. The Railfuture Ltd AGM planned for Birmingham in June is also cancelled, and business will be conducted at the 2021 AGM.

The Railfuture national conference that was to have been held in Leeds on **Saturday 3 October 2020** will take the form of a free-to-join **online webinar** on the same day. It will last for 90 minutes from 11:00 to 12:30. The subject will be "Attracting passengers back to rail" and we hope to have four speakers, from train operators, transport authorities, Transport Focus and employers, presenting views of what can be achieved and how potential travellers will respond post-COVID.

Registration will be required. Information about how to do so and the speakers will be announced on <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/> closer to the date.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAIL EAST

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 much appreciated, and are essential to make RAIL EAST visually attractive.

All submissions by **21 August 2020**, please, but articles covering late news will be considered just before sending to the printer two weeks later.

RAIL EAST is formatted by Jerry Alderson.

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Also see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Contacts>

A flyer for our meetings is always at: www.railfuture.org.uk/east/meetings.
This includes a map of the venue and directions from the station.

MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 20 JUN 2020

Church Hall
St Mary's Lane
IP2 8DA
**CANCELLED
COVID-19**

SATURDAY 26 SEP 2020

Friends Meeting House
5 Upper Colindale
NR2 1EW
**CANCELLED
COVID-19**

SATURDAY 5 DEC 2020

Venue TBC
CAMBRIDGE

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