

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
Record of Executive Decision**

This form should be used to record key and other decisions made by individual Lead Cabinet members. The contact officer will ensure that the signed and completed form is given to Democratic Services as soon as reasonably practicable after the decision has been taken.

A key decision shall not be taken unless notice of the item has been published at least 28 days before the decision is to be taken except where:

- a General Exception notice has been published under Rule 15 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules and the Chairman of Scrutiny and Overview Committee has been informed in writing; or
- a Special Urgency notice has been published under Rule 16 of those Rules and the Chairman of Scrutiny and Overview Committee has agreed the decision is urgent.

Unless permission has been obtained from the Chairman of Council and the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee that this decision may be treated as a matter of urgency under Rule 12.19 of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules, this decision will come into force, and may then be implemented, on the expiry of five working days after the publication of the decision, unless called in under Rule 7 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules or Rule 12 of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules. Where consent has been obtained to exempt the decision from call-in, this will be specified below.

Lead Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council (Statutory)
Subject Matter	Response to Network Rail's consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme
Ward(s) Affected	Cottenham; Fen Ditton & Fulbourn; Histon & Impington; Milton & Waterbeach
Date Taken	Friday, 23 October 2020
Contact Officer	Claire Spencer, Senior Planning Policy Officer 01954 713418 (claire.spencer@scambs.gov.uk)
Date Published	
Call-In Expiry/Exempt from call-in	Friday, 30 October 2020
Key Decision?	No
In Forward Plan?	No
Urgent?	No

Purpose / Background
<p>Purpose:</p> <p>To agree the joint response to Network Rail's consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme.</p> <p>Network Rail are currently consulting over plans to increase rail capacity in the Ely area. The scheme is known as Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE).</p> <p>Network Rail stated the aims of the first round public consultation as being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An opportunity for people to learn more about the EACE programme and provide an opportunity for local communities to understand: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The aspirations are to increase capacity

- The challenges that will have to be addressed to increase capacity
- How the public will be consulted as options are progressed
- The current funding position

The consultation materials are available online: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/running-the-railway/our-routes/anglia/ely-area-capacity-enhancement-scheme>

The deadline for comments is 1 November 2020.

Background:

Network Rail stated that the “(EACE) programme is a proposal to upgrade the railway to allow more trains to run through Ely. The aim is to improve connectivity and reliability for passenger services and meet the demand for more rail freight between the Port of Felixstowe, the West Midlands and the North to support sustainable, long-term economic growth.”

The consultation documents provide details to the challenges of increasing rail capacity in the Ely Area, which is shown in the consultation as covering the area down to Cambridge Station, and also details the elements of the scheme:

- removing existing speed restrictions across key bridges to allow trains to run more efficiently
- remodelling the track layout at Ely station to accommodate more train services
- modifying Ely station platforms to accommodate more train services
- remodelling the track layout at Ely North Junction to allow more trains per hour to pass through safely and efficiently
- upgrading the signalling system in line with any changes to the track layout
- upgrading or closing existing level crossings while maintaining connectivity of the road network.

On the last point running more trains would increase barrier down times at level crossings and the consultation says this may require additional measures to maintain safety for all level crossing users.

As Network Rail develop the rail options to improve capacity, they also need to understand the impact on road users and what they can do to maintain important road connections into Ely from surrounding communities.

All of these potential interventions will need to be assessed as part of the continuing development work for the EACE programme.

The consultation documents state how Network Rail want to work with the local community, local stakeholders and statutory bodies to better understand the areas they are working in.

Network Rail also outline the authorisation process they are planning to go through subject to funding being available, which will include a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) application for any works not on Network Rail land.

This consultation also sets out Network Rail's proposed consultation timeline:

- Autumn 2020 public engagement about the EACE programme (this current engagement)
- Early 2021 Public consultation on Ely south area (currently funded)
- Summer/Autumn 2021 Public consultation on the options in the rest of the Ely area
- Autumn/Winter 2022 preferred options with the EACE programme (currently unfunded)
- Winter/Spring 2023 TWAO submitted (currently unfunded)
- Autumn winter 2024 TWAO decision (currently unfunded)

On the 8 February 2018 Cambridgeshire County Council's Economy and Environment Committee considered a report on a traffic study carried out in Queen Adelaide. The committee resolved:

- a) Note the proposals for wider regional and national benefits, of increased rail capacity through Ely North Junction;
- b) Note the potential impact on the whole community, residents and local businesses of increased frequency and duration of level crossing closures;
- c) Agree to oppose any measures that restrict traffic flow across the level crossings to the detriment of residents and local businesses until alternative solutions are put in place;
- d) Note the intention to explore opportunities with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to fund the options development for a road and / or rail solution and;
- e) Agree to continue to work with the Combined Authority, Network Rail and the Ely Area Task Force to develop a comprehensive solution that meets the needs of all Cambridgeshire residents and in particular the communities of Queen Adelaide, Prickwillow and Ely.

Main Issues:

The programme is looking at all the railway systems between Cambridge and Ely, Ely and Peterborough and Ely and King's Lynn. This includes:

- 126 level crossings,
- The Ely north junction track modifications
- Bridge structures
- Ely station and track modifications
- Signalling systems
- Ely station changes

Capacity:

The current capacity of Ely allows approximately six (off peak) to eight (peak) train services to run through Ely per hour in each direction. The EACE programme is looking at what interventions could be needed to increase capacity through Ely to be used by up to 10 train services per hour in each direction. This is expected to bring benefits to the national, local and regional economies and help ease road congestion across the region by taking freight off the road network.

The decision on which extra trains will run to which destinations has not yet been established, this will be established as part of the Outline Business Case. Train timetables will not be established for many years while upgrade work is being delivered.

Level Crossings:

Within the scope of the current programme, there are 126 level crossings which could be affected by these proposals. The level crossings are spread across the scope of the programme and includes the lines between Cambridge and King's Lynn, and Ely to Peterborough. Included within the scope is the Chesterton Level Crossing.

Increasing the frequency of trains also means that level crossing barriers will be closed more frequently and so Network Rail need to look at the impact to road users.

Network Rail state in some circumstances the frequency of trains running across a level crossing may mean that the barriers are down for significant periods of time, especially in peak hours impacting on traffic flow. If this happens, it may be better and safer to close a level crossing permanently and seek an alternative way for motorists to cross the railway safely. Any such proposals would need to be consulted with the local authority and the public to determine if an alternative route across the railway would be required to maintain road connectivity.

Network Rail has made no decisions at this stage regarding level crossing closures, but know that level crossings will need to be upgraded or where necessary closed if we are to increase rail capacity through Ely. Options for specific level crossings will be part of future consultation rounds.

Funding:

Network Rail has secured £13.1m funding from the Department for Transport and £9.3m funding from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Strategic Freight Network to understand the scale of the challenge to increase capacity through Ely. This funding will enable Network Rail to develop the Outline Business Case (OBC) and submit this to the DfT (by mid 2022) to consider the case for further funding for the next stages of consultation, design and development.

Proposed main response points:

- The Councils support capacity improvements in the rail network that enable a greater number of trips to Cambridge and other locations on the line, including Waterbeach new town, to be undertaken from Ely to Cambridge by rail as a sustainable mode of transport and reduce car trips on the network and carbon impacts but would also encourage further investment in improvements that would increase the number of services.
- The consultation recognises that the increases in capacity proposed would increase downtime of crossing gates in the area that extends to Cambridge station. This includes a particular issue at Chesterton Fen crossing (lying south of Cambridge North Station) which already experiences long waits to access the Chesterton Fen Road area, where residents and businesses have no alternative vehicular access. The impacts of further increased downtime on both safety (at the crossing and in terms of emergency access) and community and economic wellbeing need to be fully recognised and an appropriate response identified and implemented. The Councils would welcome the opportunity to continue to work with Network Rail, alongside other partners in the CPCA and Cambridgeshire County Council on this important issue.

Declaration(s) of Interest

Record below any relevant interest declared by any executive Member consulted or by an officer present in relation to the decision.

None

Dispensation(s)

In respect of any conflict(s) of interest declared above, record below any dispensation(s) granted by the Council's Standards Committee.

None

Consultation

Record below all parties consulted in relation to the decision.

Councillor Tumi Hawkins, Lead Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Delivery.

Other Options Considered and Reasons for Rejection

The Council could choose to not respond to consultation.

Final decision	Reason(s)
That the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development and Deputy Leader of Council (Statutory) - Strategic Planning and Transport agree the response to Network Rail's consultation on the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement Scheme as set out in Appendix A.	To provide the Councils' comments to this consultation in recognition of the opportunities it provides to increase sustainable travel to Cambridge from the Ely area and reduce traffic congestion, and address issues at Chesterton Fen crossing identified by the Councils of particular concern.

<p>A parallel decision is being considered by Cambridge City Council to be agreed on 30 October, and delegated authority is given to the Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development to agree any minor amendments to the response agreed by the City Council that are consistent with the response at Appendix A.</p>	
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Signed	Name (CAPITALS)	Signature	Date
Lead Cabinet Member	Signed copy available upon request from Democratic Services (democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk)		
Chief Officer			

Further Information