



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 2.9

Snailwell Loop

To: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure committee.

Meeting Date: 14th September 2022

Public report: This report contains appendices which are exempt from publication under Part 1 of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, in that it would not be in the public interest for this information to be disclosed (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)). The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in publishing the appendices.

Lead Member: Mayor Dr Nik Johnson, Chair of the Transport Board

From: Robert Jones, Transport Programme Manager

Key decision: No

Forward Plan ref: N/A

Recommendations: The Transport and Infrastructure Committee is asked to consider the approach for Snailwell Loop, either to:

- a) Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to suspend works developing Snailwell Loop and release the allocated funding back into the relevant revenue or capital funds. Whilst requesting that the Interim Head of Transport continue to lobby government for the EACE scheme which is required to realise benefits for Snailwell Loop along with local Members; or
- b) Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to continue to develop the project (in alignment with current budgetary commitment) in the absence of government certainty of linked EACE project progressing and enabling the benefits of Snailwell Loop being realised.

Voting arrangements: A simple majority of all Members present and voting, *or*

A vote in favour by at least two thirds of all Members (or their Substitute Members) appointed by the Constituent Councils, to include the Members appointed by Cambridgeshire County Council or Peterborough City Council, or their Substitute Members

To be carried, the vote must include the vote of the Mayor, or the Deputy Mayor when acting in place of the Mayor.

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The Combined Authority are looking to improve the rail network to improve the offer for national, regional, and local businesses, as well as enhancing the connectivity from and to our communities. The potential improvements include Ely Area Capacity Enhancements (EACE) and Snailwell Loop schemes. These will enable more frequent services and make journeys quicker for passengers, whilst improving the potential for greater and more efficient freight movements, to, from and through our region

2. Background

- 2.1 East Cambridgeshire, and particularly Ely, is well-served by the rail network, with direct services to Kings Lynn, Cambridge, London, Norwich, Stansted Airport, Peterborough and the Midlands and the North West. However, some services, particularly on the Kings Lynn – Cambridge – London corridor especially during peak times, suffer from severe overcrowding. Whilst other services such as those to Ipswich are too infrequent (two hourly) and do not offer a genuine, realistic, and attractive options for many. In addition, the complex junctions north of Ely act as a key constraint on capacity and make it difficult to run additional train services for both passengers and freight. In order to truly realise the full potential of Soham Station, double tracking, and the provision of the Snailwell Loop is necessary to allow for direct hourly services to serve the community.
- 2.2 The EACE scheme would facilitate additional rail services to Cambridge, as well as additional services to Peterborough, Ipswich, and Norwich. The Combined Authority continue to work with Network Rail to deliver additional capacity through the Ely area for the benefit of passenger and freight services, whilst protecting the quality of life of residents in Queen Adelaide. The EACE project will help to deliver additional rail services, including to Cambridge, Kings Lynn, Peterborough, and Ipswich, and provide the capacity for any future services to Wisbech.
- 2.3 The scheme should ensure more reliable journeys for all passengers whilst providing additional capacity for freight services between Felixstowe and Nuneaton, hence reducing the need for freight to be transported by heavy goods vehicles along the A14. The benefits brought about the implementation of the EACE will be maximised by the double (twin) tracking of the Ely to Soham route. These two schemes will provide much-needed additional capacity, create new journey opportunities, and deliver faster, more frequent rail journeys for passengers, whilst maintaining highway access for residents and businesses in Queen Adelaide. These schemes form part of a rail package for the area that also includes the Snailwell Loop and Dullingham Loop.
- 2.4 The benefits of the Snailwell Loop cannot be released until the EACE scheme to the north is completed. The area around Ely currently acts as a significant bottleneck for rail services (passenger and freight). If both schemes can be delivered in tandem or simultaneously then efficiencies and value for money would be increased significantly. By the introducing additional rail paths at Ely and the opportunity for other Combined Authority rail schemes to be brought forward to capitalise on the removal of the log jam at Ely.
- 2.5 To progress this project the approved funding would be used by Network Rail to develop an options study, outline design, costing and Business Case. It is important that the Combined Authority are ready to progress key, regional and local schemes in a timely and effective manner. However, following the publication of the CPCA funded EACE report by Network

Rail it would appear that this study could be mothballed. On receipt of Network Rail's Outline Business Case on EACE in March 2022.

- 2.6 The mayor has received a letter from the Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps MP, on the EACE Business Case advising that despite the very high BCR of 4.89, there is a significant amount of capital required to realise the benefit. The Combined Authority and stakeholders continue to lobby central government around the need for EACE for the benefit of the local, regional, and national community.

Significant Implications

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The current CPCA MTFP has an approved funding of £150,000 to be spent this financial year.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 None.

5. Public Health Implications

- 5.1 None.

6. Environmental and Climate Change Implications

- 6.1 There would be both Environmental and Climate change benefits from the Snailwell loop and its reliant EACE project. By opening up additional rail paths to the region for both passengers and freight services this would reduce road traffic.

7. Other Significant Implications

- 7.1 There are no known significant implications at time to preparing this paper.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Exempt Appendix 1 – Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps MP Letter: EACE.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 None