



**CAMBRIDGESHIRE
& PETERBOROUGH**
COMBINED AUTHORITY

Agenda Item No: 2.3

Snailwell Loop

- To: Transport and Infrastructure Committee
- Meeting Date: 16 November 2022
- Public report: This report contains an appendix which is 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 appendix.
- 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 pause works on Snailwell Loop for a period of 6 months while there is on-going uncertainty about the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) scheme and slip the existing budget into 2023-24 , or.
 - b) Recommend to the Combined Authority Board to approve £150k of the current £500k subject to approval budget to enable continued development of the project and slip the balance into 2023-24, or.
 - c) Continue to work with local and regional partners to urge Government to support the EACE scheme
- Voting arrangements: For items c) A simple majority of all Members present and voting

For item a) and b) 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 enhance 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. Introducing additional rail paths at Ely creates 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 and the scheme may not be progressed

- 2.6 The mayor has received a letter from the former 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.
- 2.7 In light of the uncertainty surrounding the EACE scheme, the Committee is being asked to decide whether to pause further work on Snailwell Loop for 6 months, while retaining the funding allocation, or to progress the work as planned

Significant Implications

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The current MTFP has a capital budget of £500k subject to approval, one of the options being put to TIC is to approve £150,000 of this to be spent this financial year and the balance slipped into 2023-24. If the project is paused pending further work on EACE then the £500k capital allocation would be slipped into 2023-24

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