

Increasing rail capacity through Ely – public consultation dates announced

May 10, 2021



Network Rail is inviting the public to comment on proposals and options to increase rail capacity through Ely as part of a six-week consultation from 24 May 2021.

The aim of the Ely area capacity enhancement (EACE) programme is to allow more trains to run through Ely by improving rail capacity and reliability for passenger services between key destinations.

Increasing capacity on the Ely route could deliver significant benefits to national and local economies with better connectivity and reliability for passenger services. It will also help to 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. This will provide faster, greener, safer and more efficient way of transporting goods across the country; helping to remove lorries from the roads and further reduce pollution and congestion.

The first consultation round late in 2020 set out the principles of why rail capacity needs to be increased and generated 260 feedback responses with 89% supporting the proposals to increase rail capacity. For the second round of consultation, proposals and options will be presented to the public for the first time to upgrade the railway in an area defined as Ely South that includes:

- Proposed infrastructure changes to part of the Soham branch line and Ely Dock junction
- Proposed changes to track and platforms at Ely station
- Options to upgrade the nearby Stuntney Road bridge
- Options to upgrade two bridges across the Great River Ouse adjacent to Ely marina
- Proposal to close Kiln Lane level crossing with options to maintain pedestrian and vehicle access to the east side of the railway.

The feedback from this second round of consultation will help to progress designs prior to selecting preferred options and, subject to further funding, submitting a Transport and Works Act Order later in 2022.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said: “This is a chance for passengers who use the rail network through Ely to have a say on how to deliver better connectivity and more punctual, reliable services in the future.

“I encourage people to engage with the consultation, let us know your views on these proposed infrastructure improvements and help shape the future of your railway.”

Ellie Burrows, Network Rail’s route director for Anglia said: “Following a successful consultation in late 2020 which saw a lot of support for the principle of increasing capacity through Ely, we are now in a position to present a number of options on how we can upgrade the railway to achieve these benefits.

“It is so important to seek the views of the community who live and work in the Ely area. Their feedback will help to inform our designs as we progress with this important project and I hope everyone who wants to, will take the opportunity to have their say.”

A further public consultation is planned later in 2021 which will focus on proposals and options for the remodelling of the track layout at Ely North junction, level crossings at Queen Adelaide, and level crossings across the Ely wider area. More details on these future consultation rounds will be announced nearer the time.

Photo credit: Network Rail