

The Office of Rt Hon Mark Harper
Secretary of State for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London SW1P 2AA

Email: dft.ministers@dft.gov.uk

EEH Business Unit
c/o Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Walton Street
Aylesbury
HP20 1UA

Date: 28th December 2023

Ely – Urging progress

Dear Secretary of State,

We were delighted to see the Government's acknowledgment of the significant role that rail capacity improvements at Ely junction will play and its commitment to funding the scheme as part of the Network North announcements, published on 4 October.

As the Minister of State, Huw Merriman MP said on 26 October, Ely is a 'superb project, which really delivers for freight and ensures that freight can travel from Felixstowe across the Midlands, rather than having to go south'.

As contributors to the Keeping Trade on Track report which highlighted the pressing case for Ely, we now urge you to prioritise its delivery for the following reasons:

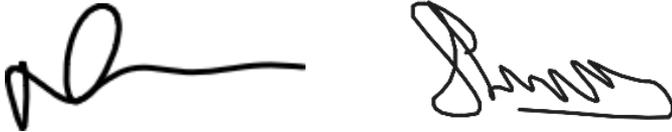
- Ely is a 'quick win' with planning at an advanced stage and its benefits could start to be delivered within the next six years – including allowing 2,900 extra freight services per year, removing 100,000 lorries from our roads per year, and reducing congestion by 5.6 million hours per year.
- In doing so, Ely will make a significant contribution to the government's rail freight growth target and net zero, and enable logistics companies to embed new distribution models which utilise rail freight for longer distance journeys to the depot and battery-powered vehicles for shorter distance onward journeys.
- Delivery of Ely by the early 2030s would support construction of the Sizewell C power station in Suffolk by providing greater capacity for delivery of materials via rail.
- It will enable Freeport East to support the new trade deals being struck with overseas countries and help drive innovation.
- Ely will enable improved frequencies of passenger services between economic hubs in the East of England, while unlocking the potential for passenger service integration when East West Rail connects to Cambridge in the early 2030s.

- Finally, we believe that the scheme at Ely should be a catalyst to plan for further complementary measures on the Felixstowe to Midlands and North corridor, recognising its key role in moving the country's freight.

For these reasons we urge you to provide funding to Network Rail to progress the next stages of planning at the earliest opportunity.

As a collaboration of sub-national transport bodies, local and combined authorities, LEPs, MPs, transport operators, trade organisations and industry, we will do all we can to support government and its agencies progress Ely at pace, so that its benefits can be realised for the UK as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Two handwritten signatures in black ink. The first signature is on the left and the second is on the right.

Naomi Green, Managing Director England's Economic Heartland and Andrew Summers, Chief Executive Transport East

on behalf of the following individuals and organisations:

Maggie Simpson OBE, Director General, Rail Freight Group
Tim Shoveller – CEO, G&W UK/Europe (including Freightliner Group)
Cllr Alex Beckett, Chair of the Highways and Transport Committee, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll Chair, East West Rail Eastern Section Board
Clemence Cheng, Executive Director, Hutchison Ports & CEO Port of Felixstowe
James Tierney, General Manager – Intermodal
John Smith, Chief Executive, GB Railfreight
Ellis Shelton, Policy Advisor, Logistics UK