



## East of England

All Party Parliamentary Group

**Co-Chairs** Peter Aldous MP and Daniel Zeichner MP

**Vice-Chairs** Baroness Janet Cohen, Jonathan Djanogly MP, Matt Hancock MP, Lord Alan Haselhurst, Rachel Hopkins MP, Lord Stewart Jackson, Gagan Mohindra MP, Priti Patel MP, Andrew Rosindell MP, Giles Watling MP

**Secretary** Clive Lewis MP

**Treasurer** Dr Dan Poulter MP

## PARLIAMENTARY LAUNCH OF NEW REPORT

*The future of freight – the pivotal role of Ely Junction for UK trade, levelling up and net zero*

Held Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June, 16:00 to 17:15

Boothroyd Room, Portcullis House

### NOTE OF THE MEETING

*Cross party, cross industry and cross country support for upgrading Ely rail junction was demonstrated as the East of England APPG hosted the launch of England's Economic Heartland and Transport East's brochure [Keeping Trade on Track](#) in Parliament on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> June.*

Co-chairs **Peter Aldous MP** and **Daniel Zeichner MP** were joined by **Iain Stewart MP**, Chair of the **Transport Select Committee**, and **Tan Dhesi MP**, **Labour Minister for Rail**, who heard the case for investment into Ely Junction and supporting schemes from an expert panel. All four welcomed the report, recognising it expressed the case and level of support for the scheme powerfully.

More than 40 MPs, Peers, rail, business and regional stakeholders listened as the panellists set out clearly the national economic, social and environmental case for funding the £466m upgrade to the rail network around Ely.

**Iain Stewart MP** remarked that he was interested in strategic rail projects that would, for a relatively small investment, deliver “big” results across a range of social and economic goals and potentially Ely would be a good example. **Tan Dhesi MP** said that increasing rail freight was a priority for Labour and noted that Ely capacity enhancements were incredibly important not just in the East of England but for the Midlands and the North.

**Naomi Green of England's Economic Heartland**, which co-authored the Keeping Trade on Track report, started by highlighting the strategic case for intervention. She explained how the high business case ratio for the project recognised the huge benefits to freight movement through the East to and from businesses in the Midlands and North, along with improved connections for passengers and the notable decarbonisation benefits, due to removing 100,000 HGVs off the roads each year. She explained how in her experience it's unusual to find a project that delivers so comprehensively for all users and stated it was a 'no regret' scheme.

**Steve Beel from Freeport East** which covers the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich said there were risks around inaction on Ely, to both business growth and climate “Ely currently adds costs and carbon to every single container being moved out of the UK”. He highlighted how shipping is an international business and if the UK is not competitive we will lose out to Rotterdam and other European ports, adding time and cost to businesses and risking skilled jobs.

**James Tierney of Maritime Transport Ltd** spoke about the amount of private investment going in to developing rail freight terminals and to reduce the carbon impact of moving goods by shortening HGV journeys. He emphasised importance of Ely to the private sector and the huge increase in demand for rail freight over recent years adding that the benefits would be felt right across the country.

**Maggie Simpson OBE of Rail Freight Group** supported the previous points emphasising the commitment of the industry to growing rail freight and the private investment going in at all points in the journey from supplier to customer. She said investing in Ely supports businesses right across the country and is critical to the UK’s growth and role in global trade.

In questions and comments many attendees took the opportunity to express why their organisation supported the project particularly highlighting the benefits to passengers which would come from more frequent services. Attendees also highlighted how siloed funding pots and segregated infrastructure planning resulted in slow decisions, and urged the Parliamentarians to keep advocating for the scheme whenever possible.

*In concluding the meeting, the East of England APPG Co-Chair, Peter Aldous MP, invited all attendees to sign a letter to the Transport Secretary and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He added that MPs and Peers should, and would, continue to raise the issue with the Department for Transport.*

## ATTENDEES

Peter Aldous MP	Co-Chair, East of England APPG
Daniel Zeichner MP	Co-Chair, East of England APPG
Iain Stewart MP:	Chair, Transport Select Committee
Tan Dhesi MP:	Shadow Minister for Rail
Naomi Green	Managing Director, England’s Economic Heartland
Stephen Beel	Chief Executive, Freeport East
James Tierney	General Manager, Intermodal, Maritime Transport
Maggie Simpson	Director General, Rail Freight Group
Jo Churchill MP	MP for Bury St Edmunds
Lord Alan Haselhurst	Former MP for Saffron Walden

Laura Gherman	Office of Priti Patel MP
Lizzy Zisman	Office of Peter Aldous MP
Theodore Barclay	Office of Jo Churchill MP
Cllr David Bradbury	Mid Suffolk District Council
Matt Stewart	EELGA
David Allatt	Cambridgeshire County Council
Tim Bellamy	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Constance Anker	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Katie Frost	Network Rail
Sarah Jane Crawford	Network Rail
Charles Baker	Network Rail
Peter John Kalton	Network Rail
Philip Smart	Rail Freight Group
Philip Sherratt	Modern Railways Magazine
Andrew Summers	Transport East
Esme Yuill	Transport East
Helen Fallon	England's Economic Heartland
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Erin Pitcher	England's Economic Heartland
Daisy Newton	Freeport East
Patrick Hall	London Stansted Airport
Jordi Beascochea	East West Rail
James Palmer	Eastern Powerhouse
Paul Davey	Hutchison Ports
Martin Woor	Hutchison Ports
Jonathan Denby	Greater Anglia
Martin Cooper	Rail Future

Ellis Shelton	Logistics UK
Mark Lucas	UK Innovation Corridor
John McGill	UK Innovation Corridor
Richard Mann	Midlands Connect
Kathryn Oldale	Deutsche Bahn
Ian Kapur	GB Rail Freight
Sara Noonan	West Suffolk District Council
Andrew Cook	Suffolk County Council
John Grant	Fen Line Users Association
Matthew Wright	Great Western Railways
Ben Curtis	Campaign for Better Transport
Peter Wakefield	Rail Future
Steve Barwick	Secretariat for the East of England APPG

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The academic partners of the East of England APPG are the Centre for Public and Policy Engagement at the University of Essex, The University of Cambridge, Anglia Ruskin University and the University of East Anglia.

