



CONNECTIVITY

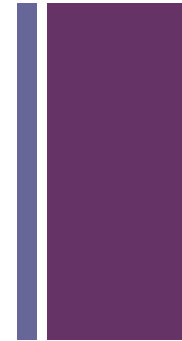
King's Lynn-Hunstanton Railway Campaign

Howard Johnston FCILT March 2019

www.hunstantonrail.org.uk



The challenges ahead



- Hunstanton and villages along the Wash Coast face serious problems if connectivity with King's Lynn and Cambridge is not significantly improved over the next ten years
- It will become impossible to retain young people
- The total number of over-75s will become unmanageable
- We must encourage investors to create jobs on the doorstep
- We must retain and improve our tourism without 'carmageddon'

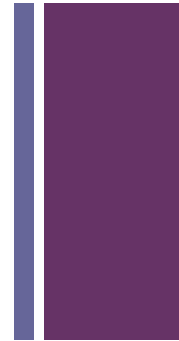
+ **The Cambridge Connection**



- The fastest growing city economy in the UK
- 2017/18 - goods and services worth £9.4billion
- Industrial parks lead the way in wireless technology, display technology, and mobile telecommunications
- All our local youngsters need a slice of the action

+ The new railway

- Hunstanton to King's Lynn: Just 29 min
- Hunstanton to Heacham 5 min
- Heacham to Snettisham 6 min
- Snettisham to Dersingham 4 min
- Dersingham to QE Hospital 7 min
- QE Hospital to King's Lynn 7 min
- ... and Cambridge Just 82 min

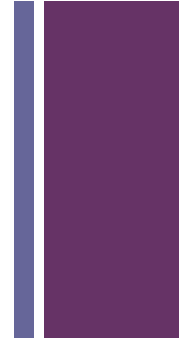


+ Don't blame Dr Beeching



- Closure was not in the 1963 Beeching Report
- Government moved the goalposts
- Through London trains and excursions cancelled
- Norwich and East Midlands feeder lines shut
- A clear way for motor coaches and private cars

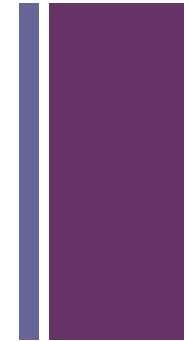
+ Times have changed. We now need...



- Better accessibility to services and opportunities
- More and simpler travel choices for everyone
- More reliable, quicker and seamless journeys
- Appropriate and sustainable housing and economic growth
- Reductions in carbon emissions
- Safer environments and reductions in casualties

+ Who pays for a new railway?

- MEDIUM AND LONG TERM OPPORTUNITIES
- Capital funding
- Major scheme funding
- Developer funding
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Norfolk Infrastructure Fund
- Local Sustainable Transport Fund
- Regional Growth Fund
- Tax Incremental Financing
- The New Homes bonus
- *The EU – maybe....*



+ UK railway revival gathers pace



- Over 200 railway reopenings identified – including Wisbech-March
- Many schemes vigorously supported by local, county and regional authorities
- Recent national transport reports
- So, why not in West Norfolk??

+ Suffocation by ageing population



- North West Norfolk is in bottom half of the list of UK's most deprived areas; almost the worst performer in Norfolk and Suffolk
- The National Average Age is 39
- Hunstanton's average age is 59, Heacham 58, Dersingham 56, Snettisham 55, King's Lynn 45
- 43% of the population of Hunstanton is over 65
- 1,000 new homes will further congest the A149
- Care homes can't recruit staff

+ Norfolk's County Transport Plan



- Investing for the best return – but it's not around here
- *“Significant numbers of people have to travel relatively long distances to access everyday facilities, often with the added challenge of variable quality public transport.”*
- *“A short term injection of funding is unlikely to result in longer term changes in travel behaviour, so building longevity into such projects is essential.”*
- Cambridgeshire Mayor James Palmer suggests a King's Lynn-Wisbech fixed link for joint benefits including tourism

+ What a new railway offers



- There's no time for romance
- A King's Lynn-Hunstanton line is an extremely successful people mover
- More A149 spending would make little difference
- A 'closer' Queen Elizabeth Hospital could be a life saver during peak holiday times.
- More tourism. It is expected to increase from places such as the new Wisbech Garden Town (pop 75,000)

+ It's just not true!



- **Too much of the old railway trackbed has been built over**

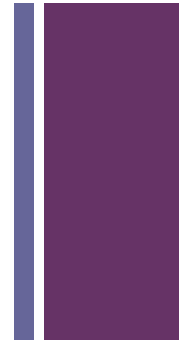
A partial new alignment increases the new route's relevance)

- **It'll cost too much.** *£10 million/mile is achievable. Over a 50 year life span, a £100 million Hunstanton railway is just £2 million/year*
- **Roads are easier and cheaper to build**

The West Winch relief road may cost £10 million, and the Hardwick Interchange £14 million. Spalding's new bypass - about three miles – will be £100 million

- **It will take too long to build.** *It can be achieved in six years*

+ Tourism



- North West Norfolk is almost entirely dependent on tourism
- This is expected to increase from places such as the new Wisbech Garden Town (pop 75,000)
- Road congestion has been a controversial issue for at the last 60 years
- Road improvements have never kept pace
- The young and elderly can't spontaneously get here
- Reinstating the railway seems a no-brainer here

+ Scottish Borders success story

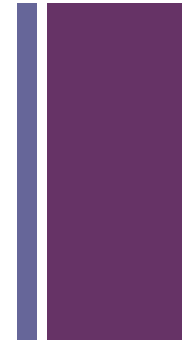


- Revived Edinburgh-Galashiels railway – 36 miles
- Cost £300 million to put back despite new bridges and tunnels, and realignment of busy Edinburgh southern bypass
- After four years, trains heavily loaded
- Depressed Galashiels economy is turning round
- Twin town of Hawick (18 miles away) screaming for railway extension

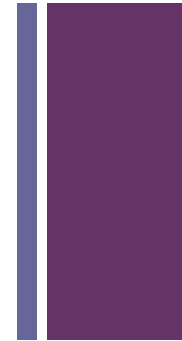


How do WE get a new railway?

- It's not rocket science
- Get talking
- Identify the problem
- Gather the data
- Develop the options
- Secure priorities in the planning process
- Discuss funding options
- Secure the powers
- Seek approvals
- Get mobilised and let the contracts



+ SUMMARY



- A new railway will help grow the North West Norfolk economy and stabilise the exodus of young people
- We need better connectivity to Cambridge (and London)
- More road building alone is problematic, expensive, and will not achieve long-term sustainability goals
- A new railway is both affordable and physically achievable

+ COUNCIL ACTIONS



- **PLEASE** make a proposal to the Cabinet to adopt a policy of reopening the Hunstanton railway, which is critical for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the people and communities of King's Lynn and West Norfolk.
- It won't cost any money to include this as part of a planning vision. If opportunities arise, the fact that it is identified as a potentially beneficial goal may put BCKLWN in the front seat for future funding assistance.



“Hunstanton appears condemned to remain remote from the rail network, forever held back by road congestion and peripherality.”

Chris Austin OBE

Former British Railways Board Member and Strategic Rail Authority Executive Director

