



Department
for Transport

Rt Hon Elizabeth Truss MP
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19 OCT 2015

From the Secretary of State
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Rt Hon Elizabeth

15 OCT 2015

Thank you for your letter of 18 September 2015, co-signed by MPs, council leaders and Local Enterprise Partnership leaders, making the case to continue with the upgrade of Ely North Rail Junction as a regional priority.

This Government has embarked on the biggest programme of railway modernisation since the Victorian era and I expect Network Rail to invest £38 billion in the five-year period to 2019. Both this investment and HS2 are vital to secure this country's economic growth and we will deliver them. As I explained to Parliament on 25 June, important aspects of Network Rail's investment programme are costing more and taking longer. I have taken action to reset the programme and get it back on track.

Sir Peter Hendy – who has a proven record of delivering on major transport challenges – is the new Chair of Network Rail and will develop proposals for how the rail upgrade programme will be carried out. He will report back to me in the autumn with his proposals to re-plan the rail investment portfolio and I will update Parliament at that time. I do not want to pre-empt his findings but I do recognise the extent of your support and the concern you have expressed to ensure the upgrade of Ely North Junction continues.

The growth in rail demand in East Anglia is substantial and our franchise plans recognise this. I am strongly supportive of the efforts being made to generate economic growth through new and enhanced rail services, and commend the work being done by local authorities, Local Enterprise Partnerships and others to maximise the potential of rail services in the region. I have asked my officials to continue to work with you on this, once Sir Peter has reported back to me this autumn.

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Patrick*

THE RT. HON. PATRICK McLOUGHLIN