

# THE UP LINE

NEWSLETTER OF CAMBRIDGE HEATH AND LONDON FIELDS RAIL USERS

Spring 2022

## Trial run for more trains

There are hopes of a better train service from Cambridge Heath and London Fields but it may take some time.

Transport for London has been asked to examine whether it is possible to run three off-peak trains an hour (two at present) from our stations to Enfield, and three off-peak trains an hour (two at present) to Cheshunt. Initially TfL says the changes cannot be implemented before May 2023.

Trials are expected to take place between now and May to discover whether the extra trains can be accommodated in the busy timetable along our line.

TfL says that the impact on the train fleet of the extra running needs to be discussed, as well as the extra power needs and staff costs, which means that an economic and financial case will have to be developed, in the light of track access charges.

The issue was discussed by the London Overground Upgrade Board in September. TfL agree that three trains an hour would be desirable to match London Overground frequencies on other lines. It is also the most

valuable and appropriate way to make progress "given the needs of the area in question".

TfL has secured agreement from Network Rail to adjust the routine weekday track patrolling which reduces the four working tracks along our line (shared with Greater Anglia services) to two.

There is often congestion beyond Bethnal Green station, on the approaches to Liverpool Street station.

This is likely to be eased once existing services are diverted through the Crossrail tunnels under central London, although there will probably be competition for any spare slots.

Much of the campaigning for the better train service has come from Enfield Transport User Group, Enfield Town Residents Association and the Enfield Southgate MP Bambos Charalambous.

They are also trying to persuade TfL to provide more late-night services by allowing passengers to board trains which at present run empty to their depots.

## Punctuality figures are better than 90%

Greater Anglia, which runs trains through our stations, without stopping, to their West Anglia Lea Valley lines, Stansted Airport and Cambridge, have revealed 94% punctuality figures over the past 12 months which is approximately equivalent to London Overground's

performance (between 92.9% and 94.6%).

A public consultation was taking place in January by Transport East which covers Essex, Thurrock, Southend, Norfolk and Suffolk (but not London), into its draft transport strategy for the region over the next 30

years. It is aiming to identify priorities for investment to facilitate a thriving economy with less pollution. The draft plan will be submitted to the Department for Transport this year. More information at:

[www.transporteast.org.uk/](http://www.transporteast.org.uk/)

# Improvements needed

We asked Transport for London to consider installing train information screens at ground level at Cambridge Heath, as at London Fields, Hackney Downs, Stoke Newington and Rectory Road stations. *TfL responded, the screens were installed and were welcomed by passengers.*

We asked for the reinstatement of the six peak hour trains (five in the morning and one in the evening) at Cambridge Heath which were cut in December 2011 and led to a fall in passenger numbers. *TfL responded positively and the trains are back.*

We asked for an earlier start to the Sunday service, from 0700, rather than 0900. *TfL responded positively, although the earliest trains are around 0730.*

## Changes needed at Cambridge Heath

Now we would like to see:

1. Ground floor retail unit to be let.
2. Station name and logo on Hackney Road bridge as at Hackney Central.
3. Second entrance on Hackney Road, to augment the existing entrance on Cambridge Heath Road.

## Changes needed at both Cambridge Heath and London Fields stations

1. Lifts at both stations to help mobility-impaired passengers, including parents with buggies and small children as well as passengers with cycles and luggage.
2. Additional platform shelters and seats to cope with rising passenger numbers.
3. Improved timetable to provide a train every 10 minutes rather than every 15 minutes as at present.
4. Stopping some Chingford trains at Cambridge Heath and London Fields to provide a direct service to Clapton and Walthamstow, without the need to change trains at Hackney Downs.
5. Designate Cambridge Heath and London Fields as art stations, to reflect the artistic

community in the area and brighten up the stations.

6. Encourage artists to use the stations to display their art.

**These changes are suggested by Cambridge Heath and London Fields Rail Users for the attention of Gareth Powell, managing director for surface transport, and Rory O'Neill, director of TfL's London Overground. They will also be circulated to local politicians who have shown an interest in train services.**

We are unhappy that the "official" estimates from the Office of Rail and Road seriously understate the real number of passengers who use our two stations, when compared with our carefully recorded observations over 23 years.

**We believe the ORR 2019/20 estimates of 1,332,312 passengers using London Fields annually and 774,306 for Cambridge Heath were significantly below the actual numbers. This undermines the case for improving our stations and the train services.**

TfL figures for 2018/19 appear to show that ORR "lost" 700,000 passengers at London Fields and 300,000 passengers at Cambridge Heath. Based on TfL figures and our counts, we believe there were more than 2 million passengers using London Fields and 1 million at Cambridge Heath.

### Improvements since the CHLFUG campaign began:

Daytime off-peak, evening, Saturday and Sunday trains. Oyster card readers, and more reliable ticket machines with Oyster top-up facilities. Real-time information screens at street level as well as customer information screens and help points on all platforms. Live monitoring of CCTV at London Fields and Cambridge Heath. Platform seats. More timetables and printed information. Repainting. Improved lighting. Efficient graffiti removal. New signs. Cambridge Heath needle bin removed. Stair edge repairs. Litter collection and efficient cleaning. Additional entrance at London Fields. Refurbishment of Cambridge Heath station. Public address system. Station staff while trains are running