

Lincolnshire

■■ Information overload keeps Railfuture busy

Railfuture Lincolnshire has responded to a “deluge” of industry and political consultation papers, the latest being Network Rail’s route utilisation study for the East Midlands, after a similar exercise earlier in the year dealing with Yorkshire and Humberside.

Branch chairman David Harby is appealing for more volunteers to come forward to help the committee deal with some of this workload. If you can help, contact him. His email is david.harby@ntlworld.com

■■ £21million upgrade for 32-mile long line



Picture: NETWORK RAIL

NIGHT DUTY: Network Rail on the Skegness line in October

Railfuture Lincolnshire has welcomed Network Rail’s £21million upgrade of the Skegness line – after years of under-investment – which by next year should clear the way for locomotive-hauled and IC125 trains and deliver huge benefits to the thousands of people who use the line. Committee member Paul Jowett reports that currently there are numerous speed restrictions and operational problems caused by singling of parts of the line, particularly between Boston and Sibley. It can take trains one hour to travel the 32 miles between Boston and Skegness! There will however be a total blockade for eight weeks in February and March. But Network Rail route director Richard Lungmuss said the blockade will allow the work to be done quickly, rather than being spread over a year. Line speed will increase from 50-60mph to 75mph.

■■ Timetable mistakes compound information failings

Railfuture Lincolnshire has pointed out a series of mistakes made in official timetable leaflets for the Nottingham-Skegness line. Sadly railway officials produced platform posters and timetable amendment sheets, but they too contained inaccuracies – mistakes about the mistakes! Railfuture member Paul Jowett commented: “Passengers must have accurate information, especially when real-time screens at Sleaford were ‘on the blink’ for most of the summer.” Paul also reported mistakes in Lincolnshire County Council’s 60-page guide to travelling by train which had the worthy aim of promoting public transport.

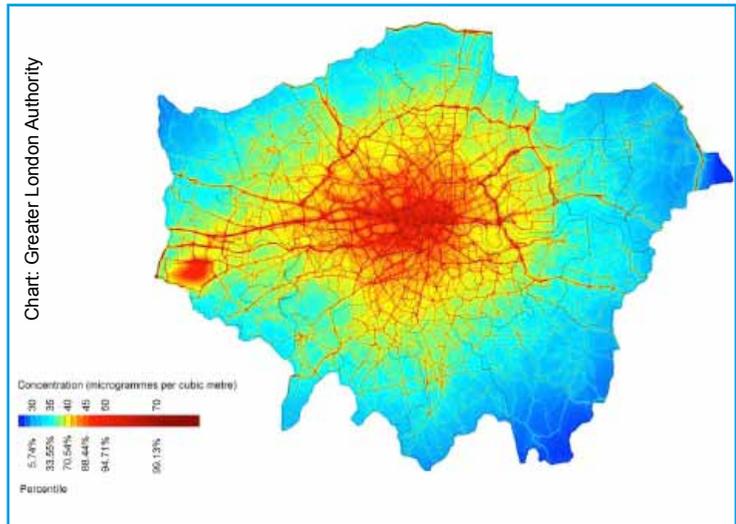
■■ Houses should follow Green Line initiative

The East Midlands Regional Plan which, among other things, influences where new housing is built, is being reviewed. David Harby reports that Railfuture Lincolnshire is calling for development to be concentrated along existing railway lines, ensuring that new residents have a public transport choice. The branch is building on an initiative from 15 years ago when it published the Green Line leaflet advocating housing in the towns and villages along the Lincoln-Sleaford-Spalding-Peterborough corridor.

■■ Friends promote their line at town festival

The Friends of the Barton Line had a stall at the Barton Christmas Festival on 28 November to promote the 160-year-old line to Barton-on-Humber. In the past, the Friends have staged music, beer, poetry, picnic, rambler and trolley train events as well as visits to places of railway interest and excursions for school children. Membership costs £5. Email contact: enquiries@bartonrail.org.uk

Blueprints from Boris



DIRTY OLD TOWN: Nitrous oxide concentrations in London in 2004. Air quality is so bad in Britain’s capital that World Health Organisation limits are regularly breached. Most of the transport pollution comes from road vehicles

By John Davison

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Boris Johnson displaced Ken Livingstone as London’s elected mayor and immediately dropped some of Ken’s transport projects.

A road bridge over the Thames at Beckton, a tram line connecting Peckham and Camden, and another Heathrow runway were not for Boris.

Light rail services to Dagenham Dock and some sort of super bus through Charlton and Woolwich were, said Boris, not essential.

But Crossrail One and the East London Line remained key to economic progress in the Thames Gateway, and the 127% boost in capacity from Thameslink was acknowledged.

By October 2009, Boris was ready to explain what other additions to London’s transport network he could support so that London could be “poised to lead the world in new green technology”.

Three documents – the London Plan, the Economic Development Strategy and the Mayor’s draft Transport Strategy – are out for consultation until 12 January.

Proposals to extend the Docklands Light Railway to Dagenham Dock are back in favour. Work is to be restarted to assess DLR extensions east of Beckton, north of Stratford International and south of Lewisham.

The transport strategy aims at cutting congestion at key London stations and acknowledges the importance of a Chelsea-Hackney railway – Crossrail 2.

The mayor wants Underground style frequencies on evening services on National Rail routes.

The strategy, says Boris, may bring in traffic charging measures even though he has already dumped the western extension of the congestion zone planned by Ken.

It admits that road freight accounts

for 23% of London’s CO₂ emissions from transport and supports rail electrification proposals for London, such as West Drayton to Paddington and Gospel Oak to Barking.

It also mentions the need to protect for transport use areas of land well-connected to the strategic transport network that offer potential locations for logistics centres and railfreight terminals, and disused railways/rail sidings.

Railfuture supports the safeguarding of land flanking the railway between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet for a Crossrail terminus south of the Thames.

The mayor’s strategy points out that Clapham Junction and the West Anglia main line needs new capacity.

Even Croydon’s Tramlink could be extended but how is not specified.

London Underground will be expected to simplify and recast service patterns to increase capacity on the Northern Line by a further 20% between 2012 and 2020.

A Northern Line spur to Battersea is also proposed.

The Network Rail tracks from Hayes in Kent could form the basis of a Bakerloo Line extension.

Hertfordshire’s ambitions for the Croxley Rail Link are supported.

If the Government sanctions a second runway at Stansted airport, the Mayor calls for rail links and stations to be upgraded in advance.

Railfuture urges campaigners to give their views on the Mayor’s Transport Strategy – Public Draft.

There is a questionnaire at www.london.gov.uk/shaping-london or within the consultation leaflet (call 0800 298 3009).

If you want to respond more fully, you can email mts@london.gov.uk with “MTS Public Consultation” in the subject box, or write to Mayor of London Transport Strategy, PO Box 65064, London SE1P 5GE.