

## Introduction

Railfuture is Britain's leading, longest-established, national independent voluntary organisation campaigning exclusively for a better railway across a bigger network for passenger and freight users, to support economic (housing and productivity) growth, environmental improvement and better-connected communities.

We seek to influence decision makers at local, regional and national levels to implement pro-rail policies in transport and development planning.

## East West Rail – 2021 public consultation

This consultation covers the overall customer experience and railway operations for East West Rail, as well as a range of infrastructure proposals - such as route alignments, stations and level crossings.

### Introduction to the project so far

#### The approach to Cambridge

##### 1 Please share your views on:

Because EWR alignments closer to north Cambridge are now being considered, we have looked again at whether we were right to have favoured Route Option E and approaching Cambridge from the south as we confirmed after our last consultation. In particular, we have reviewed our previous assessment that concluded approaching from the south was the better option taking account of a Cambourne North Station outside of Route E to see if we would have made a different decision. We consider that the advantages of approaching Cambridge from the south continue to support this conclusion and that a number of challenges remain for a northern approach even with a Cambourne North station. We'd welcome your comments on our assessment.

[Please add your comment here](#)

Railfuture fully supports the conclusions set out by the EWR Company regarding the routing options for Cambridge from and to the west, for the reasons given in the consultation. This railway is to be a national strategic asset which will serve mainland Britain well into the future and should be designed to optimise effective operation for both passenger and freight traffic. For the passenger market, the vision for East West Rail is that it should be the basis of an East West Main Line linking the principal conurbations of Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich in East Anglia with other hubs at Bedford, Milton Keynes, and Oxford and beyond to Swindon, Bristol and South Wales. A route west of Cambridge via the north side of the city will compromise operational convenience and journey time by requiring reversal in Cambridge, a station already experiencing inefficient operational complexity and insufficient platform capacity. Indeed, we believe that proposals for East West services and their passengers will benefit substantially from through running to and from Ipswich and Norwich since a through service requires less platform occupancy, and journey time, than a reversing service.

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

A route west of Cambridge via the south side of the city achieves significantly improved access for the new station at Cambridge South, the centre for bio-medical excellence and home to Addenbrookes and Papworth Hospitals and the new Astra Zeneca site. These will become very significant trip generators for staff and visitors and convenient travel to and from this station, without incurring the time penalty and inconvenience of changing trains, should be available for centres such as Ipswich, Norwich, Newmarket and Bury St. Edmunds in the east as well as Bedford, Milton Keynes, Oxford and beyond in the west.

Although we note that EWR Co express a degree of caution in respect of freight operation by referencing the need for interventions elsewhere on the network, it would be false policy to proceed on the questionable assumption that such interventions will not come about in future. The freight market in East Anglia is dominated by the Port of Felixstowe and, while we fully believe that the majority of its traffic should and will be routed via Ely along the F2N route, the appetite for rail-connected Strategic Freight Interchanges continues unabated. The justification for East West Rail is predicated on the need to provide new homes and jobs throughout the Cambridge-Oxford 'arc'. These new communities will require aggregates and other materials for the construction of homes, schools, workplaces, medical services, and places of entertainment. These materials could, in many cases, be transported by rail instead of road at vastly reduced cost to the environment – and disturbance to established local communities. Indeed, since the abandonment of the 'Expressway', greater stress will fall on the existing road network unless rail is allowed to fulfil its low-carbon potential. Every home that is built, a unit of production during that process, becomes a unit of consumption once it is completed. The retail and other consumer services offering which accompanies these new communities, whether in the form of traditional shopping or via home delivery for example, will require new warehousing and consolidation centres which in turn require low-carbon links to sources of product, mainly the deep-water ports in the south and east of England.

While firmly supporting the East West Rail project we must raise two areas of concern at the outset.

The first is the absence of explicit proposals for electrification at time of construction. Network Rail's Traction Decarbonisation Network Strategy identified East West Rail as a likely candidate for electrification, and 'retro fitting' of this at a later date can only add inefficient cost as well as disrupting the journeys of passenger and freight users who have begun to enjoy the benefits of the new link. While it is accepted that the roll-out of electrification is the subject of a separate exercise, due officially to be published later this year, its absence from these proposals nonetheless gives the railway's detractors an avoidable open goal to play on concerns about noise and emissions.

The second concern is the reference to gradients. While 1.25% (ie 1/80) is just about acceptable for intermodal traffic, it is more challenging for aggregate trains which tend to 'weigh out' before they 'length out'. Unless there is a clear commitment to electrification with its superior hauling and acceleration capabilities, this new line should avoid anything steeper than 1/125 (or 0.8%).

## **Customer experience and railway operations 2-6**

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## **East West Rail – 2021 public consultation**

## The train service

### 2 Please share your views on:

~ How you might use EWR services - for example for work, to visit friends and family, or to get to leisure destinations?

~ Based on your experience of rail travel in the UK what do you think are the main areas that could be improved?

~ If you don't currently travel by rail, what are the reasons for this? Is there anything that would persuade you to use rail services?

~ Are there ways in which we could help improve your entire journey? For example:

- How and where you research your trip

- The actual rail journey itself

- Getting from your home at the start of the journey, to the point that you reach your end destination

~ How could we support our net zero carbon ambitions through the delivery of services to customers? For example, through the design of stations, the trains we operate or through forms of active travel, for example cycling or walking.

Please add your comment here

Given the unavoidable lead times to the start of full services, we believe that their design should be centred around the needs of a population with the demographic characteristics anticipated to prevail in a decade's time, and beyond.

Our judgement and expectation is that people will travel on East-West Rail's orbital services for the full range of journey purposes including business, leisure, commuting to and from places of employment, and for conducting their lives generally. Serving a non-radial route and with links to those which are, we do not expect any one market segment such as commuting to dominate, with more even patterns of usage in terms of directional flows, times of day and days of the week. It should in our view be an explicit aspiration to offer services, and onward connections, which position rail as the natural first choice mode for existing and especially future residents for most but purely local journeys throughout the corridor. That service offer for an increasingly discerning customer base exercising consumer choice will have to be essentially consistent across the week – a meaningful 7-day railway.

We trust that we can take it for granted that East-West Rail services will be fully integrated into Great British Railways. Our judgement based on national experience elsewhere is that as an orbital route there will be many passengers who will be unlikely to take rail journeys solely between stations along the route itself, instead using it as just one albeit a vitally-important part of more variegated patterns of longer journeys.

East-West Rail will be the new journey-shrinker, opening up a kaleidoscope of new journey opportunities by reducing journey times and distance travelled (and thus fares) and opening up simpler, seamless journeys which avoid London. A service of sufficient frequency to be perceived as 'turn-up-and-go' will be significant in reducing waiting times and increase confidence that small delays will not mean unacceptable increases to time-critical journeys through missed connections.

Achieving 'net zero carbon ambitions' may be seen as the new version of 'the sparks effect' and while high environmental credentials are increasingly important, for many passengers electric traction equates to a quality customer experience – quiet and quick as well as clean.

## East West Rail – 2021 public consultation

## Station experience

### 3 Please share your views on:

- ~ Thinking about your experience of stations, how would you like your rail journey to link with other parts of your journey? For example, arriving or leaving the station on foot, by bike, car, or bus.
- ~ How can station forecourts and approaches be designed to offer the most convenient access for walking, cycling and bus services?
- ~ What sort of facilities would you like to see at stations – both those that contribute to the overall journey experience, as well as those that might serve a wider community purpose?
- ~ Are there any particularly good examples, either in the UK or abroad, of stations with good facilities or facilities for changing between different transport modes?
- ~ Are there specific factors that you would like us to consider that may improve safety and security at stations?
- ~ How can stations be better designed to manage customer flows around the station environment?
- ~ How can customers be guided through the station experience (particularly during busy periods)?
- ~ How should we ensure inclusivity, for example in terms of accessibility and the broader station experience?

Please add your comment here

As with the train service, we believe that given the unavoidable lead times to their start, the design of stations should also be centred around the needs of a population with the demographic characteristics anticipated to prevail in a decade's time, and beyond. The over-arching principle should be to ensure that the station experience is a pleasurable one.

Foot and bicycle users should be prioritised in accordance with the DfT's travel hierarchy of first pedestrians, then cyclists, public transport users and then other road users. Planning for access to the stations should be based around active travel, public transport, and the needs of less-able users, not subordinated to the demands of private car users. Stations must be designed as 'integrated travel hubs' and central to the needs of their community whatever the actual physical site may be. Stations should be surrounded by a network of footpaths, cycleways, and bus routes connecting the station to all parts of the surrounding and neighbouring communities. The increasing popularity of catchment-extending e-bikes and e-scooters must be recognized, with adequate provision of secure parking.

The East West Rail operator should look beyond the railway with a door-to-door strategy, considering commercial involvement in bus services, shared taxi, and cycle hire at stations as an integral part of their operation. Bus services presented as part of the rail operation such as Peterborough to Kings Lynn and Reading to Heathrow are popular. In terms of cycling, Railfuture believes that EWR Co should closely study the experience in the Netherlands where the railway company Nederlandse Spoorwegen and local authorities have developed a comprehensive cycle networks linked directly to every station with every station easy to use, very secure cycle storage. Much research shows that rail and cycle are ideal partners each extending the range and usefulness beyond the sum of their separate parts. EWR Co also needs to provide a step-change in the extent and quality of cycling provision on the trains.

Car access will be necessary for less able passengers, those with a lot of luggage or those living beyond a reasonable 'active travel' range, so some car parking will be necessary. Car parks should be more user-friendly than at present, should offer EV charging and be operated by the railway operator or by a contractor who remains 'invisible' to the public.

Outside stations there should be full information on train services, station facilities, local information (maps etc), and onward transport. For all users, stations need to be signed clearly from both local town centres and from the main road network.

At existing stations, EWR Co is unlikely to be the largest service or nominated station facilities operator. In those cases, EWR should work with the other train operators to improve the stations and not have detached 'EWR only' facilities.

Lessons need to be learnt from recent new stations, such as:

- ~ the station host concept as used at Oxford Parkway and other stations should be followed. Staff need to be on hand to assist passengers to buy tickets from ticket machines and also able to sell a full range of tickets including advanced tickets to customers. Tickets linked to a seat reservation must not be sold for a train which has already departed its origin station.
- ~ the software of ticket machines should be designed to present a logical sequence in the purchase process, for example, travelling when – where – with Railcard.
- ~ ticket machines should be clearly signed from the main entrance if not obvious.
- ~ at least one ticket machine should be located on the public side so that passengers can buy tickets out of hours.
- ~ ticket machines should be located or shaded so that natural light does not reflect on to screens.
- ~ stations should be staffed throughout operational hours with staff visible to passengers.
- ~ the area around ticket machines should include some flat surfaces, such as a shelf or table for passengers to place items and leave both hands free.
- ~ stations must be designed for passengers with special needs, including step-free access between station entrance and the platforms and the train, and stations need to be designed with dementia friendly features such as simple routes and colour schemes, with suitable dementia training provided to all staff.
- ~ toilets should be located on the ticketed side of the station and be suitable for people with special needs and baby changing, inspected and cleaned frequently.
- ~ free wi-fi should be provided from ticket office / main building to platforms.
- ~ passengers need protection from bad weather between cycle stores / bus stop and their train. This requires covered footbridges and staircases, with glazing, adequate shelter along the full length of platforms to encourage passengers to use the full length of trains, and waiting areas with seating which need good lighting, heating and air conditioning.
- ~ retail facilities provided need to be fully integrated into a local area masterplan, especially for stations where new development is planned.
- ~ stations should have the facility to serve refreshments, with priority for locally-owned cafes at each station to provide some individuality at each, even though a series of nationally owned stores may prove easier to arrange and provide greater income.
- ~ cycle hire facilities should be considered. Footpaths and cycle routes with suitable signage and maps should be provided between the station and local residential areas, business parks and tourist attractions.
- ~ bus stops should be as close to the station entrance as possible. Operational hours of connecting buses should match those of the train service. Information (display screens etc) about bus services should match those for the trains, and be shown on the same screens.
- ~ all forms of information and advertising on and around stations need to be positive about rail travel, and more about what passengers can do (eg catch a bus, hire a bike, buy a ticket on special offer, use the wi-fi) and less about what the user must not do (eg cycle, skate, leave luggage, watch for thieves, suspicious devices).
- ~ the station power requirements should be matched, as far as practicable, by Company financed solar and wind generation.
- ~ a wide range of appropriate artwork (eg murals, sculptures) should be commissioned from local artists.

Platforms should include the following design features:

- ~ be designed with space provision for eventual 12-carriage trains.
- ~ train information visible and audible from all points on the platform, with screens showing all the stations the next train will call at and their scheduled departure times.
- ~ signage should identify the platforms as 'eastbound' or 'westbound' and include clearly marked separate boarding zones for cycles, wheelchairs, and push-chairs / heavy luggage.

#### **On-train experience**

#### **4 Please share your views on:**

- ~ How can we create an engaging environment that suits the unique needs of our customers, for example, working effectively, relaxing or being entertained?
- ~ What types of things should we put in place to create a clean, safe and secure environment for you and your belongings on your train journey?
- ~ What facilities and services would provide the optimal train experience for customers on the EWR route?
- ~ What types of areas/spaces would you like to see on EWR trains beyond seating and standing space?
- ~ What on-train experience(s) might encourage customers to switch to rail from other modes of transport?
- ~ Are there any examples, either from the UK or from abroad, of good seating layouts or on-train facilities?
- ~ How might we consider sustainability in the on-train environment?
- ~ How can the on-train environment support customers' wellbeing throughout their journey?

Please add your comment here

As with the station experience, we believe that given the unavoidable lead times to the start of services, the design of the on-train experience should also be centred around the needs of a population with the demographic characteristics anticipated to prevail in a decade's time, and beyond. The over-arching principle should again be to ensure that the on-train experience is a pleasurable one, guaranteed to generate positive recommendations stimulating new as well as repeat business.

It is understood, and welcomed, that trains will operate in driver-controlled mode, because this will free-up conductors to act as dedicated train hostesses / hosts serving the needs of passengers. Such crew should have a staff position set aside within, not at the end of, trains for maximum visibility and accessibility for passengers, and the wide through carriage design of some recent trains should be emulated to further enhance passengers' peace of mind.

Specific facilities increasingly demanded as standard by passengers include seats which feel as if they're saying 'you're welcome' (ie they're just plain comfortable!) and which include a sense of personal space to their side and front, tables in bays or on seat backs of window seats, tech support such as socket choices and consistently reliable wifi, separate and sufficient storage space for luggage and cycles to end the humiliation of wheelchair users having their designated spaces colonised, level boarding at the very least by doors accessing the wheelchair area with accessible toilet, passenger information screens including connecting services available from each platform at next interchange station.

## **Interaction with colleagues**

### **5 Please share your views on:**

~ What types of attitudes and behaviours would you like to see our staff displaying to make your experience with EWR a positive one? This may relate to contact you have online, over the phone, at the station or on the train.

~ How and where would you like to have access to staff members on your journey and why? Again, this may relate to virtual support or face to face contact.

Please add your comment here

The national experience of the past 15 months has highlighted some exceptional examples of quality customer service. The unrelenting challenge will be, as passenger numbers and their expectations continue to grow, for the rail industry to universalise outstanding service as 'the new normal'.

## **Customer information**

### **6 Please share your views on:**

~ What sort of information do you find most critical when you are making a train journey?

~ What ways of communicating travel information do you think will be most effective as you arrive at the station or on the train?

~ Are there other types of travel information, not directly relating to the train journey, that you think it would be valuable for EWR to provide before or during your journey?

~ How could we provide better or different customer information, to help our customers be more relaxed and feel in control throughout their journey?

Please add your comment here

The principle of seamlessness is the critical thread, applicable to whole journeys not just the train journeys which passengers undertake. Punctuality of the chosen service, including its connecting services, is perhaps the most critical individual concern for most travellers. This comprehensive information must be available across all channels under the control of the rail industry ie from the train hostess / host through the in-train information displays to all personal electronic sources.

We note that the information displays on the Trans-Pennine Express Class 185-operated services set a good example of what can be achieved with connecting train, bus and taxi information shown as the train approaches a station.

As highlighted previously, stations should display local bus departures as part of their customer information systems. 'Continuing your journey' local street, cycle route and bus maps should also be provided at each station.

In collaboration with local authorities, town and village centres should have clear signage to the station including typical walking and cycling times.

In collaboration with visitor destinations, be they business or leisure, information on access to the nearest / most convenient station needs to become embedded as a matter of routine in their own promotional material.

## **East West Rail – 2021 public consultation**

## **Infrastructure development 7-41**

**Section A: Oxford to Bicester 7-9**

**Section B: Bletchley and the Marston Vale Line 10-32**

**Section C: Bedford 33-37**

**Section D: Clapham Green to The Eversdens 38-39**

**Section E: Harlton to Hauxton 40-41**

**Section A: Oxford to Bicester 7-9**

### **7 What do you think is important to consider when developing our proposals for the railway in the Oxford to Bicester area? In particular, we would like to know about:**

- a. Anything we should consider in relation to our proposals for Oxford station
- b. Your views on our proposals for Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations
- c. Anything we should consider about the level crossing at London Road in Bicester and the options we are considering

Please add your comment here

Welcoming the recent announcements for Oxford station, we look forward to local engagement as plans continue to develop. We anticipate that an additional through platform on the east side of the station will be required for the continuation of the core East West Rail 4 tph service towards Didcot (see also Q.41 e. iv), in association with a total redevelopment of the main station building there. It remains to be seen how much the new west side access will reduce pressure on the east side and on the bridge linking platforms 3 and 4.

Stations at Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village should have more ticket machines, larger waiting areas and additional sheltered waiting areas to spread passengers along the platforms and trains. If more car parking is required this should be provided by decking over the existing car parks although priority should be given to improving access by more sustainable transport modes rather than to encouraging car use.

While recognising that this is more a matter of EWR Co's influence than control, at Oxford Parkway station there is a need for better integration between rail and bus services. The principle should be that all bus services which purport to 'serve' the station should do so by using the same bus stops, not perpetuate a confusing mixture of some calling in front of the station, some at the Park and Ride and some out on the A4165 Oxford Road.

The level crossing at London Road in Bicester needs to be closed, for everyone's safety.

### **8 Please rank your preference for the proposed concepts for the level crossing at London Road in Bicester.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 6 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 6 the option you favour least.

- 1 - Concept 5: road bridge alongside London Road (offline)
- 2 - Concept 4: road underpass alongside London Road (offline)
- 3 - Concept 2: road underpass at London Road (online)
- 4 - Concept 3: road bridge at London Road (online)
- 5 - Concept 1: accessible bridge for non-motorised users
- 6 - Concept 6: alternative road crossing locations

## **East West Rail – 2021 public consultation**



**9 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed concepts above and provide any other comments. Do you have any alternative suggestions?**

Please add your comment here

Offline options are likely to be relatively less challenging and impactful than online options.

**Section B: Bletchley and the Marston Vale Line 10-32**

**10 What do you think is important to consider when developing our proposals for the Bletchley and the Marston Vale Line area? In particular, what do we need to take account of:**

- a. In relation to the existing stations on the Marston Vale Line and whether they should be kept open or consolidated through closure and relocation
- b. When we provide alternatives to existing level crossings
- c. In delivering the improvements to the Marston Vale Line
- d. In delivering works to Bletchley station
- e. In relation to the impact of reinstating a second track between Bletchley and Fenny Stratford

Please add your comment here

Railfuture supports the general logic and underlying principles for proposals to consolidate stations on the Marston Vale line. This section of the whole route exhibits the problem of using a legacy 'branch' line, with unattractive frequency and journey time and currently the 'weak link', in what is to become a strategic addition to the national network. The indicative timetable demonstrates an ability to offer existing and future communities the benefits of a more frequent service coupled with improved journey times which will achieve the strategic objective of positioning train travel as the mode of choice for many more people than now. The existing hourly service stopping at all existing stations, while practical for a captive service pattern, will serve to inhibit further growth opportunity as it devours line capacity.

All that said however, there nevertheless remains a very fine balance to be found between minimising impact on the existing customer base while maximising the potential for two new customer bases, one being incomers to the Marston Vale line catchment itself and the other being newcomers to the new extended services whether from further afield into and outwards further afield from the Marston Vale catchment or on through journeys across the full length of the line. Those two new customer bases must not be seen as exclusively passenger as there are not only existing businesses along the line but growing communities will generate need for other supporting facilities and services which rail should wish to attract. Specifically, options which include passing loops must mean 'dynamic' loops capable of accommodating 775m freight trains with the ability to enter / exit at line speed, to ensure service resilience in the event of 'out of course' running conflicting with passenger services.

One specific and strategic additional intervention, which we consider justified in the context of exploiting the potential of the spine of East West Rail to facilitate through journeys with other major destinations, is an east-north connection at Bletchley for direct connections with Milton Keynes both as a key destination in its own right and for its superior onward travel opportunities compared with the paucity of the offer available if interchanging at Bletchley, including consideration of the merits of continuation to Northampton as another significant centre and in order to minimise platform occupation times in Milton Keynes station itself. See also response to Q.32.

**11 Please rank your preference for the proposed options for the existing stations on the Marston Vale Line.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 2 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 2 the option you favour least.

Option 1: retain existing service (in a modified form) and introduce limited-stop Oxford to Cambridge services alongside it, calling at Woburn Sands and Ridgmont

Option 2: provide a more frequent, faster service with some new and relocated stations and improved community access

**12 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed options for the existing stations above and provide any other comments:**

~ In relation to option 1, please provide any comments on the search area for the relocation of Ridgmont station and the new passing loops

~ In relation to option 2, please provide any comments on the search areas for the relocated stations: Woburn Sands (relocated), Ridgmont (relocated), Lidlington (relocated), Stewartby (relocated).

[Please add your comment here](#)

We are unable to assist with a simple response to the binary choice at Q.11, in the growing belief that a hybrid option 3 is both desirable and possible. We note that the local user group BBRUA, one of our affiliated Rail User Groups, has set out thoughts on options and possibilities for Marston Vale line stations in some detail, including observations and linkages to sources of passenger demand. Such a hybrid option 3 could see consideration given to relocating Woburn Sands station, retaining Ridgmont station at its current location, by-passing the village of Lidlington, and a new Stewartby station with Kempston Hardwick closing. EWR trains would serve Woburn Sands and Stewartby, rather than Ridgmont.

**Please provide us with your view on the options for the level crossings on the Marston Vale Line: 13-28**

**13 Fenny Stratford: vehicular traffic – three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**14 Fenny Stratford: pedestrians and other non-vehicular road users – three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**15 Bow Brickhill (V10 Brickhill Street) - four options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**16 Browns Wood - three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**17 Pony - three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**18 Woburn Sands existing crossings - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**19 Aspley Guise and Husborne Crawley level crossings - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**20 Husborne Crawley Footpath No. 10 and Station Road in Ridgmont level crossings - three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**21 Lidlington level crossings - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**22 Millbrook (Station Lane) - three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **23 Green Lane - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **24 Wootton Broadmead (Broadmead Road) - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **25 Wootton Village - one option**

Please share your views on this option.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **26 Kempston Hardwick - three options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **27 Woburn Road - two options**

Please share your views on these options.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **28 Bedford Carriage Sidings – options to be developed at the next stage**

Please share your views on this.

[Please add your comment here](#)

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

### **29 Please rank your preference for the proposed options for the Marston Vale Line upgrade.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 3 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 3 the option you favour least.

- 1 - Option 3: a mix of short and long blockades
- 2 - Option 2: a prolonged blockade
- 3 - Option 1: series of short blockades

**30 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed Marston Vale Line upgrade options above as you have and provide any other comments.**

Please add your comment here

It has become standard good practice to minimise the number of blockades and concentrate them on school holiday periods when rail traffic volumes are naturally lower, reluctantly accepting the disruption to the likely increase in leisure travel demand. We accept that some short as well as extended blockades can be necessary for the most efficient project delivery in the shortest overall time.

**31 Please rank your preference for the proposed options for the Fenny Stratford additional track.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 2 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 2 the option you favour least.

Option 1: building new bridges next to the existing bridges to carry the new track

Option 2: replacing the existing bridges with wider bridges that would carry both tracks

**32 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed Fenny Stratford additional track options above as you have and provide any other comments.**

Please add your comment here

We advocate a third option which would incorporate the north to east chord advocated in response to Q.10.

### **Section C: Bedford 33-37**

**33 What do you think is important to consider when developing our proposals for the Bedford area? In particular, what do we need to take account of:**

- a. Regarding changes to Bedford St Johns station and the area around it
- b. Regarding changes to Bedford station and the area around it
- c. Regarding our preferred option for the area to the north of Bromham Road bridge (North Bedford).

Please add your comment here

Railfuture's primary concern is with the strategic long-term role of Bedford as a major hub as well as a significant destination in the wider rail network. In that context the station will be transformed from a point on one through, radial route and the terminus for two uni-directional routes, one local and one sub-regional, to a hub serving the through radial route plus a new through orbital inter-regional route as well as the sub-regional terminating route.

**34 Please rank your preference for the proposed options for Bedford St Johns station.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 2 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 2 the option you favour least.

Option 1: relocating Bedford St Johns station to the west

Option 2: relocating Bedford St Johns station to the south

**35 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed Bedford St Johns options above and provide any other comments.**

Please add your comment here

We have no particular view on this essentially local matter.

**36 What do you think is important to consider when developing our emerging preferred option for Bedford station?**

Please add your comment here

Although the timetable for the through radial route referred to above is not within the gift of EWR Co, physical provision for additional calling services at Bedford in a different timetable is. We therefore assert the case for provision to be made for regular inter-city services (and their specifiers) to recognise the new reality in a post-East West Rail world of the true significance and potential role of Bedford station as an interchange hub in the wider network. In practical terms this is most commonly expressed as the need for an 'up fast' platform.

It is Railfuture's long-settled view that restricting calls at Bedford in the through radial route to commuter services via Kettering to and from Corby offends public policy to maximise use of transport infrastructure investment generally and specifically to attract new markets to rail in the face of growing economic, environmental and social imperatives.

Thus we believe that a fundamental revisit to arrangements for Bedford station and to the north thereof is justified. Such a review might well enable a move from seemingly just 'bolting' East West Rail onto the east side of the station and the railway north thereof towards a solution which both avoids the need for the contentious 6-tracking north of Bedford and allows a much greater proportion of EMR services to call at Bedford without a significant time penalty, and should also avoid a need for those services to share the slow lines south of Bedford with Thameslink services. Such a solution should also enable continued separation of EMR and EWR services on a 4-track railway.

**37 What do you think is important to consider when developing our emerging preferred option for the area north of Bromham Road bridge (North Bedford)?**

Please add your comment here

We have no additional view on this matter.

#### **Section D: Clapham Green to The Eversdens 38-39**

**38 Please rank your preference for the proposed Clapham Green to The Eversdens alignment options.**

Please use a scale of 1 to 5 to indicate your preferences where 1 indicates your preferred option and 5 the option you favour least.

- 1 - Alignment 1 – dark blue: St Neots South Option A station and a Cambourne North station
- 2 - Alignment 2 – red: St Neots South Option A station and a Cambourne South station
- 3 - Alignment 6 – light blue: St Neots South Option B station and a Cambourne South station
- 4 - Alignment 9 – purple: Tempsford Option A station to Cambourne North station
- 5 - Alignment 8 – yellow: Tempsford Option B station to Cambourne South station

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**39 Please tell us why you have ranked the proposed alignment options above and provide any other comments.**

Please add your comment here

We prefer alignment 1 option A, for a station within the southern suburbs of St. Neots and a station in north Cambourne.

The St. Neots station will be within walking and cycling distance of large areas of existing new housing with even more planned, and the very large historic urban areas of St. Neots and Eynesbury just to the north. The area has good road links. In line with our general observation that all new developments around stations should be closely aligned with local authority walking and cycle active travel plans, this station must be closely 'sewn into' the surrounding existing urban fabric and we urge that EWR Co plays a positive role in this.

It should also be designed a 'travel hub'. We use the term to refer to a bus, tram or rail station with more than the basic facilities of a bus stop and with the dominant modes of access being walking and cycling. Their purpose is to enable easy access to public transport and interchange between public transport services. A pick-up/drop-off area is the minimum provision for cars; some parking is normally required, but the number of spaces would reduce as connectivity by other means improves.

Large park and ride facilities should not be provided as they are a wasteful land use and encourage car use. The aim of EWR Co in this radical transport project we believe must be to follow the model of bike+train, bike+train+bike. The two modes are natural bedfellows, naturally extending the range of each. See <https://www.smartertransport.uk/travel-hubs/>

St. Neots South will be a crucial interchange station with TSGN services, currently operated as GTR's Thameslink, and we foresee a wide range of journeys via this new hub in the network. The station design must therefore be carefully considered with interchanging between EWR and Thameslink at the forefront. Escalators should be considered to ease movement between what we assume to be the high level and low level parts of the station.

Cambourne is a planned recent settlement now approaching 25 years of development. It has developed to the south of its main link to the A428, which forms its northern border. We believe the station should be built at or near the main entrance to the town and a network of greenways connect it to all parts of the town. If the planned developments to the north of the A428 go ahead, the station will be interconnected with those and eventually be central to the entire town. We prefer that the station be developed as a travel hub, as alluded to above.

**Section E: Harlton to Hauxton 40-41**

**40 What do you think is important to consider when developing our proposals for the Harlton to Hauxton area. In particular, what do we need to take account of:**

- a. In relation to building a new railway junction which would join our new railway to the Shepreth Branch Royston existing railway
- b. In relation to our emerging preferred option to build a new junction which uses a bridge to connect the railways (a grade separated junction) and to extend the existing railway to connect to the new junction (using an offline construction)

Please add your comment here

a. Railfuture supports the construction of a junction at this location although is disappointed that it was not considered practical to establish a direct connection with the West Anglia Main Line (WAML) south of Shepreth Branch Junction. Currently the Royston line is used by 6 trains per hour in both directions and the addition of at least 4 trains from East West Rail will place additional stress on the capacity of the railway between Hauxton and Shepreth Branch junction unless there is a possibility of laying additional track (3-4 tracking) on this section. We are concerned that this will lock-in a capacity constraint which may compromise future service development on either the King's Cross or East West Rail routes.

b. Railfuture supports the use of grade separation at this location to minimise conflicting moves and thus support a more resilient railway. We further support the 'off-line' concept which would have less impact on services during construction.

Maps seen by some residents in the Haslingfield area appear to show the railway around 10m above ground level. This height does appear excessive and adds to the concern of local residents regarding the visual impact of the line. Railfuture asks that this alignment be reviewed to see if a lower embankment and alternative bridge design would be practical, to reduce the impact whilst still maintaining the required 5m over the road. A reduced height embankment could save costs and reduce the amount of material that needed to be moved.

**41 What do you think is important to consider when developing our proposals for the Great Shelford to Cambridge area? In particular, what do we need to take account of:**

- a. In relation to our options for the Hauxton Road level crossing
- b. In relation to our proposed modifications to the Shepreth Junction
- c. In relation to our emerging preferred option to increase the existing railway line between Shepreth Junction and Addenbrooke's bridge from two tracks to four tracks
- d. In relation to our emerging preferred option to increase the existing railway line between Long Road Sixth Form College and Cambridge station from two/three tracks to four tracks
- e. Anything we should consider at Cambridge station.

Please add your comment here

a. We believe that where possible all level crossings should be abolished where mitigation to all users can be provided. Hauxton Road level crossing vehicle traffic should be diverted to nearby over-bridges and pedestrian and cycle traffic provided with an overbridge.

b. Railfuture believes that Shepreth Branch Junction needs to be grade separated. It is very difficult to see how a two-track railway carrying 10 and more services per hour can merge with the WAML carrying at least four tph without conflicting movement on a flat junction, particularly as the line needs to accommodate freight trains of up to 775m in length. East West Rail trains should approach Cambridge station from the south on the eastern side and this 'west-to-east' movement would conflict with existing services if attempted on a flat junction. The gradients on the approach to the 'flyover' bridge need to be sufficiently generous to permit the convenient passage of freight.

c. and d. Four-tracking will be essential all the way into Cambridge, both north and south of Addenbrookes Bridge. This will again minimise conflicting movements between services and provide the necessary flexibility to permit future service development for both passenger and freight markets.

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e. The only realistic location for additional platforms at Cambridge is on the east side. While it might be assumed that half the East West Rail trains will terminate at Cambridge and the other half continue one each to Ipswich and Norwich, Railfuture advocates that if the Cambridge area does indeed remain as a terminating location then in order to offer Cambridge North the best-possible EWR service one of the two terminating trains should do so there, rather than at Cambridge 'central'.

The efficient approach to Cambridge station from both directions is crucial to the smooth operation of this already very busy station. We believe that:

- i. the entire distance from Shepreth Branch Junction to Coldham Lane Junction should be 4-tracked. Notwithstanding our comment in (c) above, the entire layout between these points should in our view be bi-directionally re-signalled with the appropriate intermediate junctions to create maximum flexibility, reliability and resilience.
- ii. Cambridge station has four through platforms, all soon capable of accommodating 12-car trains. Two additional platforms will be required to provide the required extra capacity, and we suggest that they be provided by extending island platforms 7 and 8 to 24-car length, separated by scissor junctions on either side. We note that there appears to be space for this extension, to make platform 7/8, 9/10 the same as platforms 1/4 opposite.
- iii. A new footbridge at the south end of the station to spread the flow around the station will be necessary as all the platforms will be very long. Any new south end footbridge should be extended to the east side of the station to land in Clifden Road to create a long called-for new eastern entrance to the station.
- iv. We welcome the planned 4 tph creating a core 'turn up and go' early to late service. We believe that the two services earmarked as Oxford-Cambridge should preferably both be extended eastwards to double the planned EWR service offer across East Anglia, ie 1 tph via Newmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Stowmarket, to Ipswich, and 1 tph via Cambridge North, Ely, Thetford, Wymondham, to Norwich. Beyond Oxford (see also Q.7) we note that the Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study currently only anticipates 1 tph extending beyond Didcot and believe that a second should be extended to Swindon, Chippenham, Bath and Bristol TM. These services should also operate early morning to late in the evening. The availability of onward connections at Didcot, due according to that Study to be served by all 4 tph to and from Cambridge, might suggest that Didcot-Cambridge is actually the true core of East West Rail, even if Oxford has the stronger 'brand recognition'!

We note that other new services are in planning for Wisbech-March-Cambridge and Ely-Soham-Newmarket-Cambridge. A Restoring Your Railway bid has been made to the DfT to restore the railway between Cambridge via Cambridge South and Shelford to Haverhill.

**And finally, please tell us a bit about yourself 42-54**

42 Title / 43 First name / 44 Last name / 45 Email address / 46 Phone number / 47 Street / 48 City / 49 County / 50 Postcode  
All in covering email

51 Organisation (if applicable) Railfuture

52 Please select the option that best represents the capacity in which you are responding to this consultation. I am a:

- ~ local resident
- ~ commuter to the area
- ~ visitor to the area
- ~ local business owner
- ~ future resident
- ~ elected representative
- ~ local authority
- ~ statutory body
- ~ directly impacted land / property owner
- ~ other See Introduction

53 Age range

19-34

35-50

51-65

Over 65

Railfuture members span the range.

54 Would you like to receive further information from East West Rail as the proposals develop? By selecting 'yes' you consent to us contacting you with occasional information and updates about East West Rail.

~ Yes