

# EAST WEST RAIL - DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER: NON-STATUTORY CONSULTATION UPDATE & DRAFT RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION

### To:

Councillor Katie Thornburrow

Executive Councillor for Planning, Building Control and Infrastructure

Planning & Transport Scrutiny Committee (14 January 2025)

# Report by:

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#### Wards affected:

Abbey

**Cherry Hinton** 

Coleridge

**East Chesterton** 

Petersfield

Queen Ediths

Romsey

Trumpington

### **Director approval:**

Director Stephen Kelly confirms that the report author has sought the advice of all appropriate colleagues and given due regard to that advice; that the equalities impacts, and other implications of the recommended decisions have been assessed and accurately presented in the report; and that they are content for the report to be put to the Executive Councillor for decision.

1.	Recommendations
1.1	The Executive Councillor is recommended to:
	<ol> <li>Note the commencement of the non-statutory consultation for the EWR project, which began on 14 November 2024 and will continue until 24 January 2025.</li> </ol>

	ii. Agree that the content of this report and the schedule of feedback/responses (Appendix B) will comprise the formal consultation response from the Council, and delegate authority to the Director of Planning and Economic Development to submit the report on behalf of Cambridge City Council subject to any changes made by the Executive Member and any minor amendments required in the interests of accuracy or clarity.
2.	Purpose and reason for the report
2.1	This report provides an update to members on the East West Rail (EWR) Development Consent Order (DCO) as well as setting out details and proposing the Council response in respect of the non-statutory consultation currently being undertaken by East West Rail Co., which commenced on 14 November 2024 and is due to end on 24 January 2025.
2.2	Recommendations outline key areas requiring further engagement and scheme development and seek to ensure the efficient and timely representation of the Council's current position in respect of the DCO procedures.
3.	Alternative options considered
3.1	The Council could decline to submit a response to the consultation. This option was rejected on the basis that the Council will, in due course, be required to provide a Local Impact Report into the formal process. On that basis, it is considered important that the Council takes the opportunity to present local issues important to the city and its residents into the current consultation to enable and support close engagement with the EWR team to shape/inform the final scheme design ahead of the formal consultation and submission stages.
4.	Background and key issues
	Background and proposal
4.1	The EWR project proposes to construct a new rail link between Oxford and Cambridge, which includes the construction of a new railway between Bedford and Cambridge and associated works to upgrade the existing railway between Oxford and Bedford.
4.2	The EWR project is being promoted and brought into use in three connected stages. The current non-statutory consultation relates to Connection Stage 3. This is the final stage of the EWR project and would enable passenger services to operate between Oxford and Cambridge via Bletchley and Bedford. To complete this work, as well as other upgrades between Oxford and Bedford, EWR Co. will need to apply for a DCO, which would grant consent to build the new railway between Bedford and Cambridge.
4.3	The EWR project is designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP)

due to its scale and importance. This designation is defined under Part 3 of the Planning Act 2008. Specifically, the project meets the criteria for an NSIP because it involves constructing a new railway line that: is wholly within England; forms part of a network operated by an approved operator; has a continuous route of more than two kilometres; and is not on operational land of a railway undertaker before construction begins. 4.4 Responsibility for accepting and determining the NSIP application lies with the Secretary of State, not the local planning authorities. Local authorities, including those designated as statutory consultees or 'host' authorities, participate in the process as consultees. 4.5 There are several 'host' authorities involved in this NSIP project, including Cambridge City Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and Huntingdonshire District Council. The Cambridgeshire based host authorities intend to collaborate closely throughout the DCO process to ensure thorough scrutiny of the project. DCO timeline – pre-application stage 4.6 This application is currently in the 'pre-application stage' of the DCO process, which involves early engagement and consultation with stakeholders to address concerns, conduct necessary assessments, and prepare application documents for the acceptance stage. The content of the current non-statutory consultation includes preliminary design concepts and options, an Environmental Update Report, and a Transport Update Report among other consultation materials. A statutory consultation will be carried out by EWR Co. towards the end of 2025 where more detailed information will be provided, including preferred proposals and preliminary designs, Preliminary Environmental Information Report, and a Draft Transport Assessment. 4.7 Previous engagement within the early pre-application stages is noted below: First consultation phase – 2019 EWR Co. consulted on five proposed route options for the new railway between Bedford and Cambridge. Feedback from communities and stakeholders resulted in the confirmation of a preferred option - 'Route Option E'. This route option linked existing stations in Bedford and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy, south of St. Neots, received the most support from respondents. Cambridge City Council responded to EWR Co. in March 2019 EWR Consultation - Cambridge City Council response - DRAFT.pdf Second non-statutory consultation – 2021 Nine alignment options were consulted on for the proposed new railway between Bedford and Cambridge and on other aspects of the wider project between Oxford and Cambridge. The alignments presented were within the area identified for Preferred Route Option E (the route announced by the Secretary of State in 2020), as well as possible route alignments partially outside that area, recognising the potential to serve a station north of Cambourne and/or to follow the route of National Highways' A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet improvement scheme.

Cambridge City Council responded to EWR Co. in June 2021 FINALCambridgeEWRResponseLetter.pdf.pdf

#### • Preferred route option – 2023

Preferred proposals for the project were announced in May 2023, which confirmed the preferred alignment for the new railway between Bedford and Cambridge. EWR Co. concluded that the best option would be to follow the route known as 'Alignment 1' for most of the route, but with an emerging preference for a local variation to provide a new station at Tempsford. EWR Co. also confirmed their preferences for other elements of the project and explained where further work was necessary before the preferred options could be confirmed.

• Third non-statutory consultation – 2024/25

The non-statutory consultation currently underway, commenced on 14 November 2024, and is running for a six-week period, closing on the 24 January 2025.

# **Current stage: non-statutory consultation**

### 4.8 Consultation material

The applicant has published the consultation material on their webpage. The information provided includes the following:

- Consultation Document
- Environmental Update Report
- Technical Report
- Transport Update Report
- Guide to Consultation
- Consultation Feedback Form
- Consultation Boards
- Fact sheet Cost
- Fact sheet DCO Process
- Fact sheet Assessment Factors
- Fact sheet Embankments and Viaducts
- Fact sheet Freight
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Powering EWR Trains
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Land and Landowners
- Fact sheet Door to Door Connectivity (D2DC)
- Fact sheet EqIA
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Accessibility and Inclusion

- Fact sheet Our Approach to Construction Management
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Habitat Regulations Assessment
- Fact sheet Approach to the Environment
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Nature
- Fact sheet Our Approach to Noise and Vibration Management
- Factsheet Our Approach to Historic Environment
- Guide to Serving a Blight Notice and Selling your Blighted Property
- Need to Sell Property Scheme Guide and Application Form
- Fact sheet The DCO Process and what it means for Landowners
- Guidance for Local Planning Authorities and Developers on the Safeguarding Direction
- Blight Notice Information Questionnaire
- Fact Sheet The Blight Notice Process
- Fact Sheet How you Sell your Property
- Factsheet How you can apply to the NTS Property Scheme
- Factsheet How we make an offer to buy

Officers have sought to review the available material. Comments have been collated to form the Council's formal response - see Appendix B.

# 4.9 Proposals – Route Section 8: Cambridge

At the 2023 route update announcement, East West Railway Company (EWR Co) set out its preference to serve Cambridge via a southern approach and integrate the new Cambridge South station, which is being developed by Network Rail, into the proposals. As stated within Technical Report (November 2024, Version 1, by EWR Co.) the Cambridge route section would be approximately 8km (5 miles) long. The section would extend from Addenbrooke's Road bridge over the existing West Anglia Main Line (WAML), north of Great Shelford, to the A14 bridge north of Cambridge North station, and to Yarrow Road in Cherry Hinton to the East of Cambridge, on the Newmarket line. Since the route update announcement more design development has taken place to refine the design for this section of the route. The proposals include:

- Additional two tracks approaching Cambridge: Construction of two new tracks
  adjacent to the existing two-track WAML continuing from the previous route section,
  from Addenbroke's Road bridge joining the existing four tracks at the new Cambridge
  South station, aligning with the station proposals being built by Network Rail, before
  continuing into Cambridge station. Existing rail systems would need to be modified
  throughout this section of the route into Cambridge station. This would include
  signalling, track, power and telecommunications works.
- Long Road bridge: Reconstruction of Long Road overbridge to accommodate the two new additional tracks required on the WAML. This would require reconstruction

of the existing bridge, and a diversion route would need to be in place for users of Long Road during the construction period.

- Cambridge station: Station enhancements at Cambridge station including a new platform, extension of two existing platforms, new footbridges, extension of an existing footbridge, station upgrades, new facilities for staff to the east of the station and railway systems modifications.
- Cambridge North station and sidings: Works at Cambridge North station to enable some trains to terminate at the station during construction works at Cambridge station, as well as re-providing siding facilities lost at Cambridge station.

### East of Cambridge

- Laundry Lane level crossing: Safety improvements to the existing level crossing at Laundry Lane in Cambridge and an additional track on the Newmarket line.
- Footbridges: Reconstruction of two footbridges at Coldham's Common and The Tins footpath.
- Turnback at Cherry Hinton: Construction of turnback infrastructure near Cherry Hinton east of Cambridge station to allow empty trains to turn back from Cambridge station.
- Infrastructure: Several new balancing ponds.

Other route-wide matters directly relating to Cambridge include:

- Proposal for powering the trains: EWR Co's preference is discontinuous overhead electrification.
- Rolling stock requirements: Performance, train length, accessibility etc.
- **Approach to freight:** Proposals allow for capability of maintaining the current capacity for rail freight and make appropriate provision for anticipated future growth.
- **Train stabling sidings:** Potential location at Cambridge station and at the Cherry Hinton turnback.
- Accessibility impacts: Impacts on Public Rights of Way (PRoW), highways and other access roads

# 4.10 | Headline issues

The Council is commenting on headline issues of concern at this stage – there is still a considerable amount of technical information that will be required to allow the Council to

produce the 'Local Impact Report' required by the Inspectorate from the Council in due course. However, the technical details provided within the consultation material so far, will limit the ability of officers across the Council to provide detailed and definitive feedback at this stage. Additionally, it is also noted that there has been only limited engagement, including information sharing, by the EWR Co. ahead of the commencement of the non-statutory consultation.

- 4.11 Officer reviews of the consultation material to date have nevertheless highlighted the following key issues/comments, in alphabetical order, that officers expect to address through further dialogue with the EWR Co:
  - Air quality impacts: Clarification sought in relation to freight trains and/or potential for other diesel engines operating on both new and existing stretches of the line.
  - Artificial lighting: Any new/additional artificial lighting has the potential to have an adverse impact. The impacts of light pollution arising from additional lighting at new or altered platforms, sidings and road/crossings/junctions should be fully assessed.
  - Biodiversity impacts: Concerns raised regarding potential impacts to Coldman's Common County Wildlife Site due to the Cherry Hinton turnback location and Long Road County Wildlife Site due to the replacement bridge proposal at Long Road (see related sections below).

EWR Co. are encouraged to increase the minimum biodiversity net gain target to 20% to match many of all recent infrastructure projects within the city.

# Cambridge station:

Eastern entrance: Whilst acknowledging a proposed eastern access is not currently in the scope of the proposals, the Council would support the further exploration of a new eastern entrance at Cambridge Station to improve access and accommodate increase in passenger movement.

Station design: More detail is required to show the proposals for the station and how it will accommodate additional passengers. This should include any planned extensions to buildings on both sides of the railway, existing and planned entrances and access routes, proposed footbridges and lighting, cycle storage. Temporary works during construction must be planned and designed so as not to cause damage to the existing hard and soft landscape in and around Station Square.

Heritage: The central station building is a listed building and located in a sensitive

location – the proposed extension and added building should consider the impact upon the existing network and the immediate and wider contexts. The proposals will need to be assessed against the benefit of this additional entrance in releasing pressure from the main station and the existing network, and the potential adverse impact upon the character of the area. Any changes to the Grade II listed station building will require a full understanding of the station's architectural importance and history, with sympathetic designs being developed that reflect and respect this importance. The Council will need sight of this assessment and sympathetic designs at an early opportunity.

*Wider connectivity:* The Councils suggest that additional connectivity should be provided further to the south, in the vicinity of Clifton Road, to provide better connectivity to the business and leisure uses within this area, avoiding a circuitous route via Hills Road bridge. Two options for this stage of the route are proposed and there are issues with both.

Cambridge East station: The proposal for a train turnback to the East of the City creates a potential opportunity for a new station in the vicinity of the Cambridge Airport proposed site allocation (Cambridge East) which could have a transformative impact on connectivity to and from this area of the city. However, any turn back at Cherry Hinton should also be future proofed so as not to preclude enhancement of the rail line east of Cambridge, which could further enable sustainable travel to and from the city. Continued engagement between EWR Co., landowners and the relevant councils is required, to ensure future development plans are considered.

# Connectivity and accessibility:

Active and sustainable travel: like walking, cycling, and using public transport can boost physical and mental health, reduce chronic disease risk, and lowers air pollution. Planning cycle and footpaths, and creating green corridors, should be prioritised for a healthier lifestyle and cleaner environment.

*Train Capacity:* Consideration to be given to the capacity to carry bicycles onboard the trains – many people undertake onward commuting journeys – Cambridge has very high proportion of cyclists, as does Oxford – it is therefore reasonable to expect people to bring their bikes with them. Further detail regarding cycle storage capacity provided at Cambridge station is required.

Accessibility: Disability is mentioned in the accessibility fact sheet, but it is not clear how or who is involved in the consultation and what accommodations are being made for those who do not have digital access or cannot get to the public consultations. It is not clear in the publicity whether the buildings being used for

meetings are accessible.

Young people and transport hubs: Station development should ensure interconnected travel and 'door-to-door' connectivity with regards to the needs of young commuters from outside Cambridge in particular. Cambridge has a high proportion of young people who commute to college and school from outside of the city boundary. Care should be taken to think of their needs for their daily commute and onwards travel/ travel connections, especially as young people are more likely to need to catch a bus or cycle to get to their destination during school hours.

# • Cherry Hinton turnback location:

Biodiversity impacts: The proposed railway embankment is included within the Coldham's Common County Wildlife Site boundary and contains woodland and scrub. There is no indication of what working corridor will be required to facilitate the re-instatement of the second line and electrification of the line through the County Wildlife Site, nor if there will be a permanent loss of vegetation along the embankment, or what measures will be taken to regenerate habitats once works are complete.

Residential impacts: Concern raised regarding potential environmental health impacts to nearby residents (noise, air quality, operational disturbances [e.g., lighting etc]), given the proximity to existing residential properties.

- Coldham's Lane Compound: The Coldham's Lane proposed construction compound is on or near an active landfill site which we understand is licensed by the Environment Agency (EA) there may be land stability and unintended groundwater contamination issues.
- Construction impacts: Concern raised regarding construction impacts of the scheme in relation to air quality, noise, and vibration as well as disruption to traffic and travel within the city.
- Consultation material and outreach: Further consideration needed in relation to the consultation outreach:
  - People with English as a second language are not listed as a group around accessibility – a higher proportion in Cambridge due to City's population churn and tourists.
  - Approach required setting out how consultation will engage with Gypsy,
     Roma and Traveller communities at Fen Road some communities may

not be comfortable with the venues and locations suggested for public consultation.

- Women's specific safety and accessibility needs was overlooked in the fact sheets, missing a chance to improve their travel experience. Future consultations should actively engage women and focus on human-centric design - women are one of the largest groups of public transport users, who face well-known barriers such as station lighting, safe night-time use of public transport, and public toilet provision.
- **Environmental baseline:** Further information and data required to fully assess environmental and wider landscape impacts of the scheme.
- Fen Road level crossing: Clarification needed on whether the proposed replacement for two train sidings from Cambridge Station will be re-provided at Chesterton Sidings at Cambridge North Station, and whether this will increase the barrier downtime at Fen Road level crossing (note: the use of the level crossing is already a point of concern, having a negative impact on the communities living and working in the area, as Fen Road is the only means of access). Further consideration of a new northern access to Fen Road and the closure of Fen Road is needed.
- **Freight:** Concerns raised regarding the approach to freight, which has the potential to affect the health, well-being and quality of life of the population due to traffic, noise, vibration, air quality and emissions, light pollution, community severance, dust, odour, polluting water and/or hazardous waste.
- Land take: Concerns raised regarding potential land take within the city limits, both during construction and operational phases.
- Noise and vibration: Further assessment required on the potential noise and vibration impact of these new / additional sources of noise – both temporary (construction) and long term (operational), including hours of use.
- North East Cambridge: The EWR proposals north of the Fen Road level crossing
  are within close proximity to the major development area at North East Cambridge
  (NEC). The impacts of the EWR proposals on the proposed NEC development
  needs to be fully assessed and mitigated.
- Replacement bridge at Long Road: The proposed works will pass adjacent to the Triangle North of Long Road County Wildlife Site, designated for a rare vascular plant Torilis arvensis. Assessment of potential impact to the County Wildlife Site and its key features will need to be included within and analysis, and suitable mitigation provided.

- Pedestrian bridges at Coldham's Common and The Tins: Comprehensive development is planned through the emerging Joint Local Plan at Cambridge East; with initial phases at Marleigh and Springstead village already under construction. Marshalls' relocation of the airport operations enables comprehensive redevelopment of the airport site. Opportunities to improve active travel connectivity in the area of Cambridge East is expected, noting that the rail line forms a significant barrier to travel between this area and the city centre (e.g., upgrading the pedestrian bridges at Coldham's Common and The Tins to accommodate cycles).
- Visual impacts and residential amenity: Concerns raised regarding the impact
  of level changes to the railway line and how this would impact the residential
  amenity of adjacent properties.
- As identified in previous consultation responses, significant further work is still needed to understand the localised impacts of the scheme, the options for mitigation, their effectiveness and implementation including the sequencing with wider strategic infrastructure and development. The Council has not been able to assess issues in any detail, given the high-level nature of the consultation material, and as such is unable to support any of the options unequivocally at this stage. Thorough and detailed evidence will be expected to demonstrate how issues have been explored and addressed, and why the chosen route is the appropriate one.
- 4.13 EWR and the development of the corridor more generally will bring significant change to existing communities. The Council will urge EWR Co. to engage effectively with local communities to thoroughly test the options, to understand and explore their detailed concerns, to fully consider the issues being raised and provide further information to ensure a transparent process, as it progresses the project. The Council will also refer EWR Co. to the <a href="GCSP Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)">GCSP Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</a> (adopted March 2024).
- 4.14 The Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service led by the NSIP & Major Infrastructure Team is seeking to confirm a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with EWR Co. that will enable an intensification of engagement required not just with the district councils but associated with interests managed by other partners (notably highways and transport planning by the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire County Council) in the months ahead of the proposed formal consultation next year. The service will keep members informed of the how this application progresses, and further updates will be given in due course.

# 5. Corporate plan

5.1 The EWR proposal for a new rail connection between Oxford and Cambridge aligns with the following key priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-27: • Leading Cambridge's response to the climate and biodiversity emergencies and creating a net zero council by 2030: Enabling more people to travel to Cambridge by rail from the west, thereby reducing carbon emissions, congestion and pollution with the potential to enhance access within the city and for the identified potential new site allocation at Cambridge East. Tackling poverty and inequality and helping people in the greatest need: Tackling poverty and inequality by creating jobs and learning opportunities (during construction and operation), improving access to essential services, and stimulating local economies. It could also reduce travel costs and provide environmental benefits that improve public health. Enhanced connectivity can bridge gaps in accessibility and opportunity, which fosters a more equitable society. • Building a new generation of council and affordable homes and reducing homelessness: Supporting the development of affordable and council homes by encouraging transit-oriented development, attracting investment, and utilising land for housing delivery. Improved connectivity between major strategic growth points (CBC, NEC, CB1 and Cambridge East) can also boost local economies, creating jobs and reducing homelessness through stable employment opportunities. An integrated approach to planning ensures existing and new communities are sustainable. • Modernising the council to lead a greener city that is fair for all: Promoting a greener, fairer city by encouraging sustainable transport, supporting eco-friendly development around stations, enhancing accessibility for all residents, and involving communities in planning. This helps reduce carbon emissions, fosters social equity, and ensures the benefits of green initiatives are widely shared. 6. Consultation, engagement and communication 6.1 Cambridge City Council is an interested party in this DCO process. EWR Co. as the applicant has a responsibility to undertake various consultations as part of the preapplication process. 7. Anticipated outcomes, benefits or impact 7.1 Effective participation in the development phase of the East West Rail project provides an opportunity for the Council to maximise its ability to reflect local interests in the final

	scheme design of this Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project.
8.	Implications
	Relevant risks
8.1	If the Council does not provide formal comments within the prescribed timescales the views of the Council may not be considered at key stages of the pre-application process. The Council encourages EWR Co to establish programme of regular engagement to reach resolution or further discussion through the next stages of the DCO process.
	Financial implications
8.2	The consideration of and support to the Council in responding to this non-statutory consultation forms part of the existing funding and responsibilities of the Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSP). In line with best practice and reflecting the complex technical nature of proposals such as this and the level of specialist engagement required, the GCSP is expected to enter into a PPA with East West Rail Company, to fund resources to support the Councils consideration and response to projects. In addition, the Council will secure expert legal advice to ensure effective representation during the subsequent DCO stages (e.g., the examination process). The cost of and need for such advice has been considered in the service's budget insofar as it is possible to do so at this stage. This report raises no additional implications at this stage for the cost of delivery of that response.
	Legal implications
8.3	Part 6 of the Planning Act 2008 sets out the legal requirements for deciding applications for orders granting development consent. As the DCO progresses there may be a requirement for legal representation at the Examination.
	Equalities and socio-economic implications
8.4	An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has not been undertaken in respect of this report, as it does not relate to a decision for or against any infrastructure proposal – upon which the Council expects equalities and poverty implications to have been assessed by the promoter. Any DCO application itself will include a comprehensive assessment of the schemes impacts and officers will, in forming a response, have regard to the impact of the project on the Councils equalities objectives. The report is accordingly not considered to give rise to any equality or poverty impacts.
	Net Zero carbon, climate change and environmental implications
8.5	The Council's response to the EWR non-statutory consultation has considered impacts arising from the proposed development including carbon, climate change and environmental considerations such as biodiversity, heritage, noise and air quality impacts.

	Procurement implications
8.6	None.
	Community safety implications
8.7	None.
9.	Background documents Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
9.1	EWR consultation material – as listed in section 4.8 of this report – available to view here:  East West Rail   Consultation 2024
9.2	<ul> <li>Planning &amp; Transport Scrutiny Committee</li> <li>Tuesday 19 March 2029 – Item 16         Issue details - East West Rail Bedford to Cambridge routes consultation Cambridge Council         Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee - attendance, agenda, reports and minutes     </li> <li>Tuesday 29 June 2021         Issue details - ***ROD East West Rail Informal Consultation Stage - Consultation Response - Cambridge Council         Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee - attendance, agenda, reports and minutes     </li> </ul>
<b>10.</b>	Appendices  Appendix A: Route Section Plans
10.1	<ul> <li>Route Section 6 - Croxton to Toft</li> <li>Route Section 7 - Comberton to Shelford</li> <li>Route Section 8 - Cambridge.</li> </ul> Appendix B: Table of technical comments (CCC)
	To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:  Rachel Lambert - Principal Planner, Strategic Sites (EWR DCO Lead) rachel.lambert@greatercambridgeplanning.org 01954 713153 or 07519 276 042