

11 November 2020

Anthony Browne MP
Member of Parliament for South Cambridgeshire
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Anthony

Bedford to Cambridge East West Rail route alignment options

Thank you very much for your response and your additional questions about the project.

I am pleased that our previous letter was welcomed by you and your constituents - we too are pleased to present our position on blight in due course. I am also grateful for our engagement with you and the engagement with local representatives of South Cambridgeshire you have facilitated to date.

Please find below answers to your questions as requested:

- 1. Can you confirm that EWR will include the station north of Cambourne as one of the options that will go out for public consultation next year?**

The exact location of new stations has not yet been decided, and we are working with local authorities and other stakeholders to make sure the locations work for local communities. As previously advised, we are exploring the option for a station in the north of Cambourne as we continue to develop route alignment options, prior to consulting the public early next year.

- 2. Has the option of bringing EWR into the city via Cambridge North been fully considered and if so, what are the opportunities and constraints of this alignment? If EWR has ruled this option out, can you provide details of how and why this decision has been reached?**

Approaching Cambridge from the north was considered as part of the initial work led by Network Rail to identify a broad route corridor, and then again in further detail in 2019, both before and after the non-statutory consultation. All our analyses indicated that the best option was for EWR services to approach Cambridge from the south.

The reasons for preferring an approach from the south include:

- Providing the opportunity to support growth and development around the proposed Cambridge South station;
- Enabling EWR services to be extended to Ipswich and east coast ports in the future without requiring a reversing move at Cambridge station, which would incur a considerable journey time penalty;
- Upfront capital costs of an approach from the south are estimated to be around £0.6 billion lower than if EWR were to approach Cambridge from the north (at 2019 prices), and
- There are a considerable number of significant environmental features in the area that a route into Cambridge from the north would pass through. Approaching Cambridge from the north could therefore require a higher level of effort, complexity and expense to mitigate potential environmental impacts than route options that approach Cambridge from the south.

However, as we keep on developing the railway, we will back-check our decisions at appropriate points to test that Route option E continues to be the right one for the communities who live and work between Bedford and Cambridge.

You can read about this in more detail in 'Chapter 16, Approach into Cambridge' (pages 106–113) of our Preferred Route Option Report – [here](#).

3. What is the anticipated frequency and volume of freight trains that will use EWR? Will the issue of freight movements be addressed as part of the public consultation exercise next year?

We are considering provision for freight, ensuring the route will support existing freight, and we are currently undertaking a study to understand potential freight use.

Freight will be covered in the upcoming non-statutory consultation, but specific details around frequency and volume of freight trains will depend upon work yet to be undertaken. We will however consult the public on it in the statutory consultation.

4. Can you confirm that diesel trains will not be used on the Bedford to Cambridge section of EWR and that electric or other non-polluting technologies will be used from the outset?

We have not yet made final decisions about the type of trains that we will be using and are exploring a wide range of technologies in both infrastructure, rolling stock and fuel systems, so we can create high quality, sustainable transport for the local communities that EWR will serve. We aim to become a net-zero carbon railway, and to make sure biodiversity is left in a better state than we found it.

At present, a decision on whether the new railway will be electrified has not been made by government. However, the potential for electrification on East West Rail remains under active consideration.

I hope you find the above useful and please contact me if you have any additional questions in the meantime.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Blanchflower', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Simon Blanchflower CBE
Chief Executive Officer

