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for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
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EAST WEST RAIL: BEDFORD TO CAMBRIDGE

Thank you for your letter of 19 January 2020 regarding the location of a potential East West Rail station in South Cambridgeshire. I appreciate your engagement in recent discussions on the matter. As you are aware, improving east-west connectivity is a key area that I am committed to making progress on.

The Oxford-Cambridge Arc is home to over 3 million people and some of the most productive, successful and fast-growing cities in the UK, and is recognised internationally as the home of world-class education, research, innovation and technology.

As highlighted in the report published by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) in 2017, East West Rail (EWR) is a key part of the “connectivity pillar” within the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, and would play a critical role in achieving the economic ambition for the Arc, creating closer communities and improving links across the area and beyond. Furthermore, it will support the delivery of new homes and employment opportunities.

As part of our ambitions to develop the case for this infrastructure and east-west connectivity, the Government is pleased to announce today the preferred route for the Bedford to Cambridge section of East West Rail, which last year was designated a Nationally Significant Infrastructure project.

As a colleague representing South Cambridgeshire – one of the constituencies which would be served by the new railway – I am writing to ensure that you have the latest information available about how the railway is developing.

The preferred route would deliver a new station for your constituents in Cambourne, linking them directly to the existing station at Bedford, a new station in the area north of Sandy, south of St Neots, and the existing station in Cambridge. East West Rail Company, who are developing the case for the project, recommended this route having undertaken a non-statutory consultation and technical analysis on five route options in 2019. East West Railway Company will publish full details of the preferred route option today.

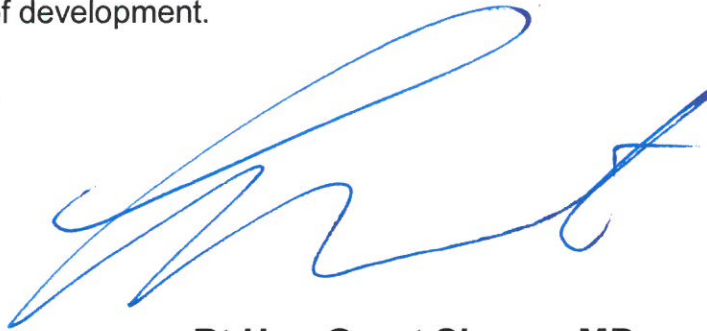
The preferred route (route E from the consultation) has been estimated to have the highest transport user benefits, appears to have fewer environmental challenges, and provides excellent opportunities to support new housing, jobs and economic growth. It was also the route most favoured by respondents to East West Railway Company’s 2019 consultation.

I recognise that you have expressed some concerns on where the exact station location will be in the Cambourne area. However, I would like to give you full reassurance that during the next phase of work, EWR Co will be undertaking further development work to include environmental and engineering studies to identify route alignments on which the railway could run. This will include work on station sites – a subject I am aware interests you, and I look forward to continuing our discussions. This will lead to the Government making a final decision on whether to take this project forward, and to make an application for a Developed Consent Order (DCO).

There will of course be further discussions with local communities, and I am highly supportive of full engagement with you and your community during the process.

I look forward to hearing from you and your constituents as the project moves forward to the next stage of development.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', is written over a light blue circular watermark. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT