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Dear Anthony,

Thank you for your email of 1 March, following our meeting regarding East West Rail.

I am providing a response which covers all of the questions raised. The questions which were addressed to East West Rail Company (EWR Co) have responses from them directly, which I hope addresses your concerns and those of your constituents.

As you know, the non-statutory consultation will be launched very soon. EWR Co is always open to hear residents' views and suggestions on the project, and values their input and is grateful for their involvement. This will be the next formal opportunity for people to influence the design of the railway, and EWR Co looks forward to residents' views and suggestions on their alignment options.

Questions for The Minister of Rail	Response
1. Do you agree that a Northern Approach to Cambridge better aligns with existing and planned major settlements in the Cambridge area, such as Northstowe, Bourn and Cambourne?	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 2019 non-statutory consultation. All EWR Co's analyses indicated that the best option was for EWR services to approach Cambridge from the south. The public was also given the opportunity to comment on the northern approach into Cambridge during the last non-statutory consultation. You can read about this in more detail in 'Chapter 16, Approach into Cambridge' (pages 106–113) of the Preferred Route Option Report – here - and in 'Chapter 7, Reviewing the approach into Cambridge' (pages 24 - 26) of the Technical Report - here . However, as EWR Co keeps on developing the railway, its design team will continue to back-check its decisions at appropriate points and ensure that any new information is taken into account to confirm that Route E continues to be the right one for the communities who live and work between Bedford and Cambridge. EWR Co will continue to review these key decisions all the way until it submits its proposals to the Secretary of State as part of its Development Consent Order application to build the railway.

<p>2. Do you agree that serving the maximum number of local communities along the length of the route, will increase system usage, increase benefits and increase the probability of viability of the East-West Rail project?</p>	<p>EWR aims to support the objectives of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc which includes the creation of jobs, driving investment, protecting and enhancing the environment, along with providing the infrastructure and design quality needed to make the area an even greater place to live and work. We will look to put communities at the centre of our work by undertaking necessary public consultations throughout, including the EWR consultation due to begin in spring 2021.</p>
<p>3. Do you agree that a properly integrated transport system for greater Cambridge would reduce net capital expenditure, increase ongoing operating revenue, provide an improved public service and attract more people away from their cars?</p>	<p>Properly integrating EWR with both existing and future transport networks in the area is something the EWR Co team is passionate about. EWR Co is keen to explore the efficiencies which could be realised from more than one infrastructure project being built in the same area: both, whether this would help long-term to create a better transport network, and if in the shorter term, coordinating construction work would be better for local communities.</p> <p>EWR Co is working closely with the teams at Highways England, Network Rail and the relevant local authorities to ensure that the planning and delivery of EWR and these other transformative projects is coordinated for the benefit of the local communities they will serve.</p> <p>A specific example of this is, on the A428, EWR Co is working with its team to see whether there is a practical way to better align and integrate both projects. EWR Co will keep talking to its counterparts working on the A428 scheme and other projects across the area to create not just the best rail system, but the best transport system they can.</p>
<p>4. Do you agree that East-West Rail should form part of an integrated transport strategy for the greater Cambridge area?</p>	<p>See above.</p>
<p>5. Do you agree that the “call for sites” published by Greater Cambridge shared planning after 31 Jan 2020 constitutes ‘New information’ since the previous consultation?</p>	<p>The 'call for sites' forms part of a wider plan-making process for the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire districts. As part of this, the local planning authorities have published various reports and documents after the preferred route option was announced in January 2020 and, to this extent, these may contain new information.</p> <p>However, it should be noted that the local plan process is still at a very early stage. The local planning authorities are currently considering 24 strategic spatial options to understand their respective opportunities and challenges across the ‘big themes’ that have been identified for the new local plan, including climate change, homes and infrastructure. Whilst some initial assessment of the strategic options has been completed, other work is ongoing. As such, the latest report from the local planning authorities (published in November 2020) indicates that the findings should be considered interim and, for a number of the topics covered, it is not possible at this stage to draw firm conclusions because this would be dependent on the actual sites chosen for each broad location and the spatial options do not identify actual sites for development.</p> <p>Consequently, whilst there may be new information available, it does not indicate that it is necessary or appropriate to re-open any earlier decisions taken during the design development process to date, at this time.</p>
<p>6. If EWR includes a station north of Cambourne</p>	<p>Station location options north of Cambourne would not constitute new information.</p>

<p>in its route alignment options, do you agree that this would constitute 'New information' since the previous consultation?</p>	<p>However, there would be a change of circumstances since the preferred route option was announced in January 2020. At that time, it was assumed that a new station in the Cambourne area would be located to the south of the settlement.</p> <p>In these circumstances, consideration may need to be given as to whether this indicates that it is necessary to re-open an earlier decision as part of the back-checking approach that EWR Co is using as part of the sequential process for optioneering and developing the design of the new railway line between Bedford and Cambridge.</p> <p>This does not mean that it would be necessary in all cases for earlier decisions to be re-opened or, if they are, that the end result would be different.</p> <p>To the extent that information on a back-check of this nature is relevant, it would generally be provided as part of the documents supporting the forthcoming non-statutory consultation.</p>
<p>7. Is the existing and future development at Northstowe included in the economic case for East-West Rail?</p>	<p>Whilst there would be potential users within the catchment of a new station near Oakington, it is not required in order for development to come forward at Northstowe as the initial phases have already been granted planning permission and the remainder are subject to recent, extant applications.</p> <p>Responses to the 2019 consultation did not identify any additional housing sites that could be supported in this area (assuming an additional station stop at Oakington) and Cambridgeshire County Council has also confirmed that public transport infrastructure provision is already in place or planned to address the needs of housing and economic growth north and northwest of Cambridge.</p> <p>Additionally, the September 2020 map of potential development sites published by the local planning authorities, indicates that there is little or no scope for further development to come forward in the Northstowe area</p>
<p>8. Are you aware of the probable loss of food supply from the Fens due to climate change and do you agree that maintaining alternative cropping space in production is of increasing national importance?</p>	<p>EWR Co will continue to assess the potential environmental effects as part of the route alignment development work. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be undertaken, and an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted when EWR Co submits its Development Consent Order application (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate.</p>
<p>9. Do you consider that a Northern Approach should be consulted on in parity with a Southern Approach given the new information we have presented? Please provide a rationale if you do not agree.</p>	<p>Decisions on route options were consulted on in 2019. The consultation met the standards required of an open and fair consultation and a route option decision was made and published in January 2020. Whilst I expect the EWR Co to back-check its decisions in light of new, relevant information to ensure that those decisions remain sound, I remain of the view that there is no material reason to re-consult on a route option which has since been dismissed as part of the development process, as part of the forthcoming non-statutory consultation. EWR Co has published its full reasons for the route option chosen here.</p>
<p>Questions for East West Rail Company</p>	<p>Draft Response</p>
<p>10. Clear evidence that local transport integration arising from a Southern Approach would lead to lower carbon dioxide emissions from road vehicles than similar</p>	<p>We are absolutely passionate about our commitment to lowering carbon dioxide emissions and we're in the process of setting a framework that will allow us to measure our progress towards a net carbon zero railway. As part of this process we're also intending to develop a carbon baseline and identify carbon targets.</p> <p>At this stage in the programme we do not yet have the level of detail that would allow for a detailed consideration of carbon dioxide emissions. A</p>

integration arising from a Northern Approach?	detailed assessment of carbon dioxide emissions associated with the project will be carried out as part of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) and will be reported in the environmental impact statement (EIS).
11. A detailed breakdown of costs which supports the statement by EWR that the capital cost of a Northern Approach would be £600m more than a Southern Approach?	The additional upfront capital costs to construct a railway east of Cambourne with a northern approach into Cambridge primarily relate to the additional complex civil engineering works required, such as earthworks and viaducts, compared to a southern approach. These include: i. A major new bridge over the A14 trunk road near Bar Hill; ii. The prevailing flat topography which means that there is a poor 'cut/fill' balance between the material that we excavate and the amounts required to construct the embankments over the lower-lying terrain in this area – significant quantities of additional suitable fill material would have to be sourced and imported from elsewhere at extra cost; and iii. Construction of longer stretches of viaduct (which costs more than embankments) due to the extensive areas of floodplain north of Cambridge which are necessary in order to avoid creating or exacerbating potential flood risk, ecology and water impacts.
12. The draft Strategic Outline Business Case, to demonstrate the justification of the economic case for a Southern Approach?	As mentioned in our previous correspondence (re. FOI: Draft Strategic Outline Business Case for Central Section, 27 th Feb 2021), the Strategic Outline Business Case is currently in draft and as such we are not able to provide a copy.
13. Comparative passenger transport analyses of both routes with all origin/destination pairs?	EWR Co carried out a high level appraisal of the transport benefits of the northern and southern approaches prior to the selection of Route E last year and found the difference in modelled transport user benefits to be small (see p114 of the Route Option report here). This marginal difference in user benefits led us to conclude that the considerable cost and environmental obstacles associated with a northern approach still meant that, overall, the decision to approach from the south was the right one. We will continue to backcheck against this decision as new evidence emerges.
14. Full reconsideration of the operational objections to the reversing of trains at Cambridge in the light of similar issues with a Southern Approach? Such a balance should be weighted by their actual prevalence in a journey origin-destination matrix.	As described in page 25 of the 2019 Consultation Technical Report , EWR Co revisited the case for approaching Cambridge from the north in the context of the strategic objectives. We found that it would require a reversing move and incur journey time penalties for any onward journeys to and from destinations to the east of Cambridge. We are unsure of what you mean by "similar issues" associated with the Southern Approach. Please could you clarify?
15. A review of passenger volumes taking into account the likely effect of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recent report on this subject by Network Rail?	The team at EWR is committed to doing the right thing for the communities we serve. This includes spending taxpayer money responsibly, but we should be clear that overall prioritisation of funding for the project happens at a Government level. However, we are live to the fact that COVID 19 has required changes to working practices, hence, while no consensus has formed about long-term rail demand in the UK, EWR Co has started testing the possible impact a long-run rise in working from home could have on the route.
16. Details of any plans for the integration of EWR with local transport schemes for cars, buses, pedestrians, cycles and metro? Please	Properly integrating EWR with both existing and future transport networks in the area is something the team is passionate about, and it came across loudly that this is top of mind for communities across the area too. The team took a view early in the development of the project that we would ensure close coordination with other infrastructure and transport in the

<p>note that some of these schemes have been revised since the previous consultation. The relative effects on system usage and revenue arising from integration of a Northern Approach and a Southern Approach with local transport systems?</p>	<p>area, at a stage far earlier than would be expected in a project of this type, and continue to work toward this target.</p> <p>We are keen to explore the efficiencies which could be realised from more than one infrastructure project being built in the same area: both, whether this would help long-term to create a better transport network, and if in the shorter term, coordinating construction work would be better for local communities.</p> <p>We are working closely with the teams at Highways England, Network Rail and the relevant local authorities to ensure that the planning and delivery of EWR and these other transformative projects is coordinated for the benefit of the local communities they will serve. This includes working with the teams delivering the A428, the Cambridge autonomous metro, C2C and CSET, part of which has involved discussions about changes to the schemes.</p> <p>It is important to us that EWR supports the full journey for passengers, and we are committed to coordinating the line with other modes of transport – whether people want to travel by car, bus, bicycle or on foot. We will release additional details on our approach in due course.</p>
<p>17. A comparison of how Southern and Northern Approaches would integrate with emerging housing and employment plans including, for example, the plans for the expansion of the Science Park north of the A14? Please note that several additional and modified plans have been released since the previous consultation and that a review of the Local Plan is ongoing.</p>	<p>Cambridge's role as a major regional hub and international centre of excellence in many sectors makes the decision of how EWR provides connectivity to the Cambridge area a critical one. Whilst still at an early stage of development, evidence from the Greater Cambridge Local Plan development suggests that potential housing and employment growth is possible in multiple areas including both the city's north eastern and southern fringes. Evidence supporting the plan development recognises the potential of the southern fringe of the city which is already an international centre of excellence for patient care, biomedical research and healthcare education, and a northern approach to Cambridge would forgo the opportunity to provide this employment hub with fast, reliable east-west public transport. England's Economic Heartland (EEH) – the region's strategic transport body – only last month reaffirmed Cambridge South as a key strategic centre in need of improved transport connectivity.</p>
<p>18. A quantitative assessment of the relative impact of freight on residents in the Cambridge area with a Southern and Northern Approach, taking into account the Coldham's Common chord proposed by CBRR and a potential chord south of Ely?</p>	<p>A quantitative assessment of the impacts has not yet been undertaken, which is consistent with the stage we're currently at in the programme. Further information on the northern approach into Cambridge will be provided at the next consultation.</p> <p>You will also be aware from our previous correspondence that we are currently developing our freight strategy. This will be reflected in the development of the scheme, and our approach will be set out publicly as part of future consultation materials and our DCO application. As part of this process we are undertaking additional studies to determine how best EWR can incorporate freight into its delivery strategy. As you would expect, we are considering the likely demand for freight to use EWR, as well as the infrastructure interventions that would be necessary both on EWR, and on other parts of the rail network to service such demand – particularly in light of both current and expected passenger usage. This will enable decisions to be made as to the value for money and affordability of such interventions. Taken together these factors will influence the amount of freight that will ultimately use EWR. As noted above, further information will be set out in future consultations and consents applications by EWR Co.</p>

19. The estimated number of freight trains that would use the line at night?	As mentioned in our previous correspondence, freight services are operated in the UK by open access commercial freight companies and unless government policy changes, this would be the case in the future. In addition, EWR Co's final operating model for passenger and potential freight services has also not been finalised.
20. A statement illustrating to what extent avoidance rather than mitigation of the effects of freight movements on residents has been a consideration for the route?	<p>We will consider the potential environmental effects as part of our route alignment development work. An Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will then be undertaken, and an Environmental Statement (ES) submitted, when we submit our Development Consent Order (DCO).</p> <p>Furthermore, we will be undertaking baseline noise surveys for the next stage of scheme development. Through the design we will seek to avoid putting the railway close to “sensitive receptors”, such as schools and housing. If this can’t be reasonably achieved and we think the railway would cause noise levels to increase, we would seek to implement ‘on-site’ mitigation – such as siting the railway in a cutting, installing noise barriers or using earthworks and landscaping to reduce noise levels. Where noise levels are still sufficiently increased at receptors, we would look to ‘off-site mitigation’ such as secondary glazing or localised screening. As part of the Environmental Statement we will report on the noise effects likely to occur. We will implement noise and pollution reduction measures along the line, which will seek to effectively manage noise and vibration to avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life.</p>
21. A review of freight volumes taking into account the likely effect of BREXIT on changes to port use and freight volumes?	Please see response to Question 9.
22. Cost of upgrading the line east of Cambridge to W12 dual-track freight standard?	This is outside the scope of EWR Co.
23. Cost of upgrading the single-track tunnel at Newmarket to W12 dual-track freight standard?	This is outside the scope of EWR Co.
24. Clear evidence supporting EWR’s stated views of the environmental effects of a Northern versus a Southern Approach into Cambridge?	We will set out further information on the environmental effects of the EWR approach into Cambridge, at the upcoming non-statutory consultation.
25. A statement of the relative effects on the landscape of both routes in relation to the Green Belt and the setting of the City?	A full environmental appraisal has not been undertaken but further work is ongoing to provide a robust comparison of the northern and southern options. We will set out some high-level information at the upcoming non-statutory consultation.
26. The estimated area of ‘best and most versatile’ land that will be lost by both Approaches?	<p>Best and most versatile (BMV) means grade 1 to 3a agricultural land. However, for most of South Cambridgeshire, information on which land is Grade 3a (classed as BMV) and which is Grade 3b (not classed as BMV) is not available. Both northern and southern approaches will pass through areas of Grade 2 and Grade 3 land but because the sub-division for Grade 3 land is not known for this area, it is not possible to give an aggregated BMV total.</p> <p>However, a northern approach could pass through or go very close to Grade 1 land (the best grade) whereas there is no Grade 1 land to the south of Cambridge at all.</p>

27. The number of farms that will be bisected by both approaches?	Our high-level review finds the number of farms affected by the railway taking either a northern or southern approach into Cambridge is roughly comparable. Our Initial findings suggest that a northern approach would potentially impact 28 holdings and a southern approach would potentially impact 29 holdings. These figures are provided for indicative purposes only due to the current stage of the project. As part of our future work we will be undertaking further analysis of farms, including engaging with individual farm owners and managers to provide further clarity.			
28. Reasons why EWR considers our analysis of the parish council consultation results is inaccurate?	EWR Co.'s consultation was a formal process that was documented and published. It is not possible to compare EWR Co's consultation with the parish council consultation.			
29. Cambridge Approaches have submitted the following questions and requests to EWR which have not been answered. Please provide responses to these requests?	Item	Date sent to EWR	Date EWR replied	Outcome
	Unexplained cost increases for EWR Central Section	11 Nov 2020	1 Dec 2020	Further information to be supplied at consultation
	A comparison of Option E and CBRR Part 1: Length and capital cost	17 Dec 2020	8 Feb 2021	Further information to be supplied at consultation
	A comparison of Option E and CBR Part 2: Residential and environmental	10 Jan 2021	8 Feb 2021	Further information to be supplied at consultation
	FOI: Draft Strategic Outline Business Case for Central Section	14 Jan 2021	27 Jan 2021	Declined – in draft
	FOI: Request a copy of the report referred to in Section 15.14 of the Preferred Route Option report	23 Nov 2020	17 Dec 2020	To be released as part of consultation documents

I hope this information addresses you and your constituents' concerns.

Yours sincerely,



Chris Heaton-Harris MP

Minister of State for Transport