

Category 9: Disruption during Construction

Abbreviations used in the responses below include the following;

- BBC – Bedford Borough Council
- EWR – East West Rail (generally refers to the project)
- EWRC – East West Railway Company

- 1. What gains will there be for rural residents who will have to put up with the disruption being caused by the new route construction. Will it cause disruption to existing power to Great Barford as this is currently carried on overhead cables which will be bisected by the route. Will there be new stations and railheads that will cut down road traffic and will the railway be electrified from the start.**

The residents of the Borough will be able to benefit from regular, fast train services to Oxford, Cambridge and beyond. To the east of Bedford, they will be able to access the railway either via Bedford Midland Station or the new station proposed at Tempsford / St Neots South.

The construction of the railway will inevitably cause some local disruption. However, it is highly unlikely that there will be an interruption to local power supplies.

BBC is pressing for the electrification of EWR from the start. The Government has confirmed that it is currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification - <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-08.HL13118.h>.

Partial electrification would involve operation of battery or hydrogen trains that would also take power from the electrified wires.

- 2. My question is around the proposal to demolish and rebuild the recently erected bridge on Bromham Road. The previous (and recent) bridge closure caused many long months of disruption and delays for commuters and businesses alike. What reassurances can you give around minimising the disruption if all of this has to be redone? Will we have to endure yet another 12 months of traffic chaos?**

It is clear that EWRC will need to put in place a very detailed and tested plan for EWR bridging works, which integrates with BBC traffic planning. At this stage the details of any proposed works are not known; the phasing of work will need to be carefully planned in order to minimise disruption.

We want to engage with EWRC to develop a joint approach to traffic management and associated engineering works. We think that it is important that EWRC communicates its plans clearly and gives local residents the opportunity to comment on those plans. The potential wholesale redevelopment of the station area could provide an opportunity to install a temporary road bridge to mitigate the Bromham Road disruption.

- 3. When will it be made clear to residents of North and North-West Beds the high-levels of lengthy traffic disruption that will undoubtedly result by the massive civil engineering works required by of the (currently) favoured Route E proposal? (i.e. a second rebuilding of Bromham Road Bridge , a rebuild of the bypass bridge by BrewPoint, The immense viaduct over A6 and the Ouse into Clapham, the cutting through Clapham park etc.. etc.. These works and their effects upon Bedford commuters (among many others south and to the west) have been largely 'glossed over' it appears and I'm convinced large swathes of the public remain ignorant of these effects due to the scant detail in the proposals revealed to date.**

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- 4. If the Northern route goes ahead has anybody really assessed the disruption caused to the traffic through and around Bedford? As far as I understand the following bridges will have to be rebuilt/modified:-a. Amphill Road; b. Kempston Road; c. Bromham Road; d. Possibly Ford End Road; e. There would also be major disruption at the points where the railway crosses the A6, Paula Radcliffe Way and Clapham Road. If the recent disruption caused by the rebuilding of Bromham Road bridge is taken as an example, the disruption will be totally unacceptable! My belief is that the major factor in the decision must be the unacceptable disruption to Bedford.**

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- 5. What routes for heavy goods traffic will be predicted necessary to construct the section of train line within Bedford? Where is this published?**

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We want to engage with EWRC to develop a joint approach to traffic management and associated engineering works. We think that it is important that EWRC communicates its plans clearly and gives local residents the opportunity to comment on those plans. One element would be a detailed traffic management plan, which would set out which roads can be used, at which times and for which purposes. We require EWRC to publish and update such plans, so that local residents are kept aware of the situation in respect to access.

As part of the ongoing process EWRC will carry out a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation based upon the selected route, and this will include an assessment of the impacts of construction.

6. Given heavy goods traffic will increase during the construction, what arrangements have been made to ensure the safety of children attending and leaving school along affected routes? Where is such information published?

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One aspect of this planning process will be to identify the location of schools and likely access routes so that this can be taken into account with the planning. We require EWRC to publish and update such plans so that local residents are kept aware of the situation in respect to access.

7. Timeline to complete the build and to get first train running on this route

According to the EWRC documentation the aim is to complete the route from Oxford to Cambridge, and runs trains by 2030.

8. How do you reconcile the apology you gave to all Bedford Borough residents about the comparatively short over run of the closure of Bromham Bridge with the years of chaos and devastation that is going to be caused to the town and the countryside because Bedford Borough Council lobbied so hard for route E? According to the archives Network Rail, EWR, Sandy Council, Will Gallagher EWR Strategy Director and many others presumed, before the flawed 2019 consultation, that the route would be south of the river along the existing transport corridor. With all the evidence that a southern route is more environmentally friendly because it

would be cheaper to build and run, shorter and therefore quicker, would not require the demolition of parts of the town and swathes of the countryside and could be electrified because it is flatter, surely now is the time for BBC to rescind its support for route E?

EWRC was mandated by Government to determine a route between Bedford and Cambridge. BBC were supportive of Route E because of the overall benefits that it would bring to the town and the Borough over many years. BBC's role is as a consultee to EWRC, and even if the Council had opposed Route E, it was still within EWRC's power to select this route.

Despite any alleged preconceived ideas of Network Rail, EWRC, Sandy Council and EWRC, after the 2019 consultation process, EWRC and the Government selected Route E. See the following for more background in respect to this decision [Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report.pdf \(eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](http://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report.pdf)

We believe that a route which comes through the town will capture the benefits of this railway line passing through our Borough. There will undoubtedly be some challenges to harmonise a substantial building project with a thriving town. We are determined to work closely with EWRC to pool our knowledge and experience, in order to devise a plan for Bedford which delivers EWR, but minimises the inconvenience to local residents.

To that end, we want to engage with EWRC to develop a joint approach to traffic management and associated engineering works. We think that it is important that EWRC communicates its plans clearly and gives local residents the opportunity to comment on those plans.

We require EWRC to publish and update such plans, so that local residents are kept aware of the situation in respect to access.

9. Route E will cause a lot of disruption to schools in Brickhill if works go ahead what will the council do to stop this?

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10. I'd like to draw your attention to the major disruption to the life of Bedford and surrounding area residents if the East West Rail (EWR) goes ahead in its current form. In addition to the well published demolition of many homes, the project will impact Bedford in many other ways. In particular Great Ouse Way, Bromham Road, Ford End Road, Paula Radcliffe Way, Clapham Road and several others road which will need to be closed for

extended periods of time. The recent Bromham Road Rail Bridge rebuilding took nearly 2 years. It is unlikely that re-widening of the bridge will take any less time as all of the services will still need to be re-routed. In the case of the Great Ouse Way this will need to be closed whilst major earth works take place to raise the height of the roadway. Whilst the exact timing & duration of disruption are unknown, it's unlikely to be less than 12 months. The consultation document also implies that the Clapham Road Roundabout will also need to be raised/modified. As for the Ford End Bridge it is likely that it will need to be demolished & re-built. Again yet more disruption to Bedford.

As part of the BBC consultation response, we have made clear our requirement that Great Ouse Way is kept open at all times, with the provision of a temporary bridge. We have also suggested an alternative route alignment to the south of the River Great Ouse which we hope will be a viable and cheaper alternative to the existing EWRC proposal. If this route proposition is developed it could mean that an existing span of a bridge supporting Paula Radcliffe Way bridge could be utilised for the railway line. If so, this would significantly reduce vehicular disruption in the area. We have alerted EWRC to our desire to develop and agree a Construction Management Plan for the proposed works, in order to deal with numerous aspects associated with the works, including management of road closures.

11. Another impact of EWR is the loss of 12 car Jowett Sidings at Bedford Station. The direct impact of this will Bedford will lose its 12 car trains to London on Thameslink. East West have provides no alternative solution to the loss Jowett Sidings. If East West goes ahead Thameslink will have no option but start the 12 car trains south of Bedford, and Bedford will lose its regular frequent service to London. The north south service is much more important to Bedford Residents than a slightly quicker journey to the outskirts of Cambridge.

In the EWRC Consultation Technical Report, the possible requirement to relocate Jowett Sidings is discussed. It mentions that EWRC will work to determine a solution which works for Network Rail and the Train Operating Company. The report mentions that a number of potential possibilities have been identified. There seems to be no reason to think that a satisfactory outcome will not be found to stable 12-car trains at a location that enables service to Bedford.

12. The economic effect of all these road closures and disruption to rail services should not be underestimated, especially in the post covid world where Bedford and its shops are already challenged.

We understand the difficulties and disruption of road closures and alteration of train timetables due to engineering works. BBC will work with EWR and local residents to ensure that disruption, such as road closure, is kept to an absolute minimum.

13. Years of construction inconvenience in an area already impacted by years of inconvenience (western bypass and Bromham Road bridge). We

understand Bromham Road Bridge will be worked on yet again (it was closed for a year and a half in 2019/20) and the A6/Clapham Road area has been a bottleneck for sometime whilst work is very slowly completed. Potentially this will finally be resolved only to be impacted by major works to build a viaduct etc. If the route went north how many years would construction take? Projects like this never run on time.

EWRC has not published any timescales or detailed plans for any of the works. It is likely that the work will be completed in phases. The total scheme may be completed some while after individual engineering works are completed. EWRC refer to 'Connection Stages' of its project. Connection Stage 1 is the route between Oxford and Bletchley. Connection Stage 2 is along the Marston Vale Line to Bedford. Connection Stage 3 is the new line between Bedford and Cambridge. EWRC is planning a phased introduction of train services by Connection Stage. It may be that the works in and around Bedford form part of Connection Stage 2. In which case, there may be less overall disruption as the impact of the bridge/road works could be phased.

We want to work with EWRC to understand its emerging plans, and to be able to contribute to its thinking as the plans develop. We want EWRC to engage with local communities, so that they are aware of how and when the plans might affect them.

14. On the proposed line drawings/plans, it shows that 2 nos roads will be shut off by the route of the line 1) spenser road/chaucer road and 2) Sidney road/Milton road.

Is this going to be a permanent shut off or will there be a connection to get round.

This going to cause endless misery to people having to do u-turns in roads plus increased danger to pedestrians with increasing u-turns.

Other than having sight of EWRC's leaflet regarding its plans around Sidney Road and Spencer Road, we have no other information with respect to EWRC's intentions. It is clear from its plan that it envisages taking some land at the corner of Spencer Road and Chaucer Road. This plan is based upon a requirement for two additional railway tracks. We believe that EWR can be operated on the existing four tracks and we have made this case to EWRC. As long as no additional land is required, there should be no reason to change the current road layout.

15. I have a question regarding how the proposed railway route will cater for the very large agricultural machinery and 'building supplies' HGVs in constant use throughout the area. The preferred routes are mostly either large embankments or wide cuttings, due to their extreme width the cuttings in particular requiring significant engineering structures to ensure the roads can continue to carry the large weights the businesses rely on. Has thought been put to avoid these issues by making use of a tunnel,

either by boring or cut & cover? It would remove multiple complications and costs, potentially minimizing any overall increase. Would Bedford Borough Council be in a position to push EWR to consider the possibility of this option?

In relation to construction traffic, we want to engage with EWRC to develop a joint approach to traffic management and associated engineering works. We think that it is important that EWRC communicates its plans clearly and gives local residents the opportunity to comment on those plans. One aspect would be a detailed traffic management plan, which would set out which roads can be used, at which times and for which purposes. We require EWRC to publish and update such plans, so that local residents are kept aware of the situation in respect to access.

In relation to the infrastructure requirements, EWRC has provided no detail, to date, of the location or scale of proposed cuttings, embankments, viaducts or tunnels. We have informed EWRC, as part of our Consultation Response, that we need to be able to comment on the proposals as they develop, so that it can integrate our feedback into its design. We have already suggested that the line around Carriage Drive is in a tunnel rather than a cutting.

16. Has the Council considered the impact on the health and well-being of the residents in the rural communities who will be exposed to years of noise and air pollution from heavy industry and construction occurring yards from their homes?

EWRC has not yet undertaken a full environmental impact assessment. It will be completed later within the scheme development in accordance with UK legislation. Part of the process will be to identify means to mitigate impacts of the scheme on the health of the local population, through construction and operation phases. BBC will work closely with EWR to ensure that local communities are represented in determining the impacts of the proposed scheme.

17. In the repositioning of both St John's station and Bedford Midland station much of the car parking will be lost either temporarily or even permanently. EWR mention in their technical document that multi story car parks could be build to provide the additional car parking required. Does the council know where the money for these multi-storey car parks will come from? Are they included in the cost of the project or will money from elsewhere need to be found? In addition how will the council propose to alleviate the disruption caused by the lack of car parking for both NHS staff and patients as well as those commuting from Bedford Midland?

One of the benefits of re-siting Bedford St Johns station closer to the hospital will be that it would provide an alternative means of access to the hospital for patients and staff.

It is understood that EWRC is responsible for the re-provision and financing of car parking for Bedford Midland Station. As part of the broader stations plan, it is expected that EWRC will provide additional car parking to support the provision of improved rail services. However, BBC will consider its own investment in additional car parking if this is likely to yield a positive return on investment.

BBC has not yet seen details of how car current parking demand will be managed through construction, but we will press EWRC to minimise disruption to existing residents.