

Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden Parish Council response to EastWest Rail consultation.

We completely oppose the so called result of the 2019 consultation which was flawed, misleading and unfair. There was a lack of notification to residents in a large proportion of the route 'E' area. The 'much spoken about' postcards were NOT received by many in the Parishes /villages in your so-called shape file especially in the area between Bedford and the East Coast Mainline and we are yet to find ANYONE in our Parish having had one!

Much of the information/costings/data provided was grossly misleading and in some cases strategically wrong. There is still no coherent explanation for the sudden large reduction in costs of route 'E', which EWR/Beds Borough Council only brought into the equation AFTER the consultation was closed. In addition, there is no provision by either EWR, or Beds Borough Council for the costs of moving/rebuilding of Bedford Midland Road station hence the current data is still misleading and incorrect. Route 'E' means demolishing a greater number of homes compared with other routes, is by far the most difficult and technically challenging to build, is the longest route which therefore will take the longest travel time from Bedford to Cambridge and create the most damaging 'carbon footprint'. It also destroys far more high grade agricultural land and devastates swathes of countryside, nature and wildlife. It is the most difficult topology, with the steepest inclines, meaning that complete electrification would be doubtful and it would be the most inefficient in diesel consumption producing most fumes (carbon).

By routing trains through Bedford Midland Road station it would significantly increase vehicle movements into an already excessively congested and polluted town with no proven gain.

Very few commuters to Cambridge will drive into Bedford to use a congested and expensive car park when it will be quicker and cheaper to drive along the new A421 dual carriageway to Cambridge 'park and ride'. This would also reflect in commuters travelling to Milton Keynes and Oxford. Overall, choosing route 'E' the train will not reduce the carbon footprint, however it will add large volumes of carbon during construction. It is already clear that the X5/905 busses travel almost empty for most of the day so are trains just

for rush hour? The Government has recently announced a significant spend on electric busses which could use the new A421 dual carriageway and save the cost of EWR Bedford to Cambridge probably being a shorter journey time and reducing the carbon footprint.

Whilst, as stated above, we are completely opposed to route 'E' we feel alignments 8 and 9 are the least damaging. In particular with alignments 1,2 and 6, trying to fit the track through the narrow channel between Spinney Road, Chawston and the new A421 rising to cross the new Black Cat Interchange would appear impractical and pose a structural danger to the new A421 embankments. In addition this is where Highways England are excavating their 'borrow pit', when eventually refilled after some years, with left over spoils has the possibility of being unstable and hence dangerous for many years particularly supporting a viaduct exceeding 2½ km in length and 19 mtrs high (all according to EWR published topographical data). If this alignment was built the predominant south westerly winds would carry considerable noise and diesel fume pollution towards large areas of Wyboston, Eaton Socon and St Neots. It would be a potential danger as a significant overhead visual distraction to vehicles traveling along the A1 and new A421. Also, this would be crossing the major gas main supplying Little Barford power station which already passes through this narrow channel. In fact, the 'emerging preference' routes would have to negotiate at least 5 Major National Infrastructure pipelines carrying water and High Pressure Gas as well as close-running to a reservoir which could de-stabilise the banking and therefore putting both reservoir and tracks at great risk.

In conclusion, whilst the Parish of Wyboston, Chawston & Colesden are not, in principle against the future ideas of a rail link between Cambridge and Oxford, it is considered highly probable 'post covid' demand for rail travel would be considerably less than your unproven projections as more people take the 'work from home' options now available.

We again re-iterate that the 2019 Consultation regarding 'Route E' in its entirety was flawed due to 'agendas with-held from the Public' and the whole scheme must to be re-visited with the utmost urgency (and this time with proper and fair consultation with all our residents).

Wyboston, Chawston & Colesden Parish Council
6th June 2021