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East West Rail Company Ltd
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Electronic submission only

Dear East West Rail Company Limited

Response to public consultation by East West Rail Company Limited (EWR Co) for East West Rail (EWR) – Bedford to Cambridge and western improvements Development Consent Order (DCO) proposals (PINS ref. TR040012)

This response is provided by Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service (GCSPS) on behalf of **Cambridge City Council** ("the Council") regarding the public consultation for the East West Rail (EWR) – Bedford to Cambridge and western improvements Development Consent Order (DCO) proposal, which commenced on 14 April 2026 and closes on 9 June 2026.

The EWR DCO proposal is designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) under Part 3 of the Planning Act 2008 (as amended). The Council is expected to be one of the host authorities for the EWR DCO under Sections 42 and 43 of the Act. The Council therefore has an important role in supporting the ongoing development of the proposals, including consideration of local planning policy, planned growth, rural community impacts, environmental considerations, active travel connectivity, and infrastructure delivery within the City of Cambridge.

National, regional and local planning context

The proposal would be determined having regard to the National Networks National Policy Statement (NPS), the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), National Planning Guidance (NPG), and local planning policy where appropriate.

The Council recognises the strategic importance of improving east-west regional connectivity across the Oxford-Cambridge growth corridor and acknowledges the potential benefits for sustainable economic growth, wider labour market access, public transport connectivity and modal shift that the proposal could deliver. The Council also notes the national policy support for strategic rail investment through the National Networks NPS and wider decarbonisation objectives.

When considered within the wider strategic planning and transport context affecting Greater Cambridge, the proposals interface with significant planned housing and employment growth, nationally important science and innovation clusters, environmental and heritage sensitivities, and existing infrastructure constraints, including water resource limitations.

The Council's support for the strategic objectives of EWR sits alongside an expectation that the project is planned and delivered in a way that aligns with the existing and emerging spatial strategy for Greater Cambridge. The railway should function as enabling infrastructure that supports planned growth and should not prejudice or delay the delivery of consented schemes, allocated sites, regeneration initiatives, employment development, or associated transport infrastructure.

Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025

The Council notes that the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 introduces changes to the statutory framework for pre-application consultation, including the removal of the requirement to consult on preliminary environmental information. However, the Infrastructure Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 continue to require systematic environmental assessment, and meaningful early engagement remains an important part of the pre-application process. The Council's approach to this consultation reflects that context.

At this stage, the Council's response is not framed as a formal position of support or objection to the principle of the scheme. The Council's priority is to identify the matters requiring further resolution before DCO submission, including the information required to assess impacts, the mitigation that should be secured, and the areas where continued engagement with EWR Co is necessary. The response acknowledges the ongoing engagement between EWR Co and GCSP and recognises that further iterative engagement will be required as the proposals continue to develop.

Response to previous consultation (Non-Statutory Consultation, November 2024)

The Council submitted a response to EWR Co's Non-Statutory Consultation in January 2025. That response highlighted a range of matters requiring further consideration, including rail alignment, embankment heights, ecological impacts, landscape and visual impacts of

key structures, construction impacts on local communities, and the extent of pre-application technical engagement with the Council's specialist officers.

The Council notes that EWR Co's You Said, We Did Autumn Update and the current consultation material reflect a clear programme of design development since that response. The Council acknowledges and welcomes the design development that has taken place, as summarised below.

Notable Improvements

The Council recognises that EWR Co has made a number of substantive changes to the proposals since the previous consultation. A number of these changes represent improvements that the Council considers positive in principle.

- Cambridge East station: The Council welcomes the inclusion of Cambridge East station within the DCO. This represents an important piece of transport infrastructure for eastern Cambridge, with the potential to support sustainable growth associated with the Cambridge East allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The Council expects the station, its access arrangements, public realm, active travel connections and any related land requirements to be coordinated with the planned delivery and wider spatial framework for Cambridge East and planned new developments nearby, particularly during construction.
- Clifton Road Eastern entrance (Cambridge station): The Council welcomes the inclusion of a new eastern entrance at Cambridge station. The early investment in delivery of this component has the potential to realise significant regeneration opportunities and benefits for the City and responds to a longstanding local aspiration. The Council looks forward to working with EWR Co to ensure the entrance and active travel hub support these early regeneration objectives and are designed to a high standard, maximise connectivity and permeability across the railway, support wider regeneration opportunities, and appropriately respond to the listed station building and conservation area setting.
- Cambridge station improvements: The proposed improvements, including new and extended platforms, a new southern footbridge, and a new secondary escape footbridge, are noted as necessary operational enhancements.
- Phased delivery: Accelerated delivery of Tempsford station, Cambridge East station and the Clifton Road entrance is considered positive as it has the potential to provide earlier connectivity benefits ahead of the full operation of the EWR service.
- Discontinuous electrification: As no new overhead electrification is proposed between Tempsford and Hauxton Junction, landscape and visual impacts may be reduced. However, the overhead electrification between Coldham's Lane junction and the proposed Cambridge East Train Care Centre will require further engagement.
- Cambridge North improvements: The relocation of the Maintenance Delivery Unit and associated upgrades at Cambridge North are noted as necessary enabling works. The Council notes and would seek to avoid the potential implications for the delivery of committed strategic regeneration projects in this area and welcomes the ongoing engagement with Greater Cambridge Shared Planning Service in relation to these works.

- Active travel connectivity: The Council supports the continued inclusion of active travel infrastructure within the scheme and is particularly keen to ensure the Clifton Road entrance and Cambridge East station provide safe, direct and legible connections to the Chisholm Trail, Cambridge Junction, Cambridge East, nearby employment areas, residential areas and surrounding communities.

Interface with planned, consented and emerging development

Greater Cambridge is one of the most productive economic areas in the United Kingdom, with a concentration of science, research, innovation, education, health and technology activity of national and international significance. East West Rail has the potential to strengthen this role by improving regional connectivity and supporting sustainable growth. Realisation of those benefits depends on the project being designed and delivered in a manner that supports, rather than constrains, the planned development and infrastructure needed to sustain Greater Cambridge's economic success.

The Council therefore expects that, where EWR proposals interact with consented, allocated or emerging development sites, EWR Co should demonstrate that its proposals avoid preventing, delaying or materially prejudicing the delivery of planned development. This should include the effects of permanent land take, temporary land requirements, construction phasing, utility diversions, safeguarding, access arrangements, severance, environmental mitigation and remaining design interfaces. The Council's specific expectations are as follows:

- Cambridge East: The Council supports the inclusion of Cambridge East station within the DCO and recognises it as enabling infrastructure for the Cambridge East allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan. The station proposals should be developed in a manner that integrates with and supports the delivery of the Cambridge East development. The DCO should avoid sterilising or prejudicing development land in this area, and the design of the station and its surroundings should be coordinated with the master planning of the wider site throughout the development of the proposals.
- District East and consented development near Cambridge East: The Council expects EWR Co to demonstrate that the Cambridge East station proposals, associated access arrangements, land requirements and any potential station relocation options do not prejudice the implementation of consented planning permissions or planned development south of Coldham's Lane and within the wider Cambridge East area.
- North East Cambridge: The Council expects EWR Co to demonstrate, prior to DCO submission, that its proposals around Cambridge North station and the Fen Road level crossing are compatible with the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan and the planned growth at the Anglian Water site. Any interface between EWR infrastructure and development land at North East Cambridge should be addressed through early engagement and should avoid resulting in the sterilisation of planned development land.
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus: The Council requests that EWR Co confirms how its proposals in the Cambridge South area, including construction compound locations and the Long Road bridge, take appropriate account of the ongoing and planned expansion of the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Construction management plans

should seek to minimise disruption to this nationally important cluster of health and life sciences activity. This should include engagement with relevant campus stakeholders where construction activity, vibration, access changes, servicing, emergency routes or temporary land requirements could affect operational continuity.

- Managing construction disruption to economic activity: Where construction works cannot reasonably be avoided in or near economically significant areas, EWR Co should demonstrate through the establishment of a robust and inclusive governance framework, and through its Construction Environmental Management Plan and associated documents, how disruption will be identified, monitored and managed throughout the construction period. The Council considers that active management of construction impacts, informed by ongoing engagement with local stakeholders, will be critical to minimising disruption to businesses, employees, visitors and local communities. Governance arrangements should provide for appropriate representation from local authorities, ward councillors, parish councils and community representatives to ensure that emerging issues can be considered and addressed as construction plans evolve.
- The Council will engage with EWR Co through the Construction Management Working Group to support the effective management of these matters and to ensure that disruption is minimised in scale, duration and impact wherever reasonably possible.
- Clifton Road Area: The Council recognises the opportunity to improve local connectivity and assist in managing increased passenger numbers at Cambridge station, while also supporting regeneration opportunities in the surrounding area. The Council welcomes continued engagement with stakeholders, including the relevant planning and transport authorities, with careful consideration given to townscape and heritage impacts affecting the Grade II listed station building and conservation area.

Areas where the Council needs further clarity or has continuing concerns

While the Council acknowledges the progress made, the following matters remain outstanding and the Council will continue to engage with EWR Co to address these matters prior to DCO submission:

- Cambridge East station – ground conditions and integration: The Council notes that contaminated land and ground stability represent significant constraints at the proposed Cambridge East station site. Early technical engagement with the Council's environmental health officers and the Environment Agency will be important. The station design must integrate with the emerging Cambridge East development, consented development nearby, and the wider active travel and public transport network, with effective connections in all directions. Cambridge station heritage: The Council recognises the significance of Cambridge station as a Grade II listed building, together with its setting and conservation area. Further assessment of, and engagement regarding, the likely heritage impacts will be required.
- Cambridge Eastern Train Care Centre – location and impacts: The Council welcomes continued engagement regarding the preferred location and design. The Council would welcome further assessment, particularly in relation to air quality, noise, vibration, lighting, construction traffic, operational activity, heritage, landscape

impacts and any implications for level crossing operation or barrier downtime where relevant. The Council notes positively any reduction in heritage impacts arising from the preferred location, subject to further detail on design, fencing, lighting, landscape treatment and operational impacts.

- North East Cambridge interaction: The Council expects EWR Co to demonstrate how its proposals north of Cambridge station are compatible with infrastructure and new developments associated with the North East Cambridge Opportunity Area, including the planned cycle and pedestrian bridge from the Anglian Water site and the future of Fen Road level crossing.
- Coldham's Common ecology and active travel: Works in the vicinity of Coldham's Common County Wildlife Site will require careful assessment and appropriate mitigation. The Council also supports footbridge replacements at Coldham's Common and The Tins being designed to accommodate cyclists as well as pedestrians.
- Clifton Road entrance – design quality and heritage: Further developed proposals will be required at an early stage, including assessment of heritage impacts on the Grade II listed station building and conservation area. The proposals should avoid prejudicing wider regeneration of adjacent sites.
- Freight, diesel traction and electrification: The Council requires further clarity on the likely frequency, timing and traction type of freight services and any residual use of diesel traction. The air quality, noise, vibration and carbon implications of diesel passenger or freight movements should be assessed using appropriate worst-case assumptions and reflected within the Environmental Statement and associated mitigation proposals.
- Air quality: Further information is required on the approach to air quality assessment during construction and operation, including construction traffic, temporary diversions, station access traffic, diesel traction and any changes affecting local road networks. Early technical engagement with the Council's environmental health officers should continue prior to DCO submission.
- Biodiversity Net Gain: The Council continues to encourage EWR Co to consider a minimum 20% BNG target and requests early clarity on BNG legal agreements and the approach to local habitat bank credits.
- Landscape and visual impacts: The Council notes that detailed Landscape Management Plans are expected to be secured at a later stage through the DCO process. Continued engagement will be required to establish appropriate mitigation measures for both the construction and operational phases, including consideration of tree loss, compensatory planting and long-term landscape management. The Council also considers it important that opportunities arising from post-construction restoration are identified and assessed as part of this process. In addition to mitigating adverse effects, consideration should be given to how temporary construction impacts can contribute to wider place-making, environmental and landscape objectives. This may include opportunities for strategic planting, green infrastructure enhancements, improved public realm and amenity spaces, or the preparation of land for future high-quality development where appropriate. A structured approach should be developed to identify and evaluate such opportunities as designs and construction methodologies are refined.

- Community Benefit Fund: Further discussion regarding the scope, governance and administration of a community benefit fund for communities along the route within both South Cambridgeshire and the City of Cambridge would be welcomed.

Ongoing engagement

The Council expects EWR Co to continue to facilitate effective pre-application engagement with the Council and local communities ahead of DCO submission, including targeted engagement where impacts are localised, complex or likely to affect groups less likely to engage through standard consultation methods.


The Council also expects future engagement to include clear, location-specific information for affected communities, including the likely duration of construction impacts, changes to access routes, replacement walking and cycling routes, compound locations, traffic management proposals and the practical implications for residents, schools, businesses, community facilities and open spaces.

The Council considers that further detailed assessment will be required as the proposals progress towards DCO submission and reserves the right to comment further as the proposals develop and further information becomes available.

The Council acknowledges the ongoing input of key stakeholders including England's Economic Heartland, Transport East, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council.

If you have any queries regarding this submission or require any further information, please contact nsips@greatercambridgeplanning.org

Yours sincerely



Stephen Kelly

Director of Planning & Economic Development

On behalf of Cambridge City Council

cc. Robert Pollock (Chief Executive)