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9 June 2026

East West Rail Company Ltd  
[consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk](mailto:consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk)

**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 **South Cambridgeshire District 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 South Cambridgeshire.

## **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.

Within South Cambridgeshire, the project interfaces with planned and emerging strategic growth, rural settlements, agricultural land, sensitive landscapes, protected ecological networks and local movement patterns. The Council's support of the strategic objectives of EWR sits alongside an expectation that the project is planned and delivered in a manner that maintains community connectivity, supports planned development, and provides appropriate mitigation in relation to impacts experienced by affected communities and landowners.

## **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 ongoing approach to engagement and input/feedback on the project 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 continue to engage with EWR Co to identify the matters requiring further resolution before DCO submission. This includes 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 also 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. This does not represent an exhaustive list, and further detail regarding the Council's views on the proposed changes is set out in the appendix:

- Mined tunnel at Bourn Airfield: The change from cut-and-cover to a mined construction method represents a significant design improvement, with the potential to reduce surface disruption, road diversions, and impacts on nearby ancient woodland, groundwater, and the delivery of Bourn Airfield. The Council welcomes this change.
- Cambourne station relocation: The relocation 700 metres west provides improved alignment between the station and the emerging Cambourne North allocation and provides a stronger basis for integrating the station with planned development and wider active travel networks.
- Hauxton Junction height reduction: Reducing the junction height by 2.7 metres to approximately 7.5m above ground level represents an improvement in visual and landscape terms. The confirmed pedestrian, cyclist and equestrian bridge over the junction is also noted positively.
- Green bridges with ecological connectivity: Planted bridge designs at Abbotsley Bridleway 18, Knapwell Wood Road, and Hardwick Road to support barbastelle bat flightpaths and connectivity for other protected species are noted positively. The Council expects the detailed designs to demonstrate how ecological connectivity will operate in practice during both construction and operation, including the treatment of lighting, planting, bridge width, watercourse crossings, and long-term management.
- Phased delivery: Accelerated delivery of Tempsford station, Cambridge East station and the Clifton Road entrance is considered positive as it has the potential to unlock further growth potential in the area and provide connectivity benefits to communities 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 recently proposed Cambridge East Train Care Centre will require further engagement.
- Chapel Hill tunnel extension: The extension from 700m to 940m reduces the depth and scale of the cutting, decreases material movements during construction, and avoids the need to divert overhead electricity cables at the northern portal.
- Bourn Brook viaduct reduction: Realigning the Bourn Brook crossing to a narrower point and reducing the viaduct from 250m to 155m is noted as a positive

environmental change. However, further information regarding impacts on the watercourse and surrounding environment will be required.

- A603 Cambridge Road: The revised approach to take the railway beneath the A603 is noted. However, further engagement will be required in relation to active travel connections, landscape and visual impacts, drainage, environmental mitigation, and construction phasing.

### **Interface with planned, consented and emerging development**

South Cambridgeshire is an area of significant planned growth, with major strategic sites expected to deliver housing, employment, community infrastructure, and wider economic benefits over the coming decades. East West Rail has the potential to support this growth through improved connectivity, reduced car dependency, and enhanced access to employment, education, and services. Realisation of those benefits will depend on effective coordination between the project and the planned development it is intended to support.

The Council therefore expects EWR Co to demonstrate through the DCO and its supporting documentation how the proposals integrate with planned development and avoid prejudicing delivery. This should include consideration of permanent land take, temporary land requirements, construction phasing, utility diversions, safeguarding, access arrangements, severance, environmental mitigation, and remaining design interfaces. Where impacts on planned development cannot reasonably be avoided, the Council expects EWR Co to minimise impacts in terms of scale, duration and effect, and to continue engagement with affected developers, landowners and the Council to agree appropriate mitigation.

Specifically:

- Cambourne North and associated employment growth: The proposed Cambourne North development allocation in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan is closely related to the railway and station in terms of long-term accessibility, sustainability and spatial structure. The DCO should explore ways in which the project implementation can complement other planned development or associated infrastructure to enable the efficient delivery of Cambourne North, including the transport and active travel infrastructure associated with the development. The station design, passing loop locations and order limit boundaries should be considered alongside the emerging spatial framework for Cambourne North, and EWR Co should continue engagement with the Council and development promoters to support a coordinated approach.
- Bourn Airfield development: The Council welcomes the change to a mined tunnel at the A428, which appears to reduce the potential for EWR construction activity to affect delivery of the Bourn Airfield strategic growth site. EWR Co should provide a clear interface plan setting out how construction activity, compounds, haul routes, utilities, access arrangements and mitigation will relate to the approved development and its delivery programme. The Council expects EWR Co to continue engagement with the promoters of the Bourn Airfield site as a key stakeholder in the planning of construction activity in this area.
- Other planned, consented and emerging development: The Council expects EWR Co to undertake a systematic assessment of the interaction between the DCO proposals and consented, allocated and emerging development in South Cambridgeshire.

Where significant interactions are identified, including through construction impacts, access changes, utility works, temporary land take, safeguarding or permanent land requirements, EWR Co should engage with the relevant parties to establish how impacts will be managed and mitigated ahead of DCO submission.

- Construction management and economic continuity: Construction works of the scale proposed are likely to impact local residents, businesses, agricultural operations and wider economic activity across the district. The Council expects EWR Co to create a comprehensive and inclusive project governance framework through which the Construction Environmental Management Plan can be managed. The objective of the governance arrangements should be to involve local voices in the discussion on options surrounding delivery that to manage and minimise disruption, including through careful programming of works, appropriate notice periods, and continuous feedback.

### **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:

- Cambourne station connectivity: While the relocation is welcomed in principle, the connection between the station, Cambourne town centre, Cambourne West, Cambourne North, Bourn Airfield and communities south of the A428 remains an important strategic issue. The Council requires further information and evidence regarding likely station catchments, mode share, active travel desire lines, bus interchange, parking demand, and the quality and functionality of north-south connections across the A428 and St Neots Road.
- Cambourne station design. Recent designs for the station indicate how the station can act as a “link” between existing and new development areas. Effectively realising this potential will require specific provision to be made within the designs and engineering works for the station and in the DCO submission.
- Harston, Newton and Hauxton community severance: The closure of the Newton Road/Station Road level crossing and associated changes to local road connections have the potential to result in significant impacts on these communities. Whilst detailed construction sequencing and contractor-led implementation measures may not yet be fully developed, the Council considers it essential that a clear governance and decision-making framework is established to oversee the planning and management of construction impacts. This should include meaningful involvement from the local authorities and parish councils to ensure that community concerns are identified and addressed as proposals evolve. The Council expects EWR Co to establish transparent processes for assessing and managing impacts relating to access, connectivity and community severance, including school and healthcare access, active travel routes, step-free accessibility, emergency access, equestrian use, replacement routes and cumulative construction disruption. The framework should enable these matters to be reviewed and responded to dynamically as construction plans are refined and implemented.

- Cambridge Eastern Train Care Centre and Fulbourn area impacts: The Council has continuing concerns regarding the shortlisted options, particularly in relation to community impacts including noise, night-time disturbance, lighting, traffic, landscape and heritage impacts. The Council notes the significant level of community concern regarding the proposed Train Care Centre and considers that a comprehensive programme of engagement, assessment and mitigation will be required to provide affected communities with confidence that potential impacts have been properly identified, assessed and addressed. If an option within the Fulbourn area is progressed, EWR Co should undertake ongoing and targeted engagement with affected communities, parish councils and the Council regarding site selection, design development and appropriate mitigation measures prior to DCO submission. The Council also expects careful consideration to be given to potential heritage impacts arising from the preferred location, subject to further detail on design, fencing, lighting, landscape treatment and operational impacts. The Council would welcome continued discussion regarding alternative location options.
- Barbastelle bat SAC and ecological connectivity: The Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation remain a significant ecological concern for the Council. The Council requires EWR Co to incorporate male barbastelle bat territories within the Habitats Regulations Assessment, share ecological survey data with the Council's officers, and demonstrate a robust mitigation strategy. This should be reflected within the bridge and watercourse crossing designs, the Habitats Regulations Assessment, the Environmental Statement and the long-term management proposals.
- Biodiversity Net Gain: The Council continues to encourage EWR Co to consider a minimum 20% BNG target. Early clarity is also required on BNG legal agreements and the approach to local habitat bank credits, given the potential implications for the wider Greater Cambridge BNG credit market.
- Construction impacts on rural communities: Construction compounds, HGV routes, and works associated with the Bourn Airfield and Chapel Hill tunnels are likely to result in significant impacts on rural communities. Mitigation measures, community engagement arrangements, construction traffic management, monitoring procedures, complaints escalation routes and enforcement responsibilities should be clearly set out and discussed with the Council prior to DCO submission. The Council also considers it important that the long-term legacy of temporary construction impacts is addressed. This should include consideration of how land used for compounds, haul roads and other temporary works will be restored following construction and whether opportunities exist to deliver wider environmental and community benefits through biodiversity enhancement, landscape improvements, green infrastructure, public access or other amenity gains. A clear framework for identifying, assessing and agreeing post-construction restoration and enhancement opportunities should be developed in consultation with the relevant local authorities and communities.
- Active travel in rural areas: Active travel proposals should be better integrated with the needs of rural communities in areas such as Comberton, Harston, Newton, and the Shelfords. Additionally, active travel connectivity to Tempsford station for residents of South Cambridgeshire district, including Gamlingay, Abbotsley and Waresley, should continue to be considered. The Council is working with Cambridgeshire partners to provide a coordinated response and expects continued

engagement through the Active Travel Working Groups. The Council also expects EWR Co to consider the wider impacts of infrastructure and associated development beyond the district boundary where these may affect communities within South Cambridgeshire, including impacts arising from access arrangements, traffic movements, active travel connectivity and construction activity associated with Tempsford station

- 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, diesel traction, station access traffic and any changes affecting local road networks. Early technical engagement with the Council's environmental health officers should continue prior to DCO submission.
- 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. This should include consideration of tree loss and compensatory planting.
- 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 welcomes the commitment to engagement from EWR Co to date and expects this to continue to facilitate effective pre-application engagement with the Council and local communities prior to 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 encourages 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.

For South Cambridgeshire, this should include village-level engagement where construction works, route severance, traffic diversions, public rights of way changes, school access, GP access, agricultural operations or local business activity could be materially affected.

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 also 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 require any further information regarding this submission, please contact [nsips@greatercambridgeplanning.org](mailto:nsips@greatercambridgeplanning.org)

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "SJ Kelly". The signature is written in a cursive style.

**Stephen Kelly**

Director of Planning & Economic Development

*On behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council*

cc. Liz Watts (Chief Executive)