

Removing and reducing embankments and viaducts on East West Rail

Embankments and viaducts are used by railways across the world to bring sections of track up to an acceptable height and smooth gradients over low ground. They may form a part of EWR's infrastructure, playing a key role in realising a once-in-a-generation opportunity to connect communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge.

We've taken a fresh look at our proposals with a view to finding ways to reduce the height of proposed embankments and viaducts or remove them altogether.

During our 2021 consultation, we presented outline details about where the new railway might need to be 'in cutting' or 'on embankment / viaduct' and displayed the 'reasonable worst-case scenario'.

Following responses to this consultation which outlined concerns about the visual impacts, we've looked at ways we could reduce the height of proposed embankments and viaducts – or remove them altogether.

The work we've been doing since the consultation has helped us to identify some potential opportunities to reduce or remove viaducts and embankments, by:

- Taking the railway under roads in cuttings instead of building viaducts over them
- Making minor diversions to potential route alignments to allow the railway to be lowered
- Diverting the roads over the railway on smaller overbridges instead of building viaducts over existing roads

This is helping us prepare designs that are less prominent, reducing potential visual impacts. We believe these initiatives could allow us to remove completely or reduce the height of approximately 50% of the embankments or viaducts (by length) compared to what was shown in the 2021 consultation.

The design of the railway is progressing and details of our proposals for these features will be presented as part of the statutory consultation, which we expect to take place in the first half of 2024.

Get in touch

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