

What are the benefits of East West Rail?



The vibrant mix of rural and urban communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge blend beautiful landscapes and a rich cultural heritage with globally renowned centres of education, business, technology and an increasingly dynamic business scene, which together contribute around £111 billion to the national economy each year¹.

It's a fantastic place to live and work, but people are being let down by a lack of good transport links, limiting their ability to enjoy everything the area has to offer - from easy opportunities to commute between home and work, to days out with friends and family.

The National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) estimates that, by 2050, the area's economic output could lose out by around £93 billion² each year without major intervention to address its lack of suitable housing and poor east-west connectivity³.

East West Rail is a once in a generation opportunity to provide new, reliable, sustainable transport for communities across the area from Oxford to Cambridge and Milton Keynes, connecting people with the things that matter most to them.

What are the benefits?

Providing cheaper and quicker travel: for communities across the area, existing transport links between the villages, towns and cities in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc (the Arc) are limited. East West Rail will improve connectivity between key towns and cities across the Arc and beyond, significantly reducing journey times.

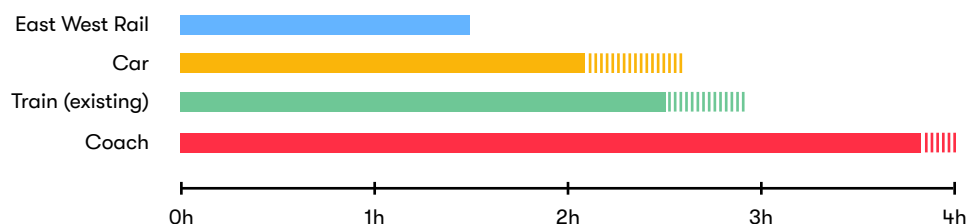


Figure 1: Oxford to Cambridge minimum and maximum journey time comparison by transport mode

1. MHCLG (2019) The Oxford-Cambridge Arc Government ambition and joint declaration between Government and local partners, page 9 https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/799993/OxCam_Arc_Ambition.pdf
 2. This has been converted into 2020 prices which is the equivalent of the NIC reported £85m in 2011 prices
 3. NIC (2017) Partnering for Prosperity: a new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc, page 25 <https://www.nic.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Partnering-for-Prosperty.pdf>

Your Questions Answered

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New job opportunities - in 2021/22, the delivery of the line between Oxford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes is expected to directly employ 980 people and support around another 500 in the wider supply chain, injecting an estimated £1.1bn into the local economy. Work opportunities are expected to increase as trains start running on this part of the line, and we begin construction on the rest of the route.

Easing congestion - it's well known that road traffic can cause congestion in rural areas as well as in towns and cities⁴. By offering rail travel as an alternative and ensuring rail travel is well connected to other modes of transport, we can help to ease congestion and reduce time spent in traffic jams.

Tackling pollution - road traffic also pollutes the air people breathe. By providing communities across the area with access to a cheap and quick rail service, we can help tackle pollution by allowing more people to switch from road to more sustainable public transport options including rail⁵.

Supporting the creation of new, affordable homes - by increasing connections across the Arc, we will support housing growth. This will increase affordable housing availability, allowing more people to live and work in the area.

Supporting the local economy - we expect the new rail link to bring with it significant local economic growth that will benefit individuals, communities, educational and research establishments and businesses. The new connections will run much deeper than improved transport, with the local advantage cemented as the area becomes recognised as a major national and global competitor.

Get in touch

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⁴. Network Rail - Engines of the Economy: How rail supports our cities. Page 4

⁵. Network Rail - Engines of the Economy: How rail supports our cities. Page 4