



Connecting Bedford and Cambourne

Choosing the preferred alignment

To deliver a service between Bedford and Cambourne, we would need to build a new railway. In the 2021 consultation we presented a range of possible route alignment options for where the railway line could be located.

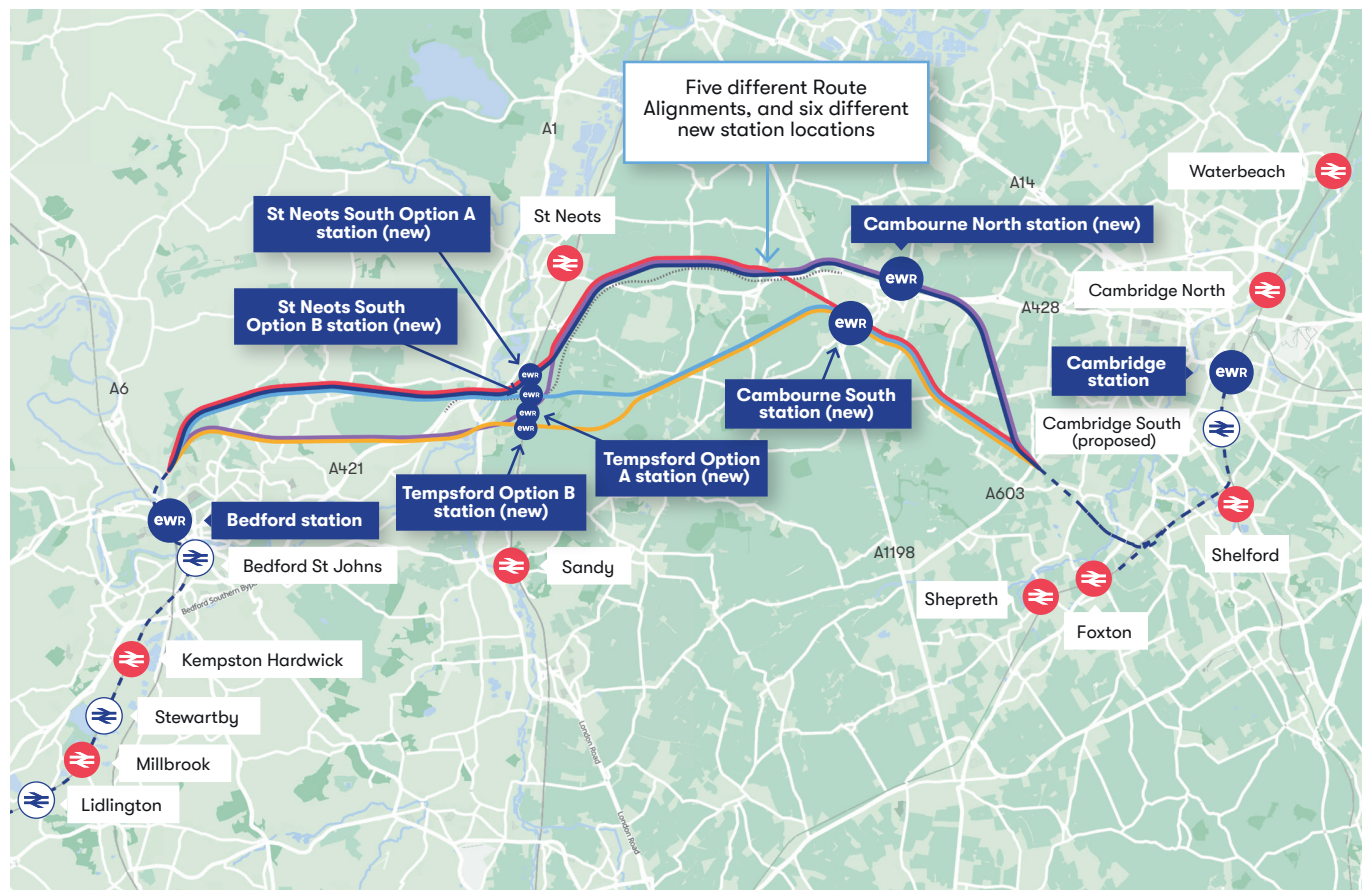
We've reviewed the feedback from the 2021 consultation and undertaken further analysis to conclude that one of our emerging preferences from 2021, Alignment 1, performs better than all other alignments we've considered for this section of the route. Our analysis also showed us that a station near Tempsford (part of Alignment 9) would have greater advantages compared to a station at St Neots South (part of Alignment 1).

Considering this, we've developed a local variation of Alignment 1, which has many of the benefits of that alignment, but also enables a new station at Tempsford. This variant is referred to as Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) and it will now be taken forward for further development.

Here, we provide more information on our assessments and conclusions.

Our emerging preferences at the 2021 consultation

At the 2021 consultation we presented five shortlisted alignment options for comment. Of these alignments 1 and 9 were identified as emerging preferences.



Legend

- Route Alignment 1 - Emerging preference**
St Neots South Option A station to Camboorne North station
- Route Alignment 2**
St Neots South Option A station to Camboorne South station
- Route Alignment 6**
St Neots South Option B station to Camboorne South station
- Route Alignment 8**
Tempsford Option B station to Camboorne South station
- Route Alignment 9 - Emerging preference**
Tempsford Option A station to Camboorne North station
- Other area of East West Rail
- Proposed A428 Alignment
- National Rail station
- Station used by East West Rail services
- Station that may be used by East West Rail services

Alignment 1 would travel northeast from Bedford, pass north of Ravensden, Wilden and Roxton and serve a new St Neots South Option A station. From the St Neots South station, the alignment would follow the

proposed A428 Black Cat improvement scheme and the existing A428 on the north side of the road, passing north of Croxton and Eltisley, to reach a new station located north of Camboorne.

Alignment 9 would travel northeast from Bedford, pass south of Ravensden, Wilden and Roxton and would continue east to serve a new Tempsford Option A station. From Tempsford the alignment would follow the A428 Black Cat improvement scheme and the existing A428 on the north side of the road, passing north of Croxton and Eltisley, to reach a new station located north of Cambourne.

Since the 2021 consultation, we've undertaken further development work on these options, taking on board feedback received during the 2021 consultation. This established that Alignments 1 and 9 remained our preference.

Confirming our preference for Route Alignment 1

We looked again at Alignments 1 and 9, to assess which performed best. Alignment 1 (serving St Neots South and Cambourne North) was found to continue to perform better overall.

Alignment 9 (serving Tempsford and Cambourne North) would lead to the village of Roxton becoming encircled by dual carriageways and the new railway, which would:

- Increase the impact on local residents
- Cut off the village from the open countryside to the south
- Adversely affect the setting of local heritage assets, including the listed A1 bridge over the River Great Ouse

Alignment 9 was also assessed as likely to have greater impacts on the environment and was more expensive than Alignment 1.

A new station at Tempsford

However, following further review of the opportunities associated with a station at either St Neots or Tempsford, it emerged that a station on the East Coast Main Line near Tempsford would perform better than a station at St Neots South. The Tempsford station would:

- Be more likely to enable this development to come forward due to the more consolidated landownership in the vicinity
- Facilitate the re-use of the former RAF Tempsford site, achieving better brownfield over greenfield land usage
- Be expected to achieve greater accessibility for more people due to a lower degree of severance caused by the new A428 dual carriageway, which would be likely to directly impact a development at St Neots; building on the opportunity to strengthen integration of active travel modes
- Be preferable in place-making terms because it would avoid the risk of the new settlement coalescing with the built-up area of St Neots.

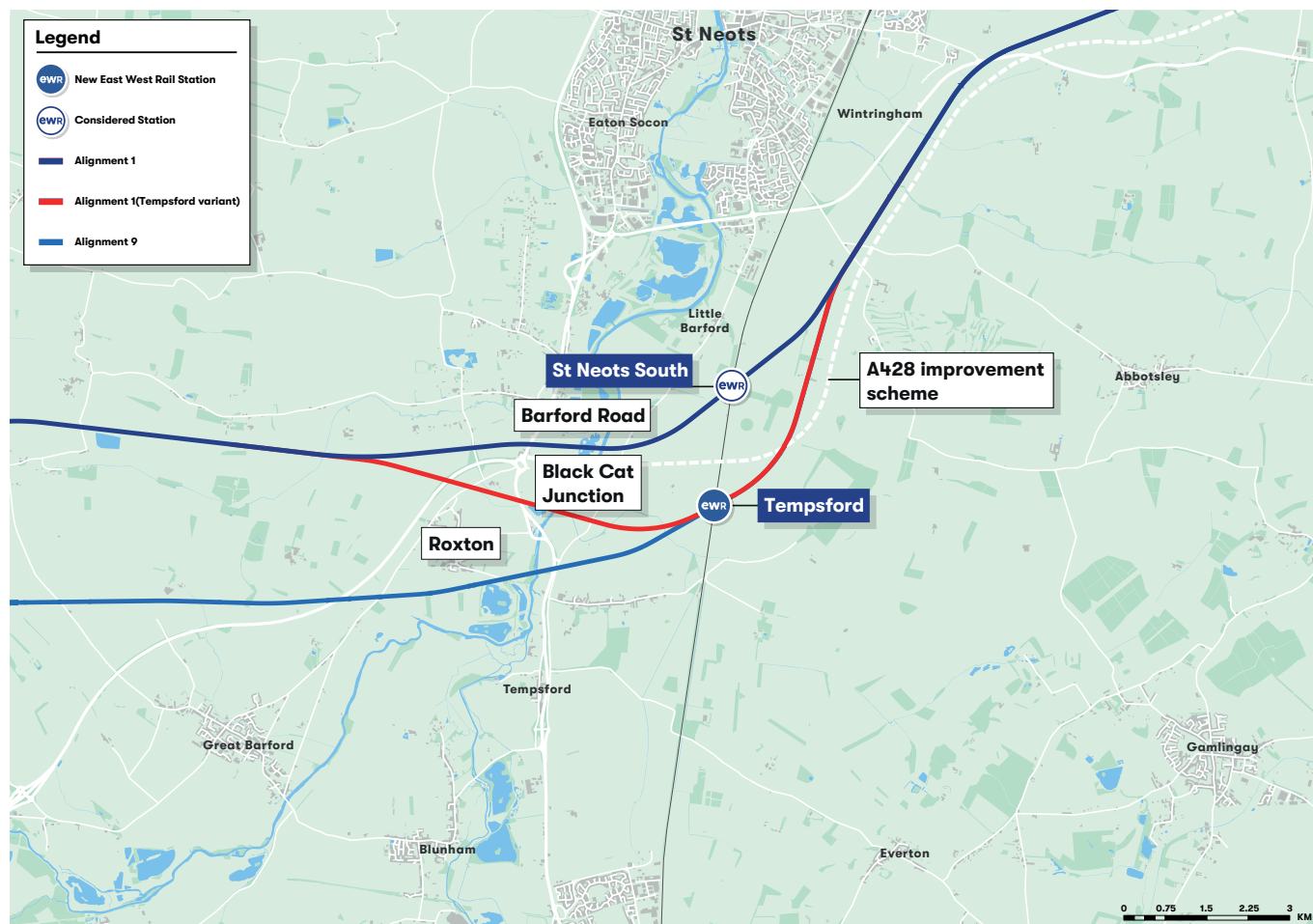
On these grounds our preference is for Alignment 1 for most of its route, but also for a new station to be developed at Tempsford.



Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant)

Having established that Alignment 1 performs better than Alignment 9, but that a station at Tempsford is expected to perform better than a station at St Neots, we developed a local variation of Alignment 1 between Colesden and Little Barford to enable delivery of a station at Tempsford.

This is approximately 1km longer than Alignment 1 and would pass north of Ravensden and Roxton, south of St Neots, and between Roxton to the south and Black Cat Junction to the north. The alignment would then cross over the East Coast Main Line at an approximate location similar to the Tempsford Option A station location, before continuing on the same route as Alignment 9.



We found that Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant):

- Wouldn't be materially different in environmental terms from Alignment 1
- Would eliminate the encirclement of Roxton and mitigate the impact on the setting of heritage assets that would have been caused by Alignment 9
- Would provide a new station at Tempsford and still enable the benefits of Alignment 1 elsewhere on the route to be secured, thereby performing better than Alignment 9 in terms of environmental impact and cost

As such, we've identified Alignment 1 as our preferred route for the majority of its length but have an emerging preference for the localised variation of the route to serve a new station at Tempsford.

Next steps

We intend to take Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant), which serves Cambourne North and Tempsford, forward for further surveys, environmental assessment and design development. This will help us understand how best to minimise impacts and ensure that this option performs as well as possible.

Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) may be subject to adjustment and refinement as a result of our ongoing assessments and design development work. We'll provide further details at the statutory consultation on the design that we propose to include in our application for development consent to enable you to comment on our proposals.

Get in touch

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