

East West Rail:

Your questions answered

What is East West Rail?

East West Rail is an ambitious project to connect Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge. It involves building a brand new railway between Bedford and Cambridge, bringing back into use a section of railway that was closed in the 1960s as well as refurbishing existing railway lines between Bletchley and Bedford.

Why is East West Rail needed?

East West Rail plans to connect communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Cambridge, creating new opportunities for people right across the area by:

- **Making it cheaper and quicker to get around the area** – connecting people to their jobs, homes and families, as well as businesses to their employees, suppliers and customers
- **Supporting new housing to make it more affordable and help your money go further** – so people can afford to live and work in the area, and businesses can afford to create more jobs and increase productivity.

As well as improving quality of life for people locally, it would help businesses by

- **Making places more appealing for people wanting to start and grow businesses** – attracting and retaining the best talent in the region, while encouraging new investment to support the economy
- **Spreading prosperity across the UK** – creating growth for towns and cities outside of London. The National Infrastructure Commission estimated that creating these transport links and supporting the area between Oxford and Cambridge was worth nearly £80bn extra each year for the British economy

What is the East West Railway Company?

The East West Railway Company (EWR Co) was set up in 2017 to develop a railway with customers and communities at its core. We are passionate about building a railway that best serves people living and working between Oxford, Cambridge, Bedford and Milton Keynes, as well as providing the best value for the taxpayer.

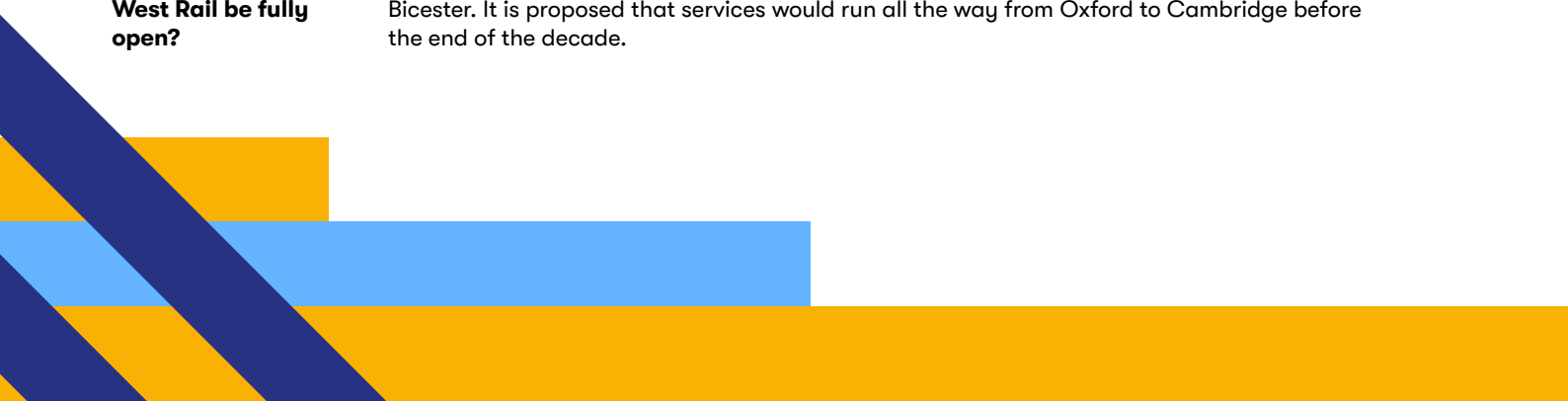
We have a mission to do things differently, to innovate and challenge the status quo in the rail and construction industries. Our distinctive outlook and passion for doing the right thing for our customers and local communities runs through everything we do and every decision we make.

How much will East West Rail cost?

The current cost estimate for building East West Rail all the way from Oxford to Cambridge is around £5bn in 2019 prices. At this early stage in the project's development, particularly between Bedford and Cambridge, there are still significant uncertainties to resolve, and this figure is likely to change as we do more detailed work. We will keep people updated over time.

When will East West Rail be fully open?

East West Rail is opening in phases, and the first phase is already open between Oxford and Bicester. It is proposed that services would run all the way from Oxford to Cambridge before the end of the decade.



How will East West Rail connect with other rail lines?

East West Rail would interchange with several main lines giving passengers access to local and long-distance destinations across the UK, such as Reading, Norwich, Kettering, Leeds, Corby and Nottingham, as well as several stations in London.

How will East West Rail impact the environment?

We're passionate about protecting the environment for the communities we serve and aim to become a net-zero carbon railway. We are exploring options for advancing low carbon design and green energy to power our trains. Unlike in many other projects, where impact on the environment might be an after-thought, we have used environmental data as a fundamental part of our decision-making process, and aim to achieve biodiversity net gain in both the construction and operation of East West Rail.

Travelling by train is one of the most carbon-efficient ways to travel; this railway will allow local people to leave the car at home, helping to reduce road congestion, in favour of a more sustainable form of transport. It will also help people get into town and city centres more quickly, reducing congestion.

Will all new stations on the route be accessible for everyone?

Yes, accessibility is covered by regulations, but we want to do better than that. We will actively be looking for ways to make the new stations accessible for all. We'll be listening to local communities and accessibility groups and asking for their ideas to help us design stations that work for everyone.

What are your estimated journey times?

At the moment we estimate the current journey times by public transport could be reduced to:

- Around 35 minutes between Bedford and Cambridge, a reduction of around 40 minutes compared to the existing bus link
- Around 90 minutes between Oxford and Cambridge, a reduction of around 60 minutes compared to existing rail connections via London

As we design and develop where the exact location of the railway will be, we will need to refine these journey time estimates.

What's happened on East West Rail so far?

Oxford to Bicester: open

- Completed in 2016, this section combined upgrading the track between Oxford and Bicester Village with major improvements to local stations
- Chiltern Railways began running services from Oxford through to London via Bicester in 2017

Bicester to Milton Keynes and Bedford: in planning

- This complex section involves reinstating parts of the old track, upgrading stations, building a new station at Winslow and a huge number of overbridges, footbridges, subways and changes to crossings
- EWR Co and Network Rail are leading a team known as the East West Rail Alliance, who are designing this section

Bedford to Cambridge: in planning

- The team here at the East West Railway Company is developing this section.
- Having identified five promising route options between Bedford and Cambridge, we held an initial non-statutory consultation in early 2019, creating a strong foundation for our design work.
- Following this consultation, we have now selected the Preferred Route Option, and we are concentrating on designing the best alignment – the precise location where the railway will go.
- We will continue to develop the case for East West Rail in order to secure Government backing so the project can proceed from development into delivery

Bedford to Cambridge: the Preferred Route Option

What is the Preferred Route Option between Bedford and Cambridge?

Linking existing stations in Bedford and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy, south of St Neots, this route was the favourite among people who responded to our consultation on route options. It would provide:

- Fast and affordable connections between existing stations in Bedford and Cambridge, and communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy, south of St Neots
- A brand new station for the growing population at Cambourne
- A brand new station in the area between Sandy and St Neots connecting with services to towns including Peterborough and Doncaster, and as far afield as Edinburgh
- Easy access to Bedford town centre, supporting plans to regenerate the town and enabling connections to communities across the Midlands, like Corby and Kettering
- Simple access to Cambridge city centre, and connections across Anglia and Norfolk



A more detailed interactive map is available at eastwestrail.co.uk

How was the Preferred Route Option chosen?

We analysed responses from the public consultation held in 2019 and carried out extensive research, which found that this route:

- Would deliver the best value for taxpayers, returning the most benefit for every pound spent
- Was the most popular option with people who responded to EWR Co's 2019 consultation
- Would deliver the best opportunities for supporting and enhancing the environment

How does EWR Co know this route is the best value for money?

EWR Co worked closely with industry experts and conducted extensive studies to understand the economic impacts of each route, including productivity and job creation. We are confident that for every pound spent on building the railway, this route gives the greatest benefit for passengers and the economy.

Will East West Rail stop at Cambridge South station?

Cambridge South station is a separate project being led by Network Rail. If the station proceeds, we would expect at least some East West Rail services to stop at Cambridge South station. We are working closely with the Cambridge South team to explore this further.

What about the area south of Bedford?

While we believe the case for Route Option E is stronger than for route options that directly serve a proposed Wixams station south of Bedford, we are very keen to ensure that the growing communities in that area are able to benefit from the East West Rail connections running from Oxford to Cambridge.

What do people living and working in the Preferred Route Area need to know?

At present, we are still working to develop the precise alignment that the railway will take within Route Option E. Crucially, before the Route Alignment is chosen, there will be more opportunities for you to comment on the plans and we will continue to use feedback from communities as part of our decision-making process throughout the life of the project.

As part of the next phase of our work, we will need to survey and access land. We will be in touch directly with those whose help we need to take this project forward.

We are doing our best to avoid impacting people, and our aim is to avoid adverse effects in residential areas and existing communities wherever possible. As the project and our design progresses, we will discuss the evolving detail with individual landowners and occupiers directly.

Legal safeguards are already in place for people impacted by projects like ours, and we will also publish our own detailed policies before the statutory consultation.

We will work hard to earn the trust of anyone who might be impacted by the railway, and will be transparent and clear at every stage.

Now that a Preferred Route Option has been chosen, what happens next?

In the months following the announcement, EWR Co will begin work to choose a Preferred Route Alignment. This will include undertaking environmental surveys in the local area, and continuing environmental, economic and technical studies.

We will also be holding events in communities across the Preferred Route Option, so you can meet the team and talk to us about the next steps.

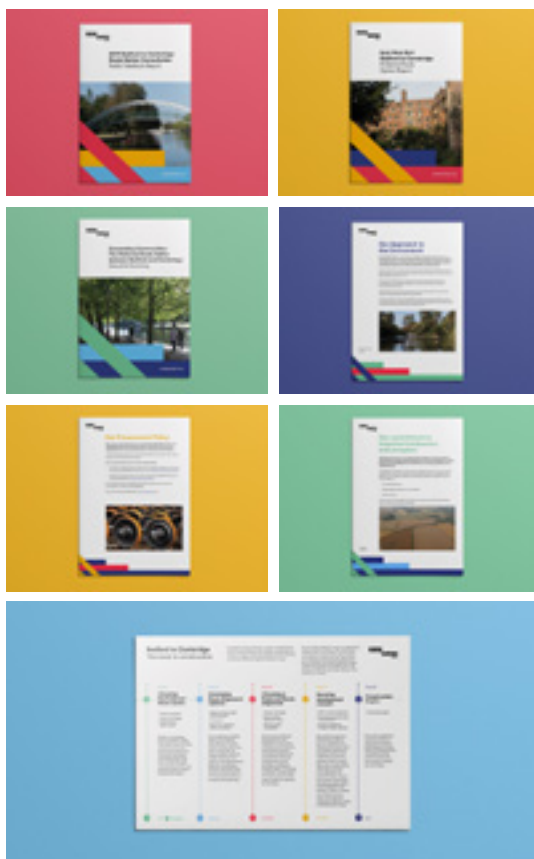
How can people get involved in the next stages of East West Rail?

Whether you prefer talking face to face, online or over the phone and whether you've got lots to share with us, or just want to get the latest news, we have you covered.

Come and meet the team at our events, call, write, email, message or sign up to our newsletters.

In 2020, we'll be launching an online community hub, so if you can't get to our events you can still have a meaningful discussion with the team.

All of the below materials are available online at eastwestrail.co.uk, and you can use any of the below contact methods to ask us to post out hardcopies, or to be added to our newsletter.



Get in touch

- Email us: contact@eastwestrail.co.uk
- Send us a message: www.eastwestrail.co.uk/get-in-touch
- Write to us: FREEPOST EAST WEST RAIL
- Call us: 0330 1340067
- Visit our events: details will be online and advertised

If your preferred method of communicating isn't on the list, please let the team know.