

Our approach to mitigating the impact of noise and vibration on local communities



We recognise that issues such as noise and vibration can be a concern for local communities - not just in terms of the construction that will be needed for this large infrastructure project, but also once train services are up and running. This is an issue that we take very seriously. We are committed to work hard to reduce, mitigate or - where we can - to eliminate disruption for people at every stage of the Project, in planning, during construction and through to our day-to-day operations.

Tailoring our solutions

Our solutions will be specifically designed for the locations and activities that would take place. Each solution we put in place to respond to noise and vibration concerns will need to be considered against the developing plans for the railway, including the specific route alignment between Bedford and Cambridge. Each area has its own unique environment and this plays an important part in how we are planning the railway.

Consequently, while we know some of the methods that could be available to us, it is too early at this stage to know which techniques we will want to adopt. Once our plans and designs move forward, we will be able to consider which measures are the most appropriate and discuss plans with you.

Our approach will be shared during the next statutory consultation once more detail about the Project, including the alignment in some areas, has been established.

Reducing noise and vibration

In line with the Government's Noise Policy¹, we will aim to avoid or minimise negative impacts on the health and quality of life of local residents and communities along the East West Rail route. This will include:

- **A noise and vibration policy** – a clear policy will outline our commitment to managing noise and vibration during both the construction phase of the Project, and once we are operating train services.
- **Comprehensive assessments** – we will use industry-leading computer modelling, which can incorporate information on local geology, to simulate potential noise and vibration impacts along the whole route, as part of comprehensive noise and vibration assessments. The assessments will form part of the Environmental Statement (ES) to support our government Development Consent Order (DCO) application.

1. Noise Policy Statement for England (NPSE), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), 2010
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69533/pb13750-noise-policy.pdf

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- **Community feedback** – as with all aspects of our work, we will be proactive and listen to the views, concerns and suggestions from local residents and future customers so that we can consider these when developing our operations.
- **Low-impact route alignment** – in deciding the track alignment we will always seek to avoid tight corners and gradients, where practicable, as these generate noise. Sometimes we will need to elevate the track, for instance when trains intersect with roads and cross land in a floodplain. However, where it's practicable we will consider building the track low in the landscape. This can help reduce noise and has the benefit of reducing the impact on the landscape. We will seek to design the track to avoid being close to residential areas where practicable.
- **Considerate construction** – all our contractors and suppliers will be required to adhere to our Code of Construction Practice, which we expect will also be required by the DCO. An important part of this will be minimising the impact of their work on users and local residents, through various measures that may include:
 - Using quieter or lower vibration construction methods and equipment, and/or putting up screens to reduce noise from construction work
 - Scheduling particularly noisy activities for weekday, daytime hours rather than evenings or weekends, where possible
 - Encouraging contractors to use prefabricated elements or manufacture components off-site, minimising disruption on site.

Additional considerations

We are committed to considering measures that will reduce noise and vibration. The measures outlined above affect the entire railway. We are also looking at measures that will benefit local communities across the line. These additional measures may include:

- **Choice of trains** - some trains are noisier than others, so we will think carefully about the pros and cons of using particular types of train.
- **Track technology** - the way we design and construct tracks can have an impact on noise and vibration.
- **Noise barriers** - where tracks are likely to create noise and vibration, we will assess what mitigation, such as noise barriers, may be appropriate.
- **Buildings and stations** - we can seek to reduce noise (as well as other negative impacts such as light pollution) in the way we design, locate and build all temporary and permanent structures relating to the railway. For example, in stations, we will consider how PA announcements and other station noise may affect the local community and consider how we can reduce the noise that is generated.

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For more information on East West Rail, visit: www.eastwestrail.co.uk

Get in touch

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