

Response to

East West Rail

Non-Statutory Consultation

June 2021

Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins

Elected Member, Caldecote Ward
(Bourn, Caldecote, Childerley, Kingston, Longstowe, Little Gransden)

Disclaimer

The content of this document is based on the evidence that East West Rail Ltd has placed in the public domain

Introduction

East West Rail (EWR) is a major National Infrastructure Project to establish a strategic railway connecting East Anglia with Central, Southern and Western England. The objective is to provide fast and affordable rail transport for communities between Oxford and Cambridge. This EWR project is part of the overall plans of Government to promote growth in the Oxford Cambridge Arc.

In 2019 EWR carried out a public [consultation from 28 January to 11 March 2019 on five \(5\) broad route options A to E](#). From the feedback, EWR identified a preferred **Option E corridor** from Bedford to Cambridge via Sandy/St Neots and Cambourne South.

East West Rail carried out further refinement and launched a new consultation on 31 March 2021. It identified nine (9) potential alignments, a number of which are outside the Option E corridor previously selected.

These new route alignments go through villages in Caldecote Ward namely Bourn and Highfields Caldecote. The dark blue (alignment 1) and purple (alignment 9) have been identified by EWR as emerging preferences and these go through Highfields. The red (alignment 2), light blue (alignment 6) and yellow (alignment 8) go through Bourn and Kingston.

The potential impact of these new routes on our villages will be significant.

I am responding to this consultation in my capacity as the Elected Ward Councillor.

Route Alignments 1 and 9

In the consultation document, EWR asks that we share our views in particular on the following:

- 1. Because EWR alignments closer to north Cambridge are now being considered, we have looked again at whether we were right to have favoured Route Option E and approaching Cambridge from the south as we confirmed after our last consultation. In particular, we have reviewed our previous assessment that concluded approaching from the south was the better option taking account of a Cambourne North Station outside of Route E to see if we would have made a different decision. We consider that the advantages of approaching Cambridge from the south continue to support this conclusion and that a number of challenges remain for a northern approach even with a Cambourne North station. We'd welcome your comments on our assessment.*

EWR should note that the above Question 1 in the Feedback form has been described by some as "convoluted and turgid". I agree. The middle section is especially incomprehensible. But we will make some sense of it.

It is my view that you have not done your homework at all well in taking the route through a Cambourne North Station and then approaching Cambridge from the South. In selecting Route alignments 1 and 9, you seem to have completely ignored Bourn Airfield, a major development site that is in the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan. In addition, Bourn Quarter, the employment site on the airfield as well as All Angels Park, a new development of 66 houses in Highfields Caldecote do not seem to have come into your assessment whatsoever.

Route Alignments 1 and 9 cut across from the proposed Cambourne North Station across Bourn Airfield right across the proposed location of Mixed Commercial Residential section via a 10-12 meter high viaduct. The alignment then goes on an embankment of similar height right across the historic open fields in front of Highfields Caldecote, an area that is earmarked as open park and drainage ponds for Bourn Airfield new village. Then it goes on to clip the edge of All Angels Park.

Did you actually think to talk to the Local Planning Authority to find out if your proposed routes would sit well within the current adopted local plan? It seems highly unlikely.

The strategic Cambourne to Cambridge busway, policy TSCSC 21 of the Local Transport Strategy of Cambridge and South Cambridge (TSCSC) adopted by the

Cambridgeshire County Council in 2014, is also affected. This busway is the only transport solution for this A428 corridor. Yet, your proposal completely ignores that too as the proposed viaduct and embankment would block it off, requiring re-routing or mitigation. Again, it seems communications with the Greater Cambridge Partnership who are delivering this busway, has been little to non-existent.

To put it in context, route alignments 1 and 9 which EWR have indicated are emerging as preferred option will result in

1. 150+ units demolished or undeliverable on Bourn Airfield. More units would be affected, including schools, by the additional noise from the train line.
2. 9 houses would be demolished in All Angels Park, unless the alignment is moved further away from that development.
3. Several houses close to the route at the top of Highfields and further down the village would suffer noise levels greater than the acceptable threshold
4. A strategic transport route would need to be re-routed or diverted affecting its delivery.
5. A local fitness business would be completely wiped out, taking away their life's work and means of livelihood.
6. The historic open character setting of Highfields Caldecote would be forever destroyed by the proposed 10-12m embankment. It would also sever the village.
7. It is absolutely ridiculous to be considering such high structures along the highest point of those proposed route alignments. Highfields is at 72m above sea level.

One can only conclude therefore that all of the above did not feature in your analysis. One of the reasons cited in your consultation document for preferring these alignments is (taken from Full Consultation Technical Report)

9.8.7. The evidence EWR Co has used in relation to the comparison of Route Alignment Options above so far suggests that options serving Cambourne North are likely to deliver housing and economic growth advantages that would outweigh factors in favour of other Route Alignment Options.

Yet, your analysis has failed to take account of existing planned developments! In trying to enable a Government-led growth agenda, your plans now threaten a local-led adopted plan for local growth. I would remind you to revisit paragraphs 9.8.8 to 9.8.10 and in particular

9.8.10 It should be noted that these are emerging preferred options, which are subject to change should further evidence come to light that concludes that Cambourne South would be a better location for delivering against housing delivery objectives. None of the five shortlisted options are being discounted at this stage

In the light of the above, one can only question the depth of detail to which your analysis of the approach to Cambridge North has been done. Infact, it seems there has not been the same level of rigour applied to this option as has been done for Cambridge south approach.

What is the reason for being wedded to a Cambridge South approach?.

It seems rather odd that a railway line would take the type of detour that you are proposing for these route alignments only to then go back south, across historic village landscapes causing substantial harm to existing communities along its path.

I therefore urge you to revisit your analysis of the Cambridge North approach, conduct it to the same degree you have done for other routes, and give the villages that are on the Northern approach route the opportunity to scrutinise your analysis.

So, no, you were not right in your assessment that concluded approaching Cambridge from the south was the better option taking account of a Cambourne North Station. It is my view that the challenges of Route Alignments 1 and 9 far outweigh those that you have stated for a Cambridge north approach.

If you insist on using either Alignment 1 or 9, then you must consider significant mitigation measures which may include replacing the viaduct and embankment with a tunnel or cutting at/below ground level. This no doubt would add significantly to the cost of delivering the railway.

Route Alignment 2, 6 and 8

These route alignments go through the proposed Cambourne South Station, and then through Bourn village and onward to Kingston, both of the latter two in Caldecote Ward.

1. The alignments sit in a cutting reducing the visual impact on Bourn. The alignment also severs the village as it crosses The Broadway and The Drift.
2. The major impact will be the need to demolish some homes along this route, which is quite undesirable.
3. The Bourn Valley is where the most visual impact will happen because of the 10-15m viaduct that will be crossing the valley. That area is more sparsely populated and so will have less visual and impact relative to other sections of the line.
4. The combination of viaduct and embankment also cuts through the top end of Kingston Parish taking off the south west corner of North Barn Farm.

Whichever route alignments are followed from a Cambourne Station, there will be devastation caused to villages in my ward. This is not acceptable.

Customer Experience and railway operations

2. Please share your views on: •

How you might use EWR services - for example for work, to visit friends and family, or to get to leisure destinations?

- *Based on your experience of rail travel in the UK what do you think are the main areas that could be improved?*
- *If you don't currently travel by rail, what are the reasons for this? Is there anything that would persuade you to use rail services?*
- *Are there ways in which we could help improve your entire journey? For example:*
 - *How and where you research your trip*
 - *The actual rail journey itself*
 - *Getting from your home at the start of the journey, to the point that you reach your end destination*
- *How could we support our net zero carbon ambitions through the delivery of services to customers? For example, through the design of stations, the trains we operate or through forms of active travel, for example cycling or walking.*

I am a local business owner and work from home. I have no commuting needs, and unlikely to use the railway for visiting friends/family or for leisure.

I avoid travelling by rail if at all possible. Getting to a train station without driving is difficult and the fares are overpriced. I find it is usually cheaper and quicker to drive. If the fares were priced more competitively, then I might try using the train.

To contribute anything significant to the net zero world, rolling stock must not be diesel. Any use of fossil fuel should be avoided completely and promotion of clean energy use should be paramount.

For many villages along the route, especially those in the middle, having a station at Cambourne (north or south) is irrelevant as they could not use it. However, creating cycleways and footpaths linking villages and to the Cambourne station would go some ways to encouraging using these active modes to travel the "last mile" to the station.

You could provide grants to villages in the area or along the route to use in net-zero carbon projects for their communities. This could be part of mitigation measures for communities that will be blighted without getting benefit of easy access to the stations.

Clapham Green to The Eversdens

38. Please rank your preference for the proposed Clapham Green to The Eversdens alignment options.

I do not have sufficient information from you to enable me rank any of these alignments. Both are detrimental to the residents in my ward.

We have repeatedly requested that EWR provide noise maps to enable us assess the noise impacts of the proposal, but none has been forthcoming.

We have repeatedly asked for representations of the proposed viaducts and embankments to enable us assess the visual impacts of these structures on our communities but that has also not been forthcoming.

The paucity of relevant data to enable proper assessment is staggering.