

Cambridge NE Area Action Plan
Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
PO Box 700
Cambridge
CB1 0JH

1 Grafton Mews
Midsummer Boulevard
Milton Keynes
MK9 1FB

02 October 2020

Dear Sir/ Madam

Regulation 18 Consultation - Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan

The East West Railway Company ('EWR Co') would like to take this opportunity to submit representations on the above consultation. The representations are submitted via email in the form of this letter and include comments on specific sections of the Area Action Plan, relevant to the East West Rail ('EWR') project.

As you are aware, on 30 January 2020 EWR Co announced the preferred route option between Bedford and Cambridge¹. This preferred option will link existing stations in Bedford and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy, south of St Neots (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Proposed EWR Central Section route (Image from <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/central-section>)

¹ https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement/Files/d09b928460/B_Version_EAS018_Summary_290120_Digital_B.pdf

The preferred route option arrives into Cambridge Station from the south where a change of train will allow customers to connect with Cambridge North Station (see Figure 2). Through this consultation, we are keen to engage with the combined authority to explore ways in which the delivery of the railway could maximise opportunities within the North East Cambridge Area.



Figure 2: Extract of proposed EWR Central Section route (detailed map) (Image from <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/central-section>)

We welcome the acknowledgement of the East West Rail project in Section 2. We strongly agree that the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan will play an important role in bringing forward thousands of new homes and jobs along these nationally important corridors (p.26).

The sections of the Draft Area Action Plan we would like to comment on and make recommendations are as follows:

4) Climate Change, water and biodiversity

We are pleased that Section 4: **Climate change, water and biodiversity** states that *the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan has been fundamentally shaped by the requirement for it to be a low-carbon, low-impact, biodiverse exemplar* (p.47). Furthermore, we welcome the statements in Section 7: **Connectivity** that *development at North East Cambridge will shift travel away from the private car, at a level not seen in Greater Cambridge before.*

To achieve this the Area Action Plan encourages the use of sustainable travel modes, as well as limiting car use and parking significantly (p.181).

Travelling by train is one of the most carbon-efficient ways to travel; EWR will allow local people to leave the car at home, helping to reduce road congestion, in favour of a more sustainable form of transport across the region.

We also know how important it is that the railway is constructed, operated and maintained in an environmentally responsible way that minimises negative environmental impacts and in fact realises opportunities for improvement. We aim to become a net-zero carbon railway and are committed to achieving biodiversity net gain. We are looking at ways to advance low carbon design and green energy to power our trains.

Recommendation

As an organisation we are continuously thinking how the delivery of EWR can help unlock opportunities to increase active travel modes, as well as other connecting modes of public transport, as credible alternatives to private car. EWR Co would therefore welcome the opportunity to work with the combined authority to identify joined up ways to improve active travel (including both cycling and pedestrian routes) around North East Cambridge and into both Cambridge North Station and Cambridge Station, to facilitate better access into the EWR network.

6) Jobs, homes and services

EWR will influence the development of the places it serves in terms of economic growth, investment and jobs and supporting the delivery of new homes by potentially unlocking land for development and providing more sustainable transport connections. We therefore concur that *North East Cambridge is a strategically important economic driver for Greater Cambridge and further afield and there is a huge demand for more business space and homes as a result* (p.134).

Recommendation

The combined authority should set aspirational targets for housing and employment growth within North East Cambridge to take advantage of the more sustainable transport connections presented by EWR and to meet the aspirations of the UK government for growth across the Oxford-Cambridge Arc. This aligns with Draft Policy 13a: Housing which makes provision for at least 8,000 net dwellings and Draft Policy 12a: Business which plans for a range of spaces supporting jobs across all forms of business and industry which could provide up to 20,000 new jobs in the area.

This concludes our representations on the Draft North East Cambridge Area Action Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require clarifications or any further information.

Yours sincerely,

Kirsty Young

Head of Programme Consents
East West Railway Company