

New East West Rail map highlights improved links to UK holiday destinations

New materials* launched this October half term show some of the UK tourist hotspots that will be more accessible once East West Rail (EWR) services are up and running. With its intersections with the UK's key strategic railway arteries, some of the UK's most loved destinations will now be more accessible by rail, offering communities between Oxford, Bletchley, Bedford, Cambourne and Cambridge more options and faster journey times.

Whether it's a trip to witness the magical River of Light festival on Liverpool's waterfront, explore the medieval narrow lanes of York or a cosy escape to the Cotswolds or the Lakes, EWR's key interchanges with the UK's major railway lines will bring some of the UK's most popular tourist destinations within easier reach for places like Bedford, Cambourne and Bletchley.

Once the whole route is opened up, East West Rail will connect with five major rail routes: the Midland Main Line, West Coast Main Line, East Coast Main Line, West Anglia Main Line and connections to the Great Western Railway. These interchanges will bring some of the UK's major cities, national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty one step closer for communities along the route.

The interchanges will also unlock access to other UK airports, with links to Stansted Airport and Luton Airport, for instance, much easier for local residents.

The UK-wide opportunities that EWR offers for improved leisure travel during school holidays are in addition to the promising tourism boost that EWR will bring to tourist hotspots along the route. Whether for shopping at Bicester Village, skiing at Xscape in Milton Keynes or a trip to Centre Parcs in Bedfordshire, EWR will help people access more leading attractions in the area – particularly for younger people.

Jerome Baddley, Director of Sustainability at Center Parcs, said:

“Sustainability and carbon reduction goals are central to our business, so we are excited at the prospect of more of our guests being able to use a greener form of transport in East West Rail to travel to our village in Woburn Forest. The new railway will connect communities and provide our guests, including those who don't drive, with a new opportunity to visit us in a sustainable, stress-free, and reliable way.”

Jill Farnsworth, Chief Executive, MyMiltonKeynes Business Improvement District, said:

“East West Rail will be a huge boost for businesses and major leisure destinations in central Milton Keynes and beyond, attracting inward investment to the local economy and connecting people to job opportunities and enjoyable days out across the city.

“The new railway will be a catalyst for sustainable growth, providing people with quicker everyday journeys they can enjoy in a hassle-free way and we are excited to see it start operating its first passenger services.”

Scudamore’s Punting Company in Cambridge said:

“The anticipated enhancement in rail connectivity to Cambridge offers promise, and we hope it could positively impact accessibility and provide a gentle boost to the city's tourism sector.”

The new connections and travel opportunities feature in a new animation published on the EWR Community Hub, where EWR Co is asking communities to list the UK destinations they would consider travelling to by rail once EWR passenger services are running. To get involved, visit <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/>.

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***Media assets**

- **Animation:** <https://youtu.be/b6sItYzI6Ts>
- **Animation embed code:** <iframe width="560" height="315" src="https://www.youtube.com/embed/b6sItYzI6Ts?si=9Ci0Zw5TawLZRHNY" title="YouTube video player" frameborder="0" allow="accelerometer; autoplay; clipboard-write; encrypted-media; gyroscope; picture-in-picture; web-share" allowfullscreen></iframe>
- **Map:** Available on request

About the East West Rail project

East West Rail intends to create a new direct connection between Oxford and Cambridge. Serving communities across the area, it intends to bring faster journey times and lower transport costs as well as ease pressure on local roads.

East West Rail is planned to be delivered in three Connection Stages:

- Connection Stage One: Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes
- Connection Stage Two: Oxford to Bedford
- Connection Stage Three: Oxford to Cambridge

Network Rail was responsible for developing the first part of the East West Rail, connecting Oxford with Bicester, and is a partner in a construction alliance to deliver Connection Stage 1 of the project, where East West Railway Company (EWR Co) and Network Rail are acting as the Department for Transport's joint sponsors.

EWR Co is now developing the route to enable services to run to Cambridge via Bedford and plans to seek statutory powers under the Planning Act 2008, following a period of extensive consultation.

About East West Railway Company

East West Railway Company (EWR Co) was set up by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2018 to develop East West Rail, a railway with customers and communities at its core.

We have a mission to innovate and challenge the status-quo in the rail and construction industries, leading to a more efficient and cost-effective project delivery, and a great experience for passengers and the communities we serve. Our vision is delivery of a safe and secure railway that is better for the customer; cheaper for the taxpayer; delivered quicker than before and is greener for the environment.

Our distinctive outlook and commitment to doing the right thing for our customers and local communities runs through everything we do and every decision we make.