

Our approach to assessing options

Assessing the relative merits of options is critical to making the right decisions for the communities East West Rail would serve. To help us do this, we have used Assessment Factors to appraise possible infrastructure options, as set out in this factsheet.

Where applied, the Assessment Factors enable options to be compared against a design baseline or comparator. Each Assessment Factor includes a number of supporting considerations. They provide a consistent framework for decision-making on infrastructure options and a robust basis for identifying preferred options.

Our approach

The Assessment Factors are a set of considerations which are aligned with the project objectives and requirements set by the Department for Transport (DfT). They comprise 15 separate factors, each of which is considered in the evaluation process and enable the relative performance of options to be compared against one another. These Assessment Factors can be found in the table on the next page.

Number	Assessment factors: Business case and customers
1	Transport user benefits – Includes elements that drive generalised journey times, origin to destination journey times, access times to stations and number of interchanges. This factor also considers the quality of journeys and crowding compared to current conditions, as well as the benefits of modal shift (i.e. less congestion and environmental benefits from people using rail over other modes of transport).
2	Potential to unlock economic growth – Considers potential for wider employment and productivity benefits of improved east-west connectivity and the opportunity for stations served by EWR to support housing growth within their catchment areas.
3, 4 & 5	Cost and affordability – Considers the cost of bringing the project into operation, including land acquisition, construction and any adaptation and mitigation works, including associated risk. This factor also considers overall affordability based on potential income and other benefits identified in Assessment Factor 1 and Assessment Factor 2.

Number	Assessment factors: Network capability
6	Short distance connectivity to support commuting travel into key employment hubs (current and future) – Considers journey time between housing centres and employment hubs.
7	Short distance passenger services – Considers impact on the interchange-to-interchange station journey times and the journey times between intermediate stations across the EWR route.
8	Rail passenger connectivity to existing main lines – Considers ease of interchange, e.g. platform-to-platform distance, level change/accessibility, stopping frequency and timetable alignment.

Number	Assessment factors: Network capability
9	Long distance passenger services – Strategic consideration of the extent to which EWR facilitates long distance passenger services beyond the proposed Oxford to Cambridge route.
10	Satisfying existing and future freight demand – Considers the potential to meet freight demand, as anticipated by the freight industry, through active provision for freight paths.

Number	Assessment factors: Railway operations
11	Performance and reliability – Considers the ability of the railway to provide a service that meets or exceeds customer, stakeholder and industry expectations.
12	Alignment with wider railway strategy/infrastructure – Considers the extent to which the railway takes account of potential future changes.

Number	Assessment factors: Deliverability
13	Deliverability – Considers the risk of harm to the workforce and public during the construction, operation and maintenance of the railway. This factor also considers the complexity of constructing and maintaining the railway efficiently while minimising disruption.

Number	Assessment factors: Environment and society
14	Environmental impacts and opportunities – Considers the potential impacts on, and opportunities to enhance the environment as well as local and regional socio-economic conditions not considered in other factors. Examples of considerations include noise, ecology, landscape and visual impacts.

Number	Assessment factors: Local Plans
15	Consistency with Local Plans (adopted and emerging) – Considers impacts on and opportunities to support development allocations and consistency with development plans.

Other considerations, including stakeholder feedback

In making decisions, some Assessment Factor results may be given greater weight than others as they are considered particularly important in the particular context of the project element being considered.

Where appropriate, the Assessment Factors and their supporting considerations have been updated and refined to reflect the stage of the project development.


The feedback received from all stakeholders, including feedback received during consultations, is also considered as part of the option selection process.

Get in touch

If you have any questions, please get in touch using the details below:

 eastwestrail.co.uk

 contact@eastwestrail.co.uk

 0330 134 0067

 FREEPOST EAST WEST RAIL