Appendix 15: Table 12.1 - Engagement since the close of the 2021 consultation – Business, industry and academia stakeholder feedback

Matter raised	EWR Co Response
Comments made that the route must be accessible end-to-end.	We're committed to delivering a railway that is inclusive, and we believe that stations must be designed to be accessible for a wide range of end users, including disabled people, older people, people with young children and people with luggage. We are carefully considering the needs of different users, including disabled people, people with visible or non-visible health conditions, pushchair users and older people, as we develop our proposals. Our dedicated Head of Inclusion ensures our inclusion strategy, 'East West Rail for All', is followed, and we set up an Accessibility Advisory Panel to find accessible solutions to our services and make inclusive decisions throughout the project. Being able to access all areas of the station, as well as getting on and off trains easily, is paramount to all users, so all our new stations will be built to industry standards and guidance, including the Office for Rail Regulations' Accessible travel policy – Guidance for train and station operators (March 2021). Our stations will have step-free access, providing ramps where required for access on and off trains, wide gates (where gatelines are installed), trained staff available for assistance and regularly maintained modern lifts. We'll provide more information on station design at the statutory consultation. The Office for Rail Regulations' Accessible travel policy – Guidance for train and station operators (March 2021) sets out how rail companies must help older and disabled customers. Currently, customers can pre-book assistance at stations ahead of their rail journey, however assistance can also be provided to people who have not booked in advance. We would have trained staff at all stations who can provide booked and unbooked assistance for customers, giving people a choice to pre-book or be spontaneous, ensuring that everyone can turn up and go. Further information about assistance booking app can be found at National Rail Enquiries - Passenger Assistance App.

It was suggested that active travel should be encouraged more.	We are committed to encouraging active travel and we will focus on integrating this with existing and future regional and local plans and planning strategies. We will seek to deliver a real step-change in the quality of active travel infrastructure throughout the EWR corridor, so that travelling by bike and on foot becomes a realistic and attractive choice for short journeys. This could then serve as a catalyst for greatly improved active travel infrastructure nationwide, bringing associated health and economic benefits to communities. EWR stations would seek to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We will ensure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs. Options for walking, wheeling and cycling could include new and improved routes, new or altered bus services and on-demand services that could provide a door-to-door service between the station and a customer's destination, timed to connect with the train service. This could also include cycle storage requirements at stations. More information will be shared at the statutory consultation.
Comments were made that reducing car dependency, decarbonisation and air quality are big concerns in Oxfordshire and the wider area.	We take our commitment to delivering sustainable transport seriously. We're developing the project in line with UK Government policy and law, such as the Clean Air Strategy, and will continue to consider impacts on air quality (including CO_2 emissions) throughout the design process. We'll seek to work with local authorities to understand the current situation in communities and how to consider relevant Air Quality Management Areas as we develop our proposals. We will produce a PEIR to describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals – allowing them to be avoided or reduced as far as reasonably practicable – as well as any potential beneficial environmental impacts. The PEIR will include information regarding the baseline air quality environment and the relevant air quality standards and targets. The likely risks from construction activities and potential impacts from operation, including identification of mitigation and control measures, will also be included and will form elements to be presented at the statutory consultation. We'll then submit an Environmental Statement as part of the DCO application, which will assess potential changes in Nitrogen Oxides (NOx) and fine particulates

	(known as $PM_{2.5}$ and PM_{10}) and dust. This assessment will follow best practice and guidance such as that set by the Institute of Air Quality Management and other recognised bodies. Our team will look to reduce the impact the new railway may have on air quality as far as is reasonably practicable. We'll consider what vehicles and equipment will be used during the construction and operation of EWR, the routes construction vehicles will take to work sites, and how to manage work sites to avoid and reduce any dust creation. In 2021, the Department for Transport's Transport Decarbonisation Plan set out an ambition to remove all diesel-only trains from the rail network by 2040. We are committed to running a sustainable railway in the long term, with reduced emissions, including for carbon, NOx and particulates. Therefore, we are exploring how we could introduce new and emerging technologies in the long-term train fleet. We will share information about this at the statutory consultation. We are committed to encouraging active travel and we will focus on integrating this with existing and future regional and local plans and planning strategies. We will seek to deliver a real step-change in the quality of active travel infrastructure throughout the EWR corridor, so that travelling by bike and on foot becomes a realistic and attractive choice for short journeys. This could then serve as a catalyst for greatly improved active travel infrastructure nationwide, bringing associated health and economic benefits to communities. EWR stations would seek to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We will ensure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs.
A comment was made that a southern approach to Cambridge would connect the Biomedical Campus and the city will benefit from growth and development.	At the 2021 consultation, we expressed our preference for EWR to take a southern approach into Cambridge (SATC), serving Cambridge Station and the new station at Cambridge South. This consisted of a route which served a station to the north of Cambourne and then travelled southeast joining the Shepreth Branch Line to the south of Harston. We invited your feedback on this preference.

Some comments were received that both north and south Cambridge would be equally served by a new railway line as the distance into Cambridge is roughly the same.	Since the consultation, we have looked again at a Northern Approach to Cambridge (NATC) and an updated NATC design was developed as part of our Affordable Connections Project (ACP) work. By relaxing the requirement to operate an even-interval clockface timetable, and in response to your feedback, we have developed a revised NATC which would enable four EWR trains per hour to use the same route as previously route, but with significantly reduced infrastructure. The four-tracking which was previously required through Cambridge would be reduced to use the existing two tracks from the proposed Milton Junction to Coldham's Lane. Between Coldham's Lane and Cambridge Station, the West Anglia Main Line (WAML) would be increased to four tracks. This option would remove the need to demolish commercial and residential property, avoid the need to build on Common Land, and remove the need re-build a number of road and river bridges in Cambridge. The SATC was also developed further to reduce vertical heights of embankments on the approach to Cambridge and consideration of a potential amendment to the station infrastructure at Cambridge North station. Further information can be found in the Economic and Technical Report produced as part of the ACP. However, we still believe that the SATC would provide greater opportunities to unlock economic growth across the region (and at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus in particular) and would deliver greater overall connectivity and greater flexibility to extend EWR services in the future. For these reasons, we continue to select the SATC as our preferred approach to Cambridge. You can read more about our reasons for this in the Route Update Report.
Comments were made that the Aylesbury Spur is integral to realising the benefits of EWR in this Buckinghamshire area	We are continuing to explore options on how to connect Aylesbury, and are in discussion with our colleagues in the Department for Transport and Network Rail. We are working with the Government to understand whether there is a viable business case to continue work on an Aylesbury connection.
It was suggested for EWR Co to share the economic case to the business community.	EWR is an investment that is complementary to other activity that the Government may undertake to grow areas around the country, enabling growth to the UK economy as a whole. We are developing our business case to underpin decisions about how the railway will be built and delivered. We will follow government guidance, procedure and best practice when we create our business case. This includes, but is not limited to, the HM Treasury's Green Book and the Department for Transport's Transport Analysis Guidance. Developing the business case for the

	project is an iterative process and ongoing work is underway to gather more evidence, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. We will make sure that we have a broad range of evidence to give decision makers a good understanding of the costs, benefits and strategic merits of the scheme. We continue to learn from other comparable infrastructure projects to inform our approach to delivering the railway. We'll use a range of techniques to estimate costs and monitor and manage risk. This will include consideration of reference class forecasting, sensitivity analysis, quantified risk analyses and optimism bias, in building the commercial case. Value engineering and innovative approaches to design, construction, and operation of the railway, will help us to monitor and manage costs to minimise the likelihood of overspend. More information on cost estimates and the economic benefits of the scheme will be presented at the statutory consultation. The business case will develop iteratively over a period of years, with approval of the final business case being required before construction can commence.
Concerns were raised about the length of journey times and congestion on the road networks from St Neots to Cambridge, during construction.	We will explore how we can provide new opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the new station, and how we can make sure there is good access for pedestrians, cyclists, as well as good bus links. We will undertake a Transport Assessment of impact on the strategic and local highway networks, road safety, and local sustainable modes of transport, including public transport. Outcomes of this will initially be reported in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) published at the statutory consultation and then within Environmental Statement (ES) submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application. The assessment will consider impact of construction on the road network, such as changes to existing traffic patterns because of predicted construction traffic and the suitability of roads, including those around the new station. Mitigation measures will be set out in the CoCP, or equivalent document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State as part of the DCO application. As mentioned, compliance with the CoCP will be secured through a requirement of the DCO.
A concern was raised about the impact on communities during construction of the railway.	We're aware that construction activities and traffic could have an impact on local residents and businesses, such as through dust or noise, and we will manage this appropriately in accordance with the best practice for projects of this type. We will also consider lessons learnt from the construction of Connection Stage 1 (CS1) in order to improve our approach. The CoCP (or

	equivalent document) will give information about provisions aimed at reducing disruption to local communities and mitigating impacts on the wider environment. Compliance with the CoCP will be secured through a Requirement of the DCO.
Questions were raised about the connection between Oxford and Milton Keynes. Stakeholders were keen to understand the programme and whether the schedule was on time. Other questions raised included the frequency of service, the class of trains and whether a train operator had been announced. Comments made that EWR Co should communicate the benefits of the project to businesses more as some still think it is only Oxford to Cambridge. Suggestions included communicating more widely with partnerships like the PRP Network and Greater Cambridge partnership to amplify the messaging to the business community.	Our aim is to have trains running between Oxford and Milton Keynes by 2025. We will not introduce a service that would be unreliable for our passengers or cause delays elsewhere on the railway, so we are working closely with Network Rail and DfT to ensure that this service will be reliable from day one. The frequency and timetable of EWR services between Oxford and Milton Keynes is being finalised and will be confirmed when this part of the line is closer to being operational. We are considering all consultation responses and feedback as the concept of operation and customer proposition are both developed for the railway, including on the needs and expectations of customers with regard to rolling stock and train classes. Chiltern Railways will operate the first stage of East West Rail services between Oxford and Milton Keynes. No decision has been made yet on the operating model for the full EWR line. When EWR is closer to being fully open and operational, we will work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) to decide which train operating company will operate EWR services. During the ten-week consultation period for the 2021 non-statutory consultation, we held a series of online events including 32 online meetings with a range of stakeholders which included business groups. Following the 2021 consultation, we have continued with in-person conversations with our stakeholders and have held 50 meetings with stakeholders within business, industry and academia to discuss the EWR scheme. We're aware people want to understand the specific benefits EWR would provide their local communities and businesses. As the design develops, we'll be able to provide more detail on what these benefits would look like, and we'll work with local authorities and communities to refine and shape these plans in line with Local Plans and wider development.

	We communicate with communities, including the business community, and individuals in a number of ways, including a regular email newsletter, public information events, the project website and via local media. We'll keep communications channels under review to make sure that it's easy for people to receive updates on our work as the project progresses.
Comments were made that the demand for east west connections will be impacted due to the working from home policies. It was stated that in some areas like the north of Oxford, there is an expectation of upcoming growth and development. This will create a greater demand for connectivity. Short distance additional uses will add up to significant changes to rail use in such areas. Comments were made that there is changing demand on usage for rail because of the movement of people. There is a need to look at the movements of people around businesses and how to connect the businesses to sustain them. As family structure and work style changes, there is a need for multi-directional travel for employment, accommodation, and leisure. Connectivity via rapid transit systems is needed to support this model.	While no consensus has formed about long-term rail demand in the UK, we have started testing the possible impact a long-term increase in working from home could have on the route. Notwithstanding this, EWR would address a fundamental lack of east-west connectivity in the area and the benefits should not be considered based on potential short-term fluctuations in demand. EWR would be a long-term investment that would provide sustainable economic growth, help to attract investment and connect communities along the route for decades to come. During Covid-19, rail demand was significantly reduced as people preferred to avoid public transport. However, since the end of the pandemic, DfT have publicised that rail passenger numbers have increased to nearly the pre-pandemic levels. We'll continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process. As part of the business case, we continue to monitor rail demand and undertake sensitivity testing with regards to long term demand changes, helping to shape our modelling. Home to many key businesses, academic institutions and with a growing population, the region will continue to need good transport connectivity. Rail remains a vital, alongside other modes of transport, in supporting communities, and helping businesses to deliver economic growth across the region and beyond. As the design develops, we'll work with local authorities and communities to refine and shape our plans in line with Local Plans and wider development.
Concerns were raised about how people will get to and from the stations.	One of our core priorities is to increase connectivity across the Oxford to Cambridge region, which includes travel to and from EWR stations. EWR stations would seek to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We will ensure

Comments were raised about EWR Co's plans regarding getting to and from stations feeding into local connectivity strategies along the route. EWR Co was encouraged to work with these local strategies.	that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs. We will work with local stakeholders to develop an integrated planning approach, promoting and prioritising both active and sustainable transport modes, including the provision of secure cycle parking facilities and safe walking and cycling routes. We will also continue working with other organisations, including bus operators, to seek to improve facilities, including interfaces and interchange with bus services at stations, and the provision of onward travel information. Although we are not responsible for bus routes, we have noted requests to consider access to the station from rural areas and surrounding villages, including Clapham and Great Barford. Although sustainable modes will be prioritised, we recognise that access by car will still be required, so we will also consider the local road network around EWR stations and any potential alterations required, as well as how much parking new stations may need. While further design work is required, we have placed a particular emphasis on how it can encourage people to access the new EWR stations by cycle. This will require further consideration to identify the correct solution for each local area, which might include new bridges or underpasses so that people can cross from one side of the railway to the other, or potentially cycle paths running alongside the railway line where these would integrate into the wider area and improve connectivity. Further information about station design will be presented at the statutory consultation.
There was support for the line to be electrified.	We are continuing to work with the Government to review long term traction options for the railway and electrification is one of the options being considered. We will need to ensure the railway aligns with relevant policy and legislation for a net zero carbon UK by 2050. We are committed to running a sustainable railway. This includes the use of greener traction power in the long term. While diesel trains are being used to enable the opening of the first part of the railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes, we are exploring how to introduce new and

	emerging technologies in the long-term train fleet and will be seeking input from bidders across the market and will ensure they understand the company's environmental goals. Information about this aspect of the Project will be provided at the statutory consultation. We are considering the most appropriate solution, including hydrogen power and full or part electrification, for the long-term train fleet and infrastructure. We will consider resilience for all weather conditions, including lightning and any potential future impacts brought about by climate change, as part of the design for any of the infrastructure and its supporting systems.
Stakeholders expressed interest in the next stages of the project and statutory consultation. A stakeholder was keen to see increased detail from the 2021 non-statutory consultation.	We plan to start the statutory consultation on the preferred route and associated infrastructure, such as stations and level crossings, in the first half of 2024 to give you a further opportunity to share your views with us. Our intention is to include public events as well as digital ways to engage with the project team and ask questions. In the meantime, we'll continue to engage with our stakeholders and the local community to help us refine the design before inviting the public to submit further feedback. Consultation feedback will be carefully considered when finalising our proposals. During the 2021 consultation, our focus was on understanding the views of communities and other stakeholders across the route. We consulted on a wide range of proposals from broad route options being considered between Bedford and Cambridge, to more specific questions linked to individual level crossings and stations. We believe we provided an appropriate level of detail for the proposals on which we were consulting at that time. The Consultation Feedback Report (CFR) provides our response to the feedback received during the second non-statutory consultation on proposals for the development of EWR. An overview of what is covered in each chapter of the CFR report can be found in Chapter 1.
A number of people asked if EWR would carry freight and if more information on the proposals could be made available. It was commented that EWR transporting freight would ease congestion on roads and suggestions were made for freight	EWR is principally intended to be a passenger route. Whilst the actual number of freight services which run is a matter for the wider industry and freight operators, we are designing the railway to maintain existing freight operating on its route and accommodate potential future growth in freight across the route. Our work indicates that the volume of new freight flows over EWR will depend on additional investment taking place on the national network and as such, our current scope is likely to enable up to two new freight train paths per day per direction from Felixstowe, routed via Cambridge, through to Oxford and beyond. Significant investment in other

trains to go all the way to Felixstowe and with connections to other areas in the UK e.g. Southampton. Freight was mentioned as an opportunity in regard to the Cambridge Sustainable Transport Zone, which will limit vehicle transport in the city.	enhancements, both on EWR and elsewhere on the network, would be required for freight to exceed these levels, which is out of the scope of the project. We continue to work closely with the industry and stakeholders to inform our approach to freight. We aim to achieve modal shift (both passengers and freight) and to reduce crowding on the wider rail network, most notably on services into and out of London. It is therefore expected that freight trains using EWR would help to reduce lorry traffic within the region. We've consulted at a formative stage to gather views on emerging concepts and will continue to provide the public and stakeholders with more detail as the proposals for the route are refined. The EWR freight strategy is in development. Additional information will be made available to the public and stakeholders at the statutory consultation.
Businesses commented that attracting and retaining talent between Oxford and Cambridge is a challenge due to not having access to cheaper transport and affordable housing.	Following a study by the National Infrastructure Commission, the Department for Transport established strategic objectives applying both to elements of EWR between Oxford and Bedford and from Bedford to Cambridge. One of these objectives was to stimulate economic growth, housing and employment through the provision of new, reliable and attractive inter-urban passenger train services in the Oxford to Cambridge area. It should be noted that this is only one of the strategic objectives for the scheme, and the project does not cater specifically to housing. However, the objective to provide a sustainable and value for money transport solution to support economic growth in the area will help to address concerns that lack of access to cheaper transport presents challenges to attracting and retaining talent. We have also thought about how the railway might best support future housing development by providing cost-effective, sustainable and accessible public transport alternatives for residents of new settlements. This built on the preference for Route Option E and has been considered under the Contribution to enabling housing and economic growth Assessment Factor (AF2). Further information about the project objectives is available in the 2021 Non-Statutory Consultation Documents and on our website.
Comments were received that stated for businesses and universities, the improved connectivity between Oxford	Oxford and Cambridge are home to leading universities, life sciences companies and a manufacturing cluster known for high-performance technology and motorsport engineering, but people and businesses in between these two cities are being let down by a lack of transport

and Cambridge will lead to better collaboration, funding and international investment opportunities and facilitate growth. Comments were made that improved infrastructure is key to the Global Britain agenda and that it would help Cambridge compete with Boston's life science cluster. Comments were made that linking the Tech Hubs of Oxford, Cambridge, and Milton Keynes is important in making the ARC a competitor to places like California and Boston.	solutions. EWR will bring this vibrant mix of communities an affordable and sustainable public transport alternative, linking people with jobs and access to new homes across the region. The National Infrastructure Commission has estimated that creating these transport links and supporting the entire area will be worth nearly £80bn extra a year to the UK economy. EWR will be vital in delivering a range of benefits for communities, businesses, academia and the wider economy. It will support economic growth through the provision of cheaper, greener and faster transport in an area constrained by poor east-west connectivity and attract both investment and top talent to the UK. Capitalising on the clear strengths in knowledge-based industries across the region is essential for long term sustainable growth, economic resilience, and international competitiveness.
A suggestion was made for EWR to align to the ARC spatial strategy and local plans to realise benefits and increase advocacy.	We're aware people want to understand the specific benefits EWR would provide for their local communities and businesses. As the design develops, we'll be able to provide more detail on what these benefits would look like, and we'll work with local authorities and communities to refine and shape these plans in line with Local Plans and wider development.
Comments were made that train tickets must be affordable to encourage people to use the train and reduce their carbon footprint. Comments were made that the ticketing system also needed to be compatible with the national system and that there was an opportunity for package tickets if this was the case. It was queried whether EWR would use a contactless railway system.	Along with our operating partners, we'll set fares to make sure that the service offers value for money and is inclusive to as many people as possible. Fares will be simple to understand and tickets will be easier to buy, in line with the rail industry's fares reform programme, which seeks to increase the trust in the railway and remove both economic and convenience barriers to travel. We aim to provide an inclusive and simple approach to ticketing which will allow customers to buy and use tickets in a way that meets their individual needs. We will use digital services, which will allow people to buy tickets on mobile phones or use 'pay as you go' services. We will also make sure that station self-service machines will be inclusive and easy to use. Staff will be on hand to help customers should they need it. Providing multiple purchasing options will enable

The frequency and journey times of EWR services was queried regarding if they would impact the East Coast Main Line services. A question was raised about whether EWR will run branded trains, or whether it will be run by a separate operator. The presence of staff in stations (ticket office and platform presence), and on trains (conductors) was raised, with stakeholders stating that the presence of station staff is very important.	customers to use solutions which are best suited to their needs making it a quick and easy process. The route between Bedford and Cambridge has been designed to accommodate up to four trains per hour in each direction and would need to slot into already busy service patterns run by other operators at each end of the route and in several places along the route. The EWR services do not connect directly to the East Coast Mainline (ECML). The route would instead pass over the top of the ECML and provide for passenger interchange at a new Tempsford station. Therefore, EWR services are not expected to impact ECML services, although modelling is being undertaken to understand the potential impact the extra ECML stop at Tempsford would have on the ECML timetable. We will keep services under review and may revise them in the future dependent upon passenger numbers. When EWR is closer to being fully open and operational, we will work closely with the Department for Transport (DfT) to decide which train operating company will operate EWR services. From both the consultation responses and the research undertaken to date, we understand that staff have one of the biggest impacts on the customer experience. We are considering how a combination of staff, systems and digital solutions can provide the optimum customer experience on EWR. The recruitment and training of staff is a key factor to improve customer experience, and we will provide all staff with the correct tools to give support and keep all passengers safe, as well as provide an inclusive environment for as many people as possible. As stated above, inclusion is key. This means we will consider requirements relating to physical and mobility needs including mobility-related disability, mental wellbeing, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. We will work to understand the diverse needs of our customers and people.

A request was received that the procurement would be a fair process for small businesses. A question was also received about the tender process and how small businesses could be involved with EWR as suppliers. Concerns were raised about a shortage of rolling stock and how EWR may affect the wider network by increasing demand for rolling stock.	EWR will stimulate economic development and opportunities, both during construction and operation. We want to work with businesses along the EWR route who share our passion for customer focus and who are bold, innovative, and can be trusted to deliver. As part of this, we also want to ensure that local businesses and suppliers can benefit from the design and construction of EWR. One of the principles of our approach to procurement is that we act with fairness and respect to everyone involved in the procurement process. Suppliers can register to keep up to date with new contract opportunities as they come up via our chosen e-tendering system, Delta. Further information about our principles relating to contracts can be found on our website. We're very aware of the challenges faced by the integration of EWR with the national network and we'll continue to work alongside others in the railway industry, including Network Rail and the multiple passenger and freight service operators that we interface with across the route. We are working to understand the needs and requirements in relation to rolling stock and our long-term fleet and will continue to engage with other train operators and manufacturers on these aspects.
A query was received as to whether EWR would consider extending the route from the south of Cambridge to nearby transport infrastructure aviation hubs. Feedback was received that connecting Cambridge to Manchester and Liverpool via Milton Keynes would be beneficial for the life science sector. Furthermore, extending EWR from Milton Keynes to Bedford and Cambridge will connect businesses and manufacturing in the North West and Midlands. Support was received for a connection between the east coast mainline and	East West Rail aims to deliver much-needed transport connections for communities between Oxford and Cambridge. The proposed extensions would not deliver on the EWR strategic project objective to improve east-west public transport connectivity by providing rail links between key urban areas (current and anticipated) in the Oxford to Cambridge area, and therefore the current scope of the project does not include extensions of the route. However, none of the alignments that we have proposed would preclude services being extended to these destinations in future, and the SATC would specifically afford the capacity for extensions to Ipswich and Norwich in the future. Similarly, all of the alignments would be able to provide convenient interchange onto existing rail services: Great Western, Chiltern and CrossCountry at Oxford, the West Coast Mainline at Bletchley, East Midlands and Thameslink services at Bedford Midland, Great Northern, LNER and Thameslink at ECML Station and Greater Anglia, Great Northern/Thameslink and CrossCountry at Cambridge. By providing interchange opportunities for journeys further east, west, north and

EWR. Queries were received whether EWR would consider extending the route to Ipswich and Norwich and interest was expressed for a link to Ely North Junction. A suggestion was made to provide a Thames Link rail loop from Cambridge to Bedford to St Pancras via Luton Parkway. Comments were made that Westcott Venture Park to the north of Oxford would also benefit from EWR.	south, EWR would assist in retaining businesses and investment in the UK, encouraging further investment and scaling up across other parts of the country. Westcott Venture Park, to the North West of Aylesbury is unlikely to benefit directly from EWR, but could benefit from the wider benefits in the region.
A suggestion was made for a future station to be located in the east of Cambridge.	The remit of the project is to provide connectivity between Oxford and Cambridge. As such, connectivity to the east of Cambridge is outside the current scope. However, the SATC design does not preclude extension of services to the east in the future. It is to be noted that there would be a need for the provision of additional infrastructure elsewhere on the existing rail network to allow extension of services, which does not fall within the current scope of the EWR project.
It was suggested that providing a fast up-line platform at Bedford station would eliminate the need for extra tracks through Bedford. A question was asked about the accessibility of platform 5 at Bedford station and whether this was being looked at by EWR Co.	Since the 2021 consultation, we have reviewed our designs for Bedford station in line with EWR and broader industry requirements. Our emerging preferred option remains a Bedford station North Concept with a station to the north of Ford End Road. As part of our proposals, three new EWR-dedicated platforms would be created on the east side of the station close to the existing platforms. As part of the platform design, we will consider straight and curved platforms at Bedford station and our proposals will be presented in more detail at the statutory consultation. Other suggestions by respondents seeking to improve capacity for all station operators at Bedford station have been considered, however these suggestions were assessed as not being required as part of the EWR project. This includes the suggestion to provide a platform on the Up

	Fast Line, for non-EWR trains. We modelled this to test whether the removal of East Midlands Railway services from the Slow Lines would remove the need for the construction of two additional tracks north of Bedford station. Although proposals for an Up Fast Platform were found to maximise capacity on the Slow Lines, as EWR would only be sharing these two lines with freight, the modelling showed that this positive impact was limited by the regular turnaround of Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) services in-platform and Network Rail's plans to uplift freight on the Midland Main Lines (MML). Consequently, although we are supportive of the need for the Up Fast Platform at Bedford station in general terms, we have not included it in our proposals as it would not remove the need for a six-track approach north of Bedford station. We'll continue to work with Network Rail, who operate and maintain Britain's railway infrastructure, and train operators to enhance our designs for Bedford station to maximise capacity and platforms whilst minimising disruption. We'll also continue dialogue with key stakeholders including the local authority during the development of the options and design. A key element of our strategy is providing a service that is accessible for a wide range of users. Our proposals for Bedford St Johns and Bedford stations will seek to align with current rail legislation and modern standards. This will include considering access for a range of users, including disabled people, older people, people with children and people travelling with luggage.
A question was received about the future of Bicester Village station in light of the changes to London Road level crossing.	We are currently considering what changes need to be made at Bicester Village station to accommodate future passenger demand and incorporate any changes required as a result of proposed changes at Bicester London Road level crossing. This will include consideration of how any proposals may impact pedestrian and vehicle traffic flows. Further detail will be presented at the statutory consultation.
Suggestion that EWR partner up to regenerate Bletchley station Suggestion for flexible tickets and electric vehicle charging points.	As we continue to develop our design proposals for Bletchley station, any facility upgrades will be designed to improve customer experience. As we would not be the station operator it is not within our remit to deliver changes to facilities such as toilets, lighting and waiting areas. However, we will be sharing communities' feedback with London North-Western Railway who will be the operator of the station.

	At the next stage of design, we will be undertaking modelling work to further understand if additional parking is required at stations. We will also consider electric vehicle charging points and disabled persons parking spaces, as well as passenger drop-off and taxi facilities. Station parking will be designed with future customer demand in mind. We'll work with the Department for Transport to assess opportunities to simplify fares and purchase options for consumers. Along with our operating partners, we'd set fares to make sure that the service offers value for money and is inclusive to as many people as possible. Fares would be simple to understand and easy to buy, in line with the rail industry's fares reform programme, which seeks to increase the trust in the railway and remove both economic and convenience barriers to travel.
A question was asked if there would be scope for existing Marston Vale Line trains to use platform 7 and 8 at Bletchley station once they are complete due to accessibility issues on the current platform 6. A further question was asked if there was scope for adding a lift shaft to the existing platform 6 at Bletchley station to resolve accessibility issues.	Network Rail (NR) and East West Rail Alliance have begun construction work on new high-level platforms 7 and 8 at Bletchley station. These platforms are programmed for completion in 2024, in time for the start of services between Oxford and Milton Keynes and ahead of works east of Bletchley. The platforms will connect to the existing footbridge at Bletchley station to provide an easy interchange to West Coast Main Line services. The existing MVL service will continue to use platform 6 as it does currently, the new services that will run from Oxford to Cambridge will run on the new platforms 7 and 8. We understand that ensuring stations are accessible to all including disabled people, older people and people with children, is important to railway users, and we are considering how stations can facilitate an easy end-to-end journey for as many passengers as possible. In terms of step-free access to all platforms, we are considering the upgrades which would be required at Bletchley station beyond the current works being undertaken. The existing platforms 1-5 already have step free access, with platform 6 currently not being step free. The new platforms 7 and 8 will also be step free. We are considering what upgrades are required for platform 6 for its continued usage, including step free access (such as a lift), and further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.
The suggestion was made for Ridgemont station to be called "Cranfield Parkway"	It is not within our responsibility or authority to re-name stations. However, we will consider the case for renaming of stations as the project develops and incorporate this in our proposals if appropriate.

General observations were made that EWR will connect the area allowing people to access the town and city centres much easier. Businesses commented that attracting and retaining talent between Oxford and Cambridge is a challenge due to not having access to cheaper transport and affordable housing. Areas such as Oxford are difficult to travel across, which is currently a barrier to increased collaboration. A few stakeholders have told us that EWR could facilitate the connectivity between strategic employment sites from Oxford to Cambridge and that improved transport connectivity would benefit students especially from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Businesses in the Cambridge area commented that improved connectivity will make Cambridge more attractive to new employees and that it will encourage businesses to move to Cambridge, particularly the life sciences. Comments were made that commercial space in Cambridge is very expensive and businesses will have the option to move to cheaper locations if they wish to do	EWR will be vital in delivering a range of benefits for communities, businesses, academia and the wider economy. It will support economic growth through the provision of greener and faster transport in an area constrained by poor east-west connectivity, and attract both investment and top talent to the UK. Capitalising on the clear strengths in knowledge-based industries across the region is essential for long term sustainable growth, economic resilience, and international competitiveness. It will also increase connectivity for households and businesses across the route. This will help businesses effectively become closer to suppliers, to a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and provide more opportunity to share knowledge. Businesses will also be able to attract an increased pool of labour because of the reduced journey time from areas along the EWR route. For households, residents will benefit from decreased journey times to areas along EWR, and workers will be better connected to additional job opportunities along the route. We will, where possible, look to further quantify the impact of EWR on the wider economy, specifically its impact on economic growth, investment, jobs, housing, and connectivity across both the region and the country. This will form part of the strategic and economic cases for the scheme as part of the business case. We are continuing to explore options on how to connect Aylesbury, and are in discussion with our colleagues in the Department for Transport and Network Rail. We are working with the Government to understand whether there is a viable business case to continue work on an Aylesbury connection. We consider environmental sustainability in the activities and the decisions made in order to ensure that the scheme is designed, constructed, operated and maintained in an environmentally responsible manner that minimises negative environmental impacts as far a reasonably practicable. We are determined to be an industry leader on environmental sustainability across the whole life cycle of the project. We aim not just to reduce impact but to realise opportunities to enhance the environment in line with the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and our own vision for the East West Rail scheme.

so. Some concerns were raised that improved connectivity could also encourage people to move on from their current employment to find opportunities in the larger cities. Comments were made that connecting Oxford and Cambridge as innovation and technology hubs will benefit the UK at a national level by spreading economic benefits and skills. Connections to other sector hubs in the Midlands and North would also provide opportunities for institutions, businesses and individuals located along the EWR line. Businesses relying on national and local supply chains have asked for improved connectivity around Bedford. Comments were also made that EWR will make Milton Keynes more attractive, encourage business buy-in and increase footfall. There was further support for EWR on the basis that it will strengthen and grow the small businesses north of Aylesbury. A connection at Aylesbury would also attract investment into the wider area. Stakeholders based outside of city centres anticipate that better transport	Network Rail is currently considering proposals to reopen the Cowley Branch Line to passenger services. The current Network Rail intention for Cowley branch line is for there to be 2 additional stations to service the business/science parks adjacent to the railway. While this does not form part of the scope for EWR we will work closely with Network Rail to integrate and align our proposals.

links will attract businesses, as there is demand but limited capacity in major areas like Oxford. Stakeholders also commented that this improved connectivity would provide important opportunities for tourism and retail which is vital for bringing people and economic support to areas along the route. Further rail links like the Cowley Branch Line re-opening, and more stations were mentioned as supporting growth of businesses and science/ business parks in the area. Stakeholders commented on the need for development to be sustainable, including sustainable transport links to enable local benefits as well as facilitating connection and growth on a national and global scale.	
Comments were made that the timing of trains and the length of the transfer to get from Bedford to Luton Parkway needs to be considered as well as factors like the ease of switching platforms.	We are actively considering the end-to-end journey, including how stations can facilitate easy and simple connectivity to existing modes of transport, including to other rail services. We understand the importance of making travel easy for all and will work to minimise the need to change platforms for connecting trains as part of our timetabling development and operational planning. We will continue to work alongside others in the railway industry, including Network Rail and the multiple passenger and freight service operators that we interface with across the route, both in

	terms of design development and timetabling. We'll agree the best way that EWR services could connect with other existing services and improve journey times and capacity, building on build on previous industry experience to ensure we deliver the best overall service, connectivity and an optimised timetable.