

Appendix 19: Table 12.5 - Engagement since the close of the 2021 consultation – Poets area meetings feedback

Matters Raised	EWR Co Response
<p>Visual impacts on the area were raised, with residents expressing preferences on how this should be managed such as with a brick wall screening the railway.</p>	<p>Assessing the potential impact of EWR on the environment is a fundamental part of our design process and is a consideration within the environmental impacts and opportunities Assessment Factor (AF14) – for a description of assessment factors see the NSC documentation, “Technical Report Appendices. C. Assessment Factors: definitions and considerations”. We will carefully consider the setting and context of landscapes and historic views, to look at how the development can be designed to blend in with the local environment. This includes thinking about where to create embankments and where viaducts are potentially required; where hard landscaping, such as walls or fencing, should be used; where landscape earthworks can be used to soften the appearance of embankments and integrate them into the wider landscape context; or how the sensitive placement of appropriate planting can be used to screen views from sensitive receptors, or to soften the appearance and presence of engineering earthworks.</p> <p>We will look at developing landscape mitigation measures that are closely integrated with the ecological requirements of both the Project and the wider area to make sure that the environmental legacy of the works is positive and to support our commitment to 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. Earthworks will be designed to reduce the impact on communities where reasonably practicable, by considering features like Public Rights of Way and heritage features and buildings.</p> <p>We will develop an understanding of what features give the existing landscape its character, and what stakeholders value about the landscape the most. This will help to inform our design work and, where practicable, the landscape design will respond to and reflect those features.</p> <p>Further information on this, alongside an assessment of the likely environmental effects and measures to avoid or minimise these will initially be reported within the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), published at the statutory consultation, and then within the Environmental Statement, submitted as part of the DCO application.</p>
<p>Potential works on the Bromham Road Bridge were raised as a concern with residents expressing that it should not be demolished and re-built again due to</p>	<p>A new span of Bromham Road Bridge, north of Bedford station, would be required to make provision for a wider railway corridor to pass underneath the bridge. We recognise concerns about the disruption that this may cause and will undertake a Transport Assessment which will help to inform our approach to reducing and mitigating the disruption of any works to the bridge and roads as far as reasonably</p>

<p>disruption to traffic and the local properties.</p> <p>Concerns were expressed regarding the knock-on effects on the local transport network of the potential closure and demolition of Bromham Road Bridge. Pollution and congestion were raised as concerns resulting from the construction period.</p>	<p>practicable. The assessment will help to inform our approach to reducing and mitigating the disruption of any works to the bridge and surrounding roads as far as reasonably practicable. Outcomes of this will initially be reported in the PEIR published at the statutory consultation and then within the ES submitted as part of the DCO application.</p> <p>We will prepare a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), or similar document, which will explain the steps that would be taken to reduce or mitigate disruption to local people, communities and the environment during construction. Additionally, we will explain our approach to construction and operation of the railway and provide further details of potential effects at the statutory consultation. We have considered both long and short-term impacts of the Project through the option selection and design process. During the next stage, we will consider how to maintain access across the railway for pedestrians and cyclists during construction, including the potential for diversions, temporary structures or access via other routes.</p>
<p>Requests were made for more information on the business case regarding the environment, cost, the community, and the decision on Route E as the preferred route. Requests were made to see the business case in full.</p>	<p>We want to provide a much-needed transport connection for communities between Oxford and Cambridge. We'll aim to deliver a safe and secure railway, which is quicker, greener, and cheaper for the taxpayer.</p> <p>We are developing our business case to underpin decisions about how the railway will be built and delivered. The business case will use a range of evidence to ensure that money is spent in the most effective way and delivering value for money. This is an iterative process and ongoing work is underway to gather more evidence, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. This includes working with the Department for Transport to assess opportunities to simplify fares and purchase options for consumers.</p> <p>EWR is an infrastructure investment that would support economic growth and social development in the region and in the UK economy as a whole. EWR is addressing the lack of east-west connectivity in the region, key to attract investment and connect communities along the route, driving sustainable economic growth.</p> <p>A bespoke forecast of rail demand was produced by EWR using historic relationships between changes in rail demand and factors that influence rail demand such as economic growth. Long term rail demand forecasts are subject to uncertainty. In order to account for this uncertainty and potential variability in the rail demand forecasting we have tested different scenarios and undertook a sensitivity analysis (i.e.,</p>

	<p>we have considered the potential impact of a long-term increase in working from home and how this could impact on the demand for the route).</p> <p>We will continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process.</p> <p>HM Treasury information</p> <p>We will follow Government guidance, procedures and best practice as we develop 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 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. This includes social and environmental impacts.</p> <p>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 risks associated with costs, for example by applying approaches such as 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.</p> <p>More information on cost estimates will be presented at the statutory consultation.</p>
<p>Queries were raised around the compensation process and timeframe. Discussions included how properties would be valued and how residents could appoint surveyors to act on their behalf. Residents raised queries on the compensation available to those permanently or temporarily losing areas like gardens, garages, and parking spaces, and expressed concern that this was insufficient. Residents raised concerns about the compensation being</p>	<p>For the owner occupiers of properties which would need to be acquired in part or wholly to construct EWR, unaffected market value compensation would be provided in accordance with the Compensation Code as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website. Landowners will be entitled to choose and appoint their own suitably qualified surveyor to submit the compensation claim on behalf of the claimant. The reasonable cost of the surveyor’s fee will be reimbursed by us as part of the claim.</p> <p>Where no land is taken, under Part I of the Land Compensation Act 1973 property owners may be eligible to claim compensation for reduction in the value of the property due to physical factors caused by the use of a new or altered railway. This is explained further in the Guide to Part 1 Claims on our website, including an explanation of what constitutes a qualifying interest.</p>

<p>insufficient to allow them to purchase a similar house in the same area.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about meeting legal costs and residents queried whether EWR would meet these costs up-front.</p> <p>It was raised that a monetary only compensation scheme was not appropriate as there were impacts that could not be quantified financially.</p> <p>Queries were raised on the powers and process of Compulsory Purchase Orders. A request was made for a property to be purchased by EWR Co under an early CPO. Queries were raised over which properties would be subject to a CPO.</p>	<p>When we submit our application for the DCO this will show the details of the land required. Landowners and leaseholders may then be able to require us to purchase the land identified. This is explained further in the Guide to Statutory Blight Notices on our website.</p> <p>Qualifying occupiers who receive a formal notice to end their tenancies would be entitled to receive compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code, subject to them having a qualifying interest. This is explained further in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website.</p> <p>We will look at ways to reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the railway as part of the design development process. Once a detailed design has been created, we'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the scheme and seek to mitigate these where possible.</p> <p>If a qualifying business (e.g. commercial or agricultural) is located where land or a section of land is required by the Project, the landowner may be able to require us to acquire the whole of the premises/field if the rest is deemed incapable of reasonable beneficial use. The landowner would be able to engage a surveyor to advise the owner of their options and to act on their behalf in relation to the compensation claim. The surveyor's reasonable costs would be reimbursed as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website.</p> <p>We invited those parties who believed they had an urgent need to sell to discuss their situation with us to explore if we can offer assistance prior to the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme being introduced.</p> <p>We consulted on the Proposed Need to Sell (NTS) Property Scheme at the same time as the 2021 non-statutory consultation and have introduced the Need to Sell Property Scheme, which aims to assist eligible property owners who have a compelling need to sell, but who have been unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced value because of the EWR Project. The NTS scheme is a non-statutory scheme and is therefore separate to the statutory blight notice process (as the trigger for statutory blight is the submission of a DCO application). It provides early support for eligible property owners who have a compelling reason to sell their property but are not able to do so, other than at a substantially reduced value, because of EWR. The Guide to the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme is available on our website.</p>
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<p>Criticism was expressed of the 2019 consultation, with residents saying that it was flawed as it was not adequately promoted and poorly timed. Criticism was raised that the option for six tracks running through Bedford had been inadequately included in consultation.</p> <p>Residents expressed that they had been inadequately consulted with and underrepresented at each stage of non-statutory consultation.</p> <p>Frustration was expressed that the consultation report from the 2021 consultation has not been published yet.</p>	<p>We take the views of local people, communities, and their representatives seriously and we will keep listening to feedback so that we can build a railway that meets the needs of the communities we serve and for the UK as a whole. All feedback received from the non-statutory consultation has been considered and used to inform the development of the railway design.</p> <p>We ran the consultation for ten full weeks, which it considered to be reasonable for a project of this type and at this stage of development. Details about the consultation were available online throughout the period.</p> <p>We ran an extensive advertising and communications process to promote the 2021 consultation along the route. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. We also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of outlets. Local representatives including parishes, councillors and Members of Parliament were also briefed in advance of the consultation launch so they could pass information to their constituents and communities. More than 9,000 pieces of feedback were received by us raising over 190,000 matters, all of which have been considered in detail.</p> <p>So far, we've held two phases of non-statutory public consultation – one in 2019 and a second in 2021. A Public Feedback Report was published in March 2020 that gave a summary of the 2019 consultation responses and how that feedback had been considered. A similar approach has been taken with this document for the 2021 consultation, and we expect this approach will also be taken for any future rounds of consultation.</p> <p>In the 2021 consultation, we explored and consulted on a range of alternatives for our proposed track layout north of Bedford and in total five different track layouts were presented. These are set out in pages 205-207 of the 2021 Consultation document and pages 268 – 291 of the 2021 Consultation Technical Report Chapters 8 – 12. The application of our Assessment Factor methodology identified the construction of two additional tracks to the east of the existing railway as the emerging preferred option.</p> <p>We're committed to making sure that communities have the information they need to help make informed decisions about our proposals, with a level of detail appropriate to each stage of the Project's</p>
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	<p>development. We have continued to listen to all project stakeholders, including community groups, since the end of the last public consultation in June 2021.</p> <p>We communicate with communities and individuals in a number of ways, including a regular email newsletter, public information events, the Project website and via local media. We are also engaging directly with individual property owners/occupiers of land that may be directly affected by our proposals. 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.</p> <p>Alongside this ongoing engagement there will be more opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to comment on the proposals during the statutory consultation, which will be undertaken before the submission of the DCO application. The Planning Inspectorate will then also carry out a public examination of the application, giving further opportunity for comment.</p>
Concerns were expressed over the cash flow of the Project.	<p>We are working closely with Government to develop a funding strategy for the Project. In accordance with standard Government practice, the Project is funded in stages, with full commitment being made after the approval of the final business case and directly before the start of construction.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the need for demolitions in the Poets area. Residents expressed a lack of support for demolitions due to the disruption caused to individuals, the community, and the environment. Concerns were raised around the impact of neighbouring properties being impacted by demolitions.</p> <p>Queries were raised on legal representation in relation to demolitions.</p> <p>Concerns were raised on the availability of suitable replacement accommodation in Bedford.</p>	<p>We are aware that EWR may affect people's homes and businesses, particularly in the Poets area of Bedford, and we will aim to reduce and mitigate negative impacts such as those raised in the consultation feedback as far as reasonably practicable. At every stage of the Project, we are committed to talking to all those who could potentially be directly affected by the railway. During the consultation, we contacted all potentially affected landowners and ran a separate consultation on a proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme.</p> <p>Where land is acquired or proposed to be acquired, the Compensation Code sets out the circumstances in which compensation is payable. More information is available in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on the EWR website.</p> <p>If an individual is unable to sell their property due to EWR, they could be eligible to sell their property to us in accordance with the proposed Need to Sell Scheme which will be introduced at Route Update Announcement. In order to do so they would need to demonstrate that they have a compelling need to sell either now or in the next three years, as well as being unable to sell the property at an unaffected market value due to EWR.</p>

	<p>Should relocations be required, we will look to work with residents and the local authority to explore what appropriate support may be needed during this process.</p> <p>In terms of impacts to residents during the construction process, further details on how we would monitor, control and manage these will be provided in the CoCP, or similar document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State as part of the DCO application. This will include measures to control impacts related to construction noise and vibration, air quality, contaminated land, ecology, historic environment, construction traffic, tree protection, surface and groundwater management, waste management and general site operations. In addition, it will state permissible contractor working hours. Our team will continue to engage with local people and communities to understand the arrangements which are least disruptive to people's lives and businesses and will ensure that appropriate measures are in place. Often this will involve the use of physical barriers to improve the aesthetic and reduce noise.</p>
Queries on the potential electrification of the railway and the timeframe for making the decision on the train traction power were raised.	<p>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.</p> <p>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 to ensure they understand the company's environmental goals. As such, we are considering the most appropriate solution, including hydrogen power and full or part electrification, for the long-term train fleet and infrastructure. Information about this aspect of the Project will be provided at the statutory consultation.</p>
Impacts on the environment were raised. Concerns were expressed over potential impacts on air quality, carbon, fluorocarbon levels, noise and vibration, and loss of ecology due to the railway. A	<p>We consider the importance of environmental sustainability in the activities and the decisions made in order to ensure that the Project is designed, constructed, operated and maintained in an environmentally responsible manner that minimises negative environmental impacts as far as reasonably practicable. We're 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</p>

<p>preference was expressed that the new railway should follow existing road infrastructure to minimise environmental impacts.</p> <p>A request was made to preserve the five London Plane trees on Chaucer Road. Requests were also made for noise barriers to be included in the proposals.</p>	<p>to enhance the environment in line with the Government’s 25 Year Environment Plan and our own vision for the East West Rail Project. We aim to protect and enhance the natural and historic environment; to be a net zero carbon railway; to ensure the resilience of the infrastructure; and to contribute to the wellbeing of communities and customers. The company will identify elements of the programme activities that could result in significant environmental effects, primarily by undertaking an Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation, which will be informed by associated environmental assessment and environmental survey activities.</p> <p>Ecology: We recognise the importance of biodiversity and protecting the habitats of local wildlife including priority habitats such as woodland and ancient woodland as well as parks and greenspaces. We will think carefully about protected species and their habitats when designing the railway. Further information on plans for achieving 10% BNG will be provided during the statutory consultation.</p> <p>We will design a programme of habitat surveys and species-specific surveys, including existing high value vegetation and trees to help understand where species and habitats are in the landscape and how they use the landscape so that we can avoid, reduce, mitigate and if necessary, compensate for identified impacts throughout the design of EWR as much as is reasonably practicable. This will include considering how to avoid the loss of trees, including those on Chaucer Road. As described, we will develop a PEIR for statutory consultation and an Environmental Statement for the DCO submission to describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals and report the results of survey work.</p> <p>We recognise the importance of ecological connectivity and reconnecting fragmented areas of habitat to strengthen them and promote movement of wildlife. Green bridges, wildlife tunnels, restoring woodland and creating new green areas and parks will be considered to mitigate severance of habitats, maintain historic features, improve connectivity, and positively integrate with landscape character. We will map where the new railway may cross and border habitats used by other important protected species, such as badgers, great crested newts and bird species, in order to consider how best to avoid impacting them altogether, or to reduce impacts on them as far as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>Air quality: 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 throughout the design process. The Project team will seek to work with local</p>
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	<p>authorities to understand the current situation in communities and how to consider relevant Air Quality Management Areas as we develop our proposals.</p> <p>We will develop 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 PM2.5 and PM10) 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.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Carbon:</p> <p>We will aim to deliver a net zero carbon railway, in line with existing and developing net zero carbon policy, legislation and commitments at a global, national and local level, which requires the UK to reach net zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. Any decision to grant development consent for EWR will need to demonstrate that it would not have a material impact on the ability of the UK Government to meet its carbon reduction targets.</p> <p>As detailed in the Consultation Technical Report (Section 3.5) provided as part of the 2021 non-statutory consultation, we have considered environmental factors, including GHGs, as part of developing the proposed route alignments for EWR. As the Project advances, we'll continue to develop our approach to delivering on our net zero ambition and we will share further information on this at the statutory consultation.</p> <p>The PEIR will describe the likely environmental effects of EWR, both adverse and beneficial. It will include information regarding the methodology used to assess the significance of the carbon emissions</p>
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	<p>associated with the Project, the carbon management and reduction approaches already in place, and those which will be used during construction and operation. We will share this at the statutory consultation. We will then submit an Environmental Statement as part of the DCO application and will include a full whole-life assessment of carbon emissions, including the embodied carbon of the materials used to construct the railway, which will make up a significant proportion of the total emissions. The significance of those emissions against regional, national and/or international carbon budgets and targets will be set out.</p> <p>Fluorocarbon levels are not considered within our assessment of greenhouse gas emissions. Although fluorocarbons are considered a greenhouse gas, the approach to the proposed assessment of operational greenhouse gas uses carbon dioxide, being the most significant greenhouse gas.</p> <p>More information about Option Route E and the environmental impact is available in Chapter 4 of this report.</p> <p>Noise and vibration:</p> <p>We recognise that noise and vibration from both the construction and operation of a railway is an important issue for local communities. EWR Co will develop a noise and vibration policy, which will set out a plan designed to establish and mitigate noise and vibration to seek to avoid any significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. We don't think it would be appropriate to adopt a blanket policy for noise mitigation as, at this early stage in the development of the Project, it's not possible to identify specific mitigation measures that might be appropriate for specific properties.</p> <p>However, we are committed to developing proposals for measures that will seek to reduce noise and vibration as far as reasonably practicable. This includes:</p> <p>Choice of trains. Track technology. Noise barriers – which form one of a number of mitigations that may be appropriate where tracks may create noise and vibration.</p> <p>We will carry out comprehensive assessments and use industry-leading computer modelling, which can incorporate information on local geology to simulate potential noise and vibration impacts along the whole route, as part of the assessments on any mitigations required. As stated, the PEIR will describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals. This process involves identifying potentially significant</p>
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	<p>adverse impacts resulting from the proposals, allowing them to be avoided or reduced where possible, as well as identifying any potential beneficial environmental impacts. The PEIR will include information regarding the existing baseline noise environment, together with construction and operational noise limits having had regard to the appropriate guidance and legislation.</p> <p>Construction and operational noise levels generated from the proposed works will also be presented as part of the PEIR at the statutory consultation. An Environmental Statement will then be submitted as part of the Development Consent Order application. Additionally, further detail will be provided on the freight strategy, and the approach to avoiding or reducing potential noise and vibration impacts from freight trains which may run on EWR, at the statutory consultation.</p>
Support was expressed for greater First Mile Last Mile provision to support connectivity with requests made for segregated cycle and pedestrian routes.	<p>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.</p> <p>As part of the station design, we will consider pedestrian and cycle access in and around the station, based on user needs. This will be presented in more detail at the statutory consultation.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>EWR stations would be able to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We will make sure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs.</p> <p>While further design work is required, we have placed a particular emphasis on how we 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.</p>

	<p>We consider that the best way to provide competitive journey times, while also encouraging people to use our services without reliance on the private car, is to use a combination of centrally located stations with good access to other transport modes and connecting train services as well as implementing measures to integrate the new EWR stations into the wider local transport network, including footpaths and cycle paths.</p>
<p>Queries were raised around freight's use of the line. Some support was expressed for developing a greater capacity for freight in the proposals to reduce traffic on the roads, whilst others expressed concern and a lack of support regarding freight using the line.</p>	<p>EWR is principally intended to be a passenger route. It is, though, being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and we are considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight. We don't yet know how much freight would use the railway, as this is subject to government policy and market demand – and we haven't confirmed the exact operating hours for the railway. As set out in the 2021 consultation, we currently envisage that EWR could accommodate roughly one freight train per hour in each direction, although the actual number of freight services is a matter for the wider industry and freight operators.</p> <p>We will undertake further rail demand modelling to understand passenger usage, where people travel to and from, and the benefits of their journeys. We anticipate that the majority of users will be business travellers and commuters, but leisure travellers will benefit from improved connections along the route. Anticipated rail demand will be set out in the business case to the Government when we submit our Development Consent Order (DCO) application.</p> <p>We also working closely with the Department for Transport to select a sustainable traction power solution. The impact of that decision on the potential decarbonisation of freight operations is being considered as part of that process. Although a decision has not yet been taken on traction for the railway between Oxford and Cambridge, we'll need to make sure that the railway aligns with relevant policy and complies with relevant legislation related to net zero carbon.</p> <p>We will seek to reduce any negative effects the new railway, including passenger and freight operations, could have on air quality, as well as any noise and vibration that could be generated by trains, wherever reasonably practicable. We will assess changes in pollutants as the Project develops, including nitrogen oxides and fine particulates, and the potential effects of noise and vibration as part of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process.</p> <p>We will continue to consult with communities as our plans develop, including about freight and its potential impacts. We have also set up a number of LRGs along the route, to help facilitate discussions about localised impacts. For people that might be directly impacted by the Project, we'll continue to</p>

	<p>work to identify and reduce any impacts that can't be avoided and work closely with people who could be affected.</p> <p>We'll consider specific measures to reduce the impact of the Project in the design of the works. This includes the impacts associated with potential future freight operations on homes, people's well-being, and the surrounding environment during operation. For example, the use of landscaping and screening could reduce visual intrusion, and noise barriers could be used to reduce noise impacts.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the mental health impacts of the uncertainty caused by the lack of information and updates about the Project. It was raised that the Project had impacted educational progress due to mental health impacts.</p> <p>Concerns were raised about the potential worsening of health conditions like asthma caused by the construction and operation of the Project.</p>	<p>Consultation and engagement</p> <p>We ran the consultation for ten weeks, which it considered to be reasonable for a Project of this type and at this stage of development. Details about the consultation were available online throughout the period. We ran an extensive advertising and communications process to promote the 2021 consultation along the route. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. EWR Co also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of outlets. Local representatives including parishes, councillors and Members of Parliament were also briefed in advance of the consultation launch so they could pass information to their constituents and communities. More than 9000 pieces of feedback were received by EWR Co raising over 190,000 matters, all of which have been considered in detail.</p> <p>So far, we've held two phases of non-statutory public consultation – one in 2019 and a second in 2021. A Public Feedback Report was published in March 2020 that gave a summary of the 2019 consultation responses and how that feedback had been considered. A similar approach has been taken with this document for the 2021 consultation, and we expect this approach will also be taken for any future rounds of consultation.</p> <p>In 2021, we ran an extensive programme of advertising and communications activities to publicise the consultation. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households across the whole Oxford to Cambridge route, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. We also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of media outlets which generated further coverage for the consultation. Local representatives were briefed in advance of the launch of the consultation. We received more than</p>

	<p>9,000 responses to the 2021 non-statutory consultation.</p> <p>We're committed to making sure that communities have the information they need to help make informed decisions about our proposals, with a level of detail appropriate to each stage of the Project's development. We've continued to listen to all Project stakeholders, including community groups, since the end of the last public consultation in June 2021.</p> <p>We communicate with communities and individuals in a number of ways, including a regular email newsletter, public information events, the Project website and via local media. We are also engaging directly with individual property owners/occupiers of land that may be directly affected by our proposals. 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.</p> <p>Statements and statistics used in EWR documents and website pages are taken from reputable and verifiable government and industry sources and checked by EWR experts.</p> <p>Alongside this ongoing engagement there will be more opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to comment on the proposals during the statutory consultation, which will be undertaken before the submission of the DCO application. The Planning Inspectorate will then also carry out a public examination of the application, giving further opportunity for comment.</p> <p>Managing construction</p> <p>We are committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that the Project is able to mitigate disruption during its planning, construction and operation stages. The Company will continue to consider the impact of planned work as the Project progresses and work with affected communities and their representatives to ensure people impacted by the work are kept up to date with activity and progress. EWR Co is considering potential impacts on the community and how to reduce or mitigate disruption to local people, communities and the environment and how to avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life. The company is considering a range of matters including sound, noise and vibration, air quality, as well as potential impacts on public rights of way (PRoWs) and land and property requirements.</p> <p>We will develop a Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR) to describe the likely adverse and beneficial environmental effects of the proposals. This process involves identifying potentially</p>
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	<p>significant adverse impacts resulting from the proposals, allowing them to be avoided or reduced where possible, as well as identifying any potential beneficial environmental impacts and likely beneficial effects. The PEIR will include available baseline data and a preliminary construction and operation assessment of impact on residential properties, community facilities, recreational facilities, open space and PRow. This will be presented at the statutory consultation with an Environmental Statement being submitted as part of the DCO application.</p> <p>We will prepare a Code of Construction Practice, or similar document, which will explain the steps EWR Co will take to reduce or mitigate disruption to local people, communities and the environment during construction. Additionally, we will explain its approach to construction and operation of the railway and provide further details of potential effects of this during the statutory consultation.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised around the impact the Project is having on housing in the area. It was noted that the houses not directly impacted by demolition or construction are still impacted by factors like changes to road layout or views.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that property owners could not get tenants in the area.</p> <p>Concerns were raised regarding blight and difficulty to sell properties due to a lack of information on the impacts EWR will have on the area. It was also raised that houses would not get valued as highly as they would otherwise have been, resulting in individuals being priced out of the area. Some are already finding it impossible to sell their property.</p> <p>Concerns included whether to maintain or renovate properties given that the</p>	<p>Property</p> <p>For the owners of properties which will need to be acquired in part or wholly to construct the railway, full unaffected market value compensation will be provided in accordance with the Compensation Code as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation. Property owners will be entitled to appoint a surveyor to act for them in relation to their compensation claim (their reasonable costs will be reimbursed by us as part of the claim) and they will be able to explain how the property values are established as if the EWR Project was not taking place.</p> <p>Owners of properties in the vicinity of the railway, where no land is taken as part of the Project, may be entitled to compensation when the railway is in operation under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973. This factors in the devaluation of property due to effects such as noise.</p> <p>We will look at ways to reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the railway as part of the design development process. Once a detailed design has been created, we'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the Project and seek to mitigate these.</p> <p>We consulted on a proposed Need to Sell scheme at the same time as the main non-statutory consultation and introduced the Need to Sell Property Scheme which aims to assist eligible property owners who have a compelling need to sell while the EWR Project is in development and delivery, but who have been unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced value because of the EWR Project. The Need to Sell Property Scheme is separate to the statutory blight notice process and (as the trigger for statutory blight is the submission of a DCO application) it provides early support for eligible</p>

<p>timescales and impacts on the area were so uncertain.</p>	<p>property owners who can satisfy the criteria of the Need to Sell Property Scheme. The details for the Guide to the Need to Sell Scheme are available on our website. Applicants will need to meet five criteria, which includes providing evidence that they currently have a compelling need to sell. The NTS scheme reflects non statutory consultation feedback and NTS consultation feedback, both received in 2021. More information can be found in the NTS Property Scheme Guidance and Application Form.</p> <p>The Land and Property team contacted landowners (including those letting their properties) at non-statutory consultation and in April 2022, were present at the Public Information events held during Summer 2022 as well being available to speak to at all times. We are keen to work with landowners to be able to provide them with information to enable them to let their properties and have not been informed by any landlords having problems letting their properties.</p> <p>We are not able to give specific advice to property owners as to whether or not to renovate properties as this dependent upon the circumstances of each case, however, we would suggest that a property owner consider if the added value would be equal to or exceed the cost. We would recommend that property owners continue to undertake routine repairs.</p>
<p>Concerns were raised that the Project could lead to a loss of local community in the Poets area. In particular, the closure of the Bromham Road Bridge and reduced playing fields would impact the community.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that access to the local countryside would be cut off by the Project.</p> <p>Concerns were raised that the Project could exacerbate existing anti-social behaviour in the area through the creation of dead-end roads and dark alleyways.</p>	<p>Bromham Road Bridge</p> <p>A new span of Bromham Road Bridge, north of Bedford station, would be required to make provision for a wider railway corridor to pass underneath the bridge. We recognise concerns about the disruption that this may cause and will undertake a Transport Assessment which will help to inform our approach to reducing and mitigating the disruption of any works to the bridge and roads as far as reasonably practicable.</p> <p>The assessment will help to inform our approach to reducing and mitigating the disruption of any works to the bridge and roads as far as reasonably practicable. Outcomes of this will initially be reported in the PEIR and within the ES submitted as part of the DCO application.</p> <p>Impact on playing fields</p> <p>It is likely to be necessary to acquire part of the Alexander Sports Centre playing fields to allow for a wider railway corridor north of Bedford. Our team will continue to engage with local people and</p>

<p>Requests were expressed for EWR Co to give back to the local community and help those most disadvantaged. EWR Co were asked to promote the benefits of the Project to the local community more.</p>	<p>communities to understand the arrangements which are least disruptive to people’s lives and businesses and will ensure that appropriate measures are in place.</p> <p>Access to countryside</p> <p>We appreciate the concerns around the impacts on the countryside and access to green spaces, and we will work to identify and reduce impacts and protect the countryside wherever reasonably practicable. To help reduce impacts, we are following the environmental mitigation hierarchy which firstly seeks to avoid significant adverse effects on the countryside and, where this isn’t possible, then seeks to reduce impacts. If this isn’t possible, if necessary, we would seek to provide compensation for any impacts, where feasible. At this stage we will primarily focus on seeking to avoid and reduce impacts, by making decisions that help us to ‘design out’ potential adverse environmental impacts. We have committed to delivering 10% BNG, supporting the UK Government’s 25-year Environment Plan and reflecting the requirements introduced by the Environment Act 2021.</p> <p>Impact on local communities</p> <p>We understand that severance is a significant concern to people living in homes and villages in the vicinity of the railway. We are committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that EWR is able to mitigate disruption during the planning, construction and operation of the Project. This includes reducing the impact to communities from any crossing closures by providing reasonable alternatives where possible. During construction, provision will be made to maintain connections that are intended to be retained after the Project is completed, even if they have to be temporarily diverted, including to key community facilities such as the school. Further information will be presented at statutory consultation.</p> <p>Supporting local communities</p> <p>The introduction of EWR will lead to many benefits for local communities. It will bring more jobs within reach of local people; it will open up new areas for businesses to grow and it will help to improve quality of life. Affordable, reliable and faster public transport will mean less time spent in traffic and less carbon emitted from congestion, improving the quality of life for local people. It will also mean people can choose to live more affordably and have more space within an easy commute, rather than paying premium house prices to live close to work as many do today. We have been promoting the benefits of</p>
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	<p>the Project to the local community and will continue to do so in subsequent stages of the Project. More information about how EWR will support local communities is available on our website.</p> <p>We are considering the introduction of a community fund, however we are currently in the early planning stage for this and have not made a commitment or identified the details of this potential fund, including who could benefits and how and under whose control it could operate. We'll develop our thinking and share proposals at a later stage.</p> <p>Anti-social behaviour arising from changes to roads</p> <p>We will consider traffic impacts and mitigations as part of traffic and transport assessments. The Transport Assessment will consider, and where appropriate and proportionate mitigate against, the impacts on the strategic and local highway networks, road safety, local sustainable modes of transport. We will also consider safety, including consideration of lighting requirements and how to reduce the risk of vandalism.</p> <p>All options considered for EWR are subject to a rigorous process using a range of Assessment Factors. These factors are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report. This will include an assessment of safety and security of the proposals and the mitigation requirements, such as additional lighting, to address issues such as personal safety, anti-social behaviour and vandalism (under the Safety Risk assessment factor).</p>
<p>Concerns were raised about the mental and physical impacts of construction on the area. Concerns included that the Poets area would be subject to a sustained period of disturbance and that they have no control over this happening. Concerns were raised particularly about the impact of construction at night, the impact of piling works on the older buildings in the area, and restricted</p>	<p>We take the safety of local residents, landowners and communities very seriously. During construction, we will ensure that health, safety, and wellbeing performance meets or exceeds minimum legal requirements and industry best practice. More information about our approach to safety and security, including reducing disruption to local communities and mitigating impacts is included in Chapter 2, Project-wide matters.</p> <p>We are 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 best practice for projects of this type. We recognise the concerns of those in the Poets area in particular, and we will develop a CoCP, or similar document, which will detail how construction-related</p>

<p>access to properties and parking space during construction.</p> <p>Queries were expressed on how the construction process will be in line with the Code of Construction Practice.</p> <p>It was highlighted that the project should work with other companies/councils to ensure that multiple construction projects can be avoided happening in the same time period.</p>	<p>impacts on the environment would be identified and managed, as far as reasonably practicable. This will include consideration of working hours and how to manage potential works at night, if necessary. As detailed design is developed further, we will consider potential impacts and suitable mitigations on buildings as a result of specific construction techniques. As part of developing our plans, we will consider how we can best work with the local authority and other developers on issues such as worksite arrangements and phasing of works to minimise impacts on communities, as far as reasonably practicable. Further information on this will be presented at the statutory consultation.</p> <p>Following consultation with all the relevant highway authority or other bodies, we will prepare a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that includes measures aimed at maintaining safety for road users and reducing the impacts of construction traffic. Further information on this, alongside initial information on lorry movements will be presented at statutory consultation.</p>
<p>Comments were made that residents were unsatisfied with how forthcoming information has been coming from their councillors and EWR, particularly regarding the Local Representatives Groups.</p>	<p>We are aware that the Poets community has raised concerns about the LRG meetings. We believe it's important that the elected representatives of every community have a forum to meet with EWR and each other to discuss the Project. We set up LRGs along the full length of the EWR route, to give a regular opportunity for elected representatives from District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils to meet with us, and the agenda is driven by the Group, not EWR Co. Meeting notes are made available on the EWR Co website. If there are specific aspects of the meetings which are causing concern, please do let us know and we can address them directly.</p> <p>We know that the local community is also keen to discuss the Project with us and over the last year, we held ten route-wide 'drop in' sessions and a number of these were attended by members of your community. We also held one-to-one meetings to enable residents and businesses to speak directly with us and the team remains in touch with some potentially impacted residents in the Poets area, discussing on a one-to-one basis how plans could impact them. We will continue to maintain this throughout the length of the Project.</p>
<p>The Need to Sell Scheme was discussed with concerns raised around the timelines. Queries were raised around the term "blight" and some residents expressed that they believed their properties to be blighted.</p>	<p>For the owner occupiers of properties which would need to be acquired in part or wholly to construct EWR, full unaffected market value compensation would be provided in accordance with the Compensation Code as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website. Landowners will be entitled to choose and appoint their own suitably qualified surveyor to submit the compensation claim on behalf of the claimant. The reasonable cost of the surveyor's fee will be reimbursed by us as part of the claim.</p>

<p>Concerns were raised regarding those that urgently needed to sell their properties and challenges regarding the market value.</p>	<p>Where no land is taken, under Part I of the Land Compensation Act 1973 property owners may be eligible to claim compensation for reduction in the value of the property due to physical factors caused by the use of a new or altered railway. This is explained further in the Guide to Part 1 Claims on our website, including an explanation of what constitutes a qualifying interest.</p> <p>When we submit our application for the DCO this will show the details of the land required. Landowners and leaseholders may then be able to require us to purchase the land identified. This is explained further in the Guide to Statutory Blight Notices on our website.</p> <p>Qualifying occupiers who receive a formal notice to end their tenancies would be entitled to receive compensation in accordance with the Compensation Code, subject to them having a qualifying interest. This is explained further in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website.</p> <p>We will look at ways to reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the railway as part of the design development process. Once a detailed design has been created, we'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the scheme and seek to mitigate these where possible.</p> <p>If a qualifying business (e.g. commercial or agricultural) is located where land or a section of land is required by the Project, the landowner may be able to require us to acquire the whole of the premises/field if the rest is deemed incapable of reasonable beneficial use. The landowner would be able to engage a surveyor to advise the owner of their options and to act on their behalf in relation to the compensation claim. The surveyor's reasonable costs would be reimbursed as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website.</p> <p>We invited those parties who believed they had an urgent need to sell to discuss their situation with us to explore if we can offer assistance prior to the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme being introduced.</p> <p>We consulted on the Proposed Need to Sell (NTS) Property Scheme at the same time as the 2021 non-statutory consultation and have introduced the Need to Sell Property Scheme, which aims to assist eligible property owners who have a compelling need to sell, but who have been unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced value because of the EWR Project. The NTS scheme is a non-statutory scheme and is therefore separate to the statutory blight notice process (as the trigger for statutory blight is the submission of a DCO application). It provides early support for eligible property owners</p>
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	<p>who have a compelling reason to sell their property but are not able to do so, other than at a substantially reduced value, because of EWR. The Guide to the Proposed Need to Sell Scheme is available on our website.</p> <p>We will look at ways to reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the railway as part of the design development process. Once a detailed design has been created, we'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the scheme and seek to mitigate these.</p> <p>If a business is located where land or a section of land is required by the Project, the landowner may require us to acquire the whole plot if the rest is deemed incapable of reasonable beneficial use. The landowner will be able to engage a surveyor to advise the owner of their options and to act on their behalf in relation to the compensation claim. The surveyor's reasonable costs will be reimbursed as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation for which the link is as above.</p> <p>.</p> <p>We have launched the Need to Sell (NTS) Property scheme – to support property owners who have a compelling reason to sell their property but are not able to because of the construction of EWR. This includes owners who may have to sell their property at a reduced value or, if they are unable to sell their property, would face an unreasonable burden in the next three years.</p> <p>Applicants will need to meet five criteria, which includes providing evidence that they currently have a compelling need to sell. The NTS scheme reflects non statutory consultation feedback and NTS consultation feedback, both received in 2021. More information can be found in the NTS Property Scheme Guidance and Application Form.</p>
<p>Comments on the progress of the Project and concerns over the project timelines were raised. Queries were raised about the due date of the consultation report and the preferred route announcement.</p> <p>Residents expressed frustration regarding the lack of information, stating that the</p>	<p>In 2021, we ran an extensive programme of advertising and communications activities to publicise the consultation. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households across the whole Oxford to Cambridge route, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. We also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of media outlets which generated further coverage for the consultation. Local representatives were briefed in advance of the launch of the consultation. We received more than 9,000 responses to the 2021 non-statutory consultation.</p>

<p>uncertainty around the scheme and timelines is negatively impacting individuals and the community. Residents shared that the lack of certainty is resulting in feeling like they are living in limbo, impacting mental health and wellbeing.</p>	<p>We're committed to making sure that communities have the information they need to help make informed decisions about our proposals, with a level of detail appropriate to each stage of the Project's development. We have continued to listen to all Project stakeholders, including community groups, since the end of the last public consultation in June 2021.</p> <p>We communicate with communities and individuals in a number of ways, including a regular email newsletter, public information events, the Project website and via local media. We are also engaging directly with individual property owners/occupiers of land that may be directly affected by our proposals. 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.</p> <p>Alongside this ongoing engagement there will be more opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to comment on the proposals during the statutory consultation, which will be undertaken before the submission of the DCO application. The Planning Inspectorate will then also carry out a public examination of the application, giving further opportunity for comment.</p> <p>We intend to hold the statutory consultation in the first half of 2024.</p>
<p>Requests were raised that members of the Poets community would appreciate the chance to engage face to face with the EWR Co team. It was stated that engagement with the community previously had been unsatisfactory.</p>	<p>Following requests made through the LRG forums for further engagement with residents of the Poets community, Ashburnham Road and those living south of Bromham Road Bedford, we hosted a series of events for these communities.</p> <p>During May 2022 we contacted 451 addresses in the area. We invited property owners and occupiers who were potentially directly affected by the Project to attend a one-to-one in-person or virtual meeting to discuss their situation with members of the land and property team. A total of 45 meetings were held over a two-week period.</p> <p>Engagement with residents of the Poets area, Ashburnham Road and the community to the south of Bromham Road has been ongoing since May 2022. We have held three meetings with the Protect Poets group, providing the group with the opportunity to have their concerns heard, for us to learn more about how the group would like to engage with the Project in the future, and giving the group opportunity to meet with Beth West, EWR Co CEO.</p>

<p>Comments were raised on various route options. The options around the number of rail tracks required through Bedford were discussed, with residents expressing a lack of support for the six-track option or any option that passes through the Poets area.</p> <p>Queries were also raised regarding the justification of the routes, particularly the financial justification of Route E. It was commented that the consultations were believed to be flawed and so the choice of the preferred route was unjustified.</p> <p>Preferences were expressed for the EWR route to follow the existing A421 corridor, or for a route traveling south of the town on the former Beecham line. However, residents fear that the route has already been chosen.</p>	<p>Consultation and engagement</p> <p>We ran the consultation for ten weeks, which it considered to be reasonable for a Project of this type and at this stage of development. Details about the consultation were available online throughout the period. We ran an extensive advertising and communications process to promote the 2021 consultation along the route. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. EWR Co also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of outlets. Local representatives including parishes, councillors and Members of Parliament were also briefed in advance of the consultation launch so they could pass information to their constituents and communities. More than 9000 pieces of feedback were received by EWR Co raising over 190,000 matters, all of which have been considered in detail.</p> <p>So far, we've held two phases of non-statutory public consultation – one in 2019 and a second in 2021. A Public Feedback Report was published in March 2020 that gave a summary of the 2019 consultation responses and how that feedback had been considered. A similar approach has been taken with this document for the 2021 consultation, and we expect this approach will also be taken for any future rounds of consultation.</p> <p>In 2021, we ran an extensive programme of advertising and communications activities to publicise the consultation. This included posting consultation information directly to 270,000 households across the whole Oxford to Cambridge route, placing adverts in locations along the route, on local radio, on social media and in local print media. We also sent press releases to local media and conducted interviews with a range of media outlets which generated further coverage for the consultation. Local representatives were briefed in advance of the launch of the consultation. We received more than 9,000 responses to the 2021 non-statutory consultation.</p> <p>We're committed to making sure that communities have the information they need to help make informed decisions about our proposals, with a level of detail appropriate to each stage of the Project's development. We've continued to listen to all Project stakeholders, including community groups, since the end of the last public consultation in June 2021.</p> <p>We communicate with communities and individuals in a number of ways, including a regular email newsletter, public information events, the Project website and via local media. We are also engaging directly with individual property owners/occupiers of land that may be directly affected by our</p>
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	<p>proposals. 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.</p> <p>Statements and statistics used in EWR documents and website pages are taken from reputable and verifiable government and industry sources and checked by EWR experts.</p> <p>Alongside this ongoing engagement there will be more opportunities for communities and other stakeholders to comment on the proposals during the statutory consultation, which will be undertaken before the submission of the DCO application. The Planning Inspectorate will then also carry out a public examination of the application, giving further opportunity for comment.</p> <p>Route Option selection</p> <p>We assessed anticipated capital costs associated with Route Options A, B, C, D and E ahead of the Preferred Route Announcement in 2020. In this assessment, we thought about how the infrastructure needed to support the railway, in particular the use of embankments and viaducts, earthworks and different earthwork profiles and gradients (height and slope). This work was included in the cost estimates made to support the selection of Route Option E as the preferred route in 2020. At the time, Route Option E was estimated to incur upfront capital costs of £3.7bn, which was the second lowest of all route options.</p> <p>Since we announced Route Option E as the preferred route in 2020, there have been no changes in situation or circumstance that would require us to reconsider our decision.</p> <p>We will continue work to assess the costs associated with EWR, including mitigation measures and capital costs, as the design of the route continues.</p> <p>Number of tracks through Bedford</p> <p>The capacity of the rail infrastructure in and around Bedford is constrained, due to the high volume of traffic currently passing through or terminating at Bedford station. Therefore, the addition of EWR services would be very challenging and would have significant operational risks related to potential knock-on delays and disruption to EWR services from other service operators and vice versa. It would not be possible to fit the new EWR services into the timetable on the current four-track MML. This is because the timetable is driven by constraints further afield, for example, the timing of the GTR</p>
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	<p>services through central London to the south coast, and the need to ‘weave’ freight services through the station area on specifically timed paths because of the high occupancy of platforms by GTR services. If the lines north of Bedford are shared between EWR and non-EWR services, these constraints mean that Thameslink and freight services would likely be prioritised in times of disruption and perturbation, because of the need to reduce knock-on effects across the wider network, increasing the performance risk to EWR.</p> <p>The punctuality of EWR services is critical to minimising congestion and performance issues for other operators who route share in and around the Bedford area – which is already categorised as congested infrastructure due to the amount of trains that pass the area per hour. The impact of delays has the potential to affect the wider geographical railway network due to increased interactions with services on numerous corridors running out of London to destinations across England, Wales and Scotland. The risk of delays transferring from EWR to MML or vice versa is substantially decreased with additional track capacity and therefore a reduction of direct interaction with the MML. In addition, it would be less complex to develop a timetable that is flexible enough to work around the existing services on the approaches to both Oxford and Cambridge.</p> <p>As a result, in developing proposals for the north of Bedford, several track options have been explored (as detailed in 8.5.7 – 8.5.98 of the 2021 Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report). The application of the Assessment Factors - for a description of these, see the NSC documentation, “Technical Report Appendices. C. Assessment Factors: definitions and considerations” – which include capital cost, railway operations and transport user benefit considerations, as well as environmental impacts and opportunities, has resulted in our emerging preference for the construction of two additional tracks to the east of the existing MML tracks.</p> <p>Since the 2021 consultation, we have undertaken further timetable and performance modelling of the level of service that can be provided using the existing four-track railway north of Bedford Station. The modelling assumptions and scope were validated and agreed with various stakeholders including train operators and Network Rail. The findings indicate that, even if the freight capacity growth enabled by previous investment by Network Rail on the Midland Main Line (MML) as part of the Corby enhancement scheme was curtailed, operating EWR services on the existing MML four track north of Bedford Station remains poorer in operational terms than the six-track option and would form a bottleneck on the MML, and would constrain future growth of rail services in the area. Consequently, the six-track infrastructure option remains the emerging preferred option due to increased confidence in the integration of the EWR timetable. This position is shared by Network Rail.</p>
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	<p>We absolutely recognise that the emerging preferred option of six tracks has the potential for demolition of homes in North Bedford and impact on communities. We are aware that EWR may affect people's homes and businesses, particularly in the Poets area of Bedford. The environmental impacts will be described in the PEIR, which will be shared at the statutory consultation. We will look at ways to reduce the impact of the construction and operation of the railway as part of the design development process. Once a detailed design has been created, we'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the scheme and seek to mitigate these.</p> <p>Re-use of the Varsity Line</p> <p>We considered the possibility of re-using this former railway and alternatives following the A421, but we ruled it out for various reasons. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The potential need to demolish a number of homes, commercial properties and take additional land including school playing fields, where the route has been built over, as well as the direct interaction with the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory (MRAO), which occupies a significant stretch of the old trackbed. • Potential land acquisition and impact on Priory Country Park, an area of public open space in Bedford, requiring replacement land to compensate for that would be taken by EWR. The land in the vicinity is either built upon or within the floodplain, making it challenging to acquire replacement land for the railway and requiring complex additional procedures to secure consent for EWR. • Large lengths of railway in floodplains which would require significant interventions to meet modern safety and engineering standards and, if unmitigated, would pose significant flooding risk within Bedford. • Lack of alignment with Bedford Borough Council's Local Plan 2040 due to loss of open space from the Bedford River Valley Park, conflict with allocation for a water sports lake with residential and education development and substantial interface and conflict with land south of the river for strategic mixed-use development centred on Bedford St Johns station. • Impact on important natural habitats, which have developed on the route of the former rail line since it was closed. • The significant distance between Bedford station and the former Bedford St Johns station on the former London and North Western Railway – over a mile – which would make interchange
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	<p>between EWR and other services unattractive and uncompetitive, and undermine the potential transport user benefits of the Project.</p> <p>We assume that the reference to the “Beecham Line” is the matter raised refers to the Varsity Line.</p> <p>Having reconsidered in light of 2021 consultation feedback, the preference remains unchanged to select Route Option E – passing to the north of Bedford and serving Cambourne – as the preferred route option. Please see the Economic and Technical Report on our website, that has been published alongside this Consultation Feedback Report, for more information.</p>
<p>Queries were raised about Bedford Station regarding the insufficient car park and existing congestion issues.</p>	<p>At the next stage of design development, we will focus on assessing parking provision and the way passengers move around Bedford station. We will consider a variety of aspects including the sizing of ticket hall and station entrance, car parking and how these station components can operate efficiently and safely.</p> <p>We will consider the existing traffic levels when developing plans in this area. We will carry out traffic surveys and transport modelling to help inform our design process, including car parking arrangements during the construction and operational stages. As part of the Environmental Statement that will form part of the DCO application, we'll prepare a Transport Assessment to consider the impact on the strategic and local highway network, road safety and local sustainable modes of transport, including public transport. The assessment will consider impact during construction and operation of EWR on the road network, such as changes to existing traffic patterns because of predicted construction traffic and the suitability of roads. If required, mitigation measures will be set out as part of in the CoCP, or similar document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State as part of the DCO application.</p> <p>We will undertake modelling work to help inform parking requirements. We will consider electric vehicle charging points and disabled persons parking spaces, as well as passenger drop-off and taxi facilities.</p> <p>Additionally, we will also look at how we can improve sustainable transport links to Bedford and Bedford St Johns stations to encourage more people to walk, cycle or travel by bus to the stations, to reduce pressure on parking and levels of road congestion.</p>

	<p>We will follow a rigorous process including using a range of Assessment Factors; for a description of assessment factors see the NSC documentation, “Technical Report Appendices. C. Assessment Factors: definitions and considerations”. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.</p>
<p>There was some support for the scheme, with residents acknowledging that better connectivity between Oxford and Cambridge would be beneficial.</p>	<p>We note comments from respondents about their support for EWR. 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.</p> <p>It will also increase connectivity for households and businesses across the route. This will help businesses become closer to suppliers, a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and 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.</p> <p>We will, where possible, look to quantify the impact of East West Rail 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 case for the Project and will be included within the business case process.</p> <p>Additionally, EWR can support the national levelling up agenda by providing the right environment for business growth across an area where new business formation, innovation and entrepreneurship is strong. This will help new business growth and survival, but also assist in retaining businesses and investment in the UK, encouraging further investment and scaling up across other parts of the country. Many businesses and industry sectors that EWR will support already have strong links to other parts of the country considered priority areas for levelling up.</p>
<p>Comments were raised regarding the need for the scheme given the distance between Oxford and Cambridge, the cost of the scheme and the 30% reduction in train passengers post pandemic.</p>	<p>EWR is an infrastructure investment that would support economic growth and social development in the region and in the UK economy as a whole. EWR is addressing the lack of east-west connectivity in the region, key to attract investment and connect communities along the route, driving sustainable economic growth.</p>

	<p>We are developing our business case to underpin decisions about how the railway would be built and delivered. The business case will use a range of evidence to ensure that money is spent in the most effective way and delivering value for money. This is an iterative process and ongoing work is underway to gather more evidence, both qualitative and quantitative in nature. We'll also work with the Department for Transport to assess opportunities to simplify fares and purchase options for consumers.</p> <p>During Covid-19, rail demand was significantly reduced as people preferred to avoid public transport for obvious reasons. However, the Department for Transport's latest post-Covid national rail passenger figures indicate that average daily passenger levels on the UK rail network are at over 98% of pre-Covid levels. We will continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process.</p> <p>While no consensus has been formed about long-term rail demand in the UK, we have and will be testing the possible impact a long-term increase in working from home could have on the route – details will be made available at the statutory consultation.</p> <p>However, EWR is addressing a fundamental lack of east-west connectivity in the region and the benefits should not be considered based on potential short-term fluctuations in demand. It is a long-term investment that would provide sustainable economic growth, would help to attract investment and would connect communities along the route for decades to come.</p> <p>We will continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process.</p>
	<p>It is noted that EWR will provide connectivity between major areas of housing and employment. It would not be possible to connect to all conurbations along the route, whilst maintaining fast journey times.</p> <p>We will aim to align with other projects and services to contribute to an integrated transport solution for the region.</p>