Appendix 20: Table 12.6 - Engagement since the close of the 2021 consultation – Political stakeholder feedback

Matter Raised	EWR Co Response
A comment was received that a commitment to active travel should garner support for active travel both locally and nationally. Some of the stakeholders in South Cambridgeshire are open to active travel initiatives such as travel hubs and limiting car parks.	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. Options for active travel could include new and improved pedestrian and cycling routes, to provide a door-to-door service between the station and a customer's origin or destination. More information will be shared at the statutory consultation. EWR stations could serve as 'community travel hubs', integrating the railway with the wider transport network – including bus, taxis, pedestrian routes, cycling and emerging micro-mobility modes. 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. Although sustainable modes will be prioritised, we recognise that access by car will still be required, so we are also considering the parking requirements and available space at each station. We will also provide EV charging facilities in our car parks.
Concerns were raised about the impact on agriculture and farming in the Eversden area.	We understand the importance of agriculture to the communities the railway will serve, and we want to find solutions that avoid, reduce or mitigate adverse impacts on land use and agricultural holdings as far as reasonably practicable. At each stage of the planning and development process, the company will assess the environmental impacts on important areas such as agricultural land (including Best and Most versatile [BMV] land) and the countryside. As part of this, we will explore ways to reduce the impact of the railway on agricultural land holdings and soil resources. To better understand how the land is used, we will continue to work with landowners, occupiers and land managers to gather information that will help inform the design process. Where land needs to be acquired, or is proposed to be acquired, the Compensation Code sets out the circumstances in which compensation is payable, EWR Co has

	provided a guide to compulsory purchase compensation – Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation. The PEIR will include information regarding baseline soils environment, including presence of best and most versatile (BMV) land, and existing agricultural and forestry land use and agricultural land holdings. We'll present the potential impacts and likely effects on the baseline soils environment arising from disturbance and displacement and mitigation, such as outline plans for soil management during construction, both as part of the PEIR and at the statutory consultation. Potential impacts and likely effects on agricultural and forestry land use and agricultural land holdings arising from land-take, demolitions of key agricultural infrastructure, severance and changes in accessibility all contribute to our consideration of Assessment Factor 14 – environmental impacts and opportunities, which is described in the 2021 Consultation Technical Report. We'll present potential impact and likely effects as part of the PEIR and at the statutory consultation. We'll then submit an ES as part of the DCO application.
Concerns were raised about the air quality issues in Bedford and that EWR would exacerbate the issue by bringing more cars and commuters into the town centre. More general concerns were expressed about the pollution emitted from the railway.	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 CO2 emissions) throughout the design process. The Project team will 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 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. This assessment would also include the impact of a possible issues of bringing additional cars and commuters to the town.

	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 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 PEIR published at the statutory consultation and then within the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the DCO application.
Some stakeholders voiced their preference for a Southern approach into Cambridge if the embankments and viaducts could be lowered. Another stakeholder felt that a Southern approach would serve the Biomedical Campus.	**Approach to lowering of embankments and viaducts** Assessing the potential impact of EWR on the environment is a fundamental part of our design process. 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 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. Since consultation, we have been reviewing the design of the Section D route, including impacts on Caldecote, Haslingfield, Harlton and Harston and looking for opportunities to reduce the height of embankments and viaducts within the design. Opportunities considered include taking the railway under roads in cuttings instead of building viaducts over them and making minor diversions to the railway alignment to allow the railway to be lowered. Roads would then be diverted over the railway on smaller overbridges, instead of building railway bridges/viaducts over existing highways. **Serving the Biomedical Campus**

	The SATC would provide connectivity directly to the new Cambridge South station, which is adjacent to the Biomedical Campus, the largest employment site in Cambridge. This would not be possible via the NATC, which would mean that commuters would need to change trains, resulting in increased journey times and less convenient journeys.
The Aylesbury Spur received strong support from a number of stakeholders in the Buckinghamshire area.	We are continuing to explore options on how to connect Aylesbury, in discussion with our colleagues in the Department for Transport and Network Rail. We are working with Government to understand whether there is a viable business case to continue work on an Aylesbury connection.
People pointed out that the Bromham Road bridge would need further construction and concerns were raised about the impact on the local community as they referenced the disruption experienced in the area from recent construction works.	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 to inform the development of the proposals. 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 published at the statutory consultation and then within the ES submitted as part of the DCO application.
Quite a few stakeholders opposed the proposals to building six rail tracks at Bedford station due to the necessity to demolish houses and the further construction work required on Bromham Road Bridge. Concern was also raised about the proposed four tracks from Great Shelford station.	**Additional tracks north of Bedford** 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 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. 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. 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 our 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. 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. 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.

	Shelford into Cambridge Currently, the Shepreth Branch Junction is the meeting point of the two twin track Shepreth Branch Royston line, the two twin track West Anglia Main Line, resulting in four tracks becoming two as they approach Cambridge. The existing twin track West Anglia Mainline to the north of Shepreth Branch Junction has insufficient capacity for the new EWR services and therefore this line needs to be four-tracked. We have considered a number of potential track layouts and further updates will be provided at the statutory consultation.
A number of stakeholders have commented that more detail is required around the business case. Many see the EWR line from Bedford to Cambridge as highly disruptive and are not clear on the benefits it brings.	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. We are developing a 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. We'll also work with the Department for Transport to assess opportunities to simplify fares and purchase options for consumers. 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. 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. 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 will provide sustainable economic growth, will help to attract investment and will connect communities along the route for decades to come. We will continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process. 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 Project. This includes social and environmental impacts. 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. More information on cost estimates will be presented at the statutory consultation.
Concern was raised that the Need to Sell Scheme is not operational yet and that some residents are already experiencing problems with the sale of their house because of the Project.	For the owner-occupiers of properties which would need to be acquired in part or wholly to construct the railway, 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. 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. We'll 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'd discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the Project and seek to mitigate these where possible. We've introduced a Proposed Need to Sell (NTS) Property Scheme to support 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. Details of the Scheme including the full eligibility criteria are set out 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.

	We invited those parties who believed they had an urgent need to sell to discuss their situation with us to explore if there if we could offer assistance prior to the Need to Sell Scheme being introduced.
Concerns were raised about the impact of construction in the area approaching South Cambridge including the impact on connectivity. Harlton village was mentioned as an area of particular concern.	We take the safety of local residents and landowners very seriously. During construction, EWR 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. We are aware that construction activities and traffic could have an impact on local residents and businesses, such as through dust or noise. 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 impacts on the environment would be identified and managed, as far as reasonably practicable. 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 parking and staging of works to minimise impacts on communities, as far as reasonably practicable. Further information on this will be presented at the statutory consultation. 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 the statutory consultation.
A high number of stakeholders expressed their dissatisfaction with the 2019 consultation and engagement. As option E was presented as the most expensive route during the 2019 consultation people were led to believe that this route would not be a viable option and therefore did not take this into consideration as they submitted a response. Some, based on the	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. Capital cost is one of fifteen Assessment Factors used to assess options. All options set out at the non-statutory consultation were presented for consideration, as possible options to be taken forwards.

information presented would not have responded at all. Some people also told us that they had difficulty in interpreting engineering long drawings in 2021 consultation and that the consultation lacked detail. It was also said that there was little mention of Little Eversden in the consultation documents. There was scepticism from people that their views would not truly be considered.	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. 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. 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. 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. As the respondent(s) highlight, there was little explicit mention of Little Eversden in the consultation documentation, however the village would have been factored into any decision making on the alignment.
Concern was expressed regarding the potential demolition of houses in the Poets area of Bedford.	We are aware that EWR may affect people's homes and businesses, including 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, including impacts to directly impacted properties and those neighbouring them. 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.

	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. 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 Property 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 East West Rail. More information about the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme can be found on our website. In terms of impacts to residents during the construction process, mitigation measures for construction impacts will be set out in a Code of Construction Practice or an equivalent document. 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 teams 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 would involve the use of physical barriers to improve the aesthetic and reduce noise. 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.
Concerns were raised about EWR and links to development plans and the use of Development Corporations. Greater Cambs planning coordination – a question was received on the guided busway. It was commented that some communities are already blighted by	In designing route options for the railway to date, we have continued to liaise with planning authorities and monitored planning applications, committed development, and emerging local policy. We have undertaken consultations to stay informed about proposals for development across the route. We have considered the potential impact of the scheme on existing housing, including housing that has been granted planning permission and is in the course of being built. We have also formally responded to third-party planning applications and policy consultations, where appropriate to do so. We will work with other organisations on planning process, including the Greater Cambridge Partnership with regard to the guided busway. Any work to set up, or legislate for Development

Luton Air Stack (Great Gransden, Little Gransden, Waresley)	Corporations would be led by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) as opposed to EWR Co. We will work with Local Authorities to understand existing and future traffic patterns, as well as different ways for customers to access stations. The modelling approach to determine the impacts of EWR on both the local and strategic road network follows the Department for Transport (DfT) modelling Guidance (Transport Appraisal Guidance - TAG). In following this guidance EWR will be using the DfTs National Trip Ends Model (NTEM) which accounts for all permitted development with Local Authorities Local Plans. In addition to this EWR will develop an uncertainty log, which will be developed alongside the Local Authorities, that captures all the potential development sites not included within NTEM. These will then be graded into sites that are likely and unlikely to be delivered. Those likely to be delivered will be included within the demand used in the EWR models. These approaches would mean EWR will be capturing the most likely future demand on the highways network. We note the comment that some communities are already blighted by Luton Air Stack (Great Gransden, Little Gransden, Waresley).
It was suggested that EWR should be looking into alternatives to diesel, including hydrogen and hybrid solutions.	We are proposing to use existing diesel trains on CS1 stage of the railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes as this allows us to begin operations sooner than would be possible with trains powered by other means, including electrification. This is because additional infrastructure, such as overhead line equipment, is needed for electric trains to operate, and battery-powered trains are still being developed to improve their range so are currently not suitable. We have an ambition to be a net-zero carbon railway, with reduced emissions, including carbon, nitrogen oxides and particulates. We're working to meet the government's vision for the rail industry to remove all diesel-only trains from the network by 2040. We'll provide more information about this, as well as detail on the potential impacts of the railway at the statutory consultation.
A comment was received that a commitment to economic growth should garner support locally and nationally.	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.

	It will also increase connectivity for households and businesses across the route. This will help businesses become closer to suppliers, to a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and create 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 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.
Strong support was received for EWR to be electrified with a significant number of people wanting to see the line electrified or diesel free from the first day of its operation.	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 to 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.
Consider the potential to collaborate with other land holding partners to facilitate 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.	It is the company's intention to build on the commitment of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain made in relation to the part of the route between Bicester to Bletchley. The company will consider enhancing some existing habitats and look at opportunities to create new habitats and in doing so, we will seek opportunities to work with local partners to facilitate our net gain targets. Further information on plans for achieving 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be provided during future phases of consultation.

There was a view that the Project's commitment to the environmental benefits should garner support both locally and nationally.	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 a reasonably practicable. As the Project develops, we will seek opportunities communicate the environmental benefits to local and national organisations. In line with this, we will set out further information of the potential environmental impacts and benefits as part of the PEIR, published at the statutory consultation. We will then prepare an Environmental Statement, which will be submitted as part of the DCO application.
People in South Cambridgeshire are concerned about the height of embankments and viaducts. There is a view that lowering embankments and viaducts, would make a Southern approach into Cambridge more palatable to some people. The height of the embankments was mentioned as a concern in Caldecote and Harlton. Residents in Harston and Haslington also voiced their concerns about the impacts of viaducts, cuttings and embankment structures, and the impact related earthworks and construction would have on the landscape and natural features.	Assessing the potential impact of EWR on the environment is a fundamental part of our design process. 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 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. Since consultation, we have been reviewing the design of the Section D route, including impacts on Caldecote, Haslingfield, Harlton and Harston and looking for opportunities to reduce the height of embankments and viaducts within the design. Opportunities considered include taking the railway under roads in cuttings instead of building viaducts over them and making minor diversions to the railway alignment to allow the railway to be lowered. Roads would then be diverted over the railway on smaller overbridges, instead of building railway bridges/viaducts over existing highways.
Concern was expressed around the impacts of freight in relation to noise, vibration and pollution.	We are 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'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.

Concern was also expressed about night-time freight traffic in particular the frequency of trains and noise levels.	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. 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 enhancements, both on EWR and elsewhere on the network, would be required for freight to exceed these levels. We continue to work closely with the industry and stakeholders to inform our approach to freight. 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. We are 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. **Impact of freight** In 2018, the Government challenged the rail industry to remove all diesel-only trains from the network by 2040, and we are committed to running a sustainable railway. We are currently looking at how we can use new and emerging technologies within our long-term train fleet. Further details including a high-level overview on anticipated costs will be published at statutory consultation. 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'll assess changes in pollutants as the scheme develops, including nitrogen oxides and fine particulates, and the potential effects of noise and vibration as part of the EIA process. Our proposed operational hours for passenger services in Appendices A and B of

	EWR Co 2021 Consultation Technical report, which referred to a potential pubic facing timetable (planned trains in passenger service), to provide some initial guidance. There will also be less intensive train movements as required outside these hours for infrastructure maintenance, inspection, freight, and other activities as part of the national rail network. EWR Co continues to work on the concept of operation to inform the operational timetable. 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. 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 work to identify and reduce any impacts that can't be avoided and work closely with people who could be affected. **Powering freight trains** We're 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.
Concerns were raised whether the station could be built.	There is no plan for an EWR station at Hauxton.
Concern was expressed that a rail line to the north of Bedford would drive housing demand in an area where limited land has been allocated for housing developments. A comment was made that EWR needs to align with the growth aspirations in the Cambourne area and further comments	In designing route options for the railway to date, we have stayed informed about proposals for new housing across the route, including in these locations. In selecting the preferred route alignment following the 2019 consultation, EWR Co took account of how the new railway could serve developments in the Bedford and St Neots areas. We have considered the potential impact of the Project on existing housing – including housing that has been granted planning permission and is in the course of being built – when EWR Co looked at detailed potential route alignments.

were made that EWR must understand the local planned developments in the various areas along the line. Concern was raised about the additional 57,000 houses planned for South Cambridgeshire and that EWR may lead to denser development around the station as opposed to spread around the area.	We have considered how the railway might best support future housing development by providing cost-effective, sustainable and accessible public transport alternatives for new residents and settlements. This built on the preference for Route Option E and has formed a key part of the approach to selecting a preferred route alignment.
It was acknowledged that EWR will bring much needed connectivity from Cambridge to Oxford. However, concerns were expressed over the connectivity in a few areas. The impact of EWR on the connectivity of the villages in the Marston Vale area in Central Bedfordshire needs to be considered holistically alongside the road and level crossings infrastructure. Concern was also expressed about accessing the A507 particularly during rush hour. Woburn Sands was also highlighted as an area that must remain connected as it is at risk of being 'locked in'. In the Great Shelford area concerns were raised over the severance of Public Right of Ways (PRoWs) and local roads, alongside the disruption to roads during construction. Concerns over the potential impact to the crossing on Grahams Road was also mentioned.	**Benefits for communities** Rural communities will benefit from improved connectivity either via new stations or improved access to existing stations in their local area. Despite being a short distance apart, journeys from towns such as Milton Keynes and Bedford to Oxford and Cambridge take a long time because of congested roads and the lack of public transport. By offering rail travel as an alternative, EWR can help to ease traffic on local roads by reducing people's reliance on cars. It will also give people more choice, offering more sustainable ways to travel and opportunities to relax or work while travelling. EWR will also offer new journeys to local communities because of its key intersections with most of the UK's main rail lines – including the East Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and West Coast Main Line – making it easier to get from Milton Keynes to Leeds or Cambridge to Manchester, as well as improved connections to international airports at Luton and Stansted. **MVL Connectivity** Local connectivity for villages including Woburn Sands is one of the key considerations in developing our proposals. We will 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. It will also set out the impact of construction on the road network, including changes to existing traffic patterns because of predicted construction traffic. This will include consideration of access and impact to the A507 and access to Woburn Sands.

In the Harlton area, access to Washpit Lane was raised as a concern. In the Harston area concerns were raised that the construction would impact on the access to schools and PRoWs. Community charter would help local communities.	We appreciate that level crossings play an important role in local connectivity, allowing people to move around their communities, so recognise local people's concerns about our proposals for upgrades to level crossings along the MVL. Accessible and safe alternatives to level crossings are important for users so that everyone can make the journeys they require to access local facilities. We provided several options for pedestrian connectivity during the consultation and have taken all consultation feedback into consideration as we developed the proposals, including how pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders can make their journeys. We will continue to consider the NMU crossing integration as we progress the option appraisal and selection process at the next stage of design. Access across the railway and to the station, businesses, and residents in close proximity will be considered during the development of proposed options. These proposals will be informed by ongoing engagement with England's Economic Heartland on door-to-door connectivity. We will also endeavour to provide ongoing access during construction, subject to safety considerations. We understand that horse riders have unique needs in crossing the railway. Temporary access during the construction phase would be planned carefully to provide suitable diversion routes for NMUs. Where equestrian routes may be affected, we will share alternative options with user groups in the development of our designs. We are committed to considering all users, including sensitivity to noise in respect of equestrian routes such as bridleways. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation. **Great Shelford severance of PRoWs** We have considered the potential impacts on public rights of way, including the DNA path between Great Shelford and the Cambridge Biomedical campus. Ongoing design development will determine the location of two new tracks and EWR Co will present information on them at statutory consultation for comment. EWR Co aim to enhance local connectivity and to encourage the use of active travel modes, including new and improved pedestrian and cycling routes, throughout the corridor. We want bike and pedestrian travel to become a realistic and attractive choice for short journeys. 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 published at the statutory consultation and then within the Environmental Statement submitted as part of the 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 Harlton, Harston and Grahams Road area, as mentioned by respondents. 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. We are not aware of the specifics regarding the suggestion but we are, for example, committed to a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), or similar document, which sets out additional standards to maintain safety and security and set out how construction impacts will be monitored, controlled and managed.
Concerns were raised around the impact the route would have on wildlife and that a new road from Sheeptick End, Lidlington, would impact the area where a Red Listed bird is breeding. Concerns were raised around the impacts on wildlife and important areas of tranquillity, such as the Country Park in Cambourne, Chapel Hill in Haslingfield and Hobson's Park Bird Reserve in Trumpington. Concerns were raised about the lack of results for bat surveys in Madingley Wood.	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, country parks and greenspaces. We will think carefully about protected species and their habitats when designing the railway. As mentioned, we intend to build on the commitment of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain made in relation to the part of the route already built between Bicester to Bletchley, with an ambition of delivering 10% Biodiversity Net Gain along the EWR route. We will consider enhancing some existing habitats and look at opportunities to create new habitats. Further information on plans for achieving 10% BNG will be provided at the statutory consultation. We'll seek to avoid direct impacts on the most significant nationally and internationally designated environmental assets including National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Ramsar Sites, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and candidate Special Protection Areas (cSPAs), Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees. This includes the colony of barbastelle bats in Wimpole and Eversden Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is located within the route option area and within 3-4km of the emerging route alignments between Bedford and Cambridge. Throughout 2022 EWR Co carried out a number of surveys to better understand the barbastelle population in the area. EWR Co will carry out further bat surveys in 2023. We will use these to make sure that the design does not significantly affect the population of barbastelle bats. We will design a programme of habitat surveys and species-specific surveys 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 consideration of surveys at sites such as Madingley Wood, as well as other habitats in the area.
There was some support in Aspley Guise to close the level crossing in this location.	We note comments from respondents about their support to close the Aspley Guise level crossing. We are further exploring options for the crossings, including keeping the crossings open. We are committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that EWR is able to mitigate disruption during its the planning, construction and operation stages of the Project. This includes reducing the impact to communities from any crossing closures by providing reasonable alternative crossings where possible. The options presented for Aspley Guise at NSC were selected to provide connectivity across the railway. Both options would result in the closure of the smaller crossings but maintain footbridge crossings at the station and at the footpath crossings (Old Manor Farm and Husborne Crawley No. 6). Option 1 would provide a footbridge at the station, road crossing at Old Manor Farm, and a footbridge at Husborne Crawley No. 6. Option 2 would provide footbridges at the station, Old Manor Farm, and Husborne Crawley No. 6. We appreciate that level crossings play an important role in local connectivity and allowing people to move around their communities, so we recognise local people's concerns about our proposals for level crossing closures. We are committed to providing a safe means to cross the railway and, where diversions are essential, minimising their impact on local communities as far as is practicable. Since the non-statutory consultation, the Department for Transport (DfT) and EWR Co agreed that we should set up the Affordable Connections Project. This was driven by two factors. First, a drive for lower costs, reflecting the impacts of Covid-19; and secondly a focus on ensuring the benefits could be supported through local leadership. The ACP therefore considered whether there remained a strategic case for investing in EWR and if there were solutions which could deliver the majority of the expected benefits of EWR at a lower capital cost to the taxpayer. (Please see the Affordable Connections Project Economic and Technical Report published with this Consultation Feedback Report page). As part of this Project, we have carried out further options analysis at each level crossing including Aspley Guise level crossing and the potential for keeping the crossing open. Where analysis has identified further potential options including keeping the crossing open these are confirmed within the Affordable

	Connections Project. Economic and Technical Report. Before preferred options can be confirmed safety risk assessments and traffic assessments need to be completed. Further, the preferred option will be selected for each level crossing following a rigorous process using a range of assessment factors, outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the non-statutory consultation Technical Report. This work will be carried out at the next stage and presented for comment at the statutory consultation.
There were concerns over the closure of the Hauxton level crossing. It was felt that this crossing is vital to reach local amenities such as schools. If the level crossing were to close this would divert traffic to the A10 which already has a junction hotspot for accidents.	Hauxton Road provides a link between the villages of Hauxton and Little Shelford. The level crossing is passed by 166 trains (both passenger and freight) per day. This is equal to around 11 trains per hour (one train every five minutes). Once the new EWR services become operational between Bedford and Cambridge, this will introduce an additional four trains per hour in each direction, five trains every 15 minutes (one train every three minutes), resulting in an increase in the time the barriers need to be closed to allow trains to pass. As a result, we have identified the need for an updated risk assessment for the Hauxton Road level crossing to account for the increased train services introduced by the Project. This will determine whether the crossing would continue to comply with rail industry safety standards, as the number of trains in each direction are set to increase. Depending on the outcome, we may need to close the level crossing to make sure that the enhanced services can operate reliably and safely. If a decision is made to close the crossing, we will consider how the connection could be maintained for general traffic use or use by sustainable transport users, such as pedestrians and cyclists. This could include creating a diversion, or a grade-separated crossing, such as a bridge. We will consider how the Hauxton Road level crossing is currently used, and how its closure might impact local communities. There will undoubtedly be some disruption through dust and noise, but we will manage this appropriately, which we will set out in the Construction Management plan submitted as part of our DCO application. We will continue to investigate the potential effects of a closure of the level crossing, including on the roads identified by the respondents, and develop potential mitigation strategies. If diversions are required, we will consider the potential impact to the local road network and the needs of road users including school children, buses, and the emergency services. We will consider the safety of diversions to both cyclists and pedestrians. We will continue to work with local highway authorities to identify and assess potential mitigations and our work will be informed by ongoing traffic modelling and surveys in the area.

	We will provide further details of our proposed solution at the statutory consultation, so the public and other stakeholders can provide their feedback. We will then consider this before submitting a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to authorise our final proposals in this area.
Substantial concern was expressed at the closing of the level crossing at Lidlington as this was seen as effectively splitting the village in two parts. Some Liddlington residents have expressed a preference for a bypass and feel that further alternatives should be sought if a bypass is not feasible.	We are committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that the Project is able to mitigate disruption during the planning, construction and operation of the Project. This includes minimising the impact to communities from any crossing closures by providing reasonable alternatives where possible. **Rail Bypass of Lidlington** We did explore the possibility of creating a rail 'bypass' at Lidlington, where the line could be re-routed away from the village centre. As explained in the consultation materials, this option was not taken forward as preliminary design work demonstrated this had significant cost and environmental implications that could not be justified by the benefits that the option would deliver. **Road Bypass of Lidlington** Alternative road bypasses were not considered at the non-statutory consultation stage, as we develop proposals we are considering the feasibility of alternative alignments and diversions (such as a bypass between Thrupp End and Marston Road) as part of the option appraisal and selection process. Further information will be provided at the statutory consultation stage. **Traffic concerns** We will 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. Outcomes of this will initially be reported in the PEIR published at Statutory Consultation and then further developed within the ES submitted as part of the DCO application. The assessment will set out the impact of construction on the road network, including changes to existing traffic patterns because of predicted construction traffic. This will include consideration of congestion, access (including access restrictions), parking, and any health and safety impacts. It will also consider the option to keep the level crossing open and the impact this will have on traffic. The PEIR will include information regarding the baseline for transport, access and NMUs, together with a preliminary assessment of impacts and will be published at the statutory consultation.

Many concerns were expressed about the closure of London Road level crossing, and it was felt that stakeholders should help co-create towards finding solutions. There was a view that preserving vehicular connectivity is essential in this location as Bicester is a market town serving a large hinterland and that an acceptable solution along London Road or via an alternative route must be found. Some people felt that the A41 route is not viable due to congestion but that a route to the east via Gavray drive should be explored. A suggestion was made for an offline road bridge with traffic partially diverted elsewhere, followed by a road underpass at the crossing. A point was also made that consideration should be given to all the various user types of the crossing when finding solutions. Concerns were also raised that the funding options will determine the decisions made.	**London Road Crossing** We have carefully considered the options at London Road, Bicester, and put forward the options presented at the non-statutory consultation – all of which were to shut the crossing. Since the closure of the non-statutory consultation additional work has been undertaken, including consideration of keeping the crossing open. We understand that safe, accessible alternatives to the level crossings are important for all users. We have taken all consultation feedback into consideration as we have developed the proposals, including the need for cycle access across the railway and the potential impacts of a road bridge in this location. We are working to identify a solution to maintain connectivity across the railway at London Road level crossing (to keep connectivity between the North & South of the railway including Graven Hill, schools and retail areas). The options being considered include an accessible pedestrian overbridge or underpass either at or near the existing London Road level crossing. For vehicles we are working to identify the most suitable location for an alternative road bridge (which includes consideration of Gavray drive) which would then not require a diversion such as onto the A41. Before preferred options can be confirmed, safety, risk and traffic assessments need to be completed. This work will be carried out at the next stage and presented at the statutory consultation. We will be consulting with key stakeholders including Oxford County Council & Cherwell District Council in developing our proposals. We have also set up local representative groups to get feedback as we develop our solution. We are undertaking detailed traffic modelling in consultation with Oxfordshire County Council and where necessary will undertake traffic surveys to understand current traffic flows at the London Road level crossing and how our proposals might affect the local area. We will continue to work with key stakeholders to seek to understand any interdependencies and identify potential mitigations from the preferred option where required. The preferred option will be presented at the statutory consultation. The design of any proposed bridge or underpass will include ease of access for all types of users as one of the factors considered during the design process. The preferred option will be selected following a rigorous process using a range of assessment factors which are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report.

	Further information will be presented at statutory consultation which we expect to take place in the first half of 2024. We are also working with England's Economic Heartland on first and last mile travel, which includes consideration of emerging modes and micro-mobility such as electric scooters. We will also endeavour to provide ongoing access during construction, subject to safety considerations. **Cost** We have considered the consultation feedback as we have continued to develop our proposals. Cost is considered under three of the Assessment Factors used to select options to be taken forward, with capital cost, operating cost and overall affordability being considered. However, cost is not the sole deciding factor in the selection of options. For a description of the Assessment Factors, see the NSC documentation, "Technical Report Appendices. C. Assessment Factors: definitions and considerations".
Information sharing with National Highways regarding land surveys was raised.	We have been working closely with National Highways, including with their project team responsible for the A428 Black Cat improvement scheme. This has included, where appropriate, sharing information gathered through surveys on land potentially impacted by both projects.
Some general concerns were raised about the noise pollution emitted from the railway.	We recognise that noise from both the construction and operation of a railway is an important issue for local communities. We will develop a noise 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. However, we are committed to developing proposals for measures that will seek to reduce noise and vibration as far as reasonably practicable. This includes: • 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.

	We will carry out comprehensive assessments and we will 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 adverse impacts resulting from the proposals, allowing them to be avoided or reduced where possible, 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. Construction and operational noise levels generated from the proposed works will 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.
Concerns were raised about the potential of project announcements being made around election time in May 2023.	We complied with all rules regarding announcements during election periods.
A significant number of people called for continued engagement opportunities in different localities such as South of Cambridge, Bedford and the Poets area. It was felt that not sufficient engagement had been done. It was also felt that EWR should strengthen the communication messages to help people better understand the preferred options.	Since the consultation in 2021, we have continued to engage through the quarterly publication of the Keeping you Connected newsletter, regular website updates, public drop-in events held in Summer 2022 in Cambridge and Bedford, and ongoing meetings between potentially impacted landowners in the Poets area and our Land Team. We have strengthened the communication messages through the development of an inclusive language guide, the route-wide Accessibility Advisory Panel, and the tailored information for the area-specific Local Representatives Groups which is published on the Community Hub.
Concerns were raised that Cambourne lacks public transport options.	It is the aim of EWR to integrate into the wider transport network, including at Cambourne and including bus, walking, wheeling and cycling, to contribute to an integrated transport solution for the region. We will make sure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs. While

Concern was expressed that the public transport offer would need to match demand. An example was given that 30,000 people are expected to work on the bio-medical site in the Cambridge area in future which will impact road congestion if adequate public transport provision is not in place.	EWR is not responsible for delivery of other transport projects, such as the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway, it will work with other provides to align as best as possible. We have assessed future demand for EWR services which forecasts a requirement for four trains per hour. The proposed route will connect directly to Cambridge South Station, which will serve the Biomedical Campus. The provision of a heavy rail solution connecting key places of work and employment is expected to take cars off the roads.
There was concern from stakeholders from the Harlton area that economic factors were favoured above community and aesthetic impacts when designing the route options.	Assessing the impact on the environment is a fundamental part of the Project's development, including consideration of possible mitigations. We have considered the potential environmental impacts and opportunities through the use of the Assessment Factors, which include consideration of environmental impacts (AF14) (including sub-factor 4. Community and sub-factor 11. Landscape & Visual). These are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report. Further information on the design of the new railway in the Harlton area will be presented at the statutory consultation.
A request was made to make more information available on the engineering mitigations if the Southern route option is chosen. Several stakeholders found a Southern alignment out of Bedford unpalatable.	**Engineering Mitigations** Information on some of our Engineering mitigations, including opportunities to reduce the height of embankments and viaducts is available on the EWR website, and further information on the updated design will be made available at the statutory consultation. **Southern Alignment out of Bedford** In our preliminary selection of Route Option E in 2020, we took into account whether EWR should by-pass Bedford to the south or should serve the town centre directly. The project has identified and tested alignment options against the Assessment Factors, which reflect the Project objectives. As such, the preferred alignment is the one that passes through Bedford station, which best meets the Project objectives as set by the Government. As the design develops, we will work to identify and mitigate impacts, where practicable.
One stakeholder commented that the design at Bedford station needs to account for all users such as cyclists,	One of our core priorities is to improve connectivity across the Oxford to Cambridge area. We will consider how we can improve local connections, bus services and the customer experience while travelling to EWR stations within our design work for the new Bedford St Johns station. We will promote and prioritise both active and sustainable transport modes, including the provision of secure

pedestrians, vehicles, and taxis and that more secure cycle parking is needed. A comment was received that St John's station may need a multi-storey car park to serve the hospital.	cycle parking facilities and safe pedestrian and cycling routes from Ampthill and Kempston Roads to the station. We will look at how the proposals might change access to other local destinations like schools. We will also continue to work with bus operators to improve interchange facilities at the station. **Parking** At the next stage of design, we will undertake modelling work to help inform parking requirements. EWR Co will consider electric vehicle charging points and disabled persons parking spaces, as well as passenger drop-off and taxi facilities. We will also look at how to improve sustainable transport links to Bedford and Bedford St Johns stations, to encourage more people to walk, wheel, cycle or travel by bus to the stations, to reduce pressure on parking and levels of road congestion.
Concerns were expressed over the size and future capacity of Cambridge South station to support EWR services.	Cambridge South station delivery is the responsibility of Network Rail. We will work closely with them to ensure that the requirements of EWR are provided for, where possible, noting however that the design is complete, and the Project is in construction. In addition, we will ensure that, as the EWR design develops, that any impacts on Cambridge South station are identified so appropriate modifications can be made, so that the station is of sufficient size and capacity for EWR in operation.
A suggestion was made to consider an eastern entrance at Bletchley Station.	At the 2021 consultation we explained that we were considering a range of further improvements to Bletchley station. For example, altering or replacing the current footbridge, enlarging the car park and creating a new eastern entrance. We continue to review opportunities for further improvements. We're working closely with Milton Keynes Council and Network Rail to support the development of a vision and masterplan for the area, including a potential eastern entrance to the station, which could be transformational for Bletchley. We'll need to consider the funding implications for such an option. We remain committed to working with the local authority and other local stakeholders to improve connectivity between the existing station and the surrounding area, and to develop our understanding of how an enhanced public realm, as well as opportunities to engage in active travel, could support this.

A comment was made that pedestrian and cycle bridges to cross the A428 and link with a new station are required.	We have taken into account the ease of access to all potential station locations. Both proposed station options in Cambourne would be located close to existing communities. Cambourne North station is separated from Cambourne by the A428 which may reduce connectivity to the existing settlement, compared to Cambourne South, particularly for active travel options such as walking and cycling. However, it is believed that this could be mitigated by a foot and cycle bridge over the A428, alongside the development of our first mile/last mile strategies.
A preference was expressed for the station to be located north of the village of Cambourne.	The current preferred route option is for an EWR station to be situated to the north of Cambourne. See the Route Update Report for further information.
Criticism was raised that there are no mitigations in place if Ridgmont station is not relocated.	As we develop the proposals for Ridgmont station, the potential relocation of the station or the potential for the station to remain in its current location is being reviewed. This review will consider mitigations should the station not be relocated, and consider how existing land is currently used, such as in respect of the Heritage Centre. We will further develop the options for the service pattern on the MVL and for each individual station, including the provision of station improvements where required, based on the service pattern to be provided. The preferred option for Ridgmont station will be selected following a rigorous process using a range of assessment factors, which are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report.
A comment was made that the proposed station south of St Neots would not serve the residents of St Neots well as its location would still necessitate people to drive to the station to catch a train. There was a preference for a station to be in Tempsford rather than South of St Neots.	One of EWR's core priorities is to increase connectivity across the Oxford to Cambridge area, supporting economic growth, housing and employment. Therefore, understanding how station location options might influence the development potential of their surrounding areas has been taken into account when comparing the route alignment options. Following our further review of the opportunities associated with a station at either St Neots or Tempsford since the 2021 non-statutory consultation, we have concluded that a station at Tempsford is expected to have greater potential for placemaking, which also aligns with Homes England's view. As such, it is expected to have greater potential for development to support significant economic growth, than a station at St Neots. It is expected that Tempsford station would be more likely to enable this development to come forward by nature of greater use of brownfield land by utilising the former RAF Tempsford site, features to distinguish it from a placemaking perspective, as well as less risk of coalescence with the existing St Neots settlement and severance caused by the new A428 dual carriageway, than a St Neots station location.

	The use of a station within St Neots is not expected to enable the same level of housing development as we anticipate would be unlocked by a new station between St Neots and Sandy, which is why the preferred location for an ECML station is south of the existing St Neots station. We are committed to increasing prosperity and connectivity across the area, and therefore options to efficiently connect existing communities, such as St Neots, with the proposed new Tempsford station and our proposed network in general remain important. We will continue to develop proposals to enable improved accessibility door-to-door connectivity (I.e. how people travel to and from the station) for the neighbouring communities. Alignment 1 would cross A1 road to the north of Blackthe Cat roundabout and approximately 500m south of Chawston Lane. However, our prefered alignment Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) would cross the A1 south of the Black Cat roundabout, over 1km south of Chawston Lane.
Support was voiced for EWR for reasons including: providing access to employment opportunities for young people, improving travel for commuters to Milton Keynes and Cambridge, providing a direct train to Cambridge and Oxford from Bedford Station, and creating better connectivity between Oxford and Cambridge. Some expressed concern that the Project will not go ahead due to some of the opposition.	We note the comments from respondents about their support for EWR. EWR would be vital in delivering a range of benefits for communities, businesses, academia and the wider economy. It would 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. It would also increase connectivity for households and businesses across the route. This would help businesses become closer to suppliers, a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and more opportunity to share knowledge. Businesses would 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 would benefit from decreased journey times to areas along EWR, and workers would be better connected to additional job opportunities along the route. Where possible, we will look to quantify what the impact of EWR would be 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.

	Additionally, EWR could 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 would 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 would support already have strong links to other parts of the country considered priority areas for levelling up.
A general point was raised a few times that EWR must be integrated with local transport networks across the area that EWR serves.	It is the aim of EWR to contribute to and integrate into the wider transport network, including bus, walking, wheeling and cycling to contribute to an integrated transport solution or the region. EWR Co will make sure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs. It is noted that whilst EWR will provide connectivity between major areas of housing and employment. It would not be possible to connect to all conurbations along the route and maintain fast journey times.