Consultation feedback report:

Chapter 12: Engagement since the close of the 2021 consultation

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12. Engagement since the close of the 2021 consultation

This chapter provides a summary of the engagement we've undertaken since the close of the 2021 public consultation and how we have continued to take feedback into account.

This chapter is divided into two sections:

- Details of the engagement we've undertaken and how feedback has been captured.
- An overview of each of the main themes, the feedback received and our responses to the matters raised.

Throughout this chapter, text in *italics* is our response to any matters raised since the 2021 consultation.

12.1 Overview of engagement undertaken since the close of the 2021 consultation and how feedback has been captured

Understanding and listening to the views of people living and working in the communities EWR would serve is fundamental to the way we are designing the railway and will help inform the planning, construction and operation of the railway. We've continued to engage with local communities and stakeholders since the close of the 2021 consultation, including with local residents, directly affected land/property owners, local representatives, political parties and representatives from business, industry and academia.

12.1.1 Business, industry and academia

Meetings held with businesses, business representative groups, academic institutions and the rail industry provided an opportunity for stakeholders to connect with the Project and learn about local and regional proposals. We also listened carefully to the ambitions and challenges faced by these organisations, as well as the needs of their workforce.

Following the 2021 consultation, we engaged with over 50 organisations across business, industry and academia across the EWR route. Notes were taken and actions captured.

12.1.2 Direct correspondence

We're always keen to hear feedback on our proposals and there are a number of ways in which people have been able to get in touch with us. We receive ongoing correspondence via email, post and a dedicated telephone line. The contact@eastwestrail.co.uk email address continues to be open and all matters are fed back to the project team to be considered during the development of our proposals.

We've responded to over 3,500 pieces of direct correspondence from members of the public, stakeholders, business and elected officials.

Every piece of communication to the contact@eastwestrail.co.uk address is recorded and read by the team, who reviews and ensures it receives input from the appropriate specialist before responding.

12.1.3 In-person information events

The public information drop-in events held between 18 May and 12 October 2022 were not part of the formal consultation process carried out between 31 March and 9 June 2021, but provided an additional opportunity for us to share information about the Project in person and for local communities to talk to the subject matter experts.

Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, we were unable to hold in-person events at the time of the consultation. No new information was available at these events, but as the feedback from the 2021 consultation was still being comprehensively reviewed, the team were eager for local people to come to meet them outside of the formal consultation process and continue to share their feedback.

Between May and October 2022, we held a total of 10 public information events across the route, attended by almost 1,500 people, so that people could meet our team face-to-face, get updates on the Project and ask us any questions they had. Comment cards were available at every event and were used to capture people's thoughts, feedback and any questions that could not be answered at the time of the event. We received a total of 446 unique comment cards.

At each event, we provided large-scale maps of the potential route, information videos and 11 factsheets to take away, on topics including the Development Consent Order (DCO) process, the benefits of EWR and the Assessment Factors (AFs) [for a description of the AFs, see the 2021 Technical Report Appendices. C. Assessment Factors: definitions and considerations. Additional regional maps, factsheets and booklets were provided at different locations. These meetings were publicised via:

- Our community newsletter, which is sent quarterly to (in the region of) 9,000 people.
- Email to 670 locally elected representatives, including members of Local Representatives Groups (LRGs) - see LRGs section below for further detail.
- Email to 232 community groups and organisations across the route, providing details of the events in their area. Emails to community groups and elected representatives contained links to social media posts and information to advertise the events within other networks to widen our reach.
- Press releases providing details of the events to the local media and worked with local journalists to promote the events. We also publicised the events in online adverts and in print.
- Posts on our own communication channels, including the Community Engagement Hub, LinkedIn page and our website.

12.1.4 Local Representatives Groups

Correspondence feedback, received since the 2021 consultation, indicated that more people wanted face-to-face engagement with us, so we established the LRGs in all areas along the route where we'll deliver EWR.

We organised 15 LRGs to provide a mechanism for ongoing engagement with locally elected representatives and their constituents. To date, 68 LRG meetings have taken place.

Each LRG has the opportunity to meet quarterly (or more regularly than this when requested by the LRG, as in the case of the Bedfordshire LRG). The meetings bring together senior representatives and specialists from the Project team and councillors, parish and town councils. These meetings are ongoing and are an open forum for discussions – a place to share information, ask questions, cover any concerns people may have and get answers. They allow us to give Project updates and understand details of all relevant local issues.

Notes are taken at each LRG meeting and are shared with all members of that LRG, before being uploaded to the relevant LRG page on our Community Engagement Hub. Specific matters raised that cannot be addressed by the team in the room are escalated to the appropriate specialist and responded to either in the meeting note, via correspondence, or if needed, discussed at a future LRG meeting. The discussion topics are fed back to the Project team to be considered during the development of our proposals.

12.1.5 One-to-one meetings

During May 2022, we contacted over 450 landowners and occupiers and held 45 in-person meetings with potentially directly affected landowners and occupiers in the Poets area of Bedford. Notes were taken and actions captured.

12.1.6 Members of Parliament and local authorities

These meetings, held between June 2021 to April 2023, were arranged to gain a more in-depth understanding of the views of Members of Parliament (MPs) on the Project, share updates with them relevant to their constituencies and to discuss any queries they needed to raise on behalf of their constituents. Alongside the engagement with MPs, we've also continued to work closely with local authorities (LAs) to better understand their views on key aspects of the Project and keep them updated of how EWR would affect their area.

Site visits and tours have been undertaken across the proposed route in various locations. These visits have assisted us in gaining better understanding local perspectives and local topography in detail. Site visits and tours have been attended by our CEO, the Strategy Director and the Head of Communications, ensuring that our leadership team has a detailed understanding of local perspectives.

We engaged with 17 MPs and 13 LAs, totalling more than 100 individuals, including elected members and officers; plus nine site visits to discuss local impact. Notes were taken during the meetings and actions captured, with suggestions, concerns and comments sent to the Project team for consideration.

12.2 An overview of each of the main themes, the feedback received and our responses to the matters raised

The main themes raised across all of our ongoing engagement activities since the close of the 2021 consultation, are summarised below, along with our response to the matters raised. The themes below have been organised alphabetically for ease and the order does not necessarily denote the number of times a matter has been raised.

For those comments which are location-specific, further detail can be found within the corresponding section chapters of this report. The relevant chapters are:

- Chapter 3 – Route E.
- Chapter 4 – Approach to Cambridge.
- Chapter 5 – Section A (Oxford to Bicester).
- Chapter 6 – Section B (Bletchley and the Marston Vale Line).
- Chapter 7 – Section C (Bedford).
- Chapter 8 – Section D (Clapham Green to the Eversdens).
- Chapter 9 – Section E (Harlton to Hauxton).
- Chapter 10 – Section F (Great Shelford to Cambridge).

12.2.1 Accessibility

Comments were made generally that the route must be suitable for a diverse range of users, including disabled people, end-to-end. It was suggested that there was scope for providing level access through the installation of lifts on station platforms or changing platforms used by EWR services to improve access for disabled people.

Concerns were expressed about the impact the railway would have on disabled people in areas such as Lidlington and the London Road level crossing in Bicester. It was also noted that while some bridges for non-motorised users may be technically suitable in terms of access for disabled people, they are in fact impossible to use in practice, such as the existing bridge at Garth Park, Bicester, which is a significant distance to the east from London Road and cannot be considered an alternative crossing.

We're committed to delivering a railway that is inclusive, and we believe that stations must be designed to be suitable for a diverse range of users. We're carefully considering the requirements of different users, including disabled people, people with health conditions, older people, people with young children and people travelling with luggage, as we develop our proposals. Our dedicated Head of Inclusion ensures our inclusion strategy, 'East West Rail for All', is followed, and we set up an Accessibility Advisory Panel to ensure that end-user lived experience from disabled people with a range of access requirements informs the provision of accessible solutions to our services, and help us make inclusive decisions throughout the Project.

Being able to access all areas of the station, as well as getting on and off trains easily, is of paramount importance to all users, so all our new stations would be built to industry standards and guidance, including the Office for Rail and Road's Accessible travel policy – Guidance for train and station operators (March 2021). Consideration will be given to the provision of level access, gate arrangements, ticket machines, wayfinding and signage and the provision, acoustics, audio systems and hearing enhancement, surface finishes and visual contrast and the design of seating to be suitable for a diverse range of end user requirements, in the development of stations. Our stations would also provide trained staff available for assistance if required, and regularly maintained modern lifts. We'll provide more information on station design at the statutory consultation, which we expect to take place in the first half of 2024.

The Office for Rail and Road's Accessible travel policy – Guidance for train and station operators (March 2021) sets out how rail companies must provide assistance for older and disabled customers if required. Currently, customers can pre-book assistance at stations ahead of their rail journey, and assistance can also be provided to people who have not booked in advance.

We would have trained staff at all stations who can provide booked and unbooked assistance for customers, giving people a choice to pre-book or be spontaneous, ensuring that people can turn up and go.

Further information about the assistance booking app can be found at National Rail Enquiries - Passenger Assistance App.

12.2.2 Accessibility at London Road level crossing

As detailed in the consultation documentation, we explored six concepts for the London Road level crossing all of which were to shut the crossing. Since the closure of the 2021 consultation additional work has been undertaken, including consideration of keeping the crossing open to local traffic. Listening to your feedback, we are still exploring options to identify a suitable location for a road bridge, investigating the potential to maintain the existing crossing for local traffic and investigating ways to maintain accessible connectivity for a diverse range of pedestrians and non-motorised traffic.

We understand that safe, accessible and usable alternatives to the level crossings are important for all users with a range of requirements. We've taken all consultation feedback into consideration as we've developed the proposals, including the need for cycle access across the railway and the potential impacts of a road bridge in this location.

We're working with England's Economic Heartland on door-to-door connectivity, which includes consideration of emerging modes and micro-mobility such as electric scooters. We would also endeavour to provide ongoing access during construction, subject to safety considerations.

If progressed as an option, bridge design, accessibility, access for disabled people, and safety will be some of the factors considered during the design process.

The preferred option will be selected following a rigorous process using a range of Assessment Factors (AFs), which are outlined in the 2021 Consultation Technical Report. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.2.3 Accessibility at Lidlington level crossing

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, such as Lidlington level crossing. 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 feedback into consideration as we've developed the proposals, including how pedestrians, cyclists and horse riders can make their journeys. We will continue to consider how non-motorised users (NMU) cross the railway as we progress through the option appraisal and selection process into the next level of detail in the design.

Since the consultation we've carried out further options analysis at Lidlington, including in respect of the potential for the crossing to remain open, as confirmed within the Affordable Connections Project and explained in the Economic and Technical (ERT) report. Before preferred options can be confirmed, safety risk assessments and traffic assessments will be completed. This work will be carried out at the next stage and presented for comment at the statutory consultation.

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 would also endeavour to provide ongoing access during construction, subject to safety considerations.

12.2.4 Active travel

It was suggested that active travel – namely walking, cycling and wheeling - should be encouraged. Some stakeholders in specific areas, such as South Cambridge, were open to active travel initiatives such as the creation of travel hubs and limiting car parks.

Requests were received for EWR Co to consider providing ample and secure cycle storage and cycle hire facilities at stations, and to enable the carriage of cycles on board trains. It was commented that there are few cycle routes to Bedford station and that this could be improved upon.

Concerns were raised that closing smaller stations along the route would reduce opportunities for some residents to travel to the station on foot or by bicycle. In addition, it was suggested that extended barrier downtime at level crossings and possible road closures could hinder active travel.

Concerns were raised that the cycle path from Great Shelford is only two metres wide and is also used by pedestrians and horse riders and that no considerations have been made regarding this. Suggestions were made to widen the cycle route between Addenbrookes and Cambridge station. It was also felt that there was a lack of motorcycle considerations within the proposals.

We're committed to encouraging active travel, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, and we'll focus on integrating this with existing and future regional and local plans and planning strategies. Options for walking, wheeling and cycling could include new and improved walking 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.

Where there is the potential for extended barrier downtime at level crossings and possible road closures that could hinder active travel, appropriate mitigations will be considered, where practicable.

EWR stations could serve as 'community travel hubs', integrating the railway with the wider transport network – including bus, taxis, walking, and cycling and emerging micro-mobility modes such as e-scooters. We'll make sure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes as an alternative to personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs.

During the design process an assessment will be made on the retention of the more rural railway stations. The assessment will consider the fifteen Assessment Factors (AFs), as described in the 2021 Consultation Technical Report, and may result in stations being deemed unviable.

12.2.5 Cycle facilities

We always consider the end-to-end journey, including how our services can connect with other transport links. As we develop our station designs the provision of cycle facilities will be key to promote active travel to and from the station. We would look to provide CCTV at each of the new stations to provide security for customer's bikes. The facilities we provide at stations would consider a range of cyclist needs and could include:

- Different types of cycle racks based on suitability, type of cycle used- including adapted bikes, space, demand and ease of use.
- Easy to access, and use, cycle repair kits.
- Secure, 'controlled access' storage shelters.
- Charging points for e-bikes and other electric-powered micro-mobility modes.
- Hire facilities for cycles and micro-mobility, including those that are electric powered.

12.2.6 Parking

Although sustainable modes would be prioritised, we recognise that access by car and motorcycle would still be required, so we are also considering the parking requirements, including parking for disabled people, and available space at each station. We would also seek to provide EV charging facilities in our car parks.

12.2.7 Cycle paths

The integration of EWR into the local transport network, including cycle paths, has been a key consideration in the decision-making to date. While further design work is required, we‘ve placed a particular emphasis on how cycle paths can encourage people to access EWR stations by bike. 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.

12.2.8 Great Shelford cycle path

We’ve considered the potential impacts on public rights of way (PRoW), including the DNA path between Great Shelford and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. Ongoing design development will determine the location of the two new railway tracks, and we‘ll present information at the statutory consultation for comment. As part of this design work, we’ll seek to mitigate any impact on the DNA path. We aim to enhance local connectivity and to encourage the use of active travel modes, including new and improved walking, wheeling and cycling routes, throughout the EWR corridor. We want bike and foot travel to become a realistic and attractive choice for short journeys. In regards to the cycle route from Great Shelford to Cambridge station, we do not currently envisage widening the DNA path, nor the section from Cambridge Biomedical Campus to Cambridge station, which is on public roads.

12.2.9 Agriculture

Concerns were raised about the impact on farmland and wheat production, particularly in south Cambridgeshire. Concerns were also raised about the impact on agriculture and farming in the Eversdens area.

We understand the importance of agriculture to the communities EWR would 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.

We considered potential impacts on agricultural activities as part of the environmental impact and opportunities Assessment Factor (14), and 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. This

includes considering potential impacts on farming in the Eversdens area and as part of this, we'll explore ways to reduce the impact of EWR on agricultural land holdings and soil resources. To better understand how the land is used, we'll 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. More information is available in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation on our website.

The PEIR will describe the likely adverse and beneficial environmental effects of the proposals. This process involves identifying potentially significant adverse impacts resulting from the proposals, such as on the baseline soils environment arising from disturbance and displacement, allowing them to be avoided or reduced where possible. It also identifies any potential beneficial environmental impacts. The PEIR will include information regarding baseline soils environment, including presence of BMV land, and existing agricultural and forestry land use and agricultural land holdings.

12.2.10 Air quality and pollution

Comments were made noting that reducing car dependency, decarbonisation and air quality are big concerns in Oxfordshire and the wider area.

Concerns were raised that the railway, particularly the use of diesel trains, would significantly add to emissions in areas such as Bedford and Bicester and increase pollution along the route. It was suggested that residents living in the villages in the EWR catchment area would need to drive to their nearest station and concern was raised that this would further increase pollution.

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 pollution from the railway.

We take our commitment to delivering sustainable transport seriously. As an arms-length body of the Department for Transport (DfT), 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 (AQMAs) as we develop our proposals.

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 (ES) 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 and include consideration of how railway users travel to and from stations.

We recognise that journeys to and from stations are important and are considering measures to enable sustainable travel. Station access is a key consideration, and we'll continue working with other organisations, including bus operators, to improve interfaces and interchange with bus services at stations and provide onward travel information. Options for walking, wheeling and cycling being considered include new and improved walking and cycling routes and increased safe cycle storage to promote the use of bikes.

EWR stations would seek to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We'll ensure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved active travel modes, such as walking, wheeling and cycling, over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs.

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 would be used during the construction and operation of EWR, the routes construction vehicles would take to work sites, and how to manage work sites to avoid and reduce any dust creation.

In 2021, the DfT'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'll share information about this at the statutory consultation.

We'll 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 ES submitted as part of the DCO Application.

12.2.11 Approach to Cambridge

Some comments were received noting that both north and south Cambridge would be equally well served by a new railway line, as the distance into Cambridge is roughly the same.

Further information was requested about the case for a northern approach into Cambridge. Suggestions about this approach included following the A428 or following the old Varsity Line. Support was voiced for EWR taking a southern approach into Cambridge.

References were made to plans published by an academic researcher showing how a northern approach from Cambourne to North Cambridge could carry freight via two spurs without the need for the proposed four tracks at Cambridge and the consequent demolition of homes in the north of Cambridge.

At the 2021 consultation, we expressed our preference for EWR to take the southern approach to Cambridge, serving Cambridge station and the new station at Cambridge South. This consisted of a route which served a station to the north of Cambourne and then travelled southeast joining the Shepreth Branch Line to the south of Harston. We invited your feedback on this preference.

Since the consultation, we've looked again at the northern approach to Cambridge and an updated design was developed as part of our Affordable Connections Project work. By relaxing the requirement to operate an even-interval clockface timetable, and in response to your feedback, a revised northern approach to Cambridge was developed which would enable four EWR trains per hour to use the same route as previously considered, but with significantly reduced infrastructure. The four-tracking which was previously required through Cambridge would be reduced to use the existing two tracks from the proposed Milton Junction to Coldham's Lane. Between Coldham's Lane and Cambridge station, the West Anglia Main Line (WAML) would be increased to four tracks. This option would remove the need to demolish commercial and residential property, avoid the need to build on Common Land, and remove the need re-build a number of road and river bridges in Cambridge. The southern approach to Cambridge was also developed further to reduce vertical heights of embankments on the approach to Cambridge and consideration of a potential amendment to the station infrastructure at Cambridge North station. Further information can be found in the Economic and Technical Report available on our website.

The southern approach to Cambridge 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 northern approach to Cambridge, which means that commuters would need to change trains and increase journey times. The southern approach to Cambridge would also provide greater opportunities to unlock economic growth across the region (and at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus in particular) and would deliver greater overall connectivity and greater flexibility to extend EWR services in the future. For these reasons, we continue to select the southern approach to Cambridge as our preferred approach to Cambridge. You can read more about our reasons for this in the Route Update Report available on our website.

We've reviewed the potential to follow the Varsity Line through Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire. Further information can be found in the Economic and Technical Report available on our website. We found that, although a shorter route overall, it would not serve Cambourne and would deliver significantly fewer benefits than the current preferred alignment, Route Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant). It would also have a significant impact on housing within Cambridge and on the guided busway.

Locating the railway to follow the existing A428 road corridor between Cambourne and Cambridge would be likely to have significant impacts on the existing settlements located along these routes, not least because it would 'sandwich' these communities between the new railway and the adjacent dual carriageways.

12.2.12 Aylesbury Spur

The Aylesbury Spur received strong support from a number of stakeholders in the Buckinghamshire area. Comments were made stating the Aylesbury Spur is integral to realising the benefits of EWR in this area.

We are continuing to explore options on how to connect Aylesbury, in discussion with our colleagues in the DfT and Network Rail. We are working with Government to understand whether there is a viable business case to continue work on an Aylesbury connection.

12.2.13 Benefits

Queries were received regarding the benefits of EWR to communities in East and South Cambridgeshire, as well as Bedford town centre.

Comments suggested that some residents of Harston village wouldn't experience any benefits from the Project.

We're aware people want to understand the specific benefits EWR would provide to their local communities and businesses. As the design develops, we'll be able to provide more detail on what these benefits would look like, and we'll work with local authorities (LAs) and communities to refine and shape these plans in line with local plans and wider development.

By introducing EWR services to Bedford, people in the town centre and surrounding areas would benefit from direct connections east to Cambridge and west to Bletchley and Oxford. Similarly, by bringing EWR services to Cambridge, people in the city centre and surrounding areas, including residents of Harston village would benefit from direct connections west to Bedford, Bletchley and Oxford. The introduction of EWR services would reinstate a vital route that was lost to local people in the last century. New rail connections can bring many benefits such as growth, urban regeneration and less congestion on the roads. We are keen that the investment in the railway brings lasting benefits to Bedford and Cambridge and the surrounding areas. Supporting jobs and prosperity locally are important objectives for us and we are very interested to hear from you about how our proposals can support the towns, cities and villages along the route.

We expect the new rail link to support significant local economic growth that would benefit individuals, communities, educational and research establishments, and businesses across the whole area from Oxford to Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge. EWR would provide increased connectivity for households and businesses across the route. For households, residents would benefit from faster journey times to areas along EWR and workers would be better connected to job opportunities along the route. Furthermore, businesses would be able to attract an increased pool of labour due to the reduction in journey time from areas along the EWR route. Even for villages that would not have a station, EWR could provide indirect benefits such as more job opportunities.

12.2.14 Bridges

Potential works on the Bromham Road Bridge in Bedford were raised as a concern, with residents expressing that it should not be demolished and re-built again due to disruption to traffic and the local properties. Pollution and congestion were raised as concerns resulting from the construction period.

Concerns were raised about the impact on the local community should Bromham Road Bridge need further construction works, referencing the disruption experienced in the area from recent construction works.

Concerns were raised regarding the bridge over the railway at Long Road in Cambridge, which is considered an important access route for the local community. It was felt that any disruption could affect the quality of life of the people living in this area.

12.2.15 Bromham Road Bridge

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.

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.

12.2.16 Long Road Bridge

We may need some bridges to be altered to accommodate the proposed upgrade from two to four tracks on the approach to Cambridge station. Current proposals include the possible replacement of the Long Road Bridge. While works were undertaken to the bridge, we would put temporary traffic diversions in place.

We'll prepare a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP), or equivalent 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'll explain our approach to construction and operation of the railway and provide further details of potential effects at the statutory consultation. We've considered both long and short-term impacts of the Project through the option selection and design process. During the next stage, we'll 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.

12.2.17 Pollution and congestion associated with construction works

We take our commitment to delivering sustainable transport seriously and we're developing the Project in line with Government policy and law, such as the Clean Air Strategy.

The Project team will work with LAs to understand the current situation in communities and how to consider relevant AQMAs. We considered potential air quality impacts as part of the environmental impact and opportunities Assessment Factor (AF14) presented at NSC, and going forward, an assessment of the likely environmental effects and measures to avoid or reduce these will initially be reported within the PEIR, published at the statutory consultation, and then within the ES, submitted as part of the DCO application.

This will include consideration of pollution arising as a result of both construction and operation of the railway.

12.2.18 Building new tracks

Opposition was raised over the proposals to building two additional rail tracks north of Bedford station due to the potential demolition of homes. EWR Co was asked to consider Network Rail's report suggesting that an alternative track configuration at Bedford station could avoid demolitions.

Frustrations have been expressed regarding the delay of decisions around the required number of tracks through Bedford station. Concern was also expressed that the benefits of the Project will not outweigh the disruption caused by constructing the route.

Some concerns were raised against the proposed four rail tracks from Shepreth Branch Junction to Cambridge.

12.2.19 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 Govia Thameslink Railway (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 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've 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 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 most likely requires the demolition of homes in North Bedford and would impact on communities, 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'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'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the Project and seek to mitigate these.

12.2.20 Shelford into Cambridge

Currently, the Shepreth Branch Junction is the meeting point of the twin track Shepreth Branch Royston line, the twin track West Anglia Main Line, resulting in four tracks becoming two as they approach Cambridge. The existing twin track WAML 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've considered a number of potential track layouts and further information will be provided at statutory consultation.

12.2.21 Bus services

It was noted that there is a lack of bus provision serving Cambridge station. People queried how bus timetables would link into the train timetables and wanted this considered. People also raised a particular issue in Oxford where most buses coming from the north do not go to the station, or do not align well with the train timetable. The lack of public transport information was also mentioned.

One of EWR's core priorities is to increase connectivity across the Oxford to Cambridge region. This includes consideration of local connectivity, bus services and customer experience while travelling to EWR stations. We'll work with key stakeholders including Oxford City Council and Greater Cambridge Partnership, to integrate the proposals with other forms of transport. Although we're not responsible for bus routes, we'll work with other organisations, including bus operators, to improve facilities at EWR stations. This will include reviewing interfaces and interchanges with existing bus services at stations and the quality of onward travel information.

12.2.22 Business case

There have been requests to share a detailed business case with the public and with the business community, with some criticism levelled at the DfT in this regard. It has been suggested that there is no clear business plan to demonstrate actual demand for the Project. Concerns have been raised regarding the disruptive potential for EWR and clarity of the benefits it would bring.

Other questions concerning the business case included:

- Clarity on what information HM Treasury (HMT) needs to decide on the proposals and whether HMT will take into account information that is not in the Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR).
- Will the business case be based on passenger travel and freight?
- Will the business case consider developer contributions and to what extent will EWR Co consider paying back to local stakeholders and communities?

A number of stakeholders commented that more detail is required around the business case.

We want to provide a much-needed transport connection for communities between Oxford and Cambridge. We aim to deliver a safe and secure railway, which is quicker, greener, and cheaper for the taxpayer.

We're 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 will consider both passenger travel and freight. This is an iterative process and ongoing work is underway to gather more evidence, both qualitative and quantitative in nature.

EWR is an investment that is complementary to other activity that the Government may undertake to grow areas around the country, enabling growth to the UK economy as a whole. We produced a bespoke forecast of rail demand by 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've tested different scenarios and undertook a sensitivity analysis (i.e., we've considered the potential impact of a long-term increase in working from home and how this could impact on the demand for the route). We'll continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process.

12.2.23 HM Treasury information

We follow the Government's guidance, procedures and best practice as we develop our business case. This includes, but isn't limited to, the HM Treasury's Green Book and the DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance. Developing the business case for the Project is an iterative process and we'll 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.

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.

12.2.24 Passenger travel and freight

Whilst the actual number of freight services which run is a matter for the wider industry and freight operators, we're 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'll 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 would be business travellers and commuters, but leisure travellers would benefit from improved connections along the route. Anticipated passenger rail demand will be set out in the business case to the Government when we submit our DCO application.

12.2.25 Developer contributions

We are undertaking ongoing discussions with local authorities, developers and other stakeholders to consider their proposals and to help ensure that the benefits of EWR are delivered for both new and existing communities. If appropriate, we'll discuss possible developer contributions with developers.

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 benefit and how, and under whose control it could operate. We'll develop our thinking and share proposals at a later stage.

12.2.26 Carbon

EWR Co was asked what it meant by a "Net Zero Carbon Railway" and asked for EWR's modelling of the carbon footprint from journeys by rail.

Concern was expressed that Route E was not a carbon efficient route, but was still concluded to be the most environmentally friendly route.

Another concern was that EWR would release large amounts of carbon during construction.

We 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 Government to meet its carbon reduction targets.

As detailed in the Consultation Technical Report (Section 3.5) published at the start of the 2021 consultation, we've 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'll share further information on this at the statutory consultation.

In relation to carbon, potential emissions that come from the operation of trains are important when considering the potential carbon impact of the railway. We did not consider

that operational carbon emissions were likely to differentiate to a material degree between the route options consulted on in 2019 and no new information has been provided in response to the 2021 consultation which would cause us to reach a different view today.

To help inform the options we shared in the 2019 consultation and the preferred route option decision published in 2020, we carried out various types of analysis. This included a high-level appraisal of transport user-related carbon emissions, in line with the requirements of the DFT's Transport Appraisal Guidance (TAG) Unit A3. At that time, it was not a requirement to carry out other carbon assessments as part of that process, however we'll continue to review requirements, throughout the development process, as guidance is updated and added.

We've established a carbon management process that aligns with PAS2080 (the standard for carbon management on infrastructure projects) and as the Project develops, we'll publish an assessment of the whole-life carbon emissions associated with the Project. This will first be published as part of the PEIR during the statutory consultation and then within the ES deposited as part of the DCO application.

This assessment will include an analysis of both the embodied emissions associated with constructing the railway, but also the emissions associated with operating the railway. In relation to emissions associated with the operation of trains, whilst this will be calculated and assessed, it isn't considered a differentiator between the route options presented in the context of whole-life emissions.

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 associated with the Project, the carbon management and reduction approaches already in place, and those which would be used during construction and operation. We'll share this at the statutory consultation. We'll then submit an ES 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.

More information about Route E, including carbon emissions and environmental impact is available in Chapter 3 of this report.

12.2.27 Compensation, Compulsory Purchase Order and the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme

Criticisms were raised regarding the lack of clarity around compensation for those impacted by EWR, and queries were received around the compensation process and timeframe for those directly impacted by the railway in specific areas (e.g. Roxton), and those permanently or temporarily losing areas like gardens, garages, and parking spaces. Concerns were raised around whether the compensation would be sufficient. Queries were also raised around the compensation process and timeframe for residents if the project does not go ahead.

Discussions included how properties would be valued and how residents could appoint surveyors to act on their behalf. Concerns were raised about the compensation being insufficient to allow them to purchase a similar house in the same area.

Concerns were raised about meeting legal costs and whether EWR Co would meet these costs up-front. Some respondents felt that a monetary-only compensation scheme was not appropriate as there were impacts that could not be quantified financially.

Queries were received regarding the powers and process of Compulsory Purchase Orders.

Queries were also raised over which properties would be subject to a CPO.
More information on the Proposed Need to Sell (NTS) Property Scheme was requested and respondents raised concerns that it was not already operational. It was suggested that those who rent their properties would be affected by EWR and that they also should be considered for compensation to cover moving costs.

For the owners of properties which would need to be acquired permanently in part or wholly to construct the railway, full unaffected market value compensation for the property to be acquired and compensation for the reduction in the value of the property remaining (where part only is acquired) would be provided in accordance with the Compensation Code as explained in the Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation. Landowners will be entitled to choose and appoint their own suitably qualified surveyor to submit the compensation claim on behalf of the claimant. We will reimburse the reasonable cost of the surveyor's fee as part of the claim.

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 on our website: Guide to Part 1 Claims, including an explanation of what constitutes a qualifying interest.

When we submit our application for the Development Consent Order, 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 on our website: Guide to Statutory Blight Notices.

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 on the website; Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation, for which the link is as above.

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'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the Project and seek to mitigate these.

If a 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 for which the link is as above.

We invited those parties who believed they had an urgent need to sell to discuss their situation with us to explore if we could offer assistance prior to the Proposed NTS Scheme being introduced.

The Proposed NTS 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 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.

Applicants would need to meet five criteria, which includes providing evidence that they currently have a compelling need to sell. The Proposed NTS Property Scheme reflects non-statutory consultation feedback and Proposed Need To Sell Property consultation feedback, both received in 2021. The details for the Guide to the Proposed NTS Property Scheme are available here: The Guide to the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme.

If the EWR Project does not proceed, then no compensation is payable, as the statutory compensation provisions in the Compensation Code would not apply as no acquisition of properties would have been undertaken nor will the project have been constructed.

12.2.28 Consultation and Communication

Some respondents shared concerns that they don't feel listened to, due to completing surveys without receiving feedback; they felt that EWR Co does not have answers to their questions. Comments were also made indicating that EWR Co should communicate the benefits of the project better to businesses.

Other concerns were raised about the delay in reporting of the findings from the 2021 consultation.

Some respondents raised concern that the 2019 consultation was flawed as it was not adequately promoted and poorly timed. Suggestions included re-running the 2019 consultation.

There were concerns raised regarding the 2019 consultation and engagement. Some respondents felt that Route Option E was presented as the most expensive route during the 2019 consultation and were led to believe that this route would not be a viable option, therefore did not take this into consideration as they submitted a response. Concerns were made about whether residents from North Bedfordshire were aware that the route might go

through their area, and some respondents felt that the consultation did not address the impact of Route Option E on residents.

Comments were received regarding difficulty in interpreting engineering drawings in the 2021 consultation and a lack of detail in the consultation documents. Comments also noted that there was little mention of Little Eversden in the 2021 consultation documents.

Concerns were raised regarding whether views of both non-statutory consultations would truly be considered when taking the Project forward. Respondents asked how much consideration would be given to the views of those directly affected by the proposals, either through the moving or removal of stations between Bletchley and Bedford, or those whose homes might be impacted.

Queries were raised around the timeframe for the next consultation. A further comment was made that the consultation should be open to all comments and not just on specific issues. Concerns were raised as to whether residents had been adequately consulted with and represented at each stage of the non-statutory consultation.

We take the views of local people, communities, and their representatives seriously and we'll 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.

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 ran the consultation for 10 weeks, which is 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. 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. We received more than 9,000 pieces of feedback raising over 190,000 matters, all of which we've considered in detail.

We believe we provided an appropriate level of detail for the proposals on which we were consulting. Cost is one of 15 Assessment Factors used to assess options. All options presented for consultation were considered as possible options to be taken forward.

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.

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. 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.

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.

The statutory consultation will be held in the first half of 2024.

12.2.29 Congestion

Concerns were expressed that EWR would significantly add to the congestion and pollution in Bedford.

Specific concerns were also raised about traffic congestion. Concerns were raised that closure of the London Road level crossing would increase congestion on already congested roads.

We understand there would be impacts on traffic and transport in the Bedford area and in the from the construction and operation of EWR and we'll work to ensure any disruption to the community is reduced as far as reasonably practicable. We'll explore how we can provide new opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the new station, and how we can make sure there is good access for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as good bus links.

Regarding the impact on congestion for proposals at London Road Level Crossing, we're aware that closure of level crossings and road developments related to the Project may impact traffic in the local road network.

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 be reported in the PEIR published at the statutory consultation and the ES submitted as part of the DCO application. 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.

12.2.30 Connectivity

There was support for the railway line allowing passengers to arrive at their destinations much faster compared to other means of public transport, to reach places such as Bedford Hospital.

Support was given for the proposals to relocate Bedford South (St Johns) station, which would improve connections from the hospital and town centre for the staff and students. Concerns were expressed that no adequate consideration is given to the provision of replacement crossings after crossing closure, for example the crossing at Woburn Sands used to reach the school.

Concerns were raised about the impact of disconnecting villages and severing access to shops, for example, if closing the London Road crossing in Bicester. It was suggested that PRoW need to be retained to keep communities connected.

Comments were made to suggest that the proposals at Bicester London Road would prevent quick access to places such as Langford Village and Ambrosden, and it was felt that Langford Village should not be cut off from Bicester. Comments also included a need to retain access to Graven Hill.

Concerns were expressed that the closure planned for Station Road in Harston would increase traffic in London Road Harston which is already an unsafe road.

12.2.31 Bedford Hospital

We are pleased to see comments from the respondents about their support of the EWR Project and the emerging preferred option to relocated Bedford St Johns station to the Bedford Hospital car park location.

12.2.32 Woburn Sands

We understand that safe, accessible alternatives to level crossings are important for all users. Any proposed changes to level crossings will be informed by a safety risk assessment and traffic assessment and this work will be carried out at the next stage. The closure of School Crossing was undertaken by Network Rail. One of the options presented at non-statutory consultation was the installation of a new bridge at this location. As we develop options for each crossing proposal, we'll carefully consider what alternatives are required if a crossing needs to close. We recognise the community's concerns and will consider the feedback as we continue to develop proposals in Woburn Sands. Further information and proposals for mitigation will be presented at the statutory consultation.

We're 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, and in response to the Government's request that we explore opportunities for a more affordable railway whilst still delivering the identified benefits (please

see the Economic Technical Report published with this Consultation Feedback Report), we have carried out further options analysis at each level crossing. Where analysis has identified further potential options, including looking further at the options for Woburn Sands crossing group and keeping Woburn Sands level crossing open, these are confirmed within the report. Before preferred options can be confirmed safety risk assessments and traffic assessments need to be completed. This work will be carried out at the next stage and presented for comment at the statutory consultation.

We've considered the impact of the Project on existing highways, PRoW and private access roads as part of the design and assessment of route alignment options. We're seeking to maintain existing highway connections wherever feasible. Where it isn't feasible to retain existing highways, PRoW and private access roads in their current location, we will ensure that a suitable alternative is available which reduces the impact on communities.

12.2.33 London Road level crossing

We recognise that there are businesses who could be affected by our proposals for the London Road level crossing, including the Bicester Village outlet retail park, as well as a number of business parks and commercial estates in the area with direct links to London Road or Station Approach. We recognise local concerns and the importance of the concepts on local businesses and residents - that's why we encouraged people to respond to the consultation with their views. The preferred option will be selected following a rigorous process using a range of Assessment Factors (including 14 - environment - and 15 - consistency with local plans), which are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the Non-Statutory Consultation Technical Report. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.2.34 Graven Hill, Langford Village & Ambrosden

We are committed to reducing and mitigating any disruption during the planning, construction and operation of EWR as far as reasonably practicable. We're continuing to consider the potential impacts of our proposals and how we can work with communities and their representatives to keep those who may be impacted up to date with activity and progress. This will include consideration of those south of the railway line, living in communities such as Graven Hill, Ambrosden and Langford Village. As mentioned above, we'll set out the steps we'll take to reduce or mitigate any potential disruption during construction – such as, impacts on PRoW, land and property requirements, road closures and impacts on traffic.

12.2.35 Harston

We'll undertake road traffic modelling during the next stage to understand any potential impacts of the closure of Station Road. It is noted that an alternative route would be provided to maintain connectivity between Harston and Newton.

12.2.36 Construction

Concerns were raised about the impact of construction on quality of life for local residents, the impact of construction traffic and the effects that construction works may have on local connectivity.

Concerns were raised about potential mental and physical impacts on local people due to construction of EWR. This included concerns that the Poets area of Bedford would be subject to a sustained period of disturbance, with residents having 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 access to properties and parking space during construction.

Queries were expressed on how the construction process will be in line with the CoCP.

It was highlighted that the project should work with other companies and councils to ensure that multiple construction projects can be avoided happening in the same time period.

We take the safety of local residents and landowners 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.

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'll develop a CoCP, or equivalent 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'll consider how we can best work with local authorities and developers on issues such as parking, access to properties, staging of works, construction at night and impact of piling works, in order to reduce impacts on communities, as far as reasonably practicable. Further information on this will be presented at statutory consultation.

Following consultation with all the relevant highway authority or other bodies, we'll prepare a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that will include 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 as part of the PEIR, and then within the ES, submitted as part of the DCO application.

We've also tried to make sure that when developing designs for the railway there is a good 'cut-fill balance' across the route. This means that spoil or earth that is extracted from the ground is used elsewhere on the Project and not transported off-site to landfill. This can assist with management of excavated material by enabling greater volumes to be re-used during construction. Our aim is to help reduce cost, traffic disruption and embedded carbon by reducing the amount of spoil that must be disposed of elsewhere and the volume of material

that must be imported in order to construct embankments. The preferred route alignment that we've chosen for Section D performs well in this regard.

12.2.37 Costs

Criticism was received over the choice of Route Option E as the preferred option, due to it being seen as too expensive. Requests were made to see the detailed costs.

Concerns were raised at the change of the cost-benefit figures for the southern approach to Cambridge from the 2019 to the 2021 consultation. Comments were received that there is a lack of costing for the two northern routes into Cambridge.

Enquiries were made regarding the cost of the proposal to build four tracks from Shelford to Cambridge.

We're working closely with the Government to develop a funding strategy for the Project.

As set out in our answer to the 'Business case' section of this chapter, we follow the Government's guidance, procedures and best practice as we develop our business case. This includes, but isn't limited to, the HM Treasury's Green Book and DfT's Transport Analysis Guidance. Developing the business case for the Project is an iterative process and we'll 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.

We continue to learn from other comparable infrastructure projects to inform our approach to delivering the railway. We would use a range of techniques to estimate costs and monitor and manage risk. This would include 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, would help us to monitor and manage costs to minimise the likelihood of overspend.

The current cost estimates include for the full infrastructure design and include for the risk of additional works being required. Any statement made on costs have been made with the best information available at the time. More information on cost estimates will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.2.38 Costs of Route Option E

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 considered 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 up front capital costs of £3.7bn, which was the second lowest cost of all route options.

Since we announced Route Option E as the preferred route in 2020, information provided during ongoing engagement and via the 2021 consultation has been taken in to account and this hasn't required us to reconsider our decision.

Although the NATC design presented at the 2021 consultation was expected to be more expensive to build than the SATC, the updated NATC design, as set out in the ETR is expected to have a lower construction cost than the SATC. This is due to the reduction in the anticipated amount of four-tracking required to the WAML in Cambridge. However, a SATC is expected to provide higher potential benefits in terms of unlocking growth, better connectivity and more flexible options to extend EWR services in the future; and remains our preferred approach to Cambridge.

We'll continue work to assess the costs associated with EWR, including mitigation measures and capital costs, as the design of the route continues.

12.2.39 Demand for services

Comments were made relating to the demand for east-west connections being impacted due to working from home policies.

Queries were raised regarding the level of demand for passenger rail services since the Covid-19 pandemic.

While no consensus has been formed about long-term rail demand in the UK, we'll be 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 its 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, help to attract investment and connect communities along the route for decades to come. 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.

During Covid-19, rail demand was significantly reduced as people preferred to avoid public transport for obvious reasons. However, the DfT have recently publicised that rail passenger numbers have now increased to pre-pandemic levels. We'll continue to monitor these figures and to factor them into our iterative business case process.

As part of the business case, we continue to monitor rail demand and undertake sensitivity testing with regards to long term demand changes, helping to shape our modelling. Home to many key businesses, academic institutions and with a growing population, the region will continue to need good transport connectivity. Rail remains vital, alongside other modes of transport, in supporting communities, and helping businesses to deliver economic growth across the region and beyond. As the design develops, we'll work with local authorities and communities to refine and shape our plans in line with Local Plans and wider development.

12.2.40 Demolition of housing

Concerns were raised about the need for demolitions in the Poets area, including the impact on neighbouring properties, due in part to the potential disruption caused to individuals, the community, and the environment.

A lack of support was voiced against the proposal to build two additional rail tracks at Bedford station.

We're aware that EWR may affect people's homes and businesses, particularly in the Poets area of Bedford, and we'll aim to reduce and mitigate negative impacts such as those raised in the consultation feedback as far as reasonably practicable, including directly impacted properties and those neighbouring them. At every stage of the Project's development 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 (NTS) 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 our 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 NTS Property Scheme, which will be introduced at Route Update Announcement. The Proposed NTS Property Scheme 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. Applicants would need to meet five criteria, which includes providing evidence that they currently have a compelling need to sell. The Proposed NTS Property Scheme reflects non-statutory consultation feedback and Proposed Need To Sell Property consultation feedback, both received in 2021. The details for the Guide to the Proposed NTS Property Scheme are available here: The Guide to the Proposed Need to Sell Property Scheme.

In terms of impacts to residents during the construction process, mitigation measures for construction impacts will be set out in a CoCP, 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 project 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'll look to work with residents and the local authority to explore what appropriate support would be needed during this process.

12.2.41 Developments

It was mentioned that the impacts of the developments currently planned in all areas should be considered, including on the 18,000 capacity stadium at Stratfield Brake (Oxford).

Concerns were expressed about the impact of a new development creating 4,000 new jobs for people who will be using the A40/A44 junction close to Oxford Parkway station, leading to more traffic.

Concerns were raised that some communities are already blighted by Luton Air Stack (Great Gransden, Little Gransden, Waresley).

We are working closely with stakeholders across the route including Oxford City & Oxford County council. Other projects in the Oxford area (such as the proposals at Stratfield Brake) will be considered and their potential impacts and interfaces with EWR.

In designing route options for the railway, we've continued to liaise with planning authorities and monitored planning applications, committed development, and emerging local policy. We've undertaken consultations to stay informed about proposals for development across the route. We've 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. We've also formally responded to third-party planning applications and policy consultations, where appropriate to do so.

We'll work with local authorities (LAs) 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 DfT's 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 LAs' Local Plans. In addition to this we'll develop an uncertainty log, which will be developed alongside the LAs, 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 approach means EWR will be capturing the most likely future demand on the highways network.

We'll carry out comprehensive noise assessments and we'll use industry-leading computer modelling to simulate potential noise and vibration impacts along the whole route as part of the assessments on any mitigations required. The PEIR will describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals and means of mitigation. This process involves identifying potentially 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. The PEIR will include information regarding the existing baseline noise environment, including from existing noise sources such as aircraft, together with construction and operational noise limits having had regard to the appropriate guidance and legislation.

12.2.42 Diesel and diesel alternatives

Concerns were raised regarding the justification for operating diesel powered trains as EWR Co should be aiming to be carbon neutral in line with public policy. Concern was raised regarding the environmental impacts and noise of diesel trains and the time it takes for new technology to be developed and approved.

It was suggested that EWR Co should be looking into alternatives to diesel, including hydrogen, electric and hybrid solutions.

We'll use existing diesel trains for the start of services on CS1 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.

No commitment on the traction power type to be used has yet been made by the Government, and electrification is only 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 in the long term, with an ambition to be a net zero carbon railway. This includes the use of sustainable traction power in the long term. We're exploring how we can introduce new and emerging technologies, such as hydrogen power, in addition to electrification, into the long-term train fleet and infrastructure. We will be seeking input from rolling stock fleet bidders across the market to ensure they understand the company's environmental goals.

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.

We are considering the most appropriate solution, including consideration of hydrogen power and full or part electrification, for the long-term train fleet and infrastructure.

12.2.43 Door-to-door connectivity

Support was expressed for greater door-to-door connectivity provision to support connectivity, with requests made for segregated cycle and pedestrian routes.

Concerns were raised about how people would get to and from the stations. Concerns were also raised that the door-to-door connectivity solutions seem aspirational and won't improve the situation at Bedford station.

Concern was expressed about the journey time savings methodology used by EWR Co, believing it to only consider the time spent travelling from station to station rather than door-to-door.

Comments received suggested those living in the Milton Keynes area are faced with reduced and inconsistent bus services and increased fare costs and that this would affect EWR Co's door-to-door connectivity goals.

Door-to-door journey times are an important part of the case for EWR. We will be comparing door-to-door journey times (for example, comparing car journeys to EWR) as part of our design work. This will also include comparison of travelling costs. We use forecast rail service levels and population and employment levels within station catchments to estimate demand for EWR services, based on detailed information on demand for existing rail services.

Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

We'll 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.

As part of the station design, we'll consider pedestrian access and cycle access in and around the station, based on user requirements. This will be presented in more detail at the statutory consultation.

We'll also continue working with other organisations, including bus operators, to seek to improve facilities, including interfaces and interchange with bus services at stations, and the provision of onward travel information. Although we are not responsible for bus routes, we've noted requests to consider access to the station from rural areas and surrounding villages, including Clapham and Great Barford.

Although sustainable modes would be prioritised, we recognise that access by car would still be required, so we'll also consider the local road network around Bedford station and any potential mitigations required, as well as how much parking the new station would need.

EWR stations would be able to integrate into the wider transport network across all modes – including bus, walking and cycling. We'll make sure that public transport connectivity and the ability to use new and improved walking, wheeling and cycling modes over personal vehicles are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs.

While further design work is required, we've placed a particular emphasis on how we can encourage people to access the new EWR stations by bicycle. 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.

12.2.44 Drop-in events

Criticism was raised regarding people's awareness of the drop-in events which were held in 2022 and a suggestion was made to do a leaflet drop to advertise events in future as it was felt that information to promote the events was not easily accessible to all. It was commented that there is a lack of local newspapers, and not everyone uses the internet.

Comments were also made about the lack of new information at the events.

Positive feedback was received about the explanations and conversations had at the drop-in events. Concerns raised included that not everyone had the chance to speak to a Project team member, answers were guarded and some questions on topics such as costs, timescales, preferred route options and freight could not be answered. Comments suggested that a public meeting would have been preferred as people in authority would have had to answer questions.

Disappointment was voiced regarding a lack of new information at the events and there was concern that the staff on the Project did not know the area or understand the impact EWR would have. A suggestion was made for staff at future events to wear name badges with their specialism clearly shown.

There was criticism that the northern route was deleted from majority of the maps, which gave a biased view for the EWR route from Oxford to Cambridge.

We chose to organise these events to restart face-to-face engagement to provide communities with a chance to speak with a range of topic specialists, including members of the senior team. We wanted to offer an opportunity to ask questions and get a better understanding of the ongoing work being undertaken by the Project, at an event outside of the formal consultation process.

We're sorry to hear if individuals didn't find the drop-in event useful. We aimed to make it clear we didn't have any new information to share at these events, as we were still reviewing the responses received during the 2021 consultation and considering how the feedback is used to inform plans for the railway. No new maps or plans were created for these events. The plans, maps and information used at these events had been taken directly from the information shared at our second non-statutory consultation that we undertook in March 2021. At the 2021 consultation we had identified the southern route into Cambridge as our emerging preferred option on maps and materials which were used at these events.

As these were information events, not a consultation, we chose not to send a postal notification of the events to every address along the route, as we did not feel this would be an efficient use of public funds. We have a duty to spend public money sensibly, and as such opted to publicise these events as thoroughly as possible without sending postal invites to the 270,000+ addresses in the mailing zone.

We instead opted to publicise these events in a range of ways:

- *On 10 June we sent out our community newsletter, which has 7198 recipients inviting people to drop-in and speak to the team.*
- *An email was sent out to 670 locally elected representatives including our contacts at Parish Council's, the nominated Local Representative Group attendee, as well as local ward councillors.*
- *We contacted 232 Community Groups and organisations across the route with details of the events.*
- *Our emails to community groups and elected representatives also contained links to social media posts and information to advertise the events within other networks than those we can access directly.*
- *We sent notifications to local media and worked with local journalists to promote the events. We also publicised the events in adverts online and in print.*
- *The information was also shared in posts on our own channels including the Project Community Hub, the LinkedIn page, and the website.*

We understand that community drop-in events may not be some individuals' preferred form of engagement and we welcome alternative suggestions for future engagement along our route.

We also welcome suggestions, like that of the name badges including topic specialisms, which we were able to introduce at events later in the schedule.

For these events, we contacted many venues across the proposed route. The ten venues were chosen as they had the most suitable availability and accessibility needed to host these types of events, as well as being accessible by public transport, to ensure those residents without access to a private car, can join the event.

The venues were also selected to serve a wider area and not just the community that is in direct proximity to the chosen venue.

12.2.45 Electrification

Queries were received about the costs of electrification and its impact on the environment.

Queries on the potential electrification of the railway and the timeframe for making the decision on the train traction power were raised.

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. Concerns were raised around the lack of electrification between Oxford and Bicester, and whether the line had been designed so that it can be electrified in the future.

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 would 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 for the start of services to enable the earliest possible 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.

We are considering the most appropriate solution and possible costs, including hydrogen power and full or part electrification, for the long-term train fleet and infrastructure. We'll consider resilience for all weather conditions, and any potential future impacts brought about by climate change, as part of the design for any of the infrastructure and its supporting systems. New sections of the railway would be designed with passive provision for potential future electrification.

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.

12.2.46 Embankments, cuttings, viaducts and tunnels

More information was requested about the embankment over the Roxton area and Black Cat roundabout.

Concern was expressed that embankment and cuttings would have a high impact on the environment – 30ft embankments in particular. Comments suggested that the embankments would have to be huge to allow the gentle gradients required by rail. In Cambridge and the surrounding areas, concerns were also raised about the height of viaducts and embankments, as was the impact related earthworks and construction would have on the landscape and natural features.

Queries were raised as to whether the 10m high embankment proposal is a thing of the past and when the alternative proposals will be available for review.

Suggestions were made to make use of tunnels and trenches to mitigate the noise and visual impacts of the embankments.

Concerns were also expressed regarding proposals that would require a tunnel under Chapel Hill in the Harlton area.

Following our further review of the opportunities associated with a station at either

St Neots or Tempsford, a station at Tempsford is expected to have greater potential for development to support significant economic growth than a station at St Neots and the preferred alignment would be Route Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) which would go north of Roxton and cross over the A421 and A1 south of the Black Cat roundabout, on a series of bridges / viaducts but would avoid the need to construct the large viaduct north of the Black Cat roundabout which would have been required for Alignment 1.

Route Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) may be subject to adjustment and refinement as a result of our ongoing assessments and design development work. We'll provide further details at the statutory consultation on the design that we propose to include in our application for development consent to enable you to comment on our proposals.

Assessing the potential impact of EWR on the environment is a fundamental part of our design process. We'll 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've 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 including for areas within Cambridgeshire. 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. Further information will be made available at the statutory consultation. Visualisations can be found on our website. As stated in section 3.10 of the NSC Technical Report, the maximum gradient of the railway would be no steeper than 1 in 80 to reduce the risk of freight trains running at slower speeds.

The preferred southern approach to Cambridge and the preferred route alignment, which performs best against the Assessment Factors, mean that EWR would pass through Chapel Hill. We are developing the design and considering options to reduce the potential impacts on Chapel Hill and are still considering whether or not this will require a tunnel. The preferred option for the infrastructure solution at Chapel Hill will be selected following a rigorous process using a range of Assessment Factors. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.2.47 Environment

It was suggested that the project's commitment to the environmental benefits should garner support both locally and nationally.

Concerns were expressed that the building materials used would create more pollution in the environment and questions were raised around environmental mitigations.

Criticism was received on the basis that environmental data used to select Route E was insufficient and there was disappointment in the quality of information provided on environmental and archaeological protections.

Concerns were expressed about the impact on the Great Crested Newts in the area around Roxton and Tempsford.

Comments suggested that there had been a lack of flood surveys undertaken.

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'll seek opportunities communicate the environmental benefits to local and national organisations. In line with this, we'll 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 ES, which will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

12.2.48 Use of sustainable materials

We'll seek to sustainably source what is needed for the construction and operation of EWR and to reduce waste as far as reasonably practicable. We'll look at the value of materials, resources and waste throughout the Project lifecycle, by following a circular economy approach to design, construction and operation that re-uses and re-purposes as much material as possible. This will follow key aims of designing out waste and pollution wherever practicable, reusing materials and products where possible, and making the most out of the natural environment. We'll develop and implement sustainable procurement procedures and will evaluate the impact of the supply chain before awarding contracts, to consider sustainability of resources appropriately during the design and construction of EWR, as well as into operation and maintenance.

12.2.49 Selection of Route Option E

Our Assessment Factor process looks at how well different route options meet the overall Project objectives. They help us to determine the benefits of each option for customers, as well as for the broader communities EWR will serve. These Assessment Factors have been agreed with the UK Government and provide a robust framework for comparing the relative performance of options. Information about the selection of Option Route E is included in Chapter 3 of this report.

For further information see "Preferred Route Option Report" [1].

12.2.50 Biodiversity

We are committed to protecting the environment by finding approaches to delivery that either avoid or reduce any negative environmental impacts as far as reasonably practicable. As part of this, we have committed to delivering 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) along the EWR route. BNG requires that habitats for wildlife are enhanced and left in a measurably better state than they were pre-development. This approach supports the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.

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'll think carefully about protected species and their habitats when designing the railway. Further information on plans for achieving BNG will be provided during the statutory consultation.

We are mapping where the new railway may cross and border habitats used by other important protected species, such as badgers, Greater Crested Newts and bird species, so that we can consider how best to avoid impacting them altogether or to reduce impacts on them as far as reasonably practicable.

We'll 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. As described, we'll develop a PEIR for the statutory consultation and the ES will form part of the DCO submission, and will describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals and report the results of survey work.

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.

12.2.51 Flooding

We've considered potential flooding issues in the development and assessment of options presented, reported within the *2021 Technical Report*. Our work is ongoing in this area, and we regularly engage with the Environment Agency, to share information, data and modelling to support this work. We aim to extend this engagement to include relevant Lead Local Flood

[1] https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/MediaObjectFiles/a72dbd2d81/Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report-v2.pdf

Authorities (LLFAs), Internal Drainage Boards and other key stakeholders. Further information on flood risk and drainage will be shared at the statutory consultation.

In line with the requirements of current national planning policy, we'll undertake detailed flood risk assessments to help inform the design process, especially where the route crosses major floodplains and has the potential to impact on flood risk elsewhere. These assessments will consider flood risk over the lifetime of EWR – accounting and planning for the effects of climate change – and will be informed by hydrological and hydraulic modelling where necessary. The design of EWR, in line with regulatory requirements, would ensure that the railway is resilient to flooding and that it does not increase flood risk elsewhere.

We'll look at ways to reduce flood risk by considering appropriate flood protection measures, including drainage design and flood compensation. Protecting local communities from flooding is one of the Project's key environmental principles. Additionally, in light of the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events associated with climate change, best industry practice and new standards, the condition and capacity of the railway drainage systems are also being reviewed with a view to reducing the future risk of the railway flooding.

12.2.52 Environmental Impact Assessment

Clarification was sought about the different approaches to Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) that might be taken in future phases of the Project – the example of the Oxford to Bicester line was given.

We will undertake an EIA and present the results in the ES, setting out the likely significant effects of the Project on the environment, which will be submitted as one of the documents to support our DCO application.

The PEIR will include preliminary environmental information, from both desk-top analysis and on-the-ground surveys including baseline conditions, land use, environmental conditions, historical features, geological conditions, and information on protected species and habitats that could affect the design, construction, or operation of the railway. This document will provide an overview of the potential impacts and mitigation strategies arising from the proposals at that stage of design.

Part of the EIA process includes procedures for consultation with statutory bodies and other stakeholders including the making of representations by them about the environmental effects of the development. We'll engage with statutory bodies and other stakeholders to build positive relationships, promote best practice, engage on key issues to help inform the design and develop proposals for mitigation.

For further information on our approach to the environment please see the relevant information on our website here.

12.2.53 Freight

There was concern that EWR Co has not been upfront about its intentions for freight and that freight services may be introduced at a later stage without a business case, considerations being made for the environmental impacts or an opportunity to comment on the proposals through consultation.

Queries were received about the timetabling of the freight trains to understand how many freight trains can be expected and how late they might be running. Queries were also received regarding 18 hours of freight a day and implications for night-time services. Questions were also asked about noise levels, vibrations and noise limits.

Queries were raised around freight use of the line and more information has been requested. There was some support for developing a greater capacity for freight services as it was acknowledged that this would relieve traffic pressures from HGVs utilising local traffic routes. However, concerns were raised about the proximity of freight trains travelling to residential areas, through town centres and the impacts of pollution.

Queries were raised as to whether freight services would require more infrastructure on the line out of Cambridge. Comments were made that there is little information about the freight implications arising from the increased capacity at Felixstowe and Harwich new docks.

Freight was mentioned as an opportunity in regard to the Cambridge Sustainable Transport Zone, which will limit vehicle transport in the city.

Further information was requested on an eastern junction to assist freight trains from Felixstowe on north/south journeys.

It was commented that clarification is needed on the frequency and impact of freight services for residents of South Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties.

Concerns were raised about deliberately driving forward a design which inevitably routes a large number of freight trains through Cambridge station and onward via Coldhams Common, Cherry Hinton and points east.

Concern was also expressed regarding the assumption that freight trains will be powered by electricity.

We are principally intended to be a passenger route. However, EWR is 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.

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 the 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'll 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 DCO application.

12.2.54 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. Further details including a high-level overview on anticipated costs will be published at the statutory consultation.

We'll 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 Project develops, including nitrogen oxides and fine particulates, and the potential effects of noise and vibration as part of the EIA process. We proposed operational hours for passenger services in Appendices A and B of the 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. We'll present emerging findings in the PEIR, which will be available during the statutory consultation. The final results of our assessments will be set out in an ES that's submitted as part of the DCO application.

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'll continue to consult with communities as our plans develop, including about freight and its potential impacts. We've 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.

12.2.55 Powering freight trains

We're working closely with the DfT 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.

12.2.56 Other matters raised related to freight

With regard to freight being an opportunity in regard to the Cambridge Sustainable Transport Zone, we'll work with other transport projects, who are proposing the Cambridge Sustainable Travel Zone, to ensure opportunities for alignment are explored and are taken where possible.

With regard to the request for further information on an eastern junction to assist freight trains from Felixstowe on north/south journeys, we assume that this eastern junction refers to a junction at Ely. This is out of the scope of the EWR Project, although our designs would not preclude this, if it were to be taken forward in the future.

With regard to the request for clarification on the frequency and impact of freight services for residents of South Cambridgeshire and neighbouring counties and the concern raised about deliberately driving forward a design which inevitably routes a large number of freight trains through Cambridge station and onward via Coldham's Common, Cherry Hinton and points east, we note that, 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.

12.2.57 Health

There were concerns about the impact the Project would have on people's mental and physical health and particularly those caused by uncertainty around the Project. It was raised that the Project would impact educational progress due to mental health impacts.

Concerns were raised about the potential worsening of health conditions like asthma caused by the construction and operation of the Project.

We're committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that the Project is able to mitigate disruption during its planning, construction and operation stages. We 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. We are 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. We are considering a range of matters including sound, noise and vibration, air quality, as well as potential impacts on PRoW and land and property requirements.

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 ES being submitted as part of the DCO application.

We'll prepare a CoCP, or equivalent document, which will explain the steps we'll take to reduce or mitigate disruption to local people, communities and the environment during construction. This will include measures to control impacts related to construction noise and vibration, air quality, construction traffic and access to PRoW. Additionally, we'll explain our approach to construction and operation of the railway and provide further details of potential effects of this during the statutory consultation.

In developing our proposals, we've aimed to reduce the negative impact the Project may have on communities and in particular people's homes, but inevitably with an infrastructure project the size of EWR there would be some people who would be directly affected. We recognise that noise, vibration, increased traffic, air pollution and access to green spaces from both the construction and operation of a railway are important issues for local communities. As we continue to develop the proposals for EWR, we'll aim to avoid and reduce impacts where practicable. Through this process we would also aim to reduce and mitigate impacts which could potentially affect residents' health and wellbeing.

For noise and vibration, this will include choice of trains, track technology and noise barriers (further information about noise and vibration impacts can be found in section 1.1.49 'Noise and Vibration' theme in this document). For air quality, this will include considering what vehicles and equipment would be used during the construction and operation of the railway, the routes construction vehicles would take to work sites, as well as how to manage work sites to avoid and reduce any dust creation. We'll work with LAs to understand existing and future traffic patterns, as well as different ways for customers to access stations.

12.2.58 Housing

Criticisms were received around the railway being designed to cater for housing developments.

Concern was also expressed that Cambridgeshire is already facing overdevelopment.

Concerns were raised that no decision had been made on the route and that the uncertainty caused problems for those wanting to sell their property who also saw their property decreasing in value, making it difficult to sell due to blight and impacts as a result of the railway. 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. Concerns were also raised around the impact the Project is having on housing in the area, such as property owners not being able to find tenants in the area. Concerns also included whether to maintain or renovate properties given that the timescales and impacts on the area were so uncertain and there are difficulties obtaining mortgages as a result of EWR impacts.

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.

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.

Comments were received regarding challenges to attracting and retaining talent between Oxford and Cambridge due to not having access to cheaper transport and affordable housing.

It was suggested that EWR Co observe research by Transport for New Homes examining 20 new housing developments across England, highlighting that with the exception of a few examples, developments were almost totally car-dependent.

Following a study by the National Infrastructure Commission, the DfT established strategic objectives applying both to elements of EWR between Oxford and Bedford and from Bedford to Cambridge. One of these objectives was to stimulate economic growth, housing and employment through the provision of new, reliable and attractive inter-urban passenger train services in the Oxford to Cambridge area. However, this is only one of the strategic objectives for the Project and the Project does not cater specifically to housing. The objective to provide a sustainable and value for money transport solution to support economic growth in the area will also help to address concerns that access to cheaper transport presents challenges to attracting and retaining talent. Further information about the project objectives is available in the 2021 Consultation Document and updates will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.2.59 New Housing

In designing route options for the railway to date, we've stayed informed about proposals for new housing across the route, including in these locations. In selecting the preferred route option following the 2019 consultation, we took account of how the new railway could serve developments across the region, including the Bedford, Tempsford and St Neots areas. We 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 we looked at detailed potential route alignments.

We've also thought about how the railway might best support future housing development by providing cost-effective, sustainable and accessible public transport alternatives for residents

of new settlements. We've considered this as part of the Assessment Factor 'Contribution to enabling housing and economic growth including best serving areas benefitting from developable land'.

The allocation of land for development is a matter for local planning authorities. It is important to note that the railway is also intended to provide new connections for existing settlements, residents and businesses – not just future development.

12.2.60 Property

For the owners of properties which would need to be acquired in part or in whole to construct the railway, full unaffected market value compensation for the property to be acquired and compensation for the reduction in the value of the property remaining (where part only is acquired) would 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.

When we submit our application for the DCO, this will show the details of the land required. Landowners and leaseholders would then be able to use the provisions of Statutory Blight to require us to purchase the land identified and this is explained further in the guide on our website: Guide to Statutory Blight Notices.

Occupiers who receive a formal notice to end their tenancies would be entitled to receive compensation e.g. the cost of moving, in accordance with the Compensation Code subject to them having a qualifying interest, which is explained further in the guide on the website - Guide to Compulsory Acquisition and Compensation - for which the link is as above.

Where no land is taken under Part 1 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 compensation may be claimed for reduction in the value of the property due to physical factors caused by the use of a new or altered railway, which is explained further in the guide on our website: Guide to Part 1 Claims.

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'll discuss the potential impacts with the owners of land and property likely to be required for the Project and seek to mitigate these.

If a business is located where land or a section of land is required by the Project, the landowner may require EWR Co 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.

We consulted on a Proposed Need to Sell (NTS) Property scheme at the same time as the 2021 consultation, 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 Proposed NTS 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 property owners who can satisfy the criteria of the Proposed NTS Property Scheme. The details for the Guide to the Proposed NTS Property Scheme are available here: The Guide to the Proposed Need to Sell Proposed Scheme.

We've launched the 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 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.

Applicants will need to meet five criteria, which includes providing evidence that they currently have a compelling need to sell. The Proposed Need To Sell Property Scheme reflects non statutory consultation feedback and Proposed Need To Sell Property Scheme consultation feedback, both received in 2021. More information can be found in the Proposed Need To Sell Property Scheme Guidance and Application Form.

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.

12.2.61 Impact on communities

It was acknowledged that EWR would bring much-needed connectivity from Cambridge to Oxford.

12.2.62 Benefits for communities

Comments were made to suggest that some areas, such as Cambridge and the north-east section of the planned route, override the interests of the local communities along the proposed route and that little consideration has been given to the impact to the rural communities, for example the east of Bedford and Woburn Sands, including the impact on Edgewick Farm and the allotments in Woburn Sands.

Concerns were raised about the impact of EWR on the communities if villages are cut in half and children are not able to get to school. This was particularly true for the areas of Harlton, Harston, Haslingfield and Toft.

Concerns were raised that the Project could lead to a loss of local community in the Poets area due to the closure of the Bromham Road Bridge and reduced playing fields in particular.

Concerns were expressed that the Project would impact individuals, families and livelihoods and that villages would lose their identity. Extended barrier downtime at level crossings and possible road closures could cut off local communities. Concerns were raised about the disruption to the connectivity between villages due to the Project.

Concerns were raised over the impact of EWR on the connectivity of the villages in the Marston Vale area in Central Bedfordshire, which needs to be considered holistically alongside the road and level crossings infrastructure. Concern was 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'.

Concerns were expressed about the measures used by the Project to assess community severance.

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 ECML, MML and WCML – 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.

12.2.63 Impact on local communities

Concerns were raised that access to the local countryside would be cut off by the Project.

In the Great Shelford area, concerns were raised over the severance of PRoW and local roads, alongside the disruption to roads during construction. Concerns over the potential impact to the crossing on Grahams Road was also mentioned. 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 PRoW.

We appreciate the concerns around the impacts on the countryside and access to green spaces, and we'll work to identify and reduce impacts and protect the countryside wherever reasonably practicable. To help reduce impacts, we're following the environmental mitigation hierarchy which firstly seeks to avoid significant adverse effects on the countryside, including PRoW and, where this isn't possible, then seeks to reduce impacts. This will include PRoW in

the Great Shelford, Harleton and Harston areas. If this isn't possible, if necessary we would seek to provide compensation for any impacts, where feasible. At this stage we'll primarily focus on seeking to avoid and reduce impacts, by making decisions that help us to 'design out' potential adverse environmental impacts. As mentioned, we've committed to delivering 10% BNG, supporting the Government's 25-year Environment Plan.

We understand that severance is a significant concern to people living in homes and villages in the vicinity of the railway.

We're committed to ensuring so far as reasonably practicable that the project is able to mitigate disruption during its planning, construction and operation stages, including areas of Harlton, Harston, Haslingfield and Toft. For level crossings, this includes reducing the impact to communities from any closures by providing reasonable alternatives where possible, and by considering the impact of changes in barrier down time. 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 schools. Further information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

Local connectivity for villages including Woburn Sands is one of the key considerations in developing our proposals. 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. 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.

12.2.64 Anti-social behaviour

Concerns were raised that the Project could exacerbate existing anti-social behaviour across the route through the creation of dead-end roads and dark alleyways.

All options considered for EWR are subject to a rigorous assessment process using a range of Assessment Factors. These factors are outlined in Chapter 5 and Appendix C of the 2021 Technical Report published at the start of the 2021 consultation. This includes 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).

12.2.65 Supporting local communities

Requests were expressed for EWR Co to give back to the local community and help those most disadvantaged and for the benefits of the Project to be promoted to the local community more.

The introduction of EWR will lead to many benefits for local communities. It will bring more jobs within reach of local people and it will open up new areas for businesses to grow. 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. More information about how EWR will support local communities is available on our website.

12.2.66 Impact on wildlife, countrysides and landscapes

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 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'll 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 (BNG) made in relation to the part of the route already built between Bicester to Bletchley. We'll 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 the Eversden and Wimpole 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 we carried out a number of surveys to better understand the Barbastelle population in the area. We'll carry out further bat surveys in 2023. We'll use these to help inform a design which does not significantly affect the population of Barbastelle bats.

We'll 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.

As described, we'll develop a PEIR for the statutory consultation. The PEIR will include assessments of disturbance to ecological receptors, and to local amenity and tranquillity

during construction and operation. This will be presented at the statutory consultation with an ES being submitted as part of the DCO application.

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'll 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.

12.2.67 Infrastructure networks

Concern was expressed about the number of transport infrastructure projects applying to pass through the Great Shelford village (EWR, CSET, Sawston Greenway, Cambridge South Station, works at Shepreth Branch Junction, the Haverhill railway line and Cambridge Connect light rail line).

It was suggested that people travelling from Great Shelford already have two railway lines to transport them into Cambridge and that EWR Co should consider joining existing lines rather than build a new railway line.

Queries were received about the red rating of the project in the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) Report 2022 and how EWR Co has responded.

Whilst EWR would contribute to an integrated transport network across the region, through alignment with other transport projects, it is noted that CSET, Sawston Greenway, Cambridge South station, the Haverhill railway line and Cambridge Connect light rail line are not part of the scope of EWR.

Similarly, the EWR proposals include for additional trains on the Royston Branch Line but no new tracks.

The additional tracks proposed on the West Anglia Mainline to the north of Great Shelford village are a key part of EWR achieving the additional capacity to meet the forecast demand.

The Environmental Impact Assessment will provide a thorough analysis on the villages existing and future condition based on these developments. Environmental mitigation and urban realm integration for EWR will be essential along the route due to the number of transport infrastructure projects in the area.

Developing a project like EWR is an iterative process and we'll continue to keep the business case and delivery programme under review. We've already been refreshing the business case and testing the options for the future development of the Project. We anticipate once that work is complete, we'll update our programme and improve on this rating.

12.2.68 International business interest

Comments were made to suggest that for businesses and universities, the improved connectivity between Oxford and Cambridge would lead to better collaboration, funding and international investment opportunities and facilitate growth.

Comments were also received stating that improved infrastructure is key to the Global Britain agenda and that it would help Cambridge compete with the life science cluster in Boston, USA. In addition, linking the tech hubs of Oxford, Cambridge, and Milton Keynes is important in making the region between Oxford and Cambridge a competitor to places like California and Boston.

Oxford and Cambridge are home to leading universities, life sciences companies and a manufacturing cluster known for high-performance technology and motorsport engineering, but people and businesses in between these two cities are being let down by a lack of transport solutions. EWR would bring this vibrant mix of communities an affordable and sustainable public transport alternative, linking people with jobs and access to new homes across the region. The National Infrastructure Commission estimated that creating these transport links and supporting the entire area would be worth nearly £80bn extra a year to the UK economy[2].

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.

12.3 Level crossings (general)

Queries were received as to the methodology used to assess the impacts of closing a level crossing including the use of local traffic modelling and traffic accident data.

12.3.1 Methodology for assessing impacts of level crossing closure

Prior to confirming closure of any level crossings, we will undertake a risk assessment, informed by a transport assessment, to understand the impact on local traffic and the local highway network. The Transport Assessment will consider factors such as the impacts on the highway network, road safety and local sustainable modes of transport, including changes to existing traffic patterns, because of closure of the level crossing and proposed new developments. These assessments will be used as part of the option selection process to

[2] https://eastwestrail.co.uk/ewr-looks-local

determine if a crossing is to close and what interventions (e.g. bridges and diversion) should be used to mitigate the diverted traffic.

Since the non-statutory consultation, and in response to the Affordable Connections Project (please see the Economic and Technical Report published with this Consultation Feedback Report), we've carried out further options analysis at each level crossing along the EWR route. Where analysis has identified further potential options for level crossings these are confirmed within the Economic and Technical Report.

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 2021 Consultation Technical Report. Outcomes of the assessments will initially be reported in the PEIR published at the statutory consultation and then further detail will be presented within the ES. The preferred option will be selected following a rigorous process using the range of Assessment.

12.3.2 Level crossing – London Road, Bicester

Support was received regarding proposals to close the London Road crossing in Bicester to motorised vehicles and to provide a cycle/pedestrian underpass that links London Road with the town centre.

Concerns were raised that closing the London Road level crossing would have an impact on the villages and traffic, particularly emergency vehicles. It was suggested that stakeholders should help co-create a solution. Concerns were also raised that the funding options will determine the decisions made.

Requests were made to consider a route to the east via Gavray Drive as the A41 route is unsuitable due to congestion.

Requests were received for EWR Co to find an option that keeps the London Road crossing open especially considering the planned housing developments in that area.

We've 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, which are suitable for a diverse range of end users are important. We've taken all consultation feedback into consideration as we've 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 a 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). 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'll be consulting with key stakeholders including Oxford County Council & Cherwell District Council in developing our proposals. We've 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'll 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.

12.3.3 Emergency Service Access

Emergency service access is an important consideration as we develop our proposals for the level crossing. The emergency services were invited to participate in the 2019 and 2021 non-statutory consultations. During further development and consultation of the Project, the emergency services will be engaged on a one-to-one basis to ascertain their feedback and to discuss any mitigation required.

12.3.4 Cost

We've considered the consultation feedback as we've 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, maintenance cost, operating cost and overall affordability being considered. For a description of the Assessment Factors, see the 2021 Consultation Technical Report.

12.3.5 Landscape and visual impacts

Concerns regarding the visual impacts of the railway were raised, with residents expressing preferences on how this should be managed such as with a brick wall screening the railway. Other suggestions include using trees and shrubs to screen the railway.

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). We'll 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.

We'll 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 achieving 10% BNG.

We'll 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. Further information on this, alongside an assessment of the likely environmental effects and measures to avoid or reduce these, will initially be reported within a PEIR, published during the statutory consultation, and then within the ES, which will be submitted as part of the DCO application.

12.3.6 Level crossing – Charbridge Lane

Queries were received regarding whether the bridge over the Charbridge Lane Level crossing was designed for a dual carriage way.

The bridge at Charbridge Lane was built during CS1 to replace the level crossing. It isn't designed for a dual carriageway.

12.3.7 Level crossing – Aspley Guise

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 crossings.

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. 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 have been 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, we and the DfT agreed that we should set up the Affordable Connections Project (ACP). 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 Economic and Technical report published with this Consultation Feedback Report).

As part of this Project, we've 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 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.

12.3.8 Level crossing – Lidlington

Concerns were raised over the closing of the level crossing at Lidlington as this was seen as effectively splitting the village in two parts. Preferences for a bypass were raised and requests for further alternatives were raised should a bypass not be feasible.

Concerns were raised that closing the Lidlington level crossing would have an impact on the villages and traffic, particularly emergency vehicles.

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.

12.3.9 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.

12.3.10 Road Bypass of Lidlington

Alternative road bypasses were not presented at the non-statutory consultation stage, as we develop proposals we are considering the feasibility of alternative alignments and diversions

as part of the option appraisal and selection process. Further information will be provided at the statutory consultation stage.

12.3.11 Traffic concerns

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. Outcomes of this will initially be reported in the PEIR published at the statutory consultation and then within 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 statutory consultation.

12.3.12 Level crossing – Hauxton

Concerns were raised 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.

Concerns were expressed that proposals would sever the villages of Harlton to Hauxton and more information on preventive measures was requested.

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). At the point that new EWR services become operational between Bedford and Cambridge, an additional four trains per hour in each direction would use the line, meaning the barriers closing the road every three minutes).

As a result, we've 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 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.

We understand that severance is a significant concern to people living in homes and villages in the vicinity of the railway. We'll 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 a decision is made to close the crossing, we'll 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.

If diversions are required, we'll consider the potential impact to the local road network and the needs of road users, including school children, buses, and the emergency services. We'll consider the safety of diversions to both cyclists and pedestrians. We'll 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.

Any disruption through dust and noise would be managed this appropriately and set out in the CoPC, or equivalent document.

We'll provide further details of our proposed solution at the statutory consultation, so the public and other stakeholders can provide their feedback. We'll then consider this before submitting a DCO application to authorise our final proposals in this area.

12.4 Local Plans and local authority strategic documents

Respondents suggested a joined-up approach between EWR Co, local planning authorities and developers when considering future housing development and the railway. This included specific requests for EWR Co to input into Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Oxford Infrastructure Strategy.

Queries were raised as to how the Greater Cambridge Local Plan process is being tied into EWR Co's work, such as how housing allocations in Cambourne are being considered alongside a potential new EWR station.

12.4.1 Consideration of future housing development

In designing route options for the railway, we've continued to liaise with planning authorities and monitored planning applications, committed development, and emerging local policy consultations to stay informed about proposals for new housing across the route, including within Oxfordshire (for example development plans around the Bicester area). In selecting the preferred route alignment following the 2019 consultation, we took account of how the new railway could serve developments in the Oxford to Cambridgeshire area. We 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 we looked at detailed potential route alignments. We've also formally responded to third-party planning applications and policy consultations, where appropriate to do so.

We've also thought about how the railway might best support future housing development by providing cost-effective, sustainable and accessible public transport alternatives for residents of new settlements.

12.4.2 Input into Local Plans

We've been monitoring and inputting into the progress of new and emerging development plans across the area, including in Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and the proposed Greater Cambridge Local Plan. Existing or proposed projects will continue to be considered as part of the EWR assessments. In addition to considering how EWR might best support future housing development by providing cost-effective, sustainable and accessible public transport options for new residents and settlements, we also considered how the railway might interact with existing housing and current projects. The proposed new EWR station at Cambourne would support the delivery of the new housing development allocated to the west of Cambourne and to the east at Bourn Airfield in the adopted South Cambridge Local Plan and the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan.

We're aware people want to understand the specific benefits EWR would provide their local communities and businesses. As the design develops, we'll be able to provide more detail on what these benefits would look like. We'll also continue to work with local authorities and communities to refine and shape these plans in line with Local Plans and wider development.

12.4.3 Oxford

We are working closely with Oxford County Council as we develop our plans. This includes consideration of housing developments and on matters such as Oxfordshire County Council's Local Transport and Connectivity Plan, the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 and the Oxford Infrastructure Strategy.

As part of the Oxford Projects Development and Delivery Group, we are working closely with Network Rail, Oxford City Council, Train Operating Companies and other key stakeholders to conduct a review of the major planned schemes including Oxford Corridor Phase 2, Oxford Station Masterplan and Oxfordshire Connect. Our aim is to develop a plan for capacity enhancements at Oxford which meets the needs of EWR, whilst seeking to integrate with other schemes to help contribute to wider growth at Oxford.

At Oxford Station, Network Rail and Oxford City Council are currently leading and co-ordinating on schemes to overhaul the station and surrounding area. We will ensure any proposals it makes in relation to Oxford station integrate with other schemes.

There are several established industry and local authority-led schemes in the Oxford area. The Oxfordshire Rail Corridor Study (ORCS) looks in detail at the county's predicted growth in jobs and housing to present an industry vision for how the rail network can best support it. As part of this, Network Rail are delivering the Oxford Corridor Phase 2 scheme which is delivering a new western entrance and platform for Oxford station. We're working closely with Network Rail to ensure the proposals meet EWR requirements.

12.5 Local Representatives Groups (LRGs)

Residents of the Poets area in Bedford were dissatisfied with how forthcoming information was from local councillors and EWR Co, particularly regarding the Local Representatives Groups (LRGs).

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 us 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 LRGs. LRG meeting notes are made available on our website. If there are specific aspects of the meetings which are causing concern, please do let us know and we can address them directly.

We know that the local community is keen to discuss the Project with us and last year, we held 10 route-wide 'drop in' sessions, with a number of these attended by members of the Poets community. We also held one-to-one meetings to enable residents and businesses to speak directly with us. We continue to be in touch with some of the potentially impacted residents in the Poets area, discussing on a one-to-one basis how plans could impact them. We'll maintain this dialogue throughout the length of the Project.

12.6 Maps

Respondents felt that the maps used by EWR Co at the community drop-in events held in 2022 were not detailed enough (for example, did not show certain villages or roads, the guided busway bridge over to Addenbrooke's Hospital and the difference between road and foot crossings). Respondents also felt the maps were inaccurate for appearing to imply that the railway would be built through flat, open space without houses and farms being affected.

The 2021 consultation covered various sections of the project from Oxford to Cambridge. The maps presented in physical materials were more detailed than the maps used in the 2019 consultation and 2020 preferred route option announcement, and included various towns and places and local features. The online interactive maps offered even more detail and allowed people to personalise the information presented to them. More detailed maps will be provided as the planning and designs develop.

12.7 Marston Vale Line

Respondents requested additional information about proposals for the Marston Vale Line (MVL). Further information was requested about the different transport modes envisaged to serve the new station at Husborne Crawley and station access points.

During the consultation, the plans we shared indicated options that could be developed further, and we are utilising the feedback received, as well as the Assessment Factors set out in the consultation material, to choose which options to progress. This includes consideration of infrastructure, construction activity and the service provided during and after construction. At the statutory consultation, the public will have the opportunity to comment and provide feedback on more detailed plans.

Concept 2 for the MVL, as shown at the 2021 consultation, set out a proposal which rationalises the number of stations along the route. As our proposals continue to develop, we'll consider the cost effectiveness of both Concepts 1 and 2.

If Concept 2 were to be delivered, some residents would need to travel a little further to their nearest station compared to Concept 1, and part of the development of this proposal would be developing plans for improved pedestrian and cycle routes, as well as working with local stakeholders on better public transport connection.

We are developing the Business Case in line with the Government's guidance and this will present the evidence that has shaped the strategic case for the railway. While the business case is still in development and will not be completed until we've obtained the required consent for the Project, our work to date has confirmed how the case for EWR isn't focused solely on Oxford and Cambridge, but that the areas in between are key to deliver the Government's aspirations for economic growth too.

Proposed options will be developed to consider the access to a relocated Ridgmont Station (in the Husborne Crawley area), the potential relocation of the station or the potential for the station to remain in its current location is being reviewed, including for pedestrians and cyclists, and businesses in close proximity will be considered. This will include consideration of local connectivity, bus services and customer experience while travelling to EWR stations within the station design work. Information will be presented at the statutory consultation.

12.8 Network Rail

Respondents asked about the relationship between EWR Co and Network Rail, the roles and responsibilities of each organisation, and whether the DCO will impact on Network Rail.

Network Rail is the current infrastructure manager of the existing railway network with which EWR interfaces. We've been working closely with Network Rail colleagues on our Project proposals, to integrate and align our proposals in line with longer term aspirations and industry plans. This also includes engagement with the Great British Railways (GBR) Transition Team and consideration of GBR plans and industry reform. The roles and responsibilities of each organisation will evolve as the project progresses and as the operational concept for EWR matures.

12.9 National Highways

Respondents asked about information sharing with National Highways regarding land surveys.

We're working closely with other projects in the area, including the National Highways A428 team, to manage interfaces and explore opportunities between these projects to reduce some adverse impacts of the combined schemes. This includes visual changes to the landscape.

12.10 Noise

Concerns were raised about potential noise from trains, particularly freight services, during construction.

Particular concerns were expressed about the impacts of noise on those living in the Poets area of Bedford, and whether this had been considered in the design of EWR; and about the noise resulting from the increase of trains between Oxford Parkway and Oxford.

We recognise that noise from both the construction and operation of a railway is an important issue for local communities and noise and vibration has been considered within the environmental impacts and opportunities Assessment Factor (AF14). Further information on this can be found within the 2021 Consultation Technical Report. We'll 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 are committed to developing proposals for measures that would 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'll carry out comprehensive assessments and we'll use industry-leading computer modelling, which can incorporate information on local geology to simulate potential noise and vibration impacts along the whole route, including in the Poets Road, Oxford and Oxford Parkway areas, as part of the assessments on any mitigations required. The PEIR will describe the likely environmental effects of the proposals and means of mitigation. This process involves identifying potentially 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. 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 ES will then be submitted as

part of the DCO. 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.

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'll continue to consult with communities as our plans develop, including on 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.
We recognise concerns about the impact of noise and vibration and are committed to considering measures that will reduce noise and vibration. This includes choice of trains, track technology and noise barriers. 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.

12.11 Operational matters

Respondents said that train tickets must be affordable to encourage train use.
Comments were made that the ticketing system also needed to be compatible with the national system and that there was an opportunity for package tickets if this was the case.
It was queried whether EWR would use a contactless railway system.

The presence of staff in stations (ticket office and platform presence), and on trains (conductors) was raised, with stakeholders stating that the presence of station staff is very important.

Along with our operating partners, we'll set fares to make sure that the service offers value for money and is inclusive to as many people as possible. Fares will be simple to understand and tickets easier to buy, in line with the rail industry's fares reform programme, which seeks to increase the trust in the railway and remove both economic and convenience barriers to travel.

We aim to provide an inclusive and simple approach to ticketing, which will allow customers to buy and use tickets in a way that meets their individual needs. We'll use digital services, which will allow people to buy tickets on mobile phones or use 'pay as you go' services. We will also make sure that station self-service machines will be inclusive and easy to use. Staff will be on hand to help customers should they need it. Providing multiple purchasing options will enable customers to use solutions which are best suited to their needs making it a quick and easy process.

From both the consultation responses and the research undertaken to date, we understand that staff have one of the biggest impacts on the customer experience. We're considering how a combination of staff, systems and digital solutions can provide the optimum customer experience on EWR.

The recruitment and training of staff is a key factor to improve customer experience, and we'll provide all staff with the correct tools to give support and keep all passengers safe, as well as provide an inclusive environment for all. We'll work to continue to understand the diverse needs of our customers.

12.12 Public engagement

Requests were made for EWR Co to undertake additional engagement with members of the Poets community in Bedford; tenant residents living south of Bromham Road in Bedford; and people living south of Cambridge.

Following requests made through the LRGs 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.

In 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.

Since then, engagement has continued. We've held three meetings with the Protect Poets group, providing the group with the opportunity to have their concerns heard, 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 our CEO Beth West.

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 insufficient engagement had been carried out.

It was also felt that EWR should do more in its communication to help people better understand the preferred options.

Since the consultation in 2021, we've continued to engage through the quarterly publication of the Keeping you Connected newsletter, regular website updates, public drop-in events held in Summer 2022, and ongoing meetings between potentially impacted landowners and the Land Team.

We've strengthened our communications 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.

Further information will be made available at the statutory consultation.

12.13 Public transport

Concerns were raised that any new public transport offer would need to match demand; and that Cambourne lacks public transport.

It is the aim of EWR to contribute to and integrate into the wider transport network at Cambourne, including bus, walking 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 walking, wheeling and cycling modes are appropriately considered in the development of our station designs. It is noted that EWR is not responsible for delivery of other transport projects, such as the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway, but we'll work with other providers to align as best as practicable.

We've assessed future demand, which forecasts a requirement for four trains per hour. The proposed route would connect directly to Cambridge South station, which will serve the Biomedical Campus. The provision of a railway connecting key places of work and employment will help to take cars off the roads and so reduce congestion.

12.14 Roads

Concerns were raised about road safety, particularly for pedestrians, cyclists and users of mobility scooters.

It is essential that we consider the safety of the public and workers at all stages of design, during the construction of the railway and its operational phase. This has been considered to date and will continue to be considered as the Project progresses. The safety of workers, road users, non-motorised users, supply chain and local people has been prioritised so any risks can be identified and reduced wherever possible. Mitigation measures for construction impacts will be set out in a CoCP or an equivalent document.

12.15 Route and scope alternative suggestions

A number of suggestions were made for route alternatives, including:

- A real expressway from Bedford town centre to the A421 roundabout.
- Improve Marston Vale line with a suburban rail service for south Bedford and out to Marsh Leys industrial estate.

- EWR to run parallel with the new A428 from the Black Cat improvement scheme development to Caxton Gibbet junctions.
- Transform the proposed Bedford branch line into a dual carriageway on top of the railway.

We note the comments on route alternatives; however, nothing presented as part of this feedback has led to us re-opening alternative routes.

Regarding the suggestion for an expressway from Bedford town centre to the A421 roundabout, our Project objective is to improve east-west public transport connectivity by providing rail links between key urban areas between Oxford and Cambridge. As such, we would only propose to undertake highway improvement works to mitigate potential impacts from increased traffic movements during the construction and operational stages of EWR. A real expressway isn't required for these reasons, so was not progressed.

We'll 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. Outcomes of this will be reported in the PEIR published at the statutory consultation and the ES submitted as part of the DCO application.

Regarding the suggestion to improve the MVL with a suburban rail service for south Bedford and out to Marsh Leys industrial estate, we are not proposing to provide a suburban rail service for south Bedford beyond the stations previously consulted upon at the non-statutory consultation along the MVL. Moving the MVL line away from its existing route isn't a feasible option because it would not represent good value for money for the taxpayer, due to the increased amount of design, engineering works, materials and land take required to deliver. It would also have significantly higher environmental impacts than upgrading the current line. We are not considering providing new stations for the MVL other than those which have already been proposed within the non-statutory consultation, as the extra land take and cost of constructing new stations isn't warranted at other locations such as Marsh Leys.

This is in line with our Project objective to improve east-west public transport connectivity by providing rail links between key urban areas (current and anticipated) between Oxford and Cambridge (as referenced on page 40 of Consultation Document).

Any route passing through the south of Bedford would need to overcome a significant number of sensitive and complex environmental constraints, including floodplain, the new Wixams development, high quality agricultural land, heritage assets and ancient woodland. It would also require remediation of the former Elstow landfill site. We would provide connectivity to Bedford south of the River Great Ouse through a Bedford St Johns station, and Bedford station would provide access to the town centre and other key destinations from the north of the River Great Ouse.

Regarding the suggestion for EWR to run parallel with the new A428 from the Black Cat improvement scheme to Caxton Gibbet junctions, we are working closely with the A428 Black Cat improvement scheme. Our preferred Route Alignment 1 (Temspsford variant) would run

parallel to the proposed A428 Black Cat improvement scheme from close to the Black Cat roundabout to Caxton Gibbet.

Regarding the suggestion to transform the proposed Bedford branch line into a dual carriageway on top of the railway, we're providing a rail link from Oxford to Cambridge and therefore constructing a dual carriageway on top of the railway isn't part of the Project, and would not encourage a modal shift away from private vehicles. Additionally, this would require large complex engineering structures, especially where the route needs to be constructed on bridges or within cuttings. It would also significantly increase the cost, construction duration and environmental impacts of the Project including visual and noise impacts.

12.16 Rolling Stock

Concerns were raised about a shortage of rolling stock and how EWR may affect the wider network by increasing demand for rolling stock.

We are working on a Rolling Stock Strategy, taking into account existing fleets and the future demands of the network. This is being done in conjunction with GBR Transitions Team and DfT to ensure a holistic view is taken.

12.17 Route extension

Suggestions for extending the EWR route were received, including from the south of Cambridge to Stansted; from Cambridge to Manchester and Liverpool via Milton Keynes; and from Bedford and Cambridge to the North West and the Midlands.

Support was received for a connection to the East Coast Mainline; to extend to Ipswich and Norwich; and to add a link to Ely North Junction.

Suggestions were made to link EWR to Westcott Venture Park to the north of Aylesbury.

EWR is a nationally significant railway project which aims to deliver much-needed transport connections for communities between Oxford and Cambridge.
We don't plan to extend the route. However, none of the alignments that we've proposed would preclude services being extended to these destinations in future.

Our route would be able to provide convenient interchange onto existing rail services: Great Western, Chiltern and CrossCountry at Oxford, the West Coast Mainline at Bletchley, East Midlands and Thameslink services at Bedford, Great Northern, and Thameslink at ECML station and Greater Anglia, Great Northern/Thameslink and CrossCountry at Cambridge. By providing interchange opportunities for journeys further east, west, north and south, EWR would assist in retaining businesses and investment in the UK, encouraging further investment and scaling up across other parts of the country.

EWR's scope is currently to provide a connection between Oxford and Cambridge however wider connectivity is important to us and are working closely with Network Rail on proposals including how best to link EWR services with the wider rail network. This will be factored into the process to design future timetables.

12.18 Southern route

Some respondents said they do not support the southern approach to Cambridge due to cost and community impact.

The NATC design presented at the 2021 consultation was expected to be more expensive to build than the SATC. Following additional work undertaken since the non-statutory consultation, the updated NATC is expected to have a lower construction cost than the SATC. This is due to the reduction in the anticipated amount of four-tracking required to the WAML in Cambridge. However, a SATC is expected to provide higher potential benefits in terms of unlocking growth, better connectivity and more flexible options to extend EWR services in the future; and remains our preferred approach to Cambridge.

We've considered the impact of the Project on existing highways, PRoW and private access roads as part of the design and assessment of route alignment options. We are seeking to maintain existing highway connections wherever feasible. Where it isn't feasible to retain existing highways, PRoW and private access roads in their current location, we'll ensure that a suitable alternative is available which reduces the impact on communities. We therefore do not agree that the SATC will sever communities.

Whilst the SATC would be closer to more settlements than the NATC, more of the NATC would be within the built-up area of Cambridge itself and a greater number of properties are expected to be close to the NATC alignment. The NATC is expected to perform worse in terms of community impacts due to the closer proximity of the route to communities than the SATC and number of PRoW crossed.

EWR would provide increased connectivity to households and businesses across the route. When businesses become closer in effective proximity (e.g. you can travel between businesses quicker than you previously could), then productivity gains can be made through closer links to suppliers, to a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and knowledge spill-overs occur. Furthermore, businesses will be able to attract an increased pool of labour due to the reduction in 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.
The SATC is expected to provide greater opportunities to unlock economic growth across the region (and at the Cambridge Biomedical Campus in particular) and would deliver greater overall connectivity and greater flexibility to extend EWR services in the future. For these reasons, we continue to select the SATC as our preferred approach to Cambridge.

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 means that commuters would need to change trains and increase journey times.

We've published further details on the reason for progressing with the southern route on our website, including in Appendix F of the 2021 Consultation Technical Report.

12.19 Stations

12.19.1 Bedford

Some respondents commented on existing road congestion around Bedford station and said that the car park is currently insufficient.

At the next stages of design development, we'll focus on increasing capacity and improving the way passengers move around Bedford station. We'll 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.

We'll consider the existing traffic levels when developing its plans in this area. We'll 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 accompany 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.

This will also set out the impact of construction on the road network, including changes to existing traffic patterns because of predicted construction traffic. The likely environmental impacts of the proposals will be described in the PEIR, which will be presented at statutory consultation. If required, mitigation measures will be set out in the CoCP, or equivalent document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State as part of the DCO application. As mentioned, compliance with the CoCP will be secured through a requirement of the DCO.

At the next stage of design, we'll undertake modelling work to help inform parking requirements. We'll consider electric vehicle charging points and disabled persons parking, as well as passenger drop-off and taxi facilities.

Additionally, we'll 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.

12.19.2 Bletchley

Suggestions were 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 improvement and are 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.

12.19.3 Oxford

Respondents felt that additional parking and improvements to the customer experience are needed at Oxford station.

Network Rail and Oxford City Council are currently collaborating on schemes to overhaul the station and surrounding area, and we'll seek to integrate any proposals we have at Oxford station with these as far as reasonably practicable. We'll look at the suitability of all existing station facilities as we carry out further design work - information on this will be shared at the statutory consultation. Any new or improved facilities that we propose would be designed to improve the customer experience by focusing on the areas that people have told us matter to them the most.

We'll continue to consider how parking can be optimised at the station. As we develop our proposals, we'll be undertaking traffic surveys and modelling work to understand future capacity requirements. We'll also consider how to provide suitable parking facilities for motorcycles and charge points for electric vehicles, as well as disabeld persons parking. We continue to work with other organisations, such as bus operators, to seek to understand how we can interface with other public transport and provide consistent onward travel information. Further information will be made available at the statutory consultation.

12.19.4 Wixams

Respondents were concerned that the development of Wixams station is subject to consultation and that this would cause delays to EWR.

The development and consultation on Wixams station as promoted by Bedford Borough Council isn't expected to cause delays to EWR.

12.19.5 Cambridge South

Concerns were expressed over the size and capacity of Cambridge South station, access to the station from rural areas, and a potential increase in traffic in the Queen's Edith area.

Cambridge South station delivery is the responsibility of Network Rail. We'll 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'll 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.

Regarding access from rural areas, we'll integrate with other transport providers to ensure an integrated approach to transport for the region, including bus and active travel.
Regarding increased traffic in the Queen Edith's area, we'll undertake road traffic modelling during the next stage to understand any potential impacts.

12.20 Station location

12.20.1 Ridgmont

Respondents felt that there are no proposals for mitigation should Ridgmont station should not be 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 will consider how existing land is currently used, such as the Heritage Centre. We'll 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 2021Consultation Technical Report and will be set out at the statutory consultation.

12.20.2 Tempsford and St Neots

Some respondents said there was a preference for a station to be in Tempsford, rather than South of St Neots. However, some respondents said that another station would be beneficial for St Neots.

Some respondents queried the distance the proposed works south of St Neots will be from the junction of Chawston Lane coming off the A1 Road.

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've 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 tosupport 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 reduced risk of severance caused by the new A428 dual carriageway, than a St Neots station location.

The use of a station within St Neots isn't expected to enable the same level of housing development that we anticipate would be unlocked by a new station south of St Neots at Tempsford.

The ECML station isn't designed to be a replacement for the Sandy station, or to have a negative impact on the Sandy station. It is expected that passengers will be able to access EWR services at Tempsford through various means including ECML rail or local bus and active travel connections.

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'll 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 the A1 road to the north of the Black Cat roundabout and approximately 500m south of Chawston Lane. However, our preferred alignment Route Alignment 1 (Tempsford variant) would cross the A1 south of the Black Cat roundabout, over 1km south of Chawston Lane.

12.21 Support for EWR

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.

We note 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, in effect, closer to suppliers, support a more dynamic and specialised labour market, and create 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'll 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 cases of the business case.

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.

12.22 The case for EWR

The case for EWR was queried based on the current economic climate, the cost of the Project and a lack of housing development being completed along the route.

In its February 2023 report, 'East West Rail as a Catalyst for Turbocharged Economic Growth', the Oxford-Cambridge Supercluster Board's report argues that EWR is essential to deliver the economic potential of the supercluster and will unlock many of the current constraints on growth and join-up the critical mass needed for the supercluster to compete globally.

EWR is a long-term investment that is complementary to other activity that the Government may undertake to grow areas around the country, enabling sustainable growth to the UK economy as a whole.

Developing the business case for the Project is an iterative process and we'll 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.

We continue 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 regarding the business case for EWR can be found in Chapter 2 of the 2021 Consultation Technical Report.

12.23 Consideration of future housing development

In designing route options for the railway to date, we've continued to liaise with planning authorities and monitored planning applications, committed development, and emerging local policy consultations to stay informed about proposals for new housing across the route, including within Oxfordshire. In selecting the preferred route alignment following the 2019 consultation, we took account of how the new railway could serve developments in the Oxford to Cambridgeshire area. We 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 we looked at detailed potential route alignments. We've also formally responded to third-party planning applications and policy consultations, where appropriate to do so.

We've also thought about how the railway might best complement 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.

12.24 Transport connections

It was pointed out that Haslingfield residents would have to drive to Cambourne to travel to Cambridge on EWR services, which would entail driving in the opposite direction.

Respondents stated that EWR must provide connections to other sector hubs in the Midlands and North would also provide opportunities for institutions, businesses and individuals located along the EWR line.

Respondents also commented that this improved connectivity would provide important opportunities for tourism and retail which is vital for bringing people and economic support to areas along the route.

It was stated that EWR must be integrated with local transport networks across the area. It was also suggested that access from EWR stations to hospitals could be improved.

It is the aim of EWR to contribute to and integrate into the wider transport network at Cambourne, including bus, walking 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.

EWR will be vital in delivering a range of benefits for communities, businesses, academia and the wider economy. It will support economic growth through the provision of greener and faster transport in an area constrained by poor east-west connectivity, and attract both investment and top talent to the UK. Capitalising on the clear strengths in knowledge-based industries across the region is essential for long term sustainable growth, economic resilience, and international competitiveness.

It will also increase connectivity for households and businesses across the route. This will help businesses in effect to become closer to suppliers, support 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.

Where possible, we'll look to further quantify the impact of EWR on the wider economy, specifically its impact on economic growth, investment, jobs, housing, and connectivity across both the region and the country. This will form part of the strategic and economic cases of the business case.

We'll explore how we can provide new opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the stations that EWR serves. This will include ensuring that there is good access for pedestrians, cyclists, as well as good bus links. We'll 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 statutory consultation and then within the ES 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 the new station.

Regarding improving access from EWR stations to hospitals, options for Bedford St Johns would improve public transport connectivity with Bedford Hospital and serve communities to the south of the river. Our services to Cambridge station would also provide improved access to Addenbrookes Hospital.

12.25 Addendum

Since this chapter was drafted, the following additional new matters were raised by stakeholders via correspondence, to which responses are being provided:

- Enquiry into whether two rail crossings in the CS1 area between Marsh Gibbon and Poundon are now open.
- Concern about the potential impact of our proposals on flood risk at the Eight Belles park in Bletchley and the impact it will have on the trees.

We'll continue to consider all feedback from stakeholders received via our ongoing engagement activities.