East West Rail
Train Maintenance Depot

Frequently Asked Questions

08.04.2026

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Bletchley West has been confirmed as the preferred location for a new Train Maintenance Depot (TMD) which will support the safe and reliable operation of services on East West Rail (EWR).

The proposed site alongside Whaddon Road, west of Bletchley and north of Newton Longville, will play a vital role in keeping the railway running efficiently.

This document provides answers to questions that have been asked regarding the preferred location for the EWR TMD.

SITE SELECTION AND ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

Question:

Why was the location near Newton Longville chosen if some requirements seemed to favour placing the depot at the ends of the route?

Answer:

The positioning of depots and stabling facilities at the end of the route is generally considered best if trains are starting and ending services at these stations. The intention is to facilitate the swift removal of trains from main line operations, enabling maintenance teams to access the route at the earliest possible opportunity. This approach also streamlines maintenance activities and maximises the time the train is available for servicing before they are required for the next day's passenger services.

However, this is not a requirement for the depot. It was one of several factors considered when reviewing possible locations, rather than something that ruled sites in or out on its own.

We will continue to evolve our concept of how the railway will operate throughout the next design stages.

Question:

Did you consider use of the HS2 Calvert Depot?

Answer:

Yes, the HS2 site at Calvert was considered. It did not progress onto the long list of sites reviewed as part of the Option Selection Report (OSR) as there is insufficient space to accommodate the East West Rail fleet. Furthermore, the Calvert site is a different type of depot – it is an 'infrastructure maintenance depot' so the facility serves a different purpose to a train maintenance depot.

Question:

There will be a significant amount of new infrastructure associated with the new Universal Studios theme park near Stewartby. Did EWR consider putting a TMD in this location?

Answer:

Yes, sites near Stewartby were considered as part of the long list identification. Significant areas of land in this location are earmarked for major housing and commercial development (for example, the Brickworks site and the area north of Broadmead Road). Our preferred site is adjacent to a proposed housing development – it is not expected to directly impact it.

Stewartby was ruled out due to a lack of space from existing plans for housing and business. Universal Studios' proposed theme park also has a significant land requirement, leaving insufficient space for a proposed TMD.

Question:

How did EWR decide which requirements were essential when choosing the location for the depot?

Answer:

Requirements for the depot have been developed by qualified experts at EWR Co., based on the concept plan for how passenger services will operate on the railway. This plan sets out how many trains need to be stored across the route and what facilities are needed to carry out routine maintenance.

These requirements were then used in the option selection process to determine the size of the train maintenance depot and the facilities needed to safely operate East West Rail's passenger service.

Question:

How does EWR ensure that sites are assessed consistently and that different factors are weighted fairly?

Answer:

Where design options were found not to meet the project's objectives and requirements, they were typically discounted early on, before the Assessment Factors were applied.

In this case, several options were discounted as they performed poorly against these objectives or proved unviable to meet the technical requirements.

The assessment was carried out by suitably qualified experts using a consistent approach across the project. The Assessment Factors do not use fixed numerical weighting, but they compare how each option performs. In this case, West of Whaddon Road was identified as a preferred location due to demonstrating improvements to a number of different factors.

Question:

Why were certain sites ruled out due to existing planning applications, whilst the preferred location 'West of Whaddon Road' wasn't?

Answer:

For the purposes of the Assessment Factors, anything that is classed as a committed development is treated as if it has already been built, and the potential impacts on it are considered.

For the site "WH – East of Bicester Road", there was a direct conflict with a proposed housing development, which would have prevent the construction or results in demolition of up to 27 houses.

The Salden Place housing development was also treated as a 'committed development' during the option selection process. Whilst we have identified land outside the rail corridor on the northern side, this is to provide sufficient space for construction activities to take place in the rail corridor for the western orientation of the TMD. We do not expect any direct loss or impact to drainage infrastructure proposed by the Salden Place development and will continue to work with Taylor Wimpey in the next design phase.

There is no direct conflict with the proposed site near the Gas Injection site in the draft local plan and our proposed works.

Question:

How does East West Rail assess costs – including construction, operation, maintenance, and required utilities – when comparing different depot locations, and why are full cost breakdowns not published?

Answer:

We do not publish a full breakdown of the costs used to calculate capital expenditure, as doing so could affect future procurement.

As noted in the report during the re-review, cost was considered a neutral factor. Whilst the baseline site had reduced costs associated with less track quantity and earthworks, this was offset by a larger cost associated with diverting utilities, resulting in a similar overall cost.

Maintenance costs reviews are carried out by our Subject Matter Experts. It was considered that the greater operational efficiency at the West of Whaddon Road site – meaning fewer movements – would offset the cost of maintaining the additional track. This was assessed as a minor improvement.

Question:

How will East West Rail consider any new issues identified during design, and could these affect the decision on the preferred site?

Answer:

Subject matter experts assessed the options using an outline design, ensuring enough detail for consultation on the preferred site.

As the design continues to be developed, it will be checked against our criteria before the final decision and Development Consent Order (DCO) submission.

ROADS, BRIDGES AND CONSTRUCTION TRAFFIC

Question:

What is the impact on the bridges and local roads – will they have to close?

Answer:

We are still developing our proposals for these bridges.

TMD layout options and further assessment of the passing loops design will influence what works are needed at each bridge, and we will be able to confirm details once we have selected the proposed TMD layout.

Should works be required for any potential modifications to existing bridges, we will consider how best to sequence work to minimise any consequential impact to traffic and connectivity for communities in the local area.

Question:

How will EWR manage construction traffic and its impact on local roads?

Answer:

EWR is committed to being a good neighbour and working with communities to minimise disruption during construction. We recognise that the community experienced challenges during CS1, and we will work hard to reduce any effects from future construction.

We estimate being at least three years away from potential construction of the TMD and passing loops. During this time, we will continue to work with the relevant local Highways Authority and other stakeholders to identify the most appropriate routes for construction traffic and to develop plans that minimise disruption to local communities. As part of this, we have considered how best to avoid smaller local roads and identify suitable ways to reach major routes.

To support this planning, we will develop detailed traffic models of the area to help us understand any potential impacts on local roads. This modelling will also help inform discussions with the Highways Authority on any measures that may be needed, such as improvements to junctions, if required.

During construction, our Code of Construction Practice will set out measures that contractors must follow. This will include tools such as GPS tracking to help ensure construction vehicles use approved routes. We will also look at ways to reduce the number of vehicle movements required. This includes looking closely at how we reuse material from the site in landscaping earthworks, and how we can make use of the existing railway to remove and deliver materials by train, instead of by road.

MATERIALS AND EARTHWORKS

Question:

I've heard a significant amount of material may need to be moved from the site. How will you do this without causing problems for local communities?

Answer:

Our current assessment assumes that all material would be taken off site – this is a 'worst case scenario'. In reality, we will be able to reuse significant amounts of material within the TMD site boundary to help screen the site and provide landscaping and biodiversity opportunities.

Furthermore, we are also considering how we can make use of the existing railway to remove (and deliver) materials by train, instead of by road, thus reducing the impact on the local road network.

ENVIRONMENTAL, SUSTAINABILITY, BIODIVERSITY AND DRAINAGE

Question:

How will drainage and removal of waste water be managed at the site?

Answer:

The designs of the TMD at the preferred location include three drainage ponds to attenuate surface water from the depot infrastructure before being discharged into watercourses at rates agreed with the Environment Agency. The land is not within flood zones for rivers but there are areas which would be at risk of surface water flooding. This risk would be managed through the design of the site to ensure water can be stored and discharged appropriately.

There are limited opportunities for foul water connections, but potential solutions are being investigated including storage on site or connections to nearby systems. Developing designs for these connections will form part of more detailed design phases.

Question:

How has EWR assessed watercourses, drainage conditions and flood risk at the proposed depot site, and how are inconsistencies in earlier reports being addressed?

Answer:

The proposed site is not within any river flood zones, but there is some risk of surface water flooding. This would be managed through the design of the depot.

The ecology section of the report incorrectly stated that there were two watercourses that crossed the site. This has been corrected in the Option Selection Report.

The site is situated on an unproductive area of superficial glacial till.

Question:

How were carbon emissions calculated for each depot option, and what explains the changes in figures across different parts of the report?

Answer:

Potential carbon emissions are an important factor in our decision making and the Option Selection Report sets out potential emissions associated with each option.

Section 14 describes the difference between the two western sites taken to final selection. Site WF2 East of M40 would result in 4,552 tCO2e whilst Site WQ West of Whaddon Road TMD would result in 6,546 tCO2e. The anticipated tCO2e did change between the initial review and further assessment process due to changes in design assumptions informing carbon modelling.

The larger CO2e associated with Whaddon Road site is largely due to additional earth and HGV movements required. However, we are considering how this can be reduced through reuse of material onsite and use of rail for moving material off-site.

Question:

The report says the site covers around 32 hectares, most of which is agricultural land, but only 16 hectares would need to be purchased. How has this been calculated?

Answer:

The anticipated loss of agricultural land did change between the initial review and further assessment process due to changes in design assumptions. The further assessment process confirmed that approximately 39 hectares would be lost for the baseline scheme and 31 hectares for Site WQ West of Whaddon Road.

Question:

What impact would you have on the CS1 biodiversity sites south of the railway line?

Answer:

We do not expect direct impact on the CS1 biodiversity sites south of the railway line.

The land we have identified to the south of the railway would provide access and working areas should we need to undertake works to existing bridge structures. Our Code of Construction Practice will include measures to control any potential impacts on biodiversity sites during construction. For example, this will include steps to protect high value biodiversity within the TMD site boundary.

UTILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONSTRAINTS

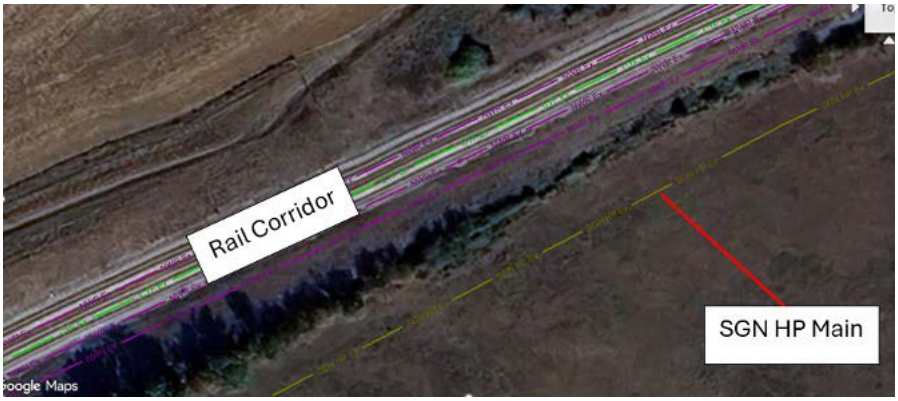
Question:

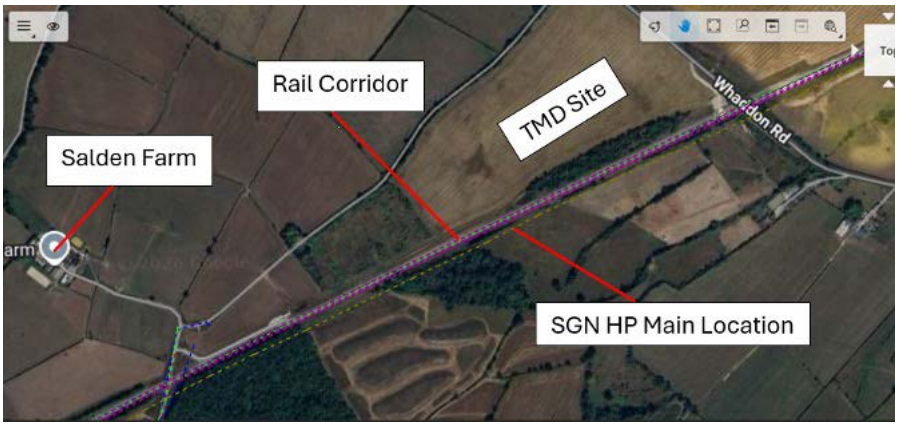
What are the expected impacts on existing utilities at the preferred site?

Answer:

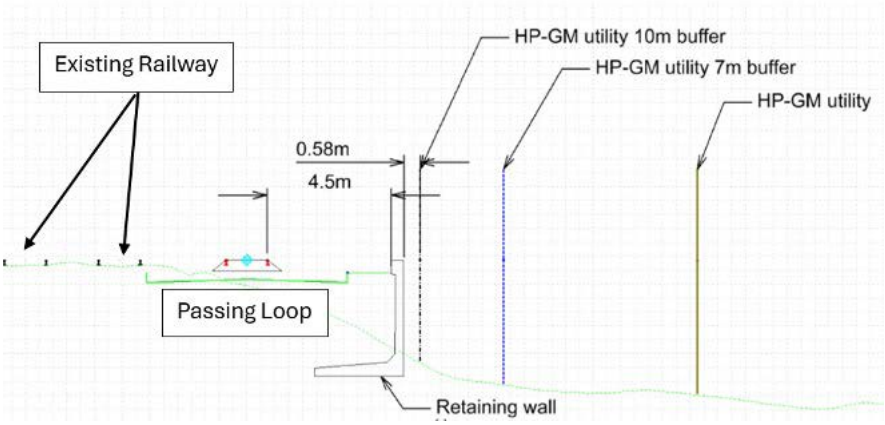
The TMD Option Selection Report (OSR) location 'WF2 East of M40' (the baseline site) a high-pressure gas main passes directly beneath the proposed depot infrastructure, which would need to be diverted. This was also the case for the overhead power lines at this location.

For the proposed TMD location, an SGN high-pressure gas main runs parallel to the railway, south of the existing railway line.





It is proposed that the western passing loop will be constructed south of the existing railway track with the high-pressure gas main remaining south of the new passing loop, still in its original position within the field. The distance between the high-pressure gas main and the passing loop is proposed to be between 13-14.5m. Based on the current design, the gas main is not expected to be located within the rail corridor.



In this location, the gas main would remain outside of the rail corridor after the construction of the passing loop.

There are utilities located in Whaddon Road and the access road to Lower Salden Farm. The need to undertake utility diversions will be dependent on the extent of bridge works required. At this stage we do not consider it will be necessary to divert the overhead powerlines to the North of the site. This will be kept under review.

LOCAL BUSINESSES

Question:

How have you considered the needs of local businesses, particularly nearby farms?

Answer:

As part of our commitment to landowners, we are offering 'farm business interviews'. This involves sitting with landowners to best understand their business practices and how we can avoid and minimise the impact to these. We use the discussions to help shape our designs and construction plans.

Where there are impacts that cannot be avoided, we will work with landowners to agree appropriate compensation. Further information about this, including details on who may be eligible to apply and what compensation may be available, can be found in the guides on our website.

For local businesses, our ongoing environmental assessment work will consider whether there are wider impacts on the local economy as part of construction and operation of the railway.

We have not identified roads to the south of the proposed depot as construction routes and at this stage, we do not anticipate there will be direct impacts on businesses. Our Code of Construction Practice will include measures to help manage any temporary, indirect impacts during construction, including steps to provide advance notice for local business.