

Consultation underway on new rail line between Bedford and Cambridge

January 28, 2019



Ambitious plans for a new rail line between Bedford and Cambridge come one step closer to fruition today, as the East West Railway Company reveal five route options and ask the public to have their say.

The new line will create a direct connection between Bedford and Cambridge, unlocking a wealth of benefits for communities along the route. It has the potential to reduce journey times and transport costs for thousands of people across the area, as well as supporting housing growth and boosting the local economy. It is expected to be built by the mid-2020s, marking the completion of the link between Oxford to Cambridge and the next phase of the East West Rail link.

Of the five options offered for consultation, three take a broadly southern route through South Cambridgeshire via Bassingbourn and two take a broadly northern route via Cambourne. The consultation also reveals options for potential new stations in Cambourne, St Neots, Sandy, Tempsford and Bassingbourn.

Simon Blanchflower, East West Rail Company's Chief Executive said: *"Bedford, Cambridge and the communities in between need the right kind of infrastructure to support them. We're hoping that residents will give use feedback on these route options to help us understand more about the priorities of*

the people this line will serve.

"We'd like as many people as possible to give us their views and are grateful to everyone who takes the time to help us as we design this crucial piece of infrastructure for the area."

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said: *"The launch of this consultation marks a significant milestone in bringing this project to fruition.*

"East West Rail will transform journeys in one of Europe's most vibrant economic regions, providing passengers and businesses with the transport system they deserve while unlocking the area's economic potential."

Councillor Mark Shaw, Chairman of the East West Rail Consortium, said: *"This announcement shows the real progress being made in getting trains operating between Oxford and Cambridge at the earliest opportunity. It's crucial that people now give their views on the proposals so that the best possible route can be taken forward."*

The East West Railway Company is inviting members of the public to find out more about these options, by downloading the consultation documents from their website (eastwestrail.co.uk/haveyoursay) or dropping into one of the eight public events being held over the six week consultation period.

Documents will all be made available on the East West Railways Company's website and a consultation helpline will run throughout the consultation. Feedback can be submitted through the website, via the freepost address EASTWESTRAIL, and in person at one of the consultation events.

This consultation follows early work to develop the project by local councils, Network Rail and the Department for Transport – backed by the National Infrastructure Commission.