

East West Rail installs 'railway first' footbridge in Bicester

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An innovative and near maintenance-free footbridge has been installed in Bicester to make crossing the railway safer for pedestrians and cyclists in future.

Made from super-strong fibre-reinforced plastic*, the new footbridge replaces Jarvis Lane footpath level crossing.

It's the first new footbridge to be opened as part of the East West Rail project - which when completed will connect Bicester to Bletchley and Milton Keynes for the first time in 50 years**.

The weatherproof material has never been used by Network Rail for footbridge construction before and it will need much less future maintenance than conventional materials steel or concrete.

Mark Cuzner, East West Rail Alliance project director, said: "Building a new railway is extremely exciting and it's only right that East West Rail uses the latest materials and technology to get the job done.

"Most importantly, replacing Jarvis Lane level crossing with this new footbridge will make crossing the

tracks safer for cyclists and pedestrians now, as well as saving money on costly maintenance in the future. The opening of this footbridge also reinstates the public right of way over the railway benefitting both local people and businesses in the town.

The paths leading to the footbridge have been resurfaced and new footpath signs have been installed.

The bridge also features steel channels at the side of the staircases so bicycles can be walked across instead of carried.

The new footbridge means the pedestrian level crossing at Jarvis Lane is now closed.

This is part of Network Rail's plans to eliminate safety risks by removing level crossings where possible to create a safer railway for the future.

*It's the very first fibre-reinforced polymer footbridge to be installed on the railway by Network Rail. The material is weather resilient and significantly low maintenance compared to conventional steel and concrete.

**** About the East West Rail project**

East West Rail intends to create a new direct connection between Oxford and Cambridge. Serving communities across the area, it intends to bring faster journey times and lower transport costs as well as ease pressure on local roads.

East West Rail is planned to be delivered in three Connection Stages:

- Connection Stage One: Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes
- Connection Stage Two: Oxford to Bedford
- Connection Stage Three: Oxford to Cambridge

Network Rail was responsible for developing the first part of the East West Rail, connecting Oxford with Bicester, and is a partner in a construction alliance to deliver Connection Stage 1 of the project, where East West Railway Company (EWR Co) and Network Rail are acting as the Department for Transport's joint sponsors.

EWR Co is now developing the route to enable services to run to Cambridge via Bedford and plans to seek statutory powers under the Planning Act 2008, following a period of extensive consultation.

About East West Railway Company

East West Railway Company (EWR Co) was set up by the Secretary of State for Transport in 2018 to develop East West Rail, a railway with customers and communities at its core.

Its mission is to innovate and challenge the status-quo in the rail and construction industries, leading to a more efficient and cost-effective project delivery, and a great experience for passengers and the

communities we serve. East West Rail Company's vision is the delivery of a safe and secure railway that is better for the customer; cheaper for the taxpayer; delivered quicker than before and is greener for the environment.

East West Rail Company's distinctive outlook and commitment to doing the right thing for customers and local communities runs through everything it does and every decision it makes.

Photo credit: Network Rail