



GREATER CAMBRIDGE
SHARED PLANNING

Freepost EAST WEST RAIL

Date: 8 June 2021

Contact: Stephen Kelly

Email:

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please find below South Cambridgeshire District Council's response to the East West Rail 2021 Public Consultation, which was agreed at the Council's Cabinet meeting of 24 May 2021.

The response of Cambridge City Council will be sent in a separate letter.

1. Introduction

As agreed by Full Council in September 2018, South Cambridgeshire District Council supports the principle of the Bedford to Cambridge section of the East West Rail line and welcomes the opportunity to provide further comments in respect of the 2021 Public Consultation.

The Council's response to the current public consultation does not prejudice an in-depth consideration of strategic issues related to future growth through the forthcoming Greater Cambridge Local Plan (which is being jointly prepared by South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council). This will include consideration of all reasonable strategy options.

Significant further work is still needed to understand the localised impacts of the scheme, the options for mitigation, their effectiveness and implementation including the sequencing with wider strategic infrastructure and development. As a general point, the Council has not been able to fully assess issues such as noise or landscape impacts in any detail, given the high level nature of the consultation material, and as such is unable to determine the impact of the options fully at this stage. We hope this will be addressed and a thorough and detailed evidence base provided to explain how issues have been explored and evaluated, and why the preferred route is appropriate.

East West Rail and the growth of the corridor more generally will bring significant change to existing communities. To enable the Council, together with our communities, to make the most of the opportunity that the railway brings, and to

effectively address its impacts, we urge East West Rail to engage effectively with local communities to thoroughly test the options, to understand and explore their detailed concerns, to fully consider the issues being raised and provide further information to ensure a transparent process relating to the analysis of options, as it progresses the Bedford to Cambridge project.

It should be recognised that EWR will have a significant impact on communities in the immediate vicinity of the chosen route and residents have real concerns about the impact on their immediate environment and quality of life.

2. Challenges and opportunities relating to the route options

We note from the consultation that there is a preference for a southern access into Cambridge from Cambourne, through the countryside to the south-western edge of Cambridge, joining the existing King's Cross line to the west of the Little Shelford / Hauxton level crossing.

We are of the view that in arriving at the preferred option, further details on the environmental, social and economic impacts of the options needs to be published. We ask that East West Rail provides further information on the work undertaken for northern and southern accesses to demonstrate how the preferred option has been arrived at. This would have the benefit of increasing public confidence in the process.

Landscape Impacts: The landscape between Cambourne and Shelford is populated with small and medium sized villages including Caldecote, Toft, Comberton, the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield, Harston and Hauxton. There are also villages to the north of the A428 that would be impacted by the northern Cambourne route.

As a general point, the introduction of a railway line with accompanying infrastructure would be potentially intrusive in this settled, open landscape with slightly undulating topography. Of particular concern are the visual and landscape impact of high embankments and these must be fully evaluated and less intrusive options explored. This particularly applies at the high point near to Highfields Caldecote and around Harston. This impact may well be increased further through the engineering responses required for the railway's construction and operation, including the provision of associated additional operational infrastructure such as lighting and communications apparatus and the need for additional/relocated rail sidings. These associated factors should be defined and considered in the process.

The preferred option would also have an impact on the setting of the historic city of Cambridge. Areas to the west and south of Cambridge include sensitive landscapes and vulnerable views, mainly due to the raised and accessible landscapes of existing high points such as Red Meadow Hill, the Gog Magog Hills and the Greensand ridge south and west of Haslingfield.

Further assessment of landscape impact should be undertaken. This should also provide a comparison of the route alignments, to ensure the relative impacts have been fully considered.

Further information is requested to demonstrate how landscape considerations have been used in selecting the route alignments, to ensure they are acceptable from a landscape and visual perspective. In this regard the Council would wish to understand the engineering choices which have been made and indicate a desire to deliver an “elevated” route and in particular whether less visually obtrusive other means, such as tunnels or cuttings, had been considered – and reasons why they had been discounted. It is an expectation that the visual impact of all associated railway infrastructure, (including grade separated junctions) and electrification is considered as part of this assessment.

Heritage Impacts: The project has the potential to impact upon above and below ground heritage assets, including Scheduled Ancient Monuments and listed buildings. A full assessment of the impacts on such heritage assets should be undertaken, which should be shared with the Council in order to demonstrate that the route alignments and associated infrastructure are acceptable in terms of impacts on heritage assets. It is an expectation that specialist archaeological advice on the condition and impact of below ground heritage assets is also sought. The heritage assessment should also consider the impacts of increased vibration from rail traffic.

Within the route sections, the impacts on specific sites should be fully evaluated, including the following:

Section D - North of Cambourne: grade II listed building farmhouse and associated buildings, New Inn Farm, Knapwell. South of Cambourne: grade II listed building to the North East of Caxton Pastures Farmhouse and Scheduled Monument which fully covers this site; Old Court House Caxton (grade II listed).

Section E - Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 1006809 settlement site at Manor Farm either site of Royston Road; Rowley’s Hill to the south of Harston.

Shelfords to Cambridge section – Cambridge Road overbridge area in Great Shelford: grade II listed Four Mile House and De Freville farmhouse and outbuildings; Shepreth branch Junction: 32-38 Granham’s Road and dovecote at Granham’s Farm (grade II listed); Line south-west and west of Addenbrookes: Scheduled Ancient Monument site ‘West of Whitehill Farm’ Harston Manor, 65 Church Street (Grade II listed)

Should alterations to the preferred route alignment result from the current consultation then the Council would request that a fresh evaluation of heritage assets corridor is undertaken.

Ecological Impacts: The consultation presents limited ecological evidence in respect of the route impacts on designated sites, priority species and the nature network. In the absence of this information it is difficult to critique or compare

individual route options and their associated impacts for biodiversity. This information should be supplied.

Valuing existing habitats in the urban environment, for both biodiversity and local communities, should be a high priority when considering route options. Ecological impacts should be limited wherever possible and mitigated on or close to site, to ensure that green infrastructure is not replaced by grey, resulting in loss of local multifunctional ecosystem services.

Clear evidence should be provided to demonstrate that the preferred route alignment options have fully considered the Ecology Mitigation Hierarchy with respect to avoiding impacts on the highest quality habitats and priority species. The ecological impacts, including Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), of any new highway routes arising from the closure of crossings would also need to be considered within this process, being directly related to the proposed development.

Whilst reference is made in the consultation documentation to impacts on priority habitats and ancient woodland being greater or lesser for certain alignments, it is difficult to independently scrutinise these without clear evidence of the number of designated sites (particularly County and City Wildlife Sites), watercourses, area and ideally condition of priority habitats. This evidence should be provided to demonstrate how these issues have been considered and why the chosen route is the appropriate one in ecological terms.

- Delivering Biodiversity Improvements

The consultation documentation states that 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is proposed from the overall scheme. This target appears unambitious given the scale of the scheme and the government's stated ambitions for Nature Recovery. A minimum 20% is more appropriate and allows for margins of errors to ensure an overall, long term BNG is achieved. This would reflect the shared regional principles for protecting, restoring and enhancing the environment in the Oxford Cambridge Arc, developed through the Ox Cam Arc Environment Working Group.

Positive outcomes to be secured through the scheme should include enhanced management of existing designated sites and priority habitats sites and the creation of new strategic habitats that connect existing ecological networks rather than creating further severance. It should be clearly demonstrated that this will meet the government's aspirations for Nature Recovery Networks. Reference should be made to Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Emergency declarations, South Cambridgeshire Doubling Nature Strategy, 'Natural Cambridgeshire' Local Nature Partnerships Doubling Nature vision and associated Priority Areas, including the soon to be launched Cambridge Nature Network. The Council is also developing evidence regarding green infrastructure for the Greater Cambridge Local Plan, and this may highlight further opportunities and synergies.

- Ecological Mitigation

Mitigation proposals should seek to provide long term management enhancements of existing non statutory designated sites. It should be ensured that the linear route does not sever key nature corridors or prevent future landscape scale restoration of nature networks.

Further detail needs to be provided to demonstrate that BNG requirements are achievable in relation to the options proposed. BNG calculations (including all assumptions made), should demonstrate that BNG best practice has been implemented. Any deviation from the use of the DEFRA V2 metric should be clearly explained and justified.

When designing BNG (and landscaping) schemes, it should be ensured that future management plans, delivery bodies, monitoring and reporting are in place to ensure that BNG ambitions are to be met in practice. Any landscaping scheme or habitat creation as a result of the scheme should be tailored to local needs using species of local provenance.

- Ecological Surveys

The consultation documentation states that ecological surveys have informed the consultation to date and are ongoing. The Council requests that this information is shared in the public domain to demonstrate that all survey work is compliant with BS42020 and associated CIEEM best practice.

- Specific Ecological Issues – Designated Sites

It is noted that the northern route would require construction of an additional junction on Coldham's Common County Wildlife Site (CWS) to facilitate onwards journeys. Coldham's Common is one of the largest natural green spaces in Cambridge, and a key element of the proposed Cambridge Nature Network. Any loss of these grassland and woodland habitats should be fully considered.

We note and support the identification of potential impacts on Nine Wells Local Nature Reserve (LNR) from the southern approach and appropriate mitigation. Other sites including the ecological mitigation on Hobsons Park and potential loss of woodland on the embankment of Long Rd could have implications for these sites.

Any route south of the current A428 would also need to fully consider the impact on Eversden and Wimpole Woods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) designated for maternity roosts of an annex II species. Western barbastelle bats are known to traverse along hedgerows and trees lines north of the SAC between the SAC and areas of ancient woodland north of the current A428.

Environmental Impacts: The Council has been unable to fully assess the environmental impacts, given the high-level nature of the consultation material. Further information and evidence will be expected to demonstrate how environmental issues have been considered, and why the chosen route is the appropriate one in environmental terms.

- Air Quality

The Council's main concern in relation to the proposal and air quality is the uncertainty and lack of commitment regarding the use of electrified trains or other technology from the outset. Further consideration will also need to be given to given to local connectivity, access and traffic management of the route options to minimise the impact on local air quality as the scheme is developed.

- Noise

The information presented in terms of potential impacts as a result of the scheme is at a very early stage. Consequently, it is not possible to accurately predict noise impacts as a result of the introduction of the proposals on sensitive receptors at any given location.

A number of options for a new route into Cambridge Station have been considered. The preferred route which is presented will be positioned North of Cambourne, and would serve the Bourn Airfield development as well as existing and proposed developments at Cambourne. It would also follow a route near to the A428 corridor following the alignment of highway improvements currently being considered.

Further information is requested in respect of how these cumulative noise considerations have been used in selecting the route alignments, to ensure they are acceptable from an environmental health perspective. Irrespective of the potential route alignment options, the preferred route should seek to avoid, or where unavoidable, minimise sources of rail and construction noise into areas previously unaccustomed to such impacts. Route alignment should follow existing transport corridors, as these already experience higher existing background noise levels as a result, although cumulative impacts are also relevant as discussed below..

Detailed noise modelling/prediction of impacts on sensitive receptors, (including both existing residential and future residential properties) should be undertaken in order to ensure that significant adverse noise impacts is prevented and that an appropriate level of mitigation is employed (if necessary). The noise assessment should also include a consideration of vibration, for both the construction and operational phases of the project.

When modelling railway noise impacts along this route, the cumulative noise impacts on nearby residential premises from both rail and road schemes operating simultaneously should be taken into consideration. Noise impacts should also be assessed for both the construction and operational phases of the development. The assessment should consider the noise impacts of increased train movements, including at potentially higher speeds, on sensitive receptors.

On-line and off-line route options should also be evaluated in respect of the potential for greater noise impacts that could occur as a result of an elevated track. Noise from a height will travel further and be heard at a greater distance than

noise sources close to the ground, as they will not benefit as much from the effects of ground attenuation over distance. Noise barriers placed closer to the noise source will have a greater effect and this is easier to achieve if the mitigation measures are located at ground level.

Artificial Lighting: Any new/additional artificial lighting has the potential to have an adverse impact. The impacts of light pollution arising from additional lighting at new or altered platforms, sidings and road/crossings/junctions should be fully assessed.

Health impacts: National rail networks and strategic rail freight movements have the potential to affect the health, well being and quality of life of the population. They can have direct impacts on health due to traffic, noise, vibration, air quality and emissions, light pollution, community severance, dust, odour, polluting water or hazardous waste. New or enhanced national network infrastructure may also have indirect health impacts.

The consultation documentation does not appear to indicate any research has yet been done into the impacts of the project on human health. We request further information in respect of the impacts on health and wellbeing from the various route alignments, evidenced for both the construction and operational phases. The final route option should demonstrate how it will promote strong, vibrant and sustainable communities, and promote community cohesion.

A full health impact assessment should be undertaken as part of the project. This should identify vulnerable groups who may be more adversely affected by these environmental changes, both temporarily throughout the construction phase, and in the long term, operationally. The report should include the differential impacts according to health or other vulnerability.

Indirect, Secondary and Cumulative Impacts: It is an expectation that all indirect and cumulative impacts of the project are assessed, as well as impact interactions and inter relationships.

Local impacts on communities: The construction and operational impacts of the preferred route should be fully addressed as part of the subsequent stages. There is potential for significant negative impacts on local residents and businesses, by severing communities and local connectivity (including local roads and public rights of way). This is causing significant local concern, and the Council would expect to see severance issues thoroughly assessed, alongside options for minimising these issues, particularly where it could impact on access to essential services, such as schools, and community cohesion. This also needs to carefully consider the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians. We ask that whichever route is selected, the detailed design carefully addresses the issue of severance. It must explore in detail the impact on local roads, cycleways and public rights of way, to ensure that safe and convenient connectivity is maintained. Particular consideration should also be given to the impacts of service disruption on local communities during the construction period.

Initial responses received by the Council from the local communities along the proposed route have raised significant concerns that a northern route does not appear to have been examined with the level of rigour that they would have expected. If such analysis has been conducted, it should be made available to the public. Further, residents have highlighted the contradiction between a diesel operated railway and local and national objectives around carbon reduction and climate change. The Council has received a significant volume of representations during the course of the consultation. The content of these representations has been collated in the attached appendix to this response and the Council would ask that these comments are given due consideration.

Delivering benefit to the wider area: Whilst the area around Cambourne and other existing and planned stations will benefit from the proximity of a new railway station, it will be vital to consider how other nearby communities in Greater Cambridge will be able to access the new train services. Improved connectivity for the rural villages along the route should be a priority.

We ask that East West Rail puts in place measures for working in partnership with local transport authorities, to consider how public transport and cycle connections to existing and planned stations will be improved, and also to consider the potential to subsidise use by local communities. The Cambourne to Cambridge scheme being developed by the Greater Cambridge Partnership has the potential to complement a rail scheme, by helping people to access rail services. This will help ensure that a range of communities can have easy and affordable access to rail services without relying on private cars to access them. This will help to widen the benefit of the railway to a much wider community, and also potentially help to get freight off the roads and onto rail.

Maximise opportunities for infrastructure connections: The project presents an opportunity to explore opportunities for infrastructure that could share the corridor (e.g. digital infrastructure or potable water pipelines). We ask that such opportunities are fully explored, including engagement with Water Resources East to consider the delivery of strategic water infrastructure that could help deliver sustainable water supplies and opportunities to reduce extraction from the chalk aquifer.

3. Relationship with future growth

Proposed new railway station at Cambourne: We note from the consultation material that a station location at Cambourne has been influenced by an assessment of potential future development opportunities, and there is an emerging preferred option for a station north of Cambourne.

Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are at an early stage in their statutory plan making process towards a Greater Cambridge Local Plan, which will consider the level of development that should be planned for to 2041, and where it should be planned for.

On page 220 of the main consultation document, it is stated that, 'a site in this area is already identified in the emerging Greater Cambridge Local Plan'. It should be clarified that no decisions have been made regarding which sites are to be included in the Greater Cambridge Local Plan at this point. This is most likely a reference to the published material relating to the testing of strategic options, published on the [Greater Cambridge Shared Planning website](#) in November 2020. Preferred options for the local plan will be subject to consultation later in 2021.

The development potential of areas in proximity to a station location to the north or south of Cambourne would require full review. It is likely that development immediately south of Cambourne at the station location identified would be very challenging, given the nature of the landscape and the location relative to existing villages, but this is an initial view given the lack of information on the scale and nature of development provided by the consultation.

Development to the north would also be challenging, particularly in respect of addressing potential landscape impacts. Linkages to the existing settlement would also be crucial to consider. This will be particularly key to encouraging non-car access to the station. Whilst the area around Cambourne will benefit from the proximity of a new railway station, it will be important to consider how other nearby communities will be able to access the station.

The general lack of information on plans for additional development despite reference to this work in the consultation has prompted questions from our community about the basis for route choices – and a request for more detail on the overall impact of each route option, with its associated growth. Clarification on the growth assumptions associated with each of the route options would therefore be helpful in future consultations that considering route options.

Proposed new train stabling at Cambourne: We note that the project will involve the relocation of sidings at Cambridge station, and that the preferred location for stabling EWR trains in the general Cambourne area. There is no detail on this proposal in the consultation. The siting of this would require detailed consideration, with regard to potential impacts on local communities and the environment, and should be taken into account prior to determination of a final route option alongside other operational requirements. Its location could also have implications for future development, and connections to Cambourne. The East West Rail scheme should also consider the wider the need for sidings in the Greater Cambridge area and make appropriate provision.

Impact on current planned development – Bourn Airfield: The assessment in the consultation document does not provide sufficient details regarding the implications for planned developments, in particular in relation to the impact of the preferred route upon the delivery of a new village on Bourn Airfield. This development is identified in the adopted South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2018 for approximately 3500 dwellings, employment and other supporting facilities. In February 2021, the Council's Planning Committee resolved to grant outline planning permission, subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement.

The preferred route will impact on the entrance to the Bourn Airfield New Village site, by virtue of a viaduct which is indicated as crossing the north-eastern part of the site and continuing into an embankment. This could give rise to significant issues with regard to site access and implications for the delivery of the site. The Council requests that further information be provided regarding how the options have taken this into account, the measures proposed to maintain access and mitigate the impact on the planned development and current and future residents. As well as the impact from demolition of existing properties, the impact on delivering committed growth on this site and others on the alignments should also be acknowledged and properly weighed up in the decision making process. This is particularly important given the consideration of housing delivery objectives for the scheme set out in paragraph 9.8.10 of the consultation document.

Local infrastructure projects: The preferred route needs to consider the impact of local infrastructure projects, (including the Cambourne to Cambridge Busway scheme which passes through the area of the proposed viaduct at Bourn Airfield and the A428 project), and the linkages to such transport infrastructure.

Proposed Cambridge South Station: We note that the southern access option places weight on the importance of directly servicing the proposed Cambridge south station. This project is a separate project to East West Rail. There is a critical need for all partners to remain focused on the delivery of this station project, to support more sustainable commuting to this location, including making the most of the opportunity provided by East West Rail.

4. Responding to Climate Change

Climate Change Targets: Whilst the consultation material makes a number of high level commitments to reducing the climate impacts of the scheme, on the whole it is considered that the proposals are currently lacking in clear and measurable targets related to climate change and carbon reduction, and there are a number of inconsistencies throughout the consultation materials.

The Government has just accepted the Committee on Climate Change's recommendations for the Sixth Carbon budget, which sets an extremely ambitious carbon reduction target for a 78% reduction in emissions by 2035 in order for the UK to be on target to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This new target will become enshrined in law by the end of June 2021. It will be vital that the proposals that come forward for East West Rail are in line with this carbon budget, including the assessment of the significance of effects as part of the EIA process.

Electrification of the Rail Network: The consultation documents make a number of high level commitments including that the scheme will 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. Paragraph 3.9.2 of the technical document goes on to state that 'the use of diesel-powered trains is not a project objective'. This appears to be incompatible with the Programme Wide Output Specification (PWOS) contained within the appendices to the

technical document, which states (at Section 5.1.9.1) that ‘the railway shall not at this point in time be electrified’.

In making their recommendations to Government on the Sixth Carbon Budget, the Committee on Climate Change included recommendations that continued electrification of the rail network, together with hydrogen, battery-electric and hybrid trains, will play a significant role in meeting the sixth carbon budget. To meet the ambition set out in the Committee’s carbon reduction scenarios, rail will need to be decarbonised further, with gradual electrification up to 55-60% of the network by 2050. Their recommendation was that ‘Government should set out a clear vision to deliver Net Zero in rail and support Network Rail in delivering the target to remove all diesel trains by 2040. This is expected to cover a mix of zero emission technologies (e.g. battery-electric, hydrogen and track electrification). The strategy should be published by 2021 as recommended by the National Infrastructure Commission’. The Council considers it imperative that the proposals for East West Rail are compatible with this recommendation.

The sixth carbon budget cannot be met unless all new railway infrastructure is electrified at the point of construction. The statement in Section 5.9.13 of the PWOS that ‘all new or renewed infrastructure shall be made compatible with positive passive provision of future electrification’ is not considered to go far enough to meet this commitment.

We are also disappointed that the scheme does not make a clear target to rule out diesel powered EWR services or freight services and recommend that the PWOS be updated to commit to electrification from the outset. To fail to do so would not be compatible with the UK’s legally binding carbon reduction commitments and could open up the project to legal challenge on climate change grounds.

Wider Environmental Sustainability Targets: With regards to wider approaches to environmental sustainability, while the aspirations set out in Section 5.30 of the PWOS are broadly welcomed, they are lacking in detail and specific measurable targets for areas such as materials, waste and carbon. These aspirations also do not cover wider elements associated with EWR such as construction standards for new station buildings or elements such as electric vehicle charging provision at stations.

Whilst it is recognised that these are very detailed elements, it is considered that the inclusion of firm commitments at this stage is necessary to give the public and local authorities confidence that the proposals can deliver a ‘net zero carbon railway’. Carbon emissions associated with the construction of the line, and embodied carbon in particular, are likely to be significant, but it is not clear from the information the extent to which this has been included in the assessment factors used to analyse the various route options presented throughout the consultation material. Climate is included as an assessment factor, but there is no detail of what is considered within climate. Further detail is therefore sought.

5. Other Points

Operational Hours of the Railway/Movement of Freight: We support the approach that route priority is given to commuter traffic and recognise the importance of the role of freight in moving goods efficiently and reducing carbon emissions associated with road-based travel. However, little information has been provided about expected freight traffic, including means of traction (or the additional infrastructure required to provide freight connectivity), and the operational hours of the railway are not apparent from the consultation documents. Concern is raised that the route may lead to the use of freight paths during the night, which could give rise to noise and disturbance to local communities. Further information and clarification is required in respect of these elements.

Related to this point, although the eastern section of East West Rail beyond Cambridge is to be considered as part of a separate project, the impact the current scheme could have on the existing infrastructure and its nearby communities needs to be considered. In particular, our communities will be concerned about the likely knock on effects of increased railway traffic in areas such as Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn where the line is currently single track in nature and heavily constrained by a number of level crossings and public rights of way.

Stephen Kelly
Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development

Appendix to Response by South Cambridgeshire District Council

EWR Local Residents Comments Submitted to South Cambridgeshire District Council (names and addresses redacted)

Firstly, from my understanding of the consultation process it would appear that an assessment of the northern approach has not been subjected to the same detail as the southern one, which leads me to believe that the southern route has been a 'done deal' from day one!

Surely when undertaking an evaluation of various routes, the identical criteria must be used and therefore in no particular order matters such as:

- the number of communities impacted, by way of existing route closures be they roads, paths, bridleways,
- the physical lie of the land issues are considered, impact on agricultural food producing areas
- all environmental archaeological and historical concerns are evaluated, e.g. water courses, mature woodland, flood plains, etc
- the engineering aspect of providing a railway with the least visual and audible impact on the locality is assessed,
- the financial cost, albeit this cannot simply be a 'cheapest is best' policy as all considerations must be accounted for which cannot solely be measured in pounds, shillings and pence.
- suitability of routing the railway within existing transport corridors, incorporating best practice from around the world; mention has been made of siting the rail in low level trenches rather than high up on embankments,
- new stations in appropriate locations, e.g. Northstowe, being planned as a rather large new town

As a local South Cambridgeshire resident, the thought of this project and the negative impact it will have on my family's daily life does not bear thinking about. Existing routes closed, increased traffic on alternative roads, the increase in noise from freight trains, (rather conveniently this aspect has been played down by EWR when truthfully this is the main reason for establishing this route especially as there appears little appetite for anyone to travel between Oxford and Cambridge) , and a probable devaluation of our property due to the closeness of the actual route and increased noise especially at night!

I hope that a re-evaluation of the northern route can be completed, and upfront results published locally without any bias.

EAST WEST RAIL PROPOSALS FOR A RAILWAY LINE FROM OXFORD TO CAMBRIDGE

INTRODUCTION

I wish to make representations in the strongest terms to ensure that EastWestRail (EWR) formally carries out a full assessment and public consultation of the northern approach into Cambridge from the west. I am extremely concerned that this, northern approach, has not been given sufficient traction and appears to have been dismissed in favour of the southern approaches which, in the words of the EWR spokespersons, are cheaper and therefore better value for money. Cheaper does not always mean better – in reality, cheaper, invariably means worse and this is certainly my understanding of the proposals currently being favoured by EWR.

It also seems to me to be a restrictive practice for EWR to offer the public 5 options and then ask us to choose our favourite of those five when none is our preferred route. My own knowledge of the law (and I am frequently asked to be an expert witness in the courts system) is that such a request is 'ultra vires' – against the law – and this non-offering of the 'best' option (the 'best' option will be explained later) is, in my opinion, an affront to natural justice.

It has been impressed on the public, ad nauseam, that there has been full consultation in all of this. It appears to me that the only consultation that has been to observe the five options and make a choice. This is not consultation. You can ask a child to choose between cabbage, swede or cauliflower when the child would prefer an ice cream. The southern routes into Cambridge are like being offered 'vegetables' when the best and sweetest route is 'a 99'.

The other extremely disappointing issue with this particular consultation exercise is that of the numerous questions being asked of the public, only one gets to the nub of the issue ie Question 1 – whether we support EWR's decision not to include the northern approach? The remaining plethora of questions asked relate to customer experience or the pros and cons of other routes –but nothing about serious consultation – as an exercise, I consider it woeful in the extreme.

SOUTHERN APPROACHES – EXTREMELY BAD FOR TEN VILLAGES AND WILDLIFE

The southern approaches will be very closely proximate to Caldecote Highfields, Hardwick, Toft, Comberton, Little Eversden, Harlton, Haslingfield, Hauxton, Harston and Little Shelford. However, not only will it destroy village life as we know it the elevated line will have a massive visual impact, be noisy and lead to the destruction of farmland. These will be diesel trains and carry enormous freight traffic through virgin countryside.

Drawings constructed from the plans and elevations extracted from the rather sketchy data published, demonstrate that an up to 10 metre (30 feet) tall embankment would run for 9.9 miles from the A428 bridge near Caldecote Highfields to the grade-separated junction at Hauxton.

Aside from the monumental visual impact and the noise, this embankment will, undoubtedly, split communities that have stood for a thousand years. It is likely to disrupt local travel patterns for schoolchildren and adults, destroy precious farmland and cause the protected Wimpole barbastelle bats to move away. As a valuation surveyor, and having been a chartered surveyor for 40 years (and having dealt with compensation claims for both the public and private sectors for all of that time), I am of opinion that the loss in local property values is already very substantial and EWR's proposed 'blight' policy is hopelessly inadequate and will not be anywhere near adequate in terms of compensation.

Any of the southern approaches will dramatically, permanently and deleteriously affect wildlife, ancient woodland (Hardwick Wood being an SSSI) and rights of way which have been in existence for over a thousand years.

NORTHERN APPROACH IS MUCH MORE SENSIBLE

Whilst it is understood that the crossing of the A14 may be more expensive than the southern routes, the economic advantages of the northern route cannot be understated.

Economically, particularly in the longer term, the northern route will connect with Northstowe (soon to be around 25,000 population (10,000 homes)), be much closer to the science park and business park areas on the northern edge of Cambridge and will serve the new developments at Waterbeach and Cambridge North East. The future economy of the Cambridge sub-region will be vastly better served with the northern route being chosen over the option of devastating the 10 southern villages for an 'easy' life for EWR engineers who have subtly and calculatedly dismissed the northern route.

Two villages will be marginally disrupted, (as opposed to ten in the southern approaches option) if the northern route is chosen.

The northern route is supported by the Woodland Trust, BCN Wildlife Trust and CPRE.

CONCLUSION

I wholeheartedly reject any of the southern routes for the reasons set out above. They may be cheaper but economically nonsensical, given the huge advantages if the northern route is adopted.

I urge you to ensure that the northern route is given a full and unequivocal assessment with proper consultation.

I have been invited to comment on the proposals to build a railway from Oxford to Cambridge.

The EWR questionnaire assumes a fait accompli and gives no opportunity to object to the whole project - hence this email. There are several good reasons for such objections:

1) Need - The existing bus service between Oxford and Cambridge is so under-used that it has had to be reduced. What evidence is there that having a train service will encourage people to travel ? There is already a good road route between Oxford and Cambridge which, when improved by the dualling of the A428 between St Neots and Caxton, will afford a journey time 15 minutes shorter than rail. The idea that people living along the route will prefer to use an expensive and unreliable rail service is fanciful.

2) Cost - Why are substantial sums being spent on such a speculative project when other parts of the Public Sector (Police and NHS) claim to be starved of funds ?

3) - Environment - The area West of Cambridge is already suffering from extensive over development for which there is no justification other than plentiful flat agricultural land which can easily be turned into housing estates. No thought appears to have been given to the strain on natural resources, eg. water, if significant housing development accompanies the railway. Furthermore, the proposed diesel locomotives will cause noise and air pollution. This appears to be completely at odds with the Government's zero carbon targets and its outlawing of diesel cars on the roads.

4) Political - Why is the Government fixated on building expensive useless railways (e.g. HS2) which no one wants and no one will use? If the Government wants to build a railway to buy some votes, build one in the North where it might possibly benefit the Red Wall constituencies.

There is considerable local opposition to this vanity project which is likely to (and in my case certainly will) erode support for the Conservative Party

As a resident of a South Cambridgeshire village I am writing to highlight the devastating effects the proposed East West Rail southern approach to Cambridge will have on villages along its route and to object to the way the consultation has been framed and conducted.

Firstly, some of the consequences a proposed new railway line will have for the villages and the environment along its route include:

- Threatened closure of two level crossings that provide vital connections between village communities.
- Some villages, including my own, are likely to become dead ends, compromising access for emergency vehicles and school busses.
- Long elevated sections of track to enable the line to cross of the A10, A603, other minor roads and the River Cam, which will enhance noise propagation, have broad footprints, permanently scar greenbelt areas, and impact ecological connectivity.
- Damaged air quality for numerous residential properties from running diesel locomotives close to them.
- Potential impacts on numerous County Wildlife Sites and Sites of Special Scientific Interest that the Wildlife Trusts for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire have highlighted along the route. See <https://www.wildlifebcn.org/news/east-west-rail-need-change-track> for further details.

As far as I can see there are no mitigating benefits for residents of villages along the route. There are no plans for new stations to be built along the proposed southern approach to Cambridge, so to use the new railway residents would either have to make their way into Cambridge (often difficult due to traffic congestion) or get to Cambourne, 18 km to the west of Cambridge. It seems that negative impacts on the quality of life of people living close to the proposed route are being treated as necessary collateral damage in order to enable the perceived benefits of the new rail line.

So what will the benefits be?

The title of the East West Rail consultation document is “making meaningful connections”, which seems highly ironic considering the effect of the planned southern approach to Cambridge is likely to sever longstanding connections between village communities.

On the project overview page on the East West Rail website the headline aim is stated to be “to deliver much-needed transport connections for communities between Oxford and Cambridge”. So the claimed justification is the demand for passenger journeys between Oxford and Cambridge and points in between. However, are such connections really “much needed”?

A Conditional Outputs Statement commissioned for the East West Rail Eastern Section in 2017 to assess the project’s strategic objectives and help frame its business case concluded that short distance trips will remain “subject to the highest demand” even after the railway is completed

(<https://www.eastwestrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/EWR-ES-Final-COS-v1.4-3.pdf>). This begs the question of whether rail, rather than improved bus services, is really the best solution, and whether the huge investment of public funds is justified. In particular, there needs to be a reassessment of whether or not the business case still stands up in a post-covid world, in which there will be increased working from home and less commuting. As a taxpayer I fear that my money is being wasted on a hugely expensive project that serves no effective purpose.

I have further objections to the way the consultation on the southern approach to Cambridge has been framed and conducted:

- No alternative routes are being considered, so we are being presented with a fait accompli.
- The glossy Consultation Summary document (<https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/Summary-Document.pdf>) that has been delivered to residents of villages along the route is a disgraceful piece of spin. It includes numerous photographs but not a single one showing a train, and the words “freight” and “electrification” – two key issues – are not even mentioned.
- As an environmental scientist I find the lack of a commitment to electrification from the outset utterly baffling when the government is committed to Net Zero emissions by 2050 and wishes to set an example to the world when hosting COP26 later this year.
- The maps in the Consultation Summary document are very low on detail and show the proposed route alignment and potential small alignment variations as fuzzy corridors in different colours. Questions about exactly what is envisaged at any particular road crossing or rail junction are invariably met with a response that no answer can be provided at this stage because the detailed design work has not yet been done, which raises questions about what basis cost estimates have been made on.
- There are no visualisations of what different sections of the track will look like from nearby villages. Concerned local residents have created their own visualisations based on elevation sections available in technical reports, which show the true horror of the huge embankments and overpasses that will scar the landscape. East West Rail representatives claim that these are unrealistic but do not provide any alternative visualisations.
- East West Rail representatives also refute suggestions that elevated sections of track will be as long as clearly shown on their own diagrams. We suspect that they are being disingenuous by counting each elevated section either side of a bridge as a separate section of elevated track.
- The design and structure of the online consultation form is awful, and seems designed to deter people from responding. Respondents are confronted with more than 40 separate questions, many of which ask their views on aspects of distant sectors of the line that are likely to be of no interest to them. A well designed online form would ask respondents which sectors they are interested in and then present them with just the relevant questions.

The justifications for not considering a northern approach to Cambridge do not stand up to even superficial scrutiny, for example:

- It is claimed that building a line across flood plains north of Cambridge would be prohibitively expensive, yet on the other side of the North Sea Dutch engineers seem to be able to do this routinely.
- It is claimed that a northern approach would be more expensive, but enquiries reveal that the provisional cost estimate includes a large provision for bridging across a sporting lake for which previous planning applications have been rejected and no application is currently active. In any case a new rail line is a century-scale investment, so long term value and efficiency should be given greater weight than short term financial savings.
- The benefits of providing the large new development at Northstowe with rail links to Cambridge and Cambourne are dismissed by saying Northstowe will be served by the guided busway. However, the busway goes to St Ives and Huntingdon, not to Cambourne, Bedford and Milton Keynes.
- Although East West Rail don't like to talk about freight, a freight route to the Midlands from Harwich and Felixstowe is clearly an important driver of the project. Given that the main line from the east coast runs to Ely, to the north of Cambridge, surely for freight journeys it makes sense to connect the line from Bedford and Cambourne to this rather than route freight through central Cambridge unnecessarily?

Finally, I highlight some specific impacts the proposed southern approach will have on my own village Hauxton: the population of the village has doubled in recent years with the addition of approximately 300 households on a former industrial site, yet the village still has very few amenities.

- The level crossing on the road from Hauxton into Little Shelford provides a vital connection to Little and Great Shelford for Hauxton residents, with many registered at the doctors' surgery in Great Shelford and also depending on the dental surgery and local shop there.
- If this level crossing is closed, which will clearly be the cheapest and simplest option for East West Rail, the shortest alternative route from the centre of Hauxton to Little Shelford is an additional 2.8 km, or 5.6 km for a return journey.
- An additional consequence of closure of the level crossing will be that this will make the village a dead end, with only a single road in and out. With the lack of any suitable turning place, this will probably mean that school busses will no longer serve the village to take secondary school children to Melbourn Village College and Sawston Village College. Furthermore, any incident on the road into the village could block access for emergency vehicles.

Regarding the proposal to 'reduce costs' by choosing the 'southern route' into Cambridge -

I consider this a very bad choice for the following reasons-

- * The line will be for noisy polluting diesel trains and EWR has not ruled out freight trains running through the night.

This will have a drastically bad effect on our quality of life - sleep will be disrupted.

At present the residents along the proposed the 'southern route' suffer from no noise pollution.

At night we can sleep with our windows open - and the silence is 'priceless'.

Medical studies conclude that disrupted sleep leads to reduced physical and mental health and shorter lives.

* the proposed the 'southern route' will pass by eleven villages whereas a northern approach will pass close to only two villages.

* the railway will be noisy and polluting so it must be constrained to the existing travel corridor to the north of Cambridge rather than destroying the peace and tranquility of these eleven villages - regardless of greater engineering challenges.

* EWR cost calculation does not include the loss in value of all the homes in those eleven villages.

That cost would be paid by the victims.

* Building a line for diesel trains is unthinkable given the present climate crisis.

* Particulates from the diesel engines will hang in the air when it's not windy - permanently damaging the health of residents nearby.

In conclusion -

The southern approach favored by East West Rail must be reconsidered.

A rail project is a long term investment and must add value to the nation and the regions it traverses.

A northern approach following the existing travel corridor may be costlier but it will add value whereas the southern approach would damage our pristine countryside.

I am a resident of Hauxton village. I am a father and I work locally in the centre of Cambridge. My personal community includes the nearby areas of Harston, the Shelfords and Sawston as these are where my friends and family live and where I access local services such as shops, restaurants, parks, medical centre, dentist, repair garage and Rail. To access these I cycle, as the distance is short and safe.

I am extremely concerned about the EWR plans that propose to put a physical barrier through my home and separate me from all those things that are important to me. The permanent road closure at Hauxton level crossing will result in myself and many other people having to resort to using their cars to access shops and services, family and friends that are currently just minutes away, with the result of increasing car pollution and congestion.

I am extremely concerned that a project “created by the Government to plan a railway with customers and communities at it’s core” and that is “passionate about...serving people living and working between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge” is so blind to the wanton damage and destruction to the communities that it is claiming is so important to them. These communities that have to leave their homes due to compulsory purchase, that are cut off from easy, quick and safe access to local community services, that are cut off from their friends and families and have to put up with the noise and pollution created by the project, not just by the construction of said project but also in its running.

I am extremely concerned that by commissioning the EWR project the Government have lost sight of their commitment to improve the environment and reduce air pollution. A commitment that has recently seen the introduction of new rules about the type of fuel wood burning stoves and coal fires can use. A commitment that has resulted in a ban on fossil fuel vehicles from 2030 onwards.

I am extremely concerned that the new rail link is intended to take up to 50 Diesel freight trains every night. Diesel combustion exhaust is a source of atmospheric soot and fine particles, which is a component of the air pollution implicated in human cancer, heart and lung damage, and mental functioning. Do you really expect local communities to think that this is okay? It is a contradiction to the Government’s environmental policy and commitments.

I question whether the rail route is really needed at all. My Sister lives in Oxford and my parents live in the Midlands. I have no difficulty travelling to see them and would not use a train to do so in any case. Times are changing and so are peoples attitudes to working and travel; many people who used to commute between these towns are either working from home now or considering moving to be closer to their place of work and improve their quality of life.

Considering the widespread disruption and destruction across the entire route caused to all the communities in its path, I am convinced the benefits are massively outweighed by the detrimental social, and environmental impact of the project.

I would ask you to consider a different approach that doesn’t affect so many people’s lives but in fact, I would urge you to reconsider doing anything at all. Nobody actually wants this besides the people who stand to make lots of money out of it.

I address my concerns over the Route E option and in particular the current position with regards to the southern route from Cambourne - Harston - Cambridge. How can we trust an organisation that is politically driven: facts are concealed and undue bias has been used? The EWR group are not specialists in strategic travel design and the consultation documents are poor, vague and suggest that they are driven by political measures to hide the fact that the London Mayor does not want to see plans for additional freight passing through London. The figures presented by EWR do not represent value for money and by DfT's own VfM assessments framework are low. It is particularly disturbing that a decision has been made about the southern route and yet this is 40% longer than the northern route: how can the costs of such a construction be cheaper and more VfM with this additional length of track? EWR have ignored requests for the northern route to be considered in parity within Option E. The consultation document reveals that a 16km stretch from Caldecote to Harston will be elevated in some place 10-12m above ground level – this is the same as a 10 mile long, 5 storey block of flats – or the same as 1540 London buses stacked 2 high: it is no wonder we are calling it the 'Great Wall of Cambridge'. The EWR staff hide behind bland statements that they do not understand and apply liberally: e.g., how can a massive construction as this be carbon-neutral? There will be 10,000s of lorries on the local roads and construction plant churning out tonnes of carbon. Roads will become choked and seize around Cambridge and its towns. Rumours abound that a deal has been made with Astra-Zeneca to construct a passenger connection whereas the reality of living, post-Covid, is that there will be a higher percentage of home-workers: no assessment of this has been made. Plus, has anyone checked how many people actually travel to Bedford and Oxford from Cambridge: the majority of travel via Cambridge is north-south. Plus, why have we just spent billions on improving east west links for freight by expanding the A14?

There needs to be a detailed review of the EWRs assessment of the southern vs northern approach. The selection criteria have been biased and there has been no analysis of other potential benefits of trench railway technology as used by CBBR. The latter has been ignored by EWR. The EWR document 'Making Meaningful Connections' list pages of benefits for the selection of Option E – but singularly ignores the analysis leading up to the selection of the southern route and hence the conclusions are misleading and wrong: EWR have been untruthful, duplicitous and dishonest. The rejection of a northern route hinges on unjustified and incorrect assumptions that 4-tracking to the north is necessary. If so, the southern approach will also require 4-tracking to connect all the major employment sites around Cambridge North. How can we trust EWR when there has been a deliberate attempt to hide the facts? Simon Blanchflower, the EWR CEO, has himself been on record saying that he would 'not want this in his own village': he should be removed with effect – he clearly is a puppet being played to impose EWR's wishes upon the residents of 10 country villages: he has led a group of people that have misled the public. Other aspects have not been addressed: where are the links with local transport plans east of Cambridge? The Southern route does not serve the 10,000 homes in Northstowe where there is to be no rail connection: why build a new town without a rail connection when the residents will be forced to use their cars? It is believed that 70% of these residents will work in Cambridge – and so where will they park their cars? Again, where has the logic gone?

Where is the strategic design of transportation of all national and local requirements in and around Cambridge been considered? Has anyone in EWR actually stood back and looked at the reality of the transport needs for the local communities to Cambridge or has EWR just said: 'we need to prove that we can get people moving faster between Oxford and Cambridge to meet the 'Mission Statement': yet mission analysis requires an objective review of all factors – not partial selection of factors to suit a political gain. Similarly, the consultations so far are not consultations: the EWR team cherry-pick their way through questions that are easy for them to answer – consultation by its very definition is a two-way meeting which is held to discuss something. It is not: ask a question and then allow the recipient to select the question to choose from! Hence the process of consultation to date has been flawed and hence meaningless and I am sure a Court Judge would declare it as not being defensible. Personally, I am fed up with the smiles and cheer of these staff that fail to realise the sensitivities of the proposals and fail to respond to questions of concern. Simon Blanchflower, himself admitted that he 'did not recognise the photos of the embankments' so drawn to represent the horror of the vertical construction & impact of these on the local people; it wasn't that he didn't recognise them, it was that he knew that if he and his team had presented such diagrams, he and his staff would have been forced to reveal their true concerns of these monsters of civil engineering construction about to land on the doorsteps of the villagers. The diagrams reminded me of a programme of the World's Greatest Railways where a street in Vietnam had to close to let the train through; are we going to see this on the southern route? Are we now degenerating to a 3rd world communist country where the views of its population are totally disregarded? The residents of Harston have constructed a mast showing the actual height of the junction at Harston (disingenuously called the Hauxton junction) which dwarfs the village: could I recommend that the EWR team visit to see how ludicrous their proposals are?

More details of the environment and community impacts need to be included. Of note, is what appears, to be a deliberate lack of communication of the visual impacts and scars upon the country and villages. For example, in Haslingfield, the proposed track will be above the level of the church tower, and fumes from the (daily) 50 freight trains (less than 100 yards away) will roll down the hillside onto the school: the children will be continually exposed to toxic fumes and all parents and staff will have every right to sue the government. Since 2013, the rate of asthma deaths has increased 17%, from 2.15 to 2.5 per 100,000 people. In 2018, 20 children aged under 14 died from asthma in 2018, up from 17 in 2017 and 13 the year before. This data was analysed by Asthma UK from ONS figures. The death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah from London as a result of an asthma attack has been linked to levels of pollutants. Residents will also have every right to sue the government. The Haslingfield rail cutting will be higher than the 1400 homes; in addition to the fumes there will be a persistent noise in our homes.

In sum, I wish to bring to your attention the need to objectively review the northern route within Option E. A Judicial Review is necessary to assess the full facts and take into consideration the views of the people that could be impacted in the southern corridor. The current proposal has been based upon insincere and duplicitous behaviours. I request your support in making my concerns known.

Regarding the East-West Rail proposals, I have three important comments:

- 1) A Northern approach to Cambridge should be thoroughly re-assessed in the light of recent decisions to build thousands of houses to the Northwest of Cambridge, in Northstowe, Oakington etc. Such an approach could efficiently serve the growing population in that area, could follow the existing A428 traffic corridor. This would avoid building invasive embankments across the vital green belt countryside to the southwest of Cambridge.
- 2) Whichever route is chosen, it is vital to preserve the footpaths, bridleways and small country lanes that together have provided a life-saving network for walking access into the countryside, without which the mental health effects of Covid lockdown would have been much worse. Indeed the new railway should be constructed with footways either side so as to open up new circular walking routes.
- 3) Building a diesel railway now is insane given the threats of climate change. It must be electric from the start.

We are both amazed and disturbed to see this project being considered.

We urge you to stand against such development and even if it is considered then there are some key issues that must be changed such as.

- 1) Trains running on diesel? Must be electric, we are in the wrong century for diesel development.
- 2) Station Road Harston. Closing this road will affect in a very negative way the whole area. EG. Getting children from the Newton area to school is a key issue. If there is going to be a new railtrack over Station Rd then this road must stay open after the development.

There are many areas we can comment on the key one is that we are against the whole project in the South and look forward to seeing the route changed to the original plan for the north of Cambridge

I am writing you with regard to East West Rail's proposed route into South Cambridge. There are no advantages to this route over a route into North Cambridge Station, which EWR do not seem to be prepared to even consider. The southern approach, with much of the route high above ground level, would cause untold damage to one of the most picturesque areas of Cambridgeshire, and benefit no one on its way. It would pass very close to Comberton Village College, where the diesel fumes would threaten the health of many hundreds of pupils. It would sever ancient footpaths and conservation areas and require many residents to cross the railway to access local doctors, libraries, primary and secondary schools.

Whereas, the Northern route would greatly benefit the huge populations of Northstowe and Oakington as well as the proposed developments at Waterbeach and Cambridge North East. EWR argue that the route would have to cross flood plains and go over the A14 – this can all be addressed by running the trains in troughs, as in Holland and many other countries. Running trains below ground level would require much less land and result in considerably reduced pollution and noise levels. It would go under the A14 and cross the flood plains with ease, with much reduced environmental impact.

The other big question is how can a new diesel railway even be considered when they are supposedly being phased out by 2040? Indeed, I have read that in October 2019 you told MPs that you were 'hugely concerned' that the current policy meant diesel trains would continue to operate until 2040 and that you were very interested in their earlier extinction! Why then would you consider allowing a new diesel line to open in 2030?

However, if this railway is still considered necessary and as we are a democratic country, the Northern route must be properly considered with a full, fair and open consultation.

We are writing to you as long time residents of Haslingfield. We have been horrified with the threat of the proposed rail project in particular the plans for a Southern approach into Cambridge.

It is always difficult to object purely on the basis of it being close to one's village. However having read a vast amount of information provided by very knowledgeable people the Northern approach engineered in a low lying system does out way the case for the Southern approach.

EWR also gives very little if no consideration to the effect the Southern approach will have on the local environment, also the potential division of communities caused by the proposed construction.

Finally there would appear to be no benefit to the ten villages affected by the Southern approach.

I have just completed the East west rail survey and below are my observation and concerns about both the consultation and the proposed new rail line.

Despite the 'consultation's' revised first paragraph and 'nod' to the Northern approach, question 38 onwards ignore that option.

I cannot see how any southern approach is either a rational economic or environmental solution for the east west rail compared to a northern approach. A northern approach would link the proposed expansion of housing in the area to the 'world leading' Science Park area of north Cambridge.

I support a fair consultation on the northern approach.

The Cambourne North, Northstowe/Waterbeach to Cambridge North would also be a logical commuter route and could relieve the already congested A14 and A428 approaches to Cambridge. Route Option E would be an environmental disaster, effectively cutting off rural west Cambridgeshire from our city. It would slice through our ancient woodland, mixed arable farmland, many footpaths, bridleways and ancient ways. Lot way in particular is of great historic importance. All of these would be affected badly by these southern routes.

As our South Cambridgeshire MP I would urge you to listen to your constituents and campaign against the proposed southern routes. The huge embankment of the proposed southern approaches routes through the Bourn Valley and the villages of Hardwick, Toft, Comberton, the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield to join the mainline near Stapleford would create an appalling eyesore and will effectively cut your constituency from our city.

The new lines also pass closely by the major secondary school in the area, Comberton Village College with its recent additional sixth form. The students would inevitably be breathing the air pollution and hearing the noise associated with main line passenger and freight traffic within a few metres of the playing fields and classrooms.

The extra rail traffic from the west into Cambridge would have a deleterious effect on the already precious area of green belt if it approaches the city from the south.

Finally, I can't find out if the line would be electrified or not, so I can only assume that polluting heavy freight diesel trains will be used. This demonstrates to me that the east west line planners/engineers are wilfully ignoring the major concern of our times, global warming.

Please use your influence to gain a fair consultation for the northern approach.

As a scientist (and one-time strategy consultant) I've taken an interest in EWR's potential routes into Cambridge

EWR Co's decision to select a 'southern' approach is based in large part on the extensive loss of property and build costs of "4-tracking" through the north of Cambridge. Curiously, although they have gone to great lengths to illustrate the consequences, they have still not actually published any technical evidence to back up their claim that it's the only solution

I have studied this in considerable detail, and am quite convinced that two tracks are more than sufficient, within EWR Co's own technical requirements - with plenty of space left for freight and various other future services.

I would urge you to take a few minutes to look through the attached slide pack and poster. Unlike EWR Co, all of my logic is there to see, and I'd be happy to make any tweaks if anybody can find any faults with my logic.

I'd be happy to discuss in more detail should you be interested.

The EWR Bedford section on existing rail tracks was not properly consulted on by EWR as your coverage showed - throughout they demonstrate a "railway man knows best" attitude, talking down contrary local views, opinions and above all facts. Look East TV needs to probe more.

Facts are the EWR project is on drip feed cash from DfT so no overhead electrification and incomplete freight capable design. So diesel till battery powered passenger trains come in 20 years time.

On the new build track section towards Cambridge the child's book image of the Fat Controller of railway fits too well - lines drawn across big maps with no regard to immediate local public transport needs. "Railwayman know best"

The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport Plan is in the link**, its very high level and totally lacking detail or commitment - it needs much work. The new Mayor Nik Johnson has declared the Cambridge Metro is not to progress so the whole of Cambridge and surroundings urgently needs a transport plan with solid detail and dates. They need prodding into action. Get them on air and get answers from the Mayor.

** <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/what-we-deliver/transport/local-transport-plan/>

The news is the EWR southern approach route to Cambridge is the "railway man knows best" solution - irrespective of the needs of the Combined Authority local transport plan and elected Councils on going new town development reality west and north of Cambridge.

Government set big objectives for jobs and housing in the Oxford Cambridge arc long term and EWR is to facilitate this, not the road improvements recently cancelled by DfT.

So EWR are not listening in Bedford and facing legal challenge in the south Cambridge approach route from a very antagonized population and worse still refusing to talk with the Combined Authority in a meaningful way.

Why the EWR haste and deaf ears - "railway man knows best". They refuse to understand other people and public organisations have expertise.

<https://cambridgeapproaches.org/>

<http://www.cambedrailroad.org/>

EWR need to give the Combined Authority time to prepare a local transport plan.

Voters want local transport to serve them not some grandiose EWR dream featuring 2045, we want local transport for us soon. Like 2025 or 2030.

EWR can not dictate to elected Councils and Mayors. This is a democracy issue.

The consultation form online https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation-feedback/survey_tools/feedback is frequently crashing, so I have set out my concerns in this email.

Q1

Please provide evidence of your Strategic Environmental Assessment; without this your proposal looks to be unlawful because it will

- cause more air pollution for the households and businesses along the route
- cause environmental damage, including plant species, trees and protected animal species
- cause damage to waterways: eg rivers (Bourn Brook), water courses and vital chalk streams
- cause potential flooding to houses local to the structure as a result of tracks.

In addition to environmental concerns, this proposal

- adversely affects Harston School and the children and families entering and leaving school twice per day Monday - Friday
- adversely affects emergency services access / egress to key areas
- does not detail severance of farmland - how will fields be split?
- does not allow footpaths to continue to be used, and closes roads off causing further congestion on A10
- ignores the historical and archaeological importance of Chapel Hill (an ancient pilgrimage route)

You have added new information on the fact sheets inside the consultation period; this consultation should be extended.

Q38

All options on Q38 rejected as there is a lack of sufficient detail to be able to respond

Why have you asked about a Cambourne South station without giving information on the surrounding housing plan / infrastructure and transport connections?

You ask for my preference for the proposed Clapham Green to The Eversdens alignment options – there is not enough consultation information to respond here; please give more detail.

Q39

The location for Cambourne South Station depends on a) a housing plan and b) local transport connections – both of which you have not put forward. Please present these.

Q40

Track carrying freight should not pass through these villages. Track should be going under roads waterways and sites of historic interest. EWR must respect the Green Belt.

These plans are a direct threat to a separate project to assess the feasibility of reopening Harston Station on the Kings Cross line. This will mean years of disruption for Harston with no benefit to the area on completion.

Low CO2 concrete or lime-based technology must be used.

There should be no severing of roads and PROWS and agricultural crossings every 500km.

This proposal will split Newton and Harston into two distinct unreachable areas.

No freight trains should be coming past residential areas.

Noise levels could be higher than 45dBA which is unlawful.

Please provide evidence that there will be no impact to Wimpole's Special Area of Conservation (Bat Conservation Trust).

A grade-separated junction at Shepreth Junction will damage the Green Belt between the southern edge of Cambridge and the Shelfords.

This proposal violates the Green Belt.

Q41

EWR must maintain a road link between the two sides of Little Shelford on either side of the railway line to prevent severing the community.

A grade-separated junction would be intolerable for nearby residents and would damage the narrow and important section of Green Belt between the southern edge of Cambridge and The Shelfords. This is part of the Green Corridor leading into the centre of Cambridge which makes an important contribution to the city's character.

Please consider these points and I look forward to your response and further development of the proposal.

I would like my answers to the feedback form as shown below to be classed as my views to opposing the southern rail route for the Cambridge to St Neots corridor. I hope you will consider my views fully and act upon the comments accordingly.

Q 1. I hope this feed back from myself will prompt EWR into making a full and fair consultation on the northern routes in parity with their preferred "Option E area". The northern route has been presented in a biased manner and has not been fairly consulted on. EWR's consultation ending March 31 2021 contains a leading question and does not provide sufficient information to make a properly – informed decision on the advantages and disadvantages of northern and southern approaches, especially as some of the information EWR has provided in Appendix F is materially inaccurate or incomplete. I believe EWR should consider a northern approach fully and with an open mind and consult on it accordingly.

As a Caxton resident I fully oppose a southern position for the station in Cambourne as it will hem in the village of Caxton which it will not serve and make the village little more than a noisy shunting yard for passenger and freight carriages, with the associated intolerable air and noise pollution.

As a Caxton resident I fully support the northern approach to Cambourne and the position of a northern station there. This northern approach only passes through 2 villages, rather than 10 for the southern route, causes less damage to the environment according to The Wildlife Trust and provides needed transport links to the growing settlements of Northstowe and Waterbeach. If the northern route's path was within a deep trench and went under the A14 as has been suggested by some parties this would further reduce the environmental and residential impact.

The southern route is highly damaging to the areas it passes through and the residents it disturbs, being set high in the landscape on embankments and viaducts. This route is within a very rural area , with huge focus on habitats, protected plant and animal species and food production which the route will destroy. There will be substantial damage to waterways, our village is completely encircled by Bourn Brook, flowing in 2 directions so anything tampered with up/down stream will have a devastating effect here. As it is there is genuine worry that there will be flooding in houses in the area as a result of the track.

The southern proposal affects 10 villages, their schools, local businesses and impacts the households with no guarantee that local paths, bridleways and local roads can continue to be used.

Additional information has been added by EWR to the fact sheets inside the consultation period and they should now therefore extend the consultation period to 10 weeks from the date the most recent information was published.

Q39 I do not think there has been enough consultation information to respond by giving preferences and would reject all routes to a southern Cambourne station out of hand and reject any route that does not sensibly follow the A428 transport corridor.

This question is premature without a fair consultation on a northern approach.

Q40 The track should not pass through these villages. EWR must respect the green belt and set any track low in the landscape, use trenches, go under roads, brooks, rivers, and tunnel through Chapel Hill. Low CO2 concrete or lime based technology must be used. There should be no severing of roads and PROWs and agricultural crossings every 500m. It is imperative that Newton stays connected to Harston. EWR should also provide a King's Cross line station for Harston to their specification. No freight trains should be coming past residential areas. Guarantee noise levels lower than 45dBA or baseline levels, whichever is lower. I need demonstration there will be no impact to

Wimpole's Special Area of Conservation to the satisfaction of the Bat Conservation Trust.

Q41 EWR must maintain a road link between the two sides of Little Shelford on either side of the railway line to avoid severing the community. A grade-separated junction at Shepreth Junction would be intolerable for nearby residents and extremely damaging to the narrow and important section of Green Belt between the southern edge of Cambridge and the Shelfords. This includes Nine Wells, Hobson's Park, and the valuable green corridor leading from this part of the Green Belt into the centre of Cambridge which makes an important contribution to the character of the city.

Temporary closures to important roads eg Long road is likely to cause traffic chaos.

https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation-feedback/survey_tools/feedback

I am writing to you to make you aware that I strongly object to the EWR proposals for the route through South Cambridgeshire between Cambourne and Cambridge.

The proposal appears to be very poorly thought through. It will blight 10 villages with embankments and cuttings through very rural undulating countryside. Hardly the best place to build a railway line.

It is very difficult to think of any single benefit, financial or otherwise, that this project will bring to the affected villages of South Cambs as there are no additional transport links e.g. a station being brought to these villages.

Quite the opposite as a number of the villages will have direct road links severed to nearby villages and a number of households being faced with a railway line carrying freight passing within yards of their houses.

A more suitable option would be a northerly route with an additional station. This would have the potential to serve the growing populations of Northstowe and Waterbeach, possibly 20000 to 30000 in the next few years. Why not plan ahead for this now instead of looking back and saying..... "If only".

This route would only affect 2 villages and would be across very flat landscape with the potential to mask the visual impact of the line by setting it in shallow cuttings.

I hope someone will consider very seriously more suitable alternatives with much less impact on peoples way of life and not just go blindly ahead with the proposed route which has no benefit whatsoever to the people in these 10 villages.

I refer to the above publication and wish to comment, amongst other matters, on the proposed choice of route from Cambourne to Cambridge.

First an observation. There is no scale on any of the maps.

Proposed routes

There is no reference to a more northerly route from Cambourne to Cambridge taking in North Stowe. This development will have a considerable population and it has to be ascertained how they will travel daily into Cambridge. This could be rail, bus or personal transport. This will be the only benefit, after Cambourne, that can be credited to the rail scheme. In the case of the southerly route no stations are proposed and hence no benefit will accrue.

Costs

There appears to be no reference to the costs of any of the proposed routes. Whilst the routes are only preliminary it is still customary to provide a estimate of the cost. This should not be difficult to evaluate because the cost of ballast and track can be calculated on a unit length basis and this can be applied to the total length of track. The other big variable is earthworks costs and these can be worked up once ground levels have been determined. Other structures, such as bridges and level crossings will add to the cost but surely these will only form a small part of the total cost.

Benefits

It is appreciated that it is not easy to assign benefits to part of an overall scheme but an estimate will still be needed.

Analysis

Whilst it is early days and it may be too early to talk about cost-benefit analysis and internal rate of return. It is still necessary to provide a trustworthy assessment to which route between Cambourne and Cambridge gives the best return on the funds expended. To people living close to the proposed southern route, as outlined in the document, there is a negative benefit because of the disruption caused and nothing positive to promoting the route.

Electric Traction

It is proposed that trains will not be powered by electric traction. This would appear to be contrary to good practice since we are hoping to eliminate internal combustion engines for reasons that are well known. While using diesel engine-powered trains may be in line with the great British tradition of not doing a thorough job it is unacceptable. Using diesel power may initially save money but it will cost you dearly when you have to electrify the line. It is much easier, and safer, constructing overhead conductors on a new line compared to one

that has trains operating on it. Remember the problems they had electrifying the London to Bristol line.

Having submitted my response to the Feedback Form relating to the proposed East West rail route, I should like to highlight the following points:

Deception: Whilst many of the routes have been delineated with clarity and supporting maps, it is still not clear where the southern route will go to from Cambourne to Harlton. Whilst we are still living under Covid restrictions, we cannot meet to discuss, learn and protest, as appropriate. However, the first question on the feedback form asks people to vote on the decision **not** to include the northern route, which seems to have been discounted, following consultation; not complete consultation, however, as the vital information about the southern route is completely missing. This is deceitful. No decisions should be made until the whole route has been fully revealed and debated.

Destruction: The village I live in, Toft, has a reputation as a good community. If high railway embankments are to be built, it is difficult to see how we can remain as close as we are if the railway is allowed to cut us off from one another, as appears to be the case in Eversden. The white area on the map covers Toft completely, which suggests that this tiny village will be seriously affected one way or another. Cutting through fields which are in current agricultural use destroys the composition of the land and makes remaining bits of fields unviable for the farmers. Wildlife will be decimated if habitats are destroyed and trees will suffer as they did in the rebuilding of the A14. Ancient footpaths are still used in these villages and our rights of way need to be protected.

Disadvantage: We do not currently enjoy the luxury of a Sunday bus service and, at the best of times, we have only a one hourly service. Those who do not have cars will not be able to reach a station in Cambourne and the idea of paying a taxi to come from Cambridge to fetch us from Cambourne to Toft is ludicrous. So we could have all the disadvantages of intrusive and divisive railway embankments and the constant noise and vibration that accompanies a railway passing through but none of the advantages of being able to catch a local train to Cambridge.

Disappointment: I should have liked to use a train from Cambridge to Oxford and always regretted the loss of the old train line which my husband used as a student and which passed through Lordsbridge. It was therefore good news initially to hear that the line was to be re-instated. Obviously parts are no longer available because houses have been built on them but it was a normal, flat railway line, running through the countryside and not riding high on huge embankments.

I have filled in the feedback form re the proposed east west rail link. One odd feature of the form is that while there are a number of detailed questions about the route from Bedford to Cambourne and from Harlton to Cambridge, there is no information, and indeed neither is feedback sought, about the section from Cambourne to Harlton. Why this exclusion? People in several villages including Toft, where I live, can only guess where exactly the line will run. On the map issued for illumination the whole area is shrouded in a white mist. Local farmers are very distressed about the potential threat to their livelihood. There are a number of ancient footpaths in the area and their future too is apparently uncertain. There is also anxiety about a busy railway line with diesel emissions passing close to Comberton Village College, should that be the chosen route.

In general terms, although it seems to have been discarded, the case for a northern route into Cambridge seems much stronger. Crucially, it could serve Northstowe and enable easier access to the Science Park and other new developments in the north of the city and at Waterbeach. Without any local stations the southern route benefits no one in the villages affected by the proposals, does not reduce local traffic, and the prospect of a series of monstrous elevations does not charm.

I think further work is required here before hasty decisions are made.

I am very concerned about the proposed east west railway southern route, the direction it will take through South Cambridgeshire and the adverse effects it will have on the environment and the quality of life for residents.

The proposed EWR Southern route will seriously affect 10 villages with some houses only meters away from the railway it will run through prime arable land, a resource we need to guard for the future should we need to be more self sufficient as a country; through areas of natural beauty and habitats which are exclusive to this area and through the Countryside Restoration Trust land which has restored so much wildlife, flora and fauna, over many years; there are species of birds now thriving there which had been near extinction, also otters, water voles and field mice. There will be destruction of chalk streams and all the aquatic life they support which is increasing in the clear water, these streams are special to this area, and historical having brought the first drinking water into the City of Cambridge. It is proposed to cut through Chapel Hill, near Barrington, part of a chalk ridge and one of the few hills in this area, a site of ancient pilgrimage and an area of natural history within the chalk. There are badgers and their setts which are protected, that will be destroyed, displaced or die as they seek new homes. These special and unique places, once destroyed, can never be replaced, we all have a duty to preserve the environment, the countryside and wildlife. Do we want future generations to look at the destruction this railway will cause and ask why we did it? Will there be any green areas left in this part of South Cambridgeshire, because undoubtedly the railway will only attract more and more housing development along the route. Let us not destroy beyond recognition a beautiful area in the name of progress without considering all the alternatives of the Northern route which would be along an already established travel corridor with the A14 and A428 and encompassing Cambourne and Northstowe whose residents want a railway station and be mostly entrenched rather than 10 meters plus above ground as on the Southern approach.

I live in Comberton, a pretty, rural village, where I brought up my children and now have grandchildren living here. Villages close to Comberton will have viaducts and embankments to a height of 10 meters high by 50 meters base width, higher and wider than the Great Wall of China. There will be viaducts, hideous concrete and steel constructions, totally out of keeping with a rural area, and will no doubt attract the graffiti as seen on motorway and other large bridges. South Cambridgeshire is renowned for its big skies and open views, these views will be marred, even blocked out, by the embankments. Some villages will be dissected by the viaducts, splitting the residents and all the problems that may cause with access and support within the community. The embankment runs close to houses, in Eversden it will overshadow houses, eliminate views and be an eyesore in an otherwise beautiful part of the country. Residents will lose any outlook they had as well as have to live with the noise of numerous passenger trains daily and, as yet unknown, numbers of freight trains passing by day and night, with the subsequent pollution caused. There will also be destruction of the areas along the routes with lorries and equipment and building resources being transported in and the movement of large vehicles, as was evidenced in South Cambridgeshire with all the A14 construction. It will not be just 50 meters of the embankment width, but substantial damage to the land either side during construction. Not to mention the disruption on local roads of all the heavy equipment that will be moving for months and months to come, dust, noise and inconvenience.

In Comberton the rail line will run very close to the Village College and Sixth form centre, which is also a sports academy, apart from the time of building and all the disruption it will cause, the pollution and noise of the trains will be detrimental to the children and their education. Pollution from diesel trains could affect their health on the sports fields, and noise will disrupt the peace they need for study and exams. I am also concerned about the safety of those children who walk or cycle to school and how they will cross the line, by means of a dark underpass and all the problems and dangers that opens up, or by more bridges?

There are various public footpaths between the villages which will be affected by the railway, one in particular between Comberton and Eversden which is well used by students to the Village college, who would otherwise have to walk along the A603 to school, as there is no easy transport. This footpath will be cut through by the embankment. So many local footpaths have been well used during the past 15 months of Covid restrictions, bringing freedom to walk in the countryside, to appreciate long views and changing seasons essential to mental wellbeing and health. The footpaths between villages and in the countryside will be a sad loss to the area, and again are often historical routes and ancient ways. Has this been taken into consideration?

There is an alternative route to the north, proposed by think-tank CBRR, which only passes two villages and causes less damage to the environment, follows an already established transport corridor and CBRR propose that their line runs in a trench which will reduce the impact on the environment and on residents, it will also link the growing new towns of Cambourne and Northstowe, who are actually pushing for railway stations. EWR are ignoring requests that this Northern route be considered fully alongside the Southern route with a fair and full consultation being made. Why is this? Are there things that local people are not being told? Is this stage one of more large developments of houses to come? I understand that EWR is a government company and would ask why they are planning to vandalise such a beautiful area of countryside without regard to any alternative Northern route. To the 'company' it is just a line on a map, to those of us who chose to live in this area it is a destruction of what we came here for, if we had wanted railways we would have chosen to live in a town or city.

Another concern is the freight that will be carried on the route, a subject which is being kept very much low key. There are proposed to be freight trains, particularly at night which will make this a 24 hour a day problem for those who will be affected by the closeness and noise, as well as the pollution from diesel engines which, it has been said, are already purchased. The notion of electrifying the route may cut down on the noise, perhaps, but would result in still more meters of height above the rail on the embankments. In the consultation it would be good if trenching could be a consideration in the Southern route to alleviate noise and the need for embankments towering over rural villages.

I would ask you to consider the Northern route which will certainly have less impact on the countryside, the rails can be entrenched and surely the question of going over or under the lanes of the A14 junction would be no more difficult than the building of so many viaducts, embankments, bridges and underpasses, also cutting through a chalk ridge and definitely more preferable to destroying irreparably a great swathe of the English countryside.

EWR should give all routes a full and fair hearing, failure to do so is to walk over the residents of this area and to dismiss their views as inconsequential. Are people, their homes, and their wellbeing, the environment and all that holds, of less worth than a railway which it is not even sure will carry a significant number of passengers and will become just a freight line degrading life in our beautiful South Cambridgeshire villages. I feel very passionately about the whole affair as I chose to live and bring up my family here because of the place it is. Should the Government formed EWR Co. not be answerable to the people of the area, or is it just an ill thought out scheme, and one that will undoubtedly bring more money to developers whose next move will be to build new towns along the route. South Cambridgeshire will disappear under bricks and concrete. Who will be responsible or answerable or even care?? I ask you to please ensure that there is a full and fair hearing for all concerned so that, whatever the outcome, we will feel that our voices will have been heard. Thank you.

I am a resident of Harston, Cambridgeshire, and I am very concerned about the recently proposed East West Railway route.

My understanding was that within the range of the southern approach, the proposed East West Rail would present us with several options.

This proposal seems to have been dropped, and residents are now confronted with a final plan, with no alternatives. What then is the purpose of the 'consultations', one might ask.

The northern approach remains the most sensible solution. Within the southern approach range, a line along the M11 would have made more sense, in terms of infrastructure and noise levels. At the very least, the junction should have been moved further to the south, halfway between Harston and Foxton; to build it in Harston is unacceptable.

The noise, pollution, and environmental damage would reduce our quality of life (and the value of our property).

The current proposal affects so many of the villages of South Cambridgeshire that it is simply unrealistic. I - and most of my neighbours - are prepared for a long legal battle, if necessary. But we hope that this will not be necessary. We hope for your support and we believe that you have the influence to help us.

I would appreciate it if you could please let me know how you plan to solve this problem for us. I look forward to hearing from you.

I'm writing this email to express my deep concern regarding the East West Rail Company's proposed plan to route the Oxford to Cambridge railway into Cambridge via the Southern Approach. My understanding is that, the CamBeds RailRoad Group favoured and proposed, the Northern Approach based on several strong criteria. It is also my understanding that, the East West Rail Company's current consultation on the route options is simply disregarding the possibility of a northern approach in favour of minor options all within the Southern Approach. I believe that, at the very least, the final decision on the route adopted should be subject to a proper choice of realistic options and not simply a fait accompli with the one main corridor and a minimal choice of options within that narrow corridor. I suggest that, considering the Northern Approach alongside the Southern Approach, with a long-term view of the costs and benefits of both, is the only truly democratic action for a company, formed by the government, to take. The very least the residents of South Cambridgeshire deserve is that both approaches be equally evaluated and that the final choice reflects the least environmental damage, preserving as much of South Cambridgeshire's special natural appeal as possible.

Having made the request that the Northern Approach be considered, I would like to express my concerns regarding the Southern Approach and the advantages I see in choosing the Northern Approach. In the interests of brevity, I am presenting these views in the following bullet points.

Southern Approach:

- This will create high embankments and deep cuttings through the hills and valleys, which are unique in a county otherwise devoid of rolling landscape.
- Two existing relatively large communities will be dominated by high and long concrete viaducts at Highfields Caldicott and Harston. This will also affect the, yet to be built, 3,500 home Bourn Airfield new village.
- The significant chalk ridge, with well used footpaths and road, will be cut through behind Haslingfield.
- The embankment from Haslingfield running alongside Harlton and Little Eversden, before crossing the Bourn Brook valley, will be an eyesore seen from miles around and will cut communities from each other, which includes routes used daily by students at Comberton Village College.
- Noise pollution from trains running up to 15 meters above ground level will affect more than just the 200-meter zone either side of the track. This is the implied noise zone, as East West Rail have quoted that the number of houses within 200 meters on the Southern Approach will be far less than on the Northern Approach (statistics which don't seem to account for the thousands of houses being developed close to the proposed track in the south. At night, when the proposed freight trains will be mostly running, noise carries several miles and will affect most villages on the route.
- The section described above will traverse important wildlife sites managed by the Countryside Restoration Trust where otters, water voles, breeding yellowhammers and skylarks are just some of the treasures. The disturbance of nationally endangered yellowhammers is particularly concerning. This is compounded by devising to put the route

through an area of chalk streams which are part of the world heritage. These streams are almost unique to lowland southern England and are already threatened by the overuse of the groundwater supplies.

- The proposed route skirting to the south west and west of Comberton and then between Comberton and Toft will be a major disruption factor to the highly valued educational environment that's been fostered at Comberton Village College for over half a century. The sports fields, classrooms and examination halls will all be subjected to the frequent noisy passage of the trains as they speed past close by. Add to this, the several route ways taken on foot and cycle by schoolchildren from surrounding villages to the college throughout term times that will be cut across.
- Beyond Cambourne, the Southern Approach offers no benefit to the many villages on the route, just environmental damage, dislocation of communities, and loss of the very amenity that has attracted such economic success to this area.

Northern Approach

- This route was favoured by the CamBeds RailRoad after careful consideration and analysis of the options.
- This approach offers the opportunity to minimise the environmental damage to South Cambridgeshire and the impact on residential areas, by using trench cutting technology, as deployed in The Netherlands for railways that are often running at below sea level. This approach, using trenches, would negate the need for viaducts, solve the "crossing floodplains dilemma, reduce noise pollution and disturbance to adjacent properties and offer a "high-tech" entrance to Cambridge and its booming "high-tech" industries.
- Going north east from Cambourne will link the rail with the growing new town and communities on the northern side of Cambridge. This includes Northstowe, the largest new town development since Milton Keynes, and Waterbeach, along with other potential large developments on the A10 axis north of Cambridge. The link would also be made to the majority of the Cambridge science parks which are located in the north of the city.
- There is an existing station on the Northern Approach which lends itself to receive the line from Bedford and potentially onward to the East Coast.
- There is an existing main transport corridor along the Northern Approach and much of this is already semi-urbanised.

In general, I have read documents that claim the Southern Approach is the only possible route because of operational reasons. I understand, however, that these are not accurate observations and that the operational challenges from the south and the north are relatively equal, the latter could be solved through advanced signalling whilst the former may require new track (on the guided busway lane or by demolishing trackside new build south of Cambridge?).

It seems that the choice is between the obvious route to the north with all its connection and transport opportunities or cutting through a still rural section of the county with no local benefit to the existing population.

The most recent surveys of the UK's top employers suggest that working patterns are changing dramatically with office workers working from home at least two to three days a week. Estimates expect passenger traffic on the rail network to be 40% less than pre-pandemic. Taking this into account, if there is still a business case for the rail project to go ahead and I understand that the Prime minister has refused to have this reviewed, then freight is going to play an even more important part in the life of this railway. If so, this makes the Northern Approach and the potential onward links to the east coast ports, even more sensible.

I am asking that you support the case for a review of the East west Rail proposals and support the rejection of the Southern Approach.

I feel passionately about the legacy we will leave our children and grandchildren. Will they thank us for constructing a massive eyesore and source of noise pollution through the beautiful south Cambridgeshire hills and valleys or, for having the foresight to build a world class track, mostly below ground level and out of sight and displaying the best of British engineering and ingenuity?

I wish to emphatically express my concerns and unhappiness concerning the current EWR proposal and how it will impact Caldecote, The Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield, Harston, and the Shelfords.

1. The EWR logic for route "E" planning appears to be ill considered if the primary objective with marginal passenger numbers is to transport an unlimited freight from the East Coast ports 24/7.

2. The Option to proceed towards the coastal ports North of Cambourne following existing well established transport routes along the A428 and the A14 to the East Coast Ports and Cambridge via the M11 corridor to Cambridge Stations which would result in less rural devastation than the presently proposed Route "E".

Fundamentally the proposed Route "E" if selected and planning approval validated will devastate the local community infrastructure and everything associated with it.

It is my personal opinion that the current proposal;

- Negates all South Cambridgeshire and Local Parish Council strategic infrastructure planning initiatives.
- Will significantly damage many developments which are in progress and will again negate the associated original objectives for the developments
- Ignores and destroys Local and National Environmental, Pollution and Conservation Policies, Aspirations and Objectives.
- Basically the Route "E" option fundamentally severely damages local business, agriculture, local history, rural wildlife and established communities as well as adversely limiting the future environment development for upcoming generations
- The proposed methodology in delivering Route "E" will severely damage the health of individuals ranging from;
 - Ø Diesel pollution emitted from powerful locomotives pulling long fully laden freight trains
 - Ø Noise pollution radiating over large distances both sides of the rail tracks
 - Ø The proposed methodology in delivering Route "E" will result in many Individuals being diagnosed with and suffer from PTSD as an inevitable outcome of the proposal progression if approved and implemented.
- The proposed methodology in delivering Route "E" Threatens to destroy community links comprising; roads, bridleways, well established Rights Of Way instigating and encouraging additional traffic and pollution levels.
- Route "E" in my opinion appears to constitute;
"Conservation and Environmental Piracy"
- EWR route "E" should not be pursued in the interests of society and business.

I am entirely opposed to the choice of route E. I agree with the new mayor of Cambridge, that it is completely unacceptable to take this massive decision without running a similar consultation in to the northern approach to Cambridge.

On Look East, you quoted that 120,000 postcards had been sent out in the first consultation in 2019, and 7000 responses returned. This number is insignificant considering the area covered and the amount of people this will affect, most of whom, like me, will not have received a postcard or known about the consultation.

South Cambridge boasts countryside as one approaches our beautiful and historic city unlike anything on offer on the northern approach and stands to be ruined by these proposals.

A Summary Report by the Cambridge Nature Network is enclosed showing a wildlife recovery network for Cambridge and it's surrounds, which stands to be destroyed by EWR's current plans. Hardwick Wood,... which stands to be cut off from Madingley Wood if plans go ahead for this route. I have taken every opportunity to plant hedgerows and put in grass margins to try and link nature on our farm. I am a member of the

'West Cambridgeshire Hundreds' who meet specifically to discuss improving conditions for wildlife to flourish, and part of the Government's 'environmental stewardship entry level plus higher level scheme'. I love the countryside and go to great lengths to promote it's well being, and am disgusted by East West Rail's total lack of regard for it in this time of environmental crisis.

In addition to the environment, the health and wellbeing of local residents should be a top priority. This route is longer, and cuts very close to many villages, in comparison to approaching the city from the north. In my local patch, not only will many be affected by the noise, unsightly wall and pollution, but it also passes Comberton Village College at very close proximity. The line stands to spread pollution to air breathed in by thousands of teenagers each day!

Agricultural land around the A14 / A428 corridor has been damaged by years of works already, in comparison to untouched productive soil in South Cambridgeshire. The fact that so much development continues to take place north of the city makes it a matter of common sense that this route should be favoured to transport thousands in to Cambridge each day, and avoid destroying unspoilt greenbelt.

Again on Look East, you quoted that more houses would need to be demolished if a different route was taken. If a house is demolished, and adequate compensation to allow the owner to purchase a similar property and move in to it is provided, the owner remains in the same position. This can not be said for demolishing well established livelihoods, which doesn't seem to be a consideration.

Assuming the bottomline is about money, then I think the issues above outweigh any additional expenditure. There needs to be a clear and certain vision (which I'm not sure exists) to justify this railway, and choosing the right route on every level outweighs cost savings that could be attached to destroying great swathes of open countryside.

Many of the questions in the 'response form' supplied by East West Rail seem irrelevant if the aim is genuinely to gather public feelings about the proposed route. I have submitted a part-completed form, but offer here my personal reaction to the proposed 'southern route' between Cambourne and Cambridge.

In general terms, I endorse much of the considered rationale behind Cambridge Approaches' response to the current consultation: that it is imperative that a northern approach to the city is considered.

My reasons are environmental, in the widest sense of the term. I live in Toft, an unexceptional small village, but the landscape within which it sits IS exceptional, for Cambridgeshire. Here there is a vast network of ancient tracks and pathways, ancient woodlands, ancient hedgerows. Of course there are large open fields, but between these are corridors used not only daily by people, but most essentially by wildlife. From my home I can walk for up to 20 miles along these paths and tracks, crossing only an occasional road to join the next path. Hundreds, possibly thousands, of people come here every year, from the city of Cambridge and surrounding villages, to walk and simply enjoy the environment and wildlife: numerous birds and mammals large and small.

The thought that a noisy, polluting railway will be smashed across this small but precious part of Cambridgeshire is not a good one. Here there are high ridges, deep lanes, and pastures dating from early medieval times, which have not been ploughed since the 15th century – not even during either world war. Those 'ancient trackways' really are ancient, some quite possibly pre-Roman. We who live here know how precious our landscape, and the evidence lying upon it, really is – and we are truly fearful about what is planned. At the very least we would lose the open access that we currently have but, more significantly, we would lose the landscape and everything living in it that we so love: a very small, precious part of our fast disappearing countryside. How does this plan 'fit' with the demands of those who are begging us all to protect our planet and every living thing within it? If the railway were taken to the north of Cambourne, it could at least in part follow existing corridors of transport, serve the vastly larger population planned for northern Cambridge – and it would not destroy such special land.

I am writing to you on behalf of the Eversdens Parish Council and our local residents. We look to our District Councillors, and our District Council, to protect our communities and environment from inappropriate development. EWR Co's plans for the East West Rail (EWR) line present the biggest threat for generations.

You will hopefully already be aware that our community feels both devastated and appalled by the prospect of EWR Co's preferred southern route alignments – all of which will have a serious adverse impact on our local communities and our environment. Our distress and anger are further heightened by our sense that the EWR Co's plans for our local area are a fait accompli, that they have not listened to local concerns, and that EWR Co's plans promise no benefit whatsoever for South Cambridgeshire villages south of Cambourne (including the Eversdens). Instead, EWR Co's proposed route alignments are destined to impose unprecedented blight and disruption during both construction and operational phases of the project. This distress and anger are even further heightened by the fact that EWR Co has never subjected alternative approaches, which would enter Cambridge from the north, to a full and equal evaluation, and by the fact that, despite widespread local demand, EWR Co continues to refuse to consult fully and equally on such alternative approaches.

In EWR Co's 2019 non-statutory consultation, our local communities had no practical choice. It was near-certain that EWR Co would prefer one of the three route options serving Cambourne, rather than either of the two more southerly route options serving Bassingbourn. All of the former route options ran south-east into the south of Cambridge through a corridor that, to avoid the University of Cambridge's Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory, seemed destined to force the planned railway line into a very narrow corridor that closely skirted the Eversdens and several other villages. In January 2020, EWR Co announced its that Preferred Route Option was Option E – the worst of worlds for our area. During the period of (very notional, Covid-blighted) 'community engagement' that followed that announcement, EWR Co's survey activities left our community in no doubt that EWR Co's route plans for our local area were already firmly set. The launch of EWR Co's 2021 non-statutory consultation in April 2021 has only reinforced this perception. In fact, the concrete shape of EWR Co's route alignment options, whether running from a South Cambourne station or a North Cambourne station, is even worse than our worst fears.

We would now like urgently to bring to your attention the following concerns:

1. EWR Co's plans envisage the railway running along massive structures. According to EWR Co's Engineering Long Section Drawings, very little of the 16km route between Cambourne and Cambridge will be 'at grade'. Most will be many metres high in the air, and a substantial portion – including the stretch that runs close to the Eversdens and over the A603, and then skirts Harlton and Haslingfield, will be on top of a 10m high, 70m wide embankment/viaduct. This will create an unprecedented, lasting visual scar on the low-lying, open, rural landscape, unprecedented and significant noise pollution in previously quiet villages, and significant air pollution for proximate properties owing to EWR Co's inexplicable plans to run diesel-powered trains for an unspecified period. Although no houses in our area seem destined to be demolished, a substantial number of properties in Little Eversden High Street/Lowfields, which will lie in very close proximity to EWR Co's vast embankment, will be very seriously affected.

2. EWR Co's planned route will be environmentally destructive. Of particular significance, the Eversdens includes the Wimpole and Eversden Woods Special Area of Conservation, a legally protected area specifically recognised to protect the maternity roosts and associated eco-system of the rare barbastelle bats. These bats have been demonstrated to forage for many kilometres from Wimpole Woods across the area, on paths that cross EWR's proposed route alignments. EWR Co's plans are destined to adversely affect that legally protected eco-system, and it is incumbent on EWR Co, as a matter of legal obligation, to consider alternative route alignments that will not have such an adverse impact, and failing that, to demonstrate that such impacts can be effectively mitigated. As yet, it has not done so.

3. The University of Cambridge's internationally important Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory lies in close proximity to the Eversdens, south of the A603. This immediate area is specially protected, but there is also a substantially wider special planning consultation zone, reflecting the acute sensitivity of the site. All of EWR Co's proposed route alignments will pass within about 1km of the Observatory, on a 10m high embankment. The railway threatens to adversely impact on the Observatory's activities in a variety of ways: vibration, line of sight, electro-magnetic interference. It has not been demonstrated by EWR Co that those difficulties can be adequately mitigated, or what the cost of those mitigations might be; indeed, EWR Co seems to be taking a very cavalier approach to this problem, simply asserting based on what we understand is very limited contact with the University/the MRAO that the problems can be mitigated. We are aware that, some years ago, the sensitivities of the MRAO forced significant mitigation measures when the M11 was constructed, as well as along the adjacent A603.

4. The villages of Little and Great Eversden are small villages (total population c 900) with no immediate amenities. We have no access to public transport, and we are necessarily dependent on cars or bicycles for transport to our workplaces in Cambridge/elsewhere, and to GP surgeries. Our children mostly attend the maintained primary school (Meridian) and secondary school (Comberton Village College) in Comberton. EWR Co's proposed alignments from Cambourne threaten to create a visual – and very real – separation between our community and our neighbouring communities. Regrettably, EWR Co has provided no adequate information in its recent consultation exercise as to which local roads and other public rights of way will be preserved, and which might be severed. Indeed, EWR Co's own Engineering Long Section drawings have given rise to substantial local fears that significant severances are being planned – including severances the road between Toft and Comberton, and of the road between Harlton and Haslingfield. We are deeply concerned by any such prospect. It will have a seriously detrimental impact on public bus routes and on school transport, which will be forced to take very circuitous routes, many miles longer than at present, and such severances would deny cycle commuters the few relatively safe road routes to their places of work: the alternative they would be left with, the A603, is a high-speed and congested road, known to be extremely hazardous.

5. EWR's plans will cause significant difficulties for our local farmers. The wide embankments currently planned will remove substantial portions of active farmland and (if not broken with regular access points for farm traffic) will render some other areas unworkable; they will also force significantly higher volumes of local farm traffic onto the

roads (including the A603), exacerbating congestion and greatly increasing the amount of mud etc on roads (with all of the additional risks that might bring).

6. The EWR project will involve a massive cost for the taxpayer (multiple billions), and yet the business case remains mystifying. No railway could run profitably based on the low volumes of Oxford-Cambridge traffic. The railway might serve local commuter needs, but if so, then it remains inexplicable that the railway should serve Cambourne, but not also the very substantial planned population increases north of Cambridge at Northstowe/elsewhere. The railway's profitability might be freight traffic-dependent, but if that is so, then EWR Co's continued obfuscation of the likely freight capacity is concerning, and it is deeply concerning, too, that EWR Co is not designing the railway with such freight-traffic in mind: a major component of such design would be choosing a route that did not assume that freight traffic would run through Central Cambridge, as EWR Co's southern route assumes, but would instead allow Cambridge to be by-passed, as a northern Cambridge approach permits. If, alternatively, the railway's sustainability is to depend on the development value that the railway might unlock, then we should be told where EWR Co expects that development to occur.

7. We believe that the business case for the EWR line needs a comprehensive review, in light of the major changes in commuter patterns that have occurred – and look destined to continue in future – as a result of more flexible post-Covid working patterns.

8. The EWR project seems to be part of a larger jigsaw that we find deeply worrying: it seems to be closely related to mind-boggling increases in housing associated with the OxCamArc. We are extremely concerned about the scale of the urbanisation that the OxCamArc has in view, and we are equally concerned about the massive encroachments that these plans would appear to entail for our environment. In particular, our water supply – already severely challenged – is likely to be yet further challenged from excessive extraction, as well as aquifer-contamination during construction.

9. We are deeply concerned that the EWR Co project is racing forwards without due consideration for its relationship with local infrastructure, existing and planned, and that it is racing forwards without apparent regard for local housing plans. We are particularly concerned about the lack of joined-up thinking/collaboration that is in evidence, and that EWR Co is forging ahead, based on its own particular sponsor's requirements, and without due regard for the bigger picture, in a manner that will detrimentally pre-determine the shape of other developments in the region.

10. EWR Co's plans will bring absolutely no benefit for residents of the Eversdens. The only impacts will be adverse. The railway will not be used by residents for local journeys: there are no stations between Cambourne and Cambridge South, and no-one would travel to Cambourne to take a train to Cambridge.

11. We are deeply concerned about the detrimental impacts that our local community will suffer over multiple years, in the course of the construction of the railway. We are particularly mindful of the volumes of material that will need to be moved in order to build the railway, as currently configured: the amount of building material that would need to be imported and stored locally, in order to build EWR Co's massive planned embankments is staggering.

12. We are deeply concerned about the amount of information that is simply not provided in the consultation, both about general aspects of EWR Co's proposals, and about the particular impacts on our local area. General aspects, of great materiality to the evaluation of any route alignment include housing plans, the integration of the railway with local transport schemes, freight strategy, and the time-line (if any) within which the line will be electrified. Of more immediate concern, we are offered almost no information, narrative or visual, about the local impacts of EWR Co's alignments. This information is essential to allow all those potentially affected to offer informed responses to EWR Co's consultation.

13. We believe, along with many other individuals and communities in the region, that EWR Co must provide a full and equal evaluation of alternative approaches to Cambridge, including a northern approach, and that EWR Co must consult on such alternative approaches on an equal footing. Indeed, we are of the view that there are some compelling arguments for a northern approach that EWR Co continues to ignore or underplay. Environmental bodies, such as BCN Wildlife Trust, CPRE and Woodland Trust, have all indicated that (contrary to EWR Co's assertions/assessments) a northern approach will have fewer environmental impacts. A northern approach promises significant transport user benefits, in serving, via a station at/near Northstowe, the large population growth anticipated to the north of Cambridge. A northern approach can be built using modern trench technology in a manner which is resilient in flood-zones and promises low visual and noise impact. A northern approach will also allow for the important possibility of a freight bypass of the City centre of Cambridge, and (through a chord at Ely) would provide a significantly better option for eastwards freight traffic in future than the Cambridge-Newmarket line, which EWR Co's southern approach would use and which would require a costly upgrade. EWR Co's preferred southern approach is justified partly on the basis that it will serve the large workforce around the Addenbrooke's Biomedical Campus – yet this downplays the fact that this will still be accessible via a northern approach, and that a northern approach could equally/better serve the very substantial working populations in Central Cambridge and in the Science Parks of North Cambridge (which are planned to grow substantially in the coming years).

We fully understand that SCDC is not the decision maker in relation to the EWR line. Nevertheless, we believe that you do have influence. We do not believe that it is enough to say that you have not been provided with enough information by EWR Co to reach a position on issues raised. That is almost certainly the case, but we also consider that SCDC could provide a more powerful challenge to the business case that is claimed for EWR (including the ongoing uncertainty about the transport use case) and that SCDC should be an important voice in demanding a full and equal investigation of, and consultation on, alternative routes – particularly those that would enter Cambridge from the north. If – which we will resist to the last – the route has to be in our area, then we would require EWR Co to demonstrate considerably greater sensitivity to local concerns in its design – above all, a much lower-impact design, positioned considerably lower in the landscape in cuttings/trenches, and passing under roads and rivers in its path, with no road severances and frequent crossings to ensure continued access for agricultural and public right of way purposes.

I am becoming increasingly concerned about the way the new rail link between Bedford and Cambridge is being handled.

I know you have a great concern for the environment and so do I. Whilst I support the creation of a rail link between Oxford and Ipswich, it appears to be being forced upon us without due regard for the best and least damaging route.

A quick look at a map of our area reveals an obvious and clear route east/west passing to the north of Cambridge, following the A428 and the A14. Cambridge can be easily accessed from that area via the fen line to Ely. Yes, there will be some costs to the area, as with any infrastructure project, but nothing like the appalling mess that will result if the southern route, chosen by the governments 'East West Rail Company', is built. Not only will some of the best countryside south and west of Cambridge be desecrated, the trains will need to carry on eastwards via Newmarket. This will impose a huge burden on the residents along that route as it now appears inevitable that the new link route will attract freight traffic as well as improving passenger services.

Furthermore, the areas to the north of Cambridge city are being steadily developed, both for large housing projects and industrial/scientific uses. These projects need to be fully integrated into the long term plans, and the rail link will form part of those developments and be of benefit. A southern route has none of these advantages.

I am also told that East West Rail Co will be running diesel powered trains. This is an almost unbelievable scenario considering the governments stated objectives to decarbonise the economy.

Lastly, the responses I have received from East West rail Co to my questions are almost insulting in their triviality.

I do hope you will bring your influence to bear on this shocking abuse of government power in the face of clear concerns by a growing number of residents.

It is not my intention to dwell further on the tremendous upheaval and disruption to local Villages and life as this you have already had from others.

I can also see there would be benefits to upgrading the railway infrastructure South of Cambridge to accommodate additional passenger trains, add new stations and reduce traffic on the A10/ A505 corridors.

What I would like to highlight is the apparent lack of honesty on the intentions for freight.

Unless the latest Govt. announcement truly means a massive upgrade on the infrastructure in East Anglia, we could be facing a situation where the EWR becomes the route of choice by default.

We are faced with a situation where ships of 200,000 tonnes containing 20.000 plus containers are visiting our ports on a regular "milk round" through the North sea. The only ports of call are Felixstowe and Southampton.

At present the predominant route out via train is via London with a lower proportion via Bury St Edmunds. If upgrades to the Port of Felixstowe, Harwich and Bathside Bay go ahead the amount of rail traffic must increase or the road infrastructure will not support the extra traffic. In any case the Govt. stated intentions to reduce the carbon foot print should preclude this.

Add to this the effects of Brexit and trade expansion outside of Europe, add in London Mayoral intentions to limit use of that route to night time only and you could have a situation where rail traffic through Bury St Edmunds increases five fold by as little as 2024, possibly as high as 80-90 a day.

Yes it will be possible to upgrade the route via Soham up to Ely and beyond to the Midlands or even down to Cambridge, but where is that in the EWR submission? Otherwise we have a route into Cambridge via the Newmarket Line coming South through Cambridge and onto the EWR preferred Southern Route. To what purpose? All the major infrastructure plans are North and West of Cambridge.

Do you really want to condemn people in Cambridge and the largely rural villages of S Cambs. along the EWR southern Route, to that level of predominantly overnight freight? These trains can be a mile long, pulled by diesel engines?

I would strongly suggest you require EWR to come clean on the freight issue, look at where it needs to go to achieve the best benefits and target your response accordingly.

I don't think you will find the Southern Route is the best fit, neither for freight and with the scrapping of the Metro system, nor for passengers.

SCDC Consultation Response to EWR - Harlton Parish Council

We have read with interest the SCDC draft response to EWR's non statutory consultation documents. Harlton Parish Council is relying on the District Council to back up local residents' concerns and stand up to EWR's proposals.

We are pleased that you are particularly concerned with EWR's initial use of diesel, the polluting nature of this fuel and the apparent avoidance of the government's own announcements on becoming carbon neutral. However we are also concerned on a local level and we wish to make sure that you are really influencing EWR's decision making.

The current proposed route that EWR is suggesting severely affects the Parish of Harlton. Here is a list of our concerns:

1. The huge embankment and viaduct that will wrap around two sides of our village. The height will be over 10 metres tall and up to 70 metres in width. Even if a tunnel is constructed to the neighbouring village of Haslingfield, how will this be safe for pedestrians (including school children travelling to Haslingfield Primary School), cyclists, vehicles and farm traffic?
2. The huge embankment will act as a blockade between Harlton and Haslingfield. The two villages are interlinked by school, shops, surgeries, churches and sporting facilities. This is not creating 'meaningful connections' as EWR announce - it is severing intrinsic links.
3. The proposed route cuts through Chapel Hill in Haslingfield. This is an important pilgrimage site and is an extremely popular cycle route. Neighbouring Money Hill has five barrows of ancient significance plus it is close to Haslingfield Pits where rare Man Orchids are found. Much of this historic, archaeological and special fauna will be in danger if the proposed line is built.
4. Harlton has many chalk aquifers, which are internationally very special and fragile. The proposals of EWR put these waterways under threat of pollution, contamination and destruction.
5. The failure of EWR to carry out proper strategic environmental assessments. The rare barbastelle bats (which forage in Harlton) could be at risk with flight paths disrupted by the elevated train line.
6. There are no benefits to residents of Harlton. We are a quiet, rural community and wish to remain one. An elevated train line, running exceptionally close to the majority of our homes is putting our village under threat. It will be very noisy, disruptive day and night and be very impactful on the health of all villagers.
7. The consultation is woolly and missing vital information. EWR has not produced its business case to back up its assertion that bringing the route to Cambridge South is justified. There has been no coordination with future housing plans or developments (such as Northstowe). There has been no thought into integrating this scheme with other transport plans.
8. The use of diesel trains from the offset is very concerning. This scheme is going against the government's own vision of becoming carbon neutral.

9. Harlton lies within the protection zone of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory (MRAO). It appears as if EWR is pushing the line closer to our village in order not to tread on the toes of the University of Cambridge. Even building the line on the edge of Harlton and other villages, we believe that the railway will interfere with the sensitive, internationally important equipment.

10. Areas of farmland and greenbelt will be obliterated forever in this scheme. The urbanisation of rural areas in South Cambs is not welcome by the residents of Harlton. As far as we know there are no schemes of high development in our area, unlike the route to the north of Cambridge (Northstowe and Waterbeach New Town). We cannot understand why EWR is avoiding areas of planned growth that would benefit from a railway line and station.

11. The disappearance of one of the few footpaths in our village (district: South Cambs, path no. 1, parish no. 115, name 115/1). The proposed railway line will destroy an important community asset.

We realise that SCDC is not the decision maker, however we believe you can make a difference by championing our concerns. We would like to see a very strong rejection of the current proposals, a valid business case by EWR, plus a fair/in-parity investigation into alternative routes to the north of Cambridge.

The current proposals are damaging to the environment, to people's lives, to homes, landscape, farmland and most importantly to the rural texture of our village. If this railway line is built surely a better design could be produced including tunnelling through hills and state-of-the-art trench technology.

I am writing to raise my concerns over the East-West rail proposals and in particular, their choice of the southern approach into Cambridge.

The route

I object to EWR's refusal to consider the CamBedRailRoad proposal for a northern route into Cambridge.

The northern proposal is well thought out and at least as good as EWR's southern approach. In addition, because so many development sites are planned north of Cambridge, a northern route offers the possibility of a genuinely useful mass transit system.

I particularly object to the plan to build this new line without electrification. Diesel trains are noisier, emit CO2 and particulates and will be with us for decades. The joke is that we will all be driving electric cars when this diesel powered line opens! In truth this line is being built on the cheap, which does not bode well for any mitigation measures.

The environment

EWR claim that their line will be 'carbon neutral' and 'deliver net environmental gains'. So far, the only thing they have proposed is to run diesel trains. This is not good enough. They claim that they will buy hydrogen or battery powered trains to replace the diesel ones, but this is pure fantasy. Their documents do not explain how they would deliver 'net environmental benefits'. Presumably this is a promise that can be quietly forgotten once the plans are approved.

The design of the line is required to be 'freight capable'. Yet EWR won't discuss the impact of freight trains, or the inevitability of very long, noisy freight trains running at night. The southern approach requires that freight trains run right through Cambridge, something that cannot be good or popular.

Economics

EWR expect very few passengers to travel the whole distance from Oxford to Cambridge. Their main selling point for Cambridge seems to be that it would be easier for residents of Cambourne to get to Addenbrookes Hospital. Hardly a good enough reason to build something so damaging to our villages and so expensive! Grant Shapps has announced a cut-back in spending on the railways. Is this really the time to be building a new line, for which the economics are dubious?

Harston, where I live

As a resident of Harston, I also object strongly to the proposal to build a 10-metre wall right across the south of our village. EWR claim that they want to build 'low in the landscape' but the reality is that nearly all of their proposed line from Cambourne to Harston would be on a massive embankment. Trains at this height will radiate noise over a wide area.

We are concerned that the embankment will trap pollution that is already present at high levels from the A10 traffic.

The sheer size of the embankment is breathtaking and would be a real blot on the landscape. Apart from the visual intrusion, it would also sever access to farmland and footpaths, making life poorer and rendering farms uneconomic.

Our local Harston and Newton Primary school is very close to the proposed embankment.

It would be badly impacted by the noise, the effects on air quality and the severance of the road to Newton, which is used by parents from Newton to deliver and collect their children. Diverting via a different route and the A10 is a non-starter most mornings, when there is heavy traffic.

I also object in a very personal way to the effect this will have on the value of our houses. For most residents, their house is a major part of their assets and is a buffer for retirement. By taking value from our houses, EWR are already stealing money out of our pockets in a very real way.

I hope you will be able to use your position to press for answers on these points.

EWR are playing not playing at all fair with the people of Cambridgeshire.

I am writing to express my concerns surrounding the route proposed by the East West Rail Company, for the line from Bedford to Cambridge. As you are likely aware, the southern approach to Cambridge passes close by to several local communities, and the impact of the proposed 'Great Wall of Cambridge' cannot be understated. The details of the height profile of the line as it passes the Eversdens, Harlton, Harston and Harston were hardly front and centre in the consultation document, but the prospect of a 10m high, 30m wide embankment stretching for miles is an awful prospect for our quiet villages. That the line might not be electrified, and that it might be carrying significant freight, not just past villages, but through the centre of Cambridge, is surely a backward step environmentally. There is also the impact on the local wildlife, and several national and local conservation bodies all support an alternate approach. Local schools are also to be affected – Haslingfield Primary counts Harlton in its catchment area, and the two villages will be either side of the 'Wall'. The route also passes very close to Comberton Village College. All of these issues could be avoided by a northern approach.

The business case for EWR was initially proposed to connect Oxford and Cambridge. The more detailed analysis shows that the number of people wanting to make this journey by train is largely insignificant. EWR then changed tack to make it about connecting communities. However, there is no benefit to any of the villages in South Cambs, and moreover, the southern approach neglects the opportunity to provide the significant development at Northstowe with a station, which would relieve the strain on the already-busy guided busway – vital with many more homes at Northstowe still to come.

EWR also make a great deal of serving the biomedical campus to the south of Cambridge, yet neglect to mention the much larger employers at the Cambridge Science Park to the north, where my office is. The Science Park management team wrote to EWR during the first consultation, expressing a preference for a northern approach into Cambridge North.

EWR claim to have 'back checked' their assumptions on a northern approach, but most of their points have been clearly rebutted by the Cambridge Approaches group. The northern approach was never considered as part of the initial consultation, and communities north of the A428 were not invited to participate.

Why is the East West Railway needed?

If the EWR line is needed at all, does the business plan justify the cost?

Is the EWR project only a ploy to get development of 1,000,000 houses in the arc and thus raise money from the developers?

If it is primarily a passenger service, will The Treasury decide that it is no longer justified, due to the 40% reduction in commuter traffic after covid? A Change in Circumstances.

Or is the project really a ploy to carry freight trains to and from Felixstowe docks to the Midlands? Is this why it is diesel?

It is ridiculous to build a new railway using diesel to be completed in 2030 and then phase it out by 2040, because of climate change reasons.

If it is primarily for passengers, then why is the southern approach to Cambridge favoured when there are no stations and no towns or new towns planned, fewer residents and far less places of employment? At the same time cutting off whole villages from the school, doctor and post office and delaying emergency vehicles.

On the northern approach there new towns (totalling 50,000 homes), more places of employment, need for better transport and only 2 villages affected negatively.

Cost should not be a reason for one route against another, if it does not serve the need.

The East West Railway project is not justified. Spend the money on the NHS workers or reducing the National Debt.

Now I am requesting your support in achieving a full assessment of the East West Rail project with respect to

- 1) the need for passenger carriage, particular after the effects of COVID on home working
- 2) implications of freight carriage
- 3) planning and consultation process.

My request is based upon the major concerns and unhappiness to residents along the proposed route and the cost of this project that will impact UK tax payers for many years.

From the beginning of the consultation process, EWR have been particular vague regarding freight, even stating it was not part of their remit. How can anyone propose a rail route without knowledge or detailed projections of freight use? As the process has moved on, titbits of information on freight use and hence requirements have slowly emerged. We now have some idea of the number of train, speeds and noise. There still appears to be much debate on the need for 4-track, whether freight trains need to go through Cambridge, or indeed, whether a Northern Route would have advantages. More recently, it appears that EWR do not have clear information on how the trains will be powered (Diesel, Electric, Battery). As stated above, how can anyone construct a railway line, not knowing how the trains will be powered? There appears to have been little joined up thinking in relation to synergies with other transport routes and construction of new towns, notably Northstowe and Waterbeach.

What is the project cost of the project to date? If cost projections vs actual costs follow HS2 and Cambridge Guided Busway projects, perhaps the EWR will cost double current projected costs.

Although public consultation meetings have been held, these are very much a case of comments on preselected routes. Resident groups along the route have provided considerable input on the plans, including constructive alternative routes and engineering solutions – but these appear to have been ignored to date.

Given the enormous cost and disruption associated with this project, surely the planners should be instructed to undertake a detailed assessment, involving a full and two-way consultation process, of a Northern Approach, before a firm decision is made.

I write on behalf of Harlton Parish Council. I'm sure you are well aware that EWR's non-statutory consultation is currently open until 9th June. Many people in our village and neighbouring parishes are very concerned by the proposals. Here are some of the major issues we have with the scheme:

1. The lack of transparency in the consultation. Many questions have been raised and remain unanswered. Other questions have fudged responses. Due to Covid, there have been no public meetings. The webinars EWR has arranged are constructed so that no one else can view questions that others have asked and the EWR can cherry pick the questions they want. There is no conversation or debate. Many people feel this is very unfair and have asked for an extension of the consultation so face to face meetings can take place. This has been met by a flat no from EWR.

2. The unfair push by EWR to build the railway line to Cambridge South station. There was not a public consultation on any routes going to Cambridge North. In the 2019 report, EWR already had discounted the northern route without the equivalent assessment that they gave the southern route.

3. The general avoidance by EWR to explain why Northstowe is not getting a station. EWR is promoting their route as connecting people. Northstowe is the largest town to be built since Milton Keynes. A railway station would be a fantastic bonus for the town and reduce the amount of traffic on the A14. The guided bus way is already at capacity. Surely a large town deserves a multi modal public transport solution. The railway, running to Cambridge North would future proof the town and make it an attractive place to live. This is surely a better solution than the current proposal, dividing communities to the south of Cambourne in the current proposal, whilst offering no benefit to the villages (Caldecote, Toft, Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield, Hauxton, Harston, Shelfords) the railway will run through.

4. The fudging by EWR to explain why they are going to use diesel trains on this new railway line. Diesel is a known pollutant, causing significant health problems for those breathing in particulates. The government has announced that it is phasing out diesel, so why build a state of the art transport link with old technology? It seems if they are more interested in saving money in the short term than building something they are proud of which will stand the test of time.

5. The line will pass very close to Comberton Village College and Haslingfield Primary School. The intermittent noise and increase in air pollution will be very damaging to the children at the school. It could well affect the health of children and exam results.

6. The lack of firm evidence from EWR that roads will remain open. The proposed line is passing across two out of three roads in Harlton. Even if tunnels are built through the unsightly embankments that have been designed the roads could be shut for many months during construction leaving access to schools, surgeries, sports facilities and shops very difficult. EWR has responded by saying that 'an assumption at this stage that railway bridges will cross over Haslingfield Road and Washpit Lane'. An assumption is not good enough.

7. The shocking design proposal by EWR, in which two sides of our village will be surrounded by an embankment 10 metres high. The proposed railway is so close to the edge of Harlton that it goes through someone's garden. Many of the houses in Harlton will be within 300 metres of the railway. The noise, pollution and unsightliness of the design in a

rural area is very distressing. EWR state that they have designed the railway to be as far away from people's houses as possible. This is clearly not the case.

8. The clunky and very visible design rather than adapting to the environment. Many countries, such as the Netherlands, have successfully built railway lines through flood plains using trench technology. There is no reason why EWR cannot design a railway that would be 'hidden' from view and go through areas likely to flood. If they adopted this technology perhaps the northern approach into Cambridge, via Northstowe would be more attractive?

8. The lack of transparency by EWR to acknowledge the amount of freight that will eventually run on this line. The noise disruption through day and night will be appalling. The proximity to housing and the fact it is elevated will cause major problems for most residents in Harlton.

9. The failure by EWR to carry out proper strategic environmental assessments. Barbastelle bats that roost in Wimpole and Eversden Woods and are known to fly out to Harlton and beyond for foraging as stated in a survey completed between 2002-2005 by the Cambridgeshire Bat Group. The impact of the railway is bound to have devastating consequences on this rare species. Plus the erection of the embankments and viaducts that EWR is proposing will make it even more difficult for the species to prosper. Many environmental bodies (such as BCN Wildlife Trusts, CPRE, Woodland Trust) support a northern approach which will be less damaging to wildlife and habitats.

10. The lack of a good business case. EWR has not published its business case, or a reassessment based on 'new normal' working patterns after Covid. They do not state how the railway integrates with the local transport or housing plan. They have not properly assessed the northern route with the southern route into Cambridge. It appears as if they have something to hide.

We hope this helps you understand the distress and anxiety that we in Harlton are feeling. We do hope you can use your position as Leader of South Cambs District Council to represent our thoughts and feelings of this dreadful scheme and push for a better alternative to be found.

I write to alert you to a very important topic, arguably one that will impact over 15,000 Sth Cambs residents for generations to come. There are very loud alarm bells ringing by residents across several villages in South Cambs: Toft, Caldecott, Comberton, the Eversdens, Harlton, Haslingfield, Barrington, Chapel Hill, Newton, Harston, Hauxton, and the Great Shelfords. Some 15,000 potential constituents in 6500 households. And more. My family moved into our home in Harlton in November 2020

What is the hoo-ha about you ask? The East West Rail non-statutory consultation released online March 31st, providing a SINGLE OPTION for Sth Cambs residents to provide feedback on. Thousands of pages of documentation are released online. Not all residents have been notified. And those whose without online technologies available are at disadvantage to adequately review and digest the proposal. Worryingly, publicly declared by EWR CEO: he does not want EWR to run through his own village, and that easy and cheap options are preferred. As a tax payer, I would like to see bright ambitious and big pictured thinking rather than cheap and easy.

I assure you, this email is not one of Not In My Back Yard. Rather it is one that is asking for an EWR rail that is broad minded and big-pictured in view as after all, it is a once in a generation rail project that will last for some 100 years at least. Some of the key questions that are rationale to my note to you include:

1. Cambridge Approach, a voluntary group providing voice for residents have commissioned independent route options. Their rail experts disagree with EWR on the viability of the Northern option. So who's right? Have passenger needs and numbers changed post-COVID? Let's have a fair and transparent debate rather than a one sided single option consultation, surely.
2. The technical/engineering diagrams released by EWR suggest embankments that are larger in height and width than the Great Wall of China will be deployed, running for miles. Is this the best type of ambition EWR can come up with considering other technologies readily available including trenching and tunnelling? (ref The Victorians built the London Tube network in 1863!).
3. The proposed route provides NO BENEFIT to any of the residents of South Cambs, who cannot even get on the train if they wanted to in either direction without having to drive to Cambridge or Cambourne station first! It is a lose-lose situation for Sth Cambs!
4. There are some new 20,000 homes to the North (Northstowe and Waterbeach) being totally ignored by EWR, and 6,500 households are being smashed through in the South without any benefit from the southern route. Where is the "making better connections" that EWR speak of?
5. The Government is committing to zero net carbon. Where is the sense in diesel passenger and freight for EWR regardless of routing and pinning hopes on the possibility of hydrogen trains of the future?
6. There is not an obvious consideration of environmental impact to nature, the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory (MRAO) network , and people/residents

7. FREIGHT! the proposed route is freight capable. Diesel freight trains running 24/7 will have a devastating impact on the 15,000 Sth Cambs residents that the route will pass through. Then also those in Central Cambridge as the route continues through there on its way to Felixtowe.

8. Apart from bringing zero benefits to Sth Cambs, proposed compensations mechanisms for impacted residents are confusing and without clarity.

9. And lastly, taking all above points into balanced consideration there is also insufficient transparency on cost comparison / business case / internal rate of return.

I am not claiming to be a rail expert. But you can see that I am rational in all the various ways the EWR proposed route and consultation process needs to be re-examined. I look forward to hearing how you can help represent the voices of Sth Cambs residents on this topic!

I wrote to you several months ago with some concerns about East-West Rail but feel compelled to write again.

It is staggering that in the 21st century the line is being designed for use by diesel locomotives. This runs contrary to any plans to meet national emissions targets over the coming years.

I know there is a vague hope that new technologies will be available in the future but that is not a gamble we should be taking. How about waiting for those technologies to be proven to be viable before operating the railway?

Given the weak business case for the line, and the low projections for the number of passengers between Oxford and Cambridge, it's hard to understand what it is that is being prioritised ahead of the urgency of tackling climate change. Can you help enlighten me on why environmental considerations are being compromised?

I urge you to speak up for local residents who are concerned about the proposed East West Rail line which will have a huge impact on my home village of Harlton and other villages close to the Southern route, while bringing us no benefits at all.

This weekend I have walked and cycled locally with my family and have been struck by the damage that the proposed route would do to the local environment and communities. Apart from urbanising unspoilt countryside with a 'Great Wall of Cambridgeshire', the railway will cut through widely-used paths and bridleways and will run very close to Haslingfield Primary School and Comberton Village College, affecting hundreds of children and young people.

Please challenge EWR about their proposals, including these points:

How can EWR claim that local residents were consulted in 2019 when most people were unaware of their plans until very recently, thanks to an inadequate first consultation? And why have alternative routes, including a northern approach, not been properly considered?

Why is EWR ignoring Northstowe, the biggest new town since Milton Keynes, which would benefit from a rail link to Cambridge North to serve its 25,000 future inhabitants? And why is EWR missing opportunities to link the new railway with existing transport including road, rail and guided busway?

Why is EWR proposing a southern approach when a northern approach would have less impact on local communities (at least 7 times fewer residents living within 200 metres of the line) and wildlife (as supported by The Wildlife Trust)?

How can the government claim it is leading the way tackling climate change when EWR is planning to use diesel trains on a new railway line? And why is EWR proposing to run polluting diesel trains so close to local schools (Comberton VC and Haslingfield Primary), putting children's health at risk?

Why is EWR proposing to take freight through densely populated central Cambridge, disturbing city residents, when this could be avoided by an alternative route?

I am asking you to push for a rethink of these badly-thought-out plans and for a serious, full and fair consideration of the alternatives. I look forward to hearing from you.

We are writing to express our concerns over the possible consequences of the decision by East West Rail (EWR) to route the proposed new railway line from Cambourne to Shelford through the narrow corridor known as Route Option E. It appears that this is likely to pass very close to both Great Eversden and Little Eversden. If it is decided to take this route, it would have very serious adverse consequences. We believe that there are alternative routes which would make much more sense both economically and environmentally.

We are particularly concerned at the lack of information and consultation with local residents over the choice of route. The recent consultation document issued by EWR does nothing to allay our concerns, and in fact appears to confirm our worst fears. In fact, such are the concerns of residents of many of the affected villages that a local action group has instructed solicitors and is raising funds for a possible judicial review of EWR's decision.

Apparently one of the reasons given for selecting Option E was that it was preferred by communities based on the feedback received. We have been told that EWR believe the residents of the Eversdens are happy with this decision because not many voices have been raised in protest. However, we suspect this is likely to be because the consequences of choosing such a route are so obviously unsatisfactory that it seemed unlikely to be the rational choice. Moreover the whole process has been conducted in a quite secretive fashion, which means that many people have simply not been aware that it has been going on. Indeed, surveying activity has recently been noticed very close to houses in the Eversdens, and in recent days some residents have been approached with requests for permission to grant access to their property for surveys to be carried out. Apparently financial inducements have even been offered to persuade people to grant access, which seems to us to be quite improper. This suggests that the process is at an advanced stage, yet hardly any information has been communicated to residents about what is going on. This makes the whole process very unsatisfactory from a public participation point of view.

We are also acutely aware that the Central Section of the East-West Rail project, which immediately affects the approach to Cambridge, is only one part of a larger jigsaw. The ultimate plan is to connect the railway line from Cambridge to the East of England ports. As such, the line planned will not be merely a passenger line, connecting Oxford, Bedford and Cambridge, and intermediate towns, and operating within normal passenger travel hours. Once complete and operational, it will be a major route for heavy freight traffic through the local area, potentially at any hour. Our comments are made in the light of this bigger picture, but unfortunately we doubt whether this larger context has been adequately explained to the public.

trains running on the track will, at least initially, be diesels rather than electric. We would have thought that if such a plan were ever to be put into effect it would almost certainly give rise to claims for massive compensation for all the affected communities, and we wonder whether EWR have even taken this into account.

Disruption of footpaths and damage to local amenity

There are three footpaths running north from the Eversdens across the route proposed for the railway. Two run from Great Eversden to Toft, and one from the end of Lowfields in Little

Eversden to the Comberton Road. These footpaths are heavily used and are an important local amenity. The railway would cut across these and would destroy access to these important public rights of way, unless EWR makes suitable arrangements for access to be maintained, for example by erecting footbridges across the track or providing access under the elevated section.

Lack of information and consultation

We have noted above our concern that the route passing close to the Eversdens appears to have been chosen without any explanation for the choice of route, and without any information being provided to residents or any attempt to consult with them. The whole exercise seems to have been conducted in a thoroughly unsatisfactory, not to say underhand and secretive, manner. Although EWR issued a consultation document on 31 March, with a deadline for comments of 9 June, it is clear on the basis of this document that EWR has no intention of conducting the consultation in a full or fair manner.

There are two important points to make about this so-called consultation. Firstly, it presents the southern route through to the Eversdens as a *fait accompli* without any justification or reasons given for this choice of route, despite the fact that this is known to be a contentious issue. The consultation does not even seek views on the choice of route, but only on such things as 'customer experience'. Secondly, the deadline for comments of 9 June is far too short, and indeed it seems to have been chosen to take advantage of COVID restrictions in order to rush it through without the possibility of physical meetings and full discussion.

This would be entirely consistent with the disingenuous and underhand way that East West Rail has conducted itself throughout this process, and affected parties are now asking for an extension of the deadline for comments so that proper consideration can be given to all the issues involved.

Alternatives

We believe that EWR should think more carefully about route options outside the Option E area. For example it would make more sense for the planned Cambourne station to be located north of Cambourne, rather than to its south at Caxton, and for the route to head east from there along the northern side of the A428. This would enable the line to serve a useful function as a commuter route into Cambridge and relieve pressure on the A428. Alternatively, the line could follow the M11 down to the Shelfords. The effect of the rail upon homes, roads, its noise and its pollution would then all be in one transport corridor.

Consideration might also be given to use the opportunity provided by an east-west rail link to provide suitable and adequate upgraded transport infrastructure to serve the new communities planned for the areas to the north and west of Cambridge and ensure maximum economic benefit from these developments. Unfortunately EWR does not seem to have considered how best to serve these new communities and instead has selected a route away from the area of greatest development and greatest need, instead following a route which will not serve any of the local communities and bring no benefit where it is most needed. The National Infrastructure Commission has recommended:

'Government should progress work on East West Rail, the Expressway and new settlements through a single co-ordinated delivery programme, with cross-government ministerial

commitment and oversight.' Unfortunately, a single co-ordinated delivery programme does not appear to be happening. We know that other local residents share the concerns raised above and believe that the deadline for responses to the consultation should be extended. We hope that you will be able to use your influence to support the call for an extension to the consultation deadline and help to put pressure on East West Rail to behave in a more open, honest and straightforward manner in the future.

Impact of EWRail route to my Livelihood and the wider community .

With the proposed route alignment D Clapham Green to The Eversdens EWR will cut right across my farm. There are currently two routes alignments. Either route is damaging to the landscape of the Bourn Brook Valley, an important environment for agriculture and wildlife.

EWRail have been made aware of the considerable Environmental and Wildlife Gains achieved by myself and other farmers here. I have written and The Wildlife Trust wrote a comprehensive letter to EWR on 6th March 2019 arguing strongly that their "consultation" was fundamentally flawed and a more Northern route would be much less damaging.

The corridor chosen initially for the route was very narrow through this section dictated by the many villages. It could be predicted at the earliest stage that the corridor chosen was so limited that hundreds of homes and lives would be damaged.

My farm has been built up by 5 generations of my family to what is a viable family farm. Of course there has been massive change but family farms still have a value in South Cambridgeshire. Depending on which route is chosen our farm will be cut through from West to East or North to South. Severing my main block of farmland of 530 acres by monstrous embankments viaducts fencing and eventually power lines.

In a meeting last month (first requested by me over a year ago) EWR were unable to give any facts as to the impact on my business, yet I am to "consult" over this concept by 9th June. None of the four surveyors had been near the site nor the area! They could not yet say how high , how wide, or any detail to allow me to comment except in general terms. They do not know how or if I will be able to access my fields!

We have always kept grazing livestock in our meadow land, quite a rare sight sadly in Cambridgeshire. Sheep and lambs each spring give great pleasure to drivers cyclists and walkers. The future viability of livestock is at obvious risk if flood meadows are inaccessible to us at lambing time or just for routine husbandry and daily animal welfare tasks.

I currently farm all these 530 acres from my internal farm tracks. Journeys through the village on the public road all year round will be hugely increased with the accompanying noisy slow diesel tractors and heavy machinery that will impact greatly on the lives of residents. This will have a detrimental effect on all our lives and to the costs of the farming operation. It is very difficult to quantify the financial implications when such basic facts as access to cut off fields are still unknown.

Neither alignment has been drawn sympathetically to in any way follow historic features or natural field boundaries. The routes themselves could take away up to 32 acres of highly productive arable cropping land. However areas of fields cut off by the track and too awkward or small to continue to farm could amount to a further 30 acres lost. The cultivable land made inaccessible by this barrier could be up to 300 acres (if the West -East alignment were chosen), so forcing all the farm traffic through the village.

Farmland lost to food production, and wildlife habitat are my main objections to siting the routes from Cambourne through the Bourn Brook Valley. We have planted an avenue of trees and over 3 miles of hedgerows as well as retaining livestock on the holding when it has

not been very economic to do so. I love my farm and at a time when most others are being farmed by large contractors I think smaller farms have made and can still make a valuable contribution to the environment and food production.

This farm has been in environment enhancement schemes for over 30 years. We established uncropped grassy field margins around my arable fields that are for partridge and other ground nesting birds and to keep ditches and hedges full of insect life which would otherwise be at risk from pesticide. For 12 years we have planted wild bird food areas in field corners and all through the winter taken additional wild bird food to spread as the birds require. We have established wildlife corridors through the farm down to the brook. Valuable in dry summers for deer locally and from Eversden Wood and Wimpole Hall.

Our flood meadows have not had any pesticide sprays or fertilizer now for 40 or more years and those pasture meadows host kingfishers, heron and are feeding grounds for the rare barbastelle bats.

Why come here? If we must have the line through Cambridgeshire why not to the North alongside the already established A428 transport corridor.

As a householder who will be impacted to some extent by the East West Rail projects proposed adoption of a southerly approach to Cambridge, and of Option E in particular, I have a whole range of deep concerns about the ramifications of this which are extensive and I believe, unconscionable. The most glaring are:

a) The construction of a new railway in the 21st century which is planned from the outset to be diesel hauled.

b) The selection of a routing for the approach to Cambridge which not only bizarrely avoids providing the connectivity which is its justification to the large new town developments most pressing in need of it, but instead creates the maximum environmental damage, disruption and sundering of many existing communities, and grotesque landscape intrusion (aka "The Great Wall of Cambridge") across a huge swathe of some of the best farmland, wildlife habitat and scenery in the County. Nor does it provide any benefit for these same communities as no stations are planned on this section, since we are told it would add to the journey time if the trains stopped to pick up passengers (!) Closing of local roads will add to our own communities road journey times, disrupt existing local bus services, cycling and walking, getting children to school and the rest of the population to already scarce local shops, pubs and amenities.

c) The lack of information and meaningful Consultation prior to being presented with what is looking increasingly like a fait accompli.

d) The (illogical) boundaries of the areas broken out for the current belated so called Public Consultation exercise, something which looks suspiciously like Gerrymandering to split the voice of the most controversial sections of the preferred route.

e) The rush to conclude the charade which is the current Public Consultation before (due to the restrictions of lockdown) such an exercise can properly take place, with the public treated to an EWR lecture by Zoom meeting, isolated in their own homes if Tech savvy, totally excluded if not, in all cases excluded from proper means of questioning being restricted to posting questions via Zoom which are only seen by EWR and frequently don't get addressed (none of mine did), perhaps they fall into the category of being a bit tricky.

f) The shakiness of the business case for this whole development. Historically there has been little demand for travel between Oxford and Cambridge, the original line was closed as uneconomic in the Beeching era and recent short lived attempts to provide an air service obviously still proved uneconomic. At a time of great uncertainty over the future of commuting why do this now anyway?

As I am sure you are only too well aware Cambridge is not short of expertise in the relevant topics of Environmental Science, Infrastructure, and planning and this is reflected in the Cambridge approaches and CBRR websites created by our community's united opposition to this grotesque boondoggle of a scheme. They contain a wealth of information and rebuttals of EWR's claims and justifications for their plans.

I am writing to express my concerns about the East West Rail plans through South Cambridge.

Firstly I do not believe the consultation has been fair or transparent. EWR failed to show any visual representations of the gravity of the project. The villages that it passes through will be adversely affected by noise, air pollution and a prominent visual feature that will serve them no benefits whatsoever. Of major concern is how EWR plans complies with the government's Noise Policy Statement?

The environmental impacts seem low down on the list of priorities of EWR. How a diesel line can be allowed to be planned in 2021 is perplexing. The freight transportation seems to be swept under the carpet. I see no evidence of other 10m high embankments else where - so why here? There is a transport option via the X5 and other routes north that would not cut off villages, risk habitat and cause so much disruption.

Village life will be destroyed and access to schools, small businesses and GP surgeries will be closed off. EWR gives no explanation of how these detriments to villages can be negated.

I hope you will give this your due consideration.

I was shocked to learn of the proposal in the recent consultation by East-West Rail to take the Southern route from Cambourne into Cambridge. Many local people, including myself, are only recently tuning into the impact of this.

The plan to bring a huge amount of freight traffic and more passenger traffic through this environmentally significant area of South Cambridgeshire is shocking, and there would be no benefits to local residents as no trains would stop between Cambourne and Cambridge to improve our transport links.

I want to see the alternative Northern route considered, which would take into account the current and proposed housing developments at Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach.

There has been no full and fair consultation on this route to date.

I believe over 10,500 people have now signed the petition requesting this.

I live in Harston and many local people are only now learning of the proposed devastation to their peaceful villages, as well as vast tracts of farmland being desecrated, and wildlife and biodiversity being destroyed.

The massive embankment being proposed along miles of the route, and the concrete structures over 10 metres high would dominate the landscape and destroy over 200 acres of much needed farmland, and beautiful countryside which could never be replaced.

We need locally produced food and farmers do not need their farms cut in two making much of their land virtually worthless or non-viable. We need future food security on this small island, and for future generations we need biodiversity and flourishing wildlife.

We also need farmland to maintain our air quality and control flooding. The benefits of nature, birdsong and the beauty of the landscape cannot be overstated, as has been clear during this pandemic.

No proper Environmental Comparison of the two routes has been made.

There are twice the number of environmental sites along the Southern route in comparison to the Northern route. Many more homes would be affected along the Southern route with the line coming so close to houses and running through 10 villages as well as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

It seems the line would also take diesel freight running all hours of the day and night, creating noise, vibration and pollution for thousands of local residents.

There has been no completed outline strategic business case for the Southern route, no transport analysis and no environmental comparison with the Northern route.

There has been no consideration of what happens beyond Cambridge as East-West Rail has said it is outside their remit, which is ridiculous. Freight would be forced through Cambridge and the villages to the east and west of Cambridge.

Harston and Newton, our two villages which have been historically linked for hundreds of years, would be cut off from each other by Station Road being closed, and a huge embankment being built. People who live in Newton come to Harston for the local school, GP surgery, shops and Post Office. From Harston we use the local pub, The Queens Head in Newton, the only pub left in the area and we also access the A505/A11/A14 from this road.

There would be a huge impact on the London Road at the other end of the village with much more traffic and pollution. A huge concrete flyover would go across the A10.

Chapel Hill in Haslingfield would be desecrated with an enormous cutting through an ancient site of pilgrimage, as well as there being an impact on the protected and rare bats at Wimpole and Eversden.

I believe a proposal has been made by the CBRR that the line should run in a Great Trench, along the Northern route, narrower and passing under the A14, reducing the environmental and residential impact. It would be set low in the landscape, with less noise, vibration and

fumes, and would take less land and be cheaper to maintain. It would be a much smaller feature in the landscape.

With the current proposal the impact on wildlife would be huge, and there would be desecration of the landscape, including Chapel Hill.

The proposed route doesn't serve the Science Park or Stansted Airport.

If the railway ran along the A428 it would run along an existing travel corridor. There will eventually be 10,000 houses at Northstowe, housing at Waterbeach and 20,000 people now work at and commute to the Science Park. All the sites put forward for development are in the North. There is nothing to support this in the current plan which just doesn't make sense. Why is there no integration of transport , housing and economic development ?

The villages of the Southern route would get no benefits of the rail line, with no stations between Cambourne and Cambridge- only the desecration of our environment and our quality of life ruined.

None of the proposals fit with Boris Johnson's policy on the environment and clean air if diesel transport is supposedly being phased out by 2040, and we have a diesel line. We are also told that rail journeys are likely to drop by 30-40% with more home working post Covid.

Everything seems to focussed on reaching the Addenbrookes/Biomedical Campus by the Southern route with little consideration or value being placed on anything else. Addenbrookes would in any case eventually be served by Cambridge South Station and people have to make connections in cities all the time. You cannot place a financial value on the destruction that would be caused by the Southern route as it stands, and much would be lost forever. The 16 parishes concerned represent 30,000 people. Surely we should have a say? The Southern route adds almost 50% to the distance into Cambridge so how can it be cheaper?

The unspoilt and irreplaceable countryside, wildlife, and biodiversity, would be destroyed and communities and villages severed permanently. Why should this happen when there is a better viable alternative? Please insist on a full and fair consultation on the Northern Route.

Furthermore, as the proposed route severs the road link between Haslingfield and Harlton it will cause delay and disruption to the families and staff who travel that route to school. The children who travel to school from Harlton will no longer be able to walk or cycle to school and will have to take a detour of several miles by car to access Haslingfield via Barton Road. The situation will be the same for pupils to come to school via Barrington.

The area of woodland currently used by the school for its forest school would also be compromised and/or destroyed by the railway cutting directly through it.

Understandably, there is significant opposition to the railway from local residents and considerable time and resources are being devoted to it by parish councils and action groups. As mentioned above, Cambridge Approaches is coordinating the opposition efforts for the local area, including instructing solicitors to advise on and commence legal action against EWR. The MP for South Cambridgeshire, Anthony Browne, has also been vocal and active in his opposition. There is increasing pressure on EWR to consider an alternative approach to Cambridge via the north and using existing travel corridors but it is far from certain that this will happen.

It is absolutely vital that as many different voices and interests as possible are heard both by EWR and local and national government if there is any chance of preventing the construction of this railway line in our local area. The residents of Haslingfield, Harlton and nearby parishes have been very vocal in their opposition. However, as a group of parents we feel strongly that it is important that the voices of our children and their teachers and staff are also heard. We would urge Haslingfield School to consider its position regarding the railway line and to ensure that this is communicated clearly to EWR and our local and national government representatives. Unfortunately, during the early non-statutory consultation process conducted in 2019 by EWR on Route Option E, they took the relative silence of the South Cambridgeshire villages to imply that people in this area were happy with the proposals. In fact, the consultation simply did not make clear the true picture and implications of what EWR were proposing. However, it demonstrates EWR's propensity to take silence as consent and so it is imperative that we ensure that every voice and every point of view is heard. The recently published second consultation can be accessed via the following link but we would suggest that, owing to its many deficiencies, the school also writes directly to EWR to state its position. <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation>

Enclosed with this letter is further information produced by Cambridge Approaches which includes a list of details for people/organisations to contact. We urge the school to write to as many different organisations as possible, and the impact of this action may be increased by seeking support/signatures from all of the school families too.

We appreciate that the attention of the school and Governors is taken up currently with dealing with other important issues including Covid and the appointment of a new Headteacher and we do understand how busy you already are. Nevertheless, we truly believe the potential damage and detriment to the school and its pupils of this railway line going ahead as proposed is too significant to ignore. Once built, it is there forever and will affect the school and its staff and pupils for generations to come. It is vital that the school takes whatever action is necessary to ensure that its voice is heard on this issue.

I wrote last year to express my extreme concern and dismay at the proposals for the building of a railway line by East West Rail which will cut through the rural communities of South Cambridgeshire. My opposition to these proposals for reasons such as environmental damage, severing of communities, noise pollution, damage to important agricultural land, and most importantly, the viability of a less damaging Northern Approach still stands.

I, like many thousands of others living in the area, were horrified to receive the latest "consultation" from East West Rail. I have put the word "consultation" in inverted commas as really it is nothing of the sort. It seems that the route of the railway through the section of the Eversdens to Hauxton is not being consulted upon, but has already been decided upon. There is no option for residents to respond on the route alignment in this area. To ask for people's views on what sort of entertainment should be available on trains is simply insulting to those whose homes, lives and communities will be irreparably damaged by this railway line.

The proposed 10m high, 100m wide railway embankment (dubbed "The Great Wall" by campaign group Cambridge Approaches) which will stretch for around 10 miles will sever connections between my village of Haslingfield, and its "sister" village of Harlton. The two villages are part of the same parish and share amenities including a primary school. This monstrous embankment will force people to take a detour of several miles to access their neighbouring village, preventing children from walking or cycling to school and forcing more people into cars and onto the roads.

As a parent of three young children who attend primary school and preschool in Haslingfield, I feel that building a railway line, especially one carrying noisy and polluting diesel trains, within a few hundred metres of a school is irresponsible and dangerous. Not only would it compromise the quality of the air that our children breathe, but staff and children would have to put up with the constant disruption of noisy trains trundling past several times per hour throughout the school day. Indeed, research conducted by the University of London and published in The Lancet found a linear correlation between noise pollution and impairment to children's cognition, in particular their central processing and language comprehension.

A Northern Approach to Cambridge for EWR is a viable and sensible alternative. I say this, not only because I do not want the needless destruction of the peaceful South Cambridgeshire area, but also because it is the better option to serve the expanding communities and developments north-west of Cambridge. The new town of Northstowe, to the North West of Cambridge is planned to be bigger than Milton Keynes and serve as a commuter town for Cambridge. Yet its transport links to Cambridge are poor with a guided busway being the only form of public transport. Only 700 of the 10,000 proposed houses are built and yet the guided busway is already at full capacity at peak times. It makes absolute sense for East West Rail to route its railway line to provide a station at Northstowe and then to approach Cambridge by the north. Why build a commuter town with no facilities for people to commute?!

Whatever decision is made about the route of the railway, I also want to voice my surprise and dismay the proposals that the trains on the new line will be diesel powered. How does this tie in with the Government's commitments to tackle climate change and pollution? Surely, in this day and age it is irresponsible and short sighted to create a railway line using technology from last century?! There have been some murmurings from EWR that there is

the possibility of the trains being hydrogen powered in the future, but when will that be and is that realistic or achievable? In the meantime, wherever the railway is located, people and the environment will have to suffer the ill effects of noisy and polluting diesel trains damaging our towns and countryside.

Finally, given the events of 2020 and 2021 with the Covid pandemic, has there actually been a re-assessment of the need for a trainline between Oxford and Cambridge? The pandemic is likely to have revolutionised people's working practises, with more and more people continuing to work from home in the future and fewer people physically attending an office every day. Is a commuter service really necessary? Will it actually be used? Will it be cost effective? Statistics collected by opposition groups suggest passenger numbers of around 80 people per hour. EWR proposes 4 passenger services per hour at peak times. Are they seriously proposing to run trains for only 20 people at a time?!

I would urge you please to do everything in your power to oppose EWR's current plans, to push for a full evaluation of a Northern Approach and indeed, to push for a full re-evaluation of the railway line itself.

I feel I need to express to you my deep dismay at the proposal by East West Rail Company to build their new Cambridge to Oxford route through, or extremely close to several beautiful, rural South Cambridgeshire villages, of which Haslingfield, where I live, is one.

I understand that the line will be used for freight as well as passenger traffic. I have always felt that railways rather than roads are the best way to move freight, so I am not objecting to that on principle. I think that carrying freight by rail is the sensible option. However there are things about the proposals by EWR that are very concerning to me:

1. Lack of early consultation - I have no recollection of any information being sent out in 2019, nor do any of the friends I have asked. No postcards arrived through our doors, although I understand some were sent to some areas by EWR. I was blissfully unaware until the group Cambridge Approaches started raising awareness locally.
2. The current proposal to cut the line through one of the very few hills in this area (Chapel Hill), which is very much loved locally. We are talking about Cambridgeshire here, with it's abundant flat land. Why choose a hill for the route?
3. The plan for the track to emerge from Chapel Hill onto a huge embankment, running for several miles over flat fields and very close to villages, with no chance to mitigate the visual impact, or perhaps even worse, the noise and pollution from the diesel trains.
4. Diesel trains. Why, when building a new railway even consider old-fashioned diesel? I recently attended a University of the Third Age lecture by Professor Sir David King on climate change and in the Q and A section he gave his opinion that he would have thought EWRCo should be considering other options such as hydrogen (my paraphrasing).

If, after thorough examination of all the possible routes (particularly the northern approach to Cambridge), the southern route is found to be the only feasible one, then I would urge that serious studies should be made on the possibility of a tunnel through Chapel Hill, to enable the line to emerge at ground level in Harlton, and not 10 metres up in the air. Secondly, a road bridge should be built over the road linking Haslingfield to Harlton, as these 2 villages have extremely close community links, including the children from Harlton going to Haslingfield school.

I hope you will consider my views, and will bear them in mind when you are using the influence of your position as leader of our District Council on the outcome of these life-changing decisions for our communities. Please do not feel you have to reply, I know you will be very busy, but I am happy to have had the chance to put my point of view to you.

As inhabitants of Harlton affected by the proposed southern route for EWR, we would like answers to these questions:

(1) Granted EWR's vaunted commitment to a carbon-neutral railway why is it

(a) going to use diesel trains on a new railway line?

(b) Proposing a railway line running diesel trains so

close to local schools (Comberton VC and Haslingfield

Primary)?

(2) How can the government claim it is leading the way tackling climate change, when it proposes to use 1960s technology on a next-generation railway?

(3) Why is EWR ignoring the largest town built since Milton Keynes?

Northstowe would benefit from a rail link to Cambridge North to serve the

25,000 people who will eventually live there. In its on-line "consultations" EWR has emphasised the benefits for local communications, but misses out a large area of housing development.

(4) Why is EWR so intent on building huge embankments around Harlton? It will be visually and aurally distressing to over half of the village. What does EWR propose to maintain public rights of way? In Harlton (parish no.

115) we will lose footpath no. 1. EWR say that they are anxious to minimize adverse impacts on the landscape, and yet here they are about to seriously scar one of the most attractive parts of South Cambridgeshire while producing no benefits to its inhabitants.

I am Harlton resident and proud to be a "Harltononite" and member of our near community, Cambridge and Cambridgeshire.

Living in Harlton for 30 years I have seen much change in Cambridge – incredible development in infrastructure including new villages (e.g. Cambourne, Northstowe), new transport links (e.g. A428, A14 upgrades and Guided Busway), new science / business parks and new schools and increasing 6th form colleges to cater for such growth.

Development has meant careful and sympathetic construction within and outside the city of Cambridge and the careful forethought in a long-term plan by many parties – CCC, SCDC and their consultees. Some projects so big that Government / Secretary of State approval is and is needed.

I have to say I am impressed – until now – where effective, forethought, consideration, sympathy, and planning has "gone to the wind" and incompetence, ignorance and common sense seems to prevail!

There is an identified need to reinstate a new railway to offer:

- Passenger service from The Oxford – Cambridge Arc
- Passengers from our new out of town Villages into Cambridge – I get this.

There is an opportunity also to design the railway to carry freight from Felixstowe and Harwich to the UK destinations – I get this.

What I do not get is the East West Rail Non-Statutory Consultation on its Southern Preferred Alignment.

I am writing to you on the very serious matter of East West Rail Preferred Route Alignment through SW Cambridgeshire in the hope that you maybe able to intervene and prevent significant irreversible environmental harm resulting from a poorly considered concept and even worse design. The whole matter is not fitting to the immediate needs of the Oxford Cambridge Arc let alone the needs of future generations.

The EWR Rail Preferred Alignment is becoming better known as the "Great Wall of Cambridge" due the outrageous and obtrusive earth embankment arranged through a large stretch of countryside, on which passenger trains and freight trains will operate 24/7.

This is not my sole opinion but that of many other including our Conservative MP Anthony Browne, whom I have met and discussed and who is also seeking further consultation on the more appropriat alternative Northern Route. I am very confident you will agee to take action on this matter.

If I can be of any assistance in providing you with any further information - please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am writing to urge you to ensure that a full and fair consultation on the routes for the proposed rail line is conducted.

I attended an early consultation at Bar Hill a couple of years ago. I was not convinced about the business case: it did not seem that the passenger numbers for the new line justified the huge expense and disruption involved. The use of diesel locomotives seemed unjustifiable against the current climate change agenda. And at the time, freight traffic was considered only as an added bonus if it could be accommodated but not an integral part of the proposal.

The route now being considered in detail for the southern approach or 'Option E' identifies the need for huge elevations and embankments which will disrupt and damage the local environment and form barriers between communities e.g. for children in Harlton travelling to their primary school. Regular freight traffic is now also part of the proposal.

It seems only fair that proper consideration is given to the northern route, which appears to have been dismissed out of hand, based on assumptions whose validity is unclear and certainly not taking into account the need for freight traffic to pass through the centre of Cambridge if the southern route is adopted. The northern route would pass through 2 villages rather than 10, cause less environmental damage, align with an existing travel corridor to the north of Cambridge and provide transport links for growing settlements such as Northstowe and Waterbeach.

We are writing to you once again to express our concern and strong opposition to the proposed Option E route as set out in East West Rail's current non-statutory consultation, as well as to request your support for an extension of the current consultation period until such a time that public face-to-face meetings have been possible, as currently residents in the impacted areas are not being given the opportunity to meet with EWR executives and have our views openly heard; their consultation process is deeply flawed and doesn't allow for actual engagement or for our questions to be answered (see also my email to EWR of 4th May regarding their online public meetings to which you were copied). We also don't consider that one page within a glossy marketing brochure to cover the plans for the railway from Harlton to Hauxton to be sufficient for our needs as residents who would be majorly impacted by the current plans – this does not constitute a fair and transparent consultation process.

Our opposition to the proposed route E alignment is for the following key reasons:

- 1) Lack of open and transparent consultation in 2019 and during current non-statutory consultation

If EWR carried out a public consultation in 2019 on its plans for this area, it was to all intents and purposes behind closed doors and without advertising the fact to the people most likely to be impacted ie the residents. We were unaware of this previous consultation and therefore unable to put forward our views, and only became notified of the plans EWR had for our surrounding area thanks to the work of Cambridge Approaches last summer. We have reviewed the current consultation documents and remain extremely dissatisfied with the lack of full, open and transparent consultation on the benefits of a northern approach to Cambridge station versus their clearly preferred southern approach. Indeed in the last 24 hours we have come to understand that EWR have recently been 'sneaking' fact sheets onto their website in April and May, pertaining to very important topics such as freight, the

northern approach, and the plight of the Barbastelle bats. This does not constitute transparency and I would go so far as to suggest that the appearance of such documents at this stage of the consultation process show that EWR realise their original documents fail the Cabinet Office Consultation Principle that consultations should provide 'enough information that those consulted understand the issues and can give informed responses.'

2) Environmental concerns – electrification of the rail line/carbon net zero targets?

It is our understanding that EWR plan to run diesel trains along the Central section of the route when it opens in 2030. We question how on earth this can tie in and align with the central government ambition for the country to reach its carbon net zero targets during the same decade. How can it be possible that in the same decade in which consumers will be expected to renounce diesel technology in cars, a National Infrastructure project will commence running using such polluting, outdated technology? It is not acceptable for the Rt Hon. Grant Shapps to merely state an intention to aim towards greener technology for this railway, it must be insisted upon that the line is electrified from the outset (which I understand will have lower capital cost implications in the long run) to ensure both the minimising of environmental impacts as well as protecting the respiratory health of those living within a short distance of the line. Furthermore, the Wildlife Trust have now put on record twice that they believe a southern approach to Cambridge is far more damaging to the environment than an alternative northern approach would be. EWR claim that they hold the environment amongst one of their key concerns in the design of the route alignment however this does not tally with the reports coming out of this respected authority on the environment. Will you assist us in holding EWR to account for these seemingly false claims that they are putting the environment at the forefront of their decision making?

3) Business case seems questionable and remains to be seen

We question the viability of the business case for a long distance rail line linking the university cities of Oxford and Cambridge. It is not clear from any of the information we have received and understood regarding EWR's plans whether this line is actually going to serve high demand for passenger services between the two cities (we understand such demand barely exists with 0.7 pax per train being forecast even PRE-COVID-19) or whether it is supposed to be a local commuter service, or indeed a predominantly freight service – EWR have not made it clear by publishing the business case what the actual *raison d'être* of this line is. The plans as they stand do not serve any of the communities along the route from Cambourne to Cambridge, and the opportunity to serve the growing community of Northstowe by adopting a northern route is being completely ignored. Given the impact this project is going to have on the local environment, the lives of local residents and their communities which will have connecting access roads severed by the Great Wall of EWR, and the mental health impact which is already being suffered by all who are currently living with the uncertainty of the current situation, the residents of South Cambridgeshire deserve better than this lack of clarity on such a major project, especially as it is our hard earned tax revenues which will be used to pay for this questionable project.

4) Loss of natural environment and biodiversity

It is of great concern to us that the peaceful countryside in this area, including the iconic Chapel Hill will be destroyed forever by EWR's plans for a cutting into this hillside. Aside

from the fact that this is a pilgrimage site and cycling hotspot for enthusiasts from many miles around, it is also a habitat for rare Man Orchids which could be destroyed by the path of route E. This area of Chapel Hill should be protected, not destroyed. Additionally, we understand that the Wildlife Trusts are concerned about the damage to the threatened Barbastelle bat species, one of the UK's most rare mammals, at Wimpole and Eversden woods. The hill, and indeed the local gardens are foraging routes for animals such as badgers, deer, foxes and hedgehogs which are near threatened. These routes will inevitably be blocked by the line and habitat, which has remained the same for hundreds of years, destroyed. The noise and vibration from diesel freight trains throughout the day and night will be hugely damaging to the welfare and quality of life of the hundreds of residents who live within a short distance of the proposed alignment (far more for the southern route than the potential northern route). Far from prioritising the environment, EWR seem hellbent on causing the most amount of destruction possible.

Finally, it is very disappointing to see that the Local plan for South Cambs is not been followed in any of EWR's planning. This plan describes the need for an effective, joined up and efficient transportation system in the region that serves the areas with greatest demand. Surely the northern route as proposed by CBRR would best serve existing and planned housing development plans such as those in the Cambourne and Northstowe area. The local plan also states that the character of the area should be preserved helping to ensure that people in the area continue to enjoy a high quality of life – how is EWR's option E proposal in line with this statement, given the concerns made above, which are only a small sample of the issues which would be caused by the implementation of EWR's proposals?

We hope that you understand our concerns and that you will support us by:

- Encouraging EWR to both extend the current consultation period and provide a new full and fair consultation on a northern approach, with all relevant information provided, and no salient points hidden from view.
- Demanding that EWR publish a business case in the immediate term, including the impacts of COVID-19 in their updated passenger forecasts.
- Requesting clear and unambiguous information from EWR regarding the purpose of this line including the amount of freight which could be transported along this route.
- Asking the Secretary of State for Transport to put on record that there will be no diesel trains running along this line from the first day of operation.

As an affected farming business, I object to the arbitrary choice of preferred route of the East West Rail into Cambridge.

I am uneasy about the lack of transparency as to why a Northern approach has been ruled out:

- The economic case for the preferred Southern route has not been presented and that must be the starting point.
- On an economic benefit case a Northern route provides the larger benefit to the county – the possibility of a station at Northstowe, the planned size of which cannot be underestimated, would be of immense benefit.
- In contrast the Southern route from Cambourne into Cambridge is through rural villages and offers no additional transport benefits to any of the villages it will affect.
- A Northern route would follow the development plans for Cambridgeshire with many new developments in the local plan.
- Again, in contrast, along the Southern route there are no development plans.
- Should we be prioritising high-speed travel for long distance commuting into Cambridge, or instead focus on efficient, high throughput local routes to help more people to be able to live closer to their place of work?

The consultation lacks the necessary economic justification on grounds of construction cost and regional economic benefit.

- Why is there a preference for the Southern route with an economic negative benefit and greater negative impact on village residents when a positive economic benefit is available on the Northern route? I am not sure the excuse of difficult engineering on the flood plain and the new A14 requiring a substantial rail bridge is accurate - HS2 rail routes traverse flood plains and sets a precedent for engineering solutions to the Northern route into Cambridge. Adopting a lower engineering capability is not the answer.

The concept of the ongoing consultation is therefore wholly flawed as it has no basis in engineering or economic impact.

Very little mention is made of freight in the consultation as EWR's focus is passengers but there will be a significant freight usage.

- Is it sensible to send freight trains from the north of the county round to the south of the county, then through historic Cambridge City (affecting thousands of residents)?
- EWR suggest that increased traffic from a Northern approach would require 'quad' track. However, they have not published their reasoning to explain why they are convinced this is necessary.

- The Southern route will surely require significant additional investment in the area of Cambridge Station if freight is to be a major aspect of EWR.

Closure of the local roads on the Southern route sever villages that are closely linked, particularly schools. Alternative road routes are simply not practicable.

I could go on but would be in danger of switching the reader off! Based on the above mentioned comments, the ongoing consultation on the Southern route is a flawed process. The preferred route from Cambourne to Cambridge should be separated from the ongoing consultation and a fresh examination of the alternative routes into Cambridge is essential. There should be proper regional economic, engineering and costing assessment carried out.

I am writing to express my deep concern about the East West Rail proposals for a railway line which will permanently change the nature of the area where I live in Harlton CB23. The planned railway embankment, higher and wider than the Great Wall of China, will disturb our peaceful village, disrupt communities and wreck unspoilt countryside including the iconic Chapel Hill. And yet the choice of route seems to make very little sense.

I urge you to use your influence to press for a rethink of the proposals in the light of the following questions:

How can EWR claim that local residents were consulted in 2019 when most people were unaware of their plans until very recently, thanks to an inadequate first consultation? And why have alternative routes, including a northern approach, not been properly considered?

Why is EWR ignoring Northstowe, the biggest new town since Milton Keynes, which would benefit from a rail link to Cambridge North to serve its 25,000 future inhabitants? And why is EWR missing opportunities to link the new railway with existing transport including road, rail and guided busway?

Why is EWR proposing a southern approach when a northern approach would have less impact on local communities (at least 7 times fewer residents living within 200 metres of the line) and wildlife (as supported by The Wildlife Trust)?

How can the government claim it is leading the way tackling climate change when EWR is planning to use diesel trains on a new railway line? And why is EWR proposing to run polluting diesel trains so close to local schools (Comberton VC and Haslingfield Primary), putting children's health at risk?

Why is EWR is proposing to take freight through densely populated central Cambridge, disturbing city residents, when this could be avoided by an alternative route?

I am asking you to push for a rethink of these badly-thought-out plans and for a serious, full and fair consideration of the alternatives. I look forward to hearing from you.

You will be aware that East West Rail Co (EWR) are currently conducting a non-statutory consultation on their plans to build a railway line from Oxford to Cambridge.

You may not be aware that the route EWR have chosen to approach Cambridge makes no sense at all. There are very many reasons why EWR's proposals are flawed, but the most frustrating thing is that there is a much better alternative route that better meets EWR's stated objectives and better meets the needs and wishes of the people living in Cambridgeshire. I have listed a few reasons below, but may I ask you, please, to use your authority to make East West Rail Co conduct a full and fair consultation on a northern approach to Cambridge, taking serious consideration of the ideas of the local community-based think tank, CamBed RailRoad (CBRR) who have been considering the best way to approach Cambridge for much longer than EWR.

I can provide, on request, very many reasons why a northern approach to Cambridge is better than EWR's proposed southern approach. Here are a few to support this request.

A northern approach will have much less impact on Cambridgeshire residents

- At least 7 times fewer residents living within 200m of the line
- At least 6 fewer villages within 500m of the line
- 5.5km less of residential central Cambridge within 500m of the line
- Close communities across South Cambridgeshire will not be severed by the railway line

A northern approach will benefit more Cambridgeshire residents

- Northstowe is going to be the largest new town in the UK since Milton Keynes. A station located here would be immensely popular with the 10,000 predicted residents.
- Conversely the southern route will destroy rural countryside in an area that the local council has no plans to develop.

A northern approach will have less impact on the environment

- 13 fewer protected wildlife and ancient monument sites affected
- A rare, legally protected colony of Barbestelle bats will not be endangered

In addition, and not related to the route chosen to approach Cambridge, are you aware that EWR are planning to run diesel trains on this new railway?! Absolutely unbelievable at a time when the Government is pledged to cut the UK's carbon emissions by 78% by 2035!

A railway running from Oxford to Cambridge, and on to the east coast ports is a good idea, if implemented thoughtfully and carefully. You have the opportunity to stop EWR from turning a great railway project into an unmitigated disaster. Thank you for your help.

I am writing to you about East West Rail (EWR). Their plans for the Southern approach to Cambridge would devastate many villages in South Cambridgeshire.

I find it hard to believe that the Southern approach is the most cost-effective choice. The alternative Northern approach passes only 2 villages rather than 10 in the South, and causes less damage to the environment according to the Wildlife Trust. Taking account of the monetary cost of distress and suffering that would be caused to people living in South Cambridgeshire villages, I think that the benefit-to-cost ratio must be greater for the Northern route. I am also concerned that EWR have done their best to conceal their plans from affected villagers for as long as possible. This makes a mockery of open government.

I am writing to you in the hope that you can bring some pressure to bear on the powers that be for a fresh appraisal of the East West Rail route into Cambridge.

As you will be aware there is much consternation in the villages south of Cambridge at the prospect of this monstrous piece of earthworks topped off with dirty diesels tanking through every quarter of an hour.

The area is of substantial recreational value, extremely popular with the cyclists (they constantly pour past my door at weekends). For walkers, Harlton Woods and Chapel Hill, and of course Wimpole Hall and its associated extensive footpaths.

This time of lock down has made us all value these precious spaces so much more, to blight it forever with this railroad would be sad indeed.

Cambridge centre itself is also being abused.

Once the dots have been joined the container freight from Felixstowe will start to trawl its way through Newmarket, Fulbourn, Cherry Hinton and the Mill Road area of Cambridge. 24/7.

Couldn't Northstowe etc. benefit from a station on the rail network? Direct link to Cambridge North, Central and South, London and of course let's not forget Oxford.

Please do your utmost to ensure that this scheme is not just bulldozed through without review.

We are writing to you to voice our objections to the proposed route of the East West rail. We believe that all alternatives have not been given sufficient consideration or, if it has, those deliberations have not been made available to the public.

We live in a grade 2 listed building in Haslingfield, we have lived here for almost 30 years and raised our children here, we look forward to enjoying the beautiful area with our grandsons, an area which is not blighted by noise and pollution.

The route proposed will create a huge amount of noise and disruption both during the construction and once the route is in use, especially if it is used for freight or overnight. The quantity of pollutants will increase hugely as the tracks are being designed for diesel locomotives and not being electrified from the outset. Pollution is known to cause damage to both people and buildings. The levels of pollution will also have a significant impact on the local school children, the school is opposite our house.

This route will create huge disturbance to the wildlife currently inhabiting the fields around Chapel Hill, sitting in my garden on a summers evening we see bats, owls, deer, rabbits, birds of prey. Badgers have setts in the old clunch pit on the hill and we are aware that the rare Barbestelle bats which inhabit Wimpole Woods use this area as their feeding ground.

Chapel Hill is one of the high points of the otherwise fairly flat surrounds of Cambridge, to build structure that cuts through the hill and creates massive embankments either side will destroy the rare and beautiful view across Cambridgeshire. There is a network of footpaths across and around Chapel Hill linking the villages of Haslingfield, Harlton and Barrington, this route will forcibly separate the villages from one another.

The Cambridge North option would allow freight to be moved from Felixstowe whilst avoiding further pollution to the centres of both Cambridge city and Newmarket town. It will pass just two villages rather than the 10 affected by option E and will provide essential transport links for the rapidly developing settlements of Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach

As residents who will be hugely impacted by this development we are astounded at the very low level of information that has been forthcoming from EWR, to date we have received one glossy brochure extolling the, to us very tenuous benefits, and that arrived in the last two weeks.

We believe the need for a link between the academic centres of Cambridge and Oxford should be reviewed post pandemic as people have learned to travel less, work from home and to embrace the virtual links technology affords.

As a footnote, it was interesting to hear CEO of East West rail state on local radio that he would not wish to live on the route being proposed!

I am writing to you in relation to the propose EWR I have a few question I would very much like to hear from you about.

EWR is proposing running Diesel trains on the new railway line, how can this be beneficial to the environment or population? Will you be recommending more environmental friendly power?

The government currently claims that it is leading the way when tackling climate change, how can this claim be upheld when agreeing to allow technologies from the 1960's to be used with understood detrimental environmental and health impacts?

These diesel trains will be running close to multiple schools , namely Comberton village College, Haslingfield Primary school and Harston Primary school, how can this be acceptable for our children?

EWR seems intent on building embankments around the village of Harlton unto 10 meters high, how can this be allowed?

Why is EWR ignoring Northstow, the largest town to be built in the uk since Milton Keynes, the propose 25.000 residents of Northstow would directly benefit from this rail connection unlike the propose route to the south where there is zero benefit to any of the population beyond Cambourn.

Some of our villagers said they had written to you so we thought we would do the same. As you probably know by now EWR are planning to build a 30ft high embankment at the back of our house and then put a high speed diesel train on top. The views across the valley will be lost but worse is the impact on our homes from fumes and noise from four diesel trains an hour plus diesel freight. Why can't they electrify the line and put it in a cutting to go under the roads. That makes it more environmentally friendly and deadens the noise. I don't know if you have any influence but perhaps you could let us know if anything can be done.

A few EWR questions for you

1. Why is EWR going to use diesel trains on a new railway line? This is anti-climate change
2. Why is EWR proposing a railway line running diesel trains so close to local schools (Comberton VC and Haslingfield Primary)? Noise will disrupt lessons and outdoor activities.
3. Why is EWR ignoring the largest town built since Milton Keynes? .Northstowe (and Water beach) would benefit from a rail link to Cambridge North to serve the 25,000+ people who will eventually live there.
4. Why is EWR so intent on building huge embankments around Harlton? It will be a horrendous eyesore and noise 24/7.
5. What does EWR propose to maintain public rights of way? In Harlton (parish no. 115) we will lose footpath 115/1, path no. 1.
6. How will Harlton residents and their children access Haslingfield facilities.

I live in Harlton and obviously worried about the disruption caused by the proposed Southern route of the the Oxford /Cambridge line to the new Cambridge South station by EWR, with no benefit what so ever for this area, with a ten meter high embankment, it disrupts well used footpaths, useful roads and a safe route for children attending Haslingfield Primary School, not to mention spoiling a beautiful environment, is this really necessary?

Harlton is not mentioned in consultation documents (it is mentioned in section E titles but no text) Why is it being ignored?

In this present climate with the increase of communication technology I feel the amount of passenger traffic from Cambridge to Oxford will be of limited use. Has enough research has been done to warrant the expense of such a service?

I feel the real purpose of the east / west line is to transport freight. In which case wouldn't the Northern route be the preferred direction so by-passing Cambridge altogether and so benefitting the large new town of Northstowe?

Has there been adequately Consultation for this northern route? As a lay person it has been difficult to find out any information.

The other concern is the use of diesel trains, how can the government claim it is tackling climate change when it is still is going to use old technology?

As residents of Harlton, we have many concerns regarding the proposed EWR southern approach and the statement by East West Railway Company that 'we've designed the delivery of this project with the community in mind' (<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/bedford-to-cambridge>).

We simply do not understand how the southern approach has been put forward, let alone highlighted as the preferred approach, as it adversely affects so many communities. From Cambourne to Cambridge South there will be no stations and no benefit to the local economy. The line will destroy rural villages and countryside, cause noise and air pollution as well as create an irreversible devastation to the countryside, wildlife, homeowners and the farming industry.

I believe, Northstowe is the largest town built since Milton Keynes. So, why is EWR not taking the northern approach? The commuting option for people from Northstowe to Cambridge North would surely be preferable to more vehicles trying to access an already congested city. The impact on rural villages is less. It seems EWR are trying to overlook this option. Why, when they are designing with the 'community in mind'?

If there is a coherent argument for the southern approach, that can justify the destruction of so many South Cambridgeshire communities, please could you advise.

If you cannot justify the southern approach, please will you forward these valid concerns so communities in rural villages are no longer subjected to the threat of this hideous proposition.

I am a resident of Harlton, a village located in the contested area of Option E of EastWest Rail's plan. I understand that the South Cambs District Council is preparing a response to the EWR consultation document. I am writing to express my absolute opposition to the plan to direct the new Line through Hauxton-Haslingfield and Harlton. I have a number of questions:

How can the government claim it is leading the way tackling climate change, when it is going to use 1960s technology on a next-generation railway?

Why is EWR ignoring the largest town built since Milton Keynes? Northstowe would benefit from a rail link to Cambridge North to serve the 25,000 people who will eventually live there.

Why is EWR so intent on building huge embankments around Harlton? It will be visually and aurally distressing to over half of the village.

What does EWR propose to maintain public rights of way? In Harlton (parish no. 115) we will lose footpath 115/1, path no. 1. (Nb this is the footpath across the field next to the vineyard)

I likely won't be here when this monstrosity hits. But the thought of possibly endangering a gentle, English way of living for the next generation is worth fighting for. Please consider these actions:

- reject Option E. In fact reject the whole project, although that is an unlikely outcome
- investigate options that follow existing or planned transport corridors (e.g. A428 & M11) in accordance with the National Infrastructure Commission report (Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge-Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc). These should include a route to Cambridge North rather than Cambridge South
- consider the environment to a greater extent than EWR are doing already, especially in their choice of whether to adopt an electrified line at the outset
- provide the public with clear and unambiguous information to back up their decisions, especially in terms of value-for-money of various alignment options and in fulfilling their environmental pledges.

I am requesting your support in achieving a full assessment of a Northern Route around Cambridge, as past the East West Rail project.

Original plans presented by EWR for the Bedford to Cambridge section of the East West Rail plan identified 5 potential approaches to Cambridge, all from the South. EWR offered no options for a Northern Route. Whatever the reasons for this omission, the negative consequences are considerable.

EWR have been slow in providing further detail and replying to requests for information. However, it is now clear that each of the southern options will have a considerable negative impacts, particularly the need for massive embankments and freight noise (not disclosed in the original plans) upon residents to the West and South of Cambridge. There are no obvious benefits.

In contrast a route to the north of Cambridge, where new towns are being built, offers the opportunity to for the railway to be properly integrated with other development plans and become an asset. Apparently, there are well established technologies for track laying in such flood plain terrains which do not involve unsightly and expensive embankments.

Given the enormous cost and disruption associated with this project, surely the planners should be instructed to undertake a detailed assessment, involving a full and two-way consultation process, of a Northern Approach, before a firm decision is made.

I write to express my great dismay and concern regarding the new railway route proposed to be in close proximity to my home and also the opaque manner in which EWR are approaching their seemingly pre-determined consultation.

I hope that you can promote the northern route - the half-hearted reference to it in the consultation document is greatly disappointing. As EWR acknowledge that the route is feasible - but seemingly just more expensive and not as direct to the favoured Biomedical campus and Astra Zeneca - it deserves proper consideration, especially given the benefits of a connection to Northstowe and Cambridge North and the ability for freight trains to continue on to Felixstowe without having to snake through numerous villages and central Cambridge.

Furthermore, it is clear that alternative routes from Cambourne to the south of Cambridge are possible, but EWR have not referred to this or their reasons for discounting them. Assuming the Trinity College satellites between Barton and Haslingfield are 'untouchable', what of the attached route that runs along the A428 north of Hardwick, cutting down to the M11 at Jct 12 and following it along thereafter. With the move towards a station north of Cambourne, this appears more appropriate and eminently achievable, following existing transport corridors with no obvious barrier. This appears a compromise solution with a reduced impact on existing settlements and arguably creates a new City boundary to the west of the increasingly popular Coton area and an opportunity for new sustainable residential development which would also benefit from the new Greenway across to the university campuses - please can you explore this with EWR and your colleagues.

I want you to know my views on the plan to build a new east west railway line from Oxford to Cambridge.

1 As a nation thinking of our carbon footprint we should not be developing diesel train lines.

2 We are considering reopening the old Harston station & do not want your southern option for the EWR getting in the way.

3 Your proposal to build a wall around our village of Harston to carry your elevated train line by your southern route proposal is too expensive, we will lose land and it will decimate the landscape. It is beyond belief that you propose to elevate it by up to 12 metres above ground with a mix of viaducts, bridges and embankments. This is not in the spirit of trying to preserve our planet.

4 You have not given the northern approach proper (fair and full) consideration, it will be shorter, will serve the biomedical campus.

I want you to give the northern approach option E serious consideration. It really is the only option; it passes only 2 villages, will damage wildlife less and will provide links with the new village of Cambourne, Northstowe and Waterbeach. It will run in a trench and pass under the A14, much kinder to the environment.

I want the northern approach for the EWR.

I am writing to express my concerns over the proposed plans for the 'Option E' EWR route and to ask that you support local residents in requesting a thorough review of alternative options to the north.

My main concerns include:

1. Minimising environmental impact

Option E appears to prioritise a simple engineering solution over the loss for future generations of a wide sweep of visually stunning countryside, wildlife habitat and productive agricultural land. I would like to understand why EWR are not planning:

- to use existing or planned transport infrastructure corridors (e.g. A428 & M11)
- to serve areas of greatest projected housing growth to the north of Cambridge.

There seems to have been little consideration given to the visual and increased noise level impacts of their plans. An example of this is the proposed grade separated lines on Station Road /Newton Road (Harston). At the recent presentation EWR were unwilling to share estimates for the height and width of this section of the rail or the details of the increased noise levels and how they intend to mitigate these with more environmentally acceptable engineering solutions. This information is required to stop speculation and allow us to assess what is being proposed.

2. The impact on our communities and village life

The proposed closing of Newton Road/Station Road for motorised vehicles will sever our village (Harston). Residents in Newton Road (myself included) will need to travel a considerably extended distance by car to reach village amenities (i.e. doctor, school, post office and village shop, village hall, churches). We will also be physically isolated from the village which will lead to increased security concerns. We will not gain a rail station. Our access to the train network will remain unchanged.

3. Covid restrictions have meant no opportunities for open public discussion

EWR's webinars have been presentations with no allowance for live discussion and have excluded non tech savvy residents. Once CV lock-down restrictions are lifted we will have just 4 weeks before the consultation period ends. In these unprecedented times the public consultation period should be extended.

I write to express my profound opposition to the proposed southern EWR route into Cambridge from Cambourne. The technical engineering, economic and environmental cases for the northern route have been much better argued by Cambridge Approaches and CamBedRailRoad than I could possibly attempt in a single email and I fully endorse their arguments and proposals. However, I do wish to register with you my opposition to building a southern route, a view which I know is shared by many in this area.

The impact of this proposed southern route can only be damaging to the environment and all who live here. The noise, vibrations, diesel fumes and the sight of such high embankments would be seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of people and wildlife alike. There are no benefits to the populations of this area.

It is proposed to pass within metres of a secondary school, Comberton Village College.

Unlike the northern route, this is a rural area which is of great amenity value to residents and visitors alike. It is a valued green belt area, a green lung to an increasingly urbanised city. The footpaths are well walked and enjoyed by people from various parts of Cambridgeshire. This route will cut through some of Britain's most ancient tracks (especially Port Way and Lot Way), despoiling or closing them for ever. What a terrible loss of our heritage.

Unlike the northern route, this area has some of Cambridgeshire's finest landscapes and the railway would remove from production hundreds of acres of agricultural land (another cut to our precarious food security).

Unlike most of the northern route area, this rural area has no major population growth planned and is not an area of major employment centres. It is to the north where transport of this kind is needed. The people who live here would reap no benefit whatsoever and bear all the damage and degradation of our environment and daily lives.

I urge you to oppose the proposed southern route and fight to ensure that there will be proper consideration of a northern route.

I am writing to you to ask you to consider using the northern route into Cambridge in preference to the southern route for the EWR. The southern route would cut through stunning countryside and would leave many of the villages in the area both spoilt and very isolated. The railway would bring many problems to people in the local villages in the south, such as high noise levels both for residents and children attending the local schools, increased difficulty reaching other villages and Cambridge, and decrease in property prices due to the proximity of the railway which will not only be transporting passengers during the day, but also freight through all hours of the day and night. The fact that the railway would be raised makes this route even more detrimental to the local area. There would be no benefits for people living in the south as there are no railway stations planned for the area.

I completely understand that people living in Cambourne are keen to have a train to take them to Cambridge, but the northern route would still do this. The northern route would also allow people living in Northstowe to commute to Cambridge, thus opening up job possibilities to people living there. Unlike the southern route, the northern route would be beneficial for many people in Cambridgeshire.

Concerning the plan to build a new east west railway line from Oxford to Cambridge. I want you to give the northern approach option E serious consideration.

The southern approach affects more villages, how can the government support this?

The proposed raised extremely high embankment the southern route would include is too expensive. How can you consider elevation by up to 12 metres above ground? The noise from the trains especially the freight trains would be horrific.

Pollution from the trains will have a negative impact on our climate.

The latest consultation published does not consider the northern approach which is clearly the better option. I want the northern approach for the EWR.

Please listen to my concerns the awful impact the southern route would have.

I am a resident of Harlton and I understand that South Cambs District Council is preparing its response to the EWR consultation documents.

I would like to request that you consider the following points for inclusion:

Why is EWR still considering using diesel trains on a new railway line, when there is a governmental promise to lead the way in tackling climate change.

Also, why is EWR proposing to run a line using diesel trains so close to schools in Comberton and Haslingfield?

Why is EWR ignoring the largest town built since Milton Keynes? EWR has argued that Northstowe will be adequately served by the guided busway, but I would argue that a train line is a completely different thing, providing access to a far larger number of destinations. In a recent broadcast on Look East, residents from Cambourne spoke in glowing terms about the prospect of having a train station nearby, providing opportunities for work, shopping and leisure. I am uncertain as to why EWR fail to see that residents of Northstowe (and possibly even Waterbeach) would have the same reaction.

As a resident of Harlton, I am appalled at the prospect of EWR building huge embankments that would allow the passing trains to pollute the air, increase noise levels drastically, destroy the beauty of local surroundings and isolate our village from much needed education, leisure and shopping facilities in neighbouring Haslingfield.

Finally, I would ask that you enquire as to what EWR proposes to do about maintaining public rights of way. Here in Harlton we will lose footpath 115/11, path no. 1. During lockdown, these pathways have been a lifeline to many, both residents of the village and visitors.