

Motion to Full Council: East West Rail – Proposed Multi-Storey Car Park in Queen’s Park

Wednesday 4th February

This Council notes:

- *Growing concern among residents of Queen’s Park regarding East West Rail’s revised plans for a multi-storey car park on the western side of the railway station.*
- *That improved pedestrian access to the station, including a potential Western Entrance, is welcomed as it would better serve the existing community and future developments in Policy 12 of Local Plan 2030.*
- *That Policy 12 of Local Plan 2030 notes land at Ford End Road will be developed for residential, local retail, education, and open space uses, which will further increase traffic in the area.*
- *That the Non-Statutory Consultation was conducted on a different version of the proposals, meaning local residents and Councillors were not fully consulted on the current multi-storey car park relocation plan.*
- *That Queen’s Park Councillors were not notified prior to publication of the ‘You Said, We Did’ report, despite the Western Entrance and car park proposals directly affecting their Ward.*
- *That information has been provided in a piecemeal, drip-feed manner, making it difficult for the Council and residents to provide meaningful feedback.*
- *That it is unclear where the idea to move the car park originated, whether suggested by the Council or solely by EWRCo, and this needs clarification.*
- *That residents fear the development would significantly increase traffic congestion, particularly on Ford End Road, Hurst Grove, Ashburnham Road and surrounding streets, with negative impacts on road safety, air quality, and quality of life.*
- *That the current proposals, as shared publicly by East West Rail, have raised questions about whether adequate mitigation, local benefits, and infrastructure investment have been fully considered.*

This Council believes:

1. Any major transport-related development in Queen’s Park must prioritise the needs, safety, and wellbeing of existing residents.
2. Development that increases traffic should only proceed where there are clear, enforceable, and well-resourced measures to mitigate congestion and environmental harm.
3. Queen’s Park should see tangible benefits from any such development, rather than bearing disproportionate negative impacts.

Full Council Action	The Council Resolves:	BBC ACTION
1.0	To call on the Executive to oppose the construction of any multi-storey car park in Queen's Park unless there are: a. Fully funded traffic mitigation measures, agreed in consultation with the Council and local residents; b. Clear infrastructure benefits for Queens Park; c. Significant investment in traffic management and transport infrastructure within Queens Park and the surrounding area, including Ashburnham Road.	Council officers continue to engage with EWR to fully understand their proposals for a multi-storey car park in Queen's Park and the mitigations to traffic impact that will be taken. Council officers have regular meetings with EWR to discuss traffic and transport matters, and contribute expertise and knowledge regarding traffic modelling and patterns in Bedford Borough. Concerns around traffic management and mitigations, and transport infrastructure in Queen's Park will continue to be raised with EWR.
2.0	To write to David Hughes of EWR requesting traffic modelling and the rationale for relocating the multi-storey car park, and to formally register the Council's objection to the proposed site under the terms of point 1.	Council officers continue to engage with EWR regarding traffic modelling, and contribute expertise and local knowledge. A letter requesting the formal rationale for relocating the multi-story car park and the car parking solutions considered was sent to EWR. Once the response has been received, this will be reviewed and suitably challenged and critiqued as necessary. Council officers will continue to engage with EWR regarding their proposals for the multi-storey car park and emerging designs.
3.0	To ask EWR whether smaller car parks with fewer floors, or multiple car parks on either side of the station, were considered as alternatives to mitigate visual and traffic impact.	A request for the formal rationale for relocating the multi-story car park and the car parking solutions considered in their emerging designs, including options discounted with reasoning, will be sent to EWR.
4.0	To seek confirmation of the origin of the relocation idea, including whether it was suggested by the Council.	The Council's response to EWR's Non-statutory Consultation, completed in January 2025, was: <i>"The Council supports the provision of replacement car parking provision but would be willing to work with EWRCo to find better locations for the proposed multi-storey car park if these are available."</i> This response was agreed by Full Council on 15 th January 2025.

		The land proposed for the multi-storey car park is owned by Network Rail, and has previously been proposed for use for temporary parking.
5.0	To request that Ward Councillors directly affected by the project throughout the Borough are actively involved in decision-making before publication of reports in the future, ensuring transparency and local input.	Officers will continue to engage with Ward Councillors directly affected by the EWR project through our wider programme of engagement. Officers will remind EWR of the importance of meaningful engagement with Ward Councillors regarding their proposals and seek confirmation of the meetings programmed in their forward plan to ensure Ward Councillors are invited.
6.0	To ask EWR to review and minimise unnecessary expenditure resulting from repeated changes to plans or consultations.	EWR is a nationally significant railway project funded by central government. As such, best value considerations for the project are outside of our control. Officers will raise this comment with EWR. As directed by the Mayor, officers continue to record all time and work completed towards the EWR project for recharge to EWR under the PPA agreement.
7.0	To call on East West Rail to meaningfully engage with local residents, ward councillors, and the Council before progressing further with these proposals.	Officers continue to provide feedback to EWR regarding EWR's engagement approach with local residents, ward councillors and the council. Officers responded to EWR's Community Consultation Strategy on 10 th February 2026. This enabled the council to provide feedback on the methods EWR use for engagement, based on our local context. There will be a further non-statutory consultation beginning in Spring 2026. Exact dates to be confirmed by EWR. This will provide further opportunity for BBC to provide comment.
8.0	To request that officers communicate this position formally to East West Rail and relevant stakeholders.	Officers will continue to engage with the EWR teams and the raise concerns and comments arising in the Motion with the EWR project team.