

Category 2: Route options within Corridor E

Abbreviations used in the responses below include the following;

- BBC – Bedford Borough Council
- EWR – East West Rail (generally refers to the project)
- EWRC – East West Rail Company

1. **Would an alignment slightly further north, permit the option of Bedford Parkway Station between Clapham and Milton Ernest. This would reduce inbound commuter traffic to the existing Bedford Midland, and do away with the need to rebuild and extend the existing station, The EW line would then stop at Bedford St Johns and Bedford North**

The alignment north of Bedford will not negate the need to rebuild Bedford Midland Station.

There is always a balance and a trade-off in respect to the optimum location of railway stations. Out of town stations certainly serve a function in providing access to the railway network without entering the town. A town centre location, though, offers connectivity to the residents of the town. The number of stations along a railway line is limited by cost (they are not cheap to build) but also because of the impact on the timetabling, scheduling and revenue of increasing the number of stations. Each additional station increases journey-time which makes rail travel less competitive than say car travel. Longer journey time reduces the amount of trains that any route can accommodate and also can have an impact on the amount of trains needed on a route, or the number of crew.

2. **Can i please ask would it not have made sence to have a link direct into stansted airport. Luton and Gatwick have a service into the airports?**

Stansted Airport is served by trains from London and from Birmingham via Leicester, Peterborough and Cambridge. The purpose of East West Rail is to connect the cities of Cambridge and Oxford and towns along that line of route. When the construction work is completed it will become possible for such a service to be introduced. At this stage, though, there appears to be no plan for EWR trains to connect directly with Stansted Airport.

3. **Would the Mayor agree that the Alignment 8 and 9, the southern options provide a more sensible and less detrimental route in terms of impact on the landscape, villages and environment as well as being topographically less challenging than Alignments 1,2 and 6, the northern ones. The southern options go nowhere near as close to village centres such as Renhold, Wilden, Clapham, Brickhill, etc. and therefore will have less impact and I'd therefore ask does the mayor support the selection of alignments 8 or 9?**

At this stage we have seen insufficient information to be absolute but on the current information our preferred route choice is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

We recognise, though, that the proposed Northern route options pass very close to the village of Wilden. If any of the northern alignments were chosen, we would propose that the alignment is altered to run somewhat further to the north of the current planned position. Such an alteration would reduce the disturbance and environmental impact to residents of Wilden.

If any of the Southern alignments were chosen, BBC would like Brickhill Country Park to be extended up to the line of the railway; and as little impact as possible on Great and Little Early Groves, and on the setting of Mowsbury Hill Fort.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum.

- 4. Please take my comments below as my response to BBC's request for views to inform their response to the ongoing EWR consultation. I do not agree with the EWR line going through Bedford mainline and out to the North to get to Cambridge. The claimed benefits of EWR going through the centre of Bedford are negligible and do not justify the destruction of the beautiful countryside to the North of Bedford especially given the longer route that would entail and the extensive and expensive engineering works required when a shorter, quicker, flatter, cheaper Southern route is available along an existing transport corridor. My preference is for a southern route option, with a new parkway station to the South of Bedford, either separate to or joined with the new Wixams station. The lack of transparency on this subject to date is outrageous as well as the lack of proper consultation in 2019. I am also appalled by the use of taxpayers money by BBC to skew the position to their own ends by employing consultants to review only certain of the possible routes in order to obtain the outcome desired by BBC. As a Putnoe resident I have concerns we will suffer from disruption through construction in the operational phase of this project with the major roads -in and close to Putnoe - Wentworth Drive, Kimbolton Road, Putnoe Lane being made the designated route for any construction traffic. I am also concerned that we will suffer from noise pollution and vibrations created by the railway. I feel highly disappointed that there seems to have been no effective attempt to inform your residents about the EWR 2019 consultation which has ended up bringing this line to our front door. Should EWR go ahead along a Northern route, the Mayor and the majority of Borough Councillors should hang their heads in shame.**

EWRC carried out a non-statutory consultation process on the proposed routes to the east of Bedford in 2019. BBC responded to this consultation supporting a route through the town. Individuals were free to respond to EWRC in the same

way. Irrespective of whether the proposed railway line was to the north or the south of the town there would be impact on the countryside. The impact would have been different depending on the mix of cuttings, embankments, viaducts and tunnels, but there would be an impact nevertheless. The route through Bedford will bring benefits to the town which would not have occurred if the town had been bypassed. We are doing our utmost to ensure that EWRC will minimise the environmental impact and disruption of construction and operation.

- 5. My preference is for the southern alignment route with a Tempsford station. Please take my comments below as my response to BBC's request for views to inform their response to the ongoing EWR consultation. My preference is for the EWR line to take a southern route option, with a new parkway station to the South of Bedford, either separate to or joined with the new Wixams station. I do not agree with the EWR line going through Bedford mainline and out to the North to get to Cambridge. The claimed benefits of EWR going through the centre of Bedford are negligible and do not justify the longer route that would entail and the extensive and expensive engineering works required when a shorter, quicker, flatter, cheaper Southern route is available along an existing transport corridor. I am appalled by the lack of transparency on this subject to date as well as the lack of proper consultation in 2019. I am similarly appalled by the use of taxpayers money by BBC to skew the position to their own ends by employing consultants to review only certain of the possible routes in order to obtain the outcome desired by BBC. This combined with BBC's offer to fund the upgrade of Bedford Midland Mainline Station were undeniably the decisive factors in the selection of the illogical route E. I suggest you rethink your support and tactics on this matter before condemning this and future generations to a destructive, inefficient and illogical route that is only even under consideration due to your influence. Should EWR go ahead along a Northern route, the legacy left by the Mayor and the majority of Borough Councillors who appear to be blindly following a party whip, will be one of which all those complicit should be greatly ashamed.**

The purpose of the 2019 consultation, and the 2021 consultation was for interested parties to share their views with EWRC. In 2019 the consultation was in respect to the broad route choices, and now it relates to variations within the chosen route. In 2019 BBC made a case for the new railway to come through Bedford. The purpose of our response to the consultation was to make our position known. It was not our purpose to judge the relative costs or benefits of the various routes. The route through the town will enable Bedford to grow and prosper in the future from the benefits of better connectivity. The redevelopment of Bedford Midland Station and Bedford St Johns will provide a stimulus to the regeneration of the town. Only by routing the line through the town will these opportunities emerge.

6. I am in favour of the EWR route linking Oxford and Cambridge but have serious reservations about which route is taken re. my village, Wilden. I am asking for Alignments 8 and 9, the southern options, rather than Alignments 1,2 and 6, the northern ones that will devastate Wilden by running straight through the middle of our village. The southern options don't go anywhere near as close to other village centres such as Renhold, Clapham, Brickhill etc, so are nowhere near as bad for them. Wilden is hit harder and closer than anyone else by the northern lines. The very close northern route diesel freight and passenger trains will cause Wilden untold noise, vibration, pollution and disruption. There will also be years of road closures, dust and lorries as they build the double railway line through here only 100 metres from the Village Hall and High Street, cutting across Shrubbery Lane, Chequers Hill and Colesden Road. When I decided to move to Wilden over 20 years ago I was attracted by the peaceful and rural setting of the village which I do not want ruined.

BBC is not the decision-making authority in respect to which route is chosen for the Oxford to Cambridge route. We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

We will do our utmost to work with EWRC and local residents to minimise the impact of the scheme. We will encourage EWRC to align the route further from residents' homes, if it is practical to do so, and to minimise the impact of engineering infrastructure.

7. We are writing to seek your support in recommending to EWR route Alignment 9 (purple).

The alignment routes 1,2 and 6 are devastating for Wilden, Colesden, Wyboston and Chawston as they go right through the middle of the villages. WILDEN alignment 1, 2 and 6

The line will only be 100m away from the Village Hall and High Street and all residents of Wilden will be affected in some way.

Routes 1, 2 and 6 will cause Wilden untold noise, vibration, pollution and disruption including years of road closures and dust and lorries as they build the double railway line.

South Brook which runs through Wilden already has a flooding issue. The construction of the line could make this much worse with the amount of earth being removed and the very deep cuttings (over 30m in places). Wilden is the worst affected village on the line from Bedford to Tempsford.

The line at Wilden would cut through 3 roads, Shrubbery Lane, Chequers Hill and Colesden Road and tear through very productive farm land. Many footpaths are in these areas and are widely used by residents.

Other Considerations: The northern routes mean that more houses will be demolished outside Bedford than the southern routes.

A Tempsford A station would give better parking and a less congested route and would take pressure off Bedford Midland and St Johns stations.

A Tempsford A station would better serve the housing developments in both Great Barford and Blunham and the possible expansion of housing in Wyboston.

Tempsford A would be better than a station closer to St Neots town which would cause more traffic congestion and poor parking.

The southern option 8 and 9 would not go anywhere near as close to other village centres such as Brickhill, Clapham, Renhold etc so nowhere near as bad for them as for Wilden.

To summarise, the Southern Alignment Routes 8 and 9 are further from homes, greener with a less demanding terrain and we would presume to be a cheaper option.

A station at Tempsford would give the North Bedfordshire villages easier access to a Station.

Please give this consideration when you are responding to the EWR Alignment Consultation.

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We will do our utmost to work with EWRC and local residents to minimise the impact of the scheme. We will encourage EWRC to align the route further from residents' homes, if it is practical to do so, and to minimise the impact of engineering infrastructure.

- 8. I wish to comment and question the proposed route of the E-W rail route from Bedford for the next 10 miles towards Cambridge. The present plans bring the line through Carriage Drive and close to the North Brickhill Country Park before crossing Graze Hill and heading East across the B660. This is a tragic loss of recreational amenity and will have long-lasting noise impact to a significant number of the urban population in North Brickhill. The present configuration of paths and bridleways that these plans will damage, make less accessible and attractive and damage the local flora and fauna, is an avoidable consequence. The flat terrain North of**

Twinwoods is much less densely populated. Taking the line (say) 4 miles further North towards North of the rise that is the old Twinwoods aerodrome would save the amenity used by hundreds of people exercising daily and reduce the noise and other pollution to a densely populated area. To what extent is the cost to the residents of North Bedford in terms of health, well being and disruption considered in making plans and why has this less impactful route not been considered?

EWRC will carry out a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation, and this will be available as a public document. BBC will work with EWRC to ensure that steps are taken to minimise the impact on the countryside. However, we recognise that the proposal round Clapham is likely to be intrusive and have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope will be considered by EWRC. BBC has also asked that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel. There is likely to be an element of disruption during construction, but after a period of time once the railway infrastructure and landscaping has established within the local environment, the full impact is likely to be far less.

- 9. I've also seen evidence of the council ignoring advice by Kilburn consulting, February 2019, where it recommended a southern route. Why did the council ignore this?**

It is longstanding Council policy to support a route through Bedford Midland. We believe that the economic benefits and the higher levels of connectivity provided by a town centre station will bring greater levels of prosperity to the town than a route which bypassed Bedford. This was supported by further analysis by Kilborn Consulting.

- 10. The longer route would have more gradients and turns so would be more expensive and not a green option in any way at all. This seems contrary to the logic of current thinking regarding the environment but also at a time when government (tax payer) spending is under extreme pressure this seems bizarre**

EWRC selected the route on the basis of a number of factors which can be found on page 14 of [this document](#), The Government has approved selection of Route E.

- 11. A southern route along side of A421 is a more logical, cost effective and greener solution. There are far fewer homes impacted, there is minimal "countryside" to destroy, the route is flatter and virtually straight. How can this not be the logical route.**

It is for EWRC and the government to determine which route is overall the best fit in respect to a balance of overall costs and benefits, and they selected the route on the basis of a number of factors which can be found on page 14 of [this document](#), The Government has approved selection of Route E.

We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum.

12. My question is "Why did this EWR Plan all change?" Initially four routes, A, B, C and D. All southerly and utilising brownfield sites, existing currently out of service railway routes and stations, along flat country. All costed as similar, and northern Bedford routes ruled out as expensive, hilly routes with large land purchases and compulsory home removals in town. Suddenly: Everything in the EWR Plan changed. The RSPB at Sandy vs thousands of Residents affected; Come On! EWR - "We cannot guess how much diesel rail freight will use this line" - Well try to make a reasonable stab at this, as it is so environmentally sensitive and important that the Public NEED To KNOW! Destruction of prime arable farmland, countryside and public rights of way, and not one Public crossing, bridge or subway are mentioned anywhere on Route E. Noise, diesel fumes and vibration at all hours, day and night. Peaceful Brickhill turned to ruin all for the sake of a slight proposal of "visitors" to our dead town centre, in the weak hope of it bringing some kind of "Revival", without any regard for the years of destructive construction to come with it in the town and surrounding areas. AND the support of the local Liberal Democrats for their local voters is appalling, remember "No More Bricks in Brickhill", then us getting the cynical Ravensden quota on the extreme edges of Ravensden Parish, nearer Brickhill than Ravensden. After three stages of building Woodlands Park here we got a "Country Park", full of rusty wire fences and collapsing poles, and three football pitches. Wow!. Now we have "Ravensden Park" being built to our North, above the Woodlands Park development, another cynical exploitation of Ravensden's parish boundaries extreme limits, and again nearer Brickhill; so anyone thinking of buying there will be on top of a busy diesel freight route running 24/7. OOPS!

EWRC selected the route on the basis of a number of factors which can be found on page 14 of [this document](#), The Government has approved selection of Route E.

In our response to the previous consultation round we pressed for the selection of a route through the town. It was not until the current consultation, though, that we became aware of the current proposal in respect to route alignments. Whatever

route is chosen, we will do our utmost to engage with EWRC in order to minimise disruption during construction and operation. We are firmly of the view that this new railway line should be electrified and we have made this point in our consultation response.

We will encourage EWRC to make modifications to the route alignment to minimise the impact on local residents. Although the consultation document does not make it entirely clear, it is our understanding that all existing roads and paths along the route where the new railway line will pass will be maintained. We have requested an assurance that EWRC will do their utmost to maintain these routes even during construction.

Although we do not know for certain how much freight traffic will use the new line, our assessment is that it will be comparatively low. The primary reason for this new line is in providing connectivity for passengers and therefore most trains will be passenger trains. The Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

13. With all the evidence showing the original consultation was flawed, did not go anywhere near those that will be affected, with replies in such small numbers compared with the potential numbers who could have replied from Cambridge to Oxford, with only around half the number quoted who responded coming from members of the public rather than vested interests and the refusal of EWR to provide information on where the replies to the consultation originated, surely for transparency and legitimacy another consultation exploring all 5 routes should be undertaken, where comparisons for the pro's and con's of each aspect of the routes can be evaluated equally and fairly, rather than choosing a route that has no public support and suppressing other routes that have obvious advantages and fewer disadvantages. I demand a re-consultation and ask why our Mayor and council refuse to agree to it, unless they fear the result of the response of their residents?

The consultation for the section between Bedford and Cambridge took place in 2019. Almost 7,000 people gave feedback following 6 weeks of consultation on the five route options.

EWRC widely publicised the 2019 consultation on the proposed routes for EWR. It was a matter of significant discussion in the local press and to some degree in the national newspapers. During the 2019 EWRC consultation, Mayor Dave Hodgson encouraged local residents to take part in the consultation and made the case publicly for a route via Bedford station in a wide range of ways. These include;

- Featured articles on his website
- Three regular email updates, each of which promoted awareness of both the consultation and the Council's support for a route through Bedford Station
- Two monthly columns in the Bedford Independent, including one shortly before the close of the consultation headlined *'I'm encouraging everyone to have their say on East West Rail'*
- Various press releases
- Numerous social media posts on Twitter and Facebook

The Council produced a leaflet explaining and promoting a route via Bedford station and encouraging people to take part in the consultation.

The Council also emailed its Council emailed everyone on its 'Consultations' email list on 25th February 2019, to promote the consultation, including a link to it.

EWRC has published its Report of Consultation, which sets out the consultation process from 2019. This can be found [here](#).

The Council submitted a response to the Consultation, which you can see at Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Public-Feedback-Report-Appendix-1.pdf (eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com) (from page 65). All the political groups on Bedford Borough Council supported a route through Bedford, you can see this support at <https://www.bedfordindependent.co.uk/east-west-rail-route-must-go-through-midland-road/>.

We have no reason to believe that the process in 2019 was flawed. The consultation was widely publicised. People had the opportunity to respond to the consultation. After the consultation the government and EWR made a decision and we are all now invited to contribute our thoughts to the current consultation.

14. Will BBC conduct an evaluation and analysis of using tunnels instead of cuttings on Alignments 1 and 9?

The railway construction project is an EWRC and, ultimately, central government initiative. Decisions in respect to the choice of infrastructure such as cuttings or tunnels is a matter for EWR and not BBC. We will, though, engage with EWRC with a view to promoting an increase in the use of tunnels rather than cuttings, and have made this recommendation in our response to the consultation.

15. BBC have spent significant amount of money getting cost reduction evidence for route E through Bedford for the needs of the many. To mitigate the life changing upset and sacrifices potentially imposed on villages on these favored alignments, will BBC attempt to persuade EWR that tunnels would be better than cuttings, regardless of the chosen route.

The railway construction project is an EWRC and, ultimately, central government initiative. Decisions in respect to the choice of infrastructure such as cuttings or tunnels is a matter for EWR and not BBC. We will, though, engage with EWRC with a view to promoting an increase in the use of tunnels rather than cuttings, and have made this recommendation in our response to the consultation.

16. John Maberley of Ravensden has proposed an alternative to Route E. His proposal, still uses Midland Mainline station, but instead of continuing north, it uses an IN/OUT system, whereby the trains come into Bedford via a station at Wixams and then comes out again, following the A421 towards the Black Cat. I know John has sent you his proposal, so have you considered adopting this instead of Route E, as your preferred route, especially in light of the recently announced demolition of houses in the Poets area if Route E is pursued?

The current EWR consultation exercise in respect to the route between Bedford and Cambridge concerns the preference between route alignments 1, 2, 6, 8 and 9. The previous consultation in 2019 concerned the selection of routes. As a result of the earlier consultation EWRC and the government selected Route E which comes through Bedford and heads out north of the town. Since the decision was made in early 2020, EWRC will have undertaken a large amount of further planning work in respect to options for Route E. There is unlikely to have been any further planning undertaken in respect to the other routes.

Given that this decision has been made, our focus is on keeping EWRC focused on how they deliver the railway infrastructure with the least amount of disruption to residents during construction and operation. We do not consider that attempting to reopen a debate where the decision has already been taken will be fruitful, and it is more likely to divert resources from our primary aim which is to seek ways of minimising disruption. We would rather that EWRC concentrate, for example, on how it might be possible to minimise the impact of a cutting, or to consider the viability of a tunnel.

17. EWR meeting and brochure states that the route alignment 9 is the emerging preference. What are the Council doing in pushing for a more Northern route? Cllr Roydon stated that the Council will push for that, is this true? Will you be joining forces with the northern parishes to ensure this happens?

We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum.

18. Dear Mr Mayor and Councillors,

I am a resident of Wilden. My husband and several generations of his family have lived on Chequers Hill. We are utterly dismayed to learn that Alignments 1,2 and 6 of the East West Railway line will run through Wilden village and cut straight across Chequers Hill. Every home and many acres of productive farmland will be affected by this Alignment. In fact the whole parish of Wilden will be totally ruined.

In the forty four years that I have lived here, there has been a persistent refusal by planners to allow any new development in the village. The prominent reason for this has always been that, the CHARACTER of the village should be preserved. Whilst this has been a valid reason, it has resulted in young people, including my four children, being driven away from the place they grew up. Amenities such as the pub, church and school have all struggled to survive.

Now, this beautiful traditional village, is about to be damaged for the present and future generations. Not to mention the vast cost and disruption of construction, villagers will have to endure the noise, dirt and damage to their way of life, as numerous passenger and freight trains thunder through their lives if, Alignments 1,2 and 6 rather than Alignments 8 and 9 are chosen.

There is evidence that there will be greater cost, loss of farmland and devastating visual impact with Alignments 1,2 and 6 than with Alignments 8 and 9. There will also be more homes demolished outside Bedford.

I would like to know how you can possibly consider the destruction of the character of this village, which planning committees have steadfastly insisted should be preserved as an example of a historic linear village, evidenced by refusal of any new development.

Therefore, I appeal to you to consider Alignments 8 and 9 as the most cost effective, least damaging and practical Alignments for the railway.

I suspect, that as Wilden's population is small our voice will not be heard, but I sincerely hope that you will give our concerns due consideration.

We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

At the next stage of the development process, EWRC will carry out a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation, and this will be available as a public document. BBC will work with EWRC to ensure that steps are taken to minimise the impact on the countryside.

We recognise, though, that the proposed Northern route options pass very close to the village of Wilden. If any of the northern alignments were chosen, we would propose that the alignment is altered to run somewhat further to the north of the current planned position. Such an alteration would reduce the disturbance and environmental impact to residents of Wilden.

Similarly, if any of the Southern alignments were chosen, BBC would like Brickhill Country Park to be extended up to the line of the railway; and as little impact as possible on Great and Little Early Groves, and on the setting of Mowsbury Hill Fort.

We will do our utmost to work with EWRC and local residents to minimise the impact of the scheme. We will encourage EWRC to align the route further from residents' homes, if it is practical to do so, and to minimise the impact of engineering infrastructure.

19. Which route alignment are you supporting?

We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum.

20. In summary, we believe that the Mayor and the Bedford Borough Council should give the following feedback to EWR as a matter of urgency:

- **Rerun the original consultation process, including the much more viable southern options.**
- **Do so transparently, fairly and using communication methods that do not discriminate against those unfamiliar with online technology.**
- **Use consultation forms that are clear, unambiguous and are easy to understand and complete.**

IF consultation is not rerun and the BBC fail to stop the atrocity: Minimise harm and damage to properties and lives by sympathetically routing the railway as far as possible from dwellings and livelihoods Select alignment 1 and not alignments 8 or 9

It is important to point out that the consultation processes in 2019 and now in 2021 are the responsibility of EWRC and not BBC. We are involved as stakeholders in the same way as local residents. In the original consultation, the Council formed a view as to which route was the most advantageous to Bedford and responded to the EWRC consultation.

Almost 7,000 people gave feedback following 6 weeks of consultation on the five route options.

During the 2019 EWRC consultation, Mayor Dave Hodgson encouraged local residents to take part in the consultation and made the case publicly for a route via Bedford station in a wide range of ways. These include;

- Featured articles on his website
- Three regular email updates, each of which promoted awareness of both the consultation and the Council's support for a route through Bedford Station
- Two monthly columns in the Bedford Independent, including one shortly before the close of the consultation headlined *'I'm encouraging everyone to have their say on East West Rail'*
- Various press releases
- Numerous social media posts on Twitter and Facebook

The Council produced a leaflet explaining and promoting a route via Bedford station and encouraging people to take part in the consultation.

The Council also emailed its Council emailed everyone on its 'Consultations' email list on 25th February 2019, to promote the consultation, including a link to it.

EWRC has published its Report of Consultation, which sets out the consultation process from 2019. This can be found [here](#).

We have no reason to believe that the process in 2019 was flawed. The consultation was widely publicised. People had the opportunity to respond to the consultation. After the consultation the government and EWRC made a decision and we are all now invited to contribute our thoughts to the current consultation.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum. We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

21. Routes 2 6 and 1 go very near many houses, through gardens and at the bottom of gardens. Routes 8 and 9 go near to villages but not through habitations. Could this be a consideration in deciding the route as a means of the Mayor reducing the impact of the rail line? The Mayor has stated that

the threat to homes and businesses is something that he takes very seriously.

We have responded to the EWR consultation document, and our route preference based on the current information supplied is alignment 1 (dark blue), followed by alignment 6 (light blue) if a Cambourne South station route is chosen.

We recognise, though, that the proposed Northern route options pass very close to the village of Wilden. If any of the northern alignments were chosen, we would propose that the alignment is altered to run somewhat further to the north of the current planned position. Such an alteration would reduce the disturbance and environmental impact to residents of Wilden.

If any of the Southern alignments were chosen, BBC would like Brickhill Country Park to be extended up to the line of the railway; and as little impact as possible on Great and Little Early Groves, and on the setting of Mowsbury Hill Fort.

Whichever route is ultimately chosen by EWRC and the government we will do our utmost to ensure that any disruption during construction and operation is kept to a minimum.

22. Why did BBC not disclose Kilborn Consultings recommendation to discuss with EWR Co an alternative route that would service a station at Bedford St Johns and leverage existing infrastructure?

The Council's view has always been that a route through Bedford Midland Station would bring greater benefits than a route which bypassed the town. A route entering Bedford at St John's Station was not proposed by EWRC, but Kilborn Consulting considered this option to assess whether or not it would bring any benefits in the absence of a town centre option. Ultimately, the Council opted to support a route which used Bedford Midland Station, and so did not need to promote the work on an alternative route.

23. I'm a Bedford resident from Brickhill and i'm greatly concerned about this potential Route E and all the potential environmental problems it could cause and destruction of precious countryside and natural habitats to the north of Bedford and also the risk of mass demolition causing many people to lost their homes and potential increased travel congestion in the Ashburnham Road, Bromham Road, Midland Road, Prebend Street areas resulting from greater numbers of passengers using the station. I would like to know why the old route in the Bedford Borough Area hasn't been considered this time around as part of the EWR proposals? When reusing the old trackbed would involve recycling an already engineered right of way and would involve no demolitions and would require diverting a bicycle track and the engineering work required for bridges etc would be minor in comparison to the significant construction works required for Route Option E. There is all this talk about the old line closing in 1968, but the line a mile

and a half east of Bedford St John's to what was then Barkers Line Level Crossing, now the entrance to Priory Marina closed in 1981 and was lifted in 1982. The first proposals for the East West Rail appeared in local newspapers back in 1997 and in the late 1990s, the old trackbed of the Varsity line called the Inner Route was the preferred route of the EastWest Rail Consortium, who considered it the most cost effective and generating the highest demand, Bedford Borough Council at the time favoured the Outer Route (Roughly the current Route Option B), but finally appeared to have accepted the Inner Route, providing certain conditions were met. It appears that no further progress happened at the time, due to the then government not providing the funding for the project. More recently the initial report by Kilbourn Consulting for Bedford Borough Council regarding the EastWest Rail, also recommended this as a potential route option and were curious why this wasn't considered as an option by the EastWest Rail Company. With regard to the old line being built on, the first place to the east of Bedford where the line has been significantly built on is at the old Blunham Station site, unlike the old Bedford to Hitchin Line which has been lost under development in Bedford, the corridor of the old Bedford to Sandy line still exists in Bedford Borough. If there are other reasons why this route wasn't included as an option, due to potential development of the old Bedford St John's Site for other uses, it would be good for this to be acknowledged in public. I have included some old newspaper articles to display my sources of information.

The consultation in 2019 was to inform the decision on which of the five routes would be chosen for detailed design. At that consultation BBC lobbied for Route E. The government and EWRC selected Route E, and will have curtailed further work on developing any of the other options. The current (2021) consultation is to gain feedback on the refinement of alignment options along Route E. After the consultation process, EWRC and the government will select the alignment within the Route E corridor. The period for reopening discussions on the broader route options has passed as the decision on the route has been made.

Our focus is on engaging with EWRC to ensure that whatever alignment is chosen, disruption in construction and operation is minimised. We understand that for many residents this will be a period of apprehension, but we hope that by engaging with EWRC we can encourage them to make alterations to their plans to the benefit of the local residents and the environment. We do not think that reopening a previous debate will serve any useful purpose.

24. I struggle to understand why the then Route B was not preferred as this is the most direct and flattest route possible, it largely follows the A421 existing transport corridor and therefore must be the fastest and most practical route for passengers and freight. So why is it that the possibilities of connecting route B to Bedford Town Centre have not been investigated?

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25. I thought I'd attach this BBC article that supports the suggestion of a look again at viability, the first point below refers
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-57010913>

The link is to a BBC News feature which suggests that some transport infrastructure projects are under review as a result of a change in patterns of work prompted by the COVID 19 pandemic. The key point is that the government remains committed to the East West Rail project. Although current rail passenger numbers are much reduced as a result of the pandemic, there is a strong view that passenger numbers will recover.

What is not so clear is whether the scale and concentration of commuter traffic will return. It seems that home-working may impact on the frequency and timing of travel. But this does not mean that in the long term that railways will not carry as many customers as pre-COVID. But what seems more likely is that passengers are distributed more evenly across the day. If so, then it is unlikely to have a negative impact on the business case for this project. The government remains optimistic and is continuing to fund the development.

26. The tenant farmers here and their fathers before them have farmed here and will lose their livelihood he train line with take acres and acres away from them - there are other routes which will have less impact on people's lives. The land owners I believe do not care about their long term tenants or a train line as they do not live in Clapham.

Any infrastructure project, be it road or rail or industrial or housing development takes up land. Whilst the land taken may be brownfield land, it is much more likely to involve greenfield sites. A two-track railway is probably one of the least intrusive options in this regard. Whilst land will be taken, and more land where there are cuttings or embankments, the proportion of land taken within any particular farm is likely to be comparatively small. Whilst the construction of the

railway will involve an element of disruption it is unlikely to result in the loss of livelihood of farmers along the line of route.