

Category 7: Costs and who pays

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 Railway Company
- EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment

1a What is the cost of the improvements to the station and the car park

The EWR consultation document recognises that there are a number of options for the re-development of Bedford Midland station. For that reason, the costs are unlikely to be known for some time. In any case, the redevelopment of the station is not the responsibility of BBC and therefore we do not know the costs.

1b How are BBC going to fund this

BBC is not funding the redevelopment of the station. It may be that BBC contributes towards improvements of the public realm, but it is too early to know, as there is not an agreed plan for the station yet.

1c Are BBC paying for the compulsory purchase of the properties required to facilitate the above

Any compulsory purchase of land associated with the development of the EWR scheme is the responsibility of EWR and will be funded by it.

2. Please confirm the anticipated cost of repossessing property in Bedford Town as a result of the current intended route and please state if and how much of local funds will be required to finance this.

BBC is not responsible for any compulsory purchase in relation to this scheme. The responsibility sits with EWRC who will also manage the costs and the budget.

3. How much funding has the Council promised to EWR for the building of route E and has this been factored into the 12% extra economic benefits of this route which the Mayor has quoted? Can the Council publish the full assessments of these economic benefits and the assumptions they rest on as the EWR line would seem to take spending away from Bedford to Oxford and Cambridge?

EWR is fully funded by the Government. The economic benefits that will accrue to Bedford, including increased employment, will result from more people being able to travel to more places. The benefits of transport business cases are assessed by the Government over a long time period and the focus will be on how economies will grow, as a result of the scheme, rather than Government shifting investment from one place to another. Oxford and Cambridge will grow whether the route comes through Bedford or not. By routing EWR through the town, Bedford will grow more than it would if it was effectively by-passed.

4. In the recommended Clapham BP Meeting you attended, Both Mayor Dave and Cllr Headley avoided the question asked "Are the Council funding the new Midland station, if Route E is picked?"

There has been no formal specification or proposal for the new station at Bedford Midland. There is a lot of work required to develop options, to cost them, and then to determine the preferred option on the station. The EWR Consultation Technical Report sets out some of the issues and work to be undertaken. Until such time as this work has been completed, it is impossible to know what the costs will be. EWR will have a requirement to fund the station. It may be possible to explore enhanced options to utilise the overall site more effectively and that may open other funding streams. However, at this stage there is no agreed scope for the station.

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that around 90% of funding has been approved; this will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal service provision.

5. Of the 5 routes submitted for our views in the initial consultation route 5 was by far and away the most expensive for obvious reasons of geography along with causing the greatest impact and destruction along with environmental impact and increasing congestion in Bedford centre. The mysterious re costing of routes 1 to 4 (route 5 hardly changed) making them compatible with route 5 has never been explained and in some cases was so significant questions remain about the original costing. I would like an explanation about why we were misled in the original consultation, how these significant re costings can have occurred and lastly why it should not be expected that route 5 will also cost significantly more.

The calculations behind the estimated route costs are complex, for reasons explained below.

The EWR consultation of 2019 referred to costs at 2015 prices, whereas the Preferred Route Option report of January 2020 had rebased costs at 2019 prices. Furthermore, EWR updated their costings based upon additional information acquired in the interim. Further work was undertaken in respect to the scope of works which drove the relative costs as well as updates in respect to the EWR 'transport model', Department for Transport 'appraisal guidance', impact of new potential new housing.

The Preferred Route Option report clarifies that the original costs were those provided by Network Rail, and that between the 2019 consultation document being produced and the Preferred Route Option report being published EWR re-examined the cost assumptions and took a more conservative approach to some of the costs.

The January 2020 cost estimates were those used by EWR and the government to make a decision as to which route to support. Route E was the second lowest capital cost (2019 prices) and only £0.1bn more than the lowest cost (range £3.9bn to £4.3bn) and indicated the highest net profit in terms of railway operations.

As far as we are aware, there has been no change in the estimated costings since January 2020.

- 5. The lesson to be learnt by all government funded schemes , ie HS2 , is that there will be huge overspends and given that the route 5 chosen is a problem route in terms of topography etc this surely is a flawed decision Perhaps our mayor can answer why he seems so obsessed with bringing extra traffic into Bedford, demolishing countless homes , ruining the countryside with diesel freight trains as rail passenger numbers are in serious decline and burdening the taxpayer with unprecedented costs at a time the country is recovering from an event as great as WW2.**

Council support for the routing of EWR through Bedford is based on the anticipated resultant increase in prosperity and economic growth for the town and the Borough. Bedford will accrue more economic benefits and grow more than it would if it was effectively by-passed.

The resulting increased connectivity will enable more people to access work (or better paid work), which is likely to raise the standard of living, which in turn will encourage more people to live in an area, which then stimulates house prices and encourages more people to live in an area which encourages growth and development.

The attraction (or availability) of highly skilled workers to locations attracts or propagates innovative technological businesses, which then stimulate demand for employment space. Increased prosperity results in increased consumer spending, which stimulates shops and restaurants etc. In some cases, locations which are cut off from such benefits suffer long term decline and failure. It is for this reason that the Government uses infrastructure investment as a catalyst for regeneration and transformation.

The economic value attributed to any scheme is dependent upon the estimated additional activity that it generates. The calculation is a complicated formula created by Government economists to model long term patterns of behaviour, in order to quantify and assess scheme benefits. EWRC and the Government support the choice of Route E within this context.

A station in the town centre allows people to access it by means other than a private car, for example by bus, foot or bicycle, and good traffic management and parking arrangements can reduce the impact of any additional traffic to the station. The Council is of the view that the EWR project can be delivered within the current track curtilage north of Bedford, thereby reducing the number of properties which would require compulsory purchase, and has made this view known to EWRC.

Rail freight traffic already runs through Bedford town centre – up to two trains per hour in each direction on the Midland Main Line. There can be no guarantees of freight usage in the future as the railway network as a whole will evolve as time progresses. All we can say at the present is that there are no proposals for additional freight paths to be created at this time.

7. Has the council seen detailed costings of the different routes? Have they queried why route E is now, amazingly, much cheaper in the rankings, whereas before it was by far the most expensive?

The Council has not seen detailed costings of the different routes. As the project continues and more details emerge, EWRC will be able to make more accurate cost estimates, with fewer general assumptions.

8. Are the latest costs shown net of estimated economic benefits? If so how have these benefits been arrived at?

It is our understanding that the costs of delivering the scheme are separate from the benefits which accrue as a result of the scheme. Together these elements will form the EWR business case. BBC has no input into the development of the business case, nor knowledge about the detail.

9. Can we see a full detailed analysis of the costs of each route?

Details of estimated route costs have not been made available to the Council.

10. Concerning the East-West Rail Consultation I am very concerned about the reasons put forward concerning choice of the 'North of Bedford' rail route. This decision made by Government in early 2020 with little publicity, and minimal explanation. The initial consultation indicated that economically routes 'South of Bedford' were best; then, without obvious explanation, significant costs were added to the 'South of Bedford' cost figures so that very surprisingly the 'North of Bedford' route costs became the cheapest. Where is the supporting detailed documentation to explain how this massive change in costs came about?

My conclusion is that the final route decision is deeply flawed and that a complete and detailed re-evaluation is required.

Unfortunately, BBC does not have the information needed to answer your question. As you suggest, the decision was one for Government. The business case which quantified the benefits and costs was prepared by EWRC. We can only assume that with the benefit of more detail, the assessment of costs altered. We lobbied hard for the route to come through Bedford because we thought that it was best for the town and for the Borough.

11. Could the Council please explain how route E became the best route after being the most expensive?

Unfortunately, BBC does not have the information needed to answer your question. The business case which quantified the costs was prepared by EWR. We can only assume that with the benefit of more detail the assessment of costs altered.

12. House prices in the affected areas are going to go down, it will be less desirable to live with a train line directly going past our house. What is the council going to do to protect us?

The Council understands the uncertainty for local communities which has arisen from this consultation, and is committed to working with EWRC and local communities to find the best solution to route choice and detailed design. We will work closely with local communities and EWRC to minimise the environmental impact by design.

Whilst it is true that the railway will have some impact, we are hopeful that by exploring the options carefully and utilising new techniques, where appropriate, EWRC will be able to deliver a railway through the area which, in due course, is seen to be a part of the rural environment, in the way of many existing railway lines across the country. However, we intend to engage with EWRC to ensure that they are sensitive to local issues.

The obligation to undertake an environmental impact assessment rests with EWRC, and as part of the ongoing process, they will carry out a detailed assessment based upon the selected route in accordance with UK legislation.

In many cases, it is anticipated that the operation of the new railway will have little impact on the daily life of people in the area.

13. There are minutes of a Clapham council meeting (19.03.19

https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fclapham-pc.gov.uk%2fwp-content%2fuploads%2fsimple-file-list%2fMinutes-2019%2f2&c=E,1,wsXIIA01q4Lt6_Pkbnoj89x415j87VH5AN3blbEylh2zu37dAD5ljDgSQzMDbkq_d_MkxylwppidtOtj95L96C3komvmV9fqDGaxiuScYtTgmp8j&typo=1019_03_19_minutes.pdf) where Councillor Walker is recorded as saying 'Walker noted that improvements to Bedford Midland, including a multi storey car park and extended platforms, would be funded by Bedford BC thus reducing the cost of the northern routes' Can you confirm that BBC will be funding this as stated in the minutes

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that around 90% of the requested funding has been approved; this will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal service provision.

14. Where will the £6m funding contribution from BBC towards the redesign and development of Bedford Midland Station be coming from? Will this funding from BBC effectively net off the benefit to the town?

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that around 90% of the requested funding has been approved; this will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal service provision.

15. I have read that BBC are contributing financially to the redevelopment of Bedford Station and carparks. Is this correct and, if so, what will be the cost to Bedford Borough ratepayers and has this cost been excluded from the EWR route costings?

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that around 90% of the requested funding has been approved; this will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal service provision.

16. Can you please tell me how much Bedford Borough Council is going to have to pay towards the re-building of Bedford Midland Station and the multi-storey car park that will surely be required if Route E goes ahead. Or is the bill for this going to be picked up 100% by East West Rail ??

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station, and we now know that around 90% of the requested funding has been approved. At this point, the Council is still considering what this means for the Bedford Midland Station, but please note that this is additional funding specifically for the scheme and is not at the expense of normal Council service provision.

17. Minimal financial benefit to the town - particularly now if Bedford Borough Council are paying for Bedford Station and Parking. In truth there needs to be transparency on this. The best figure we've seen is £6M and this seems pitiful for a town with over 170,000 residents and this will be eaten up with the work at the station.

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that around 90% of the requested funding has been approved; this will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal service provision.

18. Local tax payers should not be asked to pay for development of Bedford Station/Multi Storey parking that has a serious risk of being an under used white elephant.

The recent history of the development of car parks at railway stations across the country is that they tend to have a strong business case and that the initial costs are soon recouped. The business case does depend on the cost, the occupancy and the parking tariff. By investing in station car parking, the Council will be able to accrue financial benefits. The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station.

19. How can the change in expenditure on the alignments be explained between the change in route choices?

BBC cannot answer this question as we have no detail on the relative specifications or costings of the routes. This is a matter for EWRC.

20. How can the already congested town centre roads and station parking cope with the increased demand brought by the new railway?

The advent of EWR and of Wixams station is likely to alter the profile of car traffic to and from Bedford Midland station. There will be car parking at Wixams which may be more convenient for some customers who currently park in Bedford town centre. A new station at Stewartby / Kempston Hardwick will provide another access to the rail network reducing the need for some passengers to travel into Bedford town centre. Although the plans for Bedford Midland Station have not yet been developed we would envisage there being a substantial increase in car parking provision to meet additional demand. Furthermore, the redevelopment of this station offers potential to integrate sustainable and carbon neutral connectivity to the station which may rely in a decreased reliance on the private car.

21. How then can development plans for Bedford that are not practical, due to space and congestion, be used to justify the destruction of rural areas for both residents and wildlife?

We believe that the development plans for Bedford are ambitious and viable, although we recognise that more work is required by and with EWRC to make them more acceptable. The principles remain good, we need to work hard to ensure that the delivery minimises the impact and does not involve in the destruction of rural areas. We accept that the construction phase may be intrusive but we aim to work with EWRC and local communities to keep the inconvenience to a minimum. We also aim to ensure that when the works are complete that there are some local public benefits from the scheme, for example, would wish to see a similar fund to the Community and Environment Fund (CEF) that has been created to add benefit to communities along the route of HS2 created for EWR to allow parish councils to bid for funding for appropriate mitigation schemes such as:

- Improved pedestrian, equestrian, or cycle access not provided under statutory services
- Landscape and nature conservation enhancement projects which increase biodiversity (including pop up interventions such as skip gardens)

- Enhancement or replacement of sports and recreational facilities
- Improved access and enhancements to public open space
- Provision of enhanced or new community facilities
- Refurbishment / re-use of historic buildings and monuments

Although the proposed works involve cuttings, embankments, and viaducts we believe that with sensible and considerate planning and local involvement the effects can be mitigated and that in the fullness of time the railway be integrated within and as part of the rural environment, the same as many other railway lines across the country.

22. Did the full Council authorise the decision to pay £75,000 of tax-paper's money to an independent company to produce a report to value engineer Route E to show that it would be affordable and should be supported? What powers entitled the Council to spend this money?

It is a longstanding policy of the Council to support a route for East West Rail that passes through Bedford Midland station, bringing with it economic benefits for the whole Borough. The Council commissioned consultants to help it make the case for such a route (Corridor E) and responded to the consultation to that effect. The decision to choose Corridor E was, however, taken by the EWR Co and national government, not by the Council. The agreement of the Full Council is not required for operational procurement decisions, such as this one.

23. How specifically will the line passing through the centre of Bedford bring economic benefits and renew the town centre as opposed to a line running to the south of Bedford. We have been told that it will but not how it is expected to happen - specifics not generalities please. Why do previous reports state that a line through the centre of Bedford would only bring £6,000,000 of additional economic benefit?

The economic value attributed to any scheme is dependent upon the additional activity that it generates. The calculation is a complicated formula created by Government economists to model long term patterns of behaviour, in order to quantify and assess scheme benefits.

A scheme might enable increased connectivity which enables more people to access work (or better paid work), which might raise the standard of living, which in turn will encourage more people to live in an area, which then stimulates house prices and encourages more people to live in an area which encourages growth and development.

The attraction (or availability) of highly skilled workers to locations attracts or propagates innovative technological businesses, which then stimulate demand for employment space. Increased prosperity results in increased consumer spending, which stimulates shops and restaurants etc. In some cases, locations which are cut off from such benefits suffer long term decline and failure. It is for this reason that the Government uses infrastructure investment as a catalyst for regeneration and transformation.

Twenty years ago few would have envisaged the transformational impact of the investment in London St Pancras, or Kings Cross stations, which continue to stimulate the regeneration of a large area. It is expected that the redevelopment of Euston will do the same. Although Bedford Midland Station is on a much smaller scale, the redevelopment can have a similar effect on Bedford and the Borough. Few towns will have the North, South, East and West connectivity of Bedford.

24. Background. The Bedford Borough Council's own analysis of the financial benefit to the Borough admitted that the financial benefit of EWR in terms of GVA uplift was less than 1.5% (being £57m in an annual GVA of £4000m). No corresponding assessment has been made public on the cost to the Borough's taxpayers resulting from the devastation of communities in urban Bedford and across north Bedfordshire. This will not only be the loss of amenity and losses due to reduced house prices, but will include the collateral cost falling outside the EWR budget in terms of supporting infrastructure, road congestion, pollution, and any expenditure to fully realise benefits claimed for EWR (such as providing effective 'first-mile-last-mile' travel arrangements).

Question. What is the true financial benefit to Bedford from EWR taking into full account the impact of engineering work and loss of amenity?

Will the Mayor be transparent with the financial case available to the BBC and press EWRC for a full, accurate, and up-to-date statement covering build and operating costs for Option E and any reasonable alternative, together with information on those items that will fall on Bedford Borough taxpayers?

The information needed to answer your first question has not been shared with the Council. The scheme benefits are calculated using the Government's economic modelling methodology. The principle is that a scheme increases economic activity, which stimulates the economy, which then has a knock-on or multiplier effect, which drives more benefits. The cost other variables, for example compulsory purchase can also be calculated.

Equally, the cost of capitalising upon the opportunities to repurpose the public realm, improve first-last mile connectivity, or bus connectivity might be met by increased funding from the Government. In fact, the Council has recently been awarded a substantial grant to improve the public realm around the new station. Improvements in connectivity might reduce congestion. The opening of Wixams station, for example, will provide a high frequency service to London and to Bedford; current users of Bedford Midland Station, will have the option of using Wixams Station. Similarly, improvements in service frequency along the Marston Vale line might provide an alternative for some people who currently drive into the town.

Communities along the line of route will certainly be affected by the scheme, particularly during construction. We will engage with EWRC and local communities to ensure that wherever possible, disruption will be minimised. In many cases, it is anticipated that the operation of the new railway will have little impact on the daily life of people in the area.

It is true that there will be an immediate local impact on the demand for houses which are under the threat of compulsory purchase, and we will work to ensure that EWRC minimises the number of properties at risk and introduces a satisfactory compensation scheme for such residents, as soon as possible. The impact on the housing market elsewhere is much less clear. Although it is possible that there may be some short term interference in property prices, it is likely to be more pronounced until the precise route and impact on infrastructure is finalised. For that reason, we will push EWRC to expedite its plans, so that residents can assess for themselves the impact the scheme will have on them.

The Council will continue to seek details of the financial case which led to selection of the Route corridor, and would expect EWRC to update and publish this information. The EWR project will be fully financed by EWRC.

25. BBC repeatedly crow about “self-evident” economic benefit.

a. It isn’t self-evident – please provide the evidence

Cllr Headley repeatedly crows about £6.23m incremental GVA economic benefit to the town, and that this is 12% more than with Southern routes (which means 88% is available with the Southern Routes).

b. Please put this into context by telling us the total GVA for Bedford Borough and therefore the proportion increase of total GVA this represents.

c. In the calculation of this increase – how much has been calculated to go into the local businesses as opposed to corporates?

d. This calculation was made in March 2019. BBC say they had no knowledge of the six track option until August 2019. Therefore the incremental disruption cannot have been taken into account. What is the impact on the outcome of this calculation of the following disruption:

- The homes that would be demolished
- The road closures for road remodelling
- The bridge closures for bridge widening etc.

e. What was included in this calculation for the negative economic impacts of increased traffic, congestion, disruption during the years of construction and town remodelling, air quality issues, poor air quality associated health issues etc. etc. etc?

BBC’s response to the 2019 corridor selection consultation can be found [here](#), and the Response Document March 2019 sets out some of the economic evidence which the Council put forward to EWRC.

The economic value attributed to any scheme is dependent upon the additional activity that it generates. The calculation is a complicated formula created by Government economists to model long term patterns of behaviour, in order to quantify and assess scheme benefits. A scheme might enable increased connectivity, which enables more people to access work (or better paid work) which might raise the standard of living, which encourages more people to live in an area, which then stimulates house prices and encourages more people to live in an area which encourages growth and development.

The attraction (or availability) of highly skilled workers to locations attracts or propagates innovative technological businesses which stimulate demand for employment space. Increased prosperity results in increased consumer

spending, which stimulates shops and restaurants etc. In some cases, locations which are cut off from such benefits suffer long term decline and failure. It is for this reason that the Government uses infrastructure investment as a catalyst for regeneration and transformation.

The costs in relation to the properties that are to be demolished will be included within the budget of EWR. Detailed cost estimates undertaken by EWRC have not been shared with the Council.

26. As one of the technically most challenging routes, and with the most gradient changes, Route E is going to be the least environmentally friendly to build (due to greater construction impact) and operate (due to increased track length vs other options, and associated consumption of diesel on gradient change). How will BBC mitigate these impacts for residents?

Whilst the lengths of routes might differ and the precise combination of cuttings, embankments, viaducts and tunnel vary by route, all will have an environmental impact. Overall, Route E may be no more impactful than other routes. The approach to mitigation, therefore, is broadly similar whatever route is eventually chosen. We will strive to ensure that EWRC works with BBC and local communities to develop a Construction Management Plan, which set out in detail how EWRC and its contractors will operate

BBC believes that this route should be electrified or, if that is not possible, some traction used which is carbon-neutral. We are seeking more information on EWRC's proposals in respect to the proposed infrastructure so that we can understand what can be done to further mitigate the impact on the environment and communities.

27. Can I ask that the Borough Council make available the detailed costings that would account for the dramatic change in the cost of each route and so completely reversing the rank order? I believe there has been an attempt to share some documentation, but it is not transparent enough to promote confidence in the decisions that have been made.

The decisions in relation to route selection have been made by EWRC and the Government and not BBC. We lobbied for Route E, but it was not for us to select the route. We do not know the relative costs between the routes other than information which is in the public domain from EWRC.

28. What level of confidence do you have in the cost models from Kilborn Consulting, and also from EWR?

Kilborn Consulting are respected railway engineers, and the Council has confidence in their general estimating capabilities. EWRC will have had more information on the specifics of their proposed routes, and the Council has no reason to doubt their capabilities.

29. It is noted that the Mayor spent 75k on Kilborn Consulting as part of their lobbying effort for route E. How much did the council spend in total when factoring the salaries of officers involved and other council resource?

Time spent by individual officers in relation to the project was not recorded and therefore total costs cannot be quantified. Please note that responding to consultations on major infrastructure is part of officers' normal duties and is not recorded separately.

30. BBC have argued that Bedford town will benefit from route E. It will not bring more shoppers and jobs into town. Instead it will give those who live in Bedford the opportunity to visit, shop and work in Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge. If the stations are to be rebuilt using tax payers money should we not have a right to object as it is our taxes being spent here. This has never been put to us even in the original route options consultation.

There will be numerous benefits of the route coming through Bedford. One will be that residents of Bedford will be able to travel to new places. Equally, people will also be able to travel from those places to Bedford. Evidence suggests that rail connectivity stimulates economic growth. Therefore, the connectivity will help to generate new economic activity and prosperity for the town and wider area, which would not happen if EWR did not come through Bedford.

The Government routinely spends tax-payers money on capital works programmes, generally without seeking public feedback. However, in this case, EWRC has recognised the importance of hearing people's views. BBC has completed its own consultation response which was submitted on 9th June 2021.

31. How can you support a route north of Bedford when you still do not know the comparative costings of any of the currently proposed or any of the previously proposed routes?

Our support for Route E is based upon the long-term benefits to Bedford and the Borough. The detailed costings and merits of the detail of route selection are a matter for EWRC. It was EWRC that selected Route E in comparison to the costs and benefits of the other routes.

32. Can you make public the actual figures and costings that prove EWR coming through Bedford will be economically beneficial to the town? Can you do this with viable and factual research provided by an independent body not paid for by the Council?

EWRC selected Route E as its preferred route corridor between Bedford and Cambridge. This decision is supported by the Government. EWRC will have made this decision on the basis of many variables of which cost is just one. The opportunity for regeneration is another, and route E provides opportunities for significant regeneration at two stations within Bedford. This will boost economic activity across the whole Borough. The Council has previously made public the research upon which its calculations are based.

It is not clear why an independent body not paid for by the Council would undertake such research.

33. As part of the stage 2 consultation, how (much) is being spent on the consultants SLR Rail and Kilborn Consulting?

The work being undertaken to respond to the current consultation has not yet been invoiced.

34. Will the Council see to it that, in the interests of transparency and public interest, the full detailed costings of all proposed routes including all estimates, assumptions, discount factors, costs of disruption, purchase of land, rectifying and mitigating environmental damage, and the project costs of infrastructure and earthworks be made available to the public? And can the figures for both before and after the consultation that narrowed the route options be made available so that we can see exactly how and why the costs for the different routes changed so dramatically that the most expensive routes north of Bedford somehow became the cheapest?

The Council has not been provided with the information needed to answer your question. The railway scheme is the responsibility of EWRC, not BBC. The Council responded to the earlier consultation in respect to the five possible routes making a case for Route E. The Government announced that Route E was the selected route, but we do not have a breakdown of the costings underpinning that decision.

35. How did route E become most desirable and more economically viable when it was the least viable? I've heard the council had a plan in this and made the figures look better, is this true? And why?

BBC's involvement was to respond to the earlier Consultation and to make a case for the route of the railway to come through Bedford. The costs and benefits associated with the different routes and the underpinning logic for the route selection was a matter for EWRC. We were not involved in that decision.

36. EWR continue to evade questions about cost transparency and persist in the fallacy that they are "constantly back-checking" their calculations. - EWR have not provided the information that shows how the relative route option calculations changed from 2019 to 2020. Route E went from being the most expensive to the second cheapest with the other 4 routes being inflated by 50%-80% with no plausible explanation. *Note Route D also inflated and this would have benefitted from the BBC value engineering – so the reason cannot be solely that.

We have no insight into EWRC's approach into route selection. BBC's involvement was to respond to the earlier Consultation and to make a case for the route of the railway to come through Bedford. The costs and benefits associated with the different routes and the underpinning logic for the route selection was a matter for EWRC. We were not involved in that decision.

37. EWR have not provided all the cost information for the 2021 consultation – the cost information for the Bedford section is not included. Therefore it is impossible to verify their cost calculations on a like for like basis.

BBC is not aware of EWRC's rationale for route choice. Our involvement was limited to responding to the earlier consultation and making a case for the route to come through the town.

a) Costs are evidently already increasing for the chosen route E – When will BBC pressure EWR to be completely transparent about costs so ALL your residents can be reassured that costs are being back-checked?

The Council will continue to ask EWRC to share the rationale and details behind its estimated route costs.

We are not privy to the cost breakdown of EWR, nor how it has been budgeted for the scheme. Whilst costs often increase, they may well be within the budgeted amount. Our primary focus is on ensuring that we have the level of detail in respect to the proposed scheme to engage with EWRC with a view to gaining its commitment to improving in respect to delivery. We are keen to ensure that EWRC engage with local residents and that actions are implemented to minimise the disruption during construction and in subsequent operation.

b) Just because EWR has reached the conclusion the Mayor wanted, does not mean that the process that EWR went through should not be challenged by BBC. Why Are the Lib Dem members of BBC propagating the EWR marketing spiel, rather than representing the very reasonable concerns of the residents?

The Council has a long-standing policy to support a route through Bedford Midland Station, including in the Local Plan which has its own consultation process. The Local Plan included the statement on EWR that "The central section between Bedford to Cambridge is more difficult as the original Varsity railway line has now been built over and a new corridor needs to be determined. The Council's preferred option is for East-West Rail to be routed through Bedford Midland Station"

c) Why is the BBC not supporting the Northern parishes in demanding from EWR transparency on the 2019 consultation and the addresses that were not informed? EWR now state that there are 268,000 addresses within 2km of Route E – but they only sent out 120,000 postcards in 2019? Why are BBC not supporting the legitimate concerns of residents over the flawed process?

The decision to adopt Route E on the East West Railway was not made by Bedford Borough Council, it was made by the East West Railway Company in January 2020, prior to the Coronavirus pandemic, following a consultation.

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. You can read more about the consultation, including reviewing the public feedback at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/bedford-to-cambridge>. All MPs, Councillors and Parish Councils on any of the

proposed routes were written to by the East West Rail Company. Bedford Borough Council also promoted the consultation – you can see this at <https://www.bedford.gov.uk/parking-roads-and-travel/strategies-and-projects/east-west-rail-connection/>, and also promoted the consultation on social media and through emails.

The Council submitted a response to the Consultation, and 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/>.

36. I am submitting a question for the meeting regarding the rail extension and it is at the end of this letter but first may I add my voice to the many people who are seriously concerned at the plight of those who are at risk of losing their homes to this venture? Surely nothing is more precious than a home? And I fear that, historically, compulsorily purchased homes leave erstwhile occupants much worse off. PLEASE do not cocoon yourselves with the thought that the greater good is served by the sacrifice of a few. Unless you can reassure us that FULL AND FAIR RECOMPENSE will be made to those people who will be made HOMELESS, you must not continue with these developments. We live in times when politicians are trusted less and less and seen as self-serving and greedy. I beg that you use powers wisely and benevolently. Thank you for reading this. HERE IS MY QUESTION FOR THE MEETING “Can you assure us that any home occupiers, whether owners or tenants, made homeless by these plans, will be FULLY AND FAIRLY recompensed and that budgets for all proposed works which include compulsory purchase and home demolition reflect these costs?”

We do not underestimate the impact on the residents whose properties are currently blighted by the threat of compulsory purchase. We know that people will be angry, upset and worried. We will do our utmost to ease the worries by pressing EWRC for better compensation and by trying to reduce the number of properties that may be subject to acquisition.

There are rules governing the compulsory purchase of property which ensures that the purchase price is the market value for the premises (ignoring the fact of any blight). The aim is that the owner receives a fair price. We are pressing for an increased compensation payment to those owners whose houses are compulsorily acquired.

We are also questioning EWRC as to whether it needs to take as much land as currently anticipated. We believe that the railway can be constructed using less land and we hope to persuade EWRC that this is the case, so that fewer homes and residents will be affected.

37. Why does EWR have to go through Bedford, why can it not come into Bedford and then return via St Johns on the Varsity line? Also, how did costs increase 'overnight'! Surely it would make sense to include Wixams stations with the EWR station south of Bedford

EWRC selected the route through Bedford, based on its assessment of economic and operational effectiveness, Reversing trains at Bedford would add complexity and dwell time at the station and potentially create a bottleneck, which could affect trains running on the Midland Main Line. EWRC looked at numerous options and discounted a route that included Wixams. It is understood that such an approach would have been costly and complicated to deliver for little incremental benefit.

38. Why did Bedford Borough Council ignore recommendations from the Kilburn report, Cranfield University and CPRE to name just a few organizations for a straighter, more cost effective build (without distorting real costs) and environmentally friendly southern route unlike their biased 2019 consultation preference for a northern route?

BBC supports EWRC's decision to choose Route E because of the overall benefit it will bring to the town. A railway station in the centre of the town has greater potential to increase economic growth than a main line which effectively bypasses the town centre.

39. So far I have been unable to discover why Bedford needs a second station, particularly in this location – What / who would it serve. I understand the current St Johns Station vaguely supports the hospital, but the replacement would appear to be further away from the hospital and have no other strong “market”. Do we really need another Station, within the Town?

Bedford St John's Station provides an important facility for people travelling to Kimberley 6th Form College, Ridgmont, Bletchley and other stations along the route, as well as connections to the West Coast Mainline.

There are two proposals for a new Bedford St John's station. BBC support Alignment 1 and the station relocated closer to the hospital. This new station will make it easier for visitors to access the hospital. The relocation of the line and the removal of the current station will open up development opportunities on current railway land and the vicinity.

40. The construction of a replacement St Johns station, would have a significant impact on local housing, requiring much compulsorily purchase and demolition of property to provide suitable station infrastructure / roads / parking. Housing in the town is currently at a premium with properties being snapped up as they come onto the market. Has this been factored in?

We understand that the proposals to replace the station at St Johns will make it easier for people to access the hospital by train. The relocation of the line and current station will open up development opportunities on current railway land and the vicinity, and this will be used to provide the necessary infrastructure the station will need, such as access points and parking. We are not aware that there will be any demolition of properties required for the relocation of St John's Station.

41. Bedford as a town has in recent years, grown experientially with new housing estates being developed in all corners, one such development is that of Wixams on the south side of the town, Stradling the A6. Purchasers of properties to this development in this area were attracted to the area (village / town) by the promise of a new railway station serving the Bedford / London line. I am not sure where this is on the towns plans going forward as all appears to have gone quite on the issue. I believe the developers of the area were asked to provide a budget to provide a station as part of the development plans.

The Wixams project is unaffected by the EWR plans and is being actively promoted by BBC. The programme is progressing with a view to the station opening in 2024.

42. Wixams not only sits on the A6, but is close to a number of stations on the existing Bletchley / Bedford line, between Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick. Surely the development of a new station serving these communities and linking to the London / Nottingham railway service would be of great attraction, whilst at the same time easing congestion within Bedford and on its mainline station as commuters living on the South of the town would be able access such a station for their trips whether it be to London / Nottingham / Oxford or Cambridge, Rather than having enter Bedford. The added attraction for such a location is that it is a relatively a clean canvas enabling superior infrastructure, parking / access etc. therefore would require less in the terms of disruption to local residents and the unfortunate compulsorily acquisitions / cost. If a budget still exists and can be utilised for such a project even better!

EWRC made the decision to adopt Corridor E on the basis of construction costs, operational benefits and other essential variables.

The Wixams Station project is separate to EWR. Plans are progressing and on course for a station opening in 2024. We agree that to some degree Wixams station will relieve pressure on Bedford Midland Station. These improvements, while separate projects, will not preclude the potential for future connectivity within the area around Stewartby, Kempston Hardwick and Wixams.

43. 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. 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 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. 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. 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 Midlands Station and Bedford St John's will provide a stimulus to the regeneration of the town. Only by routing the line through the town will these opportunities emerge.

44. In the repositioning of both St John's station and Bedford Midland station much of the car parking will be lost either temporarily or even permanently. EWR mention in their technical document that multi story car parks could be build to provide the additional car parking required. Does the council know where the money for these multi-storey car parks will come from? Are they included in the cost of the project or will money from elsewhere need to be found? In addition how will the council propose to alleviate the disruption caused by the lack of car parking for both NHS staff and patients as well as those commuting from Bedford Midland?

One of the benefits of re-siting Bedford St Johns station closer to the hospital will be that it would provide an alternative means of access to the hospital for patients and staff.

It is understood that EWRC is responsible for the re-provision and financing of car parking for Bedford Midland Station. As part of the broader stations plan, it is expected that EWRC will provide additional car parking to support the provision of improved rail services. However, BBC will consider its own investment in additional car parking if this is likely to yield a positive return on investment.

BBC has not yet seen details of how car current parking demand will be managed through construction, but we will press EWRC to minimise disruption to existing residents.

45. Has the Council conducted studies and costings of the disruption that will be caused the the rural communities as a result of the construction of the rail route? Including the closure of key road links that will force lengthy detours that will impair response times of emergency services, and the damage and obstruction that arise from HGVs and machinery on narrow and worn country roads. Will these be made public?

It is impossible to assess the impact of disruption until there is greater certainty on the precise route alignment, the size and scale of infrastructure requirements and the timing and phasing of construction work. BBC expects EWRC to engage

with the Council and local residents on their proposals and we have made our expectation clear in our recent response to the consultation. We have said that:

- EWR considers the whole of the planning and construction phase as an opportunity to build and develop a partnership with the local population.
- BBC expects EWR to commit to a policy of local stakeholder engagement
- BBC requires EWR to introduce a 24-hour Helpline and a process for tracking and resolving stakeholder issues during the construction period.
- BBC expects to develop and agree a Construction Management Plan for the works at the earliest possible opportunity, and to involve local communities in this process.

The following list concerns specific commitments required from EWR by BBC:

- Hours of operation for construction works to be agreed (no overnight working – or minimal overnight working if agreed).
- That baseline noise measurements are undertaken prior to construction so as to be able to measure any increase during construction and once the railway is operational.
- Jointly agree a phasing plan to minimise congestion in respect of Bridge works in Bedford Borough
- A temporary bridge is required whilst the Great Ouse Way is being raised in order that the bypass can be kept open at all times.
- To be consulted on the draft plans for compound sites and haul roads to be used by EWR to construct the railway.
- To agree routes for HGV movements in relation to construction, and agree those routes where such movements will not be allowed
- That access is maintained at all times from the affected communities to the public services (e.g. education and health) that they depend upon
- That in Brickhill, Green Lane and Hawk Drive will not be used for access during construction
- If possible, all rights of way should be maintained. Any diversion of rights of way should be kept to the absolute minimum. Post-construction, all rights of way should be returned to a usable, and if possible enhanced condition.

46. Hello. I'm an ordinary person, living an ordinary life in a small village called Roxton. As a small village we have little to no voice! I have several concerns relating to EWR, one is the choice of 'route E' but the other, even more pressing is due to 'land locking' our small village because of road / rail infrastructure within a triangle that is less than a mile in length. Cutting off public footpaths and rights of way. I am completely baffled by the decision to choose 'route E'. The initial consultation for the railway highly suggested that 'route E' was the least favoured by EWR due to the significant structural costs involved. It involves viaducts, cuttings and embankments being constructed at considerable financial cost as well as high impact on the environment and surrounding landscape and a number of small villages that have little to no ability to object in number. It has significant impact on residential areas of Bedford. (So how and why was

this route suddenly chosen as the favourite?) There seems to of been considerable lobbying and financial incentives offered to EWR to choose this route (it was not their preferred route or preferred area for a new station.) In order to significantly lower the building cost and provide a new train station in Bedford, the current mayor of Bedford has it seems offered the incentive to build the new station and multi-storey car park from local tax payers money. This at a time when they have cut all essential services to the bare minimum. (How can they afford this but cut essential services?) The station is being moved to an area that is gridlocked mornings and evening and sometimes during the working day. It makes no sense from a pollution view point nor a 'busy commuter' point of view. It is an area people try to avoid. It involves demolition of a significant number of houses. There is on the edge of Bedford (the original preferred route A) land and the road structure to support a new train station it doesn't make sense not to utilise this. It has been highly suggested that talks between the 'new incinerator at Stewartby', warehouse / container distribution in the Midlands and the new large extending port at Felixstowe have also been instrumental in lobbying. In all of EWR consultation documents there is little to no suggestion of freight being carried, it focuses purely on passenger use. However, (contrary to current government promises on pollution and carbon emissions) it is suggested that night freight trains (long and diesel operated due to heavy loads) will be operated possibly 4 per hour or more. (Why are EWR only using consultation material about passengers?). Our village is a small triangle, It has a mix of private and social housing and no shop. It is flanked on three sides by high volume road networks and will already be considerably disrupted by the upgrade to 3 stories height of the expanded Black Cat roundabout, new road layout to Chawston / Wyboston, bringing HGV lorries across the top area of the village and upgrade of both the East to West road link (421 / 428) linking Cambridge and Milton Keynes) and new flow of the A1. If 'option 9' of 'route E' is chosen there will be a train line (with viaduct / banking) across the last remaining side of the village. The viaduct is of a considerable height (16 metres) due to huge flood plain underneath. The embankment is a considerable height due to our topography. This then leads to a large bridge going across the 421 and a minor road (see photo 1). In addition during construction (could be a significant number of years) all public foot paths are affected by the building and will need to be closed. Going for 'a walk' will mean walking down the exceptionally busy A1! Along areas that have high accident rates. Indeed will they try to close one or more our public footpaths once construction has been completed? (see photo 2). Please can you give us a voice, it is so important that someone, somewhere helps stop our village from becoming completely 'land locked' because of major road / rail infrastructure and cut off from even having a simple 'evening stroll'. We can't change the Black Cat roundabout or the A1 or the A421 / A428 but we can try as hard as we can to keep one side of our village 'open'. Please do not allow any of the rail routes that come below Roxton to be built. Please help to bring our village to the forefront of route considerations being taken.

Thank you for your comments. I would ask you to read through the Council's response to the EWRC consultation which can be found [here](#). This sets out the Council's view on many of the points raised in your comments.

According to the latest project plans, the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvement scheme will be under construction for two to three years prior to opening in 2025/26. We understand that EWRC intend to start running trains along the new EWR line by 2030.

We are aware that EWRC is talking to Highways England about major structures within the same locality, but until the route of the railway between Bedford and Cambridge is selected and designed, it is difficult to fully integrate the two schemes.

Both schemes have to provide a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation and these will set out the impacts on the built and natural environment, and how they can be mitigated.

47. Why is Bedford Borough intent on destroying the North Bedfordshire countryside, ancient woodlands, landmarks and villages when a less environmentally damaging southern A421 corridor route is available and has already been shown to be straighter, cheaper (without distorting real costs) and more environmentally friendly?

BBC did not select the preferred route options or the detailed alignment. We supported the EWR proposal for Route E because the overall long-term benefits of this railway passing through the town were substantial. EWRC selected this route because in comparison to the other routes the benefits outweighed the costs. However, we are determined to minimise the environmental impact of the route, and we intend to engage with EWRC to ensure that it is sensitive to local issues.

48. Do you actively welcome freight through Bedford town centre?

Freight already runs through Bedford Midland Station but we know that the issue of freight trains is sensitive to local residents. The challenge is to support freight in the context of a carbon-neutral agenda. The issue is not so much that trains carry freight, but the perceived impact that these trains have on the community over and above passenger trains. There are three elements which make freight trains less acceptable: the belief that they are more polluting; the increased noise; and the fear that these trains would run throughout the night. Each of these aspects can be tackled.

The BBC stance is that this railway line should be electrified. Electric freight locomotives are carbon-neutral and emit less noise. We understand that the timetable schedules will provide for up to one freight train per hour in either direction. This does not mean that there will be one freight train per hour. We will work with EWR to determine whether any freight operation can be limited so that freight trains do not run throughout the night.

49. What environmental impacts did / have you asked EWR to consider for their routes?

The duty to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) rests with EWRC as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process which is the planning approval process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. The DCO does not currently exist, and the next stage for EWRC will be to undertake the requirements for the preparation of a DCO. We expect this to include a detailed EIA and we would expect to comment on the findings.

50. How many roads will be permanently cut off as a result of the route, and what will you be doing to support residents who are effected?

We are not aware of any roads being stopped up and we will press for all current roads and accesses to remain open.

The Council would expect the application for a Development Consent Order that EWRC will need to make for the construction of the railway will also provide for public access across the railway via bridges. The Order will be a subject to a full Statutory Consultation, and the Council will expect EWRC to ensure that proper access across the railway is maintained for all affected.

51. What impact assessment has been done on the impact to air quality of driving diesel trains through Bedford Midland station, considering air quality in Bedford already breaches the levels per the Air Quality Management Area?

EWRC has not yet undertaken a full environmental impact assessment. It will be completed later within the scheme development in accordance with UK legislation. Part of the process will be to identify means to mitigate impacts of the scheme, including the impacts on air quality.

BBC is pressing for EWR to be electrified. It is important to note that there is already substantial freight traffic through Bedford Midland – up to two trains per hour each way, most of which is hauled by diesel locomotives. It is for the rail industry and Government to address this later point by pursuing a policy of further electrification across the rail network to enable wider use of electric locomotives. EWRC opted for Route E on the basis of the technical information available to them, including the likely availability of rolling stock. EWRC has a duty to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process which is the planning approval process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects. The next stage is for EWRC will be to undertake the requirements for the preparation of a DCO. This will include investigation into air quality though the affected area.

52. Have there been BBC discussions with Covanta about providing rail freight services to the Stewartby waste facility?

BBC has not been involved in discussions with Covanta about the use of rail for its waste operation.

53. Where will the £6m funding contribution from BBC towards the redesign and development of Bedford Midland Station be coming from? Will this funding from BBC effectively net off the benefit to the town?

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We have submitted a separate bid to the Government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We now know that 90% of the funding has been approved; it will be additional funding and not at the expense of any service provision.

54. Has the level of public response against Route E surprised you?

This is a rare project with the potential for a significant impact both positively and less positively, on Bedford and the whole Borough. It is not surprising that so many people should share their opinions and we continue to encourage people to do so.

55. When the EWR Technical Report states that “a new station south of Bedford would generate slightly greater increases in jobs and productivity than routes serving Bedford Midland due to faster journey times”, what other considerations made you choose to lobby for passenger and freight services through Bedford?

The 2019 EWR Consultation document was clear that Route E attracted the highest transport user benefits, and the second highest economic growth benefits of the five routes under consideration. The highest economic growth benefit was for Route D, which also passed through Bedford and on the same route north and then east of the town. It is not entirely clear where you have found the statement to which you refer. It has not been possible to find any reference to a new station south of Bedford generating an increase in jobs and productivity. It may be correct that a faster journey time might have greater overall economic benefit across the scheme as a whole. However, the 2019 Consultation document seems to suggest otherwise.

56. If Bedford St John's Station is relocated to Britannia Road, where the current hospital car park is, and a multi storey car park is built, as suggested, to make up for the lost parking spaces, who would be paying for this, Bedford Borough Council or East West Rail?

EWRC will be paying for the station relocation and this should include adequate provision for car parking.

57. Can you please confirm what the total project costings are for each of the 5 short listed route alignments within Section D of the preferred route E, Clapham Green to the Eversdens.

The costings for these five alignments within this section appear to be missing from all EWR documentation. The Consultation Technical Document only gives 2019 up front costs for the St.Neots to Cambourne

North/South and Tempsford to Cambourne North/South sections on page 330 and 331. If you are unable to answer this question then can you please confirm that these latest project costings for the five alignments will be published by EWR within the next few days to enable the public and local/parish councils to view this information which they can then use when finalising their own feedback responses to this consultation. It is extremely important for the public and local/parish councils to know the full extent of the costs for this railway before being able to make an informed decision on preferred route alignment.

BBC has not seen the costings for the alignments within Route E. Now that the consultation period has finished, EWRC will be working up detailed costings for these alignments. We expect these to be publicly available at the next stage of public consultation which is scheduled for the beginning of next year.

39. I would like to know whether the Mayor & BBC acknowledge that they are the elected representatives of the people of Bedford & Bedfordshire? What right do you have to use Council Taxpayers money to fund reports by consultants which only look at the route preferred & wanted by BBC?

It has become fundamentally clear from the meeting this morning that BBC has pushed for a route which entirely fits in with the Bedford Redevelopment Master Plan.

The behaviour of BBC has been & continues to be appalling. You continue to maintain the Route selection is entirely down to EWR. EWR have been heavily influenced by the submissions of BBC.

Finally why was a process similar to that which is going on in relation to the route E alignment consultation to inform BBC's response to this consultation not done in order to inform BBC's response to the consultation on the Route Option choice?

BBC takes the view that to seek expert views on highly complex matters is responsible governance. You can see from the reports [on this page](#) that the consultants examined all the five route corridor options which were put forward by EWRC in 2019. It is the considered view of BBC that a route which runs through central Bedford will be economic benefits for the whole Borough.

EWRC received feedback from almost 7,000 people and organisations following 6 weeks of consultation on the five route options. You can read more about the consultation, including reviewing the public feedback [here](#).

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.

BBC recognises that there was a general demand for further information on this major piece of infrastructure investment, hence the question and answer sessions which were offered to the public during the latest round of consultation.