

Category 8: Electrification

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

1. Can you confirm that only electric trains will be using the new line and that there will be no diesel trains running (either passenger or freight)

BBC is pressing for electrification for the whole of the East West Rail line. The Government has confirmed that it is currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification - <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-08.HL13118.h>.

Partial electrification would involve operation of battery or hydrogen trains that would also take power from the electrified wires.

2. Can you confirm there is an intention to have this a major freight line and will this line carry dangerous and hazardous goods.

BBC is not the developer, owner or operator of this new railway line and therefore we cannot confirm to what extent it will be used for freight. What we do know is that the underlying purpose and business case for the railway is to provide passenger connectivity between Oxford and Cambridge and stations along this line of route. Freight trains use most of the railway network and this line is unlikely to be an exception. Much of the freight carried, on rail or road, has the capacity to be dangerous and hazardous in some form. It seems unlikely that the mix of freight will be any more dangerous or hazardous as on any other route.

3. The trains should be electric. Yes this would be more expensive but would be partially off set by using a southern, shorter and flatter route and have the added benefit of longer term reduction in pollution.

BBC is pressing for electrification for the whole of the East West Rail line. The route choice makes a very small difference to the long term reduction in pollution compared to the choice of traction type.

The route choice is of course a matter for EWR and the Government. The primary objective for its choice of route is to connect communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge. A route through the centre of Bedford contributes to achieving that objective.

4. Will Bedford Borough Council commit to ensuring that the East-West Rail is fully electric from the beginning, rather than having an initial period of operation using diesel locomotives, in order to meet both current and future sustainability commitments, including a zero carbon emission?

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5. Why is it assumed by Bedford Borough Council that the route will be electrified? EWR have stated that the route will not be electrified in the first instance.

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6. What gains will there be for rural residents who will have to put up with the disruption being caused by the new route construction. Will it cause disruption to existing power to Great Barford as this is currently carried on overhead cables which will be bisected by the route. Will there be new stations and railheads that will cut down road traffic and will the railway be electrified from the start.

The residents of the Borough will be able to benefit from regular, fast train services to Oxford, Cambridge and beyond. To the east of Bedford, they will be able to access the railway either via Bedford Midland Station or the new station proposed at Tempsford / St Neots South.

The construction of the railway will inevitably cause some local disruption. However, it is highly unlikely that there will be an interruption to local power supplies.

BBC is pressing for the electrification of EWR from the start. The Government has confirmed that it is currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification - <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-08.HL13118.h>.

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7. When did the Mayor and local councillors find out that EWR was going to be diesel only (non-electrified)? And was that information included in the 2019 consultation? Because I believe that this was actually announced as early as 2016 (see section 7.34 of the following document: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862577/Network-Rail-East-West-Rail-Bicester-

Bedford-Improvements-Order-Inspectors-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR119KL5WG52XH1fQZTmdMMW_sTRTpUxczSyk3ObL8NCIIaKlvB5sEQs7-I ; I have also attached a screenshot of the relevant section).

Thank you for this reference. BBC is pressing for the electrification of EWR from the start. The Government has confirmed that it is currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification -

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-08.HL13118.h>.

8. Can you confirm if this line will be electrified, if it's not why not!

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