

## Category 3 Questions and Answers

Abbreviations used in the responses below include the following;

- BBC – Bedford Borough Council
- DCO – Development Consent Order
- EIA - Environmental Impact Assessment
- EWR – East West Rail (generally refers to the project)
- EWRC – East West Rail Company
- PRoW – Public Rights of Way

1. **Whichever route is finally taken by EWR the effects on nature, wildlife, views etc could be argued forevermore.**

As part of the ongoing development process, EWRC will undertake detailed environmental investigation in accordance with UK legislation, to identify protected species and other habitats and species of note, in order develop plans to mitigate the environmental impact of construction and operation of the railway. BBC is encouraging EWRC to avoid historic woodland and other environmentally important sites. BBC also supports the use of nature friendly construction methods.

2. **Has an environmental impact as a consequence of destroying natural countryside been conducted? Where is this published?**

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

3. **Have EWR visited Clapham / Woodlands / Ravensden / Brickhill the North Route to look at the environmental impact? Our environment – do they really not care? All Route E options will leave a scar on the landscape unlike anything the town has ever witnessed. I'm afraid that most residents will live in blissful ignorance until the bull-dozers move in. The area to the north of Bedford through which Route E would run is some of the most picturesque, unspoilt countryside our county has. We should be protecting it with all our might to pass it on to future generations intact. The south side of Bedford already has the A421 transport corridor. It is flatter, a shorter route, no doubt providing quicker journey times.**

A full EIA will be undertaken by EWRC as part of the development process, in accordance with UK legislation. The EWR team is aware of environmental

sensitivities and the need to mitigate the impact of construction and operation of the railway.

EWRC selected Route E as the preferred corridor on the basis of their own technical studies.

- 4. What guarantee are any parties giving about the increase of flooding risks where the track is going?; For example Great Barford suffers from flooding now, the giveaway is in the name – BarFORD, shallow place in a river for a crossing. The Bypass has caused extra actual flooding in the 16 years it's been open and was severe this winter. A lot of excess water comes off the bypass now. We have a stream at the bottom of our garden, its normally 4'' of tadpole water. On Christmas day this year we had a leaflet suggesting we moved furniture upstairs, turned everything off and move out. Because this stream was now threatening to overflow. This water was coming from Bypass and surrounding area on its way to the river so not caused by rivet flooding. The fields behind the village hall going towards the Bypass were flooded, worse we have seen since Bypass opened.**

The construction of a new railway line should not, of itself increase the risk of flooding. Unlike a tarmac road, a railway line is constructed on permeable material and therefore rainfall is likely to be absorbed rather than contribute to runoff. EWRC is likely to pay special attention to ensuring that construction works do not disturb existing watercourses, and will install flood mitigation in accordance with UK legislation where necessary.

- 5. I strongly oppose east west rail route E for the following reasons. This route has the biggest environmental impact, carving up beautiful north Bedfordshire countryside. It is a less direct route increasing carbon footprint and journey times. Routes A-C to the south of Bedford are all cheaper, making use of existing infrastructure and are all more environmentally sensitive. Why has this route been chosen?**

Route E was the route selected by EWRC and the government because it was judged to be the overall best option. See [Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report.pdf \(eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/444444/Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report.pdf) In railway schemes the overall carbon impact is judged on not only the emissions of the train service, but also the degree to which customers switch from higher carbon alternatives (e.g. car) to rail. The more customers the service carries the more carbon efficient it becomes. Route E enables connectivity at and with Bedford and has the potential to offer a more carbon efficient solution than the alternative routes.

**6. Precis - Cannot see that destruction of countryside is warranted or feasible. Full comment saved in screen shot**

BBC will work with EWRC to ensure that steps are taken to minimise the impact on the countryside. 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.

**7. Why is the council and mayor so happy to sell off the countryside which is such an integral part of living in the north of Bedford?**

EWRC was mandated by central government to determine a route between Bedford and Cambridge. EWR and the government selected Route E. [Preferred-Route-Option-Announcement-Preferred-Route-Option-Report.pdf \(eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](#) BBC is supportive of Route E because of the overall benefits that it would bring to the Town and the Borough over many years. It is not within BBC's power to select the route, nor is BBC involved in the land acquisition process.

**8. Has any environmental impact survey been undertaken by the council to show the effects on air quality and wildlife for both the proposed northern route and the previous southern route? If so, what was the outcome? if not, why not?**

The council has not undertaken any survey work on air quality or wildlife as this is a scheme promoted by East West Rail Company. EWRC has carried out initial environmental investigation which is available on their interactive maps which can be found [here](#). It is the duty of EWR as part of their scheme to undertake a full environmental impact assessment in accordance with UK legislation, and this will be available in public documents.

**9. If northern route goes ahead there needs to be assurance that any loss of habitat is replaced at a ratio of 3:1. New habitat also needs to commence along side the construction, not afterwards, we need established habitat as soon as possible 1. for the benefit of the wildlife being displaced 2. to mitigate as much of the pollution damage that will be caused as quickly as possible and 3. to create sound screening for the residents of north Bedford and the affected villages e.g. Wilden, Ravensden etc.**

EWR 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 impact of the scheme. BBC will work closely with EWR to help identify opportunities to enhance the environment and compensate for any environmental impact. The

creation of additional habitat could, though, involve an increase in the overall amount of land used for the scheme, so there is a balance to be sought.

**10. What is the Mayor doing to mitigate the effect of the railway running through the up-to-now unspoilt countryside to the north of Bedford? What specific mitigation measures is he going to press EWR for?**

BBC has responded to EWR with the following requests;

- A detailed engineering topographical study of the impact of the potential solutions and the opportunity to comment on the proposals
- Continuously-welded rail construction to minimise wheel noise and where this is not possible, that noise damping methods are employed
- That the route should be fully electrified unless another viable, carbon-free alternative becomes available
- Commitment to a policy of local stakeholder engagement and a 24-hour Helpline and a process for tracking and resolving stakeholder issues during the construction period
- An agreed Construction Management Plan for the works - involving local communities in this process

In addition, BBC is seeking commitments from EWRC in respect of;

- 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
- Requirements for a temporary bridge 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 Public Rights of Way should be maintained. Any diversion of PRow should be kept to the absolute minimum. Post-construction, all rights of way should be returned to a usable, and if possible enhanced condition
- As little impact on heritage and conservation assets as possible and, as great an increase in biodiversity as can be achieved. We believe that

viaducts aid permeability for wildlife, and for this reason we generally prefer viaducts to embankments

- EWRS's broader role in creating a lasting legacy from the new railway line. BBC has suggested that it may be feasible, for example, at marginal or no additional cost, to create a cycleway along the line of route, and lay fibre optic broadband, so as to bring real, long-term benefits to current and future residents of the area

**11. I would like to know why residents of Clapham knew nothing about the consultation in 2019, and therefore were unable to respond appropriately. Therefore any results from the consultation are inherently flawed, leading to a flawed 2021 consultation. Is EWR prepared to have a rethink on allowing LOCAL residents to state their case for choice of routes.**

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 25<sup>th</sup> 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](#).

**12. Have full environmental impact assessments been carried out to establish that route E is the least damaging route for the environment given that we are reaching crisis point in our bid to reduce carbon?**

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

BBC's consultation feedback we have stated that the route should be fully electrified unless another viable, carbon-free alternative becomes available.

- 13. If it is about trying to serve a big future development at Twinwoods, then why are you not pushing to take the line further to that development? Cllr Roydon indicated this in a public meeting and would put that as a proposal to EWR, is that something the Council will push for or is that another thing said without conviction and weight? Is your plan to look at having a parkway station by Twinwoods in the future?**

There is a delicate balance for the viability of a railway between journey time and the number of stations on the route. Every additional station will provide extra opportunities and utility for some, but will increase the journey time which will be a disincentive for others. Any new railway has the potential to provide opportunities for new stations and new sustainable developments. EWR will have to manage this conflict, and made their choice on the preferred route corridor on the basis of the technical information available to them. BBC will work with EWR to capitalise upon the opportunities of the railway.

- 14. Open Country side has a bigger impact on noise travelling, so what will be done to ensure it is reduced? The Cllr for Castle Ward stating that he lives close to Bedford Midland is not impacted to noise, is not an acceptable comment when the buildings reduce the sound. I hear your solution is in planting trees and possibly being done before the route is in place. Who picks up that costs? When would you look for that to be done?**

Arguably, the most effective way to limit noise is to reduce the noise at source rather than contain it. Different rolling-stocks emit different levels of noise. Electric stock is generally considered quieter than some diesel trains. BBC has expressed support for the new railway on the basis that the line should operate with electric trains.

The EWR train plan is for up to four trains per hour in each direction. In any one hour there will be prolonged periods of no railway noise whatsoever. There is a balance between the employment of noise reduction methods and their associated impact upon the environment. Whilst fencing might be effective in baffling noise, it might be considered inappropriate in the rural setting. Trees might be more visually appealing but are less effective at baffling noise. It may be that as part of the overall mitigation of the impact of the railway that trees are planted. Because of the nature of construction, though, this is unlikely to be until most of the heavy engineering work has been completed.

- 15. You recently stated that you are now to push for the line to be electrified. This should have been done in early consultations as if not, that has to become a deciding factor to the chosen route.**

**Being electrified whilst reducing the noise then has an impact to the view on open countryside green belt.**

It is our view that the trains should be electrified and we will continue to push for that outcome.

**16. For the route out of Bedford, impact many public pathways. What investigation has been done by yourselves regarding that?**

Once EWRC has selected a route then they will commence detailed design work. We are keen to engage with them at that stage to understand the precise impact along all of the route in respect to the size, scale and impact of cuttings, embankments, viaducts, tunnels, bridges etc. At that time we will also engage in respect to Public Rights or Way which cross the proposed line. Our expectation is that existing PRoWs will bridge the new railway. We will also seek to develop a protocol with EWRC to ensure that PRoWs remain open and maintained throughout construction.

**17. How many tracks will there then be through the green belt and what width will the cutting have to be?**

The new route from the Midland Mainline to the East Coast Mainline will consist of two tracks. It is possible that there may be a passing 'loop' somewhere along the line where, for a short distance, an additional track is provided. It is impossible at this stage to answer with any certainty the width of any cutting. It will be site specific and will depend upon the depth of the cutting and the geological properties of the ground.

**18. Background The devastation of rural communities was not accounted for in either the BBC 2019 consultation response to EWRC supporting Option E, nor in the EWRC technical case for this as the preferred option. Furthermore, the demolition of about 100 urban properties has been overlooked; the impact on air quality and the environment in general was dismissed; and the certainty of highly disruptive freight train operations was not admitted. Recent revelations and petitioning by professional bodies such as CPRE have failed to provide increased priority to these key issues that impact on residents' health and general wellbeing.**

**Question Why has BBC failed to undertake and make public studies on the total environmental impact of EWR and in particular of their recommended Option E through the town centre and through highly valued rural Borough landscapes? Has BBC any data on pollution during construction and operation of EWR and the possible impact on Bedford's AQMA, and will it petition EWRC to provide such information, including the added impact of freight operations?**

The Council's view is that EWR can deliver their operation without building a six-track railway through Bedford town in the area north of the station.

With respect to freight train operations, we have sought additional information from EWRC in respect to the likely level and impact of freight trains. Our current understanding is that there will be provision in the timetable for one train per hour to pass along the new route in each direction. However, the nature of freight operations does not mean that there will be a freight train every hour.

The full impact of EWR will only be known once it is clear on the precise route, the level of engineering work required, the nature of the track in terms of cuttings, embankments, tunnels, viaducts etc, and the rolling stock to be used. We are committed to work closely with EWR to ensure that the environmental impact is minimised and that active measures are taken where appropriate and possible to make environmental improvements.

**19. Will Bedford Borough Council commit to minimising the destruction of farmland and natural habitat in its decision making, better serving the wishes of the rural communities it represents?**

Our aim is that EWRC delivers this railway scheme with the absolute minimal impact on residents and the environment. We recognise, though, that there will be some impact as a result of the construction and operation of the railway. We want to work with EWRC to minimise the disruption and impact, and where possible agree means to make improvements.

**20. I just have to join the thousands of others voicing our dismay and horror at the idea of a rail route north of the town.**

**The council and the Mayor seem to have absolutely no idea of the destruction and ruination of the best bit of rolling landscape not to mention the wildlife. Years and years of unbelievable disruption and noise in an area that is gridlocked with traffic at the present time.**

**I moved to Brickhill from London 50 years ago and at that time it was deemed "The best part of Bedford to live," we were about a minutes walk from beautiful peaceful countryside. I now live in Clapham and the same can be said. Carrige Drive and Hawk drive have remained unspoilt for over 50 years and MUST BE SPARED from being ruined by a train line much better suited to the flatter route south of the town!!!!**

We recognise the very special nature of Carriage Drive and have proposed to EWRC that at this point the proposed line should be in a tunnel. We will continue to press strongly for that outcome. We also recognise that construction will bring with it the risk of disruption. We are wholly committed to ensuring that EWR understand the issues at stake and that together we develop a plan to minimise the impact of construction.

We also want to 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.

The EWRC Preferred Route Option report can be found [here](#)

**21. 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 EWRC proposal for Route E because the overall long-term benefits of this railway passing through the town were substantial. EWRC and the government 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 they are sensitive to local issues.

**22. Why was Bedford Borough Council happy with choosing a route that would require viaducts, deep cuttings and embankments in prime countryside which would not only destroy the northern landscape but would impose much higher safety risks, rather than having a leveller route that the A421 corridor would provide? It would also require greater engineering feats.**

BBC did not select the preferred route options or the detailed alignment. We supported the EWRC proposal for Route E because the overall long-term benefits of this railway passing through the town were substantial. EWRC and the government 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 they are sensitive to local issues.

**23. As per your plans (consultation doc - page 43), please confirm the trains will be electric or more advanced technology - i am very nervous there are plans for diesel, which will affect the environment and undoubtedly be noisier. We shall be living a few 100m's from the line ... whilst now we live in a rural area, with only the sound of wildlife around us**

The route selection and choice of rail traction is made by EWRC. We agree, that diesel trains will be more environmentally damaging and potentially noisier. As such, BCC is insisting that electric or some other zero carbon traction is used on this route.

**24. A 900m bridge will be a huge concrete construction blighting the landscape as you enter Clapham - no one has yet shown any drawings as to how this will look. It really feels terrifying thinking about such a structure takes over the landscape. Can it really come down the farmers fields, cross clapham rd, over the river, over Paula Radcliffe Way and under The Great Ouse Way to link with the track?**

BBC has not seen any plans or visual interpretations of the proposed viaduct at Clapham and is concerned about its potential visual impact. We believe that there might be a less intrusive alternative which we are keen to explore with EWRC. BBC will continue to press for further discussions on this issue.

**25. Can you please explain why the parishioners of Roxton should welcome a 12m high concrete viaduct and embankment that will landlock the village and close off the footpaths and bridleways around the village?**

BBC 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 (see response to Q10). We have set out a list of commitments which we would like EWRC to work towards and we will continue to press for these commitments to be met.

**26. You have promoted the East West Rail route through Bedford Midland Road exiting the town northwards. It is now clear that the only way to preserve the rural environment through which it would pass, from huge long embankments, cuttings and viaducts, is for the railway to be in a tunnel from after it crosses the Bedford-Clapham road (the old A6) until it reaches the flatter ground to the east of Wilden and Renhold. Would you please bring the full influence and resources of the Bedford Borough Council to bear on EWR putting this part of the railway in a tunnel?**

We are pressing for EWRC to build a tunnel under Carriage Drive rather than their proposal for a cutting.

**27. Can I ask that the Council would lend their support to the rural communities by listening and giving careful consideration to their objections to the routes north of Bedford?**

We understand that the route north of Bedford is sensitive, and we will work hard to ensure that steps are taken to minimise the disruption and environmental impact during works and the subsequent operation of the railway. We will encourage EWRC to adopt open two-way engagement with local residents with a view to developing the least intrusive options and effective mitigation.

**28. Did the Borough Council do an assessment of the impact on local residents of the noise levels and vibration of a long viaduct between Bedford and Clapham before supporting a Northern route?**

At the point that BBC offered its support to a northern route there was only limited information available regarding the proposed engineering detail for route E, although it was expected that the engineering requirement would be significant. Now we have more detail on the current proposals, we can comment on the impact of the new structures. We accept that the current proposal around Clapham is likely to be intrusive, and in our consultation feedback, we have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope that EWR will develop. We have also stated that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

**29. I seem to remember that the draft local plan that I saw in the library a couple of years ago recommended maintaining the green space between Clapham and Bedford and the views over the river valley. How and when did this change into supporting building a viaduct, an embankment, a deep cutting and the destruction of the unspoilt countryside North of Bedford which has many well used footpaths and bridleways and is home to much wildlife eg badgers, bats, red kites, owls, foxes, deer etc.?**

BBC accepts that the proposal round Clapham is likely to be intrusive and has suggested an alternative proposal which it hopes will be considered by EWRC. BBC has also asked that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

With regard to the environmental impact of the proposals, EWRC will carry out a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation, and this will be available as a public document.

The impact of the proposals in Public Rights of Way will be considered as the scheme progresses, and BBC has made it clear to EWRC that any severance to PRowS should be reinstated and enhanced where possible.

**30. EWR gave an answer on not reusing parts of the Varsity line at their webinar that properties had been built on parts of it and other parts are now established wildlife areas. However, this implies that the buildings built on the old line are more important than those properties near Bedford Station that would need to be demolished and the newer wildlife areas more important than the long established wildlife in the unspoilt North Beds countryside. Why did BBC not consider the alternative route using parts of the old line suggested by your own consultants?**

EWRC chose Route E as the preferred route on the basis of their own technical work. BBC supports Route E because of the additional economic benefits a station in the town centre will bring. EWRC are obliged under UK law to carry out

a full Environmental Impact Assessment of the route, and this will consider all impacts associated with the route, including heritage and biodiversity.

BBC's consultants assessed whether or not it would be possible to use the Varsity Line as an alternative option if a town centre route was not selected.

**31. I have a number of questions, which I have listed at the end. I have a few points I wanted to make first as some background.**

**I feel very passionately about the EWR railway proposals, my husband and I moved to Wilden five years ago because we wanted to live in the countryside and enjoy a better quality of life. We have  $\frac{3}{4}$  acre of land in which we planted willow trees so we could become self-sufficient in fuel for the winter, a large vegetable and fruit garden and many rescue hens which roam around. We like nothing better than to sit outside and enjoy the views and wildlife with a cold drink of a weekend. All of which will be flattened by alignments 8 & 9 which is coming through our garden. We had plans to put in ponds, renovate the house because my mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's during lockdown 1 and is becoming increasingly difficult for my 82 year old father to manage and they live in Suffolk. Now we are trapped unable to change, unable to move. This is the human impact of EWR.**

**Whilst I do agree with having an Oxford to Cambridge railway, I do not agree with the route alignment north of Bedford for many reasons, and feel that it has not been done in a transparent and just way. I feel very let down by what I thought was a democratic and fair society we are lucky to live in.**

**In my previous job I worked for a company based in Oxford and often commuted into London, my current job is based in Cambridge and therefore I am one of the people who should be benefitting from this railway. I live in Wilden having commuted into and from Bedford previously I have experienced first-hand the terrible congestion and lack of parking/cycle facilities. Why would I commute from Bedford to Cambridge via train when it is much quicker by road especially with the new road to the Black Cat? Cambridge station is 20 mins walk south of the centre, so for many people who work outside of Cambridge town centre like myself it would be quicker to drive than to commute by train and then walk/cycle. My preference would actually be to commute by train and cycle as it is greener, but the hell that is commuting from Bedford would mean that I would avoid it unless absolutely necessary.**

**Example journey time:**

- Drive from Wilden to my office in Cambridge ~45 mins to 1 hour in bad traffic but will be much less with the new road**
- Drive from Wilden to Bedford (10-15 mins), park get on train etc (15 mins), journey time (30-40 mins?), walk other end (30 mins) or cycle (10 mins)**

**I am obviously opposed to the northern alignments 8 & 9, but I am also**

**opposed to Route E completely.**

**Please find our questions below:**

**1. With increased passenger capacity at Bedford Station with both north/south and east/west rail routes, increased parking capacity (bearing in mind current capacity is hugely under provisioned), how are you intending it improve road capacity to cope with additional traffic?**

As part of BBC's response to EWRC, we have included a list of requirements for Bedford Midland Station in order to deliver a 'fit for purpose' station which is capable of meeting the demands of a new interchange. This list includes improved access to the remodelled station for all users, provision of adequate car parking, step free access, etc.

The new station will provide opportunities for regeneration in the wider area which will in turn allow for provision of car park and access arrangements to be considered in a wider context.

**2. The choice of route E is baffling many people in the local communities because of the landscape and the need for a huge viaduct and extensive cutting.**

- a) The viaduct will be an eyesore on entering and leaving Clapham**
- b) the cutting will literally cut our community in two**
- c) the cost of these works must be substantially more than the alternative route B despite BBC denying this - why did the costs suddenly change to favour route E at the end of 2019?**
- d) The impact on the flood plain is concerning especially given the horrendous flooding we experienced in the village on Christmas Day**
- e) the impact on wildlife species will be catastrophic- badgers, foxes, bats, owls, woodpeckers, hedgehogs, red kites, many plant species ... the list is extensive.**
- f) the impact of construction noise, pollution and traffic works and the subsequent noise and pollution when trains are running will be horrific and impact significantly on our lives.**

- a) BBC agrees that the viaduct at Clapham will be visually intrusive and we have proposed an alternative alignment which we believe could be preferable to the current proposed alignment. We want to work with EWRC to scope out this option.
- b) BBC has encouraged EWRC to commit to a policy of local stakeholder engagement.
- c) BBC cannot comment on the route costs as we have no detailed information on EWRC's costings. Each of the potential routes required a mixture of infrastructure arrangements including tunnels, bridges, cuttings, embankments, and viaducts. EWRC made the decision to choose Route E on the basis of their own technical work, and this has been approved by the Government.

- d) The next phase of technical work will include further evaluation of flooding and drainage issues, and the impact of proposed structures on the water and drainage environment
- e) BCC accepts that the construction phase may impact upon wildlife, but that the overall impact of the completed railway on the environment and wildlife will be minimised. Many species live in and around existing railway infrastructure and we hope that wildlife will readily adapt to this new railway.
- f) EWR 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 impact of the scheme.

**32. We have always been led to believe that the area of land between Fairfield park and Clapham would not be infilled in order to keep the village identity for Clapham. We already have Towers, a huge warehouse on the top of the hill, now there is a plan for 200 houses to be built. The only land left will be destroyed by the railway.**

We accept that the current proposal around Clapham is likely to be intrusive, and in our consultation feedback to EWRC, we have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope that EWRC will develop. We have also stated that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

**33. We urge you to consider the strength of feeling in the local community and think again about destroying the beautiful countryside between Bedford and Clapham and beyond to Ravensden. This is not the best route due to the incline of the land and the associated costs, the construction noise, pollution and disruption it will cause for the community and the eyesore of a viaduct over two roads and the river.**

This route was chosen by EWRC because they judged that it combined the maximum benefits compared to the various monetary and non-monetary costs. BBC is supportive of the northern routes because of the scale of the opportunity that it brings to Bedford and the Borough as a whole. We recognise, though, that there needs to be much detailed work at the next stage of the project to minimise residents' concerns in relation to pollution, disruption and other impact. We believe that there are better alternatives around Clapham that need to be explored, and in our consultation feedback to EWRC, we have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope that EWRC will develop. We have also stated that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

**34. How can you say that any one of the northern routes will 'protect your historic environment through preserving and enhancing your heritage assets' when you are totally destroying buried archaeological assets and**

**significantly and adversely affecting standing historic buildings and their settings?**

EWR 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. BBC will work closely with EWR to help identify opportunities to enhance the environment and compensate for any environmental impact, including the archaeological and heritage impacts.

**35. Please explain why the people of Roxton should welcome the below? (picture of train travelling through countryside)**

EWR 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. BBC will work closely with EWR to help identify opportunities to reduce the visual impact of large structures.

**36. You have promoted the East West Rail route through Bedford Midland Road exiting the town northwards. It is now clear that the only way to preserve the rural environment and reduce the catastrophic impact to the environment and villages that as Bedford Mayor you are meant to represent, from huge long embankments, cuttings and viaducts, is for the railway to be in a tunnel from after it crosses the Bedford-Clapham road (the old A6) until it reaches the flatter ground to the east of Wilden and Renhold. Would you please bring the full influence and resources of the Bedford Borough Council to bear on EWR putting this part of the railway in a tunnel?**

We agree that the visual impact of some of the structures will be significant, and we believe that there are better alternatives around Clapham that need to be explored. In our consultation feedback to EWRC, we have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope that EWRC will develop. We have also requested that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

**37. 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. EWRC will be obliged to maintain access to land and to reduce the amount of productive land which is left unusable.

**38. This Road which will be severed in half potentially if you do proceed and is an area that has become important to people's mental health during these challenging times, to get outside in open countryside , hundreds and hundreds of people walk this road each week with children, family, their dogs.. This isn't just an average road it needs to be viewed and discussed further please. This is people who live in flats, or without gardens or without enough spare income to pay to join gyms - this is a village primarily of working class people that love the village and the beautiful walks and woods that you would be ruining. You have other much more sensible routes, you honestly do.**

Note – assume question refers to Carriage Drive.

The Council has requested that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

**39. Borough Council's planning committee refused permission for the erection of a Wind Turbine at the summit of Sunderland Hill, Ravensden in 2014. This was due to 'the development having a detrimental effect on a unique character landscape, on nearby properties and historical buildings and causing disruption to Public Rights of Way and Bridleways'. Why is alignment 1 deemed to be acceptable given that it will have a much higher impact on the landscape, heritage buildings and residents within the exact same area?**

BBC is not the Planning Authority for the EWRC proposal, and therefore has no direct say in whether consent is given or refused. The East West Rail Project is classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project and as such requires a Development Consent Order (DCO) to progress. At this stage no DCO has approved. EWRC will follow a statutory consultation process in due course which will lead to the application for a DCO, and BBC will make comments on that application, albeit as a major stakeholder. We will seek assurances from EWR that steps are in place to minimise disruption during construction and in operation and that, where possible, the alignment of the route is flexed to reduce the impact on residents.



**40. Has the Council conducted studies and costings of the disruption that will be caused to 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 EWR 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.

**41. Has the Council considered the impact on the health and well-being of the residents in the rural communities who will be exposed to years of noise and air pollution from heavy industry and construction occurring yards from their homes?**

EWR 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 on the health of the local population, through construction and operation phases. BBC will work closely with EWR to ensure that local communities are represented in determining the impacts of the proposed scheme.

**42. I am particularly concerned about the route through Clapham Park as this seems likely to be the most destructive stretch to what is a most important amenity and I would suggest one of Bedford's most important historic and environmental assets. Would you be able to clarify if Bedford Borough council owns the land in question of the former Clapham Park estate? To what extent is a very deep cutting intended or appropriate? Could a tunnel be considered at least in part where the railway meets the escarpment in Clapham given the considerable level difference and to mitigate against the potentially extreme environmental and visual impact / damage to Carriage Drive, Clapham Park Wood and the golf course? Or why could the route not be directed more towards Twinwoods and the former airfield, maybe even from further north along the east midlands mainline north of Clapham?**

The BBC response to the EWR consultation makes clear that we would prefer a tunnel rather than a cutting in the vicinity of Carriage Drive. We will also engage with EWR to see whether it is possible for the alignment to be slightly further to the north around the northern tip of Bedford.

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

BBC acknowledge and agree that the potential impact of EWR on the environment is of considerable importance. 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 (see link [advice note 15 version 1.pdf \(planninginspectorate.gov.uk\)](#) ). 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.

**44. The route under Carriage Drive, Clapham and through the land beyond should be put in a tunnel. This can be made using machinery currently in use on HS2, which will drill through chalk and clay. The tunnel will reduce the local environmental impact of the new line.**

The BBC response to the EWR consultation makes clear that we would prefer a tunnel rather than a cutting in the vicinity of Carriage Drive and we will continue to press EWRC on this issue.

**45. 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 EWRC proposal for Route E because the overall long-term benefits of this railway passing through the town were substantial. EWRC and the government selected this route because in comparison to the other routes the benefits outweighed the costs. We are, though, determined to minimise the environmental impact of the route. We intend to engage with EWR to ensure that they are sensitive to local issues and to avoid them if possible.

**46. 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. BBC believes that this route should be electrified, or if that is not possible some traction used which is carbon-neutral. We are particularly concerned that EWRC work with BBC and local communities to develop a Construction Management Plan which sets out in detail how EWRC and their contractors will operate. We are seeking more information on EWRC's proposals in respect of the proposed infrastructure so that we can understand what can be done to further mitigate the impact on the environment and communities.

**47. 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.

**48. 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 next stage is 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.

**49. 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.

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

The EWRC project team will have detailed information upon which they are building their costings. Kilborn Consulting, on the other hand, would not be privy to such costings and would have to make numerous assumptions based on many years of industry experience.

**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 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 central government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of an enhanced public square outside the new station. We do not yet know if that bid will be successful but if it is, it will be additional funding and not at the expense of any normal expenditure.

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

This is a rare project with the potential for significant impacts both positive and less positive, 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. Route E Consultation**

**These are my comments on the different things being proposed now Route E (is currently) the chosen option.**

**Deep cuttings and huge viaducts are going to completely destroy the rural setting of Clapham and the green recreational areas as outlined above. We cannot let this happen.**

**Why are there no other options for this section of the line - why can't it go further north and then cut across at twinwoods so that it does not destroy this lovely stretch of green land between Bedford and Clapham. Other parts of the route have options but for this part through Clapham no other options are given! This railway is a direct violation of all that the Clapham Parish Council put into their Clapham plan.....it destroys the nature and character of the village in so many ways.**

**We cannot allow any possibility of freight on this line. Will you ensure this?**

We agree that the visual impact of some of the structures will be significant, and we believe that there are better alternatives around Clapham that need to be explored. In our consultation feedback to EWRC, we have suggested an alternative proposal which we hope that EWRC will develop. We have also requested that the proposed cutting through Carriage Drive should be replaced with a tunnel.

EWRC selected Route E as the preferred corridor on the basis of their technical studies and cost estimates. They also had to balance the additional costs of longer routes and journey times against the attractiveness of a passenger service.

We know that the issue of freight trains is sensitive to local residents. The challenge is how do we support a carbon-neutral agenda if we are against trains carrying freight? The issue is not so much that trains carry freight, but the perceived impact that these trains have over and above passenger trains on the community. 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.

**56. The only way to retain any sense of the countryside and character of Clapham would be for there to be tunnelling rather than a viaduct and deep cuttings This should be looked into and taken into account. If it is more expensive or not possible then this is more evidence that route E is not a sensible option.**

In the BBC Consultation response, we have highlighted that we believe a tunnel should be constructed under Carriage Drive.

**57. Disruption to Clapham will be huge from construction ...how can this be mitigated? As it is we struggle to leave our village in the mornings because of traffic - it can take up to 20mins or more currently, The levels of disruption to build these kind of engineering feats to cross the rivers and roads with viaducts will be unacceptable to the residents of Clapham.**

At the next stage of the scheme development, EWRC will carry out a full Environmental Impact Assessment in accordance with UK legislation. This will consider the environmental impacts of the scheme throughout construction and operation and will include an assessment of the impacts of construction on local communities. In addition, BBC has requested that EWRC commits to a policy of local stakeholder engagement where such issues can be discussed.

**58. I feel the consultation was flawed, not just because I didn't receive any notice of the line that would directly affect me (apparently 2019). But also because I feel the council bulldozed their plans through without wanting to listen to their town. There seems to be other agendas in terms of having the line come through Bedford station so it can be renovated. And no care for Bedford countryside. What will the council do to rectify this and show their support to the people affected.**

EWRC carried out a statutory consultation process on the proposed routes to the east of Bedford in 2019. BBC responded to this consultation recommending a route through the town.

During the 2019 EWR Co 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, including,

- 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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](#)

It remains the Council's view that the route through Bedford will bring benefits to the town which would not have occurred if the town had been bypassed. We are doing out utmost to ensure that the environmental impact and disruption of construction and operation is minimised.

**59. 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 statutory consultation process on the proposed routes to the east of Bedford in 2019 and the report of the consultation exercise can be found [here](#). BBC responded to this consultation recommending a route through the town. Individuals were free to respond to EWR 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 the environmental impact and disruption of construction and operation is minimised.

**60. 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.

**61. 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.

**62. 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.

**63. 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 EWR 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; and
- 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.