

Category 5: Freight Train Usage

Abbreviations used in the responses below include the following;

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

- 1. How much of the traffic using the new East West line is expected to be freight? And specifically, is waste to and from the Covanta incinerator in Stewartby going to be transported using this line? Covanta's documentation states that the reason why they chose Stewartby for their location is because it has the potential to use trains to transport waste, instead of the road network.**

With regard to freight, paragraph 3.10.1 of the Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

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.

What the East West Rail Company says <https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/ListsBlockMedia/002ad19643/Fact-sheet-freight.pdf> is, "East West Rail is focused on connecting communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge with frequent, fast, sustainable passenger transport. As well as running these passenger services, Government has also set us an objective to maintain the existing freight services that are already running through places like Oxford, Bicester, the Marston Vale and Bedford and to make provision for potential future freight demand".

- 2. The subject of Freight was not consulted on. Using a longer, steeper, more circuitous route is not consistent with the government's decarbonisation ambitions - this represents new information and should trigger a reconsideration. Yet Cllr Headley as part of the EWR consortium attend a meeting in December 2020 to discuss freight from Folkstone. So, you do know about this.**

With regard to freight, paragraph 3.10.1 of the Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to

maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

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

3. What restrictions would be put on night train service to ensure residents get peaceful nights?

The EWR consultation documents do not suggest 24 hours of freight and, of course, there is already freight going through Bedford Midland station 24 hours per day. This is possible because the railway has four tracks, so trains can continue running whilst two of the tracks are closed for maintenance. It will be much more difficult to maintain the new EWR – as a two track railway – without closing it at night for maintenance. However, this is a matter for EWRC's operational and asset maintenance plans that have not yet been published or shared with this Council, and this is a point the Council is making in its consultation response.

4. Would this route serve passenger trains and goods freight both?

What the East West Rail Company says <https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/ListsBlockMedia/002ad19643/Fact-sheet-freight.pdf> is: "East West Rail is focused on connecting communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Cambridge with frequent, fast, sustainable passenger transport. As well as running these passenger services, Government has also set us an objective to maintain the existing freight services that are already running through places like Oxford, Bicester, the Marston Vale and Bedford and to make provision for potential future freight demand".

5. I have just come across this paper by Rail Freight Group http://www.rfg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/E-W-Rail-Position-Paper-July-2017.pdf?fbclid=IwAR2QiRgoX6Yur4WBa2KaXAL9BA2F6amvtqLj9we1hSA4uDnVBE6_kFJbY4E stating that the EMR scrap recycling site in Bedford town centre next to the Cauldwell train maintenance and servicing depot is considered to have significant development potential as rail freight terminal, with plans to relocate EMR to Stewartby, thereby releasing a valuable plot of land for redevelopment or an expansion of the Cauldwell

servicing depot. Could you please give me an update on these plans and also explain what the impact on local residential properties would be.

The Council has not been approached by any developers making such a proposal.

6. Increased traffic to Bedford Station will significantly impact on air quality, adding to the damage caused by the diesel freight trains. Will the passenger trains also be diesel?

BBC is working with EWRC and other partners to consider the implications of a remodelled Bedford Midland Station. Improved access by all transport modes is considered to be essential, as is the management of traffic around the station.

BBC is pressing for electrification for the whole of the East West Rail line. The Government has confirmed that they are currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification. Partial electrification would involve operation of battery or hydrogen trains that would also take power from the electrified wires.

7. Can BBC guarantee that freight usage will not include transportation of toxic waste or waste destined for the incinerators at Stewartby?

The type of rail traffic carried is a matter for the rail industry, governed by the safety regulations overseen by the Office of Rail and Road, and over which the Council has no control.

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

Rail freight traffic already runs through Bedford town centre – up to two trains per hour in each direction on the Midland Main Line. Some of this travels through at high speed.

Paragraph 3.10.1 of the Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

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.

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

The EWR Consultation Technical Report includes an assessment of the environmental impact of each of the potential routes. As the project moves forward, EWRC will be required to undertake and publish a detailed Environmental Impact Assessment, including proposed mitigations, and this will form part of the formal statutory consultation for the Development Consent Order that they will require to build the line.

The Council is making it clear in its consultation response how important the wide range of environmental impacts are, including visual intrusion, noise, impacts on ancient woodland, scheduled monuments, green spaces, and of course most importantly on people's quality of life.

10. 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 affected?

The EWR Consultation Technical Report does not contain sufficient detail to enable the Council to make any assessment of this as far as the route between Bedford and Cambridge is concerned. We do know that the railway industry, supported by its regulator, the Office of Rail and Road, has a policy of not creating any new level crossings. 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.

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

The Council has accepted the findings of Kilborn Consulting in their work on this project.

However, the costs of constructing the railway have been developed by the EWRC, and will form part of the business case for the project to be presented to Government. The EWRC project team will have detailed information upon which they are building their costings. Kilborn Consulting, on the other hand, were not privy to such costings, but have made a number of assumptions based on many years of industry experience.

12. 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.

13. 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.

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 submitted a separate bid to central government asking for £6.25M to be allocated to the provision of a top-quality public square outside the new station. We have recently heard that this bid has been successful and we have been awarded 90% of the funding we asked for. 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 expenditure.

15. 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?

EWR Company sets out its reasons for choosing Route E in its Preferred Route Options Report - [Route-Option-Report.pdf \(eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com\)](https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/Route-Option-Report.pdf). These are summarised in the current Consultation Document on pp50-51. It states that “**Environmental considerations:** the route via Cambourne [Route E] allows us to avoid the most environmentally challenging areas and avoid potential direct impacts on irreplaceable or sensitive environmental features, including heritage assets, with good opportunities to increase biodiversity.”

BBC will engage proactively with EWR Company to ensure that impacts on residents are mitigated.

16. 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 encouraged people to do so in press releases and newsletters, and on social media. BBC understands that Route E will generate public response from those residents directly affected. The same can be said for any other route that EWR had chosen.

The choice of route was made by EWRC and the Government, not by BBC. EWRC say in their Consultation Document (p50) that: "Feedback from communities and stakeholders during the 2019 consultation was central to our decision to recommend route option E as the preferred route option. This route option, linking existing stations in Bedford and Cambridge with communities in Cambourne and the area north of Sandy, south of St. Neots, received the most support from respondents."

17. 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 Council's considerations are set out clearly in its BBC's March 2019 response to the EWR Consultation on routes, available [here](#).

18. In regards to Freight, neither EWR or BBC can properly address this. It is clear from EWR freight is part of the proposal. How as a Council could you look to have this going through the town, with increased waste from Stewartby? A Southern route would be better for all.

Rail freight traffic already runs through Bedford town centre – up to two trains per hour in each direction on the Midland Main Line. Some of this travels through at high speed.

With regard to freight, paragraph 3.10.1 of the Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

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

19. The Council paid out £75k for their own investigation, however the focus was more to Route E and not full investigations to a Southern route, so in itself that report is flawed.

The Council considered the route options presented by EWR Company in their March 2019 consultation. The Council's objectives and considerations are set out in their response to that consultation, available [here](#).

The southern route would also have jeopardised, or at the very least delayed by 5 years, the building of Wixams station, which has been a Council commitment for over a decade. It was made quite clear to the Council in meetings with the Department for Transport in June 2019 that the construction of Wixams station would need to be delayed until a much later stage in the design of EWR if the southern route were chosen.

20. Cambridge Council are still in discussions to the route around them, we think Bedford should also be pushing the same. This is something St Neots wish to address for further talks before decisions can be reached due to the massive viaduct. There are a lot of unanswered questions before a major decision like this can be made. How could a decision on Route E be made, without these questions being answered.? Why as a Council have you not pushed for better maps rather than a faded white band? The consultations are flawed and misleading and therefore we ask the Council to listen to the concerns of the town and state more answers are needed prior to agreeing to the proposals and readdress to which route is in the best interest for Bedford.

The decision to adopt Route E as the preferred corridor for the East West Railway was made by the East West Railway Company in January 2020.

The initial 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>.

EWR will undertake a full environmental impact assessment as the scheme progresses through the development stages, and this will be carried out in accordance with UK legislation. Part of the process will be to identify means to mitigate impacts of the scheme, including the visual impacts of large structures and their alternatives. The Council is determined to minimise the environmental

impact of the route, and we will continue to engage with EWRC to ensure that they are sensitive to local issues.

21. The use of freight was omitted from the consultation paperwork. There are several reports from England's Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum, Network Rail, Rail Freight Group, EWR Co, that has outlined the use of freight on the EWR line. E.g. A presentation from EWR Co in December 2020 indicates that Route E will carry freight between Felixstowe and Southampton (with the UK's biggest freight hub planned for Bicester). Network Rail's freight report of 2017 states that the demand for freight is forecast to increase by 3% per annum to 2042. This would mean a 35% increase in demand by the time the EWR line goes live in 2030.

Is BBC aware of the increased freight traffic that is proposed for the EWR line?

Paragraph 3.10.1 of the Consultation Technical Report from the East West Rail Company states that "EWR is being designed to maintain current capacity for freight trains on the existing railway and the design is considering the potential for future growth in demand for rail freight both as a result of, and independent of, EWR." The current capacity is stated as nine trains per day accessing the line from the Cambridge direction, and five on the Marston Vale Line.

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.

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22. What is the benefit for significantly increased freight traffic coming through the centre of Bedford and through rural Bedfordshire countryside?

BBC understands that long distance freight traffic does not specifically benefit residents of the Borough, although it is in the national interest as it takes freight traffic off the road network. The Council also is clear that the benefits of the EWR passenger railway to the Borough and its residents will be significant. The Council cannot stop the rail industry from using the railway for freight trains, and the use of the railway is a matter for the rail industry and Government.

23. Does BBC agree that it would be more beneficial that additional freight traffic, i.e. freight traveling solely East to West/West to East on the EWR line, did not travel through the town?

BBC understands that long distance freight traffic does not specifically benefit residents of the Borough, although it is in the national interest as it takes freight traffic off the road network. The Council also is clear that the benefits of the EWR passenger railway to the Borough and its residents will be significant. The Council cannot stop the rail industry from using the railway for freight trains, and the use of the railway is a matter for the rail industry and Government.

24. Has BBC completed an environmental study of the impact additional freight traffic would have on the town and countryside, especially as it is very likely to be using diesel powered trains?

BBC is pressing for EWR to be electrified. It is important to note that freight traffic already runs 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.

25. Would not a better solution be to have the, solely East to West/West to East, freight traffic traveling along an existing traffic corridor around Bedford, i.e. the A421?

The railway is primarily a passenger route which may accommodate some freight activity. EWRC, supported by the Government, has concluded that a northern route which passes through Bedford has a higher potential for additional benefits than a southern route along the A421 road corridor.

26. 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?

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.

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.

BBC's response to the EWR consultation includes a requirement for EWRC to work with the Council to mitigate these impacts, including the balance between tunnelling and cutting. The Council notes the view about the impact on Clapham, which will need to be considered carefully and appropriate mitigations developed by EWRC. 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.

27. 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.

28. Why was Bedford Borough Council not aware of the intended 24 hours use by freight trains? Were they not consulted or not informed during the 2019 consultations. If they were not aware and this has only just come to light then this again proves that the original consultation was deeply flawed.

The EWR consultation documents do not suggest 24 hours of freight and it should be noted that there is already freight going through Bedford Midland station 24 hours per day. This is possible because the railway has four tracks, so trains can continue running whilst two of the tracks are closed for maintenance. It will be much more difficult to maintain the new EWR – as a two track railway – without closing it at night for maintenance. However, this is a matter for EWR Company's operational and asset maintenance plans that have not yet been published or shared with this Council, and this is a point the Council has made in its consultation response which can be found [here](#).

29. Why is Bedford Council apparently not concerned about EWR freight negotiations with Felixstowe or possible contracts with East Anglian counties for the transport of waste to the Covanta Incinerator at Marston Vale?

BBC has not been involved in discussions with Covanta about the use of rail for its waste operation. The frequency and type of rail traffic carried is a matter for

the rail industry, governed by the safety regulations overseen by the Office of Rail and Road, and over which the Council has no control.

30. What discussions has Cllr Headley had regarding freight terminals in Bedfordshire brickfields?

The frequency and type of rail traffic carried is a matter for the rail industry, governed by the safety regulations overseen by the Office of Rail and Road, and over which the Council has no control. BBC would not expect to be involved in discussions with operators about the use of rail for their operation.

There are no current proposals for freight terminals in Bedford Borough.

31. Freight has been mentioned in the past but clearly the balance of language on passenger to freight has been misleading and freight has been undersold hitherto. Why hasn't BBC done more to highlight this? Why has BBC not been transparent with material information? Who is monitoring the Mayor and Cllr Headley's conduct?

BBC understands that long distance freight traffic does not specifically benefit residents of the Borough, although it is in the national interest as it takes freight traffic off the road network. The Council also is clear that the benefits of the EWR passenger railway to the Borough and its residents will be significant. The Council cannot stop the rail industry from using the railway for freight trains, and the use of the railway is a matter for the rail industry and Government.

32. I am writing as requested ahead of your online consultations to confirm that I own a home at {number removed} Park Farm Court, Carriage Drive, Clapham MK41 {second part of postcode removed} and have found out, by chance, that you intend to run a diesel passenger and freight railway through Carriage Drive, Clapham?. After 40 years of hard work my lifes savings has been sunk into this house move and I have in fact paid a high premium to move to this spot of beauty, emphasis on peace and a train line is unimaginable and I am asking for an explanation please why you would choose this location?

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 and supported by the Government.

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>.

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

The Council has a long-standing policy to support a route through Bedford Midland Station, including in the Local Plan which has its own separate consultation process. The Local Plan includes 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”.

The Council will do all it can as the project develops to ensure that its residents are protected and compensated if need be. BBC’s response to the EWR consultation includes a requirement for EWRC to work with the Council to mitigate these impacts, including the balance between tunnelling and cutting. The Council notes the view about the impact on Clapham, which will need to be considered carefully and appropriate mitigations developed by EWRC. 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.