

Category 10: Plans for Bedford Midland Station

Abbreviations used in the responses below include the following;

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

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

The Council is not contributing any of its own funds to the redevelopment of the station. We 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.

2. **Excerpt from Clapham Parish Council minutes 19th March 2019 https://clapham-pc.gov.uk/.../Minu.../2019_03_19_minutes.pdf '7. REPORTS:- a) East West Rail briefing 05.03.19. Chair had attended and tabled booklets detailing the 5 route options from Bedford to Cambridge. Two of the options would pass between Clapham & Bedford via Bedford Midland, three would go to the south of Bedford via Wixams or a new station. CPRE favoured route (b) to the south and Bedford BC preferred a northern route. If one of the northern options were chosen a large viaduct would be needed to carry the line past Clapham and Chair had expressed concerns about the impact on the community especially as green space was already being lost to housing. Parking and congestion would be more easily resolved at a new southern station but Cllr. Walker noted that improvements to Bedford Midland, including a multi storey car park and extended platforms, would be funded by Bedford BC thus reducing the cost of the northern routes. 'Please firstly confirm that this is true and then answer the following.**

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this is additional funding for the scheme and is not at the expense of normal Council expenditure.

- 3. Could you please clarify what the plans are with regards to new housing AND a new train station on the land next to Britannia Road, where the South Wing Hospital staff car park currently is. According to these plans (https://bedfordspd.htadesign.co.uk/south-river?fbclid=IwAR1i2_fEwMmDJAGe0D_KaaNWbLeeIDIZ7VDTcDUevRIW8n_wjq9HgZBSX2dA) , 875 new homes are planned south of the river. How exactly will it be possible to build a new train station and dozens / hundreds of new homes next to Britannia Road, where the hospital car park currently is?**

The new train station adjacent to Britannia Road would be a replacement of the current St John's Station. Realigning the station westwards frees up developable land on what would be the eastern side of the station, and will allow the hospital to concentrate their buildings and parking requirements on the western (Britannia Road) side of the railway. However, the majority of the proposed new homes will come from redevelopment in the Kingsway area.

- 4. When did the Mayor and local councillors find out that EWR was going to be diesel only (non-electrified)? And was that information included in the 2019 consultation? Because I believe that this was actually announced as early as 2016 (see section 7.34 of the following document: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862577/Network-Rail-East-West-Rail-Bicester-Bedford-Improvements-Order-Inspectors-report.pdf?fbclid=IwAR119KL5WG52XH1fQZTmdMMW_sTRTpUxczSyk3ObL8NCIIaKLvB5sEQs7-l ; I have also attached a screenshot of the relevant section).**

Thank you for this reference. BBC is pressing for electrification for the whole of the East West Rail line along with many other organisations. The Government has confirmed that they are currently considering the case for either full or partial electrification - <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2021-02-08.HL13118.h>.

- 5. I would like to know if the meeting on Wed 12 May will be open to the public; if so how do you join or view? The questions I would also like to ask however, are:-**
- a) Does Bedford Borough Council favour Bedford (Midland) Station regeneration in it's present site? Will it include a bus interchange as well as larger spaces for taxis and cycles?**

It is too early to have a view on the development of Bedford Midland Station. Its regeneration provides a tremendous opportunity for the town. The next stage should be that BBC works with EWRC and other parties such as the train companies to scope out the various options. Our view is that this station should, and will, be transformational for the town. To achieve these aspirations it will need to include a bus interchange, better space for taxis, enhanced cycle storage space and more.

b) Does Bedford Borough Council favour Bedford St Johns to be closer to Bedford Hospital South Wing? (Both locations will presume the building of multi-story car parks in both locations)

Yes, BBC considers that moving St John's Station towards Britannia Road would help to regenerate the whole area.

c) What are the views of Bedford Borough Council for the north junction of EWR and Midland Lines; in other words would Great Ouse Way and Paula Radcliffe Way need to be rebuilt/re-located to make room for the EWR? What would be the visual impact of a railway (or new roads) viaduct have on the environs.

We know that the development around Paula Radcliffe Way and Great Ouse Way is likely to be sensitive. We have a strong view that EWRC must keep these routes open whilst they undertake their works. We believe that it is possible to minimise the environment, visual and traffic impact by re-aligning the route and utilising an existing arch of Paula Radcliffe Way. We will engage with EWRC to see whether they can design the route around our feedback.

d) What route would the EWR take to circulate around Bedford to regain the Easterly alignment towards Cambridge?

The only information that we have is that which is included within the EWR Consultation Document. The line of the route is not clear. We have asked a number of questions concerning the alignment and the infrastructure requirements (cuttings, embankments, viaducts etc.). We believe that such information needs to be shared as soon as is possible.

e) As an aside, I assume the preference is to keep the lines northbound as a 4 track railway. Demolition of property, rebuilding (again!) of Bromham Road and Ford End Bridges to accommodate a 6 line railway is completely over the top for a distance of 2 miles and also prohibitively expensive.

Yes. The Council believes that the railway and service can be delivered with the existing four tracks in the area north of Bedford Station and has presented this to EWRC.

- 6. I'm seeing various information regards upcoming updates to Bedford rail station and associated lines. Something not yet clear, is whether the rebuilt Bedford station will get the southbound fast line platform, so that there can be good & fast train services back from Leicester-Bedford-London. For the updates to the network to bring the benefits to the town of Bedford being purported, having such a fast line in operation is considered pretty essential (it would certainly influence my potential return to the town after having moved away for reasons related to work commute).**

It is our view that an essential element of the rebuild of the station should be the provision of an additional platform on the fast lines which will enable south-bound East Midlands Railway trains to call more easily at Bedford Midland Station, and we will continue to press for this in future discussions with EWRC.

- 7. Why does the council find it more important to renovate the Bedford station, and have the line going through Bedford, than preserve the countryside of north Bedford**

The decision to adopt Route E on the East West Railway was made by the East West Railway Company in January 2020.

The consultation for the section between Bedford and Cambridge took place in 2019. You can read more about the consultation, including reviewing the public feedback at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/the-project/bedford-to-cambridge>. Almost 7,000 people gave feedback following 6 weeks of consultation on the five route options. The Council submitted a response to the Consultation, which you can see [in this document](#) (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 consultation process, and 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”

EWRC will have to provide an Environmental Impact Assessment which will examine the impact of the scheme on the local environment, and suggest ways in which the impact can be mitigated.

- 8. 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

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The Council will do what it can to work with EWRC and local residents in order to minimise the disruption caused by construction and operation of the new railway.

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

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

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

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

- 10. During a period when they are constantly having to make extensive cuts, where do the Council propose to find the money to re-build Midland Road**

Station and a new multi-storey car-park? Will it mean that there will have to be further cuts to services?

The responsibility to rebuild Bedford Midland Station and provide car parking rests with EWRC. 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.

11. That a new station and car park is to be built, what is the costs? The Council have stated that this is being paid by the residents of Bedford, which is not acceptable and should be paid by EWR. What are you doing to ensure that happens? If paid by residents for years this will impact to the revenue you states it will bring to the town and also impacts to the true costs for Route E.

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12. The drive from the pandemic is for people to work from home, which is less reason for the need of public transport to outside towns

Although it is likely that the Covid 19 pandemic will change working and travel patterns, it remains far from certain to what degree things will change. The Department for Transport is predicting a recovery in rail passenger numbers. Patterns of travel may alter, there may be less commuting travel for 9-5 office work. There is no hard evidence, though, that numbers will not recover. It is also unclear how lifestyles may change as a result of new working practices. It may, for example, mean that a reduced requirement for office work actually increases the distance people are prepared to travel for a less regular commute, or that there is an increase in leisure travel. The net result may be more passengers overall.

13. How will the Council improve access to Bedford Midland station? More routes available to passengers means more people driving to the station to

use services, have you factored this in? If so, where is that plan and can residents see it?

The reconstruction of Bedford Midland Station is an opportunity to transform the way by which people access the station. It is important that BBC works closely with EWRC to capitalise upon such an opportunity to develop an integrated vision for how the station and its surrounding area will function. More passengers does not necessarily equate to an increase in the number of cars. A clear vision and a carefully considered joint plan could deliver a step-change in integration with local public transport, and in enabling more sustainable active travel providing viable alternatives to car usage.

As EWRC begins to develop its options for Bedford Midland Station, we will ensure that we work closely with them to develop a joint vision for access.

14. In terms of the options for the new Bedford Midland station proposed, it would be helpful to understand if the new station is necessitated as an intrinsic element of the east west railway project or is this a separate project being developed by Bedford Borough Council? I would welcome relocation of the Bedford Midland Station closer to the River Great Ouse. Ashburnham Road is currently a mostly residential area and I feel the current station site would be better developed for residential use. Given that the river and riverside spaces are Bedford Town Centre's greatest asset, and close to the County Council building, Bedford College and South wing hospital. this would be a much more fitting civic entrance to the town

The redevelopment of the station is an essential element of the EWR proposal. The reconstruction of the station provides an opportunity to regenerate the area and make a much wider positive impact than purely making improvements to the railway. BBC believes that wider benefits can accrue from redevelopment of the whole area around the station, and is keen to work with EWRC to develop proposals which deliver what the railway requires, and which also makes a positive impact for Bedford and the Borough. We intend to work closely with EWRC at the next stage of the project to develop creative transformational options for the station and the surrounding area.

15. Which route alignment are you supporting? Do you not think having a station in Bedford town centre will kill the centre as people from Oxford, Milton Keynes and Cambridge will not come to Bedford for shopping / day out. They will go to each other as gave better facilities. And it will drive residents from Bedford out of the town centre as they can get to pretty Oxford and Cambridge for shopping and fun a lot quicker? The centre us already suffering with closures and this will make it worse.

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

The difference between the routes is that by coming through the town the new line provides the opportunity to stimulate regeneration around the station and across the town.

- 16. Do you really think that if your response to a station in the centre of Bedford is to put on other public transport to get to the station will help? No as will make the commute times even longer. For people who will be using the *Question incomplete.***

Redeveloping the area around the station will provide the opportunity to cater for all transport needs, including bus, walking and cycling. We expect most end to end journeys from Bedford to be shorter than travelling by car.

- 17. Why does Bedford Borough insist that the northern route would benefit future house building under their local plan for the northern fringes when there are no stations planned for that area and all footfall and traffic will have to come into an already congested Bedford and Midland Road area?**

The Council does not insist that Route E will lead to house building. If a new station was to be built on this line, then it is likely that it would be a focus for growth; but this was put forward as an option, not a requirement. The opportunities for redevelopment around St Johns and Bedford Midland Stations and will help to deliver new, sustainable housing within the town centre. Improved access to the stations for buses, cycles and pedestrians will be provided which will help to offset the impact of increased demand from outside the town – as will the creation of a new southern “parkway” station at Stewartby Hardwick. In addition, the number of parking spaces around the stations will be increased to help residents and visitors alike.

- 18. Why is it assumed by Bedford Borough Council that a Parkway hub will not serve the needs of Wixam’s residents?**

EWR coming through Bedford will mean that residents of the town can access regular, high speed, sustainable services to important cities north, south, east and west. EWR alters not only the railway geography, but also the economic potential of the town. The benefit of connecting Bedford town centre with the new railway line is potentially transformational to the town. The improved connectivity will stimulate economic growth and prosperity. The new railway and new station building will stimulate regeneration to the area around the station.

An interchange at Wixams might appear attractive since it would avoid some of the disruption associated with construction works. But its operation would detract from Bedford town. Some of the locational benefits would be lost. The economic focus would not be on Bedford Town but several miles further south. The likely

outcomes would be greater development pressure on the Wixams area and less inward investment and regeneration to Bedford.

Because of limitations within the scheduling of trains on the Midland Mainline it seems unlikely that inter-city trains could stop at both Bedford Midland and Wixams. This problem could result in competition between the two locations. If East Midlands trains did not stop at a Wixams Interchange then the economic potential of the interchange station would be less than at Bedford. But, if they did call at Wixams Interchange then they would probably not call at Bedford Midland. In which case Bedford would not only not receive any direct benefits from EWR but would also lose the benefits from Midland Mainline.

19. The council has hired consultants and briefed them to find ways of reducing the chances of some demolitions. Can the council please brief its consultants to find ways to avoid ALL demolitions of homes in the Borough? Can the council please also brief the consultants to find ways of maximising the chances of there being a fast-line platform at Bedford's main station which would both help reduce the chance of demolitions and improve the chances of trains from Leicester to London calling at Bedford?

We believe that it is possible to run the EWR service on 4 railway tracks rather than EWR's suggestion of 6 tracks. If EWR amend their plans to 4-tracks through the town then they will not need to compulsorily acquire properties along the line. We agree that as part of the improvements to the station a fast-line platform should be constructed. We have included both points within our consultation feedback.

20. I'd like to draw your attention to the major disruption to the life of Bedford and surrounding area residents if the East West Rail (EWR) goes ahead in its current form. In addition to the well published demolition of many homes, the project will impact Bedford in many other ways. In particular Great Ouse Way, Bromham Road, Ford End Road, Paula Radcliffe Way, Clapham Road and several others road which will need to be closed for extended periods of time. The recent Bromham Road Rail Bridge rebuilding took nearly 2 years. It is unlikely that re-widening of the bridge will take any less time as all of the services will still need to be re-routed. In the case of the Great Ouse Way this will need to be closed whilst major earth works take place to raise the height of the roadway. Whilst the exact timing & duration of disruption are unknown, it's unlikely to be less than 12 months. The consultation document also implies that the Clapham Road Roundabout will also need to be raised/modified. As for the Ford End Bridge it is likely that it will need to be demolished & re-built. Again yet more disruption to Bedford.

As part of the BBC consultation response, we have made clear our requirement that Great Ouse Way is kept open at all times with the provision of a temporary bridge. We have also suggested an alternative route alignment to the south of the

River Great Ouse which we hope will be a viable and cheaper alternative to the existing EWRC proposal. If this route proposition is developed it could mean that an existing span of a bridge supporting Paula Radcliffe Way could be utilised for the railway line. If so, this would significantly reduce vehicular disruption in the area. We have alerted EWRC to our desire to develop and agree a Construction Management Plan for the proposed works to deal with numerous aspects associated with the works including management of road closures.

21. Another impact of EWR is the loss of 12 car Jowett Sidings at Bedford Station. The direct impact of this will Bedford will lose its 12 car trains to London on Thameslink. East West have provides no alternative solution to the loss Jowett Sidings. If East West goes ahead Thameslink will have no option but start the 12 car trains south of Bedford, and Bedford will lose its regular frequent service to London. The north south service is much more important to Bedford Residents than a slightly quicker journey to the outskirts of Cambridge.

In the EWR Consultation Technical Report, the possible requirement to relocate Jowett Sidings is discussed. It mentions that EWRC will work to determine a solution which works for Network Rail and the Train Operating Company. The report mentions that a number of potential possibilities have been identified. There seems to be no reason to think, then, that a satisfactory outcome will not be found to stable 12-car trains at a location that enables service to Bedford.

22. The economic effect of all these road closures and disruption to rail services should not be underestimated, especially in the post covid world where Bedford and its shops are already challenged.

We understand the difficulties and disruption of road closures and alteration of train timetables due to engineering works. BBC will work with EWRC and local residents to ensure that disruption such as road closure is kept to an absolute minimum.