

Category 11: Local Stations

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
- HS2 – High Speed 2

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

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

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

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

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

the area were asked to provide a budget to provide a station as part of the development plans.

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

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

The Wixams Station project is separate to plans for EWR. Wixams plans are progressing and on course for a station opening in 2024. We agree that to some degree Wixams station will relieve pressure on Bedford Midland Station. In the fullness of time it may be that there is some connectivity between the proposed station around Stewartby / Kempston Hardwick.

BBC is of the view that connectivity to east / west and north / south destinations is best served from the centre of Bedford.

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

EWRC will be paying for the station relocation which should include an adequate provision for car parking.

- 6. There are a lot of level crossings on the Bletchley to Bedford railway link. With the advent of the "new line" and more regular / faster trains is anything going to happen to improve safety of these crossings?**

Yes. Most, if not all, will be replaced with alternatives such as bridges.

7. If the requirement is for the railway line to go through the main station, why is it not going through Milton Keynes Central? Not many West Coast Mainline trains stop at Bletchley which EWR will be passing through.

It is not a requirement of EWRC for the new line to go through Milton Keynes Central. The intersection between the West Coast Mainline and EWR is at Bletchley. The future calling patterns of trains on the West Coast Mainline are likely to be very different once HS2 / EWR is in place and it is likely that many more trains will call at Bletchley.

8. Will any new stations be built in the area between Bedford Station and Brickhill, up to the town boundary for Bedford

There are no plans to build a new station between Bedford Midland Station and the Bedford town boundary.

9. Is there any plan to build a train station in Brickhill?

There are no plans to build a new station between Bedford Midland Station and the Bedford town boundary.

10. My preference is for a southern route option, with a new parkway station to the South of Bedford, either separate to or joined with the new Wixams station. I do not agree with the EWR line going through Bedford mainline and out to the North to get to Cambridge. The claimed benefits of EWR going through the centre of Bedford are negligible and do not justify the destruction of the countryside to the North of Bedford especially given the longer route that would entail and the extensive and expensive engineering works required when a shorter, quicker, flatter, cheaper Southern route is available along an existing transport corridor. I am appalled by the lack of transparency on this subject to date as well as the lack of proper consultation in 2019. I am similarly appalled by the use of taxpayers money by BBC to skew the position to their own ends by employing consultants to review only certain of the possible routes in order to obtain the outcome desired by BBC. Should EWR go ahead along a Northern route, the legacy left by the Mayor and the majority of Borough Councillors who appear to be blindly following a party whip, will be one of which all those complicit should be greatly ashamed.

The purpose of the 2019 consultation, and the 2021 consultation was for interested parties to share their views with EWRC. In 2019 the consultation was about broad route choices, and now it relates to variations within the chosen route. In 2019 BBC made a case for the new railway to come through Bedford. The purpose of our response to the consultation was to make our position known.

The route through the town will enable Bedford to grow and prosper in the future from the benefits of better connectivity. The redevelopment of Bedford Midland Station and Bedford St Johns will provide a stimulus to the regeneration of the town. Only by routing the line through the town will these opportunities emerge.

11. Why is it not more feasible to the people of Bedford to put the station in somewhere like Wixams where people are happy to receive the infrastructure, rather than concentrate everything in the town

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 or to the south of Bedford might appear attractive since there are already plans to construct a new station in the Midland Main Line. However, there remain significant challenges with this option which would need to be overcome during construction and operation. In addition, it is BBC's view that some of the locational benefits would be lost and detract from a Bedford town centre option. 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 on the local road network resulting in less inward investment and regeneration to Bedford and the Borough as a whole.

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.

12. Why has a new car park been constructed on the old Danfos site to be demolished soon after? The Marston Vale line is to be switched at the St John's Station to go through it instead of the curve round it.

Planning permission for a car park on the former Danfoss site has been granted on a temporary basis. The site owners considered a temporary car park to be a viable financial investment.

13. Why are you against a Parkway station to the south? Other towns have shown to be a success. I don't see the argument against it due to travelling as they would have to travel to Bedford Midland, which is already a heavily congested area.

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14. That is was agreed to a Wixams train station, why can that not be a parkway station to a Southern route? If development starts within the timeframe there is no reason to then not have the station.

It is understood that whilst it was technically possible to create a Wixams Station which connected both north to south and east to west it was far from an easy option. There were engineering and cost issues in relation to the infrastructure requirements as well as potential implications to the development of the Wixams community. A more practical option for a southern route would have been a different alignment which may have resulted in a southern station, but possibly not with inter-connectivity between the two lines and probably not at Wixams.

15. Will Bedford Borough Council commit to developing a North-South AND East-West station south of the river to meet the expectations of those who bought houses in the Wixams development who were expecting this?

The original plans for a station at Wixams were for a station on the Midland Mainline, and this is currently in development and due to open in 2024.

There will be an East-West station south of the river, but it is likely to be in the vicinity of Stewartby/Kempston Hardwick. The EWR route will be along the existing Marston Vale Line at this point.

16. Why is it assumed by Bedford Borough Council that a Parkway hub will not serve the needs of Wixam's residents?

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17. Why will having an interchange between the East West and Midland Mainline encourage people to stay in Bedford? Surely it will encourage people to use it as a transfer hub only? I don't feel this has been thought through at all from a local perspective and it is instead another example of

how Bedford is being destructively used for the purposes of others in other counties.

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18. If a station and link East to West is truly believed to be necessary infrastructure to support the town and more homes, then placing a station at Wixams would surely tick all the boxes and leave the town unblemished but still ready for development in a sympathetic and non-harmful way.

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19. How will the station at St Johns or nearby be accessed? The Ampthill road area is already very congested.

St Johns station serves a purpose of providing local access to the railway network. It is envisaged that this role will continue when the station is relocated. In the future it seems likely that a large proportion of users will access the station by foot, bike or public transport. The precise means of access remain to be determined.

20. If the Bedford station is expanded into Ashburnham Road which the maps show is quite likely, how will the station be accessed?

The EWR Consultation Document shows that plans for Bedford Midland Station are in their infancy. EWR suggest two different concepts and a range of different considerations which may influence detailed design. As a result, it is too early to say how the station will be accessed. What is clear, though, is that in order to capitalise upon the redevelopment opportunities of the station to Bedford and the Borough EWR should work closely with BBC in order to create an integrated station proposal that enables smooth integration between public transport, pedestrians, cyclists and car users.

21. A parkway station would attract more people to the area given ample parking, cycle paths, secure cycle parking etc. This is the future and would attract me to the area, why is BCC so against a parkway station south of Bedford and a shuttle into Bedford? Cambridge main station is 20 mins south of the centre?

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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.

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22. If the Council get's what it wants and has a new station south of Ford End Road where will the current Thameslink sidings be relocated to?

The Council remains open minded regarding the north and south option for station redevelopment. Although, we think that there will be greater opportunities for the Town and Borough if the south option is pursued. As is highlighted in the EWRC Consultation Technical Report (Paragraph 8.4.13), a number of possible alternative locations for the Jowett sidings have been identified. EWRC states that further work is required to determine an appropriate solution that meets the needs of Network Rail, the train operating companies and EWRC. The Technical Report states that the relocation options will be developed as part of the next stage of the project.

When did BBC first have discussions regarding an EWR station at Twinwoods?

The Council has encouraged the promoters of TwinWoods Garden Village to enter discussions with EWRC since the site at Twinwoods was submitted through the Local Plan 'Call for Sites' process. Discussions took place between the interested parties early in November 2020.

23. Can the Council explain why it is so opposed to building a new purpose built station at Wixams, when it would allow for sufficient parking for the increasing number of commuters living in Bedford, would operate as a single north-south east-west rail interchange, and would open up the option of the railway to run close to the historic route south of the river and be aligned with the existing travel corridor? Connectivity with the centre of Bedford could be resolved with an automated rail shuttle to the existing station (operating in a similar fashion to the DLR)

BBC is not opposed to a station at Wixams and is working with industry partners to deliver a new station at Wixams which will open in 2024. Wixams as an interchange location has numerous difficulties, though. In order to align with the EWR route any Wixams interchange station would be located much further from the current proposed location within the heart of the Wixams villages. This relocation would reduce the utility of the station to the Wixams residents.

EWR selected a route (through Bedford) which did not feature an interchange to the south of the town. BBC believe that the long-term benefits accruing to Bedford and the Borough by the route coming through Bedford outweigh any benefits from an interchange to the south of the town.

24. However, I feel there is an huge opportunity being missed in the consultation options as they stand for an out of town station. Wouldn't more stations be better in terms of enabling people to travel by train rather than driving in their cars to access the rail network?

There is always a balance and a trade-off in respect to the optimum location of railway stations. Out of town stations certainly serve a function in providing access to the railway network without entering the town. A town centre location, though, offers connectivity to the residents of the town. The number of stations along a railway line is limited by cost (they are not cheap to build) but also because of the impact on the timetabling, scheduling and revenue of increasing the number of stations. Each additional station increases journey-time which makes rail travel less competitive than say car travel. Longer journey time reduces the amount of trains that any route can accommodate and also can have an impact on the amount of trains needed on a route, or the number of crew.

There will be a number of new stations along the Marston Vale Line which may be able to provide the benefits of out-of-town connectivity to EWR. As a separate project, Wixams Station which is currently in the development stage, will provide a means to access trains between Bedford and London. A new Bedford Midland Station will provide the main access to the railway system for residents of and visitors to Bedford and the Borough.

25. I feel a second station would be far more useful out of town, for example the ideal location would be at the former Kempston -Elstow Halt station

close to the Interchange retail park and existing Park and Ride. This location has the unique advantage of being able to serve both east/ west and East Midlands/ Thameslink railway lines where they cross and could enable the people of Kempston, Elstow and south of Bedford to walk to a station rather than encourage a tendency to drive across town to then catch a train.

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26. Surely an out of town station would mean less disruption for Bedford residents and make it easier to get to that station especially for all the people in the suburbs and villages north and south of Bedford who could get to a station south of Bedford a lot quicker than they can get into the centre causing more pollution

There is always a balance and a trade-off in respect to the optimum location of railway stations. Out of town stations certainly serve a function in providing access to the railway network without entering the town. A town centre location, though, offers connectivity to the residents 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 out of town interchange 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 area to the south of the town 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 a southern interchange option. This problem could result in competition between the two locations.

27. 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 EWR perspective in relation to route choice and journey times is driven by the cumulative impact across the whole line of the route. There is a trade-off between the number of station-calls and journey time. The impact of journey time and benefits depends upon the relative location of the various markets and the impact of inclusion or exclusion. So, for example, addition of a station call with a small number of passengers would probably weaken the overall business case. Conversely, adding a station with a vast number of customers could offset the penalty of increased journey time. The economics and algorithms involved are complex. EWR had to consider the wider benefits, costs and impacts across the whole line of the project. We were interested in the impact upon the whole borough. It is for these reasons that there can be differences in the calculation of benefits and costs.

When BBC opted to support EWRs route through Bedford we formed the view that the overall long-term benefits to Bedford by the route coming through the town exceeded those of the route by-passing the town. A rebuilt Bedford Midland Station would transform a large area of the town and stimulate regeneration. The new Bedford Midland Station would enable fast, regular and sustainable connectivity in north, east, south and west directions and to major cities. This connectivity will help to stimulate economic growth for the town.

It is highly unlikely that a southern interchange station could function in the same way as Bedford Midland. It is doubtful whether the fast East Midlands Railway Inter-City services could call at both Bedford Midland and the southern interchange. The result would be that the economic potential of this connectivity would be lost. Furthermore, the benefits of a southern interchange would create developmental pressure on greenfield land, whilst at the same time offering little prospect of economic stimulation to the town itself.

28. 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:-

i) 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?

We are open minded at this stage. An important aspect of the redeveloped station will be how interchange works for customers from a means of modes (bus, taxi, foot, cycle, car) onto the railway network. We want to work closely with EWR in the development of the proposal for the redevelopment of the station

ii) 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, the Council is in favour of moving St John's Station closer to Bedford Hospital South Wing site. This new station location will make it easier for visitors to access the hospital. The relocation of the line and current station will open up development opportunities on current railway land and the vicinity.

iii) 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 are concerned about the potential impact of the proposed viaduct at Clapham. We believe that there might be a less intrusive alternative which we are keen to explore with EWR. We have not seen any plans or visual interpretations of this infrastructure. We are keen to understand how EWR lessen the impact and wish to promote our alternative idea with them.

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

EWR has refined the route options north of Bedford to the east of the Borough along two route alignments, north and south. The precise alignment of these routes is not yet clear.

v) 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.

We believe that it is possible to integrate both Midland Main Line and EWR services on the existing four-track railway. We also believe that EWR could fit two additional tracks into less space. So even if EWR insist on six tracks we are hopeful that we can persuade them that they need less land and as a result fewer houses will need to be acquired. We realise how important it is to local residents

and in particular those directly affected, and we are raising this issue with EWR as matter of urgency.

29. Would an alignment slightly further north, permit the option of Bedford Parkway Station between Clapham and Milton Ernest. This would reduce inbound commuter traffic to the existing Bedford Midland, and do away with the need to rebuild and extend the existing station, The EW line would then stop at Bedford St Johns and Bedford North

The alignment north of Bedford will not negate the need to rebuild Bedford Midland Station.

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30. Why did BBC not disclose Kilborn Consultings recommendation to discuss with EWR Co an alternative route that would service a station at Bedford St Johns and leverage existing infrastructure?

The Council's view has always been that a route through Bedford Midland Station would bring greater benefits than a route which bypassed the town. A route entering Bedford at St John's Station was not proposed by EWRC, but Kilborn Consulting considered this option to assess whether or not it would bring any benefits in the absence of a town centre option. Ultimately, the Council opted to support a route which used Bedford Midland Station, and so did not need to promote the work on an alternative route.

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

EWRC do not currently intend to electrify this line. BBC has stated in our response to the Consultation Document that we believe that it is essential that the line is electrified.

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

BBC is not the developer, owner or operator of this new railway line and

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

iii) I understand Route E is the most expensive route and it then has two stations in Bedford within a mile of each other with limited parking. Would an out of town station like at Wixam not have been better for the second station (with better land for a new station, access and Assess ability! Why was this option not chosen?

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 or to the south of Bedford 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. Potentially the worst of all scenarios.

The decision as to which route was chosen was made by EWR and government.