

Wavendon Snippets

March 2024



Parish Map

The Elections Team at MKSS has been working with colleagues in the GIS Team to produce a comprehensive map of Parishes and Parish Wards, which has now been published on our website here.

<https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-02/Parishes%20and%20Warded%20Parishes%20%28Feb%202024%29.pdf>

REMEMBERDetails of the approved works permits may be viewed on One.Network at <https://one.network/public> including any temporary road closures or diversions. If the weather conditions are poor, some works may need to be rescheduled. Any road markings will be reinstated after the resurfacing works have completed.

Community Litter Picks



Thank to Marlese and Yogi for organizing the recent Parish Litter Pick.

The rest of March is the Great British Spring Clean. Everyone is encouraged to do their bit, mostly by joining organised community litter picks. Litter pick kits can be lent and distributed by the Council free of charge via parish councils and other community groups. If you'd like to know more, check out our Litter Pick Holders List to find the one nearest to you. <https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/waste-and-recycling/litter-pick-holders>



Historic Areas of Attractive Landscape Information

Reminder that this consultation **closes on Sunday 24 March**, if you would like to comment please submit your views to us as soon as possible.

And



Bletchley Milton Keynes South, Local Representatives

Group member,

I hope this email finds you well.

I am delighted to share with you that in today's Spring Budget, the Government reiterated its commitment to delivering East West Rail (EWR) in full. Specifically, the Chancellor announced the acceleration of works on the Bletchley to Bedford section – commonly known as the Marston Vale Line (MVL) – with a £240 million investment.

The programme falls under the existing Transport and Works Act Order that was granted to deliver improvements between Oxford and Milton Keynes. This will enable at least one train per hour between Oxford and Bedford by 2030, in addition to the existing MVL services.

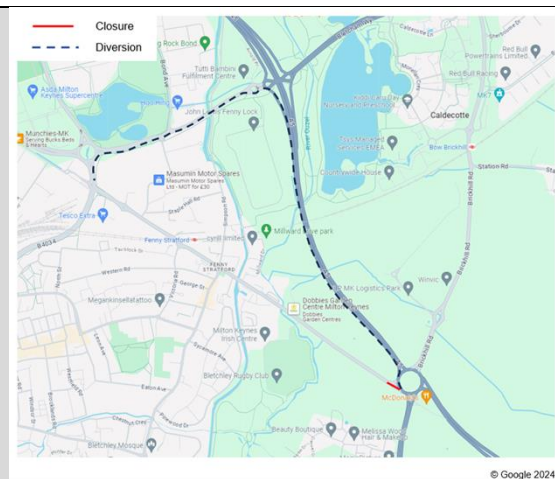
This will deliver the introduction of a new Oxford to Bedford service at a much earlier stage, start bringing the benefits of EWR to local communities

and businesses sooner. It will improve connectivity to innovation and economic centre's in Oxford, Bedford and Milton Keynes, playing an important role in boosting connectivity and unlocking productivity across the region.

It is important to note that additional work and consent will be required to enable the full EWR services between Oxford and Cambridge. We are further developing our proposals for these and will submit a separate application for a Development Consent Order in due course. As part of this, we will be launching the first stage of statutory consultation on our proposals for EWR in June this year.

I hope the above helps highlight some of the content related to EWR in this year's Spring Budget. Next week, we'll be sharing our newsletter which will contain more information, but please do contact me in the meantime if you have any questions or would simply like to talk.

Sarah Jacobs - Local Representatives Groups Engagement Manager



A5 LED replacement update

I'm writing to inform you of work we're carrying out on the A5 in Milton Keynes. Our work will replace the old street lights at the Kelly's Kitchen roundabout with new, energy efficient LED lights. This will ensure the A5 continues to be well lit while reducing our carbon footprint for years to come.

Work will begin on Monday 11 March 2024 and is expected to be completed by Wednesday 13 March 2024.

Upcoming closures and diversions

Our work will take place on the A5 Kelly's Kitchen roundabout. Work will be carried out between 8pm and 6am.

To carry out the work safely we will need to close the Watling Street junction with the roundabout while we are working.

Drivers looking to join the A5 from Watling Street will instead head east at the Bletchley Roundabout to take Bletcham Way eastbound to join the A5 at Bletcham roundabout and head southbound to reach the Kelly's Kitchen roundabout.

Drivers exiting the A5 will follow this diversion in reverse.

How to find out more

More information about our closures and diversion routes can be found on our website at <https://nationalhighways.co.uk/our-roads/east/a5-milton-keynes-portway-to-kelly-s-kitchen-resurfacing-and-lights/>

To find out more about other road improvements we're carrying out across the East of England, please visit our website at www.nationalhighways.co.uk/our-work/east/.

If you would like more information, please contact us on 0300 123 5000, or by email at info@nationalhighways.co.uk



Historic Areas of Attractive

Landscape

Many thanks to those who were able to join us at the Review of Historic Areas of Attractive Landscape Information Workshop on 29th February, we

hope it was a useful session and we look forward to receiving your comments on the proposed areas for designation as Special Landscape Areas in Milton Keynes.

For those of you who were unable to attend the workshop, or who would like a reminder, a recording of the session is available on our YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MSTd4zGspl>

The online consultation hub is here. <https://milton-keynes-ild.co.uk/> This site includes a tutorial video explaining how to use the hub – this is also covered in the recording of the workshop session. Comments can be submitted using points on the interactive map, or via the online survey. You can use either or both of these options to submit comments, the questions are the same on both.

There is also the option to submit comments via email to ncp.engagement@milton-keynes.gov.uk. Please also use this email address if you have any queries or issues regarding the consultation. The consultation closes on Sunday 24th March 2024

Joanne Payne - Customer Relationship Manager – Planning Services

To speak with me: use Microsoft Teams or 01908 253138

Milton Keynes City Council | Civic, 1 Saxon Gate East | Milton Keynes | MK9 3EJ

www.milton-keynes.gov.uk



Update on H10 Extension project

Please see attachments to this Snippets Report

Update of the Phase 1 – Works.

Construction of the temporary road is progress well; we lost a few days work due the recent rain. All our ground investigation works were carried out as programmed with no impact on the main works or the local area.

There was some recent concern over potential flooding due to a blocked ditch draining into Caldecotte Brook, a section has been cleared, a new pipe installed under the bridleway and the problem addressed. I am following up the clearance of the full length of the ditch.

In approximately 3 weeks will start surfacing the temporary road and reconstruction of the concrete block raised table at the junction of Gregories Drive with Byrd Crescent. This is required as this will be the main construction route for H10 Phase 2 and the developer. The existing condition of the junction is extremely poor and would not be able to cope with the proposed construction traffic.

Following extensive discussions with our highway's framework contractor Ringway, the works at the junction have been planned to be carried out over the 2-week school holiday closure This will minimise inconvenience to the school, parents, and residents. I attach a copy of the traffic diversion plan.

- Dates for temporary road surfacing. 28/3/24 – 2/4/24
- Dates for Gregories Drive and Byrd Crescent junction closure. 2/4/24 – 13/4/24 – Gregories Drive will be reopened after this date.
- Date for completion of all works 10 May 2024 (subject to weather)

We met with Passenger Transport (PT) and agreed the temporary suspension of 2 bus stops and provision of 1-2 temporary stop one in Britten Grove, as shown on the attached plan. PT will put up signage of the suspension in advance of our works. We will also put out some advance signage. Disruption to PT services will only be for 2 weeks.

We apologise in advance for any inconvenience that may be caused due to these works.

I will update all other stakeholder latter today.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require any further information.

Diljeet Singh BSc (Hons), MCIHT
Project Engineer
07533412682

Milton Keynes City Council
Civic Offices
1 Saxon Gate East | Central Milton Keynes | MK9 3EJ

<http://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/>



<https://www.miltonkeynes.co.uk/news/people/east-west-rail-project-affecting-milton-keynes-to-be-scrutinised-by-governments-transport-committee-4541730>

The Transport Committee attempted to determine whether it provides value for money.

The multi-billion-pound East West Rail project was scrutinised by the government's Transport Committee this week to see whether it provides value for money.

A special 'evidence session' was held on Wednesday 6 March by the committee, which is a cross-party group of backbench MPs that is appointed by the House of Commons to carry out inquiries into the Department for Transport's policies, scrutinise its decisions and hold it to account.

The project has an estimated cost of £6-7bn. It was announced in 2013 and the East West Railway Company was set up as a delivery body in 2017.

Wednesday's evidence session was attended by project's chief executive Beth West, Rail Minister Huw Merriman and Department for Transport officials as well as the Mayor of Bedford Borough Council, Tom Wootton and other witnesses.

It can be watched on Parliament TV here.

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/guide>

The session is part of the strategic transport objectives inquiry and will see MPs question the Mayor of Bedford and representatives of the Oxford to Cambridge Science Supercluster Board and England's Economic Heartland – a

sub-national transport body covering an area from Swindon to Cambridgeshire.

It follows a recent National Audit Office (NAO) report which said the government “is not yet clear how the benefits of the project will be achieved nor how it aligns to other government plans for growth in the region”.

The report did not provide a value-for-money appraisal of the project.

Witnesses were asked about the case for building East West Rail, and how different strategic objectives were considered and prioritised in the lead up to the project being green-lit. These objectives include local economic growth, housing development and improving connectivity between cities along the route.

MPs will hear how local government, businesses and residents have been consulted and communicated with, and how the Government and EWR will respond to the findings of the NAO’s report.

Local Roadworks

- Russell Street – 21 March (12 noon to 4.30pm)
Pot Hole Repairs
- Railway Crossing – 20/21 April
Works for ‘Rail Purposes’ – **now not possibly being proceeded with**
- Walton Road, Wavendon 17/19 April (Road Closure)
GigaClear Broadband
- A421 Fen Street Roundabout – 12-17 April
Pot hole repairs and resurfacing
- 20 March – Stockwell Lane, Wavendon
Road Closure – Pot hole repairs and resurfacing

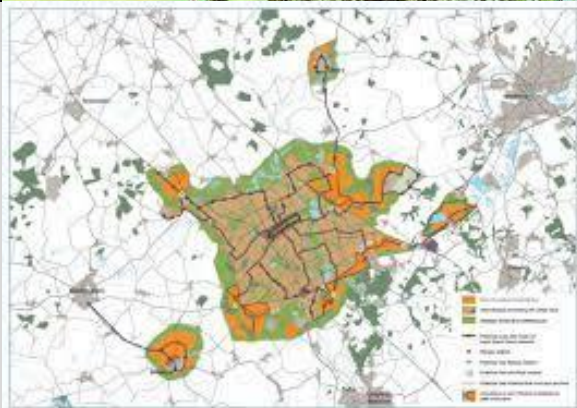
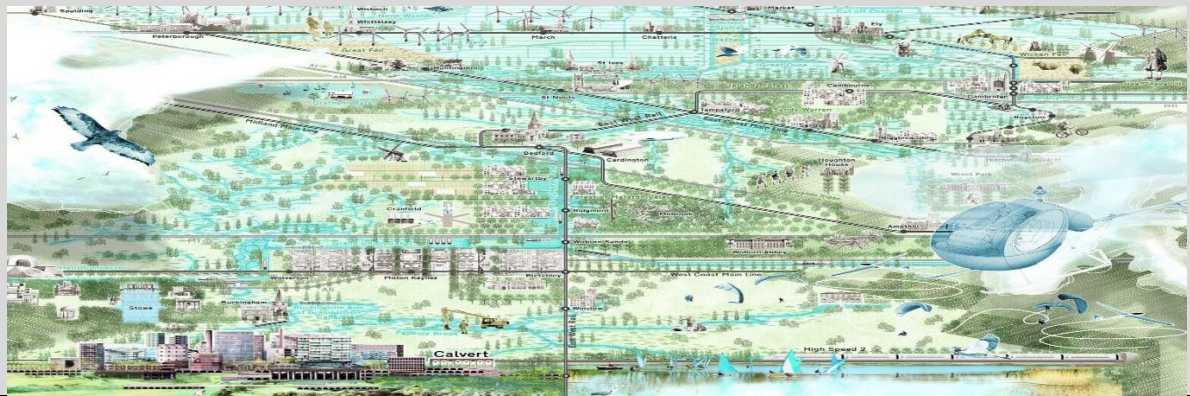
<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/practice/culture/aj-archive-milton-keynes-planning-study-1969>

The Architects Journal has reproduced an in-depth planning study of the new town from 1969

See also

The case for a 100-mile national park from Oxford to the Wash

<https://www.architectsjournal.co.uk/news/how-creating-a-100-mile-national-park-from-oxford-to-the-wash-would-solve-the-regions-water-crisis>



MK 2050 - Growth Options

Slide Presentation attached to this report

South of SEMK - 580 homes

Initial view of MKCC - positives

- Potential for meaningful number of homes
- Should help contribute toward family and affordable homes
- Connect into SEMK road infrastructure once that has been delivered

Initial view of MKCC - negatives

- Piecemeal separated additions to a comprehensively planned SEMK vis a vis planned buffers and lower density on the southern edge of SEMK
- Landscape work still to report - potentially sensitive area
- Not large enough to provide its own social infrastructure (schools, etc) and planned infrastructure for SEMK unlikely to be able to accommodate additional demand without revisiting this.

South of Bow Brickhill - 1.8 – 2.5k homes*

Initial view of MKCC - positives

- Potential for significant number of homes and smallscale social infrastructure (primary schools, etc)
- Should help contribute toward family and affordable homes

Initial view of MKCC - negatives

- Landscape work still to report - potentially sensitive area
- May not be large enough to provide larger social infrastructure
- Delivery could be impacted by EWR project
- Larger cumulative and locked in carbon emissions than urban options

* Number of homes range due to different densities scenarios being applied by MKCC and differences between MKCC and developer estimates

Levante Gate - 450 – 600 homes*

Initial view of MKCC - positives

- Potential for meaningful number of homes
- Should help contribute toward family and affordable homes
- Provision of employment space

Initial view of MKCC - negatives

- Landscape work still to report - potentially sensitive area
- Larger cumulative and locked in carbon emissions than urban options

* Number of homes range due to different densities scenarios being applied by MKCC and differences between MKCC and developer estimates

Next steps

- Meet with site promoters March to get further information and share our findings with them on the Land Availability Assessment

- Share Land Availability Assessment summary for information with Parish and Town Council and Ward Members
- Continue work on Sustainability Appraisal to assess options, and produce a preferred spatial strategy for the MK City Plan
- Consultation on draft plan summer 2024

I've compared what MKCC provided before in the local briefing to this most recent one which is more detailed covering the whole area as it was prepared for the MKCC Cabinet Advisory Group.

It that MKCC are gradually providing better numbers for each area and now say they are looking to choose 30K houses out of options of around 80k. Where there were 12 broad locations there are now 14 - the two new ones come from breaking up what was City Infill into two, and more importantly they've also split apart what was "Newport Road East" in Wavendon (it's now called East of Woburn Sands") away from the Southern Options so Wavendon and Woburn Sands now has a separate designation rather than being bundled in with the rest. In Slide 20 there are a lot more negatives than positives and there's a comment that if it is included then it should be phased later into the planning period which implies more into the 2040s than the 2030s.

The other two new things that appear to be new were that MKCC has now provided an early indication of where things are likely to head and the good news is that we're not in the initial likely list although Danesborough might well end up being in the recommended Growth options should MKCC 'find it needs more housing' (and after the General Election that seems a fairly likely possibility to me). MKCC has included the rest of the Southern Expansion but not us which may be why they split it apart. That's all on Slide 25. The other thing I noticed was that there's a much lower emphasis on the impact of any future Multi Modal Rail Transport system. It's still mentioned on slide 6, but the slide showing potential lines has gone which is what was driving up the potential density if they chose our area and probably made it more likely they'd do so.

I'm sure what was discussed at the classification given to the Greensands Ridge is likely to have an impact on the rest of the Southern expansion, and certainly anything between Bow Brickhill and the A5.

So overall it's not quite such bad news although we're not out of the woods just yet. The consultation awaits.



Next steps

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Good contact points in Highways at MKCC

Moses So
Highways Liaison Officer
To speak to me use: Microsoft Teams or 01908 254885

Moses So Moses.So@milton-keynes.gov.uk

And

Nicolina Cooper
Interim Highways Operations Manager

Nicolina Cooper Nicolina.Cooper@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Good contact Points in Waste and landscape Management

Euan Darling – Landscape Client Manager

01908 254183

Euan.darling@milton-keynes.gov.uk

Phil Snell - Strategic Landscape and Countryside Manager

01908 253606

Phillip Snell Phillip.Snell@Milton-keynes.gov.uk



Bedford Council's assessment of the
East West Rail route update announcement.

An East West Rail briefing was held on 6 February 2024 in the Bedford Borough Council Chamber.

View the presentations and documents (PDFs):

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7115/download?inline>

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7117/download?inline>

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/media/7116/download?inline>

See also CPRE Report

<https://www.cprebeds.org.uk/news/bedford-borough-council-briefing-on-options-for-east-west-rail/#:~:text=The%20Systra%20study%20found%20that,over%20a%2060%20year%20period.>

Planning in Buckinghamshire – updated February 2024

Planning in Buckinghamshire offers great opportunities due to its location with Greater London to the south-east, Berkshire to the south, Oxfordshire to the west, Northamptonshire to the north, Bedfordshire to the north-east and Hertfordshire to the east, together with its position in the Oxford to Cambridge (OxCam) Arc. <https://www.jdesign.org.uk/news-updates/oxford-to-cambridge-oxcam-arc/>

Buckinghamshire is one of the home counties with towns such as High Wycombe, Amersham, Chesham and the Chalfonts in the east and southeast of the county forming some of the most densely populated parts of the county. Development in this region is restricted by the Metropolitan Green Belt and the Chilterns AONB. Other large settlements include the county town

of Aylesbury, Marlow in the south near the Thames and Princes Risborough in the west near Oxford. The areas around the old county town of Buckingham and near Olney in the northeast, are much less populous. The largest town is Milton Keynes in the northeast, which with the surrounding area is administered as a unitary authority separately to the rest of Buckinghamshire.

The remainder of the county is administered by Buckinghamshire Council as another unitary authority. This Unitary Authority was created in April 2020 from the areas that were previously administered by Buckinghamshire County Council and districts of South Bucks, Chiltern, Wycombe and Aylesbury Vale.

<https://buckinghamshire.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?Cid=346&Mid=18201>

Buckinghamshire Council must produce a Local Plan within five years of coming into being, that is, by April 2025. An update on the progress of the Local Plan preparation was considered by the Growth, Infrastructure & Housing Select Committee on 7th September 2023. The report advises that the following studies are expected to be published in the next 6 – 9 months:

Employment and Retail Land Review

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Level 1 and Water Cycle Study

Climate Change Study

Local Housing Needs Assessment

Self-Build Needs Assessment

Settlement Review

Landscape Character Assessment update

Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment

In 2021 and 2022 Buckinghamshire Council carried out Call for Sites consultations. Submitted sites can be viewed here.

<https://bucksCouncil.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html?appid=3dba0355936e43bfbf34dbf1eab92a1f> All sites submitted through the wider call for sites (and previous calls for sites) will be technically assessed in the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HEELA).

In the meantime the current Strategic Planning position in Buckinghamshire is as follows:

Milton Keynes

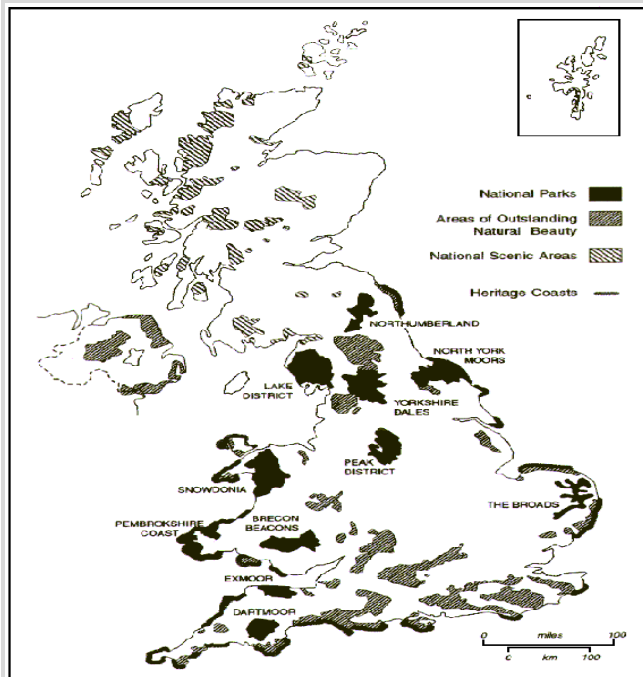
The current Local Plan Plan:MK was adopted in March 2019. Plan:MK now forms part of the Council's Development Plan and replaces both the Core Strategy (2013) and saved policies of the Local Plan (2005).

The adopted version of Plan:MK with, its updated Policies Maps, can be viewed here.

<https://milton-keynes.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s14538/Publication%20of%20Local%20Development%20Scheme%20Annex.pdf>

The Council are currently working on a new Local Plan. A new Milton Keynes Local Development Scheme was published in November 2023. Overall, the timetable to submission has been extended by six months and the Regulation 18 consultation is now programmed for late summer 2024 with the Regulation 19 consultation following in early 2025. The Council propose to submit the Local Plan for Examination before May 2025. The Council website will be updated with further information in due course.

Landscape Designations Consultation



The consultants undertaking the work for MKCC can be viewed here: <https://www.landuse.co.uk/>

A recording of the workshop held on 29 February is currently with the Communications team at MKCC as the recording itself needs to be converted to a link which MKCC is able to share more widely via email. This is likely to be early next week.

If, however you wish to view the recording before it is issued via email you should be able to do so by accessing the “chat” from last weeks session, where the recording will be available.

The link to the consultation hub is also in the chat however for ease I have copied it here: <https://milton-keynes-ild.co.uk/> .

I am still pressing for an upgrade consideration on the Greensand Ridge as it passes through the Brickhill’s from AAL to Special Area of Conservation (SAC) SAC – Special Areas of Conservation

Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) are internationally important areas defined by the national planning policy framework (NPPF) as ‘Areas given special protection under the European Union’s Habitats Directive, which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats and Conservation of Species Regulations 2010.’

The purpose of Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is to help conserve the habitat and species identified in Annex I and II of the Directive. Of the Annex I habitat types, 78 are believed to occur in the UK. Of the Annex II species, 43 are native to, and normally resident in, the UK.

They are considered to be the habitats and species that are most in need of conservation at the European level (excluding birds). Special Areas of Conservation along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs), which are classified under the Birds Directive, collectively form the Natura 2000 network.

SACs along with Special Protection Areas (SPA) form part of the Natura 2000 and Emerald Network known as Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCIs). Both Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) may cover the same areas. See <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/>



As I hope you are aware, the full train service resumed on 19th February. A special ticket offer was launched to celebrate the resumption of the full service. A single journey between any two Marston Vale Line stations costs just £1 for adults and 50p for children. This offers a discount of up to 90% on the usual fare. The offer is valid for 3 months. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/full-train-service-restored-to-the-marston-vale-line-with-1-ticket-offer>

A team from Marston Vale CRP, Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association and a number of Station Friends Groups were on trains throughout the day on Monday to welcome passengers back. Timetables, pens and special cakes were distributed. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/full-train-service-restored-to-the-marston-vale-line-with-1-ticket-offer>

The resumption of the full timetable and introduction of the £1 ticket offer has been very well received with good passenger loadings and uptake of the 25% discount for rail passengers at Gallone's ice Cream in Bedford.

The next part of the relaunch is a community competition to name one of the Class 150 units. Please see <https://www.marstonvalecommunityrail.org.uk/train-naming-competition>

I would be really grateful if you could circulate to your colleagues and post on your websites & intranet as appropriate please.

Posts are being published on the Marston Vale CRP Facebook & Twitter accounts in the next couple of days. Any assistance with sharing would be much appreciated.

NOTE Closing date for entries is **Monday 4th March**.



StopTheArc

... believe that it is very important to hold the Rail Minister to account over the deteriorating communications and engagement by East West Rail.

Despite the key recommendation from the NAO in December for EWR to improve their communications and engagement with local communities their recent behaviour has been worse not better. In particular:

1. They have arbitrarily, without consultation or agreement, amalgamated each of two or three Local Representative Groups into one and reduced the frequency of meetings.
2. They have produced a false and misleading Press Release over their unbalanced Bedford survey. They claim 75% support but the question is simply whether responders would use a new train service. It would produce a similar result for a new train service to the Moon as it ignores ticket prices, environmental damage, cost to tax payers etc.
3. They buried responses to Q2 in their survey which show only 5% support for EWR to improve public transport services. Nine times as many responders (44%) want more buses, ten times as many (53%) want "Other", and three times as many (15%) want no improvement (presumably mindful that this is not free). Copy of the full survey is attached.
4. They have now admitted that they failed to record the public's questions in their only public engagement of the whole of 2023. They have refused to take any steps to rectify this error.

The following extract by a departing member of staff gives a useful insight into the reality of EWR's internal culture:

This follows on from EWRCo.'s 2022 Savanta survey <https://cambridgeapproaches.org/the-savanta-study-do-people-support-the-east-west-railway/> where they only asked people living near proposed EWR stations whether they thought "improved East West public transport" was a good idea. 71% of people said yes and then EWRCo. concluded that this applied to their railway and to all people living between Oxford and Cambridge even though most people would not be able to easily access the proposed railway.

There is every sign that EWRCo. are not interested in the opinion of the public that they are ultimately there to serve. They organised many drop-in sessions after the confirmation of their route in May 2023 and then admitted that they took no notes of the questions that the public had asked. <https://www.cambridgeindependent.co.uk/news/east-west-railway-company-kept-no-notes-from-drop-in-sessi-9353617/?fbclid=IwAR0-3DwA9EMYJBIX0msmSUDg1wEWwUDy3SBv6UWZzKlk->

[3cq9gvPZ0Bufjk_aem_AUiHvdmFc4UyfxHze0j8uOW9oabU8CLec1J3xih59h9_mAOddZVLZzH35R52_PPKWefE](https://www.camecon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CE-SQW-CaMkOx-corridor-report-NIC.pdf)

Sadly, the misinformation does not stop at public consultation. Their core economic claim is that their railway will in some mysterious way add £103billion GVA to the regional economy by 2050. After discussion with the Department for Transport, ultimately this claim comes from the "baseline scenario" of a 2016 report by Cambridge Econometrics which, after careful reading, makes no such claim. This is not a matter of opinion, but one of hard logic.

<https://www.camecon.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/CE-SQW-CaMkOx-corridor-report-NIC.pdf>

The review from the former employee is one of several such reviews written over a period of years. Yes, all organisations have upset employees, but not this many and to this degree. We learnt from the NAO EWR investigation that there was a Treasury led inter-departmental EWR Growth Board and asked to see the minutes. The request was refused on the grounds that it was not in the public interest for us to see them. Funnily enough, public opinion on twitter did not seem to agree. See below for coverage of this decision in the Cambridge Press.

See also

<https://heyzine.com/flip-book/13f6930996.html#page/1>



Cons

The organisation has an identity crisis which stems from senior management's relationship with the board and DfT. At one time it wanted to be a fully integrated infrastructure proposer, designer, deliver and operator. Most have now has come to the realisation this will not be supported by government. Unfortunately some managers are still pursuing the target state they were originally aiming for. Whole teams are working on reams of activity which they do not have authority or money to pursue. There is a lack of delegation with everything needing to go through the CEO and Head of Strategy, who themselves have minimal delivery experience. In addition the leadership are poor communicators and fail to inspire members of staff.

The financial control demonstrated is abysmal. Not for the first time, forecast spend with a contractor is looking likely to exceed budget by a significant degree. This is having a detrimental impact on the wider business which is out of money. The business case is dependent on an 'affordable railway' yet the route being proposed will incur significant engineering challenges which have been ignored within estimating to date. There has been a departure of railway experts, and it's likely the pending rounds of redundancies will exacerbate this by decimating the engineering team. This will result in a 'TP Max' organisational structure; further strengthening the position of the technical partner and their ability to bloat budgets whilst meaning the leadership are making uninformed decisions regarding railway engineering.

Advice to Management

Step aside and let Network Rail run the programme. There is no case for EWR Co. any more.

This culture of wanting an independent railway is clearly behind EWR's obsession with six tracks north of Bedford for example. This is despite Mayor Wootton's (Bedford Mayor) study showing that only 27% of current freight paths on MML are actually used and most passenger trains terminate at Bedford.

EWR is avoiding scrutiny at every opportunity, including the secret Treasury led Economic Growth Board, so it is critical to hold them to account at every opportunity pending a full Transport Committee enquiry.

From Stop the ARC – Nick Burton

Most of you will know me as a fellow member of the Marston Vale and Milton Keynes South Local Representative Groups for East West Rail. Late last week they published a map purporting to seek input on where potential travellers might travel to on EWR. This is the map of EWR that was included.

As you can see this shows every station on the Marston Vale would be closed, including the three (Woburn Sands, Ridgmont and Stewartby) that they have previously claimed would have semi fast services and where the building of 45,000 houses would be enabled. To be generous this may be because they do want to announce decisions over what stations they will propose to close, but that is not a good enough reason for such misleading information as the website does NOT mention this. The website link is here: <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/uk-destinations>

On a more personal level I am happy to volunteer my time to help EWR get the best solution for my area; I resent it being wasted dealing with such misinformation. On contacting EWR I received the following response:

"To provide clarity on the matter, our map was specifically designed to highlight areas connected to a mainline, rather than the full set of stations on EWR, and we took the decision to highlight places where it has been confirmed that EWR services will be stopping. As per our last update in the Route Update Report, there has not yet been a firm recommendation on where the MVL EWR services will be stopping. Therefore, we believed it prudent to not include those stations until such recommendations are made.

We appreciate your feedback, if you have a suggestion on how we can accurately display stations on the MVL without giving the false impression that decisions have been taken in this area, please do let us know. We would be happy to consider any ideas you have for map legends and accompanying information in the future."

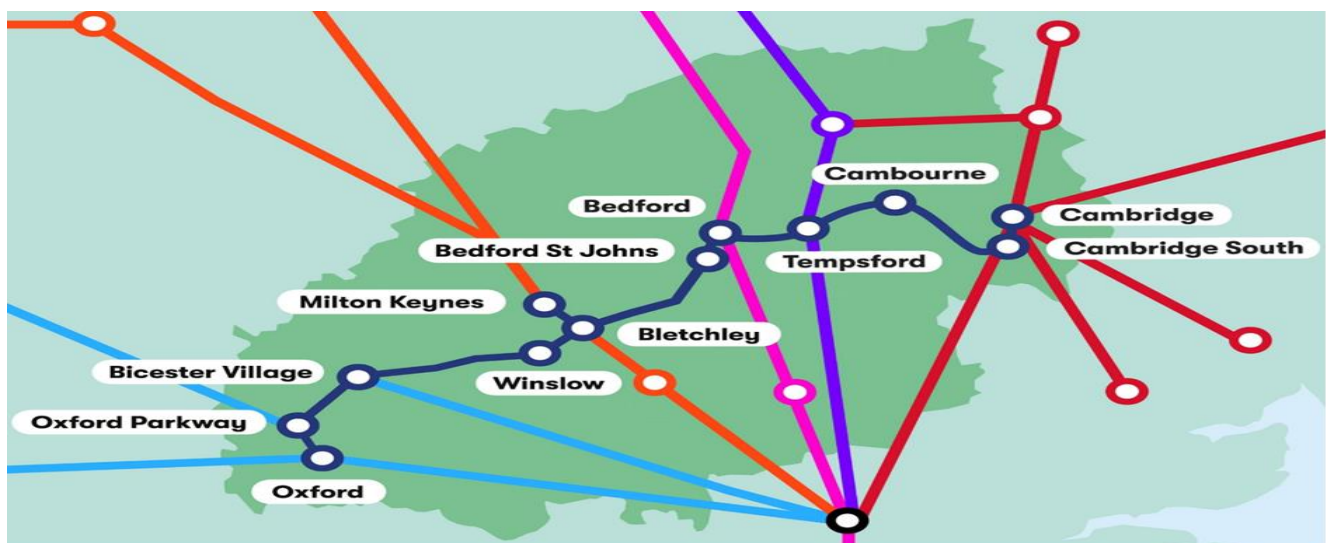
This confirms that the current plans will be a worse service for many residents in the Marston Vale Line as they will have no station but all the impact of a much busier level crossing for train services that they will be unable to access without a car. Over roads that both the Local Council Highways Authority and National Highways say are already too busy to support the development at Marston Vale. I also see I now have a new unpaid job as a communications adviser to EWR.

I would therefore be grateful for your support in highlighting these concerns at the additional online meeting that EWR are holding this Wednesday for both LRGs.

I would also be grateful for confirmation that I can raise this issue on behalf of both groups at the East of England Economic Heartland Conference, attended by EWR, earlier that day.

Any other suggestions on how we change EWR's behaviour and get them to withdraw this misleading map?

Nick Burton (07930 556012) - nickburton429@yahoo.co.uk



Cllr David Hopkins

9 March 2024