



PRESS INFORMATION

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For Immediate Publication

Campaign group calls for answers from East West Rail Co.

East West Rail's drop-in session last summer left residents feeling anxious, angry and unanswered, according to local campaign group, Cambridge Approaches. Now, after EWR Co. confirmed that they are still pushing ahead with the Southern approach to Cambridge, campaigners are calling for the rail company to answer tough questions.

EWR Co. are hosting drop in events at Great Eversden on 22nd June and at Harston on 26th June, between 2-8pm. Protests will be held between 6-7pm at both venues.

William Harrold, retired engineer and co-founder of Cambridge Approaches, said: "EWR's last drop in event attracted hundreds of residents whose lives will be deeply affected by the Southern approach to Cambridge. Sadly, representatives were unable to convincingly answer most of the questions put to them. Villagers told us they were left feeling frustrated and angry, and that EWR didn't care. Now that EWR has confirmed this Southern route for the new railway, local people deserve to ask questions. There is no appetite for wishy-washy answers. People's lives and communities are on the line."

Dr. Harrold continued: "To support EWR Co., we are publishing six key questions that *must* be answered. We have provided supporting evidence for all these questions, based on the finer detail of EWR Co.'s own reports."

- 1) **Where is the hard evidence that East West Rail will best serve Cambridge from the South, via the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, when all recommendations laid out in *your own* reports suggest otherwise? It seems the chosen route is led by political rhetoric and assertion.**

Judging by the accounts, EWR Co. have spent around £100million on their Affordable Connections Project. This project **recommended a Northern Approach to Cambridge** but also said that the **benefit to cost ratio of the southern approach had dropped to just 0.3**. EWR Co. argue that the project should still go ahead because of the benefits to the Cambridge Biomedical Campus. However, Cambridge Approaches can see that **the analysis of the benefits for these routes took no account of the following:**

- a. Cambridge South Station
- b. Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet A428 dualling
- c. The long-term effect of Covid on travel patterns
- d. GCP schemes including the C2C and CSET busways, the congestion charge.
- e. By the time new settlements at Cambourne and Tempsford are built, the CBC will be complete.
- f. Schemes already in the local plan to support the CBC.

How does all this evidence override the output of the Affordable Connections Project or fix the weak Benefit to Cost ratio?

2) Why has EWR Co. chosen the most expensive and environmentally damaging route that will risk internationally protected bat colonies and chalk streams?

The business case involves the construction of a £6 billion railway together with around 50,000 houses on water-stressed, but prime agricultural land to support 28,200 jobs in Cambridge which are already covered by the local plan. Cambridge Approaches can see that EWR Co. have selected the **most expensive route** of those analysed in the Affordable Connections Project and the one **least able to support rail freight**.

Would EWR Co. agree that this **railway will involve a large amount of CO₂ emissions from the construction of these houses** and, given that land north of Cambridge is forecast to be flooded by 20250, is **irresponsible for food security**? “How can this railway ever be net zero? That is akin to rearranging deckchairs on the Titanic,” said William Harrold.

3) Can EWR Co. confirm details of the mitigations for people living along the southern approach to Cambridge?

Buried in the consultation feedback, Cambridge Approaches can see that EWR Co. have made some attempts to mitigate the devastating effects of the Southern approach. But the campaign group wants clarity and confirmation:

- That the route will go under the A428 near Highfields Caldecote
- That the route has moved away from Toft, The Eversdens and Harlton by several hundred metres (and toward Comberton and the MRAO).
- That there will be a tunnel under Chapel Hill in Haslingfield. If so, where does it start and finish, and will this benefit neighbouring villages of Harlton and Harston?
- That 4-Tracking of the Royston Line and a grade-separated Shepreth Branch Junction would only be required if the freight traffic exceeded 2 per day.

4) Who will sign off the massive housing developments that will happen because of EWR – and will the public be consulted?

Based on evidence from EWR Co.’s reports, **Cambridge Approaches believes the EWR business case is at least 95% housing and only 5% railway**. If the housing were not signed off, would the EWR project be dropped?

EWR Co.’s Economic and Technical Report assumes that the population of Cambourne and Tempsford will increase by 53,400 and 44,000 respectively. However, EWR Co. state that only 5% of these people will regularly use the railway. Cambridge Approaches believes this figure is optimistic.

5) Why does EWR Co.’s Economic and Technical Report make no reference to the Local Plan’s job forecast, instead relying on information from estate agents?

The Greater Cambridge Local Plan sets out a housing scheme to support a forecast demand for 66,000 new jobs in Cambridge. The determination of 9,000 houses in this plan is currently held up due to water infrastructure issues which will take decades to fix. There are also hospital capacity issues. The EWR Co. Economic and Technical Report (ETR) makes no reference to the Local Plan, relying instead on forecasts from estate agents. The ETR aims to support 28,200 new jobs in Cambridge although only 5,090 of these people would regularly use the EWR.

If these jobs are in addition to those in the local plan do EWR think that job forecast in the local plan is wrong? If they form part of the local plan job forecast, then what is the benefit of East West Rail

since these jobs are already supported by the local plan?

6) **What disruption is expected for existing major rail routes because of EWR construction and how will EWR mitigate that?**

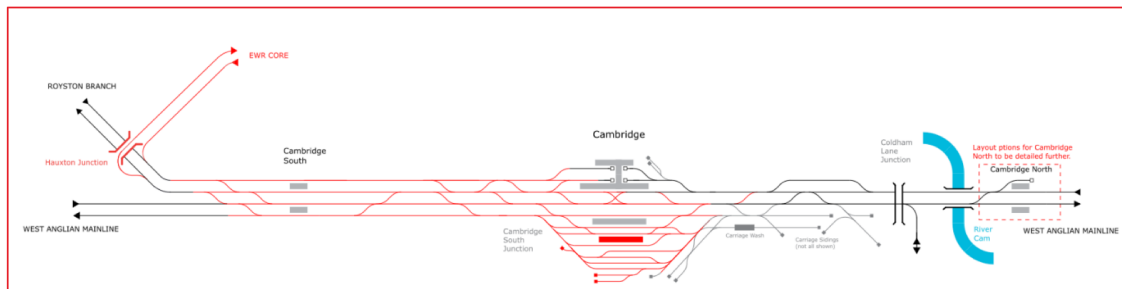


Figure 2 Schematic Layout for Cambridge South Option A.

Cambridge Approaches believes **disruption to the existing London-Cambridge rail lines will be at unprecedented levels** and will last **for the best part of a decade**. Figure 2 is taken from the ETR Appendix 13. Red lines are new rail track to be replaced in the remodelling of Cambridge Station and the southern approaches to it. This has been estimated by EWR Co. to be a £500M project on the economically important and busiest line from Cambridge to Kings Cross, Liverpool Street, Thameslink and Stansted Airport. Cambridge Approaches is calling on EWR Co. to publish its report on the likely disruption, so people know what is proposed.

David Lean, local business leader and member of the Cambridge Approaches working group, said: “If EWR Co. is serious about the Southern approach to Cambridge, they need to be upfront in answering these questions. When all evidence, including that put forward by *their own* consultants, suggests this route is the most expensive and the most environmentally damaging, we want to know why they continue to pump out rhetoric that isn’t based on fact.”

About Cambridge Approaches

Cambridge Approaches is a non-political campaign group founded in 2020 to challenge the EWR’s approach to Cambridge and the business case for building the Bedford to Cambridge section.

Cambridge Approaches believes campaign groups are strongest when information and work is shared with other groups and that local groups are most effective at mobilising their communities. CA has strong links with other campaign groups and Parish Councils. It exchanges information and engages with BFARE, BCN Wildlife Trusts, CPRE, CBRR, STARC, many local parish councils, village based groups and others.

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