

## Harlton Parish Council response to East West Rail consultation

I think that EWR has not evaluated the northern route into Cambridge with the same parity as the southern approach. I strongly support a northern approach into Cambridge. There has certainly not been a proper public consultation on this matter. In 2019 EWR had already dismissed the northern approach and all of the route corridors went to Cambridge South. I cannot agree with your assessment and feel that even this 'question' has been written in a way to lead people to comment not answer.

The current proposed route that EWR is suggesting severely affects Harlton. Here is a list of my concerns:

1. The huge embankment and viaduct that will wrap around two sides of my village and the possibility of having two out of three roads severed. The height will be over 10 metres tall and up to 70 metres in width. Even if a tunnel through the embankment is constructed to the neighbouring village of Haslingfield, how will this be safe for pedestrians (including school children travelling to Haslingfield Primary School), cyclists, animals such as horses, vehicles and farm traffic?
2. The huge embankment will act as a wall between Harlton and Haslingfield. The two villages are interlinked by school, shops, surgeries, churches and sporting facilities. This is not creating 'meaningful connections' as EWR announce - it is severing intrinsic links. Low impact designs are far more appropriate for the rural area around Cambridge, such as using trench technology.
3. The proposed route cuts through Chapel Hill in Haslingfield. This is an important pilgrimage site and is an extremely popular cycle route. Neighbouring Money Hill has five barrows of ancient significance plus it is close to Haslingfield Pits where rare Man Orchids are found. Much of this historic, archaeological and special fauna will be in danger if the proposed line is built.
4. Harlton has many chalk aquifers, which are internationally very special and fragile. The proposals of EWR put these waterways under threat of pollution, contamination and destruction.
5. The failure of EWR to carry out proper strategic environmental assessments. The rare barbastelle bats (which forage in Harlton) will be at risk with flight paths disrupted by the elevated train line. EWR has suggested they may use 'green bridges' to protect the species. Is there any evidence that this will work on such a huge structure?
6. There are no benefits to residents of Harlton. Harlton is a quiet, rural community. An elevated train line, running exceptionally close to the majority of the homes is putting the village under threat. It will be very noisy, disruptive day and night and be very impactful on the health and quality of life of all villagers in terms of noise, air and visual pollution. Even Simon Blanchflower (CEO) has stated that he wouldn't want this in his village. EWR has produced a list of the number of properties it will demolish, but not a document showing the proximity to housing.
7. The consultation is woolly and missing vital information. EWR has not produced its business case to back up its assertion that bringing the route to Cambridge South is

justified. There has been no coordination with future housing plans or developments (such as Northstowe). There has been no thought into integrating this scheme with other transport plans.

8. The use of diesel trains from the offset is very worrying. This scheme is going against the government's own vision of becoming carbon neutral. There seems to be incompatibility within EWR's own documents. In paragraph 3.9.2 the technical document states that 'the use of diesel-powered trains is not a project objective'. Then, in Programme Wide Output Specification contained within the appendices to the technical document it states at Section 5.1.9.1 that 'the railway shall not at this point in time be electrified'. It is not good enough for EWR to state it is looking at alternative energy sources and not dismiss diesel. Even the Committee on Climate Change, commenting on the Sixth Carbon Budget recommends to remove all diesel trains by 2040. This recommendation cannot be met unless the railway is electrified at the point of construction.
9. Harlton lies within the protection zone of the Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory (MRAO). It appears as if EWR has proposed the route as close to Harlton as possible to appease the University of Cambridge. Even building the line on the edge of Harlton and other villages, the railway is likely to interfere with the sensitive, internationally important equipment.
10. Areas of farmland and greenbelt will be obliterated forever in this scheme. The urbanisation of rural areas in South Cambs is not welcome. Many habitats and farmland will be destroyed. Severance of fields and access to farmland has not been considered. Also, there are no schemes of high development in this area, unlike the route to the north of Cambridge (Northstowe and Waterbeach New Town). I cannot understand why EWR is avoiding areas of planned growth that would benefit from a railway line and station.
11. The disappearance of one of the few footpaths in Harlton (district: South Cambs, path no. 1, parish no. 115, name 115/1). The proposed railway line will destroy an important community asset.

Concerns for the villages (Caldecote to the Shelfords) to the south of Cambourne.

1. There are no benefits to the c.25,000 households who live along the Route E corridor, south of Cambourne. These villages include: Caldecote, Toft, Little and Great Eversden, Harlton, Haslingfield, Newton, Harston, Hauxton, Little and Great Shelford. There will be no stations along this route - just disruption from noise, severance of roads, pollution and diminished quality of life.
2. The environmental impact on chalk streams, such as the River Cam at Hauxton, Rhee at Harston, Riddy at Hauxton, Coldhams Brook and Hobson's Brook. These five chalk streams (of which there are only 200 in the world) will all be affected by the southern route.
3. The environmental impact on chalk hills and grasslands. This includes Haslingfield Chalk Pit which is home to the Man Orchid.
4. The southern approach will sever important local road links between Newton and Harston, and possibly close the level crossing between Hauxton and Shelford.

5. There will be a negative impact on local schools. The proposed line is very close to Comberton Village College and Haslingfield Endowed Primary School. Noise and air pollution will be devastating and negatively impact on the children's learning ability.

Concerns about EWR's lack of ambition to look at the northern approach into Cambridge:

1. The complete avoidance of EWR to consider the fast growing population of Northstowe. Northstowe will eventually have 10,000 houses and a population of 25,000. The current guided bus is already at capacity during rush hour - this is with only 700 houses having been built. The A14 is also very busy. If a multi-modal public transport solution is not addressed the north of Cambridge will be at a standstill. A train line with station serving Northstowe is a sensible solution and will deliver EWR's own strategy 'of linking communities to job opportunities, access to new homes and every-day connections with family and friends'.
2. Waterbeach New Town will also have 11,000 new homes. The northern approach into Cambridge could help provide better transport links for this growing population. The A10 and current rail links will not withstand the added pressure of such a huge development. However EWR's plans could solve this and be a shining example of joined up transport planning for the future.
3. The lack of EWR's ingenuity in creating a railway to be proud of - for example in using trench technology (as seen successfully in flood areas of the Netherlands).
4. One of EWR's reasons for not properly planning a northern approach into Cambridge was the proposed rowing lake. The planning consent for the lake was withdrawn in 2018.
5. If EWR planned a northern approach into Cambridge then future, high levels of freight traffic would avoid going through the city. Freight could bypass Cambridge and many rural communities.
6. According to Kevin Hand, an independent ecologist, the northern approach into Cambridge is likely to be less damaging to wildlife and landscapes. This has been supported by Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire Wildlife Trust, the Woodland Trust, Cambridge Past Present and Future and the Countryside Restoration Trust. Why is EWR not listening to them?
7. EWR Preferred Option Report for Option E 31/01/20 shows the project benefit vs cost ratio as 0.64. Surely this has been affected by Covid? Perhaps an up-to-date projection is necessary? Perhaps if an equivalent ratio is done, improving connectivity to Northstowe and Waterbeach New Town, the result will justify a northern approach?

## General comments

It is disappointing to note that EWR has added new information on fact sheets inside the consultation phase. This has disadvantaged some people who responded at the beginning of the consultation period.

The consultation process has been very difficult for those people who do not have access to the internet and those who prefer face-to-face discussion. EWR has hidden behind public meetings that muted everyone, didn't create two way conversations and that cherry picked questions that were responded to but not answered. Chat function was often disabled. Public meetings were not in the true sense public. Even with the slight lifting of Covid restrictions, there has been no attempt from anyone at EWR to meet residents in a safe outdoor setting or to extend the consultation period.

EWR has not taken into account the impact that Covid has had on the working patterns of the population. Many people are more likely to work from home in the future and therefore won't need to travel as much. Has this been taken account in the business case?

The documents that EWR has produced have been unclear in which roads will remain open. Only through persistent badgering by concerned residents has further information been forthcoming and this is often woolly and non committal.

EWR states that a northern approach would require four-tracking, but the south wouldn't. This seems very misleading and based on misinformation. Surely dynamic time-tabling could solve this issue? And if not, four tracking must be needed in the southern approach too? It doesn't make sense.

I support CamBedRailRoad's northern approach design, using low impact design technology. I also support Cambridge Approaches transparent and fair discussion which has highlighted EWR's opaque and nonsensical determination to sever communities rather than build connectivity.

Isabel Robinson  
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