

**From:** eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk <eastanglia@railfuture.org.uk>

**Sent:** 04 May 2026 15:40

**To:**

**Subject:** East West Rail: a new mainline railway - Consultation now open

Dear Railfuture London & South East Officers

**East West Rail: a new mainline for Britain - Public consultation now open - please take part!**

East West Rail (EWR) may seem relevant to just a region but it is actually a national scheme — Britain's first new mainline for more than a century — with the potential to change how the rail network in Britain operates. This is because it links up so many places, providing an interchange to the other mainlines.

As well as those who have previously registered their support with Railfuture, we are sending this email to every member in Britain because of the scheme's significance. We're doing so now, because the government's East West Railway Company is currently conducting a public consultation on its latest proposals, which ends on **Tuesday 9 June**.

In April the East West Rail Company launched its final route-wide consultation on the East West Rail project between Oxford and Cambridge, with submission of the Development Consent Order planned for next year. As with previous consultations Railfuture will be submitting a response, and we ask you to do the same, in a personal capacity, expressing your support for the concept of EWR and its chosen route.

You can read the full consultation document here:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation/consultation2026#block-2405>.

A number of positive changes have been made to the plans since 2024, in no small part due to your comments; Railfuture welcomes these changes, particularly:

- Provision of 4 passenger services and a minimum of 1 freight path per hour across the full route
- Improvements to existing stations including new entrances at Bletchley, Bedford and Cambridge
- Extension of improvements along the Cambridge-Newmarket line to the Fulbourn area
- Acceleration of some works to deliver benefits ahead of the full completion of the line

However, there are four key aspects that Railfuture believes must still be addressed:

**1. The full route, from Oxford to Cambridge East, must be continuously electrified.**

Discontinuous electrification is unsuitable for what is intended to become a busy mixed-traffic main line; freight traffic would need to be hauled by diesel locomotives due to the gaps in overhead electrification, leading to higher noise levels, avoidable carbon emissions and slower freight journeys. Passenger services would require a bespoke fleet of battery trains, with higher rolling costs for maintenance and track wear. Furthermore, network flexibility would be lost as through-running services from the various intersecting main lines — as envisioned in Network Rail's 'East West Main line Strategy' — would not be possible. EWR services would become 'isolated' rather than a vital link in the wider network.

**2. An additional station — at minimum passive provision for one — should be provided at St Neots.** Despite the proximity of the route to the rapidly expanding eastern side of St Neots, no direct connection is proposed, with the consultation instead suggesting residents use the new

station at Tempsford — an active travel journey of upwards of 60 minutes. St Neots falls within the 'travel to work' area of both Bedford and Cambridge and would benefit greatly from faster and more frequent transport links to the two, reducing vehicle traffic on roads around the town, supporting the major housing developments happening a few hundred metres from the route and extending the benefits of EWR to tens of thousands more people.

3. **Cambridge East station should be moved to Cherry Hinton**, adjacent to Yarrow Road. While we welcome the plans for an additional station on the Newmarket line, the catchment of the proposed site — at the southern end of Cambridge Airport — would overlap significantly with Cambridge (central) station, especially when the new eastern entrance to the latter is opened. Furthermore, redevelopment of the airport site is currently unconfirmed, meaning the station would see very little usage for several years. Therefore, Railfuture proposes that the station is instead built in Cherry Hinton, adjacent to Yarrow Road. This site would provide rail access to a much larger population, as well as the significant employment site at ARM Holdings and Peterhouse Technology Park.
4. **Full delivery of the project must be accelerated.** The estimated completion date for the full East West Rail project is currently in the mid 2030s, but the railway is needed NOW to support the rapidly developing population and economy along the Oxford-Cambridge corridor. Every effort must be made to speed up delivery of East West Rail, while not sacrificing quality or resorting to 'minimum viable product'.

These four points are vital to ensuring East West Rail provides the maximum benefits to communities across the region, and we encourage members and supporters to stress these points in their responses.

### **How to respond**

The consultation response is via a form available at <https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation/consultation2026#block-2337> — you can complete the form online or return a copy via email or freepost.

**We hope that you can write in and support the proposals, and the modifications that we propose, please, by Tuesday 9 June, but preferably sooner.**

Thank you.

Best wishes,

Ian Couzens

Chair, Railfuture East Anglia — lead branch for East West Rail

**Railfuture is an independent national volunteer-run organisation campaigning for a bigger better railway in Britain with more reliable services**

How we spell Railfuture — singular, one word, one capital letter (can be abbreviated to Rf)