



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

Campaigning to protect our rural county

CPRE Oxfordshire
20 High Street
Watlington
Oxfordshire OX49 5PY

Tel: 01491 612079
campaign@cpreoxon.org.uk
cpreoxon.org.uk

By email:

consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk

9 June 2021

East West Rail Public Consultation – Project Section A: Oxford to Bicester – CPRE Oxfordshire response, June 2021

CPRE Oxfordshire supports the principles of the East West Rail Project particularly with regards to improving connectivity between existing / planned communities, boosting the local economy, and creating jobs and other opportunities for those living in the area.

An essential outcome of this project should be to encourage a modal shift from road/ private car to rail, with the associated benefits of reducing air pollution, carbon footprint and congestion. CPRE does not believe that it should be a purpose of EWR to open up greenfield areas for housing or commercial development, or to contribute to an arc of urban development from Oxford to Cambridge.

Any proposed works must make adequate provision for the future including increased frequency of passenger trains, electrification and the use of the lines for freight.

The following comments relate to the improvements to the existing railway and stations at Oxford and Oxford Parkway only.

Oxford Station

It is acknowledged that to deliver more train services every hour, improvements are required to the station. Additional platforms would be needed to accommodate the additional trains but to also improve the existing arrangements with improved turn back facilities. Brownfield land should be used to facilitate this, and it is welcomed that the project acknowledges this and consideration is being given to compulsory purchase orders.

Turning to the additional track between Oxford North Junction and the Jericho line, this would be very close to Port Meadow which is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Scheduled Ancient Monument. At this stage, details of what this part of the works would entail are limited but careful consideration must be given to the preservation of Port Meadow. There should be



The countryside charity
Oxfordshire

no incursion into it. The details provided appear to indicate that the search area is more to the east of the existing line which is welcomed.

Should there be any proposed incursion, EWR should explain in full, why and what alternative locations and proposals were considered and why these are not being taken forward. Detailed information in respect of the SSSI habitats and features including, but not limited to, ecological surveys and SSSI impact risk zone data must also be provided as part of the statutory consultation process.

As it is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, consideration needs to be given to its setting so even if there is no incursion into Port Meadow, regard must be had for any impact on its setting.

Oxford Parkway

It is suggested that the parking facilities may need to be increased to address future demand. Whilst there is some reference to investigating options to encourage access to the station via sustainable modes such as walking and cycling, this should be the priority before considering increasing the parking facilities. Occupancy data should be provided at the next stage as part of any justification for increasing the number of parking spaces.

With regards to both sites, you should consider biodiversity net gain principles, enhancing the biodiversity of the immediate area through new habitat creation, tree and hedge planting and installation of artificial nesting and roosting sites. We would expect best practice to be followed with regards to minimising the impacts of lighting.

Yours faithfully

Lisa Cheung
Honorary Consultant - Planning