

WILLINGTON PARISH COUNCIL

Mr Simon Blanchflower
Chief Executive East West Rail
Greater Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
Westminster
SW1P 4DR

8th March 2019

Dear Mr Blanchflower,

East West Rail – Bedford to Cambridge (“Central Section”) route options consultation

The Willington Parish Council at a recent meeting gave consideration to making a response to your Bedford to Cambridge Consultation 2019 required by the 11th March. A number of councillors and residents attended one or other of your local consultation events.

The parish of Willington is an historic and thriving village community of some 800 or so residents with a school, public house and post office located more or less of equal distance of five or so miles between Bedford and Sandy and therefore directly affected by three of the possible routes, A, B and C. (the village had, until its closure in the late 1960's, a station on the previous Bedford to Cambridge rail line).

The Council would want to give support in principle to the delivery of a rail infrastructure between Cambridge and Oxford.

The two current most concerning issues for the parish are the ever growing volume of traffic passing through the village on the A603 and the urban creep from Bedford along the same road on its western approach. Under the Local Plan 2032 the parish has been set an additional housing target of fifty units. It is thought that this target could be met without destroying the separate and rural nature of the community. Consequently, the same should be the aim of the impact on the village of the East West Rail project. It is imperative that the same important considerations which have been given to protect the villages of north Bedfordshire from any adverse effects of the proposed routes should also be accorded to the village communities which lay to the east and south of Bedford.

On the basis of the information so far supplied and, in particular, without knowledge of the precise route alignments, it is not possible at this point in time to state a preference for which of the options should be supported.

With the Development Consent Order not planned to be secured until 2023, the Council looks forward to engaging in further consultative processes as a means of seeking to protect and preserve the best interests of the parish.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Vowles (Chairman)

Mrs Sue Bottoms, Clerk
17 Willow Springs, Cranfield, Bedford, MK43 0DS
Tel: 01234 751300 sue.x999@btinternet.com