

Transport and Works Act 1992

**Transport and Works (Applications and
Objections Procedure) (England and Wales)
Rules 2006**

**The Network Rail (East West Rail Western
Section Phase 2) Order**

**Draft Planning Statement 3: Milton Keynes
Council**

June 2017

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EWR Alliance

June 2017

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Executive Summary

This draft Planning Statement is one of a suite of five being submitted as part of the Round Two Consultation for the East West Rail Western Section Phase 2 (EWR2) Project. This consultation will inform design development and an application for a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to authorise the construction of EWR2 is scheduled to be submitted in Spring 2018.

This draft Planning Statement addresses development within the administrative area of Milton Keynes Council (referred to as the Milton Keynes sub-section).

The section commences at the administrative boundary of Milton Keynes Council to the west of Bletchley Road and proceeds eastwards to Bletchley Station where the line divides to travel northbound into Milton Keynes and eastbound towards Bedford where it concludes at the administrative boundary of Central Bedfordshire Council. The route within the Milton Keynes sub-section is approximately 10.77km in length.

The proposed development within the Milton Keynes sub-section would include the replacement of 1km of existing double track railway. The proposed development would include an addition to Bletchley Station in the form of two new platforms, along with platform extensions at Woburn Sands Station. Additionally, it is proposed to construct a new accommodation overbridge at Woodley's Farm, whilst a number of changes to existing vehicle and pedestrian crossings and bridges is also proposed.

Proposed development within the Milton Keynes sub-section will be assessed for its compliance with national planning policies provided in the National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS) and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), as well as those in the local Development Plan, which comprises the following relevant documents:

- Milton Keynes Core Strategy;
- Milton Keynes Local Plan (Saved Policies);
- Plan:MK Draft Preferred Options (Emerging)';
- Milton Keynes Site Allocations Plan: Preferred Options (Emerging);
- Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan; and
- Walton Neighbourhood Plan.

The main material considerations raised by the proposed development are considered within the context of planning policies in the above documents. The main material considerations relate to sustainable development, land use and agriculture, cultural heritage, air quality, ecology, noise and vibration, geology, landscape, flood risk and highways. These topics are assessed and discussed in detail in the Draft Environmental Statement (Draft ES) submitted for consultation.

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In the context of the findings of the Draft ES, it is considered that, following the implementation of mitigation measures and the significance of residual impacts in relation to residential amenity, visual impact and cultural heritage, the scheme at this stage is in compliance with planning policies of relevance to the main material considerations. However, it should be noted that the assessments reported in the Draft ES are not complete at this stage. Additionally, it should be noted the Draft ES assessed a project boundary that has since been superseded by the boundary shown in the drawings referenced in this Statement. The boundary assessed in the Draft ES is generally larger than that shown.

Section 38 (c) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA 1990), as well as paragraph 14 of the NPPF, confirm that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise. Proposals which accord with the Development Plan are to be approved without delay. In this respect, the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section, and the scheme in its entirety, is considered to be in full accordance with national planning policies and the local Development Plan.

1. Introduction

1.1. Transport and Works Act Order

- 1.1.1. Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (Network Rail) intends to apply for a Transport and Works Act Order (TWAO) to authorise the construction of East West Rail Western Section Phase 2 (EWR2).
- 1.1.2. This involves the construction, operation and maintenance of an upgraded and reinstated rail link between Bicester and Bedford, Milton Keynes and Princes Risborough, as well as the construction of new railway infrastructure (including new overbridges, footbridges, a new station and station platforms) and improvements to existing infrastructure (such as station platform extensions).
- 1.1.3. The scheme also includes the need for powers of compulsory land acquisition. As the scheme is beyond the scope of Network Rail's permitted development rights, a TWAO is required to authorise all proposed development. The application process for a TWAO is governed by the Transport and Works Act 1992 ('the 1992 Act') and the Transport and Works (Applications and Objections) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 ('the Application Rules').
- 1.1.4. The application under the Transport and Works Act 1992 will be determined by the Secretary of State for Transport. As part of the TWAO submission, Network Rail will also seek a direction from the Secretary of State under Section 90 (2A) of the TCPA 1990, which if given, would deem the grant of planning permission for EWR2.
- 1.1.5. On behalf of Network Rail, the East West Rail Alliance (EWR Alliance) is responsible for the design and construction of the scheme. The EWR Alliance (made up four equal parts between Network Rail, Atkins, Laing O'Rourke and VolkerRail) will prepare and make the TWAO submission.
- 1.1.6. At the time of submission, the following documents will make up the TWAO submission for EWR2:
 - Draft Order;
 - Explanatory Memorandum;
 - Statement of Aims;
 - List of consents, permissions or licences required under other enactments;
 - Consultation Report;
 - Environmental Statement;
 - Funding Statement;
 - Declaration of Status
 - Order Plans;

- Book of Reference; and
 - Formal request for Deemed Planning Permission.
- 1.1.7. In addition to the above, the following documents will also be produced to support the Round Two Consultation and TWAO submission:
- A suite of Planning Supporting Statements;
 - A Design and Access Statement;
 - Detailed Planning Drawings; and
 - Detailed Scheme Drawings.
- 1.1.8. In parallel to the TWAO submission, Network Rail will also seek Listed Building Consents under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Area) Act 1990 for the works affecting listed structures that will be necessary to implement the scheme.

1.2. Deemed Consent Planning Supporting Statement

- 1.2.1. This draft Planning Statement (Statement 3) is one of a suite of five being submitted as part of the Round Two Consultation for EWR2. The proposed development would be undertaken across the following 7 District, Borough and County Council administrative areas:
- Cherwell District Council;
 - Aylesbury Vale District Council;
 - Milton Keynes Council (Unitary Authority);
 - Central Bedfordshire Council (Unitary Authority);
 - Bedford Borough Council (Unitary Authority);
 - Buckinghamshire County Council; and
 - Oxfordshire County Council.
- 1.2.2. A draft Planning Statement has therefore been produced to cover the proposed development in each administrative area.
- 1.2.3. This draft Planning Statement addresses development within the administrative area of Milton Keynes Council. The other four Planning Statements consider the following:
- Draft Planning Statement 1: Development within Cherwell District Council / Oxfordshire County Council;
 - Draft Planning Statement 2: Development within Aylesbury Vale District Council / Buckinghamshire County Council;

- Draft Planning Statement 4: Development within Central Bedfordshire Council; and
- Draft Planning Statement 5: Development within Bedford Borough Council.

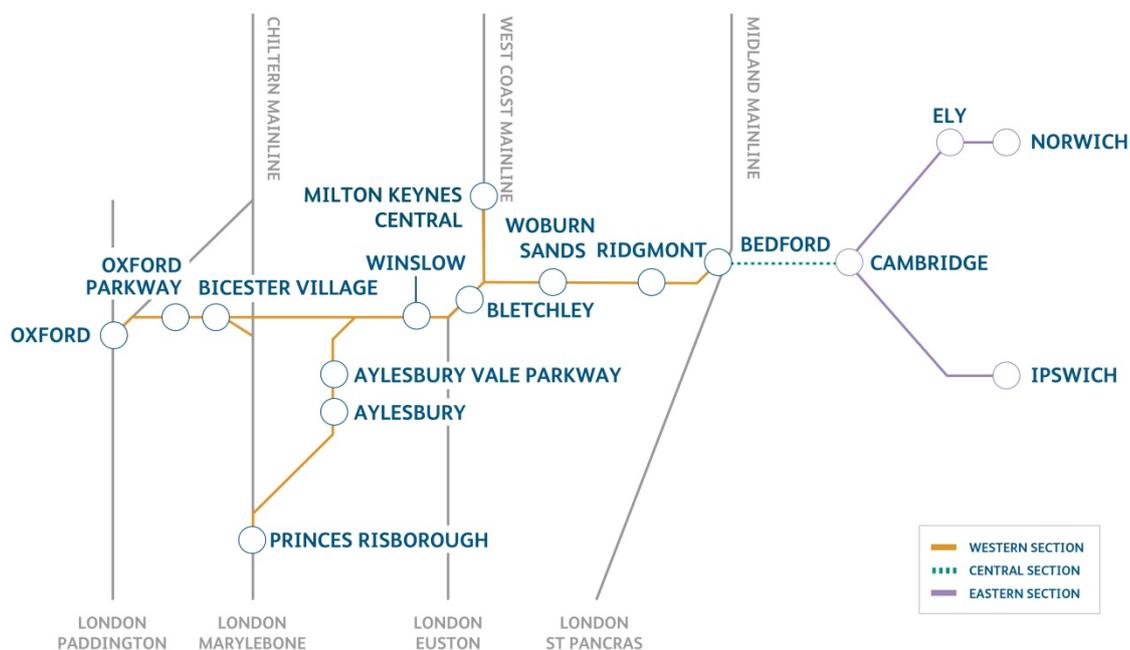
1.3. Background to East West Rail

1.3.1. East West Rail (EWR) aims to establish a strategic railway connecting East Anglia with Central, Southern and Western England. Once built, EWR would link the strategic growth areas along the M11 corridor, Milton Keynes, Aylesbury, Bedford and Oxford and support growing hi-tech digital economic sectors by connecting the key hubs between Oxford and Cambridge. It would, via connections with Great Eastern, East Coast, Midland, West Coast and Great Western Main Lines, connect to the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich, avoiding travel on congested tracks around north London and could provide an extra route for north-south freight traffic from the port of Southampton.

1.3.2. EWR falls into three distinct sections as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

1. Western Section (Oxford to Bedford and Milton Keynes to Princes Risborough);
2. Central Section (Bedford to Cambridge); and
3. Eastern Section (Cambridge to Norwich and Ipswich).

Figure 1: Diagram of EWR Sections



1.4. East West Rail Western Section

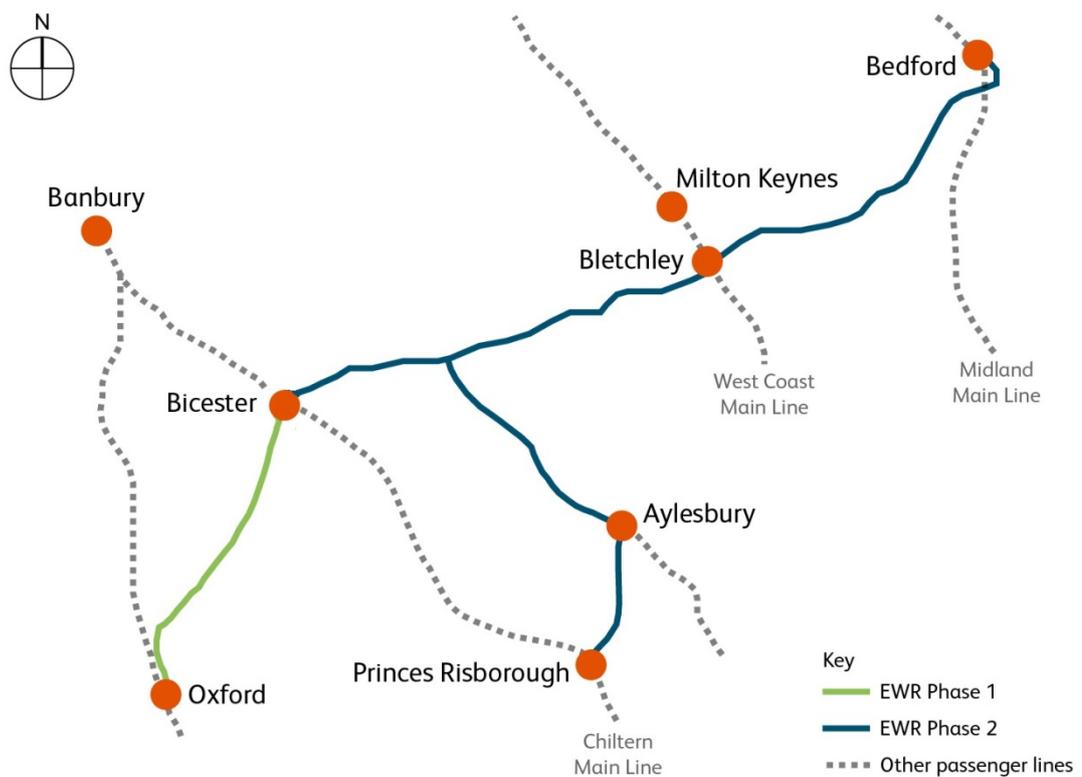
1.4.1. The EWR Western Section is the most advanced in terms of design and funding. Development of this section of railway would result in the introduction of direct rail passenger services as follows:

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- Bedford to Oxford;
 - Milton Keynes to Oxford; and
 - Milton Keynes to London via Amersham.
- 1.4.2. This would require upgrading and reinstating the Oxford–Bicester–Bletchley–Bedford and Princes Risborough–Aylesbury–Claydon Junction railway lines.
- 1.4.3. Within the Western Section, there are two distinct phases of work; EWR Phase 1 and EWR Phase 2 as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2: Layout of EWR Phases 1 and 2



- 1.4.4. EWR Phase 1 was completed in December 2016 and involved the upgrade of the Oxford-to-Bicester line and new section of track to link Oxford and Bicester Village (formerly Bicester Town) stations directly to the Chiltern Main Line allowing new direct passenger services from Oxford to London Marylebone. It also involved widening the existing track bed; doubling over 18km of track; increasing the line speed to 100mph; constructing new overbridges, underbridges and footbridges; closing 37 level crossings; building the new Oxford Parkway station at Water Eaton; upgrading Islip station and installing a new signalling system.
- 1.4.5. EWR2 requires upgrading and reinstating the Bicester–Bletchley–Bedford, and Aylesbury–Claydon Junction railway lines. The key proposals for EWR2 include alterations to, or replacement of, a number of overbridges and underbridges along the route; improvement of facilities at or closure of a number of highway, private roads and public rights of way (PRoW) level crossings; provision of replacement highway footbridges/underpasses or diversions at closed level crossings; a new railway station and ancillary facilities at Winslow Station and new platforms at Aylesbury Vale Parkway and Bletchley Stations and platform extensions at Woburn Sands, Ridgmont and Princes Risborough stations to support the proposed new train services and increased passenger numbers.

1.5. EWR2: Project Benefits

- 1.5.1. EWR2 has five main benefits:
1. To support Local Authorities' ambition for substantial economic growth based on the creation of new private sector jobs and the development of major areas of new housing;
 2. To positively contribute to tackling climate change by providing a more sustainable means of meeting travel demands;
 3. To provide a connection between existing radial routes out of London meaning passengers won't have to interchange through London;
 4. To enhance the rail network capacity and flexibility by creating opportunities for alternative routes of passenger and freight services; and
 5. To realise the opportunity offered by an upgraded and reinstated rail link.

1.6. Overarching Project Description

- 1.6.1. The majority of EWR2 is located in rural, predominantly arable, surroundings. Where the route passes through towns (Bicester, Winslow, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, Bedford, Aylesbury and Princes Risborough), surroundings comprise residential, commercial, industrial and other urban land uses.

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- 1.6.2. Between Bicester and Bletchley, the railway will be upgraded to two tracks, and will see all level crossings replaced by bridges or alternative routes. New signalling and safety systems will be installed to allow trains to operate at speeds of up to 100mph. Between the western edge of Grebe Lake to the level crossing with Queen Catherine Road, all necessary powers for the implementation of EWR2 have been authorised under the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017 and will therefore not be included within the scope of the EWR2 TWAO.
- 1.6.3. Between Aylesbury and Claydon Junction the upgraded railway will have two tracks and, and all level crossings will be replaced by bridges or alternative routes. New signalling and safety systems will be installed to allow trains to operate at line speeds of up to 90mph. Between Station Road at the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre (near Quainton) to the connection with the Bicester/Bletchley railway, the majority of powers for the implementation of EWR2 have been sought under the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act and therefore only discrete areas will be included within the scope of the EWR2 TWAO.
- 1.6.4. Between Bletchley and Bedford some level crossings will be replaced by bridges or alternative routes.
- 1.6.5. To meet the operational requirements of a modern railway, it will be necessary to widen the railway corridor in many locations. In such locations earth retaining features may be installed as an appropriate means of achieving an equitable engineering solution.
- 1.6.6. A new station at Winslow will be constructed with two platforms able to accommodate trains of up to 9 carriages, step free access throughout and passenger facilities include a ticket hall, space for retail units, a transport interchange, a car park with 360 spaces (342 standard spaces and 18 restricted mobility parking); and cycle racks.
- 1.6.7. New station facilities at Bletchley and Aylesbury Vale Parkway stations will be constructed. At Bletchley Station, the new facilities will include two platforms able to accommodate trains with up to 9 carriages and there will be step free access throughout, with the platforms connected by lifts and an underpass. At Aylesbury Vale Parkway Station, the new facilities will include two platforms able to accommodate trains with up to 9 carriages, connected by lifts and a footbridge with steps.
- 1.6.8. Platform extensions at the existing stations of Ridgmont, Woburn Sands and Princes Risborough will be built.
- 1.6.9. The waste transfer facility at Calvert will be relocated, with necessary authorisation being provided by the High Speed Rail (London - West Midlands) Act 2017.

2. Site and Surrounding Context

2.1. Milton Keynes Sub-section Description

- 2.1.1. The Milton Keynes sub-section is approximately 10.77km in length and is shown in the Scheme Drawings submitted for consultation and listed in Table 1. The section commences at the administrative boundary of Milton Keynes Council to the west of Bletchley Road and proceeds eastwards to Bletchley Station where the line divides to travel northbound into Milton Keynes and eastbound towards Bedford.
- 2.1.2. There are 19 existing PRow, highway or working crossings within the Milton Keynes sub-section (via underbridge, overbridge or level crossing). The majority of roads that intersect the line as it travels northbound provide primary routes into Bletchley from the west. Those that cross the line as it travels eastbound consist of primary routes into Bletchley from the south and south east and include the A5, Brickhill Street into Caldecote and the Newport Road (A5130) through Woburn Sands.
- 2.1.3. At the commencement of the sub-section the line is crossed via an underbridge by Bletchley Road before proceeding to travel alongside Newton Road, where a number of residential properties are located. Beyond an area of woodland south of Newton Road, the Bletchley landfill/clay pit site is located in close proximity to the line. A narrow track travels under the line via an underbridge from Whiteley Crescent to the north to the landfill/clay pit to the south. Further east, the line is crossed by Selbourne Avenue via an overbridge.
- 2.1.4. Prior to entering Bletchley Station, the line travels adjacent to a residential area to the north, as well as the Blue Lagoon Local Nature Reserve to the south. As it diverts northbound towards the station, the line is intersected by Water Eaton Road, which crosses via an underbridge. As the line enters into Bletchley Station it travels adjacent to the Bletchley Conservation Area situated to the west, within which a large number of listed buildings are located.
- 2.1.5. Travelling northbound following the division of the line at Bletchley Station, the line travels past industrial units to the east and a residential area to the west. The route concludes as it travels over the Grade II listed Watling Street Bridge.
- 2.1.6. Travelling eastbound, the line travels alongside industrial units at Denbigh West Business Park, as well as Bletchley railway depot. The line proceeds eastbound and travels over V7 Saxon Street via an overbridge and under Watling Street as it approaches Fenny Stratford Station. Upon exiting the station, the line is intersected by a level crossing, over which Simpson Road travels, before proceeding to cross over the Grand Union Canal and River Ouzel. The line proceeds to cross over the A5 as it exits Bletchley. As the line continues through Bletchley to the east of the Watling Street crossing, it travels within close proximity to a number of Grade II listed buildings.

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- 2.1.7. The line proceeds to travel to the south of Bow Brickhill and through Bow Brickhill Station where it crosses over Brickhill Street via a level crossing. As the line continues eastbound, residential dwellings at Old Farm Park adjoin the line to the north whilst agricultural land continues to adjoin to the south. Further east, the line is intersected by a single level crossing which accommodates a track used by Woodley's Farm located to the south. As the line approaches Woburn Sands it is intersected by a level crossing accommodating Fisherman's Path. The line proceeds into Woburn Sands where it is adjoined by residential dwellings to the north and south before entering Woburn Sands Station. To the east of the station, the line is intersected by a highway level crossing accommodating Newport Road (A5130), as well as a footpath crossing at Cranfield Road. The Milton Keynes sub-section concludes as it reaches the Milton Keynes Council and Central Bedfordshire Council administrative boundary.
- 2.1.8. For the most part, this sub-section does not travel through areas susceptible to flooding, with the majority of the route located within Flood Zone 1. However, the line does travel through or adjacent to small areas identified as being within Flood Zones 2 and 3. The entire length of the Milton Keynes sub-section is located within a Wildlife Corridor, as designated by the Milton Keynes Local Plan.

3. Proposed Development

3.1. Railway Works

- 3.1.1. Proposed works within Milton Keynes sub-section would commence at the western boundary of Milton Keynes Council at the west edge of Bletchley, continuing the double track railway travelling from Aylesbury Vale District Council. The route would later merge with the West Coast Main Line to the north of Bletchley Station. Proposed works in this section comprise the replacement of 1km of existing double track railway, centred about the existing railway corridor.
- 3.1.2. Proposed works within the section of the route between the junction at Bletchley Station and to the eastern boundary of Milton Keynes Council beyond Woburn Sands to the east comprise the replacement of existing single track railway with a total of 3.8km of new double track railway, centred about the existing railway corridor. Works to upgrade Denbigh Hall South Junction for operational purposes would also be carried out.
- 3.1.3. Works would involve the widening of the existing railway corridor, which would allow for the provision of a maintenance walkway. This would result in the extension of embankments over 1.7km. In order to reach an equitable position between widening embankments and cuttings, there would be minor retaining walls installed at discrete locations.
- 3.1.4. Existing track drainage would be replaced with a pipe drainage system along each side of the railway corridor. Drainage would discharge to the same locations as the existing drainage system. In addition, there are nine culverts, which require a variety of works undertaken, varying between minor repairs, extensions and reconstruction.
- 3.1.5. Finally, there are three level crossings along the route which would be closed, combined with other crossings and/or replaced with bridges. There are five level crossings along the route which would remain in place.

3.2. Bletchley Station

- 3.2.1. It is proposed to extend Bletchley Station in the form of two side platforms, elevated at the same level as Bletchley Flyover and either side of the railway at the north end of the Flyover. The platforms would be connected to each other via a new underpass, effectively at ground level. This station extension would be connected to the existing station via a new footbridge, which would connect to the east end of the existing station cross platform concourse. This would provide the sole means of (non-emergency) access/egress to the station extension.
- 3.2.2. The two proposed new platforms would have an operational length of 212m and are positioned to link with the existing facilities at the station. An additional emergency refuge area would be constructed at the northern ends of the platforms of approximately 40m in length. Further emergency egress staircases would be provided at the southern end of the platforms. The operational width of both new platforms is proposed to be 3.5m.

- 3.2.3. Part of the proposed platforms would be raised along Bletchley Flyover, whilst the remaining part would be constructed along the existing retained embankment. The platforms would comprise precast concrete units spanning transversely from the front of platform to the back.
- 3.2.4. Both sides of the station extension contain a staircase and lift to access platform level, and a covered waiting area adjacent to the platform. The covered waiting area comprises a 20m long triangular shaped platform widening to the south of the stairs and lift. The façade of the station extension shall consist of a continuous full-height steel truss around the building and platform widening. The lift cores shall be constructed in precast reinforced concrete. The height from ground level to the peak of the lift shafts (the tallest proposed structure) would measure 9.70m.
- 3.2.5. A new footbridge would be constructed to connect the existing footbridge to the new high level platforms. The span of the new footbridge would have a total length of 40m and would be uncovered. Whilst the new footbridge would provide access to the new platforms, an underpass would be constructed to facilitate movement between the new platforms.

3.3. Woburn Sands Station

- 3.3.1. In addition to proposed works at Bletchley Station, the scheme includes extensions to the platforms at Woburn Sands Station (Platforms 1 and 2). This is to ensure that the platforms at Woburn Sands Station are of a size suitable to accommodate larger trains that would travel along the EWR2 route.
- 3.3.2. Platform 1 has an existing length of 67.48m and it is proposed to construct an extension of 57m to create a total operational length of 101m. At present, Platform 2 has a total length of 64.85m. It is proposed to construct a 73.40m extension to Platform 2 to create an overall platform length of 138m. Both platform extensions would have an operational length of 101m and a width of 2.5m.
- 3.3.3. Each of the proposed platform extensions would be constructed from pre-cast slabs and pre-cast cross walls on new reinforced concrete strip foundations. The extensions would be edged with pre-cast concrete coping and would tie into the existing platforms. Such materials are consistent with those of the existing platforms. A 1.5m high steel fence would be positioned along the back (western) edge of the platform extension.
- 3.3.4. Woburn Sands Station is Grade II listed and therefore works to extend the platforms represent development within the setting of a heritage asset. Therefore, a separate Listed Building Consent application will be submitted at the same time as the TWAO submission, seeking consent to carry out the proposed works to this heritage asset.

3.4. Watling Street Bridge

- 3.4.1. Watling Street Bridge is subject to Grade II listed status. Therefore, should any proposed works to the bridge be required it would have a direct impact on this heritage asset. In this event, a separate Listed Building Consent application will be submitted at the same time as the TWAO submission, seeking consent to carry out the proposed works to this heritage asset.

3.5. Proposed Bridges

- 3.5.1. Development along this section of the route would include the construction of an overbridge and footbridge over the railway. These are described below (running from west to east).
- 3.5.2. **Woodley’s Farm** – An existing accommodation crossing and nearby Fisherman’s Path crossing would be extinguished and replaced with the construction of a new accommodation overbridge. The span of the bridge would measure 15.3m and would have a vertical clearance over the railway line of 6.0m. The total width of the bridge would be 9.76m and would comprise a 5.0m wide carriageway, a 2.17m wide verge and 1.42m wide verge. Concrete parapets and wingwalls would be constructed on both sides of the carriageway, along with metal vehicle restraint barriers.
- 3.5.3. **School Crossing, Woburn Sands** - An existing footpath level crossing would be extinguished and replaced with the construction of a new footbridge. The footbridge would provide stepped and ramped provision. A separate planning application (reference 16/01639/FUL) was submitted to Milton Keynes Council for the construction of the footbridge in July 2016; planning permission was granted in November 2016.
- 3.5.4. The School Crossing footbridge would provide a staircase/ramp on both sides of the line connecting to the main walkway. The height of the footbridge would measure 8.6m from the railway line to the top of the footbridge trusses. The total extent of the footbridge measures 24.60m in length over the line, with the main span providing a walkway width of 2.0m. The footbridge ramps measure 68.0m along both sides of the line to accommodate cyclists and users unable to access the staircase. The main walkway would benefit from solid elevation trusses measuring 1.8m in height. Similar to other footbridges along the railway network, the footbridge would be of modular design.
- 3.5.5. Full details of the above proposed works are provided in the drawings listed in Table 1 below. Reference should be made to the draft Design and Access Statement (draft DAS) for further design details.

Table 1: Proposed Works within the Milton Keynes Sub-section

Location	Structure Proposed	Scheme Drawing Number	Planning Drawing Number
Rail Route	Railway works	Scheme Drawing Refs. 133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-004027 to 004009	-
Bletchley Station	Extension to station	133735_2C-EWR-BBM-080300-DR-T-004002; and 133735_2C-EWR-BBM-079540-DR-T-004003	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016058 to 016062

Location	Structure Proposed	Scheme Drawing Number	Planning Drawing Number
Woburn Sands Station	Platform extensions	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-004008	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016078 to 016080
Woburn Sands School Crossing	New footbridge	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-004008 133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016081 to 016083	(see planning application reference 16/01639/FUL on Milton Keynes Council website for planning drawings)
Woodley's Farm	New accommodation overbridge	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-004007	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016075 to 016077

3.6. Existing Bridges

3.6.1. In addition to the construction of two new bridges within this section of the route, the proposed scheme comprises work to Bletchley Flyover and five existing bridges along the route. Works to Bletchley Flyover comprise significant repair work, including piling, strengthening and bearing changes. Work to the five existing bridges listed below (running from west to east) would include general repair work. Such works benefit from permitted development under Part 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2016 and therefore consent for the works described below are not sought through the TWAO submission:

- OXD 06 (Newton Road - Bletchley);
- OXD 05 (Cattle arch – Bletchley);
- OXD 04 (Cattle arch – Selbourne Avenue, Bletchley);
- BFO (Bletchley Flyover would also be strengthened);
- BBO 155 (Intersection bridge, Bletchley); and
- BBM 05 (River Ouzel – Fenny Stratford).

4. Planning Policy Context

4.1.1. This section reviews the planning policy framework against which the scheme is to be considered. This includes planning policy and guidance at the national level, as well as adopted and emerging policies in local development plan documents. In addition, this section also reviews relevant local transport policy. Planning policies focussing on the design of proposed development have been omitted from this document and are discussed in the draft DAS.

4.2. National Planning Policy

National Policy Statement for National Networks

4.2.1. The National Policy Statement for National Networks (NPS) sets out the need for and the Government's policies to deliver development of national significant infrastructure projects on the national road and rail networks in England. The Secretary of State is to use the NPS as the primary basis for making decisions on development consent applications for national significant infrastructure projects related to national networks.

4.2.2. The NPS concludes that at a strategic level there is a need for development of the national rail network. The NPS outlines the following objectives for the rail network to ensure that it is a driver of economic growth and social development:

- offer a safe and reliable route to work;
- facilitate increases in both business and leisure travel;
- support regional and local public transport to connect communities with public services, with workplaces and with each other; and
- provide for the transport of freight across the country, and to and from ports, in order to help meet environmental goals and improve quality of life (paragraph 2.29).

4.2.3. The NPS sets out a number of potential impacts that are relevant to national networks infrastructure and discusses how these should be assessed by development proposals and appropriate mitigation measures identified. Those of relevance to EWR2 are discussed below.

4.2.4. [Biodiversity and Ecological Conservation](#) - States that appropriate weight is to be applied to designated sites of international, national and local importance, protected species, habitats and other species, as well as biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment (paragraph 5.26).

- 4.2.5. The NPS states that proposed development located within or outside of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) should not normally be granted if it would have an adverse impact on the designation, unless the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts (paragraph 5.29). The same principle applies to proposed developments that affect Ancient Woodland. The NPS also recognises the value of Regional and Local Sites and states that due consideration should be given to these designations. However, it states that such designations should not be used in themselves to refuse development, particularly given to the need for infrastructure. Proposals should ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are included as an integral part of the development (paragraph 5.31).
- 4.2.6. **Flood Risk** – requires the submission of a Flood Risk Assessment alongside proposals located within Flood Zones 2 and 3, or those within Flood Zone 1 that are of 1 hectare or greater or may be subject to sources of flooding other than from rivers and the sea (paragraph 5.92).
- 4.2.7. **The Historic Environment** – requires developments that are subject to an EIA to include an assessment of any likely significant heritage impacts (paragraph 5.126). The NPS states that the Secretary of State should seek to identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected and its setting (paragraph 5.128). Great weight is to be given to the conservation of a heritage asset and any harmful impact on its significance is to be weighed against the public benefit of development (paragraph 5.131).
- 4.2.8. **Landscape and Visual Impact** – The NPS requires consideration on landscape and visual impact. Proposals are required to consider the nature of the existing landscape likely to be affected and nature of the effect likely to occur. Proposals should aim to avoid or minimise harm to the landscape and provide reasonable mitigation where appropriate (paragraph 5.149). The Secretary of State is required to judge whether the visual effects on sensitive receptors, such as residents, outweigh the benefits of the development (paragraph 5.158).
- 4.2.9. **Noise and Vibration** – Developments are required to be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements for noise and regard should be given to the Noise Policy Statement for England. Proposals will be considered against the extent to which they achieve the following aims:
- avoid significant adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise as a result of the new development;
 - mitigate and minimise other adverse impacts on health and quality of life from noise from the new development; and
 - contribute to improvements to health and quality of life through the effective management and control of noise, where possible (paragraph 5.195).
- 4.2.10. **Impacts on Transport Networks** – requires consideration to be given to the impacts of the proposal on wider transport networks and of construction sites on transport networks whilst it is in development. Consideration is to be given by the Secretary of State on the extent of impacts on local transport networks and policies set out in local plans (paragraph 5.211).

- 4.2.11. **Water Quality and Resources** – seeks to prevent new development from contributing to water pollution. It states that for projects that are improvements to the existing infrastructure, opportunities should be taken, where feasible, to improve upon the quality of existing discharges where these are identified and shown to contribute towards the Water Framework Directive commitments (paragraph 5.222). In determining a proposal, the Secretary of State should be satisfied that a proposal has had regard to the River Basin Management Plans and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive and its daughter directives (paragraph 5.226).

National Planning Policy Framework

- 4.2.12. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012 and provides the Government's planning policies for England and sets out how these are expected to be applied.
- 4.2.13. The NPPF states that for Development Plans and emerging policies, due weight according to their degree of consistency with the NPPF (paragraph 215) should be given. The NPPF is clear that the decision-taker may also give weight to relevant policies in emerging plans according to the stage of preparation, the extent of unresolved objections, and the degree of consistency of the policies to the NPPF (paragraph 216).
- 4.2.14. The NPPF highlights 12 Core Planning Principles which should underpin decision-taking (paragraph 17). These core Planning Principles, all of which are of relevance to EWR2, are as follows:
- be genuinely plan-led;
 - be a creative exercise in finding ways to enhance and improve the places in which people live their lives;
 - proactively drive and support sustainable economic development to deliver the homes, business and industrial units, infrastructure and thriving local places that the country needs;
 - always seek to secure high quality design and a good standard of amenity for all existing and future occupants of land and buildings;
 - take account of the different roles and character of different areas, promoting the vitality of our main urban areas, protecting the Green Belts around them, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and supporting thriving rural communities;
 - support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change, and encourage the reuse of existing resources;
 - contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution;
 - encourage the effective use of land by reusing land that has been previously developed;

- promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas;
 - conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance;
 - actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable; and
 - take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs.
- 4.2.15. A fundamental principle of the NPPF (paragraph 14) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, which states that development proposals which accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay. The NPPF sets out national policy on a number of areas, against which proposals are to be considered. Those of relevance to EWR2 are summarised below.
- 4.2.16. [Section 1: Building a strong, competitive economy](#) – sets out the Government’s commitment to secure economic growth and to ensure that the planning system encourages sustainable growth. It emphasises that significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth (paragraph 19). It requires planning policies to seek to address potential barriers to investment, including a lack of infrastructure, and identify areas for infrastructure provision (paragraph 21).
- 4.2.17. [Section 4: Promoting sustainable transport](#) – emphasises the important role that transport policies can play in facilitating sustainable development and highlights that the transport system needs to be balanced in favour of sustainable modes (paragraph 29). It encourages solutions that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reduce congestion (paragraph 30) and states that Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods and people (paragraph 35).
- 4.2.18. [Section 7: Requiring good design](#) - states the importance which the Government attaches to the design of the built environment and how this should contribute positively to making places better for people (paragraph 56). It is considered important to plan positively for the achievement of high quality and inclusive design for all development (paragraph 57). Securing this involves not just aesthetic considerations, but addressing the connections between people and places and the integration of new development into the natural, built and historic environment (paragraph 61).
- 4.2.19. [Section 8: Promoting Healthy Communities](#) – paragraph 75 seeks to protect PRoWs and access. It encourages local authorities to identify opportunities to enhance existing facilities.

- 4.2.20. **Section 10: Meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal flooding** – highlights the key role that planning can have in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and minimising impacts on climate change (paragraph 93). New development should avoid increased vulnerability to the impacts arising from climate change and that any risks should be managed through appropriate adaptation measures (paragraph 99). In addition, the NPPF seeks to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding, but where it is necessary ensure that it is safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere (paragraph 100).
- 4.2.21. **Section 11: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment** - emphasises the need for the planning system to contribute to and enhance the natural environment (paragraph 109). Planning policies and decisions should encourage the effective use of land by re-using land that has been previously developed, provided that it is not of high environmental value (paragraph 111). Impacts on biodiversity should be minimised and where possible development should provide net gains in biodiversity (paragraph 109).
- 4.2.22. **Section 12: Conserving and enhancing the historic environment** - recognises that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource which should be the subject of a positive strategy for their conservation and enjoyment (paragraph 126). In determining applications, local planning authorities should ensure that applications are assessed for their impact on heritage assets and seek to avoid or minimise conflict between the heritage asset's conservation and any aspect of the proposal (paragraph 129).

4.3. Local Planning Policy

- 4.3.1. This sub-section of the route is located within the administrative boundary of Milton Keynes Council. Local planning policy documents of relevance to this sub-section are therefore as follows:
- Milton Keynes Core Strategy;
 - Milton Keynes Local Plan (Saved Policies);
 - Plan:MK Draft Preferred Options (Emerging); and
 - Milton Keynes Site Allocations Plan: Preferred Options (Emerging).

Milton Keynes Core Strategy 2013

- 4.3.2. Milton Keynes Council adopted the Milton Keynes Core Strategy in June 2013 for the purpose of setting out the spatial strategy and local planning policies in the district up to 2026.
- 4.3.3. **Policy CSA: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development** – Commits to taking a positive approach when considering proposals that reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development. This includes working proactively with applicants to find solutions that enable proposals to be approved wherever possible. The policy reiterates that planning applications in accordance with the Local Plan and relevant Neighbourhood Plans are to be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

- 4.3.4. **Policy CS11: A Well Connected Milton Keynes** – Seeks to implement a number of measures to improve public transportation to meet the demand of the borough. One such measure identified by the policy is ‘to engage with Network Rail and relevant stakeholders along the EWR line to identify operational benefits which thereby provide additional support for a more sustainable transport strategy and/or economic growth of the city’.
- 4.3.5. **Policy CS15: Delivering Economic Prosperity** – sets out key projects to develop Milton Keynes as a major city with a highly skilled workforce. One such project is the provision of services to support inward migration of employers and employees, as well as investment to facilitate it.
- 4.3.6. **Policy CS19: The Historic and Natural Environment** – Seeks to protect and enhance the significance of Heritage Assets. It therefore requires proposals to consider the character, appearance and setting of Heritage Assets. The policy also seeks to protect and enhance the character of the different landscapes in the Borough. In addition, it seeks to maximise biodiversity through the following:
- protect and enhance the hierarchy of national, regional and local sites within the Borough as well as BAP Priority Habitats and species;
 - provide nationally designated sites and statutorily protected species with the highest level of protection;
 - ensure that damage to the biodiversity and geological resource of the Borough will be avoided wherever possible. Where unavoidable it will be minimised through mitigation or if mitigation is not possible, by compensation, by provision of replacement habitat of higher quality to achieve a net gain in biodiversity;
 - create and enhance habitats to help wildlife adapt to the impact of climate change;
 - seek opportunities for habitat protection, restoration and creation to meet the objectives of the UK and Bucks & Milton Keynes Biodiversity Action Plan and aims of the Biodiversity Opportunity Areas; and
 - support biodiversity recording and monitoring, in particular the work of the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre.

Milton Keynes Local Plan 2005 (Saved Policies)

- 4.3.7. The Council adopted the Milton Keynes Local Plan in December 2005 which set out planning policies for the local area for the period up to 2011. A large number of the Council’s existing development management policies are still contained in the Local Plan. Following the adoption of the NPPF, the Council undertook a review of Local Plan policies to identify those that comply with national planning policy. Policies identified as being compliant with the NPPF were subsequently saved and these accompany the Core Strategy as part of the local development plan.
- 4.3.8. **Policy S1: General Principles** – Sets out a number of principles to guide the scale and distribution of development. Those of relevance include:

- The pursuit of greater environmental, social and economic sustainability;
 - Seeking to reduce the need for, and length of journeys by car;
 - Concentrating new development in or around existing centres, and around nodes along public transport corridors; and
 - Respecting key environmental constraints.
- 4.3.9. [Policy D1: Impact of Development Proposals on Locality](#) – Outlines a number of adverse impacts that are to be prevented. Development that results in any of the identified impacts is to be refused. These impacts are as follows:
- Additional traffic generation which would overload the existing road network or cause undue disturbance, noise or fumes;
 - Inadequate drainage, which would adversely affect surface water disposal, including flood control, or overload the existing foul drainage system;
 - An unacceptable visual intrusion or loss of privacy, sunlight and daylight;
 - Unacceptable pollution by noise, smell, light or other emission to air, water or land;
 - Physical damage to the site and neighbouring property including statutorily protected and other important built and natural features and wildlife habitats; and
 - Inadequate access to, and vehicle movement within, the site.
- 4.3.10. [Policy HE1: Protection of Archaeological Sites](#) – States that planning permission will be refused for development proposals that would have an adverse impact upon a Scheduled Ancient Monument or its setting.
- 4.3.11. [Policy HE5: Development Affecting the Setting of a Listed Building](#) – Seeks to prevent development that has an adverse impact on the setting of a listed building. It highlights that this may extend well beyond their immediate building curtilage(s) and may include an extensive street scene or a wider urban design context, especially when the application site is located within a designated conservation area.
- 4.3.12. [Policy HE6: Conservation Areas](#) – States that proposals within or affecting the setting of a Conservation Area should preserve or enhance the character and appearance of the area.
- 4.3.13. [Policy NE1: Nature Conservation Sites](#) – States that proposals likely to result in harm to the biodiversity or geological conservation value of a site of county-wide (RIGS, MK Wildlife sites) or local importance (Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Corridors, local wildlife sites) will only be permitted if the importance of the development outweighs the local value of the site.
- 4.3.14. [Policy NE2: Protected Species](#) – States that proposals will be refused consent if they would adversely affect animal or plant species, or their habitat, specifically protected by law.

- 4.3.15. [Policy T12: Major Transport Schemes](#) – Seeks to refuse development that would prejudice the construction of a number of major transport schemes, one of which is the EWR link upgrading.
- 4.3.16. [Policy T13: Transport Reservations](#) – States that permission will be refused for development that would prevent the future use for transport purposes of transport reservations, as identified on the Proposals Map.

Plan:MK Draft Preferred Options (Emerging)

- 4.3.17. The Council is currently in the process of preparing a new Local Plan, which will set out planning policies against which new development will be assessed. The Preferred Options draft of the Local Plan was published for public consultation in March 2017. Emerging policies of relevance to EWR2 are set out below.
- 4.3.18. It is a Strategic Objective of the emerging Local Plan to manage increased travel demands through supporting EWR2.
- 4.3.19. [Policy MK1: Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development](#) – decision making will take a positive approach to reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development in the NPPF.
- 4.3.20. [Policy SD4: Central Milton Keynes Connectivity](#) – seeks to improve accessibility to and within Milton Keynes.
- 4.3.21. [Policy ER7: Controlling the Risk of Pollution](#) – Requires new development to protect ground water, surface water and soil. It requires suitable controls for air pollution and noise, as well as vibration and other forms of pollution. It also requires land to be protected from contamination.
- 4.3.22. [Policy FR1: Managing Flood Risk](#) – seeks to steer development toward areas with the lowest risk of flooding. Development within flood risk areas will be permitted if it demonstrated that it is appropriate at that location and no suitable alternatives are available.
- 4.3.23. [Policy FR2: Sustainable Drainage Systems \(SuDS\) and Integrated Flood Risk Management](#) – requires new development to incorporate SuDs to manage surface water.
- 4.3.24. [Policy NE1: Nature Conservation Sites](#) – seeks to prohibit development that is likely to harm the nature conservation interest of nature designated sites, including Ancient Woodland.
- 4.3.25. [Policy NE2: Protected Sites](#) – seeks to avoid negative impact of new development on protected species.
- 4.3.26. [Policy NE3: Biodiversity and Geological Enhancement](#) – seeks to avoid damage to biodiversity and geodiversity and enhancement will be sought where appropriate.
- 4.3.27. [Policy NE5: Conserving and Enhancing Landscape Character](#) – requires development in the open countryside to respect the character of the surrounding landscape.

- 4.3.28. [Policy HE1: The Conservation and Enjoyment of the Historic Environment](#) – seeks to implement a positive strategy to conserve and enhance the historic environment.
- 4.3.29. [Policy HE2: Development Proposals Directly or Indirectly Affecting Heritage Assets](#) – supports development that sustains the significance of heritage assets.
- 4.3.30. [Policy CT1: Sustainable Transport Network](#) – promotes a safe, efficient and convenient transport system that provides choice. It promotes engagement with relevant stakeholders along the EWR2 route to identify operational benefits.
- 4.3.31. [Policy CT4: Public Transport](#) – seeks to develop the quality and capacity in public transport through a number of measures, including supporting the development of EWR2.

Milton Keynes Site Allocations Plan: Proposed Submission Draft (Emerging)

- 4.3.32. The Council is currently in the process of preparing a Site Allocations Plan which will allocate sites for residential development in order to support the delivery of housing required in Milton Keynes.
- 4.3.33. [Site Allocation SAP2](#) – Wellington Place car park, Bletchley, is located in close proximity to the north of the line as it diverts northbound towards Bletchley Station. Although the site is allocated for residential development of approximately 11 dwellings, it is understood that permission has been granted for a single office block at the site which has yet to be implemented. Although the site is in close proximity to the line, it has a buffer of woodland which screen it from the railway line. EWR2 would have no impact on the deliverability of the site for residential development.
- 4.3.34. [Site Allocation SAP11](#) – Builder’s Merchant, Fenny Stratford, is located in close proximity to the line as it travels through Fenny Stratford. The site is located to the north of Fenny Stratford station and positioned behind a number of offices situated alongside the line. The site is allocated for residential development and has an estimated capacity of 79 dwellings. Although located in close proximity to the line, EWR2 would have no impact on the ability of the site to deliver development.
- 4.3.35. [Site Allocation SAP13](#) – Former MFI unit, Watling Street, Bletchley, adjoins the line as it travels north of Fenny Stratford, west of the Watling Street overbridge. The site is allocated for residential development of approximately 28 dwellings. The site benefits from a belt of trees along its southern boundary, screening it from the railway line. EWR2 would have no impact on the deliverability of this site.

4.4. Neighbourhood Planning

West Bletchley Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4.1. In addition, the route travels within the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area of West Bletchley. However, at this stage, no draft plan has been published, with early public consultation having been undertaken by West Bletchley. As such, there are presently no draft policies against which proposed development can be considered.

Bow Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4.2. The route also travels within the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area of Bow Brickhill. The Bow Brickhill Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated in May 2013, although at this stage a draft plan has yet to be published for consultation. As such, there are presently no planning policies against which proposed development can be assessed.

Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4.3. The route travels through the Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan Area, within which development is to be considered against policies in the Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in July 2014 and forms part of the development plan. Policies in the neighbourhood Plan that are of relevance to these sub-sections are set out below. Policy WS1: Design Parameters is discussed in the draft DAS.
- 4.4.4. [Policy WS2: Open Spaces within the Current Built-up Area](#) – identifies three areas of existing open spaces that are to be preserved from any development unless in exceptional circumstances set out in the NPPF. The three identified areas include the Recreation Ground which is located adjacent to the line.
- 4.4.5. [Policy WS15: Rail Services](#) – The policy recognises the proposed upgrading to the East West Rail line at Woburn Sands. It states that proposals to improve rail services through the village, including electrification, will be supported where the following principles apply:
- Plans are finalised in consultation with Woburn Sands Town Council;
 - Proposals improve the level of rail services for both commuting and leisure; and
 - Proposals include measures to ensure the safety of both cars and pedestrians crossing the railway without increasing delay and congestion.

Wavendon Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4.6. The route travels within the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area of Wavendon. The Wavendon Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated in July 2012, although at this stage a draft plan has yet to be published for consultation. As such, there are presently no planning policies against which proposed development can be assessed.

Walton Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4.7. Part the route travels through the Walton Neighbourhood Plan Area, within which development is to be considered against policies in the Walton Neighbourhood Plan. The Neighbourhood Plan was adopted in January 2017 and forms part of the development plan. Policies in the neighbourhood Plan that are of relevance to propose development is set out below.
- 4.4.8. **Policy WNP6: Caldecote ‘Site C’** – Allocated land adjacent to the line for residential led, mixed use development. The policy requires applicants for development at this site to demonstrate that they have engaged East Wes Rail prior to the submission of a planning application. Such a planning application is required to demonstrate that the proposal does not preclude the delivery of a preferred solution for a new railway crossing.
- 4.4.9. **Policy WNP17: Open Space and Leisure** – Requires all open spaces, areas of landscaping (including transport corridors to be protected from development. Figure 2 in the Neighbourhood Plan identifies the EWR2 route as a ‘landscaped transport corridor’.
- 4.4.10. **Policy WNP16: Design Principles** - is discussed in the draft DAS.
- 4.4.11. In addition to the above policies, the Neighbourhood Plan outlines a key commitment in relation to transport management in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. One such commitment is to manage the potential noise and visual impacts of EWR2 on residents and the environment.

4.5. Local Transport Policy

A Transport Vision and Strategy for Milton Keynes: Local Transport Plan 3 – 2011 to 2031

- 4.5.1. Milton Keynes Council’s Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) set out the borough’s policies and programme for delivering local, sub-regional and national transport policy objectives. The LTP builds on the spatial planning policies in the Core Strategy as well as policy and guidance at an international, national and local level.
- 4.5.2. A key intervention of the LTP is to support EWR2. The LTP emphasises that EWR2 will:

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“support economic growth and investment in new jobs and homes; provide for faster journeys between towns and cities to the north and west of London, avoiding the need to travel via the capital; provide an alternative to travel by road, reducing congestion and carbon emissions; and create increased capacity elsewhere on the rail network in the longer term”.

- 4.5.3. The LTP also highlights that EWR2 will link the knowledge economies of Cambridge and Oxford with Milton Keynes providing additional economic benefits. It also expresses support for the direct connectivity to Reading, Oxford and Bedford that will be achieved through the scheme.

5. Planning Considerations

- 5.1.1. Section 38 (c) of The TCPA 1990 confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise. In this section, the planning issues raised by the proposed development are considered against the prevailing planning policy framework.
- 5.1.2. Having established the context within the Milton Keynes sub-section, the proposed development and existing planning policy context, the main material considerations raised by EWR2 are considered within the remainder of this section under the following headings:
- Sustainable Development;
 - Land Use and Agriculture;
 - Cultural Heritage;
 - Air Quality;
 - Ecology;
 - Noise and Vibration;
 - Geology, Soil and Land Contamination;
 - Landscape and Visual Impacts;
 - Water Quality and Flood Risk; and
 - Traffic and Transport.
- 5.1.3. With the exception of 'Sustainable Development', the above headings relate to the individual chapters of the Draft ES. Each Draft ES chapter provides a detailed assessment of the impact of the scheme on the above environmental topics. They also provide a detailed discussion of the existing environmental baseline in the Milton Keynes sub-section and also identify mitigation measures appropriate to any adverse effects. This chapter of the Planning Statement provides a high level summary of the findings of each Draft ES chapter to a level appropriate to assessment performance against planning policy objectives. Therefore, reference should be made to the Draft ES for detailed content on each environmental topic.

5.2. Sustainable Development

- 5.2.1. EWR2 would make a valuable contribution to achieving the objectives of national and local planning policies and strategies. The scheme would deliver a number of social and economic benefits. Firstly, it would deliver a strategic link between key economic centres and would support the ambition of local authorities for substantial economic growth. The scheme would support new commercial and residential development key centres along the route. It would make a valuable contribution towards reducing congestion on the local road network and would improve connectivity between communities. Additionally, the development of new crossings over the railway line and works to existing structures would significantly improve safety for vehicles and PRoW users.
- 5.2.2. In this context it is clear that the scheme would achieve the objectives of national and local planning policies. At a national level, the objectives for the rail network set out in the NPS would be achieved through facilitating a reliable route for commuters to the workplace and other communities, as well as increasing business and leisure travel. Additionally, the route would support the transport of freight across the region.
- 5.2.3. As referenced in Chapter 4, the core principles of the NPPF seek to support sustainable economic development to deliver homes, commercial units, infrastructure and thriving local places, along with making the fullest possible use of public transport. The scheme would contribute towards achieving these objectives. It would also support the delivery of policy objectives provided in Section 1 and Section 4 of the NPPF, in particular through addressing an evident barrier to investment in the region through the existing lack of suitable infrastructure.
- 5.2.4. At a local level, the scheme would deliver the objective of Milton Keynes Core Strategy Policies CS11 and CS15, as well as Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policies S1, T12 and T13. It would also deliver a key intervention of the 'A Transport Vision and Strategy for Milton Keynes: Local Transport Plan 3 – 2011 to 2031' document.
- 5.2.5. The EWR Alliance has adopted a Net Positive biodiversity target for the entire EWR2 scheme. A Biodiversity Net Positive assessment of the scheme is provided in Technical Appendix 9.19 of the Draft ES. Through the achievement of a net positive biodiversity target, the scheme would achieve the objective of biodiversity enhancement sought in NPPF Section 11 (paragraph 109), Milton Keynes Core Strategy Policy CS19 and Plan:MK Draft Preferred Options emerging Policy NE3.
- 5.2.6. Additionally, EWR2 includes the closure of a number of existing level crossings and diversion of PRoWs over the railway line via proposed new overbridges and footbridges. Such work would ensure that access over the railway line via all PRoWs would remain open, as well as significantly improving the safety of users. In this regard, the scheme delivers the objective of NPPF paragraph 75.

5.3. Land Use and Agriculture

- 5.3.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on existing land uses and agriculture is discussed in Chapter 6 of the Draft ES.

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- 5.3.2. The scheme as a whole would require both temporary and permanent land take. Temporary land take is required during the construction phase for compounds, storage and access, whilst permanent land take is required for the scheme itself.
- 5.3.3. The majority of the scheme within Milton Keynes is restricted to land within Network Rail's ownership and roads. Prior to mitigation, the scheme in the Milton Keynes sub-section would result in temporary and permanent land take. This comprises agricultural land, land with planning permission for residential development and a car wash/storage yard at Woburn Sands, which is required temporarily during construction. Additionally, land adjacent to residential areas, Bletchley allotment gardens and Selboune Avenue Cemetery would also be required during construction. An area of the carwash/storage yard at Woburn Sands is also required to accommodate the proposed new footbridge at School Crossing.
- 5.3.4. Land take also comprises a small amount of Sub-grade 3a, 3b and Grade 4 agricultural land, as land use within this sub-section is predominantly non-agricultural. The scheme is considered to result in the small loss of agricultural land within the Milton Keynes sub-section and as such no significant effects on land quality are predicted.
- 5.3.5. It is proposed that following construction works, the scheme would restore temporary land take to its previous condition. Construction working areas would be managed so that access to residential properties, community facilities and commercial enterprises are maintained, whilst disturbance to such receptors would be managed. With regards to agricultural land, construction areas would be fenced off to prevent access into adjacent land and arrangements would be put in place to ensure farm access is maintained during construction.
- 5.3.6. There is potential for temporary amenity impact on residential properties, as well as community facilities and commercial enterprises. This would represent a conflict with NPPF paragraph 17 and Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policy D1. However, it is important to note that such impact would not be permanent and through appropriate mitigation measures the significance of such impact would be substantially reduced and greater compliance with these policies achieved. The long term residual effects on agricultural land quality would be limited to the permanent loss of agricultural land. As permanent agricultural land take within the Milton Keynes sub-section, and across the scheme as a whole, would be small, no significant effects on agricultural land quality are predicted as a result of the scheme. In this context, the permanent impact of the scheme is fully compliant with the NPS and NPPF Section 3.

5.4. Cultural Heritage

- 5.4.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on cultural heritage assets is discussed in Chapter 7 of the Draft ES.
- 5.4.2. The Draft ES identified three Conservation Areas within the Milton Keynes sub-section at Bletchley, Loughton and Woburn Sands. It identified four Scheduled Monuments and six Grade I or II* Listed Buildings located within 1km of the route. With regard to Grade II Listed Buildings, 19 were identified within Bletchley Conservation Area, 13 within Loughton Conservation Area, 1 within Woburn Sands Conservation Area and 39 outside of a Conservation Area but within 1km of the route. In addition, 38 non-designated assets were identified within 250m of the route. The Draft ES did not identify any Registered Parks and Gardens within this sub-section.
- 5.4.3. Against this baseline, and before mitigation measures are implemented, the Draft ES demonstrates there would be no significant effects on the setting of designated historic assets within the Milton Keynes sub-section. However, the scheme would have a significant effect on two non-designated buried archaeological remains (the London Brick Company Brickworks and Eastwoods Brickworks). In respect of the London Brick Company Brickworks, impact arises due to the brickworks being located in the area of the main construction compound on Bletchley Road, with any remains being affected as a result of the construction of the compound. With regard to Eastwoods Brickworks, any intrusive groundworks have the potential to impact on the buried remains of the brickworks.
- 5.4.4. Mitigation measures to reduce the significant effect on these assets are identified, with archaeological recording likely including a programme of investigative trial trenching. As a result of implementing the identified mitigation measures, the scheme would have no residual significant effect on the two buried archaeological remains.
- 5.4.5. In the context of the above, the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section is in full compliance with national and local planning policies related to the historic environment. The scheme is fully compliant with the NPS, NPPF Section 12, Milton Keynes Core Strategy Policy CS19, Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policies HE1, HE5 and HE6, and Woburn Sands Neighbourhood Plan Policy WS1.

5.5. Air Quality

- 5.5.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on air quality is discussed in Chapter 8 of the Draft ES. However, it should be noted that the ES has not assessed the operational traffic impacts of EWR2.
- 5.5.2. There are no Air Quality Management Areas within or adjacent to the study area (350m from construction activities and 100m from haulage roads) in the Milton Keynes sub-section. The Draft ES assessment found that air quality in Milton Keynes is currently good with no monitored exceedances or risk of exceedances of air quality objectives in respect of Nitrogen Dioxide and PM₁₀.

- 5.5.3. The assessment identifies that although diesel rail locomotives would be in operation, no significant effects are likely to result from emissions, which would be partially offset by a decrease in emissions from road transport. There is potential for impact arising from dust deposition during construction of the scheme. Therefore, mitigation measures have been identified to prevent harmful impact from dust. Such measures comprise regular and recorded monitoring (twice daily) of construction areas, use of hard surfaces haul routes to minimise risk of trackout and ensure sufficient protection between the scheme boundary and other properties.
- 5.5.4. The air quality assessment demonstrates that the part of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section, and as a whole, would have no significant effect on air quality. In this context, it is demonstrated that the scheme is fully compliant with the NPS, NPPF Section 11 and Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policy D1.

5.6. Ecology

- 5.6.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on Ecology is discussed in Chapter 9 of the Draft ES.
- 5.6.2. The Draft ES identifies, within close proximity of the route, designated sites relating to; two National Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), four Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), one Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and 16 Biological Notification Sites (BNSs).
- 5.6.3. In addition, there are 11 Milton Keynes Wildlife Corridors within 2km of the proposed scheme which are designated either as road, railway, wetland or woodland corridors providing habitat connectivity and forming ecological networks.
- 5.6.4. The Draft ES identifies that the majority of the Milton Keynes sub-section is dominated by the urban landscape of Milton Keynes. The Draft ES recorded only two terrestrial areas of significant importance outside of designated sites, including woodland around Winterhill Industrial Estate, Milton Keynes and a mosaic of habitats to the north west of Woburn Sands.
- 5.6.5. Within this sub-section landscape, the Draft ES notes habitat types relating to woodland and scrub, hedgerows, grassland, watercourses (including the Grand Union Canal and the River Ouzel), ponds, lakes and wetlands, arable/cultivated land (primarily within the east of the sub-section) and urban areas, all located within or in close proximity to the route.
- 5.6.6. The Draft ES recognises that permanent habitat loss would occur as land (all within Network Rail land) is required within part of the Blue Lagoon BNS for embankment construction and also within part of the Blue Lagoon LNR for access to repair Bletchley Flyover. As a consequence, this would result in the permanent loss of approximately 2.3ha, 6.5% of the BNS (included within which is also 0.4ha, 1.2% of the LNR) which includes grassland and scrub/woodland edge habitats and also including bare ground and an existing track adjacent to the railway line. These habitats support rare plants and invertebrates, as well as bird species for which the BNS is designated.

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- 5.6.7. The Draft ES also identifies that Wavendon and Brown Woods BNS may also be affected by the proposed scheme, albeit, on a more temporary nature as a haul road shall be created leading from Bow Brickhill Road to the proposed level crossing replacement overbridge works at Woodley's Farm. This haul road would lead to increased traffic activity resulting in elevated noise, as well as visual and vibration disturbance near to Wavendon and Brown Woods BNS, located some 70m from the proposed works. This is likely to create disturbance to bird species; however, this would be both temporary and minor.
- 5.6.8. The Draft ES also notes that there would be a loss of habitat from within the Woburn – Bletchley Milton Keynes Railway Corridor and also Mainline Milton Keynes Railway Corridor. This would be significant at the county/metropolitan level.
- 5.6.9. Proposed construction works associated with the scheme would result in the loss of habitats which support bats, water voles, reptiles and scarce species of invertebrates. The loss of habitat would also include vegetation from Blue Lagoon Park Lake, woodland scrub and grassland. Further habitat loss and impacts would occur as a consequence of the proposed compound works at Bletchley and River Ouzel bridge works, which would result in clearance of vegetation from the banks of the River Ouzel, and its tributaries. This would impact upon the quality of the watercourse from increased erosion and sediment entering the watercourse, which may affect fish habitats in the River. The proposed works to the bridge over the River Ouzel may also disturb identified bat roosts, while the Bletchley Flyover works may destroy or disturb otter resting places along the river bank.
- 5.6.10. Mitigation against habitat loss would include measures to compensate for the loss of the identified habitats. Grassland and scrub habitat would be created to compensate for loss in the Blue Lagoon BNS whilst habitat would also be restored along the operational railway embankments which would provide connectivity between the Blue Lagoon BNS and railway corridors. To control potential disturbance to birds, works in the area of the Blue Lagoon BNS and Blue Lagoon LWS would incorporate measures to reduce visual and noise disturbance whilst complying with strict ecological guidance. New bat roosting habitats would also be provided, where mitigation is required. Mitigation would also be required to compensate for the loss of river habitat to the River Ouzel. The river restoration techniques shall be agreed with the Environment Agency (EA).
- 5.6.11. Where mitigation measures have been identified, these would be implemented to prevent harmful impacts. Such measures comprise best practice construction measures to minimise the risk and control of incidental pollution. Long-term mitigation would include, where feasible, habitat retention and enhancement within close proximity to existing habitats / mosaics. The mitigation techniques reduce the operational ecological effects to a level that is not significant. The Draft ES predicts that there would be no adverse operational or significant ecological effects on habitats within the Milton Keynes sub-section and accordingly the scheme would comply with the requirements of the NPS, NPPF Section 11 and Milton Keynes Council Core Strategy Policy CS19.

5.7. Noise and Vibration

- 5.7.1. An assessment of the noise and vibration impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on sensitive receptors is discussed in Chapter 10 of the Draft ES. It should be noted that the ES has not assessed the impacts associated with traffic noise.
- 5.7.2. At present, noise levels are typically dominated by traffic on the road networks and trains on the West Coast Main Line. Measured levels typically fluctuate depending on the time of day due to the morning and afternoon rush hours, and train movements. The Draft ES establishes that train movements are also more frequent during the busier rush hour periods. The level of audible noise from train movements differed at various locations along the route due to distance, screening, topography and existing buildings and structures.
- 5.7.3. Activities during the construction phase of the scheme would result in some degree of noise disturbance at nearby receptors. However, it is important to note that such impact would be temporary. Mitigation measures to reduce noise during the construction phase have been identified. A number of measures to manage noise generated during construction activities would be agreed with the local authority and set out in a draft Code of Construction Practice (CoCP). Through implementation of mitigation measures, such as phased construction activities and acoustic screening in appropriate locations, it is anticipated that the scheme would meet with appropriate noise thresholds at all sensitive receptor locations during the construction phase.
- 5.7.4. The Draft ES identifies receptors within the Milton Keynes sub-section that could potentially be affected by noise levels exceeding Significant Observed Adverse Effect Level (SOAEL) (as defined in the Noise Policy Statement for England, as referenced in the NPS) as a result of train movements. Such receptors consist of residential properties located within the Whitley Crescent, Milton Grove area. Noise barriers are proposed at Bletchley (including Bletchley Flyover) to mitigate noise impact. Impacts arising from vibration during the operation of the scheme are anticipated to occur at one residential property during the operation of the scheme and appropriate mitigation would be put in place to ensure amenity is not materially affected at this location.
- 5.7.5. The NPS and NPPF (paragraph 123) highlight that it is important to recognise that new development will often create some noise. The key consideration is whether any noise impact would result in significant adverse impact on health and quality of life. The Draft ES identifies that the scheme would not result in significant noise impact within the Milton Keynes sub-section. Whilst vibration impact is predicated to occur at one residential property, following the implementation of appropriate mitigation, it is considered that such impact would not result in a significant adverse impact on health and quality of life. As such the scheme is considered to comply with the NPS and NPPF, as well as Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policy D1.

5.8. Geology, Soil and Land Contamination

- 5.8.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on geology, soils and land contamination is discussed in Chapter 11 of the Draft ES.
- 5.8.2. The Draft ES determines that no significant impacts would arise during the construction phase of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section in respect to exposure of contaminants to nearby residents, built environment receptors, pollution to surface water courses and pollution of groundwater.
- 5.8.3. In respect to the operational phase of the scheme, mitigation measures have been incorporated into the design of the scheme to reduce impact and as a result it is considered that no significant impacts would occur. The scheme is considered to result in moderate/low risk for contaminants to impact on superficial and bedrock secondary aquifers, as well as ground gas from surrounding landfills (in particular at Newton Longville) impacting on nearby properties. Other potential impacts, such as exposure of contaminants to nearby residents, pollution of surface water courses and pollution of groundwater are considered to be either very low risk or low risk.
- 5.8.4. In terms of the risks to geology as a resource within this sub-section no local geology sites or 'Really Important Geology Sites' (RIGs) are located within 500m of the scheme.
- 5.8.5. The Draft ES demonstrates that through the incorporation of mitigation measures into the design of the scheme, it would result in no significant residual impact with respect to geology, soil and land contamination within the Milton Keynes sub-section and across the entire route. In this context, it is demonstrated that the scheme is fully compliant with the NPS, NPPF Section 11 and Milton Keynes Core Strategy Policy CS19.

5.9. Landscape and Visual Impacts

- 5.9.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on landscape and visual receptors is discussed in Chapter 12 of the Draft ES.
- 5.9.2. Within the Milton Keynes sub-section there are a number of statutory designations representing areas that are potentially sensitive to the scheme. Such designations include Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Ancient Woodlands and SSSI. There is also an Area of Attractive Landscape (The Brickhills) within the sub-section. Although the scheme area lies predominantly within or on the outer fringes of the urban area of Milton Keynes, it lies in close proximity to two Landscape Character Areas. Additionally, there are a number of viewpoints from sensitive visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the scheme.

- 5.9.3. The Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) finds that the landscape impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section is limited to adjoining Local Landscape Character Areas whose quality and tranquillity levels are already lessened by the proximity of existing urban detractors. The main effects on the settings, value and qualities of adjoining Local Landscape Character Areas are from the loss of vegetation from within the railway, a new overbridge structure at Woodley's Farm and increased train operations. The LVIA concludes that the impact on Local Landscape Character Areas and Townscape Character Areas is not significant.
- 5.9.4. The LVIA also finds that the majority of visual effects resulting from the operation of the scheme would not be significant. Moderate adverse significance would be experienced by some visual receptors, such as adjacent properties on Cranfield Road, Woburn Sands, as a result of the effects of the provision of a ramped footbridge at School Crossing Woburn Sands, high level platforms at Bletchley Flyover and the new accommodation bridge at Woodley's Farm.
- 5.9.5. The findings of the LVIA demonstrate there would be some impact on visual receptors within the Milton Keynes sub-section. Mitigation measures have been identified and implementation of such measures would significantly reduce any adverse impact. Although there would be moderate adverse impact on visual receptors, including residential properties, such impact would not result in unacceptable visual intrusion or loss of amenity. It is considered that any residual impact would not be of a significance whereby the objectives of planning policies would be compromised. In this regard, the impact of the scheme on visual receptors within the Milton Keynes sub-section is considered to be acceptable against the NPS, NPPF Section 11 and Milton Keynes Local Plan Saved Policy D1.

5.10. Water Quality and Flood Risk

- 5.10.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on flood risk and the water environment is discussed in Chapter 13 of the Draft ES.
- 5.10.2. The route within the Milton Keynes sub-section crosses or is located in close proximity to large number of surface water features including main rivers, ordinary watercourses, drains, lakes and ponds. A review of the EA's Flood Map for Planning indicated that the majority of the scheme is located in the low risk Flood Zone 1. Land within Loughton Valley Park immediately adjacent to the western embankment of the scheme is indicated to be within the medium risk Flood Zone 2. Land immediately to the east of the scheme associated with the unnamed tributary of the Loughton Brook that passes beneath the railway at Stacey Bushes is indicated to be located within the Flood Zone 3. Land on either side of the River Ouzel, including upstream and downstream of the scheme crossing of this watercourse, is also identified to be located in Flood Zones 2 and 3.
- 5.10.3. A review of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicated likely fluvial flooding associated with Loughton Brook to the north of the A5 and adjacent to the western embankment. Ponding of surface water adjacent to the scheme is also indicated where the railway crosses Watling Street in Bletchley, within the Winterhill Retail Park in Milton Keynes, and north of the A509 Portway.

- 5.10.4. There is potential for impact on the quality of watercourses as a result of construction works at Woburn Sands Station and the strengthening of a bridge over the River Ouzel, as well as through works to existing culverts. Additionally, there is potential for impact on the quality of watercourses arising from a number of proposed construction compounds within the sub-section through construction activities and stored materials.
- 5.10.5. Although the construction of new platforms at Bletchley Station and platform extensions at Woburn Sands Station would increase impermeable surfacing, it is considered unlikely that surface water run-off generated through such development would increase more than 25% when compared to the current situation.
- 5.10.6. A CoCP has been prepared, a draft of which forms an appendix to the Draft ES for consultation. The CoCP includes mitigation measures to protect the water environment during the construction phase and would be reviewed regularly. For construction compounds and areas of the proposed works located within areas deemed to be at risk of fluvial and surface water flooding, a Flood Emergency Response Plan will be prepared for implementation during the construction phase.
- 5.10.7. With regards to the operational phase, the Draft ES identifies that the majority of potential adverse impacts on the water environment can be mitigated through appropriate design of the scheme. General mitigation principles that would be implemented are summarised as follows:
- If construction in the existing floodplain is unavoidable, compensation of lost flood storage capacity on level for level basis would be provided;
 - Design footbridges that are required to be located within the existing floodplain as light, open structures with a small footprint to minimise obstruction to flows during flood events;
 - Design new watercourse crossings to have appropriate capacity so as to not increase flood risk elsewhere;
 - Retain the capacity of existing culverts and bridge openings so as to not increase the risk of flooding in the area or elsewhere;
 - Avoid the diversion or culverting of watercourses. If this is unavoidable, consult with the EA and local authority to agree design and mitigation requirements;
 - Provide appropriate drainage systems in areas identified as being susceptible to flooding from surface water;
 - Surface water runoff from new stations, platforms, extensions to existing platforms, car parks, sidings or other potentially polluting areas would be drained via appropriate pollution prevention measures before discharge to the receiving water environment;
 - Surface water runoff from new impermeable surfaces would be drained via appropriate attenuation measures to limit runoff; and

- Surface water that drains from track areas where this is not from station or sidings locations would percolate through the gravel track ballast to provide natural treatment prior to overland flow to an adjacent surface water feature or infiltration to ground.
- 5.10.8. In respect of water quality, the Draft ES identifies, in general, that construction activities have the potential to result in adverse impact. However, implementation of mitigation measures to avoid polluting water courses would mean no significant effects would occur.
- 5.10.9. The Draft ES demonstrates that through the implementation of the above identified mitigation measures, the part of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section, and as a whole, would have no significant effect on flood risk and the water environment. In any case, the 'Technical Guidance on Flood Risk' (as referenced in the NPPF), makes it clear that essential infrastructure is appropriate and acceptable in Flood Zone 3 provided flood risk is not increased elsewhere. In the context of the Draft ES findings, in particular the confirmation that flood risk would not be increased elsewhere, it is demonstrated that the scheme is fully compliant with the NPS, NPPF Section 10 and Milton Keynes Local Plan Policy D1.

5.11. Traffic and Transport

- 5.11.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section on traffic and transport is discussed in Chapter 14 of the Draft ES. However, a full impact assessment arising from traffic and transport has not been reported in the Draft ES at this stage.
- 5.11.2. The highway network within the Milton Keynes sub-section includes four road overbridges and eight underbridges. There are also three road level crossings in the sub-section. The Draft ES identifies that construction compounds would generate traffic during the construction phase and have the potential to affect the road network during this time. Such traffic would consist of HGVs and car trips generated by staff. Operational changes to traffic flows at Bletchley Station, Milton Keynes Central Station and Woburn Sands Station due to changes in passenger demand as a result of the scheme would also occur.
- 5.11.3. The assessment of construction and operational effects from traffic and transport changes within the Milton Keynes sub-section is ongoing and has yet to be established. Consultation with Local Highway Authority stakeholders with regards to traffic projections and methodology is currently being undertaken. Once the full assessment is available in the final ES, its findings and an assessment of performance against planning policy will be included in the final Planning Statement.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1.1. The EWR2 scheme, as proposed at this stage, has been considered against the national and local planning policy framework of Milton Keynes Council.
- 6.1.2. It is clear that the scheme would deliver significant economic and social public benefits and presents an opportunity to make a substantial contribution to achieving the strategic objectives of national and local planning policies. It would do so through the creation of a strategic link between economic centres, facilitating economic growth, reducing congestion of the highway network, providing a reliable rail route for commuters, ensuring net gain in biodiversity and enhancing the local PRow network.
- 6.1.3. The current findings of the Draft ES identify that the scheme would not result in significant adverse impacts in relation to the main material considerations and environmental topics within the Milton Keynes sub-section (notwithstanding that a full assessment has not been reported in the Draft ES at this stage). The majority of potential residual impacts arising from the scheme can be mitigated through measures identified in the Draft ES to a level that is not significant.
- 6.1.4. It is anticipated that there would be some residual impact within the Milton Keynes sub-section in respect of temporary amenity impact at residential properties, community facilities and commercial enterprises through construction land take, as well as viewpoints from some visual receptors. However, it is considered that such impact would not be of a level whereby the objectives of national and local planning policies are compromised. In any case, the significant public benefits that would be brought about by the scheme would demonstrably outweigh any less than significant impacts. A key material consideration within the Milton Keynes sub-section is impact on the setting of listed buildings and Conservation Area. However, the current findings of the Draft ES provide confidence that no significant impact would occur in this regard.
- 6.1.5. Section 38 (c) of the TCPA 1990 confirms that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material circumstances indicate otherwise. This is reiterated in NPPF paragraph 14 which provides a presumption in favour of sustainable development, stating that development proposals which accord with the Development Plan should be approved without delay.
- 6.1.6. The scheme must therefore be considered in the context of the TCPA 1990 and NPPF paragraph 14. Using the current findings of the Draft ES, it is considered that the scheme within the Milton Keynes sub-section, and as a whole, is currently in full compliance with national planning policies and the local Development Plan, therefore representing sustainable development in the context of planning policy.
- 6.1.7. Findings of this draft Planning Statement may be subject to change at the time of the TWAO submission as the ES is updated and aspects of the proposed development amended.