

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 5: Bedford Borough
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 Bedford Borough Council (referred to as the Bedford sub-section).

The Bedford sub-section commences at Stewartby Station at the administrative boundary of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council and concludes as the line travels through Bedford Station and merges with the Midland Main Line. The route within the Bedford sub-section is approximately 8.4km in length.

The Bedford sub-section currently benefits from a predominantly double track railway and therefore there are no proposed works to the railway line. Proposed development include the construction of a new highway overbridge at Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick and a footbridge at Woburn Road, Kempston as well as a number of changes to existing vehicle and pedestrian crossings and bridges.

Proposed development within the Bedford 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 documents:

- Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan
- Allocations and Designations Local Plan
- Bedford Local Plan 2002 (Saved Policies)

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.

In the context of the findings of the Draft ES, it is considered that, following the implementation of mitigation measures, the scheme at this stage is in full 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.

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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 Bedford 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. 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 a 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 have also been produced to support of 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 5) 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 Bedford Borough 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 3: Development within Milton Keynes Council; and

- Draft Planning Statement 4: Development within Central Bedfordshire Council.

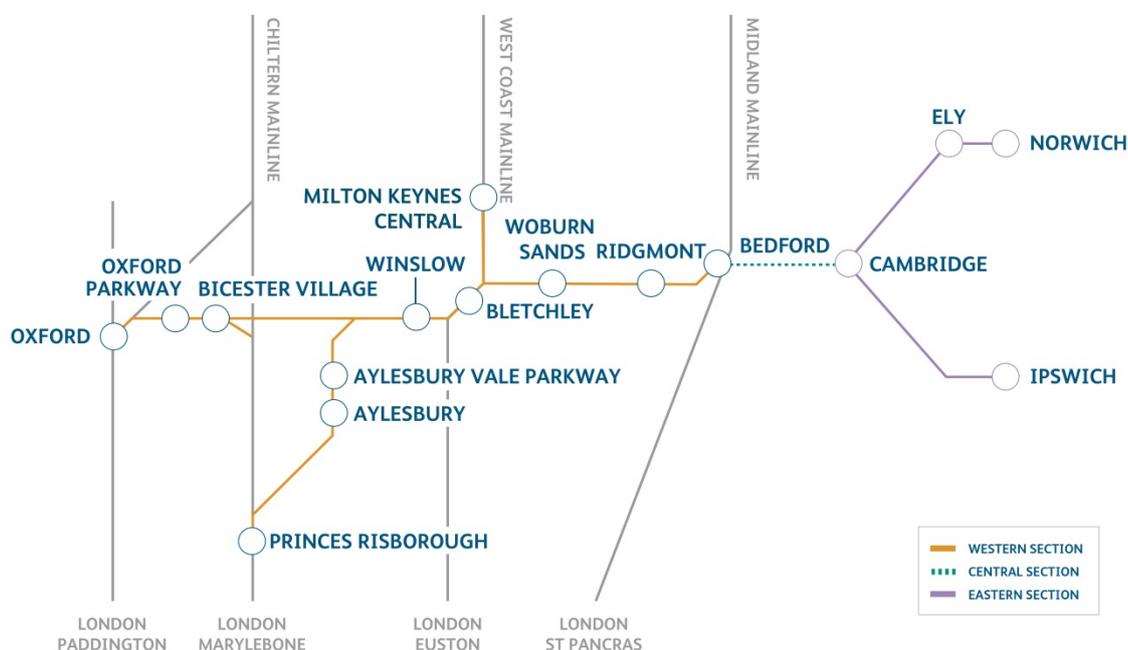
1.3. Background to East West Rail

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



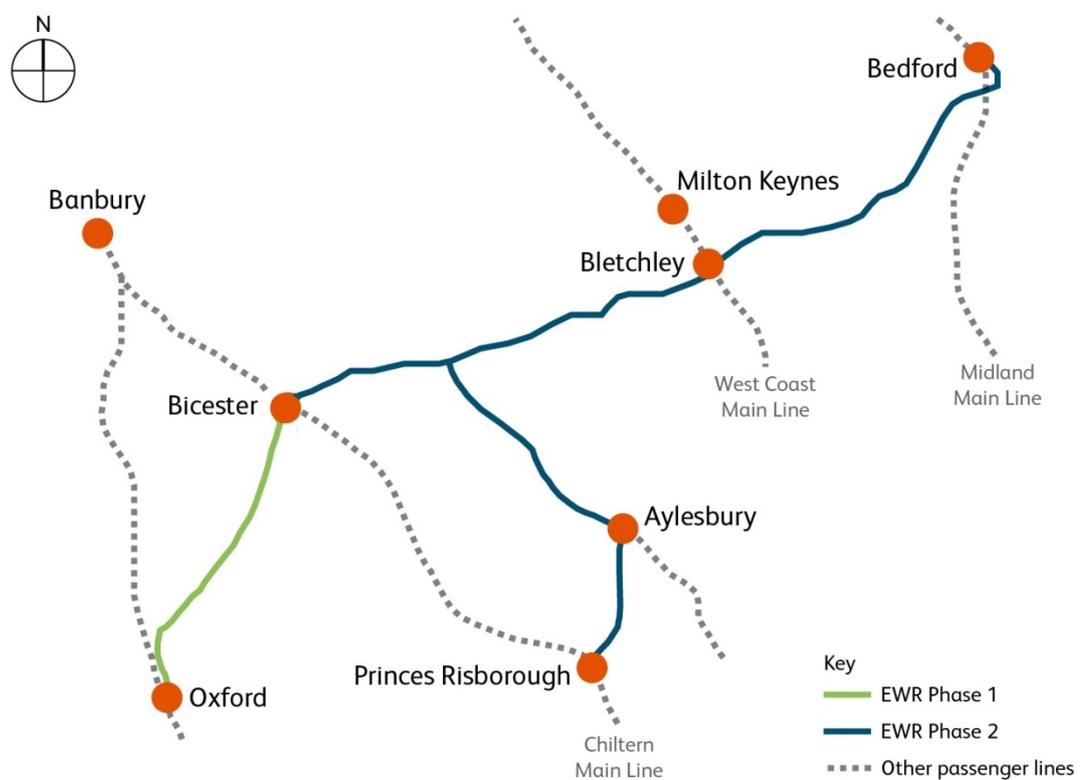
1.4. East West Rail Western Section

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:

- 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 (north of Calvert), 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, 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, 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. Bedford Sub-section Description

- 2.1.1. The Bedford sub-section commences at Stewartby Station at the administrative boundary of Central Bedfordshire Council and Bedford Borough Council and concludes as the line travels through Bedford Station and merges with the Midland Main Line. The route within the Bedford sub-section is approximately 8.4km in length and is shown in the Scheme Drawings submitted for consultation and listed in Table 1.
- 2.1.2. There are a number of footpath, highway or working crossings within the Bedford sub-section (via underbridge, overbridge or level crossing). Major highway routes that cross the line include the A421, A6 and A5141, which act as primary routes into and around Bedford from the south.
- 2.1.3. The Bedford sub-section commences as the line crosses over Green Lane, Stewartby via a level crossing before travelling through Stewartby Station and adjoining industrial sites to the east and west. The line proceeds through an area of agricultural land and crosses Broadmead Road via a level crossing. The line travels through Kempston Hardwick Station and crosses with Manor Road via a level crossing before travelling alongside industrial and commercial units at Marsh Leys Business Park, as well as Woburn Road Industrial Estate to the north of the A421, under which the line crosses.
- 2.1.4. The line is intersected by a footpath level crossing at Woburn Road, Kempston as it enters into Bedford and before travelling past the Interchange Retail Park and proceeding into a predominantly residential area. The River Great Ouse travels along the east side of this section of the line. As the line continues it travels alongside playing fields associated with Springfield Lower School and Daubeney Academy. The line proceeds to cross under the Midland Main Line before it crosses under the A6.
- 2.1.5. Finally, the line travels through a dense residential area before proceeding through Bedford St Johns Station and continuing to Bedford Station. Before entering Bedford Station, the line crosses under Cauldwell Street and travels over the Great River Ouse. The line concludes as it merges with the Midland Main Line.
- 2.1.6. For the most part, the route within the Bedford 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 some areas within Flood Zones 2 and 3, located at an area north of Stewartby, around the Interchange Retail Park in Bedford as it travels adjacent to the River Great Ouse and around Bedford St Johns Station as it approaches the River Great Ouse crossing.
- 2.1.7. The entire length of the Bedford sub-section does not travel directly through any statutory land designations. However, the line travels within the setting of a Grade II listed structure at the Stewartby Brickworks (two kilns and four chimneys), as well as in close proximity to the Stewartby Conservation Area which extends to the east of Stewartby Station.

3. Proposed Development

3.1. Railway Works

- 3.1.1. The Bedford sub-section currently benefits from a predominantly double track railway, which is located on the original double track embankments/cuttings. As such there are no proposed works to the railway line itself within this sub-section.
- 3.1.2. There are three level crossings along the route which would be closed, combined with other crossings which shall be replaced with bridges. There are two level crossings along the route which would remain in place.

3.2. Proposed Bridges

- 3.2.1. Within this section of the route, the construction of new bridges over the railway line are proposed at two locations. The location of these proposed new bridges are described below (running from west to east).
- 3.2.2. **Manor Road (Kempston Hardwick)** - A new highway overbridge is proposed at Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick, which would replace the existing highway crossing. The span of the overbridge would measure 16.28m and would have a vertical clearance over the railway line of 6.20m. In width, the overbridge would measure a total of 11.15m, comprising of two footways and the carriageway. The footways would measure 2.21m and 1.92m, whilst the carriageway would measure 6.0m. Pre-cast concrete parapets and wingwalls would be constructed on both sides of the overbridge span, whilst metal vehicle restraints would be erected on both sides of the carriageway.
- 3.2.3. **Woburn Road (Bedford)** – It is proposed to construct a new stepped footbridge to connect the existing PROW south of the line and adjacent watercourse with Woburn Road to the north. The total extent of the footbridge over the line and watercourse, including the staircase width, measures 28.17m. The footbridge also measures 17.70m on both sides of the line to accommodate the length of the staircase. The footbridge would have a vertical clearance of 5.6m from track level to the main span of the footbridge.
- 3.2.4. The main walkway of the footbridge would benefit from solid elevation trusses measuring 1.8m in height. Similar to other footbridges along the railway network, the footbridge would be constructed of steelwork. The use of colours for the frames around the staircase and main span, as well as the handrails, will be appraised according to the surrounding environment of each footbridge and established at the time of the TWAO submission.
- 3.2.5. Full details of the above proposed works are provided by 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 Bedford Sub-section

Location	Structure Proposed	Scheme Drawing Number	Planning Drawing Number
Rail Route	Railway Works	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-006023 to 006035	-
Manor Road (Kempston Hardwick)	New highway overbridge	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-006026; and 133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-006027	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016087 to 016089
Woburn Road (Kempston)	New stepped footbridge	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-006029	133735_2D-EWR-BBM-XXXXXX-DR-T-016084 to 016086

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 chapter 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 Bedford Borough Council. Local planning policy documents of relevance to this sub-section are therefore as follows:
- Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan;
 - Allocations and Designations Local Plan; and
 - Bedford Local Plan 2002 (Saved Policies).

Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan 2008

- 4.3.2. The Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan was adopted by Bedford Borough Council in April 2008 and sets out a long term spatial strategy and planning policies against which development proposals are to be assessed.
- 4.3.3. [Policy CP2: Sustainable Development Principles](#) – states that the development and use of land will ensure that:
- Resources and infrastructure are used efficiently with the priority on the re-use of brownfield land;
 - Biodiversity is protected and scarce resources are conserved;
 - Climate change, renewable energy and drainage issues are properly addressed;

- Buildings and spaces promote the character of townscape and setting of settlements and enhance human health and safety;
 - The character and quality of local landscapes are preserved and where appropriate enhanced;
 - Important historic and cultural features are protected;
 - The use of public transport, walking and cycling is encouraged and car use minimised; and
 - Opportunities for leisure, recreation and tourism are readily available.
- 4.3.4. **Policy CP10: The Creation of Jobs** – outlines the Core Strategy objective to deliver a minimum of 16,000 net additional jobs in the borough by 2021.
- 4.3.5. **Policy CP13: The Countryside and Development within it** – states that development in the countryside will only be permitted if it would be consistent with national policy.
- 4.3.6. **Policy CP21: Designing in Quality** – requires all new development to be designed to the highest quality. To achieve this development should:
- Have regard to good practice in urban design;
 - Consider the context within which it will be situated and the opportunities to enhance the character and quality of an area, as well as local distinctiveness;
 - Preserve and enhance Conservation Areas, Scheduled Ancient Monuments and other archaeological remains, as well as listed buildings and their setting;
 - To be fully accessible to all members of the community;
 - Incorporate measures to promote crime prevention and community safety; and
 - Address sustainable design principles.
- 4.3.7. **Policy CP22: Green Infrastructure** – seeks to protect existing green infrastructure of local and strategic importance from development. It requires, where appropriate, development to provide green infrastructure in accordance with adopted local standards.
- 4.3.8. **Policy CP23: Heritage** – states that development will be required to protect and where appropriate enhance:
- the character of conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, historic parks and gardens, listed buildings and other important historic or archaeological features; and
 - the borough’s cultural assets, including its landscape, in order to underpin sense of place, cultural identity and promote quality of life.

- 4.3.9. [Policy CP24: Landscape Protection and Enhancement](#) – seeks to conserve and enhance the landscape and character of the borough. In doing so, development is required to protect and where appropriate enhance the quality and character of the landscape, and should be of appropriate nature and scale within the wider landscape.
- 4.3.10. [Policy CP25: Biodiversity](#) – seeks to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, in particular priority habitats, species and geodiversity features.
- 4.3.11. [Policy CP26: Climate Change and Pollution](#) – sets out a number of requirements to ensure development minimises pollution and its impact on climate change. Those of relevance include:
- Minimise the emission of pollutants into the wider environment;
 - Have regard to cumulative impact of development proposals on air quality;
 - Utilise sustainable construction techniques; and
 - Limit any adverse effects on water quality and minimise the risk of flooding.
- 4.3.12. [Policy CP27: Strategic Transport Infrastructure](#) – supports a number of strategic infrastructure proposals, including the East-West rail scheme.
- 4.3.13. [Policy CP28: Local Transport Plan](#) – supports the objectives, strategy and programme set out in the Local Transport Plan.

Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013

- 4.3.14. The line has no impact on the deliverability of allocated sites within the Allocations and Designations Local Plan.

Bedford Local Plan 2002 (Saved Policies)

- 4.3.15. The Bedford Local Plan was adopted in October 2002 and provides planning policies for development management purposes. A large number of policies in the Local Plan were deleted in 2007, with the remaining saved policies still currently in use as part of the development plan framework.
- 4.3.16. [Policy NE3: Sites of local importance](#) – prevents development that may:
- Have an adverse impact on a Local Nature Reserve, County Wildlife Site or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site.
 - Have an adverse impact on other sites supporting national, regional or county rare species unless alternative provision can be agreed or it can be demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweighs the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the feature.
- 4.3.17. [Policy NE4: Trees and Hedges](#) – seeks to protect and retain trees and hedges of amenity, landscape or wildlife significance.

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- 4.3.18. [Policy NE6: Woodland](#) – seeks to protect areas of woodland of landscape, amenity or wildlife significance, whilst also placing a presumption against development in ancient woodland.
- 4.3.19. [Policy NE12: Landscaping in Association with Development](#) – requires proposals to make early provision for appropriate landscaping and to provide adequate screening. In cases where the benefits of development outweigh any loss in landscape features, compensatory provision will be required.
- 4.3.20. [Policy NE13: Landscape Management and Protection](#) – requires proposals to demonstrate, where landscape features are to be retained or created, that provision has been made for their retention, protection, management and maintenance.
- 4.3.21. [Policy NE16: Flooding](#) – states that development will not be permitted where it would intensify the risk of flooding, would be at unacceptable risk from flooding, would prejudice existing flood defences or hinder the ability to carry out flood control and maintenance work, or would adversely affect wildlife habitat in the floodplain.
- 4.3.22. [Policy NE24: Protection and enhancement of water resources](#) – seeks to protect and where possible enhance water resources. To achieve this, the policy will prevent development that would: adversely affect the quality or quantity of water resources, their amenity or nature conservation value, as well as those that restrict access to the River and other water bodies with recreational value. In addition, the policy also seeks to achieve more sustainable methods of surface water management and drainage through active negotiation with developers.
- 4.3.23. [Policy BE11: Setting of Conservation Areas](#) – requires new development within, adjoining, or likely to affect the setting of conservation areas to preserve or enhance its character or appearance. The policy sets out the following criteria against which proposals will be assessed:
- The scale, form and density of development in relation to its surroundings;
 - The quality and type of materials and architectural detailing;
 - Levels of traffic generation and associated impacts;
 - The effect on the streetscape, roofscape and skyline; and
 - The extent to which any open space will be affected;
 - The extent to which the proposed works would bring about substantial benefits in terms of economic regeneration and environmental enhancement.
- 4.3.24. [Policy BE21: Setting of listed buildings](#) – seeks to preserve and enhance the setting of listed buildings through ensuring appropriate design of nearby development, the use of adjacent land and the preservation of trees and landscape features.
- 4.3.25. [Policy BE24: Archaeology](#) – seeks to protect enhance and preserve sites of archaeological interest and their settings.

- 4.3.26. **Policy BE30: Material considerations in the control of new development** – sets out a number of material considerations against which proposals will be determined. Those of relevance include:
- The visual impact of the development and its relationship within the local context;
 - Any noise, smell or other health and safety problems which are likely to be generated by the development;
 - Any factors which might give rise to disturbance to neighbours and the surrounding community;
 - Any adverse effects on the natural environment and the built heritage likely to arise from the development.
- 4.3.27. **Policy BE38: Landscaping** – requires proposals to make provision for adequate on-site and, if necessary, off-site landscaping which would result in a benefit in environmental and landscape terms.
- 4.3.28. **Policy T6: Public Transport Infrastructure** – supports the improvement and provision of public transport infrastructure.
- 4.3.29. **Policy T8: Rail Network** – states the Council will continue to promote Bedford as an important station on the national rail network by seeking the:
- Maintenance and enhancement of Inter-City services
 - Maintenance and enhancement of Thameslink services;
 - Improvement of exiting cross country services and development if new links; and
 - Improvement of facilities at Bedford Station.
- 4.3.30. **Policy T9: Rail Services** – states that the Council will encourage improved rail services to and from Bedford.

Bedford Local Plan 2035: Consultation Paper

- 4.3.31. Bedford Borough Council is currently preparing a new Local Plan, which, when adopted, will supersede planning policies contained in the Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan and Bedford Local Plan 2002.
- 4.3.32. Preparation of the new Local Plan is currently at an early stage, with the Council consulting on a Consultation Paper from 18th April to 2nd June 2017. At this stage, no planning policies have been drafted.
- 4.3.33. The Consultation Paper identifies a number of potential sites to deliver new residential development. A number of these sites are situated either adjacent or in close proximity to the route of EWR2. These sites are as follows:
- Site Reference: 593 - 268-308 Ampthill Road (estimated capacity: 35 dwellings);

- Site Reference: 549 - Land adjoining 64 Chantry Avenue, Kempston (80 dwellings);
 - Site Reference: TC15 – Kingsway (500+ dwellings);
 - Site Reference: 4 - Bedford St Johns old station, Elstow Road (60 dwellings); and
 - Site Reference: 569 / 570 – Stewartby Brickworks (1000 dwellings).
- 4.3.34. It is considered that the proposed development included in EWR2 would not impact the ability of these sites to deliver new residential development should they be included in the adopted version of the new Local Plan.

4.4. Neighbourhood Planning

Stewartby Neighbourhood Plan

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

4.5. Local Transport Policy

Local Transport Plan 2011-2021

- 4.5.1. The Local Transport Plan 2011-2021 (LTP) sets out the transport aims and ambitions for the Bedford Borough and identifies the key strategies, schemes and initiatives necessary to deliver corporate and local transport outcomes. The LTP supports the spatial planning policies in the Core Strategy, as well as national planning policies.
- 4.5.2. The LTP highlights that the development of EWR2 will deliver improvements to rail infrastructure within the Borough. A key strategy of the document is to “support the work of the EWR Consortium for the reinstatement of rail services between Oxford / Milton Keynes / Bedford / Cambridge”. This strategy is considered to contribute towards the delivery of the following objectives of the LTP:
- Objective 1: To provide a reliable and efficient transport system, in order to support a strong local economy and facilitate sustainable growth.
 - Objective 2: To deliver improvements that encourage a reduction in transport emissions and greenhouse gases, in order to tackle climate change and develop a low carbon community capable of adapting to the impacts of climate change.
 - Objective 3: To promote greater equality of opportunity by providing opportunities for all residents to access key services and facilities.

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- Objective 4: To contribute to better safety, security and health by reducing death, injury or illness from transport and promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health.
- Objective 5: To encourage and support a sustainable transport system that contributes to a healthy natural and urban environment.

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 Bedford 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 Bedford sub-section and also identify mitigation measures appropriate to any adverse effects. This section of the draft 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 Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policies CP10, CP27 and CP28, as well as Bedford Local Plan Saved Policies T6, T8 and T9. It also delivers a key strategy and objectives in the Local Transport Plan 2011-2021.
- 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), Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policies CP24 and CP25, and Bedford Local Plan Saved Policy BE38.
- 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 and Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policy CP22.

5.3. Land Use and Agriculture

- 5.3.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford sub-section on existing land uses and agriculture is discussed in Chapter 6 of the Draft ES.
- 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. Prior to mitigation, the scheme in the Bedford sub-section would result in temporary and permanent land take. The main temporary land take impacts are within one area, at the Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick level crossing, which would be closed and a new overbridge constructed. Such works would require the demolition of a residential property (South View), as well as temporary land take of a small corner of an additional cottage for construction works. Such works would therefore have a temporary adverse impact on residential amenity.
- 5.3.4. Temporary land take also comprises a small amount of Sub-grade 3a and 3b agricultural land of approximately 5.36ha. This represents a small temporary loss of agricultural land, 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, including agricultural land, 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. Permanent land take would also be required of large portions of the front gardens of four of the Eastwood Cottages. Land take is also required for the Kempston Hardwick crossing, including the South View property.
- 5.3.7. Due to the potential for temporary amenity impact on residential properties some conflict with NPPF paragraph 17 and Bedford Local Plan Saved Policy BE30 would occur. 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 Bedford 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 Bedford sub-section on cultural heritage assets is discussed in Chapter 7 of the Draft ES.
- 5.4.2. The Draft ES identifies three Conservation Areas within the Bedford sub-section at Stewartby, Elstow and Bedford. There are seven Scheduled Monuments and 17 Grade I and Grade II* Listed Buildings within 1km of the route. With regards to Grade II Listed Buildings, 18 are identified within the Elstow Conservation Area and 74 within the Bedford Conservation Area. 15 Grade II Listed Buildings within 1km of the route but outside of a Conservation Area were also identified, along with 115 non-designated assets 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, the Draft ES demonstrates there would be no significant effects on the setting of designated historic assets within the Bedford sub-section. However, the scheme would have a significant effect on one non-designated buried archaeological remain (MBD6900 – Iron Age and Roman Remains). Impact arises due to the construction of an overbridge at the location of the Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick level crossing, with works likely to necessitate the loss of buried archaeology.
- 5.4.4. Mitigation measures to reduce the significant effect on this asset is identified, with archaeological recording to be undertaken. 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 Bedford 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, Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policies CP2 and CP23, and Bedford Local Plan Saved Policies BE11, BE21 and BE24.

5.5. Air Quality

- 5.5.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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. Bedford Borough Council has declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) in Bedford Town Centre, within which the route of the scheme travels through. Monitoring within the AQMA as part of the air quality assessment identified in places concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide that exceed the annual mean objective. Monitored concentrations outside of Bedford and the AQMA are below the annual mean objective for nitrogen dioxide.
- 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 of 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 regular damping down of surfaces when needed.

- 5.5.4. The air quality assessment demonstrates that the part of the scheme within the Bedford 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 Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policies CP2 and CP26.

5.6. Ecology

- 5.6.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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; one Special Area of Conservation (SAC), one National Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), two Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and six County Wildlife Sites (CWS).
- 5.6.3. The Draft ES identifies that the Bedford sub-section is dominated by the urban areas of Kempston and Bedford, which are situated to the north of the A421. South of the A421 are expanses of arable land and several large former industrial sites now colonised by grassland, scrub and ruderal vegetation. Several large lakes are present at Kempston Hardwick and at Stewartby (on the boundary of the Central Bedfordshire sub-section).
- 5.6.4. Within these landscapes, the Draft ES notes habitat types relating to woodland and scrub, hedgerows, grassland, watercourses (including the River Great Ouse and Elstow Brook), ponds, lakes and wetlands, arable/cultivated land (between Marshy Leys Industrial Estate and Stewartby) and urban areas, all located within or in close proximity to the route.
- 5.6.5. The Draft ES recognises that there are no adverse operational ecological effects and therefore no specific mitigation is required to the designated sites. The proposed scheme may impact upon other sensitive or protected species.
- 5.6.6. The Draft ES identifies that a single barn owl nesting range overlaps with the proposed scheme and whilst no collision hot-spots have been identified, the increased train speed and frequencies once the scheme is operational would likely result in an increased risk of collision.
- 5.6.7. To mitigate this where feasible, the scheme has been designed to ensure maintenance of all railway lineside vegetation to avoid impacts on designated sites, bats, reptile and Great Crested Newt populations in this area.
- 5.6.8. The proposed works specifically associated with the construction of the Woburn Road footbridge may degrade the aquatic habitat of Elstow Brook due to alterations in hydrology, sediment input and fragmentation of habitat at the banks of the brook. These effects may also have an impact downstream: potentially impacting the lake at the Interchange Retail Park; which is connected to Elstow Brook. Mitigation would therefore be required for river restoration techniques which shall be agreed with the Environment Agency (EA) to compensate for the loss of river habitat. Mitigation would also be required for the creation of new freshwater habitats to support Great Crested Newts given that grassland and scrub habitat suitable for Great Crested Newts would be removed, to the north of the A421 road.

- 5.6.9. The Draft ES also recognises that noise and vibration from the proposed replacement overbridge on Manor Road may disturb wetland wintering birds at the Chimney Corner Gravel Pit Lake and birds at Kempston Hardwick; however, the Draft ES identifies that there are no likely significant residual ecological effects during the construction phase as strict measures would be followed during construction to avoid disturbance which includes measures to control light, noise and vibration and monitoring to ensure effectiveness of the measures, as well as potential use of a temporary bund or screen to provide screening between the breeding area and construction site.
- 5.6.10. The demolition of a building at Kempston Hardwick to facilitate the construction of the proposed replacement overbridge on Manor Road may likely impact upon bats; however, mitigation measures to compensate for the potential loss of a bat foraging, roosting and commuting habitat near Kempston Hardwick would be required through the creation of replacement habitats within the vicinity. Construction of the replacement overbridge on Manor Road would also remove habitat suitable for water voles from the bank of a stream and pond near Randalls Farm. Therefore, replacement habitat for water voles populations shall be required. The Draft ES also notes that there is no requirement for otter, reptile, invertebrate mitigation and no badger setts or evidence were recorded.
- 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 ecological effects on habitats in the Bedford sub-section and accordingly the scheme would comply with the requirements of the NPS, NPPF Section 11, Bedford Borough Council Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policy CP25.

5.7. Noise and Vibration

- 5.7.1. An assessment of the noise and vibration impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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. 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 has 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 that no significant noise effects would occur within this sub-section during the operation of the scheme. In this context and given there are no proposed infrastructure changes within the Bedford sub-section, no mitigation is proposed. Impacts arising from vibration during the operation of the scheme is anticipated to occur at one residential property during the operation of the scheme.
- 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 Bedford sub-section. Whilst vibration impact is predicated to occur at a residential property, 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 Bedford Local Plan Saved Policy BE30.

5.8. Geology, Soil and Land Contamination

- 5.8.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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 Bedford 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 A and bedrock principal aquifers, waterbodies and the River Ouse, as well as ground gas from surrounding historic landfills 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 Bedford sub-section and across the entire route. In this context, it is demonstrated that the scheme is fully compliant with the NPS and NPPF Section 11.

5.9. Landscape and Visual Impacts

- 5.9.1. A full Landscape and Visual Assessment (LVIA) of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford sub-section on landscape and visual receptors is discussed in Chapter 12 of the Draft ES.
- 5.9.2. Within the Bedford sub-section there are a number of statutory designations representing areas that are potentially sensitive to the scheme. Such designations include 19 Scheduled Monuments, two SSSIs, six Conservation Areas and a large number of Grade II Listed Buildings. In addition, there are three Landscape Character Areas within the Bedford sub-section, along with a number of viewpoints within the sub-section from sensitive visual receptors that have the potential to be affected by the scheme.
- 5.9.3. The LVIA finds that adverse impacts on landscape would be mitigated by embankment design and planting to help integrate the new structures into the local landscape setting. The LVIA identifies that overall effects on landscape reduce from large adverse to neutral at Construction and Year 1 to slight adverse or neutral by Year 15. There would be no significant effects on the Bedford townscape.
- 5.9.4. The adverse impacts on the visual amenity of residents and recreational walkers would be mitigated by planting to help screen the new structures and trains on the railway. The LVIA identifies that overall effects on visual amenity would reduce from very large adverse to neutral at Construction and Year 1 to slight adverse or neutral once mitigation has been implemented and established.
- 5.9.5. The findings of the LVIA demonstrate that, through mitigation, the scheme would not have a significant adverse landscape and visual impact within the Bedford sub-section. In this context, the scheme within the Bedford sub-section is compliant with the NPS, NPPF Section 11, Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policies CP2 and CP24, and Bedford Local Plan Saved Policies NE12, NE13 and NE38.

5.10. Water Quality and Flood Risk

- 5.10.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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 Bedford sub-section crosses or is located in close proximity to a large number of surface water features including main rivers, ordinary watercourses, drains, lakes and ponds. The route travels through areas of Flood Zone 3. A review of the Bedford Town Centre SFRA reported that there are historical records of fluvial flooding in the area of Bedford St Johns Station, including the scheme to the south of the A5140 and the area on the east and west bank of the River Great Ouse in the vicinity of the County Bridge. The assessment also identified a number of locations along the Lower Middle River Great Ouse in close proximity to the route which are at risk of fluvial flooding.
- 5.10.3. A review of the EA's Risk of Flooding from Surface Water map indicated surface water ponding adjacent to the scheme at the location of the level crossing with Broadmead Road, and adjacent to the scheme at the Woburn Road Industrial Estate and crossing with the Midland Main Line. Notable surface water flooding is also indicated to the south of Bedford St Johns Station adjacent to the scheme to the rear of Althorpe Street, as well as to the scheme as it passes beneath the A5141 Cauldwell Street and on the approach to Bedford Station.
- 5.10.4. The construction of the replacement overbridge on Manor Road has the potential to increase the risk of flooding elsewhere. However, potential increase in surface water runoff generated in these areas is therefore anticipated to be less than 25% when compared to the current situation. Construction of the overbridge has the potential to temporarily impact the quality of the nearby Elstow Brook.
- 5.10.5. The proposed footbridge at Woburn Road, Kempston is identified as being within the existing floodplain associated with Elstow Brook. However, as the proposed footbridge would be an open structure with a small footprint, it is not expected to result in significant loss of flood storage capacity or impede the flow of flood waters. Additionally, the construction works were also identified as having potential to temporarily impact the water quality in Elstow Brook.
- 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 Bedford subsection, 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, Bedford Core Strategy and Rural Issues Plan Policy CP26, and Bedford Local Plan Saved Policies NE16 and NE24.

5.11. Traffic and Transport

- 5.11.1. An assessment of the impact of the scheme within the Bedford 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 Bedford sub-section includes five road overbridges, as well as two existing vehicle level crossings. One of the two level crossings is proposed to be closed as part of the scheme and replaced by a new highway overbridge on Manor Road, Kempston Hardwick, which would result in significant safety benefit for users of the highway network.
- 5.11.3. 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 Bedford Station due to changes in passenger demand as a result of the scheme would also occur.
- 5.11.4. The assessment of construction and operational effects from traffic and transport changes within the Bedford 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 Bedford Borough 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 Bedford sub-section (notwithstanding that a full assessment has not been reported in the Draft ES at this stage). All potential residual impacts arising from the scheme can be mitigated through measures identified in the Draft ES to a level that is not significant and the objectives of national and local planning policies uncompromised.
- 6.1.4. 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.
- 6.1.5. 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 Bedford 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.
- 6.1.6. 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.