



Department for Transport

Richard Fuller MP
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Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill
Minister of State for Rail

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Our Ref: MC/00033254
Your Ref: RF33840

25 February 2025

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your letter of 10 February to the Secretary of State, Rt Hon Heidi Alexander MP, regarding East West Rail (EWR) and the environment. I am replying as the Minister for Rail.

As you know, EWR is a new railway that will connect Oxford-Cambridge, and cities and towns in between, including Milton Keynes, Bletchley, and Bedford. The first services between Oxford, Bletchley, and Milton Keynes are due to start in 2025 and the Government has committed to accelerating work to deliver EWR services between Oxford-Bedford from 2030 and for the early delivery of a station at Tempsford.

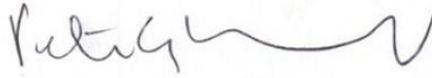
East West Rail Company (EWR Co) launched a non-statutory consultation consulting on proposals for the project in November 2024, which concluded on 24 January 2025. As you will be aware, as part of this, it published an Environmental Update Report for the project which you can find [here](#).

As set out in the consultation, EWR Co is committed to protecting the environment by finding approaches to delivery that avoid, minimise, or mitigate negative environmental impacts. It will continue to assess the potential environmental effects and legal requirements as its design work progresses and an update on this will be set out at its Statutory Consultation, together with a Preliminary Environmental Impact Report. An Environmental Statement (ES) will be submitted when EWR Co submits its Development Consent Order application (DCO) to the Planning Inspectorate.

The Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs and the Ministry of Housing, Communities, and Local Government announced proposals for a new approach to developer contributions for nature recovery to be introduced as part of the forthcoming Planning and Infrastructure Bill. A series of working papers has been published at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-reform-working-papers and the Government is considering feedback on these.

Please also do assure your constituent that there will be further opportunity to comment on EWR Co's environmental mitigations and proposals for the line at a future statutory consultation.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Hendy", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill

MINISTER OF STATE FOR RAIL