



Nick Timothy
Member of Parliament for West Suffolk

HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON, SW1A 0AA

East West Rail Consultation Response – Nick Timothy, MP for West Suffolk

1. East West Railway (EWR) Company is currently undertaking its final consultation for the overall Cambridge to Oxford route of the new railway. This will enable it to seek the Development Consent Order so it can finalise its detailed planning and start construction.

2. In effect the EWR Company is proposing to start its eastern end close to the former Fulbourn station which is about four miles from Coldham Lane Junction. There are nine miles further to Newmarket although the route is double track for about one-and-a-half miles past Dullingham station. So a further eight miles will have to be restored to double track.

3. I support the proposals for the entire Cambridge to Oxford railway in general but residents in the West Suffolk Constituency are affected by the following proposals in the EWR prospectus in particular:

- Cambridge station – Clifton Road eastern entrance (Question 14)
- Cambridge East station (Question 15)
- Cambridge Eastern train care centre (Question 16)
- Other feedback (Question 17)

Question 14: Please use the box below to provide any feedback you have about our proposals for the new eastern entrance at Cambridge station.

4. The new eastern entrance at Cambridge station will be a significant improvement for West Suffolk residents. Many constituents in Newmarket, Kennett, Kentford and Red Lodge commute daily into Cambridge, and a faster, more direct route into the eastern side of the city will make a real difference to their journeys. Students travelling to sixth-form colleges in that part of Cambridge will benefit too. I strongly support this proposal.

Question 15: Please use the box below to provide any feedback you have about our proposals for Cambridge East station

5. I strongly support the proposed Cambridge East station. East Cambridge is home to some of the country's most dynamic research and technology businesses – including Peterhouse Research Park, ARM Holdings and Capital Park – which together support around eleven thousand jobs. All of these sites are within ten minutes' walk of the proposed station at Yarrow/Gazelle Road. For commuters from Newmarket and the surrounding villages, a direct rail connection to this employment hub would be transformative. The alternative station proposed on Barnwell Road would offer far less benefit to West Suffolk residents and should not be prioritised over the Yarrow/Gazelle Road site.

Question 16: Please use the box below to provide any feedback you have about our proposals for Cambridge Eastern train care centre.

6. I note that the proposed Cambridge Eastern Train Care Centre is located approximately four miles east of Coldham Lane Junction – well along the corridor towards Newmarket. This is relevant to the wider case for investment in the Cambridge–Newmarket line, and I would ask EWR to consider this proximity when planning future infrastructure development along this route.

Question 17: Please use the box below to provide any further feedback you have about the project and our proposals for East West Rail. Please include relevant location information to help us understand your feedback.

The case for a restored, doubled-tracked and electrified Cambridge–Newmarket railway

7. The single-tracked Cambridge to Newmarket railway is one of the most significant infrastructure constraints holding back West Suffolk. The line runs for just over nine miles from Coldham Lane Junction to Newmarket, of which only one-and-a-half miles beyond Dullingham station is currently double-tracked. Restoring double track across the remaining eight miles – at an estimated cost of around £73 million – would unlock enormous economic and social benefits for the region. I urge EWR and the Government to treat this as a priority. The cost figure of about £73m is based on similar projects elsewhere in the country. I say “about” as although there will not be any new land take, the cost of making the cuttings and embankments “climate change resilient” is an unknown.

Commuters and students

8. There is strong and growing daily demand for travel between Newmarket and Cambridge. Residents commute to the research parks, universities, hospitals and businesses that make Cambridge one of the country's most productive economic centres. Students travel to sixth-form colleges.

9. Yet because the line is single-tracked, services are infrequent and slow, and only a small fraction of potential passengers currently use rail. A doubled-tracked, electrified line with a new turn-back facility at a redeveloped Newmarket station would allow a frequent, fast service connecting Newmarket directly to Cambridge East, Cambridge Central and Cambridge South – and onward to Cambourne and points west. This is not an incremental improvement: it would transform the travel options of tens of thousands of people. The benefits would flow in both directions.

Cambridge capacity and the case for Newmarket as a turnaround terminus

9a. Cambridge station is already operating at or close to capacity for train movements, and this constraint will persist even once additional tracks and platforms are provided. The volume of new services that EWR will introduce – together with the further growth in demand that Cambridge East will generate – means that the pressure on Cambridge’s rail network will intensify significantly in the years ahead. That makes it all the more important to plan now for where turnaround capacity and stabling will be located for services operating on the eastern corridor.

9b. Newmarket is the right answer. A redeveloped Newmarket station with a dedicated turnaround facility would relieve pressure on Cambridge by allowing services to terminate and stable east of the city, rather than occupying valuable platform capacity at Cambridge itself. This is not a secondary consideration – it is a critical piece of network design. Services terminating at Newmarket would free

up paths at Cambridge for EWR trains and other operators, while simultaneously delivering the frequent, fast service that Newmarket and the surrounding area need and deserve.

9c. The evidence from elsewhere in the network is clear: a fast, frequent rail service consistently attracts passengers away from congested road alternatives. West of Cambridge, the case has been made for four or five trains per hour through Cambourne. The same logic applies east of Cambridge. Newmarket is a major traffic source in its own right – and Cambridge East will generate further demand along this corridor. A frequent, reliable service east of Cambridge is just as viable and just as necessary as the service proposed to the west. EWR should plan the eastern corridor on that basis.

10. There is also significant counter-flow demand from Cambridge-area residents who work in Newmarket's world-leading veterinary research and equine health businesses. A reliable, frequent rail service would attract many of these workers to the train for the first time. A restored double track would also allow Greater Anglia to run more frequent services from communities further west – including the fast-growing settlements around Kennett and Bury St Edmunds – greatly improving their connectivity to Cambridge and beyond.

Horseracing and the wider equine economy

11. Newmarket is the home of British horseracing. It is not simply a local asset – it is a national one. The town's two racecourses attract close to half a million visitors a year. The wider racing and equine industry supports around seven thousand jobs in West Suffolk alone, and the bloodstock trade generates hundreds of millions of pounds for the UK economy.

12. Racing is Britain's second most popular spectator sport after football, and Newmarket is its historic and operational centre. At present, poor rail connectivity means that most racegoers travel to Newmarket by car. A frequent rail service – with trains arriving from Cambridge and connecting from multiple points of origin across the EWR network – would dramatically increase the number of visitors who can reach the racecourses by public transport.

13. This matters not only for accessibility and environmental reasons but for the long-term commercial health of racing itself, at a time when the sport faces significant financial pressures. EWR has recognised the economic logic of investing in rail access to major visitor attractions – most notably in its work with Universal Studios around the Stewartby development. Newmarket's racecourses, which predate Stewartby by centuries and draw far larger and more regular crowds, deserve the same attention.

14. Summary of my asks to EWR:

- Support and plan for the restoration of double track on the full Cambridge–Newmarket line, with electrification;
- Include a turn-back facility at a redeveloped Newmarket station in its long-term infrastructure plans;
- Work with Greater Anglia to design a frequent, fast Cambridge–Newmarket service that connects to all three Cambridge stations and the wider EWR network;
- Give proper weight to Newmarket's residents and workforce, and the town's economic and cultural significance – including its role as the centre of British horseracing – when assessing the case for investment on this corridor.

15. The East West Rail project is an opportunity to rebalance connectivity across the region. West Suffolk should not be left behind.