



Department for Transport

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From the Secretary of State
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Dear Colleague,

Thank you for your joint letter of 22 June in relation to East West Rail (EWR) and for your time in meeting with officials from the Department for Transport on 17 June.

The Government recognises the importance of investing in Cambridgeshire as part of global Britain and as you will know it has made considerable investment in the area.

This includes £1.5 billion to upgrade the A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon and potentially £812.5 million in funding for the A428 Black Cat-Caxton Gibbet improvements linking Milton Keynes and Cambridge. The Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority has received £95 million from the Transforming Cities Fund for public transport improvements and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Growth Board has secured almost £147m from three rounds of the Local Growth Fund, supporting projects including transport schemes that facilitate economic growth and housing, such as Ely Southern Bypass.

As you will also be aware, last year Network Rail submitted a Transport and Works Act Order application for a new £173m station at Cambridge South which would support the rapid economic and population growth in Cambridge, centred around the Cambridge Biomedical Campus and Southern Fringe development area. The outcome of all planning approvals is expected to be known by the end of the year.

In relation to East West Rail, as you will know, in January 2021 £760 million in funding was announced for Connection Stage 1 (CS1) of the EWR project. This is currently in construction and, when completed, is set to create a direct service from Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes.

CS2 and CS3 of EWR are currently at development stage, and options for these sections were consulted on from March-June 2021. East West Rail Company (EWR Co) is currently reviewing submissions to last year's consultation and the Government and EWR Co. will set out next steps for the project in due course.

In relation to electrification of EWR, the Government is committed to meeting the national target for net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and in 2021 the Department for Transport published the Transport Decarbonisation Plan. This commits to delivering a net zero rail network by 2050 and includes an ambition to remove all diesel-only trains from the network by 2040. The plan discusses electrification and the potential of newer technologies such as battery and hydrogen power.

With regard to EWR, diesel rolling stock will be used for the commencement of services for CS1, with passive provision being made for electrification. We believe this is the right interim solution which will allow the earliest possible start of services between Oxford and Milton Keynes whilst a decision on decarbonisation options are taken.

In relation to environmental impacts more generally, EWR Co is committed to protecting the environment by finding approaches to delivery that avoid, minimise or mitigate negative environmental impacts and as part of this, it has committed to delivering biodiversity net gain (BNG) and is currently delivering a 10% BNG for CS1.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grant Shapps', written in a cursive style.

Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR TRANSPORT