

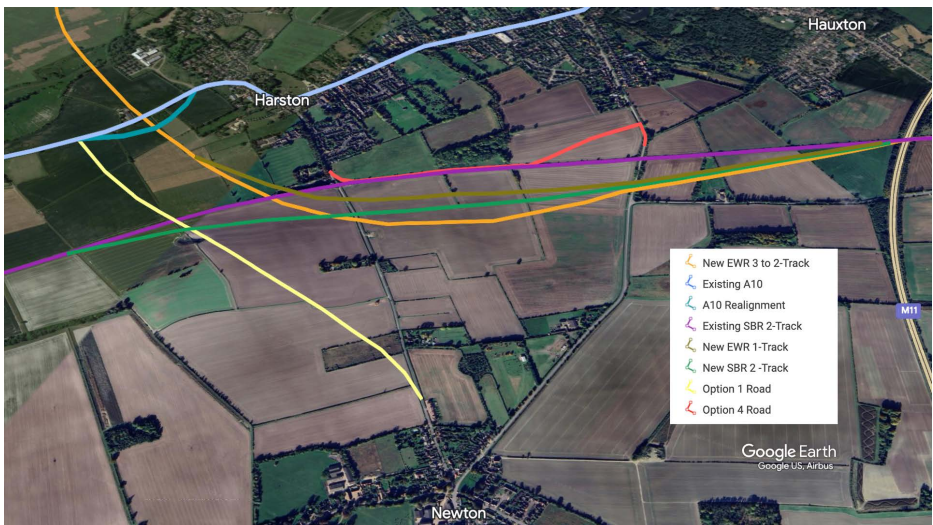


**East West Rail
The bombshell
that will hit
Harston**

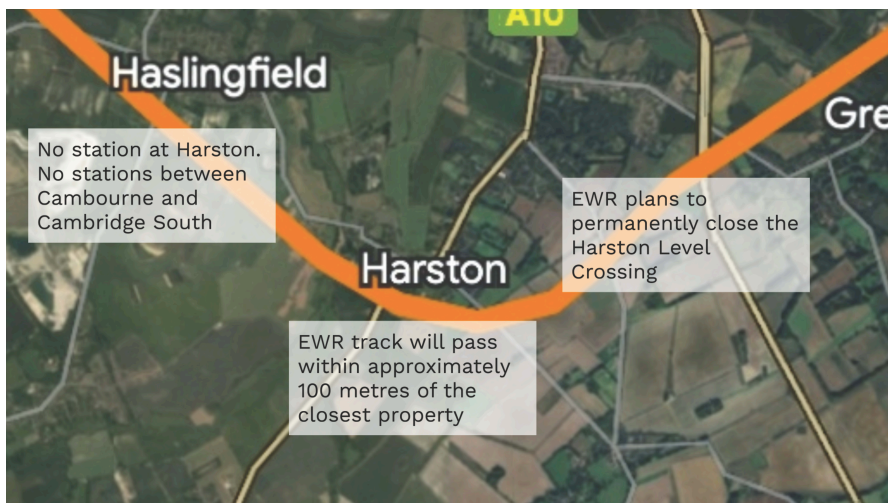


The current East West Rail (EWR) public consultation has revealed just how disruptive the plans proposed for the railway will be to Harston, particularly for residents on the South West and East sides of the village.

Harston will be the place where the twin track EWR line comes out of a tunnel under Chapel Hill, next to Haslingfield, and then joins the Mainline from Kings Cross to Cambridge. The map below shows you how and where EWR wants to engineer this.



The Harston EWR Working Group has other ideas which are detailed later in this pamphlet, about moving the whole EWR line a small distance away from Harston. But let's look at what is currently proposed by EWR as their preferred options together with our suggested options.



The EWR proposal shows the railway line is running very close to the South West, the Southern and Eastern edges of Harston.

These are the things you should know so that you can voice your opinions to EWR during the consultation period, we'll tell you how at the end :

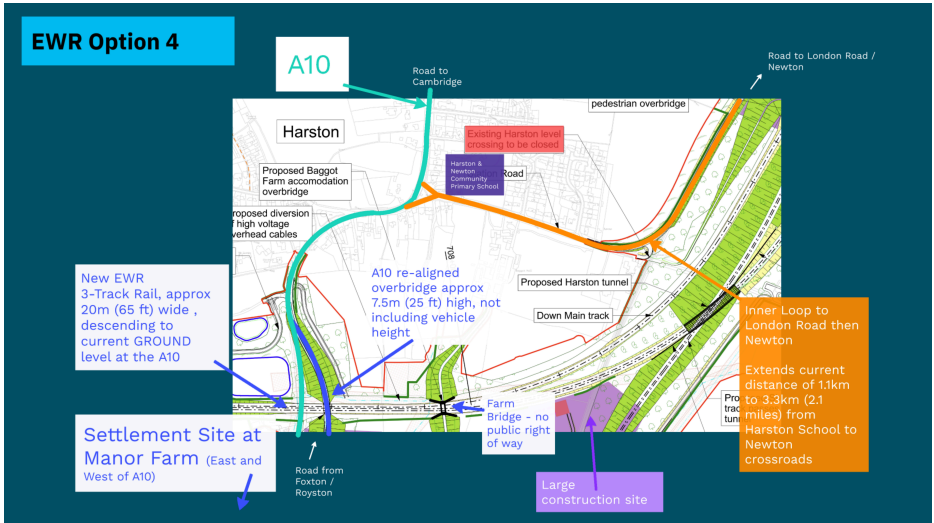
1. The A10, at the west end of the village, is to be moved around 50m East, starting from where it intersects with the entry to Sagentia offices at Harston Mill. EWR intend to build a bridge and embankments over the railway line that will carry the A10 roadway. It will be approximately 10 m high. If you add another 4m for trucks' height, you will have traffic approaching Harston at the height of a five-storey building. You can imagine how far the noise and light pollution from that source will carry, day and night!
2. This new Bridge will also take the Melbourn Greenway – but make it less desirable for those cyclists and commuters who use it for commuting.
3. The EWR line to Cambridge is intended to curve round the South East corner of Harston, where it will join the Kings Cross Mainline just to the East of the Station Rd level Crossing, which is to be closed, preventing any road traffic from having a direct route from Newton to Harston or Haslingfield , or using Station Rd/Newton Rd. The Kings Cross Line will also be raised up maybe 12m creating sound at a higher level than we hear today ; add to that the trains will be going up a hill and may have to brake on the way down opposite Lawrence Lea.

4. The EWR line will go through a short 150m tunnel to be built to the East of the current Kings Cross Main Line and to go under it. To enable this the current Mainline will be moved east some 200m into Rowley's Hill that carries the current Newton Rd, and the mainline will be raised on a flyover the EWR line on an embankment 100m wide and c 12m high. This rail flyover will carry around 30-40 trains an hour in years to come, and being elevated will cause a lot more noise and intrusion than is currently the case for residents who live on the south or east side of Harston and possibly further afield – or to the East of the line (Newton).
5. To enable freight trains to use the EWR line, to go to Bedford and beyond or to East Cambridge and beyond, there will be two very long holding loops, where the freight trains can stop to allow other fast passenger trains to pass. These loops will effectively add two more lines of around 1 km each to the four EWR and Kings Cross Mainlines. The loops will hold diesel freight trains of up to 750m long, that will probably wait for anything up to 30-45 minutes, maybe with diesel engines idling. There will be one freight stopping loop on the North side of the line by the Recreation Ground up to the M11 bridge and another one from Station Road round the South and over the River to the tunnel under Chapel Hill. So at one point making SIX tracks - with two tracks especially for freight.



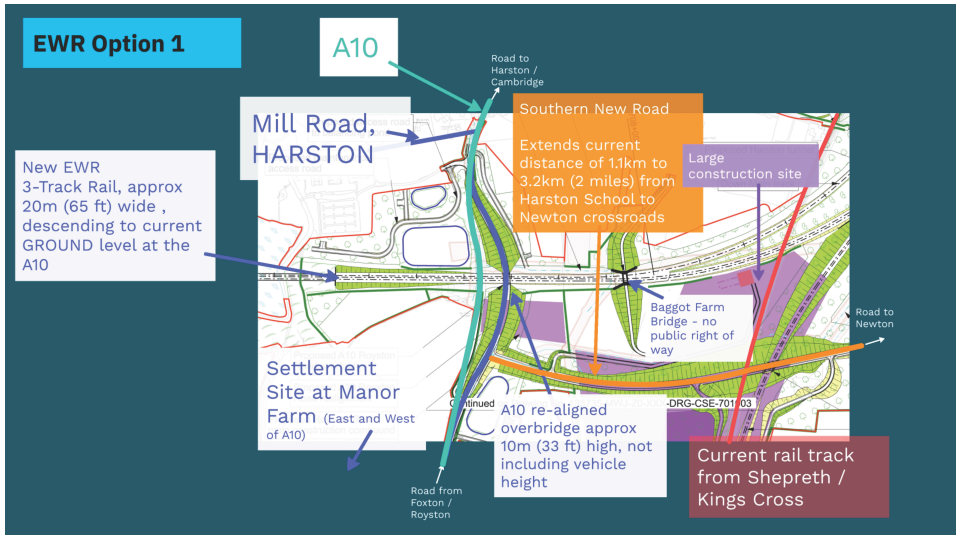
6. EWR intends to build a footbridge to carry pedestrian and cycle traffic over the railway lines from where the current level crossing is on Station Road to the Newton Rd. This bridge will have ramps on either side of the bridgeway about 400m long. The bridge itself will be around 8m high and 200m long, as it crosses the five railway lines. It seems likely that this bridge will be nearly 1 km in length and highly visible to all those who live on the Eastern edge of Harston and will add at least half a mile to all journeys.

7. To compensate for closing the railway crossing, EWR's preferred option is to build a new road linking Station Rd and London Rd, that will run along the current Kings Cross mainline track, which is being moved to the east by around 200m. The new road will join London Rd via a roundabout to be built around 250m north of the current Kings Cross line at the end of Donkey Lane and will provide a short cut from London Rd to the Pemberton Junction avoiding the A10 through most of the village.



Proposed replacement to Station Road/Newton Road

8. EWR also considered building a new road from near Newton to the A10, but it appears this option is less favoured than the above Station Rd to London Rd option. It will effectively add 1.5km (1 mile in old money) to those who used to drive or bicycle direct from Newton to Harston and vice versa using the Station Road level crossing.

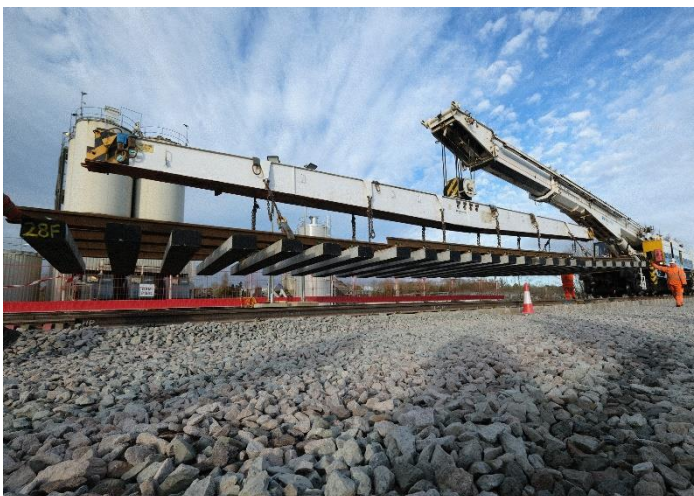


9. EWR also considered Options 2 and 3 that save approximately 1km compared to option 1 by crossing the EWR line and are explained in the Technical Report. If you would prefer one of these then now is the time to state that.
10. EWR intends to build a substantial new road bridge carrying London Rd over the **three** railway lines, c100m South East of where it currently crosses the railway. EWR will also rearrange the road junction of London Rd and Shelford Rd, so that Shelford Rd will pass under London Rd linking to Little Shelford further adding more distance to all journeys on that road. We are told that this will be fully active travel compliant.
11. EWR intends to build a high agricultural use bridge over their line near Baggot Farm, which is on Station Rd. This is to enable the farmer to reach fields on the other side of the EWR line. It will probably be around 8m high and very visible to those who are based in Station Rd, including the Harston and Newton Primary School. This special bridge is not required for Option 2

and is otherwise the only sign of support for Harston Residents or Businesses.

12. The Build. There will be massive disruption, disturbance and pollution during Construction based on information we have from other villages and councils on the route. This will be for a period likely to be from 2028 to maybe 2036?

- a. The construction yards, many tens of acres in size, on the East and South West of Harston, are coloured purple on the official EWR maps. They will hold very large fleets of HGV vehicles, excavators and huge amounts of construction materials and earth, dug out to enable the railway line to be built. The EWR construction work between Oxford and Bletchley has shown these construction yards to be a very significant source of HGV pollution, dust and noise disturbance to local residents.
- b. The HGV traffic that will be travelling around Harston, Haslingfield, Newton and Hauxton, is expected to cause significant continuing damage to our local roads, with risk to other local traffic and pedestrians, from HGV movements and poor truck driver behaviour. We can expect in particular the A10, Station Rd and London Rd to be heavily impacted, with HGV traffic at all hours.



- c. It is expected that there will be major disruption for many years to commuter traffic, active travel users on the A10 and to local businesses generally. Using local roads will become difficult in addition to the disruption to Network Rail's main line services that pass through Harston and Shelford. Think about the weekend rail replacement buses that plough along the A10, from Cambridge to Royston, and then envisage that going on daily for many years, as railway lines are moved, bridges are built and the mainlines are closed for weeks and months at a time. Poor commuters – especially those on the A10, they probably won't know what is going to hit them. The impact to the local and village economy will be severe and possibly terminal.

What can the Harston EWR Working Party do?

Your team will be dependent on the South Cambs District Council, the County Council, the Highways Agency, the Environment Agency and the Health and Safety Executive to monitor EWR during the construction process, which remember may run for between 8-10 years.

The Working Party has approached these agencies (or will be) to ensure they are prepared to monitor and manage EWR; the Official and Statutory enquiry expected in 2026 that hears any evidence regarding the planning of the line and any constraints on the construction process that follows.

It can be most effective if we all get involved and, in particular, if you make your thoughts known to EWR and our MP and again to the Official Statutory Enquiry, when that happens in 2026. After that the Secretary of State makes the decision to go ahead. Don't forget that we are electing new County Councillors and a New Mayor in May next year – another point when we can make our views known.

But there is Another Way - and we believe a Better Plan!

The Working Party has been considering, with those who know about these things, to develop two outline variations to the EWR proposal, that would resolve many of the issues for Harston, as set out above. Here is what we suggest, and we'd like to know what you think.

1. **We want EWR to consider again, with the most recent local plan (including our draft Neighbourhood plan) and the expected higher projected demand for Freight in 2050, whether a Northern Route into Cambridge would be better value for all stakeholders and the environment.** This Northern Route was discarded by EWR in an earlier consultation and rejected without public debate or consideration of economics and impact; the Southern route can only be justified by expected economic growth in South Cambridge, that in reality is a long way off and may in housing and jobs terms be as much to the North of Cambridge as it is to the South. Many other factors favour a Northern Route eg lower cost, environment impact on neighbours etc. So going North makes a lot of sense. Your views would be welcome.
2. **If the southern route is finally chosen then we want EWR to think about moving all of the works about 500m or more towards Foxton and away from the Southern end of Harston.** The land there is largely agricultural, and the railway line could join the Kings Cross Mainline to Cambridge halfway between Harston and Foxton near Hoffers Brook, with a very small time penalty – less than one minute of added travel time. Although this may be close to a site of archaeological interest that area has already been and will be compromised by the EWR current proposal.

Harston

Locals propose:

OPTION 5:

Move the proposed rail line more than 500m SOUTH of the current EWR plan

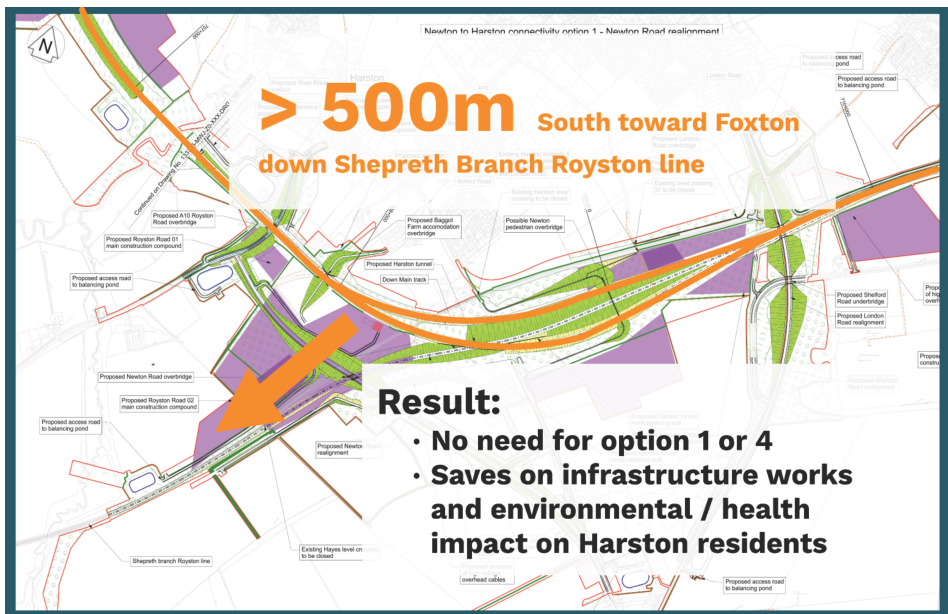


OR

OPTION 6:

Reconsider Cambridge Northern Approach





3. This latter version above would remove many of the negative impacts well away from Harston. The construction yards and the nuisance they will cause will be further away from Harston and in a less built up area. It would also significantly lower the noise and air pollution from the elevated railway line (remember the freight is likely to be all diesel and operating mainly at night?), impacting Harston residents at the Western end of the village.
4. Besides moving the railway junction in this way, the Working Party would also like to move the new road alignment and road flyover on the A10, where it crosses the EWR line, a similar distance towards Foxton, thereby seriously diminishing the high level noise, light and other pollution from the intended very high road flyover site that is now right on the edge of the village.
5. The Working Party will also ask EWR to look at the planned pedestrian and cycle path over the line close to Station Road. This option to move the junction of the railways to the South is expected to save the cost of road diversions and may even enable an elevated bridge over the line at the same location as the level crossing and hence keep open Newton Rd/Station Road which is much desired by residents of Harston and Newton. The cost of the bridge might not be much different than the new road and road junction they intend to build from Station Rd to London Rd

So what's next? Over to you

The Parish Council would like *all* Harston residents to make submissions. And it wants to help you collect your thoughts and make them known to EWR, as part of this **public Consultation which ends on 24th January 2025 – so not much time to think about this and then get your thoughts into EWR.**

If you want to look at the detailed map of EWR lines you should go to:

<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation2024/route-section-plans>

Click and Scroll down the Comberton to Shelford maps collection to **Route Section 7, Sheet 3a Option 4**. There's a lot of technical detail but if you use this special village leaflet you should be able to spot what we are identifying as high impact areas.

Please email your submission to consultation@eastwestrail.co.uk and make sure you copy us in on your submissions to the Consultation, so we know what you think and can collect all our thoughts to inform the Parish Council.

You can contact the Parish Council directly via the website:

harstonparishcouncil.gov.uk and use the 'Contact us' tab. Rather than answering all questions individually we are likely to issue further advice by another note or possibly a meeting.

*You can also write to your MP, Pippa Heylings MP,
pippa.heytings.mp@parliament.uk*

Finally, to complete the EWR Working Group Survey please use this link



We are intending to mount an exhibition of the large scale A0 EWR maps, annotated to show some of the impact points identified above on semi-permanent display at the Village Hall. We will also be willing to lend these maps to any village group that wants to study them more carefully.

The Parish Council is concerned about the impact on the Local Farms, the Surgery and the School amongst the many other businesses and other facilities that are part of our village community. We will report further on this in our next communication. These three cannot easily move location and we should all fight for their continuing existence in their current locations with minimal impact from whatever EWR may be proposing.

The Working Party can't guarantee that we have all the information or that any proposal will be successful. We and the Parish Council are certain that we should make our views known and that we should encourage the debate and if possible influence the decision; if we don't make an input to the Consultation our voice will NOT be heard, and we may find that we have a decade of high negative impact construction that starts as soon as 2028 for a line that is basically in the wrong location.

East West Rail Working Group

A couple of before and after visualisations

