



Harston Parish Council

6 Hornet road
Trumpington
Cambridge
CB2 9GH

clerk@harstonparishcouncil.gov.uk

07354604249

6th September 2024

Dear Brian Milnes,

We understand that Cambridgeshire County Council is having continuing discussions with EWR (East West Rail) and we hope with the Department for Transport, its sponsor. We hereby request that Brian Milnes as the representative for Harston Parish Council (HPC) on Cambridgeshire County Council makes the following representation.

As background you should be aware that the HPC has kept in close contact with EWR, suggested that there should be local meetings with the CEO, held its own parish meetings focused on EWR and taken polls of its residents on two occasions. So, we believe that we are reasonably informed of the issues and are able to make these comments on an informed basis.

1. Benefits

We have not found any resident that believes there are any benefits to Harston of the EWR proposals.

2. Concerns

The concerns and negative items include, inter alia, :-

- a. Very substantial disruption to the residents during the build phase, over many years
- b. A loss of connectivity with our neighbouring village of Newton, owing to Harston level crossing closure, with consequent much longer journeys between our two villages ; and also the Hauxton level crossing and journey times to Little Shelford.
- c. Losing pupils from our primary school, in part from the level crossing closure, which will enforce much longer journeys to and from Harston school for Newton children and their parents – the effect could be possibly terminal for the school if it loses too many pupils; it is currently near minimum levels. Loss of the Harston and Newton school would be very serious for Harston parents who would then have to travel by road to other regional primary schools.
- d. Transport disruption caused by the closing of two level crossings – one in Harston and one in Hauxton. It is anticipated that this would cause substantial HGV traffic along unsuitable Harston village roads; hence causing air and noise pollution to residents and the school etc , with probable effects on their health, learning and wellbeing
- e. The loss of a proposed re-opening of the Harston Station and ability to provide local frequent and regular public transport. This is likely to cause more traffic on the local roads and may lead to rerouting the A10 which already carries very heavy traffic,.
- f. A loss of footpaths both to Barrington and to Newton/Hauxton
- g. Considerable ongoing noise and pollution due to an elevated track running between two hills within close proximity to Harston.
- h. Increased road traffic on both the A10 and the small narrow connecting roads, many of which will soon be subject to 20mph limits. All these roads are likely to be seriously clogged both during the construction phase and afterwards at a serious cost to productivity and with a major impact on residents
- i. A loss of spatial amenity caused by a high embankment on three sides of the village, to the West, South and East. These embankments will reflect noise back onto the village, both during construction and subsequently during the running of trains and especially freight trains with double locomotives running potentially in excess of 16-18 hrs a day.

3. Opportunities (This requires the expenditure on large funds to achieve a benefit. Can't see how EWR provides real return)

- a. An opportunity to redesign the spatial plan for Harston with a better core and a better community feel in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- b. An opportunity to design how transport in and around Harston could be improved including consideration of the impact of the rerouted A10 trunk road. Harston might benefit from a transport study of existing and proposed

traffic between Melbourn and Trumpington, including local travel. The Harston Parish Council does not have the resources to pay for such a transport study, but the County Council might consider this an important input to its interaction with EWR and residents.

4. Threats

There is a distinct threat that Harston loses its Rural feel, identified by local residents as a strong reason to live in Harston. Many of its local farming enterprises of any scale may disappear, as EWR acts to divide agricultural land up into uneconomic and inaccessible parcels on either side of the railway. Some farmers have reported that journey times to their fields may treble, making farming such land uneconomic. The village could also become just a dormitory town to Cambridge.

- a. Also transport and highways in and around the village are likely to become clogged, during both the construction phase and subsequently.
- b. Water has become more of an issue for Harston and other local villages, both in terms of availability of potable water and in the disposal of waste water in a hygienic way by local sewers, which are barely adequate currently, as they frequently overflow during heavy rain.
- c. Environmental groundwater surveys need to be carried out, to understand the impact on the ecology of the construction of EWR. Harston is where EWR crosses the River Cam or Rhee and there is a substantial likelihood of environmental impact during both the construction phase and subsequently on this important riparian environment.
- d. Harston is at an advanced stage of its Neighbourhood Plan development - it is clear that the EWR plan if it goes ahead would make a mockery of the aspirations and democratically expressed wishes of its residents.

5. Awareness

For the record while we are fully aware of the process that is leading to the Statutory Enquiry and the subsequent DCO, adequate communication from EWR has been severely lacking. Even that which has happened has not considered or adequately discussed the impact and planning for issues arising from the EWR project. The detail has been so lacking that it is not possible to have an informed opinion at the Parish Council level; and we would suggest the same applies at County Council level.

6. The other issues are:-

- a. Travel to Oxford could take longer because of road travel time to Cambourne where there is to be car parking – experience of end to end travel shows that travel time will not be improved.
- b. The cost benefit ratio appears too low. The financial information underpinning the argument for EWR has not been made public in a way that allows benefits to be established for the spending of a huge amount of money (~£8bn) on the Bedford to Cambridge part of EWR; unless of course significant freight is included.
- c. Freight will require “double locomotives” to get up the hill, requiring large holding areas for freight trains, with substantial noise and air pollution for local residents while the freight trains wait for a clear slot on the line. It seems likely that such freight may run through the night so as not to impede passenger trains, running on the main Kings Cross line or Liverpool Str line.
- d. The route chosen seems to be the least efficient in terms of distance and greenhouse gas emissions. Calculations have shown that the Northern Route is cheaper and a shorter distance. In addition, a northern route would also serve the fast-growing communities around Northstowe and Waterbeach. Travel via the Northern route through to Cambridge South are unlikely to take very much longer than the Southern Route, and would have the added advantage of calling at Cambridge North and Cambridge Central stations as well, enabling commuting to those two centres from the West, which in aggregate could well be as important for jobs as the Cambridge Biomedical Campus to the south.

Kind Regards



Dominic Bellamy
Chairman Harston Parish Council