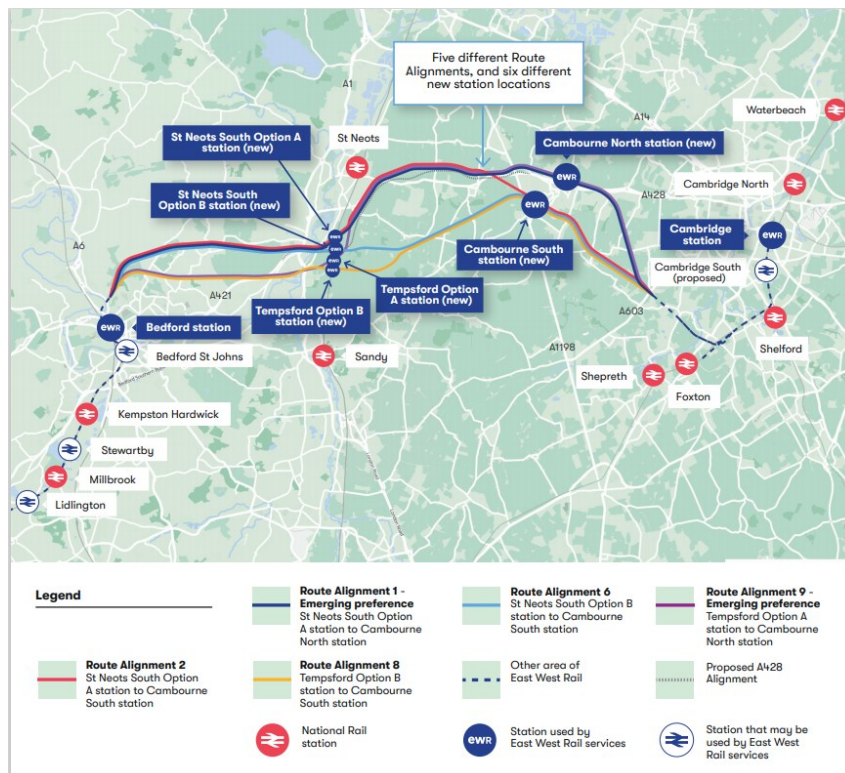


# Caldecote PC Working Party East West Rail Report on Alignments 1 (Blue) & 9 (Purple)

On 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021, East West Rail (EW Rail) launched a new non-statutory consultation period for the new Oxford to Cambridge railway line. Based on the findings from their previous consultations they proposed five different routes, two of which (alignments 1&9), are a completely new route that has not been consulted on before and EW Rail have announced this was their preferred option.

Fierce lobbying by the villagers to the South during the previous consultations has led EW Rail to consider a station to the North. EW Rail have staggeringly found a sliver of land across the top of Highfields that allows them to still approach Cambridge from the South. But this has been rushed, and EW Rail have failed to consider its true impact.



Caldecote is unique in that it is affected both ends of the village. The working party has looked objectively at the details and these are the facts as we find them. Alignments 1&9 just don't work. Alignments 2,6,8 affect Caldecote the least but there is a small impact, albeit much smaller than the impact caused by alignments 1&9. Our view is that the route chosen should be North to North OR South to South i.e. North Cambourne station to Cambridge North or a South Cambourne station to Cambridge South. The findings of the Parish Council Working Party is that, of the routes currently up for consultation, alignments 2&6 are the preferred choice for very valid reasons that are explained below.

The EW Rail consultation ends on 9<sup>th</sup> June, and we can comment either by completing a paper feedback form or online at <https://communityhub.eastwestrail.co.uk/consultation-feedback>

Question 1 allows comments on an approach via North Cambridge, Questions 38 and 39 are the only two questions related specifically to Caldecote. We can complete the other questions or leave them blank.

We encourage you to read fully our findings and then complete the Consultation Feedback form, on the link above, **before the 9<sup>th</sup> June.**

# Working Party Evaluation and Conclusion

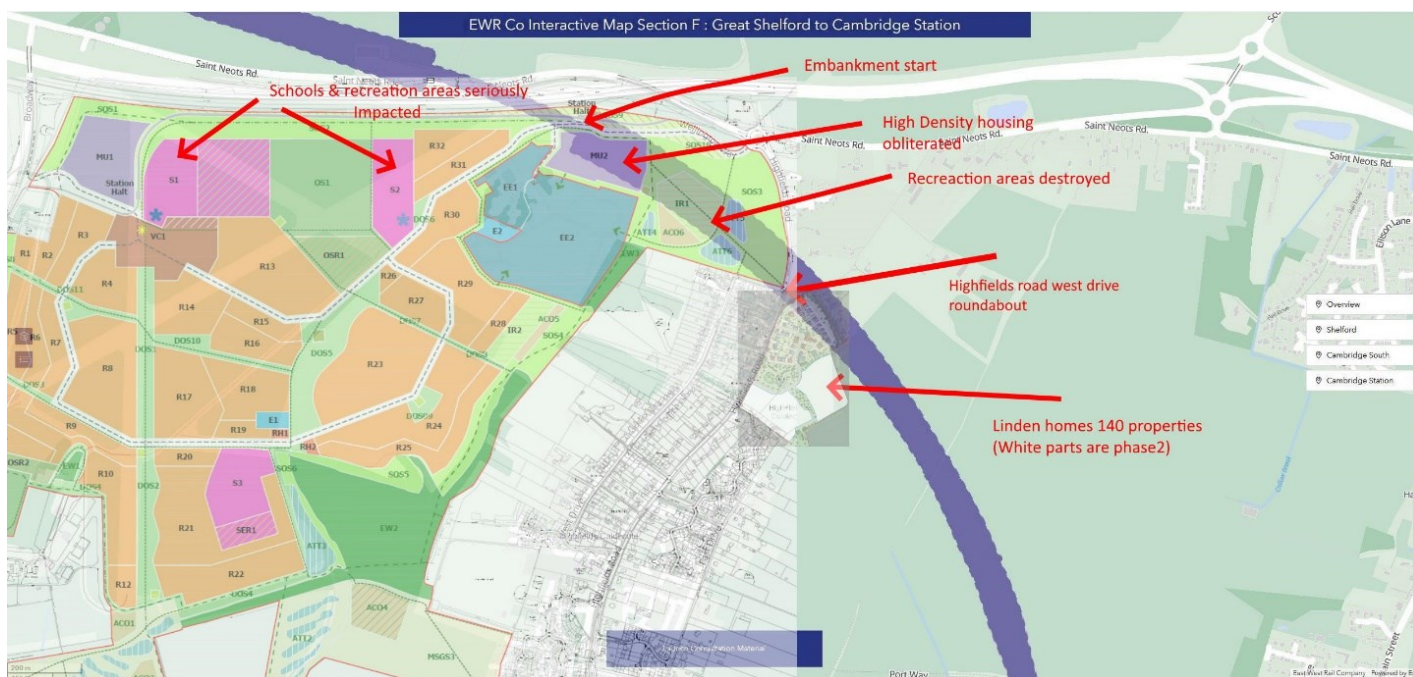
## 1. Impact on Existing Developments

They have totally failed to take into account the impact on existing and planned developments when comparing alignments (1&9) to the alignments that use a South Cambourne Station (2,6 & 8).

Much is made of the apparently lower number of properties demolished on the blue alignment, but we calculate another 9+ properties in Linden Homes Angel Park development, and an extra 1 at Potts Farm, so without even considering the impact on Bourn Airfield development that makes it **14+ properties to be demolished on the 1&9 alignment, not 4!**

Linden Homes will have finished their Angel Park development of 140 house by 2023. The first house is due to be occupied this summer! The foundations of the houses that will need to be demolished have already been laid. Some additional 9+ houses will need to be demolished, and all 140 houses seriously affected.

Bourn Airfield Development has outline planning permission for 3,500 houses and associated schooling. The entire field that the railway is proposed to go through is part of this Development. Apart from the Viaduct and the start of the embankment landing directly on a proposed High density Multi use area, which includes high density housing such as flats, the whole field is to be landscaped and offers recreation facilities for the community (orchard, allotments, balancing ponds) for both Bourn Airfield and Highfields.



Housing areas R30, R31 & R32 will all be seriously affected.

The visual impact to the front and the severance of the entrance of this new community will be horrendous.

## 2. Environment Impact of Noise, Visual and Habitats

No real account has been made to the pollution, noise and visual impact on the inhabitants of West Drive, Highfields Road and Highfields Court of a 10-12m high, 80M wide, embankment. Having to go up an additional 10-12 meters on a hill that is already some 72M high has a disproportionate visual, noise and pollution impact on the surrounding area.

A height of 82M is 7 meters **higher than the Gog Magog Hills**, the highest point in our local area!

If the route is electrified, the pylons will sit an additional 5m above the surroundings!

Even without the two new housing developments that will be directly impacted by this route from a north station to the south, there is a lot of difference between the visual and noise pollution of a 40-foot-high embankment across the top of Highfields, compared to a cutting through The Broadway at Bourn.

Having a station at North Cambourne and then going south has an unacceptable visual and noise impact on the entrance to both Highfields Caldecote and the Bourn Airfield Development, especially when compared to the impact of any other entrance to any other community.

For instance, in their technical document (Consultation-Technical-Report-Appendix-E-v2.pdf Section 14.13 Noise & Vibration p. 7) when talking about houses impacted AFTER mitigation in the alignments 2,6 & 8 from South Cambourne stations they state only Crow End will be impacted, whereas Highfields and Highfields Court will be impacted if a Northern Station is used along alignments 1&9.

*We calculate:*

### Highfields –

53 households within 75m  
103 households within 200m

**Total 156**



### Crow End -

9 households within 75m  
25 households within 200m

**Total 34**



The **impact on Highfields Caldecote is over 4 four times larger** than at Crow End! And this isn't taking into account those also affected on the Bourn Airfield Development.

At Crow End the train is in a cutting into the side of the hill (which we assume they mean Broadway), unlike the transmitter that would be the Highfields embankment, booming across the top of the hill.

The southern routes are built lower across the valley leading to a smaller overall noise profile and less visual impact.

South Cambourne Station is lower at 60M (and could be lower). The railway height at the viaduct over the Caldecote/Kingston/Toft/Bourn junction is around 40M at the same Latitude as the Viaduct across the A428, thus significantly lower in the landscape.

In general, the embankments are considerably lower on the south routes, with a considerable saving in real estate and hence visual impact.

In addition, the wood and habitat behind Angel Park would need to be destroyed and further south of Toft and Cambourne alignments 1&9 means a loss of mapped priority habitat areas – **300% more** than routes 2&6.

### 3. The Housing Myth

Much has been made of the possibility of building development north of the old A428. The elephant in the room is the duelled A428 and the old A428 separating this area from Cambourne. It will take people in West Cambourne just as long to travel to a station north as it would for people in any development north of the old A428 to travel south, and we are not sure the A428s are conducive to a coherent community.

EW Rail justify their reference to development potential north of Cambourne by referring to the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) Local Plan and stating that a site in this area is already identified. However, there is as much development land to the south/west of Cambourne as to the north, without the problem of navigating both the new dualled A428 and the old A428.

Their technical document "Consultation-Technical-Report-Chapters-8-12-1.pdf" page 334 says that if a development corporation at Cambourne comes into existence then it should not be a distinguishing factor between the two locations.

The Government has already started the process of setting up development corporations as needed for the OxCam arc. (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-plan-to-transform-oxford-cambridge-arc-into-uk-s-fastest-growing-economic-region>)

*9.6.31. Land at the Cambourne South site is in multiple ownerships, which would present challenges to delivering large scale development at speed. In contrast, land ownership around Cambourne North is generally consolidated, which would provide better opportunity to deliver the proposed development.*

*However, in March 2020 the Government committed to developing the case for a development corporation at Cambourne to "accelerate new housing and infrastructure development"<sup>63</sup>. Should a development corporation come forward, land consolidation in the vicinity of each site would not impact on deliverability of the proposed development, therefore should not be a distinguishing factor between the two locations*

The budget in 2020 specifically stated that a Cambourne development corporation should be set up

“The Budget announces plans to develop, with local partners, a long-term Spatial Framework to support strategic planning in the OxCam Arc. This will support the area’s future economic success and the delivery of the new homes required by this growth up to 2050 and beyond. The government is also going to examine and develop the case for up to four new Development Corporations in the OxCam Arc at Bedford, St Neots/Sandy, Cambourne and Cambridge, which includes plans to explore the case for a New Town at Cambridge, to accelerate new housing and infrastructure development.”

#### **4. South Cambourne versus North Cambourne Station**

Notwithstanding that the journey from South Cambourne is faster and shorter, the consultation document has beefed up the advantages of a North Cambourne station over the South Cambourne station.

Housing is one advantage quoted but their own documents state it shouldn’t be a distinguishing factor.

Much is made of the fewer properties demolished if they go North and then South, but they haven’t accounted for the Linden Homes’ Angel Park demolitions (an extra 9+ properties), or the Bourn Airfield community (potentially 150 units affected). Alignments 2&6 will have much less impact.

They have also not considered the number of homes impacted close to the entrance of Highfields (156+ within 200m) or the possibility of severance of the only fully accessible road into and out of Highfields Caldecote and, further down towards Hardwick and Toft, the severance of routes regularly used for commuting by foot and bicycle to Hardwick, Coton and Comberton villages, incl our village college.

The railway would follow the terrain down the hill from a South Cambourne Station, having less immediate visual impact. More noise will be absorbed because it follows the side of the hill, partly in a cutting and, in general, is lower during its descent from the Hill than alignments 1&9.

A southern route would impact the lower end of Caldecote, however, after mitigation its effect would be slight in comparison to the effect on the northern end of the village.

#### **5. North to North**

Following the A428 route from the Black Cat roundabout to Caxton roundabout only makes sense if a northern approach to Cambridge is proposed.

If freight is to be a big thing for this line, then a northern approach will lessen the impact for Cambridge as a whole.

But if EW Rail’s remit is to get to Cambridge South a northern route would mean a train change at Cambridge Station and it negates the advantage of quick access from Cambourne to the Biomedical Campus and Addenbrookes

Whilst there is NO proposed alignment for a Northern approach to Cambridge, we are being asked to comment on their assessment of a Northern Approach in question 1 of the feedback form.

## 6. POSSIBLE MITIGATIONS for Alignments 1 & 9

Due to the proposed height and its impact on 2 communities the only sensible mitigation would be to tunnel under the A428.

Across the field it should be in a cutting below ground, just as is offered to the Broadway on alignments 2 & 6. This should extend to behind the woods at the back of Linden Homes' Angel Park.

Where it cuts Highfields Road and the track to Highfields Farm & its Public Right of Way, and the bridleway to Hardwick & Comberton, there should be bridges constructed over the cutting at ground level.

Pedestrian and cycling access should be offered by similar bridging across the field as per the paths detailed by the approved Bourn Airfield Development plan

## 7. CONCLUSION - Alignment 6(Light Blue)

- Its quicker and shorter - surly that is what trains are for
- It's cheaper, especially once the costs of mitigation and developer compensation are taken into account for going through Highfields on alignment 1&9
- Fewer houses demolished once the additional 9+ at Linden Homes are considered. This will mean 13+ homes will be demolished for alignments 1&9, compared with 9 for alignments 2&6
- Alignments 2&6 have No impact on the delivery of the 3,500 home Bourn Airfield Development
- Alignments 2&6 are significantly lower in the landscape, avoiding having to rise up an additional 10-12M on a hill that is already 72M high, thereby reducing the disproportionate noise, visual and pollution impact on the surrounding areas
- There is No advantage in following the new A428 route since only a Southern Approach to Cambridge is offered.
- The alignments in order of preference are **6,2,8,1,9**
- "North for North and South for South". ie Northern Cambourne station if a Northern approach to Cambridge and a Southern Cambourne station if a Southern approach to Cambridge.
- If people had realised that the terrain of option E, ie a station at Cambourne, would be so problematical we're not sure anyone would have voted for such an option at the previous consultation.
- If a northern approach to Cambridge is to be reconsidered, then we feel all other options from Bedford should be revisited.

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## Questions Still Unanswered

These are some questions left unanswered, and we continue to urge EW Rail to provide more information throughout this consultation period

- a) What is EW Rails policy on bridging B, minor roads, private roads, tracks and Public Rights of Way?
- b) In particular what are they going to do about the Wimpole way, which will be cut on any Southern approach to Cambridge?
- c) The embankment profile across the top of Highfields seems to be 130M going down to 110M. Can they i) confirm this and ii) if it is that wide is this because of the curvature of the track?
- d) Identify the numbers of the houses in both "Crow end" and Highfields/Highfields Court still impacted after mitigation, or supply the radius they are working to at both sites?
- e) Clarity on the situation regarding freight trains