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Paul Maynard MP  
Under-Secretary of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London  
SW1P 4DF

By email: [paul.maynard.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:paul.maynard.mp@parliament.uk)

3rd August 2016

Dear Paul Maynard

**Re: East West Rail delays put economic, employment and housing growth at risk**

We write in our respective roles as chairmen of the East West Rail Consortium's Western and Central Section boards, to congratulate you on your appointment as Under-Secretary of State for Transport; and to extend our best wishes for success with your new portfolio.

We would like to update you on the progress and challenges of making East West Rail a reality; invite you to a site visit with local MPs and representatives of the National Infrastructure Commission; and to request your support to help accelerate delivery of the railway, so that the significant benefits of this priority infrastructure investment for Government are not delayed any further.

The East West Rail project will improve connectivity by rail between East Anglia and Oxfordshire – and beyond – but it is more than 'just' a railway. East West Rail is a catalyst for economic, employment and housing growth, connecting the key growth centres of population and economic activity.

We need to see work on the ground start at the earliest opportunity, and within this parliament, to avoid putting the significant benefits of East West Rail at risk by eroding investor confidence.

**Western Section: Bedford and Milton Keynes, to Oxford and Aylesbury**

Last year Chiltern Railways started operating a new service between the brand new Oxford Parkway station and London Marylebone via Bicester. This project, badged East West Rail phase 1, will be complete in December this year with services running from Oxford city centre. The upgraded line also provides the infrastructure needed for train services to run to Milton Keynes and Bedford, once Phase Two of East West Rail is complete.

Phase Two of the Western Section of East West Rail gained Government support and a place in the National Infrastructure Plan in 2012 due to its exceptional business case that forecast significant economic benefit for a relatively low investment, and an unprecedented benefit to cost ratio of 6.3:1.

Since then, the case for East West Rail has snowballed and the project has generated greater confidence and growth than originally expected. Recent analysis forecasts a boost to regional GDP of £135m per annum – increased from circa £38m per annum forecast in 2010 – just on the Western Section.

Along the Western Section corridor, through Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire alone, provisional plans aim to deliver 119,500 new homes by 2032, and circa 120,000 new jobs. East West Rail is the only major infrastructure in this area that will support this level of housing and employment growth. The estimated cost of the Western Section is circa £1bn.

The local authorities within the Consortium are now pioneering a joint delivery approach with Network Rail, which has been recognised by the Department for Transport as a new model for rail investment and delivery. This approach is a trailblazing example of the Government's agenda of devolution and localism being realised.

Despite pressure on our own budgets, local authorities within the Consortium have committed some £46m towards the cost of the project, clearly showing our confidence in the anticipated benefits, and our commitment to achieving our shared economic growth, employment and housing objectives.

It should also be noted that there is a very high level of public support for East West Rail, and latent demand for the new services.

### **Central and Eastern Sections: Bedford to Cambridge and East Anglia**

Working closely with Network Rail, we have identified a preferred corridor to extend the Western Section of East West Rail east of Bedford to Cambridge, so that new passenger and freight train services could ultimately run all the way from Southampton to East Anglia, and the ports in Norfolk and Suffolk. There is great potential to link to the new station Cambridge North Station, and plans are underway to build a station south of Cambridge to support the Cambridge Bio-Medical Centre. Astra Zeneca are moving their global headquarters to this site, creating 2,000 jobs. Papworth Hospital is also relocating to this site.

This development work shows that a new railway between Bedford and Cambridge would unlock significant economic benefit to make it a viable scheme that would justify investment. It shows a benefit to cost ratio of between 1.7:1 and 2:1, which is remarkably high for a scheme at this stage of development. This could rise as work on the Eastern Section (Cambridge to Norfolk and Suffolk), identifies the benefits to East Anglia. This is one of the fastest growing regions, that has grown from having a lower-than-average GVA, to become a net contributor to the UK economy.

### **Current concerns over delayed delivery due to funding constraints**

Against this positive story, following the recent re-planning of railway enhancements by Sir Peter Hendy following his appointment as Chairman of Network Rail last year, Network Rail no longer plan to complete the Western Section of East West Rail by March 2019, and no target completion date will be forthcoming before 2017.

We are concerned at the length of time it is taking for Network Rail and Department for Transport to deliver the railway.

There is considerable concern and frustration amongst the Consortium members, our strategic partners and local communities at the length of time it is taking Network Rail and Department for Transport to deliver the railway. The delay and lack of certainty puts planned housing and employment growth at risk by eroding developer and investor confidence, and limits the activity of those who have invested already. This is especially worrying as local authorities are developing their Local Plans.

We need the new Government to show its commitment to East West Rail.

Compared to HS2 and Northern Hub, East West Rail is a relatively low investment that will yield significant benefits in a far shorter period of time. The cost of lost benefits so greatly outweighs the investment required to make it happen.

We are engaged in discussions with the Department for Transport and Network Rail to explore potential bridge funding for the Western Section so that work on the ground will not be subject to further delay.

If funds are made available, work on the ground could start well before 2019, using Permitted Development rights on sections of the line where no Transport and Works Act Order is required. We urge you to support our efforts in this.

We are also pleased to be working with the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC), which has been tasked with making recommendations to Government to maximise the potential of the Oxford – Milton Keynes – Cambridge corridor as a single, knowledge intensive cluster that competes on the global stage. We hope that working effectively with the NIC, we have the opportunity to accelerate delivery of East West Rail.

#### **Invitation to Western Section site visit – Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

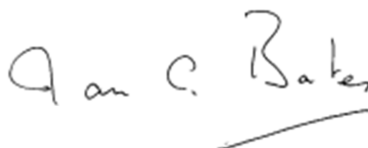
We look forward to working with you in your new role and to continued progress to deliver East West Rail, which will support our common aims to increase prosperity and improve the quality of life for people who live and work in this our region and beyond.

We have sent you a separate invitation to a special event on the morning of Monday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2016 to see progress on the Western Section on East West Rail, from the window of a specially-commissioned train. We would be delighted if you, or a representative from your department, would attend.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Rodney Rose  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Chairman Western Section  
Joint Delivery Board  
East West Rail Consortium

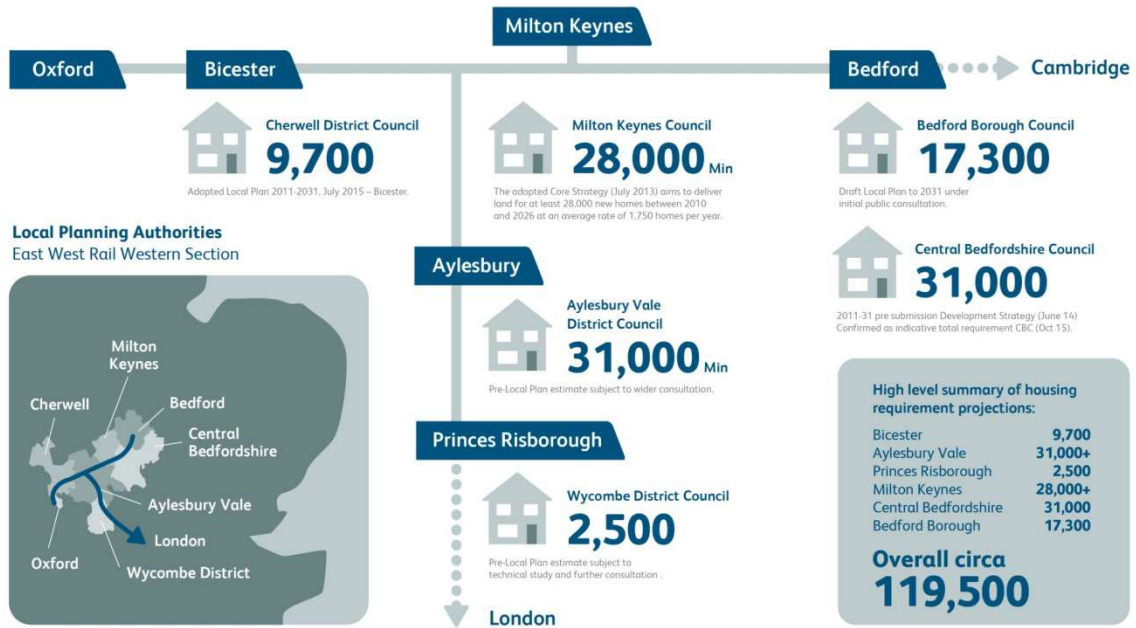


Cllr Ian Bates  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Chairman Central Section Board  
East West Rail Consortium

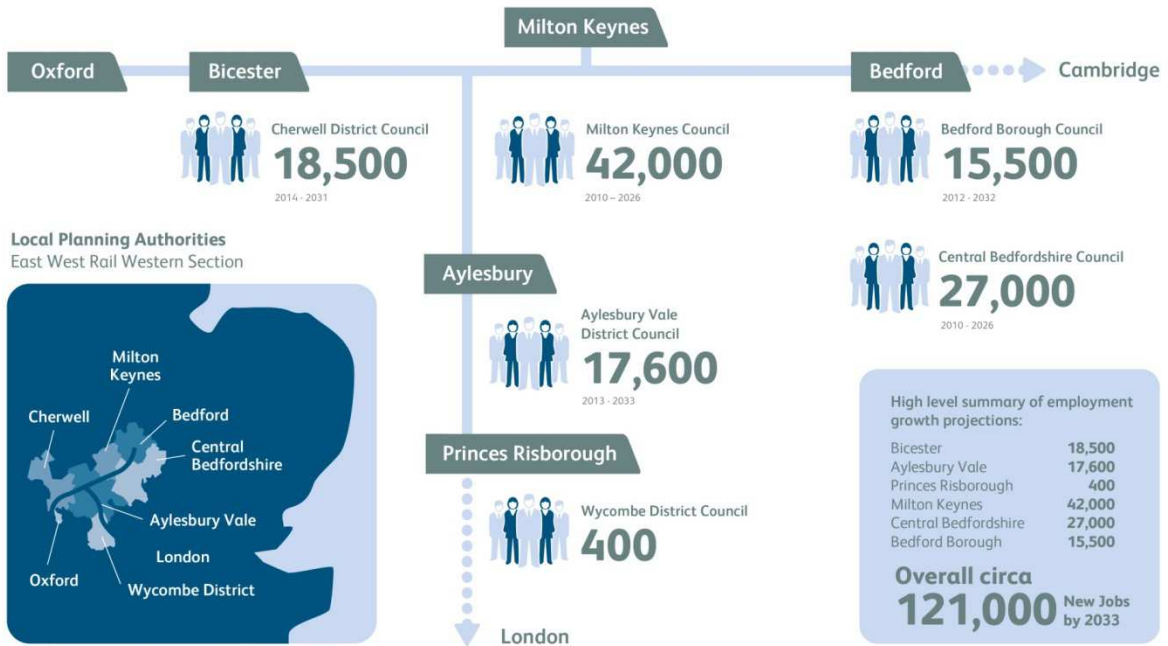
cc:

Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP, Secretary of State for Transport  
Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State, Department for Communities and Local Government  
Lord Andrew Adonis, Chair National Infrastructure Commission  
Cllr Martin Tett, Chairman, England's Economic Heartland Strategic Alliance  
Phil Graham, Chief Executive, National Infrastructure Commission  
Alistair Cormack, National Infrastructure Commission

# Projected Housing and Employment Growth along the East West Rail Western Section Corridor



Connecting People, Connecting Business



Connecting People, Connecting Business