

Environmental Services

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## **Buckinghamshire County Council Position Statement:**

### **East West Rail Project**

**Date: September 2017**

#### **Objective:**

To provide a clear Statement of Buckinghamshire County Council's position in regards to the East West Rail Project.

#### **Reason for Position Statement:**

This statement has been prepared in response to East West Rail's recent public consultation that has resulted in queries being received from members of the public expressing confusion and concerns over the impact of the East West Rail project on the local highway network, especially during the construction period.

#### **Background:**

BCC (together with AVDC) is a member of the East West Rail Consortium of Local Authorities as they support the provision of this rail infrastructure that will provide considerable economic benefits to Buckinghamshire and in particular the Aylesbury Vale area, together with expected environmental and sustainable travel benefits.

BCC is also a statutory consultee in the Transport Works Act Order in terms of assessing the impacts of this project, to ensure that where possible any impact on the residents, environment and highway are minimised and mitigated. The teams assessing the Environmental Statement (ES) are entirely independent of the East West Rail Alliance, which is the delivery organisation for the EWR scheme. The EWR Alliance is responsible to Network Rail (NR) which is the sponsor of the scheme. It should be noted that the BCC staff are not part of the design of the scheme.



## **Position Statement:**

Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) has not agreed to any trip generation figures or construction routes and are still waiting for updated information on which to make an informed assessment of the combined impact of EWR and HS2.

BCC is concerned about the construction impacts of East West Rail. The EWR Environmental Statement has been scrutinised and assessed by Highways officers who have provided detailed feedback as part of the formal consultation. In particular concerns have been expressed over:

- the lack of a robust justification of the construction traffic figures;
- the lack of detailed assessment of construction routes and the potential traffic impact on these routes; and
- the lack of a robust assessment of the traffic impact of existing railway stations once new services are in place.

Consequently BCC has requested that additional data and information is provided by the EWR Alliance.

It should be noted that due to inaccuracies in the traffic data included in the ES and the fact that there has been a change in the way that EWR will be delivered, BCC is not in a position to provide residents with robust or reliable estimates of the traffic resulting from the EWR project. BCC understands that the transport chapter of the ES is being revised and updated to look at the project in more detail and to provide more accurate data. Until such time that this additional data has been received BCC are not in a position to provide any update on EWR. It would be premature and inappropriate for BCC to attempt to provide estimates without a sound factual basis.

BCC has also not yet agreed to any construction routes. Indicative construction routes were proposed by EWR and these were assessed on a high level basis by BCC and dismissed where there were known limitations (weak bridges / narrow carriageways /directly passing sensitive locations). BCC has requested a full assessment of all proposed construction routes that would include but are not limited to: additional traffic; junction assessments; tracking plans; and road safety assessments.

BCC is equally concerned over the combined impact of EWR and HS2 and have agreed with EWR that an assessment of the combined impact of EWR and HS2 will be provided as part of the assessment of highways impact in the revised ES for EWR.