

---

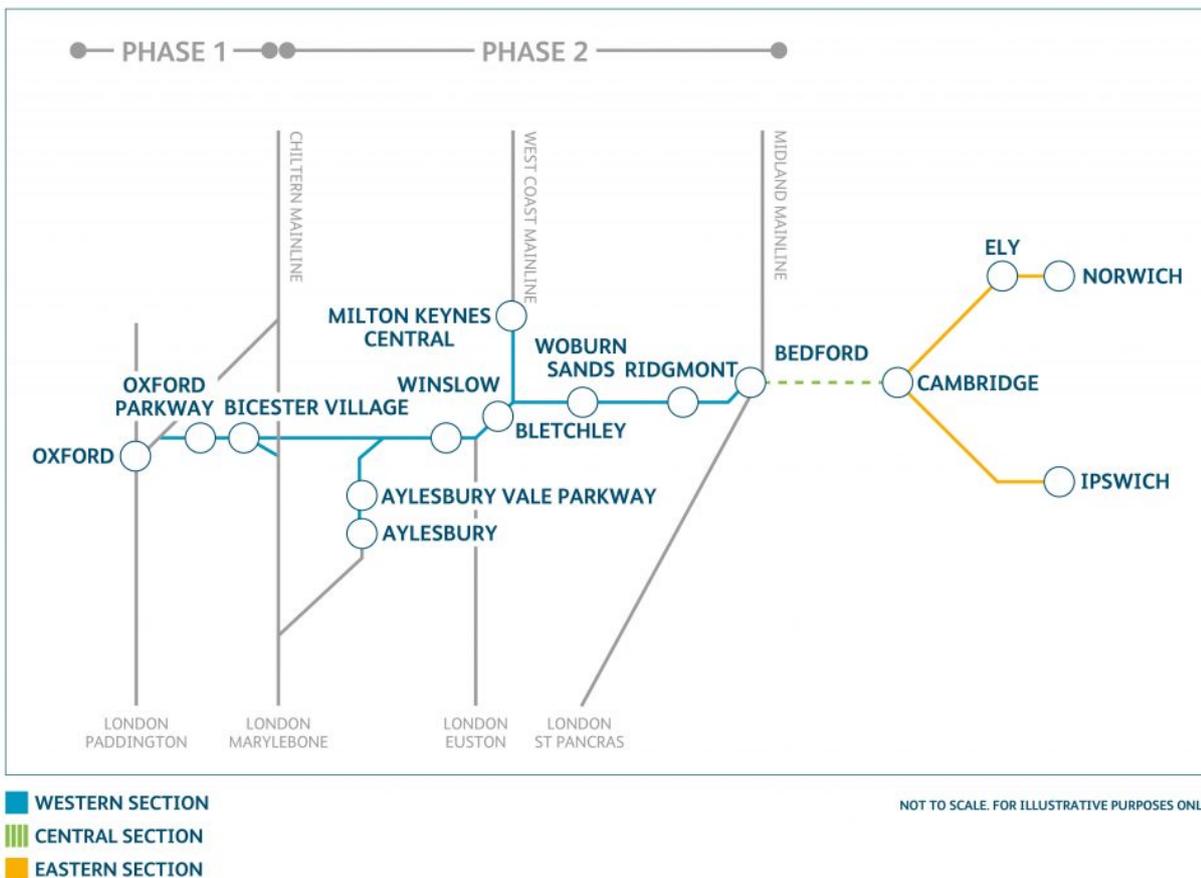
## East West Railway link to re-open in mid-2020's

The closure of the railway between Oxford and Cambridge in 1967 was much contested, as original network planning after nationalisation had identified the route as a valuable diversionary line for freight traffic to avoid congested London junctions and marshalling yards. That plan was abandoned as the volume of freight traffic had declined, but much of the infrastructure remained as a legacy, including the fly-over across the West Coast main line at Bletchley.

The line did not close completely, as a local service was retained between Bedford and Bletchley and connectivity for non-passenger movements was retained between Aylesbury and Bletchley. Some sections of the track-bed survived due to the rural location, but much development took place between Bedford and Cambridge that resulted in the loss of many sections of the route.

In 1995 a consortium of local authorities and businesses established the East West Rail Consortium to press for the re-opening of the route, placing a strong emphasis on the advantages of a railway to serve a growing population in the towns along this important economic corridor. The economic benefits were accepted by the Government and in 2017 the East West Railway Company was established as a non-departmental public arms-length body with the purpose of accelerating the delivery of a re-opened line by the mid-2020s.

The vision is to build infrastructure which supports local and national strategies for the region as quickly and as cost effectively as possible. The company is tasked with finding new ways to fund and finance the infrastructure, with future management of an integrated business that includes operating the train services.



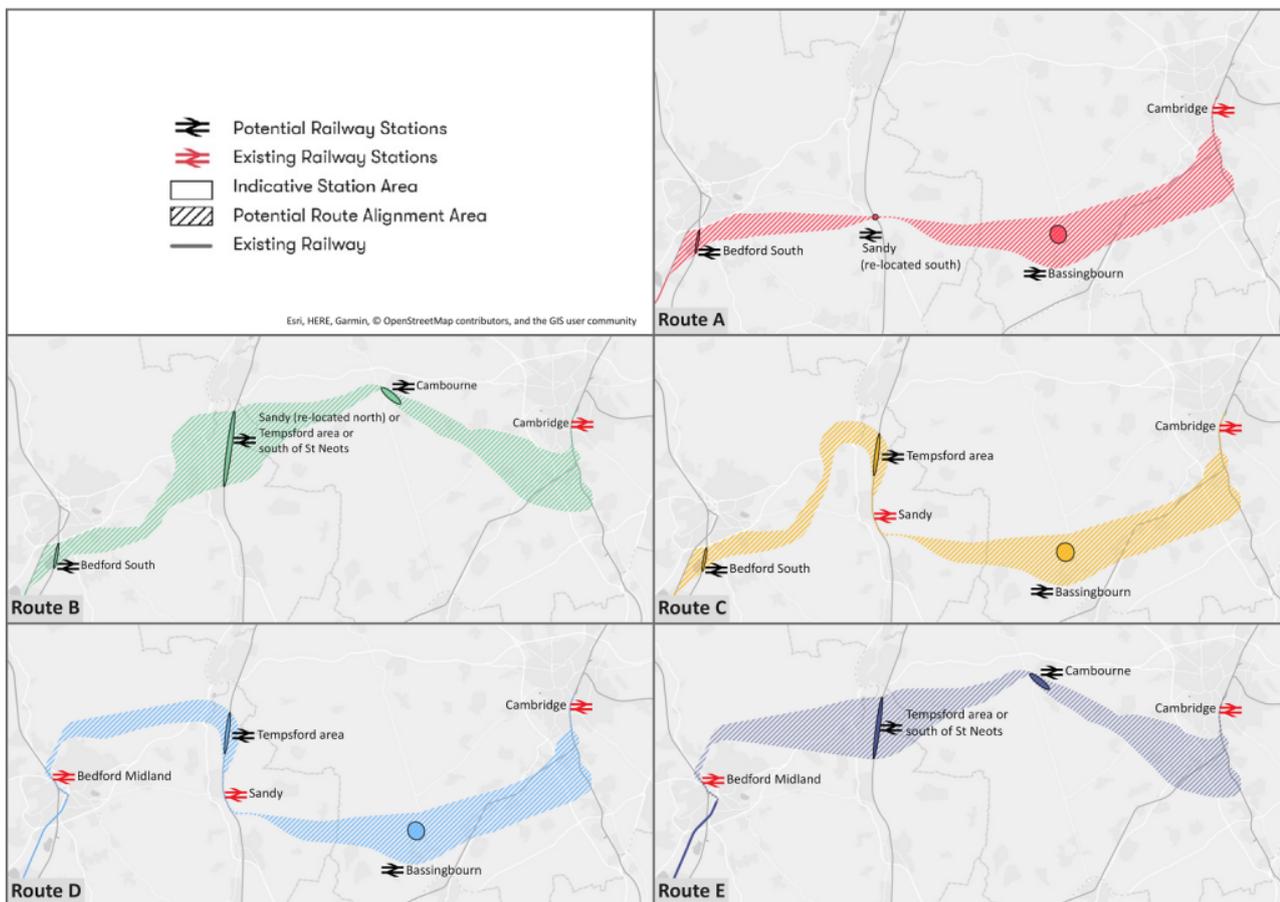
## The three sections of the East West Railway indicating the connectivity created

The development plan separates the route into three sections and the proposed services from Oxford extend to reach Ipswich and Norwich. The sections have very different characteristics:

- The Western section from Oxford to Bedford already has an upgraded route between the University City and Bicester over which new services are operated by Chiltern Railways to London Marylebone. The Train Operating Company, which sponsored the project, negotiated a 20-year franchise agreement to enable the financial outlay to be justified. Beyond Bicester, the line as far as Bletchley has been out of use for some years and a complete infrastructure renewal is needed to allow a 100mph dual track railway to be created. Between Bletchley and Bedford local trains continue to operate and, although an upgrade will be necessary, a railway exists.
- In the Central section, a new route formation rather than track renewal is the situation beyond Bedford to reach Cambridge. The East West Railway recently conducted a consultation on the choice of route corridor from which a more detailed alignment will be determined. The original line ran via Sandy but much of the footprint was eliminated as a result of creating greater East Coast main line capacity.

- The Eastern section reflects the development of existing local lines that are rural in nature with an aspiration for improved journey times to attract greater use of the routes between Cambridge, Norwich and Ipswich.

In the years since the line closed new settlements have been created in Cambridgeshire, which has seen a large population expansion. As a result, alternative route corridors have been proposed that would provide access to rail services at Cambourne where significant housing development has taken place with further development planned. A new station, Bedford South, is also considered in the relevant options available.



### Alternative route corridors for the Central Section of the East West Railway

The planning process is expected to continue until 2023 with subsequent construction allowing services to start in the mid-2020s. FCP is well placed to support the development and procurement process and provide appropriate technical, commercial and operational analysis to support the case for the choice of alignment and stations served. Having undertaken the DfT's study on Maximising Third Party Funding for rail projects, which led to the 2018 call for Market Led Proposals, FCP is also able to advise on alternate funding models.

