East West Rail

Consultation 2026

Consultation Response by Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably (POETS)

June 2026

POETS (Planning Oxfordshire's Environment and Transport Sustainably) is a group of senior planning, environment and transport professionals and academics focussed primarily on planning and transport in Oxfordshire. For more information go to *www.poetsplanningoxon.uk*

1. POETS continue to **support** the development of the new East West Rail corridor to Cambridge as a critical component of an enhanced local and regional public transport network. In particular it will:

    a) significantly improve the quality of public transport options both for local and inter-regional travel;
    b) facilitate a significant modal transfer away from the congested road network;
    c) offer the opportunity for substantial transfer of freight from road to rail, bringing significant relief to strategic roads such as the A34 and M40.

2. POETS **welcome** the proposal for additional freight and passenger capacity, which reflects the potential value of the new railway for communities along its corridor.

3. To fully deliver on its strategic objectives it is essential that the whole route is fully electrified at the earliest opportunity, to minimise future operational costs and maximise the potential operation of heavily loaded freight services.

4. The upgraded station at Oxford Parkway **must** be developed as a high quality interchange, requiring a radical redesign of the whole site in collaboration with Oxfordshire County Council which operates the bus Park & Ride service from the site. In particular:

    - there must be safe and direct access close to the station buildings for cyclists with adequate attractive parking provision nearby;
    - local bus access to the site needs to be altered so local bus services can stop close to the station buildings while also serving the heart of the bus Park & Ride facility;
    - new safe and direct pedestrian routes will be needed to link the bus Park & Ride, the station buildings and the Oxford Road;
    - a suitable parking & standing area for buses needs to be provided on site to facilitate rail replacement operations plus special services on days when the proposed Oxford United stadium is in use.

5. POETS continue to **oppose** the closure of the London Road level crossing at Bicester unless an underpass is provided that can accommodate buses. The latest underpass proposal in the consultation document – which appears to delay general traffic as much as operation of the level crossing would – is unacceptable. Local and national transport policies emphasise the need to promote greater use of public transport and the latest proposal, which significantly disadvantages buses relative to cars, runs contrary to this and would increase operating costs for buses while adversely affecting the local bus network and the routes served in Bicester. It would also threaten the future economic viability of Bicester town centre. One would have hoped that the impact of severance of bus routes in Oxford due to the extended works at Oxford station would have emphasised the importance of this issue.