

To whom this may concern,

Papworth Everard Parish Council have held in-depth discussions in regard to the proposed routes for the new East-West Rail route. Following these discussions, we have come to the conclusion that although we *are* in favour of a railway, our parish believes that the Southern Cambourne route would be most beneficial for not only the developers, but many local parishes. Please see the points below.

Preference for the South-Cambourne route.

Having held discussions, we believe the best route for the EWR would be South of Cambourne. This is for numerous reasons, of which we will outline below.

Habitat loss

The planned northern Cambourne route passes close to two extremely valuable environmental areas of interest: Elsworth wood which is both an ancient woodland and protected Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Knapwell wood which is also an ancient wood. Elsworth wood has three different uncommon types of woodland. The dominant tree is coppiced field maple, with a varied shrub layer and a considerable population of oxlips. There are several nationally uncommon beetles, such as the rove beetle *Stichoglossa semirufa*. It is our understanding that the hedges around the fields between the ancient woodlands and A428 are unusually rich in different tree and shrub species, which may indicate that they are much older than is usual for West Cambridgeshire, generally, where most parishes are enclosed under Parliamentary Enclosure Acts between 170 to 200 years ago. The consensus is that the development would cause severely degrade the environmental within these areas, and when we questioned the EWR developers, although they said they had analysed the impact, we are yet to see any evidence of this. The Northern route puts a wide range of uncommon, rare and diverse species of both plants and animals at risk; with such an emphasis in the modern day of environmental stewardship, building through such crucial area's would be an example of EWR developers neglecting their responsibilities to protect such important sites of biodiversity, putting even more rare species at risk of extinction. Knapwell wood is also an irreplaceable habitat whose environmental deterioration would certainly increase the loss of biodiversity in our local area. Elsworth wood, Knapwell wood and the countryside between them are generally quiet, undisturbed, with only the occasional human visitors. This is an ideal situation for their long-term preservation and conservation. The presence of the railway, its station and any residential or mixed development in the vicinity, would increase the pressure on these delicate ecosystems to an entirely unacceptable extent.

Ease of transport connections

From map analyses provided by both yourselves and our own sources, it seems that, logically, it makes more sense for the route to go to the south of Cambourne for ease of connections to Cambourne itself. It avoids potential issues caused by the A428 and future extensions to the road and will significantly avoid further traffic being placed on the already often congested road; your analysis also gives hints that it may also costs less to go to the south compared to the north of Cambourne due to

the shorter length of the southern route, although EWR has not been forthcoming with this data. In addition, multiple smaller parishes exist South of Cambourne compared to the North - the additional houses being built to fund the railway may extend to these smaller parishes making them much more accessible and bringing more to the local economy allowing the smaller parishes to grow which would prove beneficial to them. In addition, with the majority of houses being placed to the south of Cambourne, it would also be much easier for residents to access it if it were to be placed south, which would likely increase its usage making it a strong transport hub.

Support of local parishes

Other Northern parishes you have consulted have also drawn similar conclusions to our own. We believe we have strong support from our surrounding parishes and therefore urge our views to be taken onboard, seriously, by the developers.

Lack of transparency regarding discussions, especially regarding Northern parishes.

We would also like to comment on the complete lack of transparency we as a Northern Cambourne parish were given in regard to the EWR route decisions, compared to Cambourne itself and its Southern parishes – a point that was made by many parishes at the meeting with EWR developers and our local MP; EWR refused to give us an extension for submitting our comments. We were only made aware of the decision to possibly go north of Cambourne relatively recently, meaning that we had to both organise and hold meetings on a last-minute basis in order to get our response in by the deadline; the time we had for discussions was not enough for the scale of such a decision.

In addition, EWR developers not only failed to give clear answers to many of the questions we posed at the recent meeting, but also kept referring to research that had been ‘done’ but that we were not able to see, leaving us to trust their word rather than being able to look at data and make our own conclusions.

Overall, we feel that EWR did not provide sufficient time for our parish to hold adequately long talks over the project, and also failed to clearly answer any of our queries posed at the meeting.

In conclusion, both for your own ease and that of many parishes surrounding Cambourne including our own, we believe the EWR route South of Cambourne will prove to be more beneficial. We request that you read our comments seriously and take them on board in your future decisions.

Thank you

Papworth Everard Parish Council