



Welcome!

Welcome to the second issue of the East West Rail Phase 2 (EWR2) project newsletter which contains updates on recent progress and outlines forthcoming activities on the project. On behalf of the East West Rail Alliance, I wish you well during these challenging times with the coronavirus pandemic and hope that you are all keeping safe.

Since our last newsletter in April 2020, the Alliance has continued the site preparations for the delivery of the EWR2 project. As an essential infrastructure project, site operations on EWR2 have continued through the coronavirus pandemic with workers and supervisory staff continuing to attend site while support staff work from home. The Alliance commitment to reduce the project construction duration and therefore minimise disruption to the community remains very strong. By continuing to work through the coronavirus pandemic we are safeguarding the project completion date and working to make the new railway infrastructure available to the public at the earliest possible date.

I would like to thank everyone in the community for their tolerance and understanding during the implementation of our works. In particular, we appreciate that the closure of local footpaths and roads does impact the everyday lives of people in the community and that this impact is exaggerated by the additional strains imposed by the coronavirus pandemic. Please rest assured that we are making every effort to minimise the disruption while also responding to the feedback we receive from our community stakeholders.

Recognising the significant challenge posed by the coronavirus pandemic on local government, I would like to thank all our colleagues in the local planning authorities, councils and statutory bodies who have been working closely with the project team to keep the required planning applications and approvals on track.

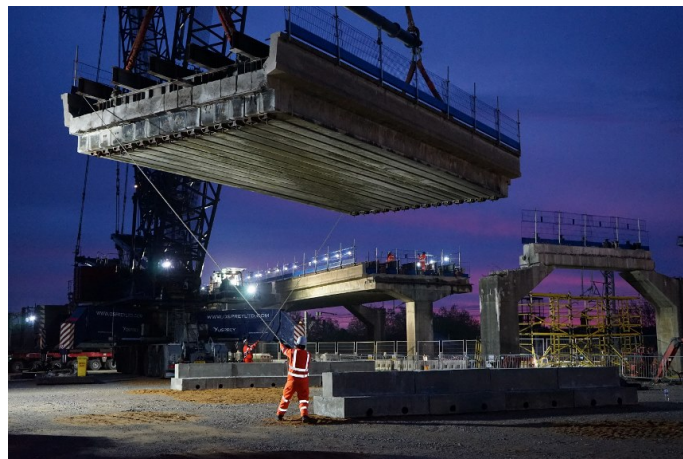
As part of our response to the feedback received on the works undertaken so far, we have significantly increased the amount of information in our project newsletter and organised the content into sections to enable a better understanding of what is happening in each area of the project.

If you have any feedback or suggestions for the newsletter, please use the email publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk

Kind regards

Mark Cuzner, EWR Alliance Director

Bletchley Flyover upgrade underway



As reported in the first issue of our newsletter, a key element of the EWR Phase 2 project is the upgrade of the Bletchley Flyover. To bring the flyover up to modern standards and ensure it is structurally sound for the next 60 years we will need to dismantle and rebuild the flyover.

Since our last newsletter in April, the team has successfully lifted three of the 17 concrete decks (spans) that need to be removed from the flyover, including one deck which was previously located above the West Coast Main Line itself. These significant lifts were carried out using one of the largest "mobile" cranes in the country and took place whilst the railway was closed in order to maintain the safety and integrity of the railway.

The team are now preparing for the removal of the next set of decks from the flyover. These decks span over the West Coast Main Line and Buckingham Road, and so the complex lifts need to be carefully coordinated and meticulously planned.

The lifts will take place throughout July and August, and will be carried out with the help three cranes, including the AK 680-3, the largest mobile crane in the country with a lifting capacity of 1,200 tonnes.

To allow us to safely remove the decks that span over Buckingham Road, it has been necessary to close the road to all vehicles. The closure came into operation on Sunday 5 July and will be in place until Thursday 30 August.

A protected walkway has been provided through the worksite so pedestrians can still get access from one side of Buckingham Road to the other for the majority of the work. However, if and when pedestrian access cannot be maintained a shuttle bus will operate between the train station and the bus station, every 15 minutes.

Early works underway as construction sites begin to take shape



One of our Environmental Compensation Sites



Site clearance in the Winslow Cutting



One of the 'haul roads' we are constructing to reduce the amount of construction traffic on local roads.

In addition to our works at Bletchley, the Alliance has been busy carrying out works to enable us to set up our construction sites and compounds required for the project.

The team has been making good progress, working collaboratively with local authorities and statutory bodies to ensure all the permissions and licences are in place for the required works.

We have continued the construction of all of our Environmental Compensation Sites, designed to offset the environmental impact the project will have. So far we have finished 12 of the 19 sites we're due to construct. We are underway with three further sites and the remaining four will all be complete within the next 12 months. As part of this process, we have now completed the construction of all of our artificial badger setts, and we're delighted to report that we have footage of them being used, including video showing a mother badger nursing a baby cub at one of the setts.

We have now served notice on the majority of the temporary and permanent land required for this phase, and in late May/early June, began the process of erecting hoardings and boundary fencing to mark out the various plots of land needed for our construction activity. This will help us keep our construction sites safe and secure.

In addition, as confirmed in our last newsletter, we have been carrying out vegetation clearance works to remove trees and areas of scrub which have established along the embankments of the mothballed section of the old Varsity Line and recently closed sections of the railway. These works have been conducted under a licence granted by Natural England.

We have continued to prepare for the construction of a number of our compounds, including our Bicester site. Before the compound can be established, we have needed to undertake archaeological works to ensure there are no archaeologically significant artefacts in the area. As various sections of the site have been handed back to us by our archaeological specialists, we have been back filling the land to facilitate the construction of the compound.

Finally, we have started the construction of a number of haul roads and are making road improvements to ensure that our construction vehicles can safely access our sites with as little disruption to local traffic as possible.

Footpath Closures



As part of the project, we have already needed to close a number of footpaths/bridleways along the old 'varsity' railway line between Bicester and Bletchley. We are aware that with current covid-19 measures in place, these footpaths were being used more frequently.

The footpaths which crossover and run alongside the railway have always been part of our plans, and the proposals for their closures were included in the various consultation phases and presentations which the Network Rail and EWR Alliance has made to communities along the route.

There will be a great deal of construction work taking place to reinstate the railway, including sections of 'haul roads' which will be used by HGVs and large construction vehicles - making it dangerous to allow members of the public to use the footpaths.

We recognise that this is inconvenient and have received feedback from local people on the closure length and signage. We've taken on board comments and are improving the signage and are reviewing plans so we can re-open the footpaths as soon as work is completed and it is safe to do so.

Alliance recognised for 'excellent' sustainable approach to design

As an Alliance, we have committed to delivering lasting environmental, social and economic benefit through the project. "Sustainability in Every Choice" is a core principle of the Alliance, which everyone who works on the project contributes towards.

To demonstrate our commitment and to track our progress, we have registered with CEEQUAL - an internationally recognised evidence-based sustainability assessment, rating and awards scheme for civil engineering and infrastructure projects. We have entered the "Whole Project Award", which assesses everything from the early sustainability strategy decisions made by the client and how these requirements are embedded into the project from design through to construction and beyond.

We are delighted to report that project has been rated as 'Excellent' as part of CEEQUAL's interim assessment, which focuses on the decisions made during the design stage.

Sustainability & Environment Lead for the Alliance, Ruth Voigt said: "Excellent is the highest rating available on CEEQUAL scheme, so we're thrilled that our approach has been recognised with this accolade. It demonstrates that sustainability has been a key component of our design strategy for the project and that stands us in good stead to deliver a truly sustainable project. Our focus is now on delivering against that strategy and gathering all the evidence we need for our final assessment at the end of the construction phase."

How can we help?

The Alliance is fully committed to leaving a lasting legacy in the communities we serve. We have already undertaken various community engagement projects including painting signage and fencing in Calvert Green, transforming outdoor spaces at Winslow and Wescott schools, as well as installing a new patio and refurbishing the club house at Waddesdon Cricket Club.

We also engage with many schools and colleges in the area. We can come in to talk about the project, promote career paths in rail, construction and engineering and our team of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) ambassadors are trained to deliver engaging activities for primary and secondary school pupils.

Unfortunately, many of the plans we had for this year have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic, however we are working with local stakeholders and community groups to see if there are activities we can help with during lockdown, and what we can do as lockdown measures continue to ease.

Some of our plans include:

- Working with local charity Bucks Impact to carrying out gardening for the elderly and vulnerable across Buckinghamshire
- Working Buckinghamshire County Council on a clear up of the popular local walking/cycle path between Waddesdon Green and Berryfields
- Working with local schools to deliver STEM sessions to their pupils online via Microsoft Teams

Naturally, each of these activities will only be carried out in accordance with the latest social distancing guidelines.

If you have any projects we may be able to help with, please get in touch with us at publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk

Alliance scores 45/50 in first CCS assessment



In addition to CEEQUAL assessing our sustainable approach to the project, the Alliance has registered its Bletchley site with the Considerate Contractor's Scheme (CCS), a not-for-profit, independent organisation endorsed by local authorities and government to raise standards in the construction industry by working with sites to share best practice and assess their approach to engaging with the public, our workforce and caring for the environment.

Monitors assess our performance against a set of criteria via a series of visits and audits, with the very highest performing registered sites considered for National Site Awards.

The Bletchley site had its first assessment in early July and we're delighted to report that the project scored 45/50 and achieved an 'exceptional' rating in each of the five areas that are assessed. Achieving such a high rating sets a high standard that we will aim to maintain and seek to improve as and when we register our additional sites across the project.

In the meantime, if you would like to find out more about the CCS scheme, please visit: <https://www.ccscheme.org.uk/>



Bicester

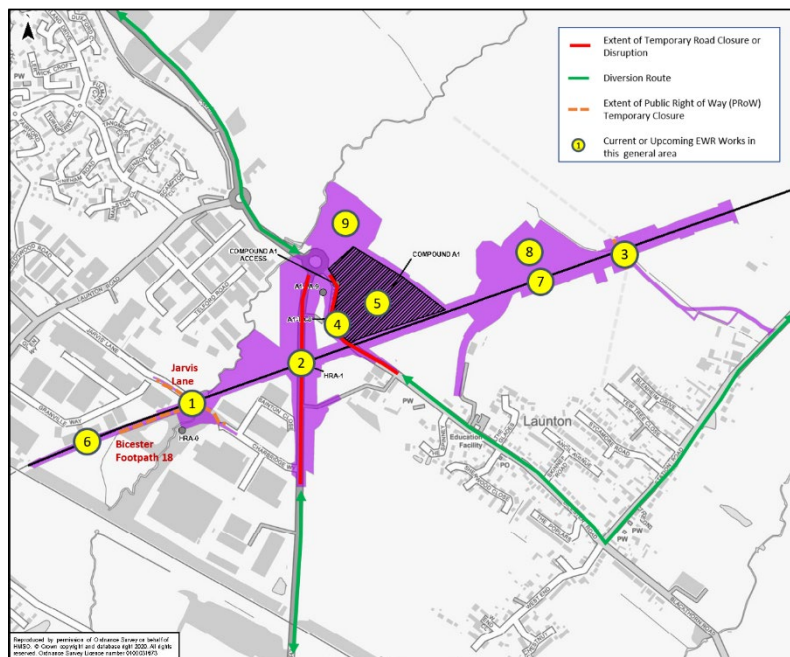
1. Jarvis Lane railway works and footbridge works

Description: We will be reconstructing the old railway line in this area and a new footbridge is to be constructed which will allow people to safely cross the railway. We will reopen footpaths as soon as it is safe to do so.

Duration: Work began in spring 2020 and is due for completion late 2021.

Disruption: Footpath closure/diversions will be in place at various points during this time.

Upcoming activity: Over the next three months, we will start to build the new footbridge by building a new access point from Jarvis Lane to allow us to get our construction equipment onto the railway line. This will include carrying out some vegetation clearance and building a temporary haul road with ramps up to the railway. We will also be installing a temporary bridge to allow us to transport our construction equipment to site in order to construct the piled foundations for the new footbridge. The new footbridge will be installed in early 2021 and this will allow the re-opening of the footpath in mid-2021.



2. Charbridge Lane road bridge

Description: One of the most significant construction activities in the area will be the new road bridge on Charbridge lane, which we will construct using multiple temporary road diversions to minimise disruption to the local community.

Duration: Work started in early summer 2020 and is due for completion in the summer of 2022.

Disruption: There will be partial and full road closures of Bicester Road during this period, as well as the temporary closure of public rights of way in the area. Residents will also see increased construction traffic during this time. All closures will be publicised on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming activity: Work over the next three months will include preparation for the new road bridge in the Mill Meadow area with vegetation clearance, archaeology excavation, flood storage construction, and new temporary road earthworks ready for the temporary alignment of the highway later in the year. Whilst the temporary alignment is in place, we will maintain access to Tythe Barn and local allotments.

3. Grange Farm footbridge

Description: Along the temporary haul road that we're constructing between Bicester Road and Station Road Launton, a new footbridge will be constructed in the Grange Farm area to allow safe crossing of the new railway.

Duration: Work will begin in autumn 2020 and is due for completion in winter 2021.

Disruption: There will be public rights of way closures in place whilst the new footbridge is constructed.

Upcoming activity: Over the next three months the project will begin construction of the footbridge foundations once the access to the site and working area has been constructed. The haul road along the railway corridor will also be used to facilitate the construction of the overbridge.

4. Bicester Road Works

There will be full and partial road closures in this area as we carry out our Charbridge Lane overbridge works (see No.2 above), and whilst we establish the site compound entrance and Allotment entrance works. All road closures will be publicised via [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

5. Main Bicester compound construction

Description: A small compound was constructed in late 2019, and we are now constructing our main Bicester compound just off the roundabout on Bicester Road. This will be the main hub for work in this area and will include site offices, storage for materials, maintenance, parking provision, together with welfare facilities for construction staff.

Duration: We started construction of the main compound in late spring 2020. Once complete, the compound will be in place until work in the area is complete in late 2022. The land will then be re-instated to its former condition.

Disruption: There will be partial road closures as the site entrance is constructed during summer 2020. These closures will be publicised via [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed. There will also be an increase in construction traffic into the site throughout the duration of our works in the area.

Upcoming activity: As part of our work we have started archaeological excavations in the areas around the compound, which has resulted in the discovery of Romano-British and Iron ditches thought to be linked to Alchester - a nearby Romano-British and Iron age settlement. The main compound construction is due to complete later this summer.

6 & 7. Railway works and haul road construction

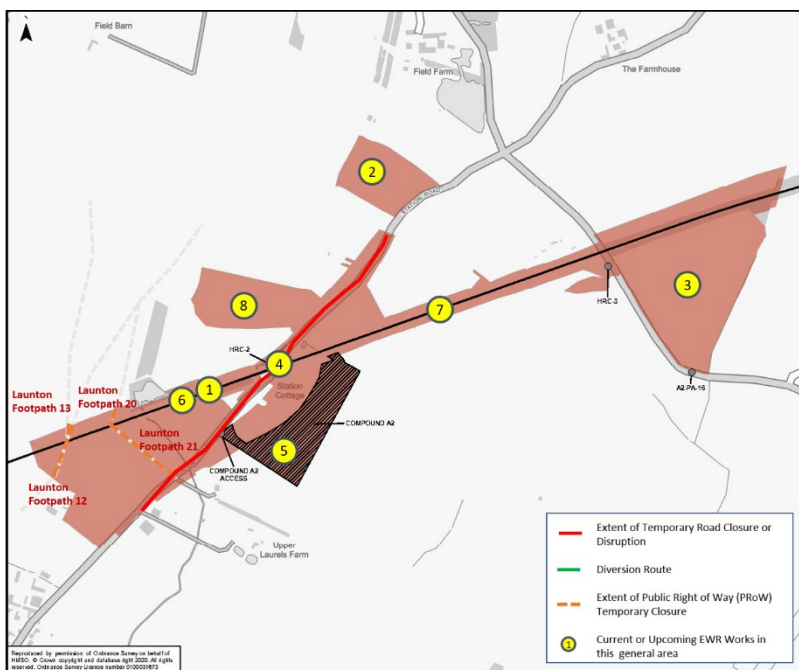
In this area, track works will begin in the summer of 2022. We are also constructing new haul roads for our construction traffic to use to minimise our use of public highways.

8 & 9. Environmental Compensation Sites

These sites have been established to mitigate our impact on the local ecology and will include features to allow local species to flourish. They include the creation of aquatic habitat features like river back waters, grasslands, scrub and woodland with specific species and features for badger, otter, reptiles, great crested newts, bats, butterflies etc.



A 3D model showing the new Charbridge Lane overbridge



Launton

1. Castleman's underbridge repair

Description: The existing bridge structure will be upgraded to strengthen the bridge for the new railway. This will include carrying out brickwork repairs to the structure.

Duration: The work will begin in early 2021 and is due for completion in the summer of 2021.

Disruption: During the work there will be some restrictions to the access under the bridge.

Upcoming Activity: No activity is planned in the next three months.

2 & 3. Ecological Compensation Sites

These sites have been established to mitigate our impact on the local ecology. They include the creation of aquatic habitat features like river back waters, grasslands, scrub and woodland with specific species and features for badger, otter, reptiles, great crested newts, bats, butterflies etc.

4. Station Road crossing and overbridge

Description: The existing level crossing at Station Road will be replaced with a road bridge, providing road users with a bridge over the new railway.

Duration: The construction of the bridge will start in late summer/early autumn 2020 and is due for completion in summer of 2022.

Disruption: There will, at times, be full and partial closures of Station Road whilst we construct the new road bridge. All closures will be publicised on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: Work over the next three months will include vegetation clearance, ecology work to re-locate newts and other creatures, as well as archaeology studies. Following this, main construction work will begin to build the new road bridge, starting with the creation of a working area for construction plant.

5. Station Road, Launton Compound construction

Description: We are building a construction compound to help with the construction of the road bridge on Station Road. The compound will be used to provide materials storage as well as welfare facilities for construction staff.

Duration: We will begin constructing the compound in summer 2020 and it is due for completion in late 2020.

Disruption: There will, at times, be full and partial closures of Station Road whilst we construct the new road bridge. All closures will be publicised on [one.network](#) and appropriate signage will be displayed.

Upcoming Activity: Work over the next three months will include vegetation clearance, ecology work to re-locate newts and other creatures, as well as archaeology studies.

6. Haul road construction

Description: We have constructed a new haul road in this area for our construction traffic to use in order to minimise our use of public highways.

7. Railway works

In this area, track works will begin in the summer of 2022. We are also constructing new haul roads for our construction traffic to use to minimise our use of public highways.

More Information

This newsletter has been published as a summary of works in the Bicester & Launton area. If you would like more information on the entire East West Rail Phase Two project, scan the QR Code opposite to read our project-wide newsletter.

