

**NETWORK RAIL (EAST WEST RAIL BICESTER TO  
BEDFORD IMPROVEMENTS) TWA0**

**Summary of Proof of Evidence**

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## Summary of proof

1. My name is Alan Francis and I represent the Milton Keynes Green Party. For many years I was the National Transport Speaker for the Green Party of England & Wales. In that capacity I participated in the TWAO approval process for Thameslink 2000 and the Parliamentary approval process for Crossrail.
2. I have been campaigning for EWR since 1980. In that year British rail announced that they were to build a new station at Milton Keynes Central. I wrote to BR suggesting that when the new station opened the passenger rail service between Oxford and Bletchley should be re-instated with an extension to the new Milton Keynes Central station. At that time the Oxford to Bletchley line was still in use for freight and ECS moves. Now, just 39 years later, we have reached the public inquiry stage into the re-instatement of the service.
3. We fully support the re-instatement of the rail line between Cambridge and Oxford via MK (EWRL). However we believe that there are some omissions which should be in the TWAO - see below.
4. A number of our objections concern changes to the Train Service Specification and infrastructure instruction made by Department of Transport (DfT) to Network Rail. This specification appears to have changed on several occasions over the period of the EWR project. We have asked for the various versions of the Train Service Specification and related instructions to be made available to the inquiry so that the reasons for the changes can be evaluated and, where necessary, challenged.
5. Princes Risborough to Aylesbury. The Milton Keynes Central to Aylesbury service was originally specified to continue to Marylebone via High Wycombe. This should be re-instated. This line was originally planned to have speed increase and some doubling. Now no works are planned. At the very least the line speed should be increased to 60mph. The first half mile or so at each end should be doubled.
6. Double track should be provided north from Aylesbury as far as Aylesbury Vale Parkway.

7. The Bletchley high level platforms should be built to accommodate 8 car, or at the very least 6 car, trains. Immediately to the north of the Bletchley high level platforms shallow ramps and refuge areas are proposed, about 40m in total length on each side. These should be built as extensions of the platforms. That would enable 5 and 6 car trains to use the high level platforms at no significant extra cost.
8. The lift for platform 8 should go down to Saxon St level, providing passive provision for an eastern entrance to the station.
9. In the short term trains should be able to operate between MK Central and Bedford/ Cambridge by reversing in any of platforms 5, 7 or 8 at Bletchley in either direction. Platform 5 already has this capability but is also used for other purposes. Consequently it may not always be available. The new high level platforms 7 and 8 should also be reversible to increase flexibility.
10. Denbigh Hall South Jn, where the Bletchley line diverges from the WCML Slow lines, has a maximum speed of 25mph for the diverging route. The earlier EWR plans including upgrading this junction to 40mph. This has been dropped, we think on the instruction of the DfT. It needs to be re-instated. With a speed limit of 25mph the junction will not be able to handle the 3tph (possibly 4tph) in each direction that will be taking the diverging route.
11. As well as increasing the speed the layout of Denbigh Hall South junction should also be changed from a switched diamond to a ladder type junction. Both Up and Down Bletchley tracks should be bi-directional and have a line speed of 50mph.
12. The second track and platform should be reinstated at Fenny Stratford station and over the level crossing.
13. The level crossing at Bow Brickhill station should be replaced by a bridge. This is straightforward to do with space to the west or east of the existing road.
14. If the level crossing at Woburn Sands is not to be replaced by a bridge then in the short term changes should be made to reduce the barrier down time and increase the capacity and safety for road traffic and pedestrians. Considerable congestion is caused now. When the number of trains increases this would become worse.

15. In the eastbound direction the platforms should be staggered, as at Bow Brickhill. This should save more than 1 minute of barrier down time for each closure for east bound services.
16. In the westbound direction another signal should be installed a few hundred metres before the level crossing. This should save 1-2 minutes of barrier down time for each closure for west bound services.
17. The level crossing should be altered so that it can accommodate 3 lanes of traffic and a 2m wide footpath on both sides. The 3rd lane is required so that traffic waiting to turn right into Cranfield Rd does not hold up traffic heading towards Kingston roundabout. With the closure of the school crossing more pedestrians, especially children, will be using the crossing and the narrow footpaths are not safe and do not have the required capacity.
18. There should be cycle storage facilities at Ridgmont station and on both sides of the line at Woburn Sands station. However we note that although these are not in the TWAO they could be installed without being included in the TWAO.
19. Oxford-Bedford should be made electrification-ready during this phase. That means ensuring that all overbridges and structures have sufficient clearance for OHLE to be installed later. Any bridges with insufficient clearance should be rebuilt or have the track lowered now, while the Bicester-Bletchley section of the line is not in use, rather than having to close the line later when it is in operation.