

East West Rail Consultation

The East West Rail Company (EWR) has issued an informal Consultation on the future of the Oxford - Cambridge railway line which includes the Marston Vale line between Bletchley and Bedford. The consultation, which closes on 9 June, puts forward two possible patterns of service and a number of proposals in respect of individual stations and pedestrian crossings. A full copy of the consultation document can be found at www.eastwestrail.co.uk

The number of trains per hour would increase from the current two stopping trains to five or six per hour with a mix of stopping and semi fast services. If the six train service is adopted it would mean that the crossing gates at Woburn Sands would be closed to vehicle traffic for up to 40 minutes per hour in peak hours. Under one scenario the Woburn Sands Station would be relocated approximately 400 metres to the west.

The consultation proposes two options for the Woburn Sands crossing.

Option 1 suggests that the crossing be closed and a by-pass be provided from Newport Road just north of the new development adjacent to Frosts, past the fishing lakes, to Bow Brickhill Road; from there traffic would have to enter Woburn Sands via Bow Brickhill Road. Alternatively the by-pass would bridge over Bow Brickhill Road, through the allotments and Edgewick Farm, and into Woburn Sands at the corner of The Leys and Hardwick Road.

Option 2 suggests retaining the crossing but recognises that the gates might be closed for up to 40 minutes in peak hours.

These proposals are currently being considered by the Town Council who will be meeting EWR informally in the next few days. At the moment public meetings are prohibited but one will be held as soon as possible. The Council has already informed EWR that Option 1 (the by-pass) would be unacceptable due to the loss of amenity facilities and the inadequacy of Hardwick Road and The Leys to accommodate any additional traffic. There is also a restrictive covenant on Edgewick Farm. The Council is, however, very unhappy at the prospect of increased closure time at the existing crossing under Option 2. The Town Council will issue further information following the meeting with EWR.

Residents are invited to submit comments direct to EWR via the link on their website. EWR will be issuing final proposals following the closure of the informal consultation in June.