



Press Release

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East West Rail gets Government support

Trains could be running between Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford within five years following a welcome Government announcement today.

The East West Rail Consortium welcomes news that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has published a report that encourages further development of this important rail project.

The east-west transport links study was funded by ODPM following a commitment it gave at the Public Examination into the Milton Keynes South Midlands sub regional strategy.

The study has looked at options for improving transport between the major growth areas of Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Bedford, as well as Oxford, an important part of the Cambridge-Oxford "high tech arc".

The study has concluded that a complementary package of rail and road measures would meet the transport pressures generated by new housing.

In today's announcement, ODPM has welcomed continuing work by the Consortium to inform development of the housing and transport strategies across the sub-region.

The Consortium has already completed a supplementary study that has strengthened the ties between housing growth and the railway, and has identified possible ways of funding the railway and making it happen.

Both reports can be found on the re-launched East West Rail Consortium website, at www.eastwestrail.org.uk.

The Consortium's Chairman, Neil Gibson from Buckinghamshire County Council said: "We're all delighted at the ODPM's announcement to back this project which is key to ensuring there are good transport links for these major development areas. Although the Government cannot commit funding at this time, ODPM has today welcomed our ongoing work to identify alternative sources of private sector funding, and they have agreed to work with us to develop the project further."

Note to editors:

The East West Rail Consortium is made up of 21 local authorities together with the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), South East England and East of England Development Agencies (SEEDA and EEDA), Network Rail, O2C Arc and Hutchison Ports.

The complete East West Rail scheme comprises a route linking East Anglia (Ipswich, Norwich)-Cambridge-Bedford-Bletchley/Milton Keynes-Bicester-Oxford-Swindon and beyond, with a spur to Aylesbury. The route will connect the ports of Felixstowe and Harwich with the Great Eastern, East Coast, Midland, West Coast and Great Western main lines.

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For more information please contact our Communications Team (Adrian Saunders, Rail Development Officer, Oxfordshire County Council on 01865 815080 or Richard Ward, Senior Transport Planner, Buckinghamshire County Council on 01296 382964).