



Press Release

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Further work brings East West Rail a step nearer

The East West Rail Consortium has started further development work costing almost £300,000 after a positive announcement from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) last week giving support to the project.

The latest study is being funded by the Consortium, jointly with four local authorities (Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire and Milton Keynes), ODPM, the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA), Milton Keynes Partnership and Aylesbury Vale Advantage.

Managed by consultants Steer Davies Gleave, the study will review the western part of the route, between Oxford and Bedford, and identify the cost of making it happen

An earlier business case in 2002 had assumed an hourly train service, but since then plans have been announced for housing growth in Aylesbury, Milton Keynes, Bedford and Bicester, and a minimum of two trains each hour is now thought necessary.

Laing Rail Projects are revisiting the technical and operational aspects, looking at the cost of track and signalling for the higher level of service, and will put together an indicative timetable for freight and passenger trains.

An important part of the latest work is to consider how increases in land value can be captured and invested in East West Rail. Steer Davies Gleave, Llewelyn Davies Yeang and Knight Frank will work with developers, landowners, and planning authorities to develop a way of funding that can be included in local planning policies.

It is intended to complete the current development phase in July. The results of the study will enable the Government to decide if it wants to see the project delivered in time to meet the demands arising from major new housing.

It will also help inform a decision about the location of new housing in Milton Keynes and will be considered as part of the East of England regional spatial strategy.

More news on the project can be found on the East West Rail Consortium website, at www.eastwestrail.org.uk.

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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).