

Press Release

Milton Keynes Partnership, Press Office

Tel: 01908 353981 or 01908 353913

Email: media@eastwestrail.org.uk

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Agreement with Chiltern Railways puts East West Rail scheme on track

Milton Keynes Partnership (MKP), the East-West Rail Consortium and Chiltern Railways have signed an agreement that will allow work on the East-West Rail link to be progressed alongside the new London Marylebone to Oxford route that Chiltern Railways proposes to open in 2012 - 2013.

Through MKP the East-West Rail Consortium is currently taking forward projects that will enable an outline design of the rail infrastructure to be produced, in addition to detailed construction and operations management plans and a budget of £2 million has been secured for this. The arrangement with Chiltern Railways means that they have agreed to rebuild the Oxford to Bicester section of the line for their new service, and will engineer it to also accommodate the East-West route services.

If both schemes are successful, Chiltern Railways intends to run two trains per hour from Oxford to London via Bicester and High Wycombe, and on the East-West line there will be up to two trains per hour from Oxford to Milton Keynes and/or Bedford, in addition to a service from Aylesbury to Milton Keynes.

John Lewis, Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Partnership, said: "Chiltern Railways' plans fully meet the Consortium's needs in terms of line capacity and station facilities so they will do the development work for the line west of Bicester Town, whilst we are commissioning the work eastwards, from there through to Bletchley. This arrangement means that we can avoid any duplication of work and it will also significantly reduce overall costs for the East-West Rail project."

Allan Dare, Strategic Development Manager of Chiltern Railways, said: "We are delighted to sign this agreement with the East-West Rail Consortium. The two schemes complement each other very well, and by working together we can ensure the best possible services at a lower cost."

The Chiltern Railways' route will need a new chord line at Bicester to connect its London to Birmingham line with the East-West route just east of Bicester Town station; upgrading and double-tracking the East-West line from Bicester Town to Oxford; and a new station at Water Eaton Parkway.

Chiltern Railways will be seeking a Transport and Works Act order to authorise the new chord line at Bicester and the new station at Water Eaton Parkway, together with other lesser works that will require statutory authority. The line between Bicester and Bletchley will all be on the existing railway (which is still legally operational) and, therefore, should be covered by the normal planning permission process.

More news on the project can be found online at www.eastwestrail.org.uk.

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For more information please contact: Helen Meadows or Nadir Farrell in the Milton Keynes Partnership press office on 01908 353981 or 353913, or email on helenmeadows@englishpartnerships.co.uk or nadirfarrell@englishpartnerships.co.uk