

## Press Release

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## **Welcome announcement of new London to Oxford rail route**

The East West Rail Consortium welcomes the official launch of Chiltern Railway's Evergreen 3 project by The Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Adonis on Friday 15 January.

Evergreen 3 is set to deliver a new rail route from London to Oxford by connecting the Chiltern and East West routes at Bicester and upgrading the line between Bicester and Oxford. The new route is planned to provide two trains an hour in each direction.

The announcement is an important step towards the East West Rail Consortiums' ambition to restore a rail link between Oxford and Cambridge. Part of the route will now be delivered by Chilterns Railways Evergreen 3 project resulting in significant cost savings for the project.

John Lewis, Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Partnership and Chair of the East West Rail (Western) Project Board said, "We are hugely supportive of Evergreen 3 as it marks a major step forward for rail services in the area and provides a boost to the East West Rail project.

"Aside from the cost saving benefits, Evergreen 3 will speed up the delivery of improvements which can only be good news for passengers."

The Western section will deliver train services between Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford and implementation will follow on immediately after the completion of the Evergreen 3 project.

Neil Gibson, Chair of the East West Rail Consortium went on to say, "These two schemes are complementary and will provide a range of new services for passengers.

"We are working alongside Chiltern Railways as they develop Evergreen 3 to complete the design development for our western section. This is being done in accordance with Network Rail's design standards and is due to be completed in spring 2010."

In recognition of the benefits that the Western Section will deliver, Cllr David Robertson, Chairman of South East England's Regional Transport Board said: "The announcement on Evergreen 3 is an important step towards the delivery of East West Rail.

"This vital piece of infrastructure will create thousands of jobs in the region and promote sustainable housing development in some of the South East's most important urban areas. "

Alex Pratt, Board Member at the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) added: "The new rail route is part of a long-awaited scheme that will deliver significant national and regional economic benefits, and contribute to the generation of up to 100,000 jobs and new homes.

"The link represents the first time that a direct rail connection has been made between High Wycombe and Oxford and on completion, the direct link to and from Oxford and Cambridge will support economic prosperity throughout the entire corridor."

The East West Rail Consortium will continue to work closely with the Department for Transport and Network Rail in order to secure funding for the western section.

**ENDS**

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**Notes to editors:**

East West Rail Consortium is a group of local authorities and government agencies with an objective of securing a new rail route from East Anglia to Oxford via the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area.

More details of the project can be found online at [www.eastwestrail.org.uk](http://www.eastwestrail.org.uk).