

## Press Release

**Milton Keynes Partnership, Press Office**

Tel: 01908 353981 or 01908 353913

Email: [media@eastwestrail.org.uk](mailto:media@eastwestrail.org.uk)

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### Site Investigations continue for East West Rail

Outline design work continues apace on the western section of East West Rail with additional site investigation starting this month. The work will include excavating trial trenches along the route and making a number of boreholes to help engineers understand the condition of the ground before designing any necessary ground improvements.

The site investigation is expected to last until the end of this year after which a detailed geotechnical report will be published and will enable the design of new track and railway infrastructure to be completed.

Earlier this year the disused section between Claydon and Bletchley was cleared of vegetation to allow engineers to access the track to carry out survey work and inspect the route prior to carrying out these further site investigations.

John Lewis, Chief Executive of Milton Keynes Partnership, said: "While these investigations are happening the East West Rail Consortium is also reassessing the business case for re-opening of the railway with a view to evaluating the benefits that this would bring locally, regionally and nationally."

This work is part of the Consortium's drive to acquire regional and national funding in order to deliver East West Rail. Because of factors including the economic downturn, the time required to complete the statutory processes and to assemble the funding package the Consortium has revisited the programme for implementing the scheme and latest projections are to seek a start of construction in early 2014 and look to open the new train services in late 2015.

Neil Gibson, Strategic Director (Communities and Built Environment) at Buckinghamshire County Council, who chairs the East West Rail Consortium, said: "Whilst this may seem a long way off, there still is an enormous amount of planning work to be undertaken during the next stages of development, not least of which is potentially to promote the scheme under the new Planning Act 2008 which comes into force in March next year."

**ENDS**

For more information please contact: Helen Carvalho or Nadir Farrell in the Milton Keynes Partnership press office on 01908 353981 or 353913, or email on [helen.carvalho@hca.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:helen.carvalho@hca.gsx.gov.uk) or [nadirfarrell@hac.gsx.gov.uk](mailto:nadirfarrell@hac.gsx.gov.uk) or Richard Ward at Buckinghamshire County Council on 10296 382964, or email on [rward@buckscc.gov.uk](mailto:rward@buckscc.gov.uk)

**Notes to editors:**

**Milton Keynes Partnership** created in June 2004 is responsible for growth, development and investment in the new city. It is a sub-committee of the Homes and Communities Agency, the newly formed housing and regeneration agency for England. Milton Keynes Partnership is a key member of the East West Rail Consortium and is project managing the current design work.

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). The £2 million for the current development and design work has come from the Growth Area Fund from Oxford, Aylesbury, Milton Keynes and Bedford with support from the DCLG.