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This guide is designed to help you understand more about East West Rail and the Central Section.

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## Glossary

**Corridor** – A wide geographical area with loosely defined boundaries encompassing a range of potential route and alignment options.

**Routeing** – A method used to work towards defining a proposed railway path within a corridor.

**Alignment** – The preferred railway path within a corridor.

**Node** – A point or location on the existing railway network or on the proposed routeing, where existing rail infrastructure connects with new rail infrastructure.

**East West Rail Consortium** – A group of local authorities in the region who have campaigned to reinstate east west train services.

## Ambition

# What is East West Rail?

East West Rail is being developed to help improve transport links to enable the economic development of your region. The aim is to provide a fast and reliable rail service to connect East Anglia with Central, Southern and Western England.

East West Rail has been broken down into three sections: The Western Section, the Eastern Section and the Central Section.

The Western Section improves services between Oxford and Bedford and the Eastern Section will consider services to the East of Cambridge.

## Where and what is the Central Section?

The Central Section will provide you with a new rail line providing

new direct rail services between the Bedford area and Cambridge. This will interface with the Western Section, providing you with a direct link between Oxford and Cambridge.

## Why are we doing this?

The Central Section will build on an already vibrant regional economy by extending the strategic rail network, to provide a new rail link connecting you to new houses, jobs, education and leisure facilities in the Eastern Region.

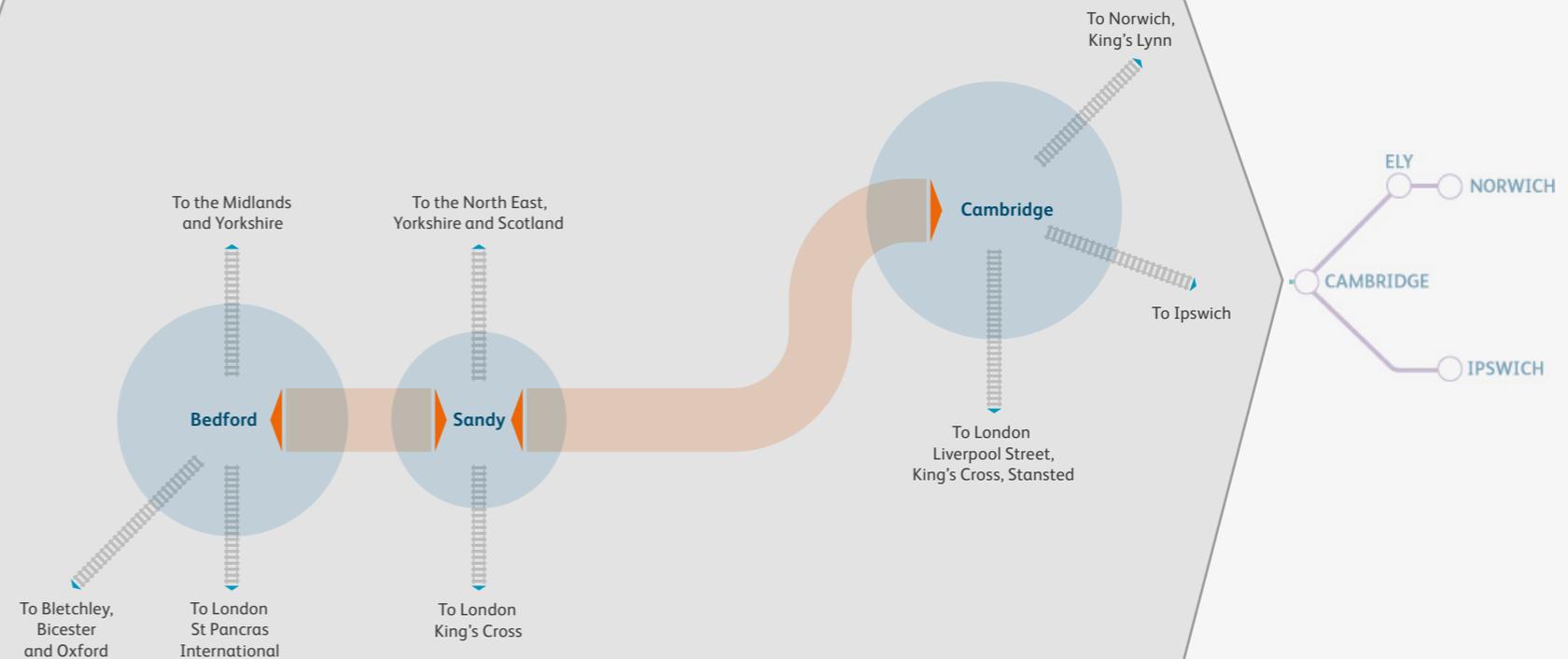
The rail link will also provide improved connectivity in the Oxford-London-Cambridge *Golden Triangle*. This will unlock further growth and development potential.

Network Rail is developing plans to provide this new Central Section rail link. We are working closely with the East West Rail Consortium, rail industry partners, regional groups, and the Department of Transport (DfT) to develop a scheme that can be considered as a choice for funders.

### The Western Section



### The Central Section



### The Eastern Section

Landscape

# Connecting Oxford and Cambridge

Currently, there is no direct rail connection between Oxford and Cambridge. The only available route through the Home Counties, north of London, can be slow and costly. A typical train journey between Oxford and Cambridge can take two and a half to three hours.

## Encouraging growth

The jobs market is growing in the Oxford, Cambridge, Bedford, Milton Keynes and Sandy areas. But poor transport links between Oxford and Cambridge are impacting this development. Our new railway link will connect these locations and encourage their further growth.

Outcomes

### Better access to jobs and housing

Reduced journey times and increased journey options will give you access to wider education and job opportunities. It also opens up access to wider affordable housing.

### Encourage further investment in the region

Transport links are proven to drive economic development. East West Rail Central Section will help people and goods to move around the region – both supporting the existing economy and encouraging more investment in the future.

### More environmentally friendly travel

The new rail link will provide faster, better and more sustainable travel. It will contribute to tackling climate change, providing low carbon transport and providing an alternative to travelling by car.

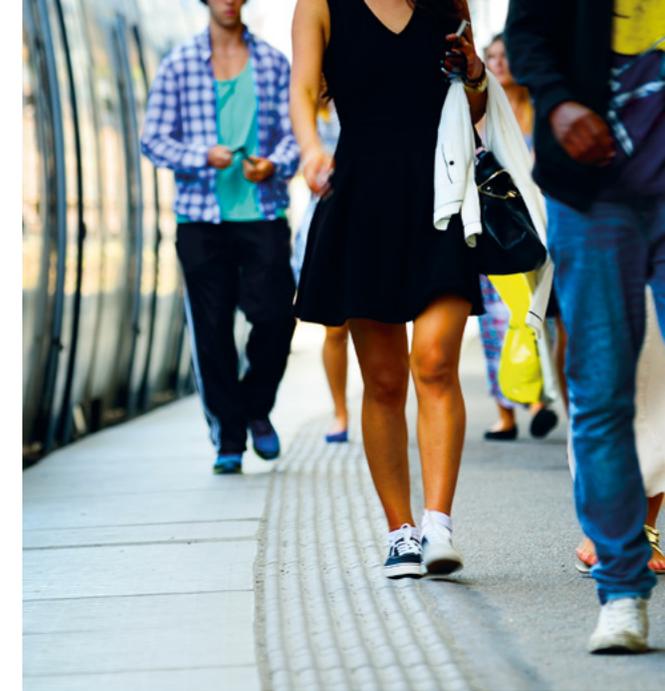
Predicted housing and employment growth through to 2031.

#### New dwellings forecast

#### New jobs forecast

Cambridgeshire
<b>45,000</b>
Bedford
<b>17,300</b>
Central Bedfordshire
<b>31,000</b>

Cambridgeshire
<b>31,000</b>
Bedford
<b>15,500</b>
Central Bedfordshire
<b>27,000</b>



Progress

# Progress to date

We are already working to complete Western Section Phase 1 between Oxford and Bicester. With Western Section Phase 2 planned to extend links to Milton Keynes, Bedford and Aylesbury.

This will allow passenger and freight services to run between Bedford and Bicester and between Milton Keynes and London via Aylesbury.

We are currently developing plans for the Central Section which will follow on from the Western Section. We have identified the Bedford – Sandy – Cambridge corridor as representing the best value option.

The East West Rail Consortium are starting a study to research the potential additional benefits of enhancing the existing rail services between Cambridge and Norwich and Ipswich (The Eastern Section).

## Early Central Section Work

In October 2013, The East West Rail Consortium undertook a study in partnership with Network Rail and DfT to assess the potential economic benefits of the project, identifying key centres of population and economic activity and the journeys you make between them.

The East West Rail Consortium’s development work concluded that the scheme was potentially viable and that it should be evaluated further.

Network Rail in partnership with industry partners and the consortium, have continued the early development work for the Central Section.

## Economic Appraisal – Two Corridors

Working with our industry partners and the East West Rail Consortium, we identified a number of potential corridors that would accommodate the journeys you often make between Bedford and Cambridge. These were analysed to identify those that offered best value. With key industry stakeholders and the Consortium, we agreed criteria and evaluated twenty potential corridors, before finally selecting seven for further analysis.

These seven were subject to initial economic appraisal. From this, we identified two corridor options that offered best value for further investigation. These two options were a corridor linking Bedford to Cambridge via the Sandy area, and a corridor linking Bedford to Cambridge via the Hitchin/Letchworth area. We evaluated these options in detail, considering everything from the infrastructure requirements, construction cost and demand for travel on each route, to geographic and environmental impacts.

Western Section Phase 1 – Complete work between Oxford and Bicester.

Western Section Phase 2 – Provide a link between Oxford, Bicester, Milton Keynes and Bedford, and Milton Keynes and Aylesbury.

Central Section – Preferred corridor identified as Bedford – Sandy – Cambridge.

Eastern Section – A study to consider options to enhance rail services between Cambridge and Norwich and Ipswich.

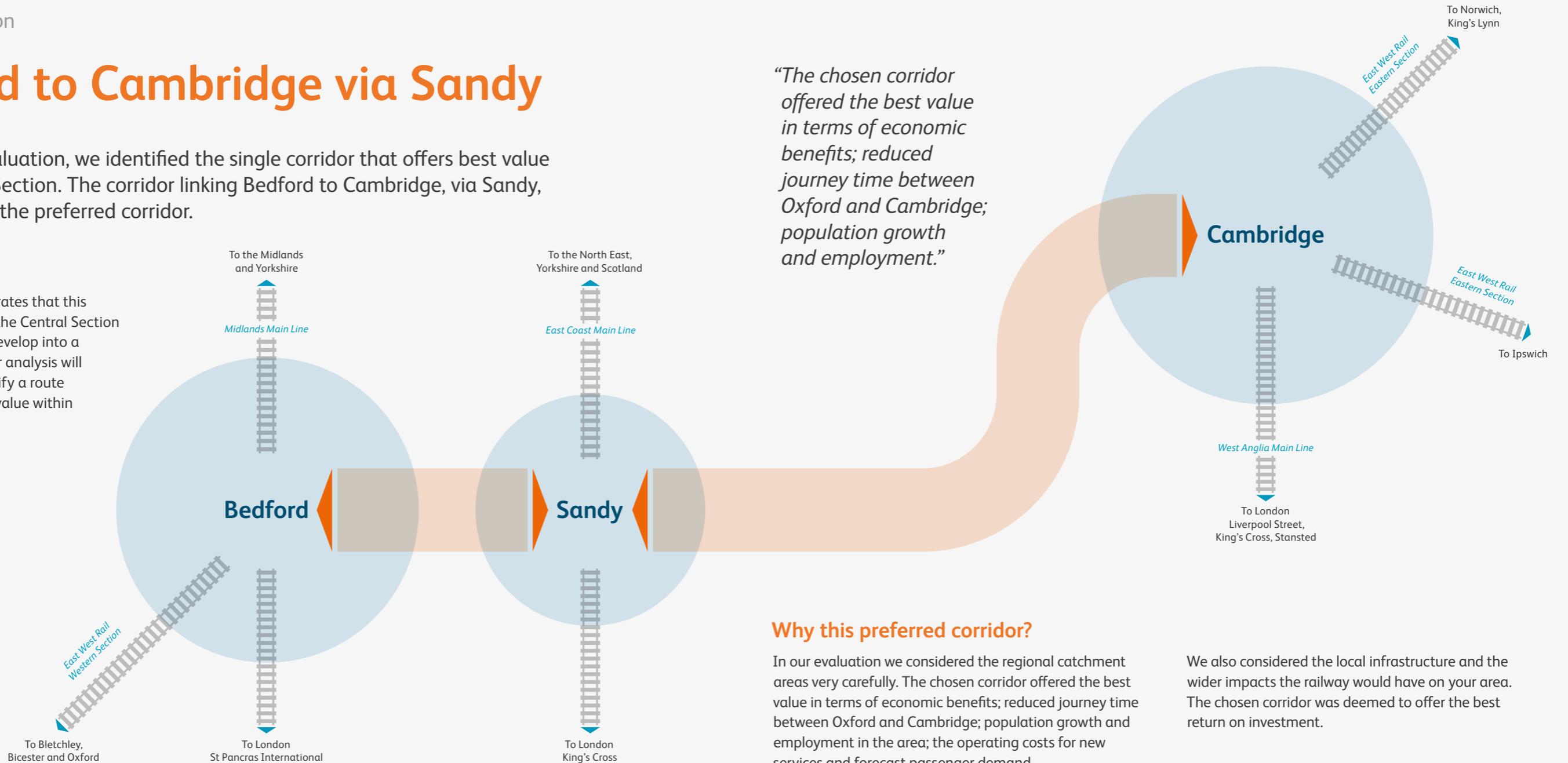
Recommendation

# Bedford to Cambridge via Sandy

Through our evaluation, we identified the single corridor that offers best value for the Central Section. The corridor linking Bedford to Cambridge, via Sandy, was selected as the preferred corridor.

## Viability

Our analysis demonstrates that this preferred corridor for the Central Section has the potential to develop into a viable scheme. Further analysis will now continue to identify a route which offers the best value within this preferred corridor.



*“The chosen corridor offered the best value in terms of economic benefits; reduced journey time between Oxford and Cambridge; population growth and employment.”*

## Why this preferred corridor?

In our evaluation we considered the regional catchment areas very carefully. The chosen corridor offered the best value in terms of economic benefits; reduced journey time between Oxford and Cambridge; population growth and employment in the area; the operating costs for new services and forecast passenger demand.

We also considered the local infrastructure and the wider impacts the railway would have on your area. The chosen corridor was deemed to offer the best return on investment.

## Next steps

## Funding and further analysis to define a specific route

Now that we have a preferred corridor, we will continue to work with the East West Rail Consortium, DfT and industry partners to progress the development and assess route options. We anticipate that this will take between one and a half to two years.

During the next phase, we will consider broad routings within the chosen corridor. This work will help us to understand how we manage the connections with the existing railway infrastructure in the Bedford, Sandy and Cambridge areas.

We will be working with the Consortium, local authorities and key stakeholders as part of our route identification.

You can find out more at [networkrail.co.uk/East-West-Rail](https://networkrail.co.uk/East-West-Rail)



## FAQs

## Frequently asked questions

### When could the new rail link be opened?

We do not yet know the date when the Central Section rail link could open. Currently, we have an illustrative programme, assuming funding and consents approval, which shows a possible completion of the scheme in the early 2030's.

### How will this affect landowners and property owners?

As the development of the Central Section is still in the early planning stages, it is difficult for us to understand the potential impacts on specific land and property owners within the wide geographical area of the preferred corridor area. However, it is likely that some land and property owners will be impacted. We are working with the East West Rail Consortium, local authorities and key stakeholders at this stage to develop routing options and detailed alignments within the preferred corridor. As our understanding grows through this development process, we will consult with all impacted land and property owners and identify possible steps to reduce the potential impact.

### How will this scheme be funded?

Network Rail proposes to work with EWR Consortium, DfT and industry partners, to establish potential funding sources for remaining development stages and construction.

### Will journey times be improved?

Yes. Further work is required to accurately estimate any journey times between Oxford and Cambridge. Our initial estimations believe the journey time between Oxford and Cambridge with the Central Section could be between one to one and a half hours.

### When will we be consulted on this?

We will consult with all stakeholders and potentially affected communities extensively as we develop the proposals for the Central Section and consider detailed alignments within the preferred corridor. This consultation will form a key element of our development of the Central Section in preparation for a future application for consent to deliver the Central Section.

You can find out more at [networkrail.co.uk/East-West-Rail](https://www.networkrail.co.uk/East-West-Rail)

Network Rail National Helpline **03457 11 41 41**

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