



Stephen Hammond MP
Under Secretary of State for Transport
Department for Transport
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Reply to:
Cllr Janet Blake
Chair East West Rail Joint Delivery Board
Buckinghamshire County Council
County Hall
Walton Road
Aylesbury
HP20 1UY

www.eastwestrail.org.uk
Date 11 November 2013

Dear Minister,

EAST WEST RAIL: COMMITMENT TO OUR LOCAL CONTRIBUTION

In April 2012 we wrote to the Department expressing our commitment in principle to use our best efforts to contribute £30 million and reasonable efforts to contribute a further £20 million toward the capital cost of the western section of East West Rail. Provided this condition was met, it was agreed that Network Rail would work in conjunction with the East West Rail Consortium, to deliver the scheme as set out by the Consortium in its November 2011 prospectus.

In July last year, as a result of this commitment, the Secretary of State was able to announce the funding of East West Rail in the Department's spending programme for Control Period 5 (2014 -19). This included an unexpected commitment to electrify Oxford – Bedford and the route's incorporation in the new strategic rail corridor between Southampton, the East Midlands and South Yorkshire.

Since then my colleagues in the Consortium have been working hard to translate our in-principle commitment to make a local contribution into a legally binding commitment. I am delighted to be able to tell you that the local authorities that comprise the membership of the Joint Delivery Board, established to provide the governance and oversight of our joint local contributions, have now fully signed up to the funding of their respective individual contributions. Specifically the fully committed contributions to date total £45.38 million made up as follows:

Local Authority	£ million
Aylesbury Vale District Council	5.36
Buckinghamshire County Council	10.16
Milton Keynes Council	7.65
Bedford Borough Council	2.6
Central Bedfordshire Council	4.2
Cherwell District Council	4.35
Oxfordshire County Council	11.06

This letter serves to notify you, in advance of the signing of the formal agreement between the Department and Buckinghamshire County Council as the lead local authority, that all the authorities above have either obtained full council approval or are in the process of doing so, to allocate funds to East West Rail and to pay the Department in accordance with agreed payment schedules that will form part of the formal agreement between us.

We believe that this is a matter to be celebrated, as significant funding of this nature by local government toward the cost of a rail infrastructure project is almost unprecedented. It is all the more unique inasmuch as all local authorities are, as I am sure you are aware, working with substantially reduced budgets. In agreeing to make this large contribution to East West Rail, we provide evidence of the importance we all attach to the benefits to the economy and the growth in new housing and jobs which we believe will be delivered following the implementation of this fantastic new infrastructure project; a project incidentally, which we have been promoting since 1995. Thus today's celebration represents for us an extraordinary milestone achievement following the many years of hard work we have invested in this project.

Our approach to funding will help deliver a more cost efficient railway carefully integrated with local needs, for we will be undertaking works both for the railway and around the railway as part of our contribution. This pioneering approach has all local authorities working with Network Rail to collectively deliver the project and the local authorities providing resources to help manage project requirements such as local rights of way and environmental issues. Where the local authority is better placed than Network Rail to undertake specific works such as highway changes, we will agree with Network Rail to undertake these from our own resources. The value of all these works will be part of our funding contribution.

In conclusion we very much look forward to the opening of East West Rail train services by December 2017. In parallel with the delivery programme for the western section of East West Rail, the broader East West Rail Consortium continue to devote resources to establish new railway links east of Bedford in our bid to re-open the final phase of the old varsity line to Cambridge.

Yours sincerely



Cllr Janet Blake
Cabinet Member for Transport and Planning
Buckinghamshire County Council
and
Chair of the East West Rail Joint Delivery Board

