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20th February 2025

BY EMAIL ONLY

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EW/1708/20250219

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Project No: _____

EW/1708

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: East West Railway Company Limited: Representation on the Harston Neighbourhood Plan for Submission under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

This consultation response on the Harston Neighbourhood Plan 2024 to 2041 (Submission Version - Regulation 15) is submitted on behalf of the East West Railway Company Limited (EWR Co). EWR Co is the organisation responsible for delivering East West Rail (EWR), a major rail project aiming to deliver both new and enhanced rail infrastructure to provide frequent, fast, and reliable rail links for communities between Oxford, Milton Keynes, Bedford, and Cambridge.

Between 14th November 2024 and 24th January 2025 EWR Co undertook a further round of non-statutory consultation (NSC) on the EWR project, details of which can be found on EWR Co's [consultation webpages](#). The purpose of this non-statutory consultation was to obtain feedback on the early project designs, including areas where EWR Co is considering options, whilst the consultation feedback will be taken into account as the design of the project is developed in more detail. Feedback will also be used to review potential opportunities and inform plans to mitigate the impacts of the EWR project. A statutory consultation is proposed for later in 2025, where more detailed information about the project is to be presented before the proposals are finalised and an application for a Development Consent Order is submitted.

Figures 1 and 2 (enclosed) have been produced to show the options for the proposed design of EWR at this stage within the context of the Harston parish boundary and designated neighbourhood area.

Further details of the EWR proposals for the part of the route within the Harston designated neighbourhood area are contained in Chapter 15 of the consultation document which can be found [here](#). This chapter proposes the following EWR infrastructure interventions within the Harston neighbourhood area:

- A new section of railway to pass south of Harston village and connect to the Shpreth Branch Royston Line forming a new Hauxton Junction;
- Diversion of the Shepreth Branch Royston Line over the new East West Rail westbound lines.
- Two new passing loops as part of the new Hauxton Junction:

- The westbound passing loop would be located from south of Chapel Hill to Hauxton junction and join the Shepreth Branch Royston Line to the west of the existing M11 crossing.
- The eastbound passing loop would start approximately halfway between the existing Newton Road and London Road, joining the Shepreth Branch Royston Line again to the west of the existing M11 crossing.
- Re-alignment of A10 south of Harston on overbridge over new EWR railway;
- Closure of Harston, No.37 and Hayes level crossings;
- Newton to Harston connectivity options:
 - Option 1 would divert Newton Road to the south-west of the existing road, passing over the Shepreth Branch Royston Line via a bridge in its new location, before heading west to join the realigned A10 (see **Figure 1**).
 - Option 4 would provide a connection from Newton to Harston via London Road. North of the realigned highways overbridge, a new road connection would use the route of the former Shepreth Branch Line track to connect to Station Road, south of Harston. This would include an active travel route for pedestrians and cyclists (See **Figure 2**).
- London Road overbridge/realignment, Shelford Road underbridge/realignment, Baggot Farm accommodation overbridge (included in both of the above connectivity options);
- Option for new accessible overbridge east of the existing Harston level crossing, and;
- Other works such as temporary construction compounds, five balancing ponds, utilities diversions, and habitat creation within the neighbourhood area.

Figure 1 shows the proposals for Option 1 for maintaining connectivity between Newton and Harston, whilst Figure 2 shows the proposals for Option 4. Both figures show the proposed permanent and temporary EWR infrastructure interventions within the Harston neighbourhood area which are included in both connectivity options.

As part of the NSC, EWR Co asked for the community's feedback on Option 1 and 4 for the Newton and Harston connectivity options, due to the closure of Harston level crossing to accommodate the new railway infrastructure. Feedback was also sought regarding the option for a new accessible overbridge approximately 400m east of the existing Harston level crossing, which would be included in both connectivity options.

On the 14th November 2024 the Secretary of State for Transport issued Safeguarding Directions for the EWR project which require Local Planning Authorities to consult EWR Co on any application for planning permission that is located within the safeguarded area, prior to the determination of that application. The safeguarded area is a zone bounded by lines marked "Limits of Land subject to Safeguarding Direction" shown on plans annexed to the Directions. South Cambridgeshire District Council was issued with copies of the Safeguarding Direction and accompanying Guidance on the 14th November 2024. The documents for the Safeguarding Direction and the accompanying guidance that were issued to the Local Planning Authorities can be found at the following webpage: www.eastwestrail.co.uk/safeguarding.

At this stage, EWR Co's key comments on the Submission Version (Regulation 15) Harston Neighbourhood Plan are as follows:

Environmental features and designations identified within the Harston Neighbourhood Plan of relevance to the EWR project

Given the size and scale of the EWR project and the range of infrastructure interventions identified within Harston as set out above and shown within Figures 1 and 2, there is the potential for temporary and permanent impacts on environmental features identified within the draft Policies included in the Neighbourhood Plan, including on the following:

Policy HAR 2: Protecting and enhancing important landscape features within and around the built-up environment

- Landscape features referred to in Policy HAR2 including existing hedgerows, dense vegetation and trees; existing grass verges; and boundary ditches.

Policy HAR 3: Protecting and enhancing landscape character and setting in and around Harston village

- Settlement fringe area 3 (Northeast Fringes London/Shelford Road), area 4 (Southeast Fringes Station Road/ Newton Road) and area 5 (Southern Fringes and A10), which Policy HAR 3 seeks to protect and enhance;
- Important village and parish views H, K, L, N, M, and Q, which development proposals will be expected to respect and not adversely impact under Policy HAR 3; and
- Harston's village gateways on the A10, Newton Road and London Road, which Policy HAR 3 seeks to protect and enhance.

Policy HAR 4: Conserving and enhancing heritage assets in Harston

- The Drift trackway;
- Harston Mill and 50 Royston Road Manor Lodge/Mill Cottage;
- Sunbourn, Newton Road;
- Windmill Cottage, Newton Road; and
- ROC Post, Newton Road, all of which Policy HAR 4 seeks to conserve and enhance.

Policy HAR 9: Protecting and enhancing Harston's wider landscape character

- The Harston Farmlands and Harston Chalklands landscape character areas which Policy HAR 9 seek to conserve and enhance.

Policy HAR 10: Protecting and enhancing biodiversity in Harston parish

- The Rookery deciduous woodland, permanent pastures/meadows to the north and south of Station Road, Pollard willows stepping stone, and floodplain grazing marsh on the River Rhee/Cam, which Policy HAR 10 seeks to protect and enhance.

Policy HAR 13: Managing flood risk in Harston parish

- Drainage infrastructure associated with artesian wells, which Policy HAR 13 seeks to protect or improve; and
- Access to ditches, which Policy HAR 13 seeks to maintain.

Policy HAR 21: Protecting and enhancing rural routes

- The existing Public Rights of Way (ProW) network, which Policy HAR 21 seeks to protect the amenity value of.

In line with EWR Co's strategic ambitions, the EWR proposals seek to avoid impacts where possible, through the careful design of infrastructure in line with the ambitions set out in EWR Co's [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#). This is being done at the earliest stage of design to ensure that all aspects of environmental sustainability are robustly addressed, through embedding environmental design principles into the design requirements.

This has included considering existing baseline information, such as biodiversity data and historical records from local record centres and other major projects. In addition, survey work has been carried out since 2021 to collect data on air quality, noise levels, traffic behaviour and the natural environment.

This information has supported the development of the EWR proposals which have sought to avoid impacts. Where this has not been possible, the proposals presented at NSC include initial mitigation designs based on early assessment of potential environmental impacts. Mitigation set out in the proposals include:

- The potential areas of where noise mitigation measures, such as barriers or bunds, may be required.
- Areas of habitat enhancements and replacement, such as hedgerow improvements or woodland creation.
- Measures to maintain habitat connectivity, such as green bridges and mammal tunnels.
- Landscaping areas, such as the creation of woodland screening or earthworks.

Further consideration of the potential likely environmental impacts of the proposals and initial mitigations are described in the [Environmental Update Report](#) included as part of the EWR NSC. The mitigation proposals within Harston can be viewed on Figures 1 and 2.

Further design development will take place in parallel with the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and supporting surveys, modelling and technical assessments. Within the EWR [Environmental Impact EIA Scoping Report \(December 2024\)](#), landscape, visual amenity, historic environment, traffic and transport, and biodiversity are identified as topics which will form part of the EIA to be undertaken for the EWR project. An assessment of these topics will consider how the project will affect environmental features within Harston, taking into account those identified in the Harston Neighbourhood Plan as highlighted above. As part of this process, appropriate mitigation will be identified to address any potentially likely significant effects, and wider topic strategies will be adopted to help secure effective responses to the EWR proposals.

Policy HAR 21: Protecting and enhancing our rural routes and strengthening connections within the village through an improved network of active travel rural route

Policy HAR 21 aims to maintain and enhance the existing rural footpath networks and sets out aspirations for improving connectivity between different parts of the village through the rural route network. At this stage of the EWR design development, the proposals have the potential to interact with Aspirational Routes 1, 2, 3 and 4:

Route 1 Station to Newton Road – EWR Co’s current proposals are that, in order to enable the new grade-separated junction, Harston level crossing would be closed. EWR Co is considering proposals for the construction of a new accessible Newton overbridge to the east of the existing Harston level crossing, as shown on Figures 1 and 2. This would provide an alternative route for pedestrians, cyclists and other non-motorised users between Newton and Harston after the level crossing is closed. The Newton overbridge would connect to The Drift footpath which currently leads to the No.37 level crossing, thus offering additional circular walking routes. Furthermore, the existing Station to Newton Road will be modified to enhance the pedestrian experience, which is made possible as a result of the proposed traffic diversion away from the road following the Harston level crossing closure.

Route 2 Newton Road over Rowley Hill – EWR Co’s proposal for Newton to Harston connectivity Option 1 would divert Newton Road to the south-west of the EWR route passing over the realigned Shrepreth Branch Royston line and extending westwards to join the realigned A10. The realignment of Newton Road would intersect with this aspirational route. The alternative connectivity option (Option 4) would have a temporary impact on this aspirational route due to the route intersecting with utilities construction zone.

Route 3 London Road to Shelford Road and Route 4 London Road to The Drift ‘permissive’ – EWR Co’s current proposals includes an active travel route for pedestrians and cyclists via London Road. This proposed active travel route will include a proposed footpath diversion to the north of the new railway connecting to The Drift, following the closure of the level crossing No.37. The potential new accessible Newton overbridge would connect to The Drift and Newton Road, providing additional circular walking routes. The EWR proposals would therefore support the development of Route 3 and Route 4.

Policy HAR 27: Station Road (SIG Roofing Site)

Policy HAR 27 allocates land at Station Road, currently the SIG roofing site, for redevelopment to housing. As stated in our previous response, at this stage of EWR's design development, there is a partial conflict of the land identified for proposed housing site at Station Road and land required for EWR.

EWR requests that the land within the EWR safeguarded area, as shown in Figure 3, is removed from the proposed housing allocation at Station Road. The land required by EWR is proposed for woodland habitat creation and the embankment for the proposed down main track.

It should be noted that the EWR proposals involve the closure of Harston level crossing to the south of this site, and therefore vehicles will not be able to access this site from Newton Road to the south. EWR Co is considering the option for a pedestrian overbridge over the proposed railway to allow for active travel of non-motorised users from Station Road to Newton Road.

Making Views Heard

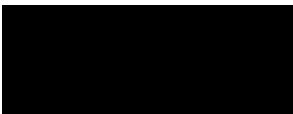
EWR Co recognises that the Parish Council and local community may have concerns about the potential impacts from EWR that could arise within the Parish, both during construction and once the scheme is operational. As part of the EWR design development, EWR Co is assessing these potential impacts and how they could be mitigated. We are committed to regular engagement with communities and businesses potentially affected by the construction and operation of the project as we design the proposals, plan our approach to construction, and build the railway. We are also keen to work with local stakeholders, including the Parish Council, to consider how EWR can contribute to local nature objectives and improving active travel routes in the Parish.

Furthermore, EWR Co will develop and submit a draft Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application for the EWR project. The CoCP will set out a range of mitigation measures and principles which contractors would be required to follow when building the project, including engaging with stakeholders and the community.

Going forward, there will be further opportunities for the public and stakeholders—including the Parish Council—to provide their views on the proposals prior to the submission of the application for a DCO, including through the Cambridge City and Surrounding Areas Local Representative Group, which the Parish Council have a standing invitation to attend as members. Further information on the Local Representative Groups, including regarding previous meetings, can be found on the EWR website. EWR Co would welcome further discussion with the Parish Council, either at the quarterly Local Representative Group meetings or in separate meetings which can be arranged at the Parish Council's request.

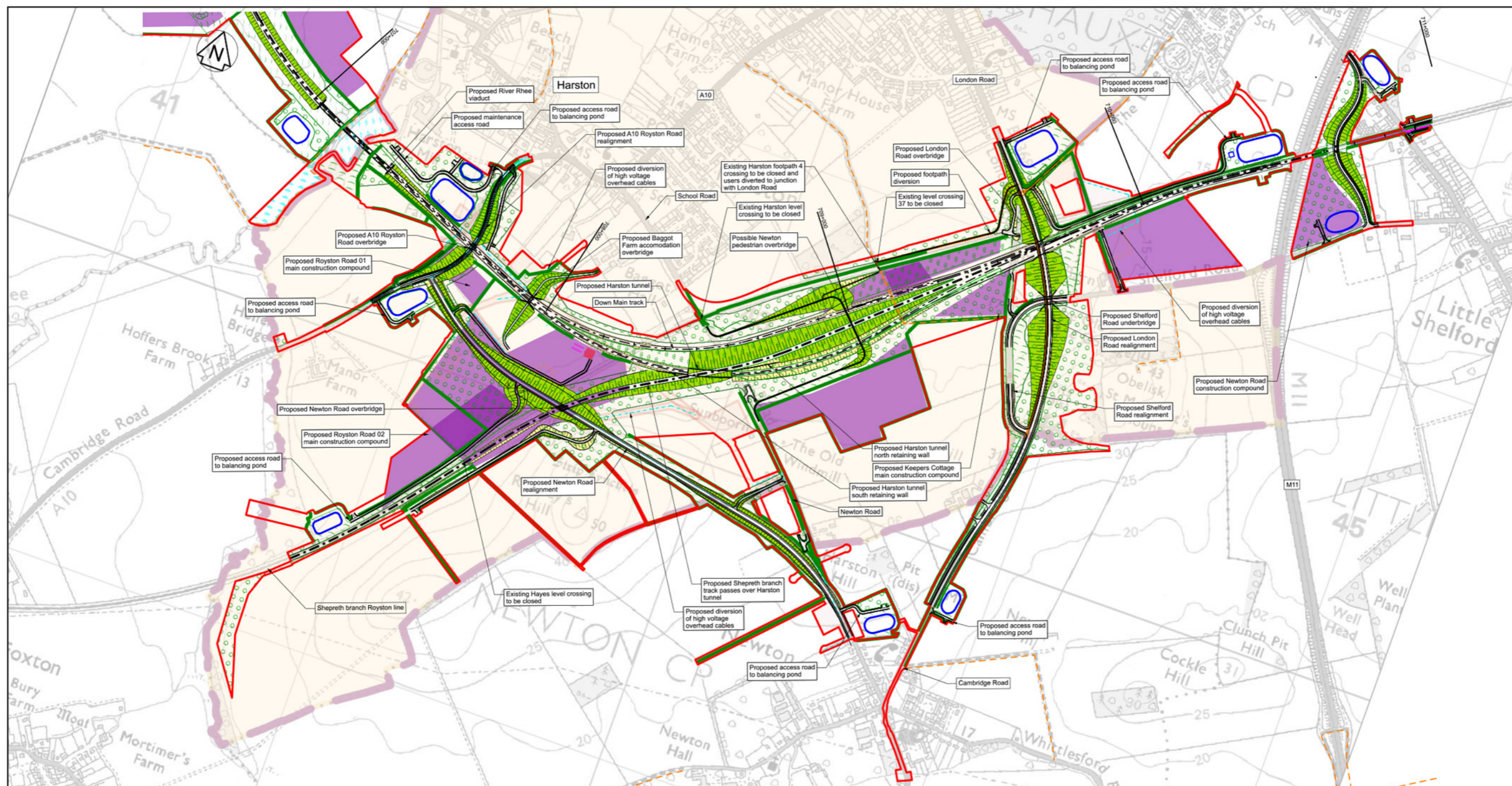
We hope that the above response is helpful, however, should you require any clarification or further information in respect of the EWR project, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully,



Matthew Barron
Principal Planner

Figure 1: EWR design proposals including connectivity Option 1 within the Harston Neighbourhood Area



Key

- Draft Order Limits
- - - - EWR alignment
- 100+000 Chainage (metres)
- Permanent highway (public and private)
- Construction & logistic sites
- Telecoms compound

- Engineering earthworks (embankment)
- Engineering earthworks (cutting)
- Landscape mitigation earthworks (embankment)
- Landscape mitigation earthworks (cutting)

- Habitat creation - woodland
- Habitat creation - grassland
- Habitat creation - wetland
- Preliminary utilities diversion
- Traction power compound
- Bridges and retaining walls

- x - x - x Public Right of Way - closed
- - - - Public Right of Way - existing
- Balancing pond (indicative)
- Habitat creation - hedgerow
- Designated Neighbourhood Area
- Parish Boundary

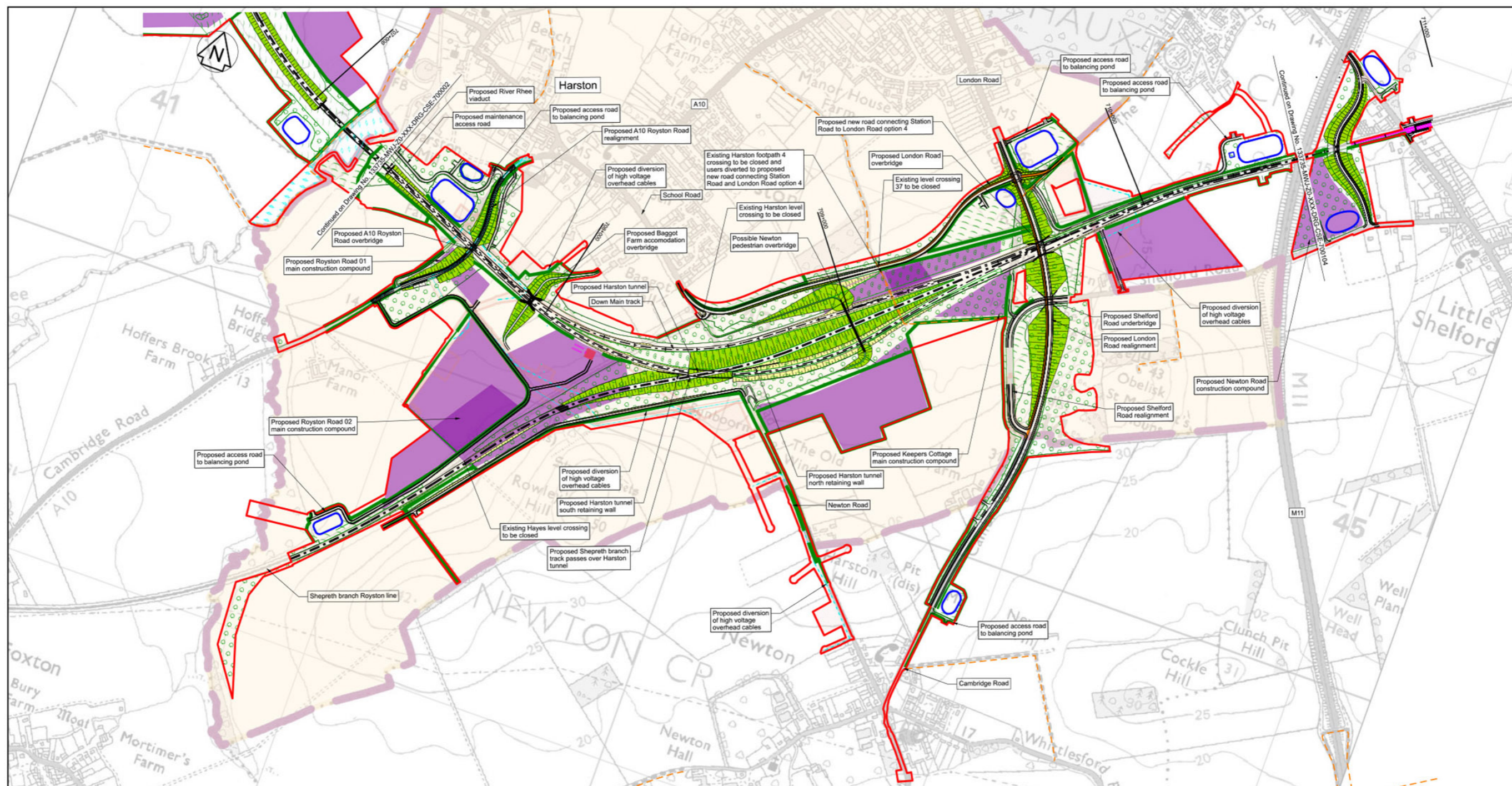


HARSTON – EWR PROPOSALS INCLUDING NEWTON TO HARSTON CONNECTIVITY OPTION 1

NOT TO SCALE



Figure 2: EWR design proposals including connectivity Option 4 within the Harston Neighbourhood Area



Key <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Draft Order Limits - - - - EWR alignment 100+000 Chainage (metres) Permanent highway (public and private) Construction & logistic sites Telecoms compound 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engineering earthworks (embankment) Engineering earthworks (cutting) Landscape mitigation earthworks (embankment) Landscape mitigation earthworks (cutting) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Habitat creation - woodland Habitat creation - grassland Habitat creation - wetland Preliminary utilities diversion Traction power compound Bridges and retaining walls 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - x - x - x Public Right of Way - closed - - - - Public Right of Way - existing Balancing pond (indicative) Habitat creation - hedgerow Designated Neighbourhood Area Parish Boundary 	
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 East West Rail logo with 'Jv' branding

HARSTON – EWR PROPOSALS INCLUDING NEWTON TO HARSTON CONNECTIVITY OPTION 4

NOT TO SCALE

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Figure 3: Interaction between draft EWR Order Limits/Safeguarded Area and proposed HAR 27 Station Road Housing allocation

