

Sir/Madam

As a railway users group, representing around 150 commuters and other users of the railway between Bicester and Oxford, we are deeply concerned that Network Rail has no clear plan for the construction of Phase 1 of the East-West Railway, as acknowledged in your Industry Strategic Business Plan for England & Wales for CP5.

This situation is outrageous considering that EWR is a Committed Scheme for Control Period 5, and work is expected to begin as early as April this year.

We are equally concerned that there is thus no consideration as to how service between Bicester, Islip and Oxford can be maintained as long as possible, and recommence as soon as possible.

Our members face appalling problems while the service is closed, given the terrible road congestion around Oxford at peak times. Buses do *not* resolve this, as they are subject to the same traffic as cars, and in fact add to congestion, as noted by the "Sustainable Transport Manager" at Oxford County Council (Noel Newson) some years ago. The true cost of the EWR/Evergreen 3 project will be met by them, in hours lost each day.

We therefore ask that you direct NR to produce and publish a comprehensive plan of works without further delay, and in addition to explain precisely how they will minimise the duration of closure.

Many thanks

Dr. Ian East

Chairman, Oxford-Bicester Rail Action Group

<http://www.obrag.org.uk/>