

East West Rail (EWR) Consultation 2026

Cambridge Eastern Train Care Centre (TCC)

Analysis of Proposals, by Fulbourn Forum

Introduction

1. The above consultation, which does not include, but is linked to, the proposal for a Cambridge East Station at Cherry Hinton (off Coldham's Lane), is for a Train Care Centre (TCC) located parallel to and just north of the existing single-track line between Teversham Road and Wilbraham Road in Fulbourn. The consultation, which runs until 9 June 2026, is understood to be the last before the proposal for the final section of the East West Rail into Cambridge (from Milton Keynes) is finalised and a Development Consent Order (DCO) is submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport in 2027.
2. Following a change to the Planning Act 2008, and via the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, the DCO process has been made "simpler and more efficient". In practice this means that where the government supports an application, it can be translated into rapid approval and project initiation within 18 months of submission.
3. A link to the **EWR Cambridge Eastern Train Care Centre Consultation 2026 - Option Selection Report** (referred to below as the Consultation Document (CD)) has been included in the email from Fulbourn Forum to which this analysis is attached. The Option Selection Report is not easily found online but includes the reasoning by EWR for the selection of Fulbourn for the TCC. The analysis below responds to that Report.

The public consultation at Fulbourn on Saturday 25 May 2026 only presented one option, that preferred by East West Rail, for the design and location of the TCC, identified in the CD as **CEA2 West of Wilbraham Road, Fulbourn (baseline)**. This has been selected as the Baseline as it is the closest connection to (central) Cambridge Station at the end of the EWR route. The CD considers three other options, one other at Fulbourn (CEA1) and two near Foxton, identified as CSM1 West of Barrington Road, Foxton, and CSM2 West of Barrington Road, Foxton. The following comments will mainly consider CEA2 and its impact on Fulbourn, although with occasional reference to the other three options for comparison.

4. CEA2 West of Wilbraham Road has been chosen as the preferred site largely due to the perceived railway operations benefit, **overriding the significant impacts** on the Fulbourn community, the local environment and landscape, the initial construction difficulties, water resources, Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan policies, and its **Green Belt location**.

Train Care Centre overview

5. The facility **will provide stabling and servicing for a total of nine trains**, six trains at 120m length, and three trains at 244m length. **Only the six shorter trains are part of the EWR network**, while the three longer trains are providing a facility for other networks (assumed to be the main London to Cambridge and beyond), due to lack of capacity at Cambridge. The length of each stabling track is around 300m. This expansion to provide facilities for other networks has never been considered in the past and will greatly increase the impact on Fulbourn.
6. **The TCC will be a dedicated 24 hour operational servicing facility, operated seven days per week / 365 days per year.**

7. The site contains an automatic vehicle inspection system, a train wash (up to 60m in length,) train stabling, site lighting, roadways and walkways, fencing and security measures, office and welfare facilities, plant and equipment for train servicing including associated plant rooms. This is a large industrial development.

Infrastructure

8. It is understood that the existing single-track would be double-tracked as far as the entrance to the new siding to the TCC, while the overhead electricity lines would be extended from Cambridge into the Care Centre. All trains will be either fully electric (mainline) or hybrid battery/electric (EWR). **The Fulbourn CEA2 and CEA1 Wilbraham Road sites do not have the power required for the facility.** It is planned that this will come from the Substation at Gazelle Way in Teversham, to the north of the railway by the Tesco level crossing. The underground cable connecting the two sites is shown to come through Fulbourn village, along Fulbourn Old Drift, Hinton Road, Pierce Lane, the High Street, Church Lane, Station Road, and Wilbraham Road. This will cause huge disruption to village traffic, the quality of the road surface, and to the many living along the route. It is noted that the Barrington Road, Foxton options are already served by overhead electric lines.

9. The Consultation Document states that **expandability should be considered**, but then states that none of the four options are expandable due to site restrictions and lack of capacity on the main line. However, the Wilbraham Road option CEA2 would appear to have space available, so it must be considered that should double-tracking be extend to Newmarket and beyond in the future, then **there may be demands to increase the facility with extra tracks**, thus greatly increasing the likely impact on the Fulbourn environment and its residents

Complexity of Delivery

10. **Construction traffic is planned to come from the A11**, into Gt Wilbraham down Mill Road, and then to Fulbourn along Wilbraham Road. These routes are on small C-roads and, in places, along residential roads, where, according to EWR, interaction with the public is considered to be unavoidable, increasing the safety risk. Access to the site for construction traffic is likely to be from the blind corner by the access to Queen's Farm. This access route from the A11 is the same as that already used by many heavy and large vehicles daily, coming to the S&B Herba Mill, the Queen's Farm industrial sites, and the local weighbridge, all in Wilbraham Road, Fulbourn, just before the level crossing into Station Road. The intensification of large lorries/HGVs on this route for the several years of construction is surely unsustainable and the Consultation Document flags it as a concern.

11. **The predicted construction traffic numbers are highest for CEA2 Wilbraham Road**, being between 51% and 70% lower at the Barrington Road sites. The reason is the large amount of earthworks required due to the cut/fill and import/export material requirements (143,000m³) for the CEA2 option being significantly more than any of the other three location options. All unwanted material is taken off-site and not reused in any way.

Environmental Issues and Concerns

12. The Consultation Document (CD)states that **"CSM1 Barrington Road is the preferred option for Environment** due to the significant decrease in greenhouse gas emissions; reduced agricultural land take, potential heritage impacts, and indirect impact to community receptors; whilst presenting a minor improvement for BREEAM and wider EWR sustainability strategic objectives."

13. The CEA2 Wilbraham Road location **affects around 16ha of farm holding**, while the sites at Barrington Road affect 10ha and 12 ha respectively.

14. **Sewage storage and Operational odour** is the result of the activities of train cleaning, light maintenance (pollution?), and emptying of 'controlled emission toilets'. The CD states that the close proximity of the residential properties to location CEA2 Wilbraham Road "may give rise to potential

odour impacts from fugitive releases at initial transfer to surrounding receptors.” Toilet waste will be stored on site and removed by road tanker “on a periodic basis.” This period is not defined. At the Consultation event it was given as either every day or perhaps twice a week. No such concerns exist for the Barrington Road sites as they are close to a sewage treatment works and there are no surrounding receptors.

15. **Construction Carbon is greatest for location CEA2 Wilbraham Road** – 1,150tCO₂e. At the two sites at Barrington Road, Foxton, there is a decrease of 40% and 53% respectively.

16. **Community impacts are greatest for location CEA2 Wilbraham Road**, affecting the most residential properties. The figure quoted in the CD is given as approx. 260, being 4 to 4.4 times more, respectively, than the two sites at Barrington Road. However, there is no information to support the figure for Fulbourn, so may be an underestimate. The roads or parts of road affected will include Wilbraham Road, Station Road, Apthorpe Street, Cow Lane, Highfield Gate, Cox’s Drove, Woodyard Close, Farehurst Park, and Teversham Road. The new housing development of 110 dwellings at Farehurst Park, still under construction, will be significantly affected.

17. **The community impacts not assessed** in the Consultation Document are those associated with the increased train movements, not only to the residential properties mentioned above but to the new housing being built along the railway line at Orchard Park, a development of 204 dwellings. There is also a currently unoccupied new development of 10 flats next to the railway line at the end of Fulbourn Old Drift. Currently, there is just one small train of two or three carriages (40 to 60m long) passing every half hour, between around 6.30am and 10.45pm. With nine long trains (6no. 120m and 3no. 244m) being stabled, **there will be an additional 18 train movements along the line from late evening through to early morning**. Subsequently, in addition to the constant noise of the Care Centre itself, residents will experience train movement noise and light pollution during the quietest parts of the night, particularly those in closest proximity.

18. **Ecology, Biodiversity, and BNG (biodiversity net gain)** – the Consultation Document (CD) identifies that the TCC proposals are located within and are adjacent to areas of water dependency, including the Fulbourn, Teversham, and Little Wilbraham Fens. **No field surveys have been undertaken** (relying on aerial photos and third-party info), and it confirms that hydrological modelling is required. However, it does claim that “No irreplaceable habitat was identified within any of the option boundaries or within a 30m buffer”. **This is profoundly wrong. Contained within the CEA2 Wilbraham Road option boundary is the chalk stream emanating from the active spring at Poor Well in Cow Lane.** This is an irreplaceable, priority habitat, and currently Fulbourn’s most reliable spring. In addition, it is identified that the Fulbourn TCC site lies both within and adjacent to areas mapped in the **Local Nature Recovery Strategy** for tree and woodland planting and other biodiversity improvements, being at the Cambridge end of the National Trust’s Wicken Fen Vision.

19. **Water Resources** – it is claimed that none of the options cross any watercourses or water bodies. As outlined in 18. above, this is wrong. **The proposed siding for the CEA2 Wilbraham Road option begins before the chalk stream emanating from Poor Well, all clearly within the EWR footprint**, resulting in significant infrastructure works over, and in the vicinity of the chalk stream. In addition, the CD identifies that there will be an area of **surface water flood risk** in the location of the existing ‘drain’, which is their definition of the chalk stream! This false observation is obviously the result of no field surveys having been undertaken.

Both the CEA1 and the CEA2 Wilbraham Road options are located within a **Water Framework Directive (WFD) groundwater body: Cam and Ely Ouse chalk**. They are also located within the Source Protection Zone 3 (SPZ3) of Anglian Water public water supplies, “so would have a greater possible interaction with sensitive receptors” (Consultation Document). On top of the above important facts, it should be noted that the ground water levels in this area (which in the first half of the 20th Century was wetland) are

currently significantly reduced due to the high levels of water abstraction from the Fleam Dyke Pumping Station (a major contributor to Cambridge's water supply), only one and half miles away. Even with this abstraction, it should be noted that much of the Farehurst Park development is built on raised development platforms of up to 1.5m to take account of the potential for flooding, now exacerbated by the weather extremes resulting from climate change. Over the past five years we have had hot, dry summers but also two winters of very high rainfall when the all Fulbourn's springs ran strongly and localised field flooding was experienced.

Water Resources East (WRE), working with Cambridge Water, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency (EA) is well advanced with plans to bring new water sources to Cambridge (reservoir at Chatteris and pipeline from Grafham Water) with the intention that this would allow a reduction in the abstraction from Fleam Dyke Pumping Station of up to 60% as part of the area's nature recovery strategy. This could allow the water table to rise by up to 2 metres, allowing the local springs to run all year round and the chalk streams to regain some of their past significance. The timescale for this is likely to be within the next 10 to 12 years.

Although the proposed **train wash facility** is said to be designed to use recycled grey water, some of this contaminated water will, at times, need to be disposed of. This issue is not addressed in the Consultation Document, but the answer given at the Consultation Event was that this would go to on-site attenuation basins. However, this gives rise to the discarded water seeping into the ground and into the chalk aquifer below, particularly of concern once the water table has been allowed to rise in the near future.

20. **Noise** - The CD states that **"the introduction of noise from the TCC is expected to result in a change in the character of the noise climate, especially at night"**. It is confirmed that the CEA2 Wilbraham Road option will affect significantly more residential properties than any of the other three options. At the Barrington Road, Foxton options, **no** residential properties would be affected within a 50m radius. It is surely unacceptable that Fulbourn residents should be subjected to this intrusion in their lives. **This noise from the activities of a large industrial installation, mostly at night, is compounded by the Traction Substation which emits a continuous source of tonal noise.** The train wash facility is located just behind the houses in Cox's Drove and Woodyard Close – houses not all shown on the consultation maps.

"Activity and noise generated by the TCC would reduce tranquillity, and lighting would reduce the darkness of the surrounding farmland". (Consultation Document)

Landscape and Visual Impacts

21. **CEA2 Wilbraham Road would be on a slight rise in the low-lying farmland in the Fulbourn Fen Edge Chalkland LCA (Landscape Character Assessment).** This 'slight rise' is likely to be in the order of up to 2m above the surrounding land (the railway line behind the Farehurst Park development is on an embankment). Therefore the rail infrastructure and associated buildings will be elevated in the landscape with the proposed buildings and structures of 7m high being effectively up to 9m high (higher than a two storey house with a pitched roof). The cut and fill required for the TCC will "introduce an uncharacteristic level change in the fenland landscape".(Consultation Document)

It is confirmed that the taller elements of the TCC will be visible from the public footpath which runs alongside the Cudde Ditch, and from the Harcamlow Way footpath which runs alongside the Little Wilbraham River, being even more visible in the winter when deciduous vegetation is not in leaf. In addition, the TCC lighting at night would introduce significant light pollution into what are currently views over dark farmland.

22. **Historic Environment** – direct impacts are defined as physical impacts to a heritage asset, while indirect impacts are defined as impacts through changes to the setting of a heritage asset. The TCC

would be visible from the Fulbourn Conservation Area from the area around Lanthorn Stile and The Chantry. East West Rail acknowledges the existence of a Scheduled Monument: 1465057, Iron Age ritual enclosure containing a Bronze Age barrow, and Roman cemetery, in proximity to the CEA2 and CEA1 options, located along the northern edge of Fulbourn, just beyond Lanthorn Stile, and considered to be nationally significant. With the proposed TCC also being between scheduled monuments within 1km to the east and west, the Consultation Document accepts that “there is likely to be substantial prehistoric archaeology in the area of the (Fulbourn) options.” No excavations have yet been undertaken in confirmation but this must be essential.

East West Rail Co’s sustainability Strategic Objectives (SO) and BREEAM considerations (Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method)

23. The Consultation Document clearly states that the CEA2 Wilbraham Road option is the one that **detracts most from the sustainability Strategic Objectives**. The risks identified in the CD include “being within the impact zone for three SSSIs, potential impact on high distinctiveness and priority habitats, archaeological risk due to close proximity to a scheduled monument, and indirect impacts to a high number of residential receptors. This option would also be the most carbon intensive”.

Designations

24. The CEA2 Wilbraham Road option is in **the Cambridge Green Belt** under both the adopted and the emerging Local Plans. Both Barrington Road, Foxton options avoid the Green Belt. Government attaches great importance to green belts, and openness cannot be retained with the large industrial complex of a Train Care Centre in the landscape. CEA2 is also contrary to Policy FUL/03 Creating a Network of Green Infrastructure of the Fulbourn Neighbourhood Plan. This seeks to encourage and facilitate appropriate development proposals that will consolidate and extend the network of green infrastructure in the village. The TCC project does not achieve that outcome.

Conclusion

25. The issues outlined above, clearly demonstrate the unsuitability of the Fulbourn sites for the location of a Train Care Centre. Other sites would clearly be more suitable on both environmental and social implications. No so-called ‘optimal’ proposal should ever be located in a small rural village, significantly impacting the green and blue environment, the landscape, the tranquillity (especially at night), additional traffic, the night sky, and many inhabitants. This proposal has been brought forward with almost no advance warning, no early consultation with the public or the authorities, and no detailed field studies to properly identify impacts. Fulbourn and its residents will be subjected to the long term imposition of large scale industrial infrastructure and the resulting large scale environmental harm for a claimed small benefit to the EWR operational agenda. In due course, this harm may be exacerbated by an increase in freight train movements as well.

In addition, although the TCC is presented as an EWR project, the facts tell another story. Three of the proposed sidings are not for use by EWR. They are for three 244m long trains that operate on the main London to Cambridge (and beyond) line. This appears to be highly inappropriate development by stealth, with infrastructure for an unrelated rail network being included in a Development Consent Order for another project. East West Rail must look elsewhere for a site that has considerably less harmful impacts.

David Cottee

Fulbourn Forum for community action

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