

Dear David Hughes, CEO EWR

Response to EWR Consultation June 2026 from Woburn Sands Town Council:

Please find below Woburn Sands Town Council's response to the non-statutory consultation.

Woburn Sands Town Council would like to thank East West Rail for the opportunity to provide feedback on the 2026 Consultation. The Council and residents broadly support the benefits that improved rail connectivity and the proposed relocation of Woburn Sands station could bring to the area. However, we ask that the following concerns and recommendations are carefully considered as the project develops, to ensure that the needs of the local community, environment and infrastructure are fully addressed.

Important issues for Woburn Sands

Confirmation of the specific areas impacted by the EWR development, specifically the areas outlined in red adjacent to the rail line.

1. Keeping the Woburn Sands level crossing open mitigating community severance between the two parts of the parish of Woburn Sands across the railway;
2. Keeping Woburn Sands Station within the envelope of Woburn Sands, accessible to all our current population and surrounding parishes;
3. Enabling Woburn Sands to use all new train services with a fully functioning station for both local stations on the Marston Vale Line (MVL) and fast trains between Oxford to Bedford/ Cambridge.

Marston Vale Line - Support for Route-wide Proposals

In general we are in support of the proposals, with the exception of the closing of Bow Brickhill Station.

1. Trains schedule

The schedule for trains will provide a much more reliable service, enabling residents to use Woburn Sands station to commute between Oxford and Bedford/ Cambridge, and Universal Studios.

We hope that this will also provide better connectivity to London and north via both West Coast Mainline and Thameslink, as currently most commuters drive to stations on those lines rather than use MVL due to lack of trust in the service.

New infrastructure - Woburn Sands

Woburn Sands has a population of circa 5,000 residents with the neighbouring parishes of Aspley Guise, Aspley Heath and Wavendon having a further 7,000 residents. With the planned SEMK expansion the population forecast to grow by an additional 3,000+ households. Many of these residents will use the station in the future.

Universal Studios will change the local circumstances further with the potential for residents and visitors to be using Woburn Sands station, and potentially Woburn Sands in new ways.

2. New station proposals

We welcome the detailed plans for the new station at Woburn Sands, particularly the work put in to enable residents to imagine what it would look like. The design principles make the potential for a brilliant addition to the town. WSTC and residents would like to be part of the design process, to enable details, style and important elements have local input.

The siting of the new station, and plans to develop a pedestrian, bikeable and accessible route across the railway are welcome. The location makes the station walkable for most residents, including more reachable for those on the western areas.

There are still a lot of elements to consider integrating plans with SEMK that requires further consultation and clarity, particularly on the implications for traffic on which we have not seen any modelling.

As previously we request:

- Private funding for the build of the new station is a concern, particularly in view of the developer, O&H, already losing some of their land. S106 Tariff monies need to be ringfenced for the benefit of funding community infrastructure and not for funding the building of a new station. The new station must not disadvantage our community in the services it will need for increased residents and passengers.
- Arrangements need to be made for the Loop bus to stop at the new Station and be able to continue its route effectively. Planning needs to include the planned MRT despite Woburn Sands not being included in the first phase of plans.

3. Environmental and Heritage Concerns

We would really like to emphasise the importance of protecting Woburn Sands' rural character and biodiversity.

Key concerns and requests:

- When constructing the new station and creating the access routes for it: ***Minimise the loss of mature trees, hedgerows, wildlife habitats and historic footpaths. Demonstrate how biodiversity net gain will be achieved through meaningful environmental enhancement rather than simple replacement planting.***
- The need to preserve the area's historic and environmental setting, including links to the Greensand Ridge and local heritage: ***Undertake further engagement on environmental mitigation proposals.***

4. Multi-storey car park

We think the new multi-storey car-park will be needed, and the design into accessibility, and connectivity for bikes, pedestrians and local residents is welcome. Multi-storey car parks can be locations for anti-social behaviour, as well as feeling unsafe for commuters at night and alone. Examples built relatively recently at Leighton Buzzard and Bletchley which leak water onto commuters, have uneven walking surfaces and are unsafe in icy weather restricting spaces the whole upper level.

We anticipate that this will include space for bicycles, e bikes, scooters and EV charging.

- The scale and visual impact of the proposed multi-storey car park and the need for high-quality design, sustainability measures and sensitive integration into the local landscape: ***We would like to see it the station and car park designed to a high architectural standard that respects the character of Woburn Sands. Incorporate sustainable features such as green roofs, living walls, rainwater harvesting and low-carbon construction.***

Potential amenity needs pricing cooperation

There is the potential for the car park to provide parking for the Green 'buffer' area around the lake that will become a leisure area for Woburn Sands, potentially providing space for visiting teams for sports pitches. Details of how this could work needs to be explored further as we progress with design for this area.

5. Parking in residential areas

For consideration needs to be taken on the pricing of the car park and it has raised a number of valid concerns from residents. Residents are concerned that their residential streets, already busy with residents' parked cars, will have commuters parking who want to avoid parking charges in the car park. Therefore pricing for the multi-storey needs to be done in conjunction with local consultation and after traffic modelling is shared to avoid unintended consequences.

The Town Council would be happy to work with MKCC and yourselves to identify parking management measures where necessary.

- Pressure on nearby residential roads, including The Leys, Theydon Avenue and Parklands Estate: We would ask the risk of overspill parking in nearby residential streets, particularly Parklands Estate, The Groves, The Leys, Theydon Avenue and Bow Brickhill Road is thoroughly assessed

6. New road and Woodleys Farm Bridge connecting to grid roads

The clarity that there will be a bridge and road which will provide the key route into the multi-storey for vehicles is useful. We understand that there will be no vehicle access from Newport Road for private vehicles, but will enable pedestrians, bikes, and buses.

If the Woodleys Farm bridge becomes the most convenient way to cross the railway, it will attract traffic that currently avoids the area because of the level crossings. Your earlier modelling work specifically identified increased traffic on Hardwick Road and The Leys as a likely consequence of the bridge option.

7. Traffic and Road Congestion

- Whilst this is welcome in some ways, it creates the need for vehicles to be re-routed through Woburn Sands, up the High Street where children cross for school.
- Theydon Avenue will have increased pressure as a rat-run and is already used by heavy vehicles despite supposed restrictions.
- More traffic from Aspley Guise, Woburn and Junction 13 will cross the double roundabout, down Hardwick Road, The Leys and Bow Brickhill Road to reach the new access road.
- New traffic will also be directed from A5 and on the new Bow Brickhill Road towards Woburn Sands in addition to the traffic from SEMK.
- Traffic modelling must be shared so that residents can consider the future impact and potential mitigations put in place in advance, not after issues are created.
- There must be specific S106 monies to mitigate impacts of increased traffic by the new station and car park.

Key concerns and requests:

- Increased traffic congestion on Newport Road, Station Road and surrounding routes: ***From the traffic monitoring that has been done, we would ask that we are provided with a forecast of how the increased train frequencies will affect the level crossing closure times and local traffic.***

- Existing traffic problems being exacerbated, particularly at junctions such as Cranfield Road, Summerlin Drive: ***We would ask that you assess the cumulative impact on these surrounding streets.***

We would be very keen to see the traffic assessment document when it is released. Specifically for the following roads:

The Leys: This is arguably the most vulnerable road.

Your technical report specifically states that traffic could proceed from the bridge via The Leys and Hardwick Road and notes that improvements and parking restrictions may be necessary.

For residents this could mean:

- Loss of on-street parking.
- Double-yellow lines.
- Restrictions near junctions.
- More vehicles passing throughout the day.

The issue is not just traffic volume but road width. When cars are parked on both sides, parts of The Leys effectively operate as a single-lane road.

Hardwick Road: Hardwick Road is probably the street most likely to experience a noticeable change.

You have explicitly identified Hardwick Road as part of the route traffic could use after crossing the bridge. You have also stated that parking restrictions might be required.

For residents this raises several concerns:

- Reduced kerbside parking.
- More congestion at peak times.
- Increased difficulty exiting driveways.
- More noise from acceleration and braking.
- Increased pedestrian safety concerns for local facilities.

If parking restrictions are introduced, residents without off-street parking could be particularly affected.

Theydon Avenue: Drivers use this as a rat-run and so do heavy vehicles despite restrictions. It is already highly congested due to poor road layout, multiple pot holes, sharp bends and cars parked on both sides.

If congestion develops on: Hardwick Road, The Leys, Bow Brickhill Road and Theydon Avenue we need a clear traffic mitigation plan.

8. Level Crossing

Our understanding is that the Woburn Sands level crossing could be closed for approximately 30 minutes of every hour.

- We would like to see predictive figures for traffic queue flow clearance at the level crossing. This has the potential to be very disruptive for the Town.
- Minimising the time the level crossing down remains a key priority for our community to keep community severance to a minimum and enable pedestrians to walk and schools to operate.
- Effective traffic management and road planning is required at the level crossing / Cranfield Road junction out onto Newport Road. This is currently a crunch-point for back-logs as vehicles hold up traffic turning right into Cranfield Road.
- Cranfield Road junction with the Level Crossing is often flooded, pavements are not wide enough or accessible and pedestrians have to walk past vehicles with no protection. We would like to see a safer access for pedestrians that is separate from the traffic and is accessible.
- We request that EWR revisit the Network Rail approved plan for a footbridge at the school crossing to give children, parents and pedestrians safe access to the schools and recreation areas in Woburn Sands (MKCC and Central Beds). It is particularly dangerous for those with accessibility needs or with buggies.
- The long-term future of the level crossing: We need clarification of the long-term strategy for the level crossing, including whether closure is a future option and if that is the case.

9. Design of Woodley's Farm bridge

Due to having to clear the electrified lines, there is a potential for 10m high bridge. We are concerned that this will have a detrimental impact on the Green Buffer area, casting a long shadow over green space and the lake, potentially changing the ecosystem.

We would like to understand what the broad engineering requirements are from EWR in terms of scale and size and plans to mitigate the impact on residents and the environment. There appears to still be lack of clarity of who will build and pay for the new bridge. Residents need to understand where these decisions lie, and we need to be part of the design as it will have a huge bearing on whether the Green Buffer and lake is a pleasant space or becomes a prime local for anti-social behaviour.

We understand from MKCC that there are proposals for pedestrian access underneath the railway for redways. We would like to see plans for these, and we have concerns that is continuing the design of unsafe pedestrian access. Alternative plans mooted have suggested pedestrians will walk over the bridge next to traffic. This seems equally unsafe.

10. Paths to the new station and accessible routes

Many residents are concerned about the changes to the use of picturesque Fisherman's Path into a key route to the station. To make this accessible, there are concerns that it would destroy the nature of the current path.

Rather than determine only this route, we would ask that there is more direct consultations with residents, WSTC and SEMK developers so that as the new Green leisure area is developed the station access is integrated into those plans rather than the routes and approach predetermined.

The routes to the station will be determined by the design of the green space around the lake and without this close cooperation it could result in just a through path for commuters, destroying the value of the green space.

Specific concerns raised by residents:

Our residents feel that upgrading the alley to meet accessibility standards would likely require widening, paving, and lighting works that could result in the loss of mature trees, bushes, and wildlife habitats that have developed over many decades.

Additional concerns include:

- Loss of the alley's historic and natural character through increased lighting and urbanisation.
- Increased noise, litter, and footfall affecting nearby residents.
- Potential for antisocial behaviour and crime associated with creating a direct route from a transport hub into a residential area.
- Increased pedestrian and cycle traffic through Parklands and surrounding residential streets, potentially turning the estate into a transit corridor rather than a quiet neighbourhood.
- Risk of commuter overspill parking in residential streets, particularly due to anticipated level crossing closures and station access constraints.
- Concerns that these changes could reduce residents' quality of life, increase insurance costs, and negatively affect property values.
- These impacts are inconsistent with East West Rail's stated design principles relating to environment, community value, place, user focus, and safety.

Alternative Proposal

Rather than routing users through Fisherman's Path Alley, the residents propose directing walking, wheeling, and cycling traffic via alternative routes.

Claimed Benefits of the Alternative

Alternative routes:

- Preserve the alley, its mature vegetation, and wildlife habitats.
- Reduce commuter parking pressures within Parklands.
- Prevent Parklands becoming a through-route for non-residents.
- Maintain station access for local residents while discouraging unnecessary through-traffic.
- Improve safety by directing users along a more open, purpose-built route.
- Reduce noise, litter, and disturbance to residents.
- Avoid the cost of upgrading the alley.
- Better protect community wellbeing and the residential character of Parklands.

11. Construction of new station and track

Disruption due to construction traffic is of concern and we request agreement to timetabling of this traffic to minimise disruption.

EWR must not decommission the existing station in Woburn Sands before the new station is commissioned, built and open. The town cannot be left without a fully functioning station and level crossing preventing traffic and pedestrians at any time.

Proposed Construction Compound – Vandyke Close Main Concerns

The proposed construction compound located adjacent to the Vandyke Close area raises several concerns for local residents:

- Construction Traffic – ***Clarification is requested regarding proposed operating hours, anticipated daily vehicle movements and HGV Movements***
- Noise Impacts – ***Residents are concerned about the potential increase in noise associated with construction activities, including reversing alarms, loading and unloading operations, generators, plant machinery, and vehicle movements.***
- Lighting Impacts – ***The introduction of security lighting, CCTV infrastructure, and temporary construction lighting could result in increased light pollution and adversely affect nearby residential properties.***
- Loss of Public Footpath Access – ***The proposal appears to involve the closure of the existing public footpath running from Vandyke Close across the adjoining fields. This route is extensively used by residents for walking, dog walking, and access to the surrounding countryside. The loss of this amenity would have a significant impact on the local community.***
- Duration of the Compound – ***Residents would like confirmation of how long the compound will remain in place and whether the site will be fully restored to its previous condition following completion of the works.***

- Flood Risk and Ground Conditions – ***The proposed compound is located on land that regularly experiences standing water during periods of adverse weather. Further information is requested regarding flood risk assessments, drainage measures, and the suitability of the site for intensive construction use.***

Alternative Proposal –

Consideration should be given to combine the two compounds and site them where the main large plant will be.

Consideration should be given to locating the construction access point further along Cranfield Road rather than routing construction traffic through an established residential street.

A location with direct access from Cranfield Road or combining the large and small compounds could provide several benefits:

- Reduced impact on residential areas.
- Less conflict with parked vehicles and local traffic movements.
- Improved road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduced noise and disturbance to nearby homes.
- Direct access to the proposed worksite from a more suitable highway network.

This alternative may offer a more practical and less disruptive solution while still providing effective access to the construction area.

The Council could emphasise that residents generally support East West Rail and the relocation of Woburn Sands station, but seek stronger assurances that the scheme will be designed and delivered in a way that protects local communities, maintains connectivity, safeguards the environment and addresses the significant traffic and parking pressures that are expected to arise.

Thank you for your attention to these matters and we look forward to working with you in the future as EWR plans progress to the satisfaction of Woburn Sands Town Council.

Yours sincerely,

Town Clerk Jo Farrant and Councillor Alex Poppleton
On behalf of Woburn Sands Town Council