

# East West Rail Phase 2

## Project Newsletter, Spring 2021

### Welcome

Welcome to the spring 2021 issue of the East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) project newsletter. I hope that you are keeping safe and well during these challenging times.

I would like to once again apologise on behalf of EWRA for the disruption caused by our works. We appreciate the patience and understanding of the community and we remain committed to both minimising the disruption, while also trying to complete our works sooner to reduce the duration of the disruption.

As reported in the winter issue of the newsletter, 2021 will be a significant year for the East West Rail Phase 2 (EWR2) project with the substantial part of the main civils works (comprising mainly of excavation, new structures and drainage) to be completed by the second quarter of 2022. Following completion of the civil works the project will be focused on track construction and installation of the railway systems with most of the required materials being delivered by rail, which means construction traffic generated by the EWR2 project will be significantly reduced after the second quarter of 2022.

Since our last newsletter the project has made good progress and several key project milestones have been successfully achieved, which you can read more about below.

As ever, we have included local progress update tailored to your area and we have also created a new section dedicated to our earthworks programme, which continue to ramp up over the coming months.

At the time of print, the Alliance is preparing for our May Bank Holiday which will see over 100 precast concrete beams will be installed above the West Coast Main Line during a three day closure of the railway. The new beams will form the deck structure for the new Bletchley Flyover structure that will carry the East West Rail line over the existing West Coast Mainline.

Finally, I wanted to thank all those who took part in our recent newsletter survey. We have had largely positive feedback on the format, frequency, and usefulness of the newsletter as well as some constructive feedback on how it can be improved which we have tried to incorporate into this issue. You can read more on the results below and I hope you find this latest edition of the newsletter of use.

We are acutely aware that our works are having an impact on the communities near to the project and we will continue to strive to minimise these impacts wherever we can. In the event that you do observe something that causes concern please do not hesitate to contact our project hotline.

Once again thank you for your continued support and interest in the project.

**Mark Cuzner, EWR Alliance Director**



Over 100 beams wait to be installed on Bletchley Flyover

**ATKINS**  
Member of the SNC-Lavalin Group

**NetworkRail**

**LAING O'Rourke**

**VolkerRail**

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## Project Progress

**Since the last issue of the newsletter we have continued to make significant progress across all areas of the project.**

Our work to the local highways in the vicinity of the project are now substantially complete. These improvements included over 130 separate activities to widen roads, create passing bays, construct accesses to our work sites, compounds and haul roads, all designed to reduce our impact on the local road network. Our highways teams will now focus on completing the small number of remaining activities as well as carrying out ongoing repairs and maintenance as and when required.

We have completed piling activities for all the bridges required for the project (except for Winslow cutting), which has allowed significant progress on the construction of the five new overbridges required for the project. You can read more about progress of each bridge in the area updates. We have also successfully installed the first of ten new footbridges for the project at Jarvis Lane near the western boundary of the project.

At Bletchley we have continued to carry out the complex work required to bring the Bletchley Flyover up to modern standards. The existing structure above the West Coast Mainline has been successfully dismantled and the bridge abutments that will support the new bridge beams across the railway have been constructed. The new bridge beams will be placed over the West Coast Mainline during a major railway possession that will take place over the early May Bank Holiday.



Charbridge Lane overbridge, April 2021

At the north end of Bletchley Flyover work has also started on the new high-level station that will extend from the existing Bletchley Station and provide passenger access to the new railway. Piling and foundations have been completed and work will start shortly on the station construction.

Finally, in mid-April, the first section of new track for the EWR2 project was successfully installed near Bicester. This is a key milestone for the project because it is not only the first section of track, but it will also enable access for the engineering trains that will carry out the track construction across the whole project.

### Station Road overbridge takes shape

One of the five new overbridges to be constructed on the project, the Station Road overbridge has made significant progress in recent months.

As reported in the winter 2020/2021 issue of the newsletter, the team were busy installing all the precast concrete shell abutments ahead of the bridge beams being lifted into place.

The beams were successfully installed on site in March and the structure is now largely completed. The team will now focus on the significant amount of earthworks that are required to tie the bridge into the local road network.



Station Road Overbridge, April 2021

## Sandhill Road Closure

Over recent weeks and months, we have been engaging with local residents and stakeholders regarding the closure of Sandhill Road, a road that crosses over the railway to the south east of Steeple Claydon via a road bridge. Due to the age and condition of the Sandhill Road bridge the structure requires replacing and upgrading to modern day standards.

A high pressure gas main supply line runs across Sandhill road on the north side of the bridge and initial surveys which were presented during consultation showed that a protection slab could be installed to protect the gas line without it having to be replaced, resulting in a 12 week closure of Sandhill Road.

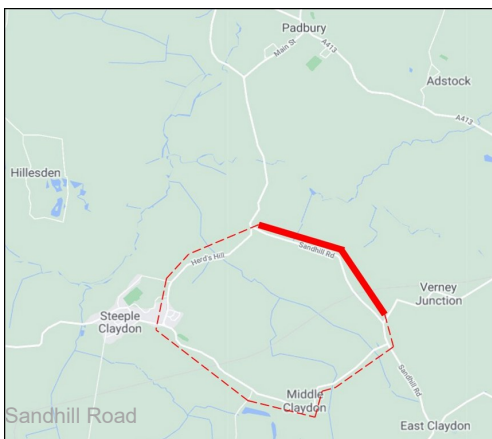
The owner and operator of the high pressure gas supply line, Southern Gas Network (SGN) carried out further surveys to the gas supply line crossing over Sandhill Road and concluded it would necessitate considerably more work, requiring shutting down the supply leading to an outage. This can only be carried out in the summer months when gas usage is lower than at other times of the year.

Due to the additional work to the gas line and having to revise the bridge replacement work around this has resulted in having to close Sandhill Road for a longer period than originally anticipated.

After receiving feedback from residents and we have carried out a full review of all work with SGN who will carry out the pipeline replacement and our supply partners shorten the time frame.

As a result, some key changes have been made to both the SGN and EWRA works plans, allowing us to shorten the length of time the road is closed by nearly 50%.

In summary, the High Pressure Gas main work will take place from 10 May - 17 August. The final bridge and road work will then take place from 17 August - 5 September, a total 17 week closure. Access to all properties will remain throughout.



A final notification to residents and businesses impacted by the upcoming closure has been issued and thank you to all those who have been involved in the feedback process, including those who dialled into the live webinar we hosted earlier in the year to provide an update on our plans.

## Traffic Ambassadors and Variable Message Signs deployed

As part of our plans to monitor and improve the flow of EWR2 construction traffic (including vehicles used by the Alliance and our supply chain partners), Traffic ambassadors have been recruited and deployed to local areas across the project.

The Ambassadors will monitor the performance of the projects traffic flows and will report any issues they observe to our Logistics and Construction Managers who will be able to take immediate action.

In addition, the Ambassadors will monitor delivery vehicles to ensure they comply with requirement to display EWR2 identification, and to ensure EWR2 construction vehicles stick to the approved construction routes for the project. Finally, they will monitor driving behaviours to ensure compliance with the law. Our ambassadors will be identifiable by their hi-vis EWRA branded jackets and EWRA labelled vehicles.

The Alliance has also installed 14 Variable Message Signs (VMS) across the Bicester to Bletchley area, with messaging will displayed to request EWR2 construction traffic to follow the "20 is Plenty Campaign" where applicable, direct vehicles from unapproved construction routes and warn of potential delays due to traffic in the area.

It is hoped the appointment of these Traffic Ambassadors will help us manage the flow and performance of our construction vehicles across the project, however, should you spot any issues caused by any vehicle associated with the EWR2 project, please report this to [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk) or via the Network Rail Helpline on 0345 711 4141.



## Lending a hand in the local community

The Alliance has continued to carry out a number of community engagement projects and volunteering opportunities, despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Since the last issue of the newsletter:

- Our team has worked with students at Aylesbury Grammar School on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) project to come up with a design for the new Winslow Station.
- A member of the project team has volunteered with Bux & Oxon 4x4 Response Group (BORG) to help with the Covid-19 vaccination programme in Winslow.
- Continued our gardening and maintenance project at Grendon Underwood Combined School near Bicester.

If you have any thoughts and suggestions for community projects we may be able to get involved with, please contact [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk).

## Artificial otter holts in use

We're delighted to report that we now have evidence of the artificial otter holts constructed across the project being used by the local otter population.

The otter holt - located in one of the Environmental Compensation Sites constructed to offset the environmental impact that the project will have during the construction stage – has been regularly monitored by our Ecology team since it's construction. During this time the team has also been trying to entice the otters to the holt by adding additional features such stepping stones and spraints (otter droppings) at the entrances.

All the team's efforts were rewarded in early March of this year, as the cameras that have been installed under licence recorded evidence of otters using the holt on a regular basis.

You can view the camera footage of an otter entering and exiting the holt in the online version of our EWR2 Project Newsletter.



An otter uses one of the artificial holts constructed by the Alliance

## Thanks for your feedback!

The EWR2 Project newsletter plays a key role in how the Alliance keeps local stakeholders and residents informed of project progress and upcoming works.

We have strived to make the newsletter as useful and informative as possible, embracing interactive technology via our online version to bring the project to life with videos and photos whilst also including localised sections to keep the communities in which we are working up to date with progress and upcoming activity.

Earlier this year we gave readers the chance to share their feedback on the newsletter with us via an online survey which ran for two weeks.

The results are now in and we're delighted to report that on average the newsletter scored 4 out of 5 in terms of its overall usefulness, with the local sections also scoring 4 out of 5 for their usefulness.

Respondents found the newsletter generally interesting and informative and the local area updates provided useful information about works in their area. As a response to feedback we've made some amendments to maps to make them clearer.

For clarity, you can contact us via [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk) or via Network Rail's 24/7 helpline on 0345 711 4141 and your query will be directed to the most appropriate person.

You can also use the [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk) address to let us know if you have any further feedback or suggestions for future issues of the newsletter.

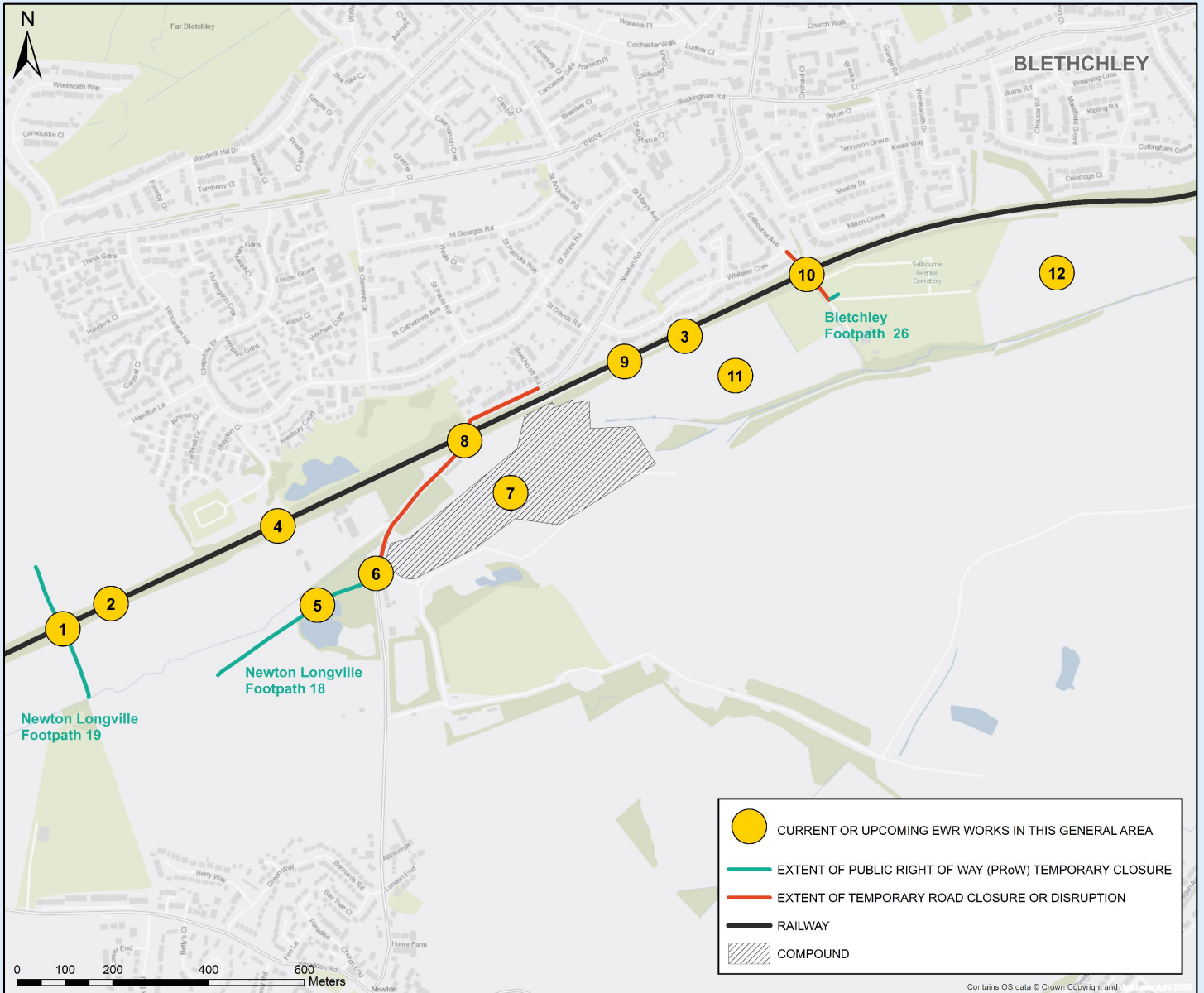
Once again, thank you for your feedback and input into the readership survey.



## Progress in your area – Bletchley

The coded maps in this section mark out areas of Bletchley where we will be working. Use the numbers to find out what is happening in each area, and what activity is coming up in the next three months.

### West Bletchley





## 1. Trenches underbridge replacement

**Description:** The existing bridge is to be demolished and replaced with a new bridge to support the new railway. We will also be diverting an existing water main.

**Duration:** Construction began in summer 2020 and is due to complete in late summer 2021.

**Disruption:** Newton Longville footpath 19 has been closed to allow the existing bridge to be demolished and the new bridge to be constructed.

**Recent progress:** Precast concrete units which form the new structure have been installed.

**Upcoming Activity:** The new structure will be waterproofed and backfilled, to allow access for construction of the main earthworks required in the area.

## 2 & 3. Railway works

In March/April we started preparing the formation for the new railway to be constructed in these areas. The formation provides the ground upon which the new railway will be installed, consisting of earthworks and drainage installation. The installation of the track is due to begin spring of 2022.

## 4. Tompkins underbridge repairs

**Description:** We will repair and strengthen the existing underbridge so that it can accommodate the new railway. Work will include brickwork repairs, replacing the parapets and new waterproofing.

**Duration:** We started ecology works in early summer 2020 and began strengthening and repairing the bridge in autumn 2020.

**Disruption:** Access under the bridge will be restricted during the construction works.

**Recent progress:** We have undertaken the first phase of brickwork repairs and installed new parapets to the existing bridge.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will undertake the second phase of repairs in winter 2021, including waterproofing works and installation of handrails.

## 5. Haul road construction

**Description:** We have constructed a new haul road which will allow us to move our construction vehicles and machinery across some of our sites which will minimise disruption to local roads.

**Recent progress:** The construction of the haul road is now complete, and the haul road is now operational.

## 6 & 7. Compound construction and access

**Description:** We have built a compound to provide site offices, welfare facilities and materials storage which will be used throughout the duration of our construction work. We will also build an access route which will enable construction traffic to get onto the new railway construction site through the compound and a new haul road connecting to our compound near Whaddon Road in Newton Longville. This will mean we can reduce the amount of construction traffic using local roads between these two areas.

**Recent progress:** The construction of the compound is now complete.

## 8. Newton Road underbridge repairs

**Description:** We will refurbish the existing Newton Road underbridge. Work will include new waterproofing, brickwork repairs and deck strengthening works.

**Duration:** Work began in summer 2020 and is due for completion in the winter of 2021.

**Recent progress:** The first phase of brickwork repairs to the existing bridge have been undertaken.

**Upcoming Activity:** We will undertake the second phase of repairs in winter 2021, including waterproofing works and installation of handrails and signage.

## 9. Cattle underbridge repairs

**Description:** We will refurbish the existing Cattle underbridge. Works will include new waterproofing, brickwork repairs and installing new parapets.

**Duration:** Work began in autumn 2020 and is due for completion in the winter of 2021.

**Recent progress:** Brickwork repairs and strengthening works have been carried out to the existing bridge, together with the installation of new precast concrete parapets.

**Upcoming Activity:** The remaining bridge repair works, including waterproofing and installation of new handrails, will be carried out in winter 2021.

## 10. Selbourne Avenue underbridge repairs

**Description:** The existing bridge is to be upgraded to support the new railway. The work will involve demolishing parts of the bridge, piling works to reinforce the existing structure and installing new parapets. We will also install new handrailing and waterproof the deck.

**Duration:** Work began in summer 2020 and is due for completion in the winter of 2021.

**Recent progress:** The first phase of repairs and strengthening works have been completed.

**Upcoming Activity:** The remaining bridge improvement works, including waterproofing and installation of new handrails, will be carried out in winter 2021.

## 11. Compensation Flood Storage Area

**Description:** We will construct a new compensation flood storage area (CSFA) in this area to provide alternative flood water storage areas which will protect the area from flooding as the new railway is constructed.

**Duration:** Excavation needed to create the CFSA will start in spring 2021 and is due to complete by summer 2021.

**Disruption:** There will be an increase in construction traffic in the area during the works.

**Upcoming work:** No work is due to take place until spring 2021.

## 12. Environmental Compensation Site

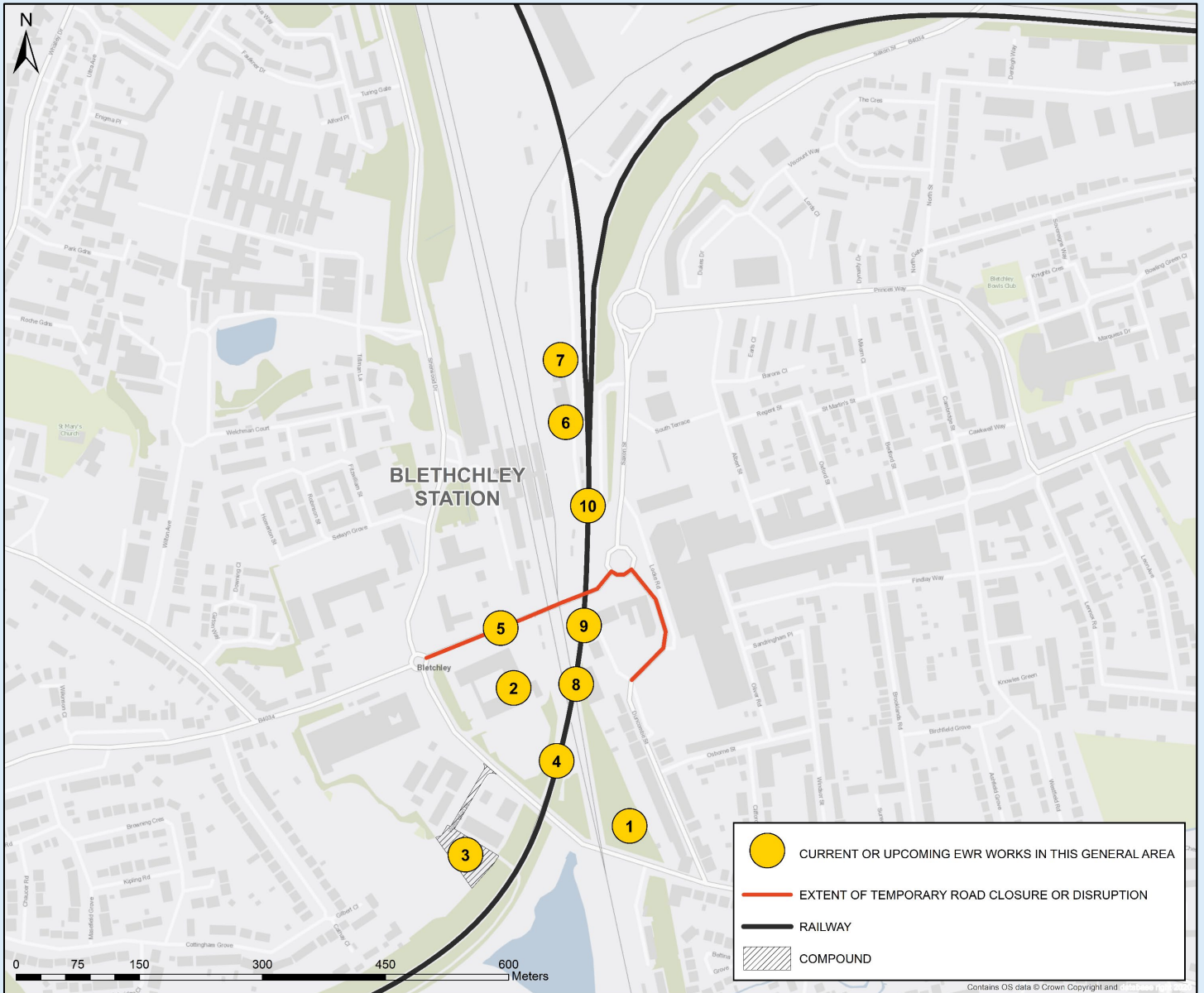
These sites have been established to mitigate our impact on the local ecology. They include the creation of aquatic habitat features like river back waters, grasslands, scrub and woodland with specific species and features for badger, otter, reptiles, great crested newts, bats, butterflies etc.



## Progress in your area – Bletchley

The coded maps in this section mark out areas of Bletchley where we will be working. Use the numbers to find out what is happening in each area, and what activity is coming up in the next three months.

### Central Bletchley



## 1. East Water Eaton Road Compound and access point

**Description:** The East Water Eaton Road compound and access road was constructed earlier in the year and provides us access to the East side of the West Coast Main line so we can carry out work on the Bletchley Flyover.

**Duration:** The compound and access point was established in the summer of 2020 and will remain in place until completion of works in spring 2022. Once works have been completed a large proportion of this area will be restored to its former condition. The area behind the new flyover structure will be used for maintenance access.

**Disruption:** There will be an increase in construction traffic using the compound and access point whilst the works take place. Work in this area will include night-time working. This is because much of our work needs to take place when the West Coast Main Line is non-operational – for the safety and integrity of the railway. We will be monitoring light and noise levels on site to keep disruption to a minimum. If residents do experience any issues, these can be reported to our team on site, or via Network Rail's 24/7 helpline on 03457 11 41 41 or [www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus)

**Recent Progress:** We have completed the installation of the ALO (Any Line Open) hoarding to the railway line edge in this area. This hoarding has formed a protective barrier for our workforce, allowing us to carry out the piling works for the new flyover structure while the line is operational and reducing the need for night time working. Following the completion of the Bank Holiday works to install the new flyover bridge beams in this area, the ALO hoarding will be removed as it is no longer required.

**Upcoming activity:** In the next three months we will continue constructing new piers and supporting structures for the new flyover over the West Coast Main Line.

## 2. Water Eaton Road Compound

**Description:** Our Water Eaton Road Compound is located in the car park of the old Cable & Wireless building (aka Mercury House). The compound provides us with access to the West Coast Main Line and the Bletchley Flyover in order to carry out our works.

**Duration:** The compound was established in September 2019 and will remain in place until the flyover construction work is complete in spring 2022. Once works are complete, we will reinstate the land to its former condition.

**Disruption:** The site will be used throughout our works on the Bletchley Flyover. There will be an increase in construction traffic using the compound whilst the works take place.

**Recent progress:** The Water Eaton Road compound has been used to house the piling rig, mobile crane and supporting equipment used to install the new foundations for the new flyover structure.

**Upcoming activity:** Our Water Eaton Road compound will be the main site used throughout the work we're carrying out on the Bletchley flyover.

## 3. Wellington Place Compound

**Description:** Our Wellington Place compound was established in the spring of 2019 and provides site offices, staff welfare, staff parking and materials storage, as well as an access point to the Bletchley Flyover. It is the main control centre used to manage our work on the West Coast Main Line.

**Duration:** The Wellington Place Compound will remain operational until Spring 2022. Once our activities are complete, we will return the land to its former condition.

**Disruption:** Our Wellington Place compound will cause minimal disruption. EWRA staff are not permitted to park on local roads, they must instead use the Wellington Place compound car park – helping us minimise disruption to the local community. Wherever possible, our staff access the Water Eaton Road compound via the access point provided by the Wellington Place compound.

## 4, 8 & 9. Bletchley Flyover refurbishment works

**Description:** One of the most significant and complex elements of the entire East West Rail Phase Two project, the upgrades we're making to the Bletchley Flyover will bring the structure up to modern standards and will ensure it is structurally sound for the next 120 years. We will be carrying out maintenance and repairs in various locations spanning the length of the flyover, however, the sections that span the West Coast Main Line and Buckingham Road need to be dismantled and re-built in order to safely accommodate new, modern rail services.

**Duration:** Our works on the Bletchley Flyover started in August 2019, however, have ramped up significantly since April 2020. The works are due to finish in spring 2022.

**Recent Progress:** Since the last newsletter, we have been carrying out piling activities and installing the bridge abutments and cill beams which will support the 103 bridge beams due to be lifted into place over the Early May Bank Holiday Weekend. You can read more about this activity in the main section of our spring 2021 newsletter.

**Disruption:** Notifications for residents impacted by our Early May Bank Holiday works have been issued and – as ever - if residents do experience any issues, these can be reported to our team on site, or via Network Rail's 24/7 helpline on 03457 11 41 41 / [www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus](http://www.networkrail.co.uk/contactus) or via [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk)

## 5. Buckingham Road site

**Description:** Our Buckingham Road site was established in early July 2019 and was used to dismantle the sections of the flyover that span Buckingham Road and Duncombe Street. In early summer 2021, we will re-open the site and close Buckingham Road so that we can begin to install the new beams needed for the new flyover structure.





**Duration:** Circa two months.

**Disruption:** Buckingham Road will be closed for circa two months as the installation of the new beams takes place. Details regarding the road closure will be published on [one.network](https://www.one.network) and appropriate signage displayed.

## 6 & 7. Bletchley High Level Station & CEMEX area

**Description:** We are building two new high-level platforms at Bletchley Station, which will enable the station to become a stop on the East West Rail line once it's opened. The new station will be accessed via a new link bridge extension from the existing Bletchley Station platforms to the west.

**Duration:** The work in this area started in early 2021 and will run through to spring 2022.

**Disruption:** There will be limited disruption to the existing station through this period, so train passengers should see limited impact.

**Recent activity:** We have made alterations to the CEMEX concrete plant access point in order to make room for the new station access stairs and lifts. We have completed piling the foundations for the new Bletchley High Level Station ready for the main construction of the new high level platforms to begin.

**Upcoming activity:** Construction of the main building and high level platforms will begin in summer 2021.

## 10. Railway works

**Description:** Throughout the Bletchley Flyover works, we will be carrying out changes to the Signalling, Power & Communications (SP&C) equipment and Overhead Line Equipment (OLE) on the West Coast Mainline. Once the main structural works are complete on the Bletchley Flyover, we will begin to lay the new East West Rail track across the flyover. The track works are due to start in summer 2022.

**Duration:** Significant OLE works have taken place throughout 2020 and the early part of 2021 and will continue as we prepare to install the new flyover structure and the installation of track in 2022. As part of our early May Bank Holiday Weekend possession we will begin installing OLE equipment under the new flyover structure as the new flyover beams are installed.

**Disruption:** All OLE works are scheduled to be carried out either in weekend possessions or more significant Bank Holiday disruptive possessions where the railway line is closed for a prolonged period of time.

**Upcoming activity:** Continuing the installation of new OLE equipment throughout 2021.

→ For any queries or questions please contact us on: [publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk](mailto:publicinformation@ewralliance.co.uk)

