



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Rt Hon Chris Heaton-Harris MP  
Minister of State for Rail  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
London SW1P 4DR

**BY EMAIL**

Tuesday 9th February 2021

Dear Minister

### **EAST WEST RAIL - URGENT INTERVENTION REQUIRED**

As you will be aware I have raised a number of issues relating to the construction of East West Rail with you and your Department over recent months. I am writing today with a very specific and alarming development from East West Rail which will have a devastating impact on my constituents and simply must be changed. I am extremely concerned about the upcoming closure of Sandhill Road in the Claydons area of North Buckinghamshire as part of works to replace a railway bridge and to divert utility lines which serve the surrounding villages.

As has been demonstrated countless times by residents and local representatives, the closure of Sandhill Road will cause major disruption to key access routes serving the Claydons, Verney Junction and Quainton. My constituents in these villages have already suffered enough from the cumulative impact of HS2 and East West Rail, including from constant noise and vibration from service vehicles, the extensive accumulation of mud on the roads, and damage to the road surface itself, among other factors.

I visited Verney Junction recently, who are already effectively cut off from surrounding areas -- and heard the heartbreaking case of someone having lost their life as the ambulance taking them to Milton Keynes Hospital got caught up in road closures and simply did not make it in time. This cannot go on.

The Chairman of East and Botolph Claydon Parish Council, Peter Wright, demonstrates the urgency of the situation very well in his recent post on social media:

*The suggestion that it would take 10 months to demolish and rebuild the bridge, even if there are other services to realign, is simply not credible. At the very least it illustrates a serious lack of competent civil engineering expertise within EWR. The closure will seriously hinder the ease of access by local residents, Emergency Service traffic, plus routine delivery traffic from the south.*

*The proposed diversion through Middle Claydon utilises a rural country road with many pinch points and this is totally unacceptable.*



*The communities of Steeple, Middle, Botolph and East Claydon have had enough of the bullying and aggressive approach by the of East West Rail Company. Despite all the efforts of the Parish Councillors in the villages, supported by our local Buckinghamshire Council representatives, together with our MP Greg Smith the vandalism, road closures and destruction of our roads, verges and villages continues unabated. Speeding HGV vehicles continue to threaten and terrify other road users. Roadways are being destroyed and potholes are increasing in number and size.*

I'd therefore like to request your urgent intervention on this matter to uphold the safety of my constituents, as well as their ability to freely enjoy and access their homes, businesses and properties.

East West Rail will doubtless bring many benefits to Buckinghamshire for many years to come, and will provide significant economic stimulus to what is currently a poorly served part of the county. However, at present East West Rail risks being tarnished by the impact on local communities from its construction – similar to the ongoing harm caused by the enormity of HS2 works. Like yourself, I want East West Rail to be a great success and to deliver for the future, but in order to do that I urge you to bring those constructing the railway to account and change their negative approach to local communities to one which without fail minimises the impact on local people, taking whatever steps are necessary to maintain life as normal.

I look forward to your urgent attention to this matter and, as ever, am happy to discuss this with you at any time should you require any clarification or more information.

Yours ever,  


**Greg Smith MP**