

Bedford-Tempsford Central Section of East-west Rail Thoughts June 2020 RP.

1. Bedford St John's site and trackbed down to Cardington Road in imminent threat for other than rail uses and will be developed over unless an 11th hour recall by a power of on reflection of the Bedford Borough Council. If this site and access is lost, it locks in the route north of Bedford.
2. The traditional route needs a level crossing at Cardington Road, the same at Priory Park entrance, the evoking the clause won at the 1993 Side Roads Order 199 A421 Bedford Southern Bypass Inquiry that DfT would give sympathetic for getting over or under the bypass in the event of a rail being pursued.
3. From east of the bypass you head eastwards at an angle off the old formation at that location adjacent to Willington Woods and cross the River Great Ouse twice veering back to go through the Willington-Great Barford Road (bridge or level crossing) and curve round with bridge or level crossing over the Great Barford-Blunham Road and embankment alongside River Great Ouse, north of built Blunham to curve round and across River Ivel and A1 to the Tempsford plain approaching the ECML from the south western angle with junctioning to allow through services (passenger and freight) south of Peterborough and north of Stevenage including East Bedfordshire to Bedford and the Oxford corridor proliferatedly.
4. The old route means passenger services reversing at Bedford Midland and whilst it adds time, could be quicker if a. baying is provided for 8-12 coach trains or through tracks segregated to existing tracks b. the lines from 1984 St Johns Halt/Danfoss/old Hitchin arches (currently a NR owned car park) are straightened and upgraded to 20 mph than the current circuitous 10mph. Freight could go through on the reinstated triangle with other operational benefits.
5. The north of Bedford option begs the question where does it leave the Midland Main Line? Field south of the A6-A428 Bypass is now built on. North you have the challenge of bridging over or under the A6 Clapham Bypass, engaging the River Great Ouse, dealing with a perennial flood plain and to do what? Go into tunnel climbing until Ravensden/North Brickhill? Such expense and avarice compared to the straighter and cheaper/less distance land use of the former rail trackbed? From Ravensden you head across to the Wilden/Colesden area, you have to cross both the A421 Great Barford Bypass, the A1/Black Cat Roundabout, descending to bridge the River Great Ouse/Ivel and enter flood plains of Tempsford from a north-westerly direction. This is contra for heading east to Cambourne and the ascent to Shepreth Junction Cambridge.

Conclusion: I appeal to all to think again and consult on these 2 options. Please put on hold any non-rail use development of the St Johns Station site in the strategic interest. If you junk it now and block it, you lock in the northern route which is more problematic and expensive and not without a NIMBY element as well. c/o richard.erta@gmail.com 18-06-2020