

Press Release from Buckinghamshire Council

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Transport Secretary urged not to derail Aylesbury spur plans

Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, Martin Tett has written to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps urging him to confirm Government support and funding for the much needed Aylesbury link section of East-West rail.

In January, the Government announced a further £760m to deliver the next section of the rail project between Oxford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes, which would also see a new station built at Winslow. As well as unlocking vital new economic development opportunities, expansion of East West rail will also take more cars off the road, reduce congestion and cut emission levels.

However, there was no confirmation of funding to reinstate the Aylesbury link, seen as critical to opening up the full potential of the Aylesbury Garden Town project, provide options to travel to both Oxford and Milton Keynes and new links from north Buckinghamshire through to London via the Amersham and High Wycombe lines.

Martin Tett said the lack of firm commitment from the Government could jeopardise the economic jump-start needed locally. "Aylesbury is due to grow by over 16,000 new homes in the next 15 years so it needs to be better connected, particularly by rail. This is a golden opportunity and therefore I see it as absolutely vital to secure the Aylesbury link and finally end the uncertainty once and for all."

Martin added, "Mr Shapps has already said that restoring railways helps put communities back on the map by unlocking access to jobs, education and housing. It's a no-brainer to me that the proposed Aylesbury section would deliver on all these elements in an efficient and cost-effective way and finally bring to an end the rail 'cul-de-sac' that's blighted the Aylesbury area for decades."

"Locally we are already suffering the combined impacts of construction of both HS2 and East-West Rail, therefore not to have the Aylesbury link confirmed is extremely disappointing, I hope Mr Shapps can give us the answer we all want to hear as soon as he can."

The Council has also recently sent an ambitious 'Buckinghamshire Growth and Recovery Proposal' to Government to assist in the rebuilding of the economy post Covid. A key part of this requires the full delivery of the Aylesbury spur of East West Rail.

Buckinghamshire Council is a member of the East West Rail Consortium of local authorities which has played a pivotal role in campaigning for the scheme over the decades, and also England's Economic Heartland, the region's sub-national transport body. Both organisations are pressing Government for an early decision on the funding which will allow the Aylesbury-Milton Keynes link to be delivered as soon as possible.