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Cash for new railway route



b10-1021 MP Richard Fuller overlooking Westminster Bridge, London.

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A LONG-touted rail route linking Bedford, Milton Keynes and Oxford is set to get the go-ahead after Tuesday's announcement by Chancellor George Osborne.

The East-West Rail link was mentioned in the Chancellor's Autumn Statement, which focused on supporting growth while keeping interest rates low.

Plans for a Bedford- Oxford route are the first step of a scheme which could eventually continue on to Cambridge, Ipswich and Norwich.

Richard Fuller, Conservative MP for Bedford and Kempston, said: "This is fantastic news for Bedford. "A regular, fast rail service to Oxford, with a direct route to central Milton Keynes, will reinforce Bedford's position as a natural hub for the rail network, further improving our attractiveness for new businesses and bringing more, local jobs."

The current Marston Vale line, which runs from Bedford to Bletchley, was once part of a cross-country rail route linking Oxford and Cambridge, but the line closed to passengers 44 years ago.

It is claimed that this new East West scheme will eventually create 12,000 new jobs in the region.

Mr Fuller spoke about the plans last month during an MPs' debate with Theresa Villiers, the minister for transport.

He said: "Bedford has seen levels of unemployment that are above the national average and too often such issues are thought to affect other parts of the country and are sometimes overlooked in the eastern area."

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