

## East West Rail Consortium: Annual General Meeting

### Meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 Council Chamber, Bedford Borough Hall

#### Present:

Cllr Carol Paternoser (CP)	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Claire Britton (CB)	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Michael Headley (MH)	Bedford Borough Council
Chris Pettifer (CPe)	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Mark Shaw (MS)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Paul Irwin (PI)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Martin Tugwell (MT)	England's Economic Heartland
Cllr Ian Bates (IB)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Jeremy Smith (JS)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson (JJ)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Andrew Bowe (AB)	Cherwell District Council
Cllr Derrick Ashley (DA)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Phil Smart (PS)	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Roy Davis (RD)	Luton Borough Council
Keith Dove (KD)	Luton Borough Council
Ishwer Gohil (IG)	Milton Keynes Council
Tony Jones (TJ)	Norwich City Council
Louise Symes (LS)	North Herts District Council
Cllr Tim Wotherspoon (TS)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Jon Dixon (JD)	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Guy McGregor (GMcG)	Suffolk County Council
Kerry Allen (KA)	Suffolk County Council
Sara Noonan (SN)	St Edmund and Forest Heath Councils
Cllr David Johncock (DJ)	Wycombe District Council
Cllr Alan Turner (AT)	Wycombe District Council
Erica Blamire (EB)	Network Rail
Peter Winters (PW)	Network Rail
David Sexton (DS)	DfT
Rob Brighouse (RB)	East West Railway Company

#### EWR Consortium:

John Disley (JD)	Oxfordshire County Council
Fiorella Mugari (FM) (Treasurer)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Adam King (AK) Comms Manager)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Steve Davis (SD) (Secretary)	Buckinghamshire County Council

#### Apologies:

Bob Menzies	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Sue Clarke	Central Bedfordshire Council
Jodie Colclough	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Colin Clarke	Cherwell District Council
Carolyn Barnes	East Suffolk District Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council

Cllr Liz Gifford  
Cllr Mike Stonard  
Cllr Yvonne Constance  
Caroline Danby  
Ralph Raynor  
Cllr Geoff Holdcroft  
Cllr James Finch  
Cllr Jane Storey  
Penelope Tollitt  
Cllr Michael Ladd  
Patrick O'Sullivan

Milton Keynes Council  
Norwich City Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Stevenage Borough Council  
Suffolk Coastal DC  
Suffolk County Council  
Suffolk County Council  
Wycombe District Council  
Waveney District Council  
EWR Consortium

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

- 1.1 MT welcomed attendees to the meeting, in particular the elected Members from the Consortium. He set out that the proposal was that this year's AGM represented an opportunity to consider a proposal from the officers to review/update the Terms of Reference for the EWR Consortium, as part of which the proposal was to strengthen the role of elected Members.
- 1.2 MT went on to set out that, subject to the agreement of the AGM, the officers would convene a further meeting of the EWR Consortium within 6-8 weeks. The elected Members would be asked to consider the revised Terms of Reference at that meeting and elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the proposed 'strategic board'.
- 1.3 MT sought the meeting's support for this approach and for their support for him to chair this particular meeting: the elected Members concurred.

## **2. Apologies**

- 2.1 As recorded above.

## **3. Notes of Previous Meeting**

- 3.1 The notes of the previous meeting were agreed

## **4. Update from East West Railway Company**

- 4.1 RB provided an update (Slides attached)
- 4.2 RB opened by thanking everyone in the Consortium for the existence of the project, due to the Members diligence and enthusiasm we are on the verge of delivering a key transport investment. He reassured the meeting that it is recognised EWR is more than just a transport scheme and there is a need to consider how it supports delivery of housing and economic growth. EWRCo will champion this wider consideration and challenge where necessary to this end.
- 4.3 Key points made during the presentation:
  - Since the last AGM there have been 3 reports which provide strategic context:
    - The Hansford report (which set out opportunities to encourage third party investment in the rail network)
    - National Infrastructure Commission: Final report (commissioned by Government and which identifies long term economic potential)
    - Hammond budget announcement (which committed Government to deliver EWR)

- Discussions between DfT, Network Rail and EWRCo to define the client role (see slide)
- The role of the Programme Board critical, with Consortium elected Member representation
- Clarification of roles for client sponsor, delivery agent and Network Rail (see slide)
- EWRCo is developing its organisational capability: currently approximately 12 fte at present: 40 by the summer rising to around 60 by end of the year
- MK/Bletchley to Bedford: work is on-going with a view to identifying the best option for direct access. RB provided an overview of the potential options and is keen to hear views/reactions from Consortium members. RB wants to ensure that options are kept alive to allow thorough consideration to enable the best solution.

#### 4.4 Discussion:

- Cllr Turner recorded his disappointment that the Aylesbury to Princes Risborough twin tracking did not form part of the core scheme being taken forward and asked if this could be included? RB confirmed that this is currently outside of EWRCo remit but commented that he understood that the Secretary of State is keen to explore whether the next 'Chilterns' franchise can pick up improved connectivity through to Old Oak Common.
- DS highlighted there are other pressures on the wider network, in particular noting that Marylebone Station has reached its capacity: providing services through to Old Oak Common (with the interchange opportunities that will exist there) would complement Marylebone services: they would also improve access to the regeneration of Old Oak Common/Park Royal.
- Cllr Johncock emphasized the importance of improved north-south linkages to the Wycombe Local Plan
- Cllr Headley stressed the need for MK/Bedford and Bedford/Cambridge to be considered together, and the importance of including consideration of development potential. RB agreed noting the railway is an enabler for MKC and Bedfordshire aspirations for growth and connectivity.
- Cllr Jamieson raised concern about consideration of new options for the section between MK and Bedford impacting on the programme. He highlighted the risk of having to take out housing proposals for the Marston Vale in the draft Local Plan if the EWR services do not go there. RB confirmed he wants to give visibility on alternatives not delay programme. He also confirmed that the proposals for improvements to the Marston Vale section as part of the Western Section remained within scope.
- Cllr Bates asked if there is liaison on strategic issues between EWRCo/NR/Highways England regarding the linkages between EWR and the expressway. RB confirmed it is seen as a corridor rather than just a 'road' or 'rail' route and engagement is underway with Highways England on a cross-Gov't Group.
- RB noted the difference between Central Section (HE has a route that already exists, EWR has options for new construction) and Western Section (EWR has a route that is being restored, HE has options for new construction).
- Cllr Smart said don't defer delivery of Bedford-Cambridge: he was encouraged that a strategic approach for EWR as a whole was being adopted by EWRCo.

RB confirmed although his remit is Oxford to Cambridge his is very interested in linkages beyond this and is looking further east including the opportunities presented by the Cambridge South work. RB reminded the meeting of the balance that needs to be struck between new stations, services and capacity: additional stations reduce overall capacity if not considered within the context of associated track & signalling infrastructure.

## **5. Working Arrangements**

- 5.1 MT presented this item (paper attached). MT explained how the different arrangements between western and central sections reflected the history of the project and the progress made with each. He went out to outline that now was an appropriate moment to review the working arrangements: the proposal from officers was that this include a review of the Terms of Reference (TofR). He specifically highlighted the opportunity – referred to by RB in his presentation – to strengthen the local Political input into the EWR Company.
- 5.2 The paper suggested guiding principles for elected Members to consider. MT proposed that, subject to the elected Members supporting the proposed approach, officers across the route would work to draft revised TofR (including consideration of geographical representation): the intention being to reconvene this group in 6-8 weeks.
- 5.3 RB is in complete support of the approach, stressing the need to have strong member representation on the EWRCo Programme Board in a decision making capacity to enable work to move forward.
- 5.4 Discussion:
  - Cllr Shaw recorded his support for the proposed approach, as did Cllr Bates, who added that in revising the TofR there is a need to consider the potential role of the Combined Authority. MT advised that the Combined Authority is currently not a Consortium member but undertook to contact them.
  - Cllr Smart cautioned that the TofR for the Consortium needed to take into account the status of the EWRCo. RB confirmed EWRCo is not a private company: it is an 'arms-length' public body. RB stressed that he wants to bring private sector thinking and approaches to the work of the EWRCo.
  - Cllr Headley supports the direction of travel as western and central sections have felt disjointed. He also reminded the meeting of the wider linkages to/from the Midlands need to be considered.
  - Cllr Johncock noted it is important we avoid the size of the 'strategic board' being unmanageable. He questioned whether Highways England (HE) should be included. Cllr Ashley concurred. He also counselled about the need to avoid the 'domino effect', citing as an example where long distance services through Hertfordshire had been improved to the detriment of local services.
- 5.5 MT advised that the proposed 'strategic board' would be the paid-up members of the EWR Consortium and noted that the meeting had heard early how working arrangements are already in place to 'join-up' work on EWR with that on the expressway.
- 5.6 MT reiterated the offer from the EWRCo to have representation on the Programme Board: the proposition was that this would be the Chair and Vice Chair. He

advised that the EWR Consortium team would work with the EWRCo to ensure that the revised ToFR for the Consortium links in with the EWRCo governance model.

- 5.7 RB emphasized that elected Members sitting on the Programme Board needed to speak on behalf of the EWR Consortium: noting at the same time that this did not fetter individual Consortium members when dealing with local issues relevant to them.
- 5.8 MT noted that the proposed role for the Chair/Vice-Chair on the Programme Board served to emphasise the importance of the 'strategic board' meeting on a more regular basis. This might in turn enable a rationalisation of existing EWR related meetings.

**The meeting AGREED the guiding principles set out in Section 5 of the agenda item as the basis on which to prepare revised Terms of Reference for the Consortium**

## **6. Western Section Phase 2**

- 6.1 PW provided an update (slides attached)
- 6.2 Key points:
  - GRIP 4 work 70% complete with completion brought forward to March 2019
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> round public consultation ahead of the TWAO submission had been completed
  - Enabling works underway in 2018, with a second phase planned for 2019 ahead of TWAO to support accelerated delivery timescales. Main works to commence late 2019.
  - Social Value Manager in post with 38 Community engagement events held to date.
- 6.3 MT noted support from DfT on the timescale for the TWAO, with early identification of the Inspector, looking at potential venue, etc.
- 6.4 RB stated he would like to reduce the construction timescale if possible and he has asked NR to look at this and to undertake as much work as possible before the TWAO, working in cooperation with members.
- 6.5 MT highlighted the network of SPOCs (Single Point of Contact) that covers the Western Section as being fundamental to making things work as efficiently as possible, with the further benefit that such work forms part of the Work in Kind.

## **7. Central Section Update**

- 7.1 EB provided an update (slides attached)Key points:
  - The Transport Appraisal is due to be completed by July 2018
  - Informal public consultation on route options proposed October to December 2018
  - SOBC and confirmation of preferred route early 2019, with work on alignment of preferred route from April 2019
  - Route choice is a balance between optimum journey times and NIC recommendations for connectivity to unlock housing and economic development. This is a key point when considering how to appraise the route options which are being looked at alongside areas for potential housing growth.

## 7.2 Discussion:

- Cllr Davis is pleased that there is consideration being given to the alignment and potential housing, including first/last mile consideration. He raised concern about ensuring the connection to developers and their funds noting this needs CLG discussion. EB said the issues are recognised and it is being considered via a cross government working group. RB confirmed EWRCo are talking cross government to ensure the issue is raised at senior level.
- Cllr Bates raised concern about the timescales for the Central Section in relation to the timing of Local Plans. EB noted the concern, but emphasised the need to go through a robust process of decision making to avoid potential challenge through the consents process later on.
- Cllr Smart noted that consideration of rail freight is becoming more essential, especially in relation to diversionary capacity for services from Felixstowe, construction traffic arising from home construction (and associated infrastructure) and future goods distribution. EB said that freight is a key factor considered as part of NR's System Operator role. Recent work looking at the benefits of freight, especially in terms of "not using London" shows some add-on to passenger benefits. EWR infrastructure will form part of the wider Strategic Freight Network.
- Cllr Smart stressed that if freight is de-scoped at too early a stage then the opportunity is gone for generations. Passive provision is always better than no provision. EB said there is a need to fully understand the requirements for freight, who the beneficiaries are and where potential funding would come from.
- DS noted there can be a difference between what you start and end up with, describing changing freight demands – coal and steel being replaced by containers, building materials and "Waste to Power". There is now less interest in dedicated freight terminals and more on locally sited sidings. Trainload freight may change more into parcels type offer.
- PW referred to a recent paper to DfT considering capability for freight on the Western section. Passive provision is being built in (e.g. decision on full freight strengthening of Bletchley flyover) rather than retro fitting later on.

## 8. Eastern Section Update

- 8.1 MT provided an update. A prospectus for the Eastern Section, similar in approach to that produced for the Western Section, is being drafted. A first draft would be circulated to officers shortly. It builds on the work commissioned by the EWR Consortium focused on identifying a Conditional Output Statement. The prospectus would be the next step in promoting the benefits of the Eastern Section – setting out where the value lies in developing rail services and a sense of priorities. It will need to plug into existing NR and TOC plans on what is a live railway. MT reminded the meeting that the COS had identified that the Eastern Section will also benefit the Business Case for both the Central and Western section.
- 8.2 DS noted there has been great success in the reduction in number of level crossings on the western section to improve journey times and we should look to do this in the east.
- 8.3 MT advised that the intention was for the draft prospectus to be considered by the next meeting of the EWR Consortium.

## **9. Treasurer's Report including Work Programme**

9.1 FM provided an update on the Consortium's finances.

9.2 Key points:

- Income slightly down on previous year (due to fewer pre-payments)
- Subscriptions remaining at same level of £3000 for County/Unitary Councils and £1500 for District Councils.

9.3 Cllr Smart noted Essex County Council had asked to join. MT apologised for lack of progress and committed to action this.

9.4 MT highlighted that the covering paper included a number of potential work area priorities the Consortium could undertake in 2018/19 and asked for Member views:

- a) Eastern section prospectus
- b) Freight
- c) Future Service Ambitions
- d) Wider Linkages

9.5 Discussion:

- Cllr Johncock very much supports b) Freight and d) Wider Linkages (ref north-south linkages including Wycombe)
- Cllr Ashley supports freight and suggests we approach the Major of London as freight is a key theme in the London Plan (perhaps a joint study?).
- JS and SN support Eastern section work and particularly interaction with the Cambridge Rail study. KA agreed suggesting it needs to look beyond Cambridge further east and asked that Eastern reps be invited to join their Western and Central colleagues at these meetings. The Terms of Reference will be developed in this vein.

### **The meeting AGREED:**

**a) To note the Treasurer's Report as set out in Section 1**

**b) The subscription rates for 2018-19 as being**

<b>District Authorities</b>	<b>£1,500</b>
<b>Unitary and County Authorities</b>	<b>£3,000</b>

**c) To include as priorities for the 2018/19 Work Programme as:**

- **The Eastern Section prospectus**
- **Freight**
- **Wider Linkages**

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

10.1 MT summarised that building on the steer provided by this meeting, the officer team would look to reconvene the meeting in 6-8 weeks.