

**East West Rail Consortium Strategic Board
Meeting held on 11th December 2018.
Council Chamber, Bedford Borough Hall**

Present:

Cllr Sue Clark (SC)	Central Bedfordshire Council (Chairman)
Cllr Michael Headley (MH)	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Derrick Ashley (DA)	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Phil Smart (PS)	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Roy Davis (RD)	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Gerald Brewster (GB)	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr Phil Larratt (PL)	Northampton Borough Council
Cllr David Levett (DL)	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Andy Smith (AS)	Suffolk Coastal District Council

EWR Consortium Secretariat:

Martin Tugwell (MJT)	England's Economic Heartland
John Disley (JD)	Oxfordshire County Council
Patrick O'Sullivan (POS)	EWR Consortium
Fiorella Mugari (FM) (Treasurer)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Steve Davis (SD) (Secretary)	Buckinghamshire County Council

Also In Attendance

Claire Britton (CB)	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Marc Cole (MC)	Babergh and Mid Suffolk Councils
Melanie MacLeod (MM)	Bedford Borough Council
Bruce Waller (BW)	Cambridge City Council
Jeremy Smith (JS)	Cambridgeshire County Council
Stephen Lakin (SL)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Dr Carolyn Barnes (CBa)	East Suffolk District Council
Michael Newsham (MN)	Ipswich Borough Council
Keith Dove (KD)	Luton Borough Council
Ishwer Gohil (IG)	Milton Keynes Council
Paul Everard (PE)	Northampton Borough Council
Louise Symes (LSy)	North Herts District Council
Kerry Allen (KA)	Suffolk County Council
Sara Noonan (SN)	West Suffolk Councils
Adam Wood (AW)	Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Ellen Goodwin (EG)	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
Pete Winters (PW)	Network Rail
Stephen Barker (SB)	East West Railway Company
Will Gallagher (WG)	East West Railway Company

Apologies:

Cllr Carol Paternoser	Aylesbury Vale District Council
Cllr Simon Barratt	Babergh District Council
Cllr Mark Shaw	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Paul Irwin	Buckinghamshire County Council
Joan Hancox	Buckinghamshire County Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr James Jamieson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Jodie Colclough	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Cherwell District Council
Cllr Mike Stonard	Norwich City Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Cllr Yvonne Constance	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Ralph Raynor	Stevenage Borough Council
Cllr Geoff Holdcroft	Suffolk Coastal District Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Mary Evans	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Michael Ladd	Waveney District Council
Cllr Alan Turner	Wycombe District Council
Cllr David Johncock	Wycombe District Council
John Callaghan	Wycombe District Council
Adam King (Comms)	Buckinghamshire County Council
Hilary Chipping	SEMLEP
Chris Starkie	New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership
David Sexton	DfT
Nick Hester	DfT
Chris Nicholson	East West Railway Company

1. Introductions and Apologies

- 1.1 Cllr Clark welcomed the representatives from Babergh and Mid-Suffolk Councils (Cllr Brewster and Marc Cole).
- 1.2 Cllr Clark reported that she had attended the first of the new East West Railway Company / DfT Programme Board meetings and it was a positive and useful meeting. Cllr Clark reminded the meeting that the Chair (Cllr Mark Shaw) and herself (as the Vice-Chair) represent the Consortium on this board (supported by Martin Tugwell and Patrick O'Sullivan).
- 1.3 Apologies are as recorded above.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- 2.1 The meeting accepted the minutes of the previous meeting as a true and accurate record subject to the addition of point 11.3:

11.3 Cllr Headley reminded the meeting of previous discussions concerning future wider linkages work noting the need to look again at the linkages with the East Midlands Cities (Leicester, Derby, Nottingham).

- 2.2 Cllr Clark asked Patrick O'Sullivan for an update on David Sexton. POS reported that David is undergoing treatment for blood cancer and is working in-between hospital visits. He has been a great friend to the Consortium and we look forward to seeing him again in future.

3. Western Section Phase 2 – Progress Report

- 3.1 PW provided an update – slides attached. Key points:

- TWAO submitted in July 2018. 234 objections, 11 representations and 411 letters of the support were received. PW thanked the Consortium for their support noting DfT reported this is one of the highest levels of support they have encountered.
- Public Inquiry starts 6 February. 31 of the objectors submitted a Statement of Case indicating they wish to appear at the Inquiry. The applicant is focused on trying to resolve outstanding issues. Highways is a key theme of Local Authority objections, in particular the impact during construction. Particular geographic hotspots of objection exist at Stewartby, Winslow, Lidlington and Woburn Sands
- Network Rail are keen to meet with local authorities to address objections before the Inquiry where this is possible
- Work in 2019 includes: completion of GRIP 4 in March and commence Grip 5 detailed design; decision on digital signalling (ETCS) expected in early 2019; enabling works; conclude development of integrated programme with HS2

- 3.2 Cllr Ashley asked what is the geographical extent of the TWAO? PW confirmed it is from Bicester through to Bedford, including some (limited) improvements to the Marston Vale line.
- 3.3 Cllr Smart queried whether the line speed on the Marston Vale is affected by the decision to close or not close a level crossing? PW confirmed that this has no impact on the proposal set out in the TWAO: EWR Company may seek to increase line speed in future, at which point an assessment would be necessary. POS noted that the EWRCo are looking at the Marston Vale line for future possible improvements.
- 3.4 Cllr Roy asked if there is safeguarding of adjacent land for future improvements. PW confirmed that some parts of the previous electrification scheme have been retained and the design for the single track Aylesbury spur is being done with future dualling in mind.
- 3.5 Cllr Larratt asked of the timescale for CPO? PW replied that he would need to check on this.
- 3.6 Cllr Smith asked if the structures are being designed to accept freight. PW confirmed the spec is for W12 and RA10 – i.e. the route (including the structures) will be capable of handling the heaviest of trains, without restrictions on loading gauge.

- 3.7 Cllr Clark noted BCC is particularly concerned about the impact of the proposals on local highways in general (including during the construction phase) and specifically around Calvert with HS2 works. PW reassured the meeting that resolving outstanding highways issues are a key priority for the Alliance and they are responding to the points raised. PW asked for an initial view from BCC as soon as possible once info has been provided.
- 3.8 POS asked by when a decision would be reached on the HS2 integration. PW said this is needed by March. MT reminded the meeting of concerns expressed by Buckinghamshire County Council members at previous meetings about the need to engage with them early on proposals that have an impact on rail access to the FCC-run Energy from Waste plant.

4. **Feedback from Budget**

- 4.1 MT reflected on the helpful messages contained within the budget. Key points:
- Government had published its formal response to the National Infrastructure Commission's report on the Oxford to Cambridge Arc
 - Although the response identified a 'core focus' for the Arc between Oxford and Cambridge, it also explicitly recognised the critical importance of wider strategic linkages – this was seen as recognition of the importance of linkages to the east of Cambridge (which includes the Eastern Section) and linkages to Swindon and beyond (which is being picked up by the wider linkages work)
 - The Government response endorsed the ambition to accelerate delivery of the Central Section, as well as noting the need to look at improved connectivity to/from Aylesbury

Overall, the view was that the Budget was positive for the East West Rail project as a whole.

5. **Central Section Update (EWR Company)**

- 5.1 WG provided an update – slides attached. Key points:
- Now 45 people in company including a New CEO - Simon Blanchflower – who will attend the next Consortium Board (March AGM)
 - Route selection and consultation to move quickly to a selected route (important to note that at this stage in the development of the Central Section the routes are a few kms wide)
 - Preferred route - selection by Summer 2019, formal consent process from 2021
 - Determination of the alignment for the Central Section will follow on from route selection – it will be at that stage that it will be possible to confirm precise location of railway infrastructure
 - Set of criteria to be applied in determining the selected route include potential for economic growth, housing, cost, deliverability, transport benefits and environmental opportunities.
 - 12 potential routes have been looked at in developing the consultation material – these are being narrowed down so that a small number will be set out on which comments will be invited.

- Route options: Key Node Options
 - Bedford (with the strategic choice being between a new station to the south of Bedford or taking the route through Bedford Midland)
 - East Coast Mainline (where the strategic choice centre on whether the route should be north of, south of or through Sandy)
 - South Cambridgeshire (where the strategic choice being between whether the route serves Cambourne, or between Arrington and Bassingbourn)
 - Route into Cambridge (where the preference is likely to be enter from the south but the consultation will offer the option to comment on the merits of a northern approach)
 - Southerly route is cheaper and journey time is more beneficial than Northerly route
 - Getting broad views in Consultation:
 - starts in late Jan/ early Feb; ends in early March (ahead of the start of local election purdah)
 - 90k+ leaflets being produced
 - 8-10 public events being organised across the central section
 - documents available in public libraries
 - engagement with all stakeholders (LAs, etc)
- 5.2 Cllr Ashley asked if there will be an interchange at Bedford South. WG confirmed there will be interconnectivity between EWR and the MML.
- 5.3 Cllr Smart asked how will communications be managed so that the Consortium sees what EWRCo are consulting on prior to the consultation beginning? WG confirmed there will be a briefing session for local elected members a few days before the formal consultation launches, but noted the tight timetable meant that this will take place close to the consultation beginning. Cllr Smart encouraged the Company to work with Local Authority communications officers in advance and WG confirmed this would be helpful.
- 5.4 Cllr Headley asked what assumptions about the Marston Vale Line are being made in the consultation material noting that it is important that a view is taken on that as part of the same decision and not separate. WG confirmed it will not be part of the consultation but noted that the need for further improvements to the Marston Vale line is a point to be considered by the EWRCo.
- 5.5 Cllr Clark asked how the EWRCo will keep the local councils directly affected by the scheme informed – local ward members need to be informed before the consultation starts. WG confirmed pre consultation briefing meetings are being set up and they will also keep local ward members in touch by letter or email.
- 5.6 Cllr Clark asked what level of detail will be provided in the consultation and how the information gained from consultation will be used? WG noted it will be high level, but invited councils to provide as much information as possible in their response so that the EWR Company is sighted on the key issues. He confirmed that responses to the consultation will be used to draw conclusions over the summer with continuing conversations with local authorities, looking at how the infrastructure can support local ambitions (local plans).
- 5.7 Cllr Clark asked that the EWRCo is consulting with local authorities over event venues and asked what is the plan for consulting with Parish Councils? WG confirmed they will have a proactive approach, with County, District, Unitary being the priority along with focusing on areas that might have particular sensitivities.

- 5.8 Cllr Headley asked if existing services would be kept separate from those associated with the Central Section? WG said they are looking for the right service pattern overall so are keeping all options open.
- 5.9 MT introduced the paper before the meeting which set out the proposed arrangements for developing a Consortium response to the consultation.

The meeting AGREED to:

- a) Note the content of the briefing from the East West Railway Company**
- b) The proposed arrangements for preparing a response to the anticipated engagement on the Central Section**

6. Eastern Section Prospectus

- 6.1 KA presented this item noting the work that the Eastern Section Working Group had undertaken to complete this document.
- 6.2 Cllr Clark thanked KA and the Working Group for all their work in producing the excellent prospectus.
- 6.3 Cllr Smart gave further background on the importance and scale of the Prospectus and proposed that the meeting endorse it. This was seconded by Cllr Brewster.

The meeting AGREED to adopt the Prospectus.

- 6.4 Cllr Smart asked how it will be shared with the public. MT confirmed that he will be meeting with KA and Cllr Nicoll to pick this up and promote it, including arranging for it to be published on the Consortium website, via the Comms Manager Adam King.

ACTION: AK to work with the Consortium secretariat to publish prospectus

7. Work Programme: Update on Wider Linkages

- 7.1 JD presented this paper noting it is a 'starter for 10'. It was recognised from the very start that EWR infrastructure (as national rail infrastructure) can facilitate a wide variety of service patterns - ref Cllr Headley's amendments to the September meeting minutes, and the opportunity for 'cross country' connections.
- 7.2 The paper starts to explore what these might be, breaking it down into north-south and east-west opportunities for both passenger and freight services.
- 7.3 Wider linkages work is timely, off the back of Government's response to the NIC report, development of England's Economic Heartland (EEH) Transport / Connectivity studies and progress on the central and eastern sections - and an opportunity to take forward alongside other EEH work.
- 7.4 The paper also takes the opportunity to briefly update the Board on the progress of the Oxfordshire Rail Connectivity Study, which it is a funding partner of, as there is a clear link to the potential for services to extend to the south and west.
- 7.5 Cllr Davis raised a concern that improving connectivity at a national level could put a strain onto interchanges. There is a need to consider capacity / opportunities at hubs (as well as the infrastructure connecting them).
- 7.6 Cllr Smart suggested it would be more appropriate to refer to sub-regional transport bodies (generally) rather than EEH specifically, requesting an

amendment to recommendation 'b' to "... Emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies to ...". The meeting agreed this amendment.

- 7.7 Cllr Headley suggested we look at the advantages of linking our corridor to the Midlands cities to yield greater economic prospects. MT noted work is already happening, for example, with discussions with Midland Connect.
- 7.8 Cllr Larratt expressed his gratitude for the inclusion of 'Northants and beyond'.

The meeting AGREED that it:

- a) **Recognises the significant opportunity that East West Rail infrastructure presents for new and enhanced national and regional service patterns;**
- b) **Work with the Department for Transport and emerging Sub-national Transport Bodies to develop proposals further, in order to inform future investment planning and franchise mapping decisions.**

8. Future Meetings

- 12 March 2019 (AGM) (Cambridge)
- 11 June 2019 (Bedford)
- 17 September 2019 (Cambridge)
- 10 December 2019 (Bedford)

Cllr Clark noted a change of venue for the next meeting in Cambridge – it will be at the Quay Mill Hotel on the A14.

9. Any other business

- 9.1 Cllr Ashley asked if there is any strategic work underway to co-ordinate leverage of funds through local plans to support delivery of investment in strategic infrastructure? MT noted that the issue of securing the funding for strategic infrastructure is something that needs further consideration, commenting that it was unrealistic to secure the required funding through the development planning system. This is an issue under consideration by EEH and the Consortium will be kept abreast of proposals as they are developed

Cllr Clark closed the meeting at 4.20 pm

11 December 2018