

East West Rail Consortium Strategic Board 9th June 2021

Agenda Item 3: Consultation Response

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Consider and agree, subject to amendments accepted by the meeting, Annex 1 as the response to the East West Railway Company's consultation**

1. Context

- 1.1. East West Railway Company launched its second (non-statutory) consultation on the scheme on 31st March: closing date for responses is 9th June.
- 1.2. Key areas of focus for the consultation are: Oxford Station and its supporting infrastructure (including Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations); London Road level crossing in Bicester; how best to serve communities on the Marston Vale Line; options for improved stations in Bedford; and five alignment options for the section of new railway between Bedford and Cambridge.
- 1.3. The strategic ambition of the East West Rail Consortium is to support and enable delivery of East West Rail connecting East Anglia, with central, southern and western England. The delivery of East West Rail has been at the core of the region's strategic priorities for 25 years and is the single biggest opportunity for this part of southern England. Investment in a strategic railway will be at the heart of transforming what is currently a series of discrete functional economical areas and housing markets into a better-connected region, to the benefit of businesses and residents alike.

2. Consideration

- 2.1. The draft response, attached as Annex 1, has been prepared by the Consortium secretariat. It has had the benefit of comments and input from the officers of individual Consortium members.
- 2.2. The response has been prepared as a strategic response. This allows individual Consortium members to make their own, more detailed comments as appropriate.
- 2.3. The current consultation is non-statutory: it is anticipated that the East West Railway Company will undertake the next – formal – stage of consultation later in 2021.

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