

EAST WEST MAIN LINE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

Wednesday 8 June 2022

11am-1.30pm

Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Alison Cackett	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Ian Stutely	Norwich City Council
Cllr Lance Stanbury	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Liz Leffman	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Michael Headley	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Phil Larratt	West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Phil Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Steve Broadbent (Chair)	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Sue Clark (Deputy Chair)	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Susan Glossop	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Suzie Morley	Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins	South Cambridgeshire District Council

In Attendance:

Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Andrew Summers	Transport East
Beth West	East West Railway Company
Danny Miller	East West Rail Alliance
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
David Rawson	Oxfordshire County Council
Edward Leigh	North Hertfordshire District Council
Fiona Foulkes	England's Economic Heartland
Gavin Dowland	Network Rail
Gavin Jones	Buckinghamshire Council
James Povey	Milton Keynes Council
James White	Western Gateway STB
Jeremy Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council
Jez Baldock	East West Rail Alliance
Jon Shortland	Bedford Borough Council
Julian Sykes	Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning
Kate Campbell	East West Railway Company
Katherine Davies	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Lewis Boudville	East Suffolk Council
Louise Wicks	Oxfordshire County Council
Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council
Matthew Jones	Network Rail
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council

Naomi Green
 Nathalie Mazhunga
 Oliver Walsom-Pridmore
 Rebecca Johnson
 Sara Noonan
 Susan Browning
 Suzanne Buck
 Tony Jones
 Trevor Brennan

England’s Economic Heartland
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 Network Rail
 Central Bedfordshire Council
 West Suffolk Council
 Buckinghamshire Council
 Transport East
 Norwich City Council
 England’s Economic Heartland

Apologies:

Cllr Ruth Brown
 Cllr Phil Bibby
 James Gagg
 Jeremy Damrel
 John Rippon

North Hertfordshire District Council
 Hertfordshire County Council
 Oxfordshire County Council
 East West Rail Company
 Buckinghamshire LEP

Item	
1	<p>Introductions and apologies</p> <p>The Chair made attendees aware that the meeting would be recorded for the purposes of minutes.</p> <p>Apologies were received as above.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of last meeting</p> <p><i>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2022</i></p> <p>The minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to the following corrections:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cllr Phil Larratt is the representative of West Northamptonshire Council - Paul Frainer and Jonathan Dixon were attendees from Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning
3	<p>East West Rail strategic narrative</p> <p><i>To receive an update on work which the Partnership is supporting to update and reemphasise the strategic narrative for East West Rail</i></p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) and Trevor Brennan (TB) outlined the progress made on strategic narrative work programme for financial year 2022/23 as agreed at the East West Main Line Partnership Board in March 2022. This programme consists of three packages, the outputs of which would be presented at the next EWML Partnership Board in September 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broad Strategic Narrative of East West Rail (funded by EEH and EWR Company) – the first draft of this has been completed and is being reviewed by EEH and EWR Company. This narrative goes wider than traditional transport TAG-compliant business case, capturing: a literature review of the existing business cases for the East West Rail scheme; both planning and transport benefits; and individual station catchment maps to identify housing and commercial opportunities. - Business Advocacy (funded by EWML Partnership) – interviews with businesses across the East West Main Line geography are ongoing with regard to the significance of the East West Rail scheme for business, economic growth and the flourishing of clusters. The output is expected to be an evidence-based ‘glossy’, which can be used

	<p>by Partnership members in their engagement with Ministers and MPs to press the case for East West Rail.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strategic Modelling (50% funded by EWML Partnership and 50% by EEH) – this model utilises the EEH Land Use Model as a base for quantifying the wider benefits of East West Rail including carbon saving opportunities, economic benefits and land value capture possibilities. <p>It was agreed that the draft outputs of these packages would be made available to officers to review.</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll requested that the Eastern Section Board would also be given the opportunity to input into these packages, given their continued work developing the business case for the Eastern Section of the East West Main Line (east of Cambridge). It was agreed that an initial draft would be shared with Eastern Section Board members.</p> <p>ACTION: EEH officers would make the draft outputs of work packages available to the officers of EWML Partnership and Eastern Section Board members.</p> <p>ACTION: EEH would present the outputs of these three packages at the next EWML Partnership Board in September 2022.</p>
4	<p>Making the case for the Aylesbury link</p> <p><i>To agree funding for work to make the strongest case for delivery of the East West Rail link to Aylesbury at the earliest opportunity</i></p> <p>TB outlined a request for £30,000 funding to be used to update the business case of the Aylesbury link to East West Rail. This is recognised as a longstanding priority for the EWML Partnership, EEH and Buckinghamshire Council, and considered to be an integral part of the East West Rail scheme, with both local regeneration opportunities within Aylesbury, as well as wider strategic regional rail connectivity. It was noted that the Aylesbury link was included in both DfT’s 2018 Western Section Business Case and in the 2020 Transport Act but was not included in the East West Rail capital funding awarded for Bicester – Bletchley.</p> <p>It was noted that Buckinghamshire Council may be willing to match-fund the EWML Partnerships’ funding – this would be subject to member approval.</p> <p>Following queries raised by Oxfordshire County Council re connectivity between Aylesbury and Oxford, it was agreed that the scope of this work would include both westward and eastward rail connectivity opportunity from Aylesbury. Representatives of West Northamptonshire Council and Milton Keynes Council also confirmed their strategic interest in realising the Aylesbury link.</p> <p>The meeting approved the funding request.</p>
5	<p>Update from Eastern Section Board</p> <p><i>To receive an update from the Partnership’s Eastern Section Board</i></p> <p>Andrew Summers updated the EWML Partnership on the reinvigoration of the Eastern Section Board. This is chaired by Cllr Alexander Nicoll, with Cllr Phil Smart as vice-chair and secretariat will be undertaken by Transport East. The purpose of the group is to provide a single voice on the Eastern Section of the East West Main Line and continue to develop the business case for the Eastern Section. An economic impact report will be undertaken over summer 2022, led by Transport East, for which EWML partnership have already agreed to contribute.</p>

	<p>The meeting thanked Kerry Allen for their hard work in supporting the Eastern Section activities over the past few years.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart emphasised the need to coordinate the work being undertaken by the EWML Partnership, the business case development by the Eastern Section Board, the Network Rail Suffolk Strategic Study, and Network Rail’s East West Main Line Strategic statement.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart also declared an interest as an employee of the Rail Freight Group.</p>
6	<p>East West Main Line Strategic Statement</p> <p><i>To receive a presentation from Network Rail on its East West Main Line Strategic Statement which was published in March</i></p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent (SB) welcomed Network Rail representatives to the meeting to discuss the East West Main Line Strategic Statement, which focuses on coast-to-coast rail connectivity. It was highlighted that it was unfortunate that the EWML Partnership were not aware of the publication of such an important document and that corrections have been requested, for example of county/authority names.</p> <p>Matt Jones, Network Rail, explained that the EWML Strategic Statement had been published in March 2022. It was originally conceived as an internal collective unified position across all the Network Rail regions. Its purpose is to provide high-level principles that could be used by regional strategic planning teams in development of more granular strategic advice to funders. This focuses on identifying long-term future opportunities to integrate new EWR infrastructure with current existing infrastructure, so as to prevent inadvertent “locking-out” of these future opportunities. It does not contradict the benefits derived from the currently remitted EWR programme (Oxford – Cambridge via Milton Keynes, inc Aylesbury link); suggest changes to the currently remitted scope of infrastructure or provide a train service specification. It also does not specifically request funding.</p> <p>The geography of the study was scoped to include 16 major urban centres, selected based on their demographic importance and whether they could be reasonably connected by rail using the EWR core infrastructure. The generalised journey time of all the possible origin and destination pairings within the geography was compared between the existing rail network and use of EWR (based on configuration state 3 services). The transformative change is clear in the core EWR area – when considering origin-destination pairings outside of this, journey times via existing lines are competitive to EWR. These are therefore opportunities to improve in the longer-term, which could be investigated incrementally by regional strategic planning teams to consider both passenger and freight improvements.</p> <p>NG proposed that the EWML Partnership send a formal response to the Strategic Statement, which would provide a considered reflection on this technical work.</p> <p>Cllr Sue Clark said there had been concern from residents regarding the wording of the strategic statement on freight and what this may mean for communities on the Marston Vale Line. She was surprised that this important work had been going on without engagement with EWML Partnership or the sub-national transport bodies. She does not know what view her officers would have on it. She suggested that the document should be noted and then discussed more fully at the September meeting once members have had a chance to talk to their officers. She stressed that she was not wishing to diminish the work of Network Rail, but members needed time to understand it more fully.</p> <p>Gavin Jones said there were lessons to be learnt on the way engagement had been handled. He was happy for a meeting to be arranged between officers and Network Rail to discuss the Strategic Statement.</p>

	<p>Phil Smart said it may be helpful to change the recommendation to 'notes and welcomes publication of the document'. On the issue of freight he said it strengthens the case for electrification. He said it was a useful time for the Statement to be published. Speaking from a Suffolk perspective he very much welcomes the report. He said the report can be a springboard to make sure we have a fit for purpose railway for all the regions involved.</p> <p>Michael Headley agreed engagement was sub-optimal but didn't want the message back to Network Rail to be not to publish these types of documents. Keeping documents internal is not helpful. He said there was a lot in the document to support including electrification, main line concept, wider linkages including direct linkages to East Midlands, and the Bletchley Chord. He could not support the need to have additional two lines north of Bedford as there are huge implications of doing this for Bedford. He reiterated Bedford Borough Council's opposition to the East West Railway Company's proposals for additional segregated tracks north of Bedford Midland.</p> <p>James White said he was pleased to see linkages west of Oxford in the report and this was a priority for Western Gateway STB.</p> <p>The Chair agreed there was much in the Strategic Statement which was positive, however given comments received during the discussion the recommendation could be changed.</p> <p>The meeting agreed to change the phrasing of the recommendation "for the Board to note the publication of the technical document and welcome the opportunity to consider it before providing regional position and response in autumn."</p> <p>ACTION: EEH Officers will coordinate a further briefing for officers by Network Rail to discuss the Strategic Statement in more depth.</p> <p>ACTION: Partnership officers to draft a formal response to Network Rail ahead of the next Board in September.</p>
7	<p>Welcoming new CEO of East West Railway Company</p> <p><i>To formally welcome Beth West as new CEO of East West Railway Company and to hear her vision for the line</i></p> <p>SB welcomed Beth West (BW) to the meeting and to their new role as CEO of the East West Rail Company.</p> <p>BW highlighted her interest in engaging with communities and recognised that the previous communications methods used could be improved. Local representative groups have been set-up to engage with impacted communities. BW also welcomed the work of the EWML Partnership on strategic narrative, recognising that traditional transport modelling does not capture the transformational benefits adequately for schemes like EWR.</p> <p>Cllr Michael Headley, Cllr Dr Tumi Hawkins and Cllr Sue Clark emphasised to BW and the EWML Partnership that the delays in telling host communities along the proposed line of route what is happening is unacceptable. BW empathised with this position.</p> <p>Cllr Liz Leffman stressed the importance of electrifying the EWR line from day one or, at the very least, making it electrification ready. BW recognised the need to look at non-carbon-based fuel for rolling stock as an alternative to diesel.</p>
8	<p>Update on progress from Company and Alliance</p> <p><i>To receive updates on progress from the East West Railway Company and EWR Alliance</i></p>

	<p>Jez Baldock updated the EWML Partnership that the main civil engineering works are coming to an end, with work moving to rail/track engineering focus. Track is being laid to east of Winslow, and track laying will then be undertaken from Bicester eastwards in July/August. Various bridges have been (re-)opened along the line of route.</p> <p>HS2 has formally declared a 3-month delay in the Calvert area, resulting in a revised infrastructure ready date of July 2024. Efforts are being taken by HS2 and the EWR Alliance to minimise this delay in delivery.</p> <p>Two current project challenges were highlighted to the EWML Partnership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpredictable materials and resource shortages • Condition of road haulage routes in Buckinghamshire – it is recognised that rural roads are being used to build EWR, which will require reinstatement. <p>Danny Miller presented on the social value generated by the project and its supply chain in April 2021 – March 2022, giving examples of community engagements. The monetised value of this is estimated to be £1,090,399.40 – work is planned to work out what the social return on investment is.</p> <p>JB’s presentation is available on the EWMLP website.</p>
9	<p>Future meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16 September 2022 (10-12.30pm) • 7 December 2022 (11-1.30pm) • 15 March 2023 (11am-1.30pm) • 14 June 2023 (11am-1.30pm) <p><i>Note: that the working assumption has been that meetings will be virtual.</i></p>