

EAST WEST MAIN LINE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

6 October 2022

10am-12.30pm

Virtual Meeting

Present:

Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Ian Stutely	Norwich City 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 Dr Tumi Hawkins	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Phil Bibby	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Robert Roche	Luton Council
Cllr Jessica Wilson-Marklew	Milton Keynes City Council
Cllr Richard Stobart	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Katie Thornburrow	Cambridge City Council
Cllr Peter Martin	Buckinghamshire Council

In Attendance:

Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Andrew Summers	Transport East
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Edward Leigh	North Hertfordshire District Council
Fiona Foulkes	England's Economic Heartland
James Povey	Milton Keynes Council
James White	Western Gateway STB
Jez Baldock	East West Rail Alliance
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
Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
Susan Browning	Buckinghamshire Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Trevor Brennan	England's Economic Heartland
Bronwyn Marshall	England's Economic Heartland
Philip Howard	Central Bedfordshire Council

Andrew Bramwell
 Hilary Chipping
 Jeremy Damrel
 Antony Swift
 Rupert Zierler
 Natasha Holdgate
 James Gagg
 Chris Wragg
 Jordi Beascochea
 Chris Poultney
 Will Gallagher

Suffolk County Council
 SEMLEP
 East West Railway Company
 Luton Council
 Buckinghamshire Council
 West Suffolk Council
 Oxfordshire County Council
 West Northamptonshire Council
 East West Railway Company
 Cambridgeshire County Council
 East West Railway Company

Apologies:

Cllr Martin Wilby (Norfolk County Council), Cllr Ruth Brown and Cllr Ian Mantle (North Herts District Council); Cllr Liz Leffman and Duncan Enright (Oxfordshire County Council)

Item	Agenda item
1	<p>Introductions and apologies</p> <p>Apologies received.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed Cllr Katie Thornburrow to the meeting, representing Cambridge City Council which had recently joined the Partnership.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart declared an interest as an employee of the Rail Freight Group.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of last meeting</p> <p>The minutes were approved.</p>
3	<p>Strategic position</p> <p>The Chair gave his reflections on the last few months. He acknowledged the degree of uncertainty over East West Rail. This was why EEH and EWMLP commissioned work on making the case for the economic importance of delivering the scheme to Bedford, Cambridge and Aylesbury.</p> <p>The Building Better Connections brochure was sent to ministers, MPs and media in the run-up to the mini-budget on 23 September.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted a quote from AstraZeneca which said 'the UK needs critical assets like EWR to join up innovation hubs in the region and create a globally leading zone that can rival London for global investment and this should be a priority for government'.</p> <p>He added that the Chair of the Arc University Group made a good point about the importance of still physically connecting people and places.</p> <p>In terms of the mini-budget, it was pleasing that EWR was on the Treasury's list of projects for acceleration, while Prime Minister Liz Truss had given her commitment to EWR in a media interview.</p>

	<p>The Chair said it was important to secure funding and commitment for the scheme in the run-up to the next fiscal event in November. He outlined plans for the APPG event in Westminster.</p> <p>At a local level, the Chair said there was a need for clarity on design, construction, and future operations of EWR – the EWMLP needs to hold EWR Company to account by representing what constituents are encountering. At strategic level, we also need to represent the benefits.</p> <p>Cllr Susan Glossop (SG) asked whether the government’s recent references to delivering East West Rail included the ‘central’ or ‘eastern’ sections?</p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) said there had not been confirmation but it was inferred this meant to Cambridge.</p> <p>Will Gallagher (WG) said there had been no official answer yet, the conversations with Treasury are about accelerating delivery to Cambridge.</p>
4	<p>Update from East West Railway Company</p> <p>Kate Campbell (KC) presented slides on the EWR Company’s engagement.</p> <p>This includes nine drop-in events since May, with 900+ attendees. There is also a quarterly newsletter - focusing on stories that support and highlight environmental credentials. Also appeared in Milton Keynes Chamber of Commerce and Northamptonshire Chamber of Commerce by monthly publications. The website has had a refresh.</p> <p>KC said local representative groups are ongoing until November. She thanked the Partnership for Building Better Connections which she said had ‘played an absolutely critical role in getting us where we are today’.</p> <p>The Chair highlighted concern over inflationary pressures, how could this impact government view on the delivery of the project?</p> <p>WG said CS1 (Bicester-Bletchley) is already in construction, most materials already purchased, and head room was built into budget, so he is confident on CS1 delivery. All projects that are competing for government funding are all in the same boat.</p> <p>Hilary Chipping (HC) said it was positive that Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough had been listed as investment zone locations in the mini-Budget – was there a possibility of linking investment zones with EWR? WG said investment zones are decision for local authorities. What makes EWR an even more compelling story for government is joining up investment opportunities all the way across the line, not just Oxford and Cambridge.</p> <p>Cllr Michael Headley (MH) asked what were the likely type of announcements before Christmas, for example on Marston Vale options? WG said doing work on this right</p>

	<p>now. Company is supporting government to make decisions based on their analysis. They are engaged with government to get as many decisions or preferences clear.</p> <p>AN was concerned that investment zones may detract from freeports. The Chair said his interpretation was they are different in scale. WG said it was not yet clear size or amount of investment zones.</p> <p>Cllr Katie Thornburrow (KT) said EWR is much more than helping economy, affects how people plan their lives around where the railway stations are and the service providing. Pulling out of public buses will be devastating in Cambridge. How can we make the stations the most important travel hubs? Going east for Cambridge is priority for improving line to Newmarket and beyond. People choosing to buy homes based on public transport provision.</p> <p>The Chair said EEH has been working on this issue in their strategic narrative. WG said EWR enables sustainable economic growth; EWR is good for the environment. Work on the first mile, last mile with EEH work will be critical going forward – can be massive change for quality of life for people in region.</p> <p>AN said touched on the challenges facing rural bus services. Need to make it an integrated system – ticketing needs to include train as well as bus for people to shift mode. Need for legal reform. Friction between transport modes.</p> <p>NG said there were a number things EEH are doing – working across STBs in wider southeast on shared buses project looking at where there are barriers to delivery of buses. EEH doing work around mobility hubs and has published Regional Bus Strategy. Continue to press DfT that there is a problem.</p> <p>Andrew Summers (AS) said the Transport East transport strategy is truly integrated approach to moving goods and people. Rural mobility work will look at some of the bus challenges.</p> <p>NG suggested that first mile, last mile to EWR stations and integration is something the Partnership could explore further. The Board agreed.</p>
5	<p>Making the case for East West Rail</p> <p>The new Chancellor’s Plan for Growth 2022 included East West Rail as one the schemes identified for delivery as soon as possible although it didn’t give an explicit commitment to delivery of East West Rail in full, namely between Bletchley and Cambridge or the Aylesbury link. Securing that commitment and funding to progress the scheme east and south of Milton Keynes has become the priority for the Partnership.</p>

	<p>Seven Hills was commissioned to produce the report for the business imperative piece. 15 organisations were secured with the support of LEPs and local authorities. Three key messages were developed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic growth and innovation • Connecting skills and talent • Boosting global investment <p>The business advocacy document focuses on section between Bletchley and Cambridge, the Aylesbury link and wider opportunities. Brochure has been sent to ministers, MPs, businesses, and media. Document to officially launch in the House of Commons 25th Oct 2023.</p> <p>The draft Strategic Narrative is a separate, supporting piece of work by EEH and EWR.</p> <p>The Chair asked about timing on the Aylesbury link work.</p> <p>TB said the Partnership was waiting for information/data from EWR Company before progressing with business case for Aylesbury link. EWML Partnership is co-funding with Bucks and taking through procurement.</p> <p>Phil Larratt (PL) highlighted an error in the contents of the strategic narrative. NG thanked PL and said this would be corrected.</p> <p>SC said the business brochure was a refreshing way of approaching putting together a case and in a readable way.</p> <p>She asked whether work which has been carried out first mile, last mile in Marston Vale has been published?</p> <p>NG said it had not. EWRCo wants to align timing with the Marston Vale options. SC said it would be helpful to see it as soon as possible.</p> <p>KT said EWR was important in the context of Cambridge’s local plan. NG said aligning hooks between transport schemes and planning process was important.</p>
6	<p>Response to Network Rail’s Main Line Strategic Statement</p> <p>Adam King (AK) introduced the item. The draft response has been amended to be shorter, higher level and more concise as per feedback from officers at the workshop. The document mainly concentrates on the Partnership’s response to those seven principles.</p> <p>Phil Smart (PS) said he was very happy with the response. He echoed KT’s earlier points around importance of developing services to the east. Highlights that we are going to have to rely on the rail network more than ever before if trying to decarbonise.</p>

	<p>MH supports the current draft. In regard to the freight section, the Midlands corridor, he asked to please make it clearer that we're talking about Felixstowe, Peterborough and Ely so no room for misinterpretation.</p> <p>SC said she supports the approach of sticking to the strategic points in document. She advised adding a sentence in the intro that reinforces that the focus is the principles and also to point readers in the direction of the response sent in to the EWR consultation.</p> <p>The Board agreed..</p> <p>Edward Leigh (EL) asked if the comments sent in previously had been received. AK said they had been received. Some of the comments were used however it had been decided that the response would not cover interfacing areas.</p> <p>PS said he agreed Ely is the overwhelming priority for rail freight. He said EWR is probably going to be required in diversionary capacity for freight. Free market determines where terminals are built – some will be better accessed by EWR, but currently have to travel via London.</p>
7	<p>Update from Eastern Section Board</p> <p>Andrew Summers from Transport East presented slides on Eastern Board Update.</p> <p>Transport East is undertaking a rail plan – roundtable being kicked off 15 November bringing together disparate voices around rail to form a single voice. Will bring this back to next EWMLP meeting.</p>
8	<p>Update from East Rail Alliance</p> <p>Jez Baldock (JB) from EWR Alliance presented a project update on CS1.</p> <p>Chair expressed interest in hearing more about apprenticeships and skills at a future meeting.</p> <p>AN commended the social value effort.</p>
9	<p>Revising Partnership’s terms of reference and administrative update</p> <p>Fiona Foulkes (FF) gave an update regarding finances.</p> <p>£23,175 of £49,440 has been received or committed from local contributions. Member advised to please check whether their authority has contributed.</p> <p>Year to date expenditure of £67,900 which is made up of staffing costs (including management of the WIK process), website developments and modeling to support the case for EWR and creation of business imperative for East West Rail documents.</p> <p>AK advised the terms of reference was last updated in 2018. Therefore tweaks have been made around names of meetings, language, contributions, and background information on STBs.</p>

	<p>Purpose of Partnership has changed and now reflects the six areas of interest that were agreed when the partnership launched in September 2021.</p> <p>SG queried why the requirement of chair and vice chair to be geographically separate was being removed. AK suggested that this could be considered at the time of nominating chair and vice chair, rather than a prescriptive approach. NG said at the moment, the Chair and Vice Chair (Bucks and Central Beds respectively) are not geographically dispersed, but they have different experiences and expectations.</p> <p>MH raised a concern about a line in the TofR regarding collective responsibility points and said it was unworkable. AK confirmed this had been in the previous TofR. MH also suggested having the AGM in June.</p> <p>The Board agreed the revised terms of reference subject to removing collective responsibility clause and AGM being in June.</p> <p>The Board also formally supported Cambridge City Council joining the Partnership.</p>
	<p>Future meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7 December 2022 (2-3.30pm)• 15 March 2023 (11-1.30pm)• 14 June (11-1.30pm) <p><i>Note: that the working assumption has been that meetings will be virtual.</i></p>

