



## **EAST WEST MAIN LINE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD**

Wednesday 14 June 2023

*11am – 1:30pm*

Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

### Present:

CLlr Phil Bibby	Hertfordshire County Council
CLlr Steve Broadbent	Buckinghamshire Council
CLlr Jodie Chillery	Central Bedfordshire Council
CLlr Phil Larratt	West Northamptonshire Council
CLlr Liz Leffman	Oxfordshire County Council
CLlr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
CLlr Philip Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
CLlr Katie Thornburrow	Cambridge City Council
CLlr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew	Milton Keynes City Council

### In attendance

Andrew Bramwell	Suffolk County Council
Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council
Jordi Beascochea	East West Rail
David Bradbury	Mid Suffolk District Council
Trevor Brennan	England's Economic Heartland
Ruth Brown	North Hertfordshire District Council
Susan Browning	Buckinghamshire Council
Kate Campbell	East West Rail
Karen Chapman	Suffolk Growth
Hillary Chipping	South East Midlands LEP
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Katherine Davies	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
Hanane Elmaarouf	England's Economic Heartland
Helen Fallon	England's Economic Heartland
Fiona Foulkes	England's Economic Heartland
James Gagg	England's Economic Heartland
Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
Nicola Gribble	Bedford Borough Council
Mark James	East West Rail Alliance
Rebecca Johnson	Central Bedfordshire Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Robert Jones	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Edward Leigh	North Hertfordshire District Council
Greg Logan	Bedford County Council
Melanie McGuinness	Bedford Borough Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Sara Noonan	West Suffolk Council
Erin Pitcher	England's Economic Heartland
Chris Poultney	Cambridgeshire County Council
James Povey	Milton Keynes City Council
David Rawson	Oxford City Council
Julian Richardson	Oxfordshire County Council

Jeremy Smith  
Alastair Southgate  
Andrew Summers  
Julian Sykes

Cambridgeshire County Council  
Essex County Council  
Transport East  
Greater Cambridgeshire Shared Planning Service

Beth West  
James White  
Louise Wicks  
Rupert Zierler

East West Railway Company  
Western Gateway  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire Council

Apologies  
Cllr Tomi Hawkins  
Cllr Robert Roche  
Cllr Indy Wijenayaka  
Cllr Jim Weir

South Cambridgeshire District Council  
Luton Borough Council  
West Suffolk Council  
Bedford Borough Council

Item	Agenda item	Action
1	<p>Introductions and apologies</p> <p>Cllr Jim Weir (Bedford Borough Council), Robert Roche (Luton Borough Council), Tomi Hawkins (South Cambs), Indy Wijenayaka ( West Suffolk Council) sent their apologies.</p> <p>Declaration of interests from Cllr Phil Smart (Rail Freight Group)</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent welcomed new members to the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent gave his thanks to the former vice chair Sue Clark for her significant role in the East West Main Line Partnership (EWMLP), stating she has been instrumental to the evolution of the partnership and a great support.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent provided an overview of updates affecting the EWMLP.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• East West Rail (EWR) preferred route from Bletchley to Cambridge announced in May. Important to note that it came from the Chancellor as part of a wider announcement to grow the science and technology sectors.</li> <li>• EWR has significant potential to enable the region’s science and technology sector to flourish, connect communities and provide job opportunities.</li> <li>• There are still concerns over the future funding of EWR, such as the Aylesbury link. We are still calling for the electrification of the line and the use of different rolling stock.</li> </ul>	
2	<p>Confirmation of Chair and Election of Vice Chair</p> <p>Naomi Green discussed the governance of the partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership is clear in its ambition about promoting the need for EWR connectivity.</li> <li>• Reminder of membership, Local Authorities (LAs) are full members and pay an annual contribution. Membership of the partnership is dependent on this contribution being paid. These are the voting members.</li> <li>• The partnership has a chair and vice chair and the terms of reference for the partnership deem that these should be agreed annually. There is an expectation that the role of chair and vice chair can be held for a maximum period of three years.</li> </ul> <p>It was agreed that Cllr Steve Broadbent shall continue as chair.</p> <p>Following the recent local elections former vice chair Cllr Sue Clark will no longer hold the position. There is a need to elect a new vice chair, however, to allow all the</p>	<p>If any members would like to discuss the role of vice chair email Naomi Green or Cllr Steve Broadbent.</p>

	new members time to hear about the partnership and to consider the role this election shall be deferred to the following meeting.	
3	Minutes of last meeting The minutes of the last meeting were approved.	
4	<p>Route update – presentation from EWR Company</p> <p>Beth West provided an update on the May route announcement.</p> <p>Four documents were published. The Route Update Report describes how the proposals for EWR have developed since the 2021 consultation and what the preferred plans are. The 2021 Consultation Feedback Report covers all feedback received. The Economic and Technical Report covers strategic work done and considers some potentially more affordable options. The 2023 Need to Sell Property Scheme is for people who are needing to sell their homes.</p> <p>In terms of engagement, EWR Co have been having quarterly meetings with fifteen local representative groups where various issues have been discussed. Engaged widely with business, industry, and academia, and have been talking to political stakeholders and statutory bodies. They will continue to engage with our local authorities as we are leading up to the statutory consultation. Have had public engagement drop in events with more running into the Autumn.</p> <p>Beth covered EWR Co’s work on the strategic case for EWR which included assessing whether heavy rail was still the optimum mode, which it was. They have looked into various components of the route to see if there are ways to deliver benefits more cost effectively. This led to an updated service pattern.</p> <p><u>Questions/Comments</u></p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent asked how the EWR Co will be handling representations made between now and the beginning of the public consultation? Beth West replied that the Company is engaging with communities and that she will come back with more detailed plans which ensures engagement is as thorough as possible.</p> <p>Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew said she is concerned about the Bletchley to Bedford line including the level crossings. Beth West said having the increased frequency of trains per hour will increase utilisation. She said there was a need to consider level crossing technology and ways to make it efficient.</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent asked for more detail regarding the decisions about the level crossings. Beth West replied it is about capacity. In the first instance to increase capacity EWR will be adding more carriages to the trains rather than more trains. Need to be looking at station design to make sure platforms are suitable for longer trains.</p> <p>Jeremy Smith asked about track capacity / platform capacity and eastern access at Cambridge station. Is there anything to say at this point in similar context to commentary on Oxford and Bedford? Beth West replied on the Oxford side they will need to deal with the station, currently working with Network rail to create solutions. Will need to rebuild Bedford station as new platforms have to be put in, need to make sure the station design does not preclude future growth.</p> <p>Cllr Nicola Gribble raised the plans’ impact on Bedford, including demolition of homes, and asked if the BFARe (Bedford for a Reconsultation) representation had</p>	<p>EWR Company to update Partnership on its community engagement plan.</p> <p>Beth West will share the flood analysis with Cllr Nicola Gribble and her local representatives group network.</p>

	<p>been considered. She requested for the technical flood risk to be shared with the local representatives group network.</p> <p>Beth West said EWR Co is very mindful of the impact on Bedford and looked in detail at all options. She said the chosen route has less sensitive, complex environmental constraints with a potential for higher frequency of services. EWR Co spent a huge amount of time going through and analysing the routes which would cause the least disruption and deliver the most benefits.</p> <p>Andrew Summers asked what work EWR Company is doing to make realise integration opportunities from EWR to the transport network. Beth West replied that they need to integrate with the rest of the rail network and will continue to work with Network Rail and the train operating companies to make this work. Will be working closely with all the local authorities to get the correct connectivity to the stations.</p> <p>Naomi Green said that STBs have an important role to make EWR work for and with the local authorities through the local transport plans. Working closely on behalf of the partnership and EEH board to look at the legacy of EWR for the region.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart asked what avenues there are for interested strategic passenger and freight stakeholder engagement? Beth West said that she will come back on this and will consider how to engage with wider Oxford to Cambridge stakeholders.</p> <p>Keith Dove said that some of the stations on the Marston Vale Line are very close to the level crossings so when the train stops it delays traffic. In the 2021 consultation there were suggestions about moving some of the stations, so they were further away from the crossings, has any thought been given to this? Beth West said they are still working on the design, but it would be helpful to get views on this.</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll said he is supportive of the increased engagement with communities. Endorses a holistic conversation across a wide variety of stakeholders to see how to get the public to understand the vision of the project when sometimes all they see is disconnected silos. Beth West said there should be feedback on engagement style with communities to ensure best practice.</p> <p>Edward Leigh said there are concerns that Tempsford station is not going to be able to provide the desired level of interchange connectivity because of the capacity constraints on the East Coast Main Line and timetabling. Beth West said that the ideal thing is that the interconnection points and timetabling work so travellers do not have massive wait times. Naomi Green said that Network Rail is thinking about this and the STBs (EEH and Transport East (TE)) are focusing on integration between lines so that services can work.</p>	
5	<p>Financial update and work programme</p> <p>Naomi Green set out how the finances were used over 2022/23 and what work is proposed for the financial year 2023/24.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The partnership is solely reliant on funding from contributions from members and it is the decision of the board to set the level of subscription each year to fund the work of the partnership.</li> <li>• During 2022/23 the partnership played an important role in making the case for EWR next sections between Bletchley, Bedford and Cambridge.</li> <li>• Partnership has grown and has welcomed Cambridge City Council.</li> </ul>	<p>Naomi Green will follow up the outstanding contributions. Will bring an update on the success of this and how the funding for 23/24 will be secured.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the previous financial year (22/23) we received subscriptions to the value of £37,803. 6 members did not provide their contributions. We are following up with those individual authorities.</li> <li>• The terms of reference are clear that payment is part of the expectation of being a member.</li> <li>• Proposal agreed that subscription levels will be frozen. It will be £1,545 for district authorities and £3,090 for county and unitary authorities.</li> <li>• For the next financial year (23/24) the overriding priority is making sure that the EWR is well planned and delivered. Three key areas recommended to take forward: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Using the investment in the Oxford to Cambridge section as the catalyst for the East West Main Line, progressing the Eastern section work.</li> <li>2. Doing things correctly and creating the legacy of EWR</li> <li>3. Ensuring the Aylesbury link is progressed.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><u>Questions/Comments</u>  Cllr Steve Broadbent asked about membership and payment.  Naomi Green that the terms of reference set out that those who do not contribute cannot continue and we will reach again to make the authorities aware.</p> <p>Cllr Katie Thornburrow said the value for money offered by EWMLP is tremendous.</p> <p>Naomi Green said that if there is anything members would like covering, we welcome suggestions that can be presented to the chair and added to the agenda.</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll said it was key every authority contributed.</p>	
6	<p>Update on Aylesbury link</p> <p>James Gagg updated the meeting on the current position and plans for supporting the Aylesbury link of EWR.</p> <p>An economic narrative for the Aylesbury link is being developed, in line with the board's previous agreement. This would look at how the wider strategic rail connectivity delivered through the Aylesbury link would help support the business sector, labour markets, innovation clusters across the wider geography.</p> <p>The work is expected to take around three months and will be reported back to the board. It will feed into a more detailed business case work supporting the further work by EWR, we plan to engage further with the company as we progress.</p>	<p>Report back at next meeting regarding progress on the Aylesbury link work.</p>
7	<p>Update from Eastern Section Board</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll and Andrew Summers gave an update on the work the Eastern section board were doing.  Cllr Alexander Nicoll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Had last meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> June, the meetings are successful and well attended, often joined by stakeholders like the Port of Felixstowe.</li> <li>• Adam King from EEH attended which is a good way of placing the work and some of the more Eastern centric issues, including Ely and Haughley, in the wider context of the EWR partnership.</li> </ul> <p>Andrew Summers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pleased that Will Gallagher could attend and give an update on the EWR announcement.</li> <li>• This was a good start for increased engagement between the East and EWRC.</li> <li>• Members were broadly supportive of the announcement.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As Cllr Nicoll and Cllr Smart have highlighted, the interest of the group is to ensure high quality rail services and to continue to press the case going forward.</li> <li>• Ministers and Secretary of State have endorsed the Transport East Transport Strategy, this means that government has to pay due regard to the principals, outcomes and proposals in the strategy when making policy going forwards.</li> <li>• In the strategy, TE have heavily articulated the need for EWR.</li> <li>• TE are developing a rail plan focusing on short term wins to improve rail services.</li> <li>• Andrew Summers discussed the great work EEH has done with TE on the Ely prospectus; one of the key infrastructure pieces needed in the Eastern rail network.</li> <li>• The brochure is now published, and a lot of parliamentary activity is taking place.</li> </ul> <p>Questions/Comments</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart said that Network Rail are undertaking a re-signalling exercise. With the support of TE, they are trying to work with Network Rail to get one of the signalling blocks shortened to get more frequent trains through the section. Although there is no immediate need, there will be when EWR goes live, therefore trying to futureproof.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have an upcoming parliamentary event on Ely which many will be attending.</li> <li>• The work is still upfront, live and visible.</li> </ul> <p>Andrew Summers agreed on the continued need to advocate Ely and Haughley and said EEH and TE are working incredibly closely to promote the case.</p>	
8	<p>Update from EWR Alliance</p> <p>Update from Mark James</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EWR is 80% complete in terms of overall activity</li> <li>• Still heading for an infrastructure ready date – built infrastructure ready for July 2024. This will support the entry into service activity with Chiltern railways as operator of choice.</li> <li>• Worked through most of the track construction, currently building track in the HS2 area.</li> <li>• The rails should meet and join in August/September in the integration area, but the aim at the moment is to progress track construction completion.</li> <li>• Winslow station building is now complete and being internally finished. The entrance to the station is in progress now, tarmacking the carpark, bus stop, taxi area.</li> <li>• New platforms (7 and 8) at Bletchley station are pretty much finished, the link bridge to the new and old are now in place. The next stage is to move to systems fitter and connect back to the existing station where all the operations will take place.</li> <li>• Endeavoured to try and get as many new footbridge and diverted footpaths handed back to the local authorities. 7/10 new footbridges are now open to the public and have had some good feedback from the communities where they are now in use.</li> <li>• 6/11 main compounds are now out and being reinstated.</li> <li>• 80% of haul roads have been removed and reinstated.</li> <li>• 166/445 temporary land plots have been reinstated and returned to their landowners.</li> <li>• A number of permanent repairs to TWAO construction links are complete.</li> <li>• The project has received just over £2.5million return on social investment.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing a lot of STEM activity in schools’ engagement to demonstrate the construction and engineering legacy.</li> <li>• Now running a large programme of rail safety training.</li> </ul> <p>Questions/ comments</p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent said the STEM talks in schools is very good, have been trying to link it onwards to apprenticeships and job opportunities to build up skills.</p> <p>Adam King asked when will the pedestrian route alongside the track between the High Street and Winslow Grange in Winslow be reopened to the public? Mark James said it will happen in the next quarter.</p> <p>Naomi Green said that EEH has taken a piece of work on the legacy of EWR to the EEH board. Said we should learn from Cllr Broadbent and what has worked and feed this into a wider legacy piece.</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll commended the comments of reopening rights of way.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart said that the importance of the consortium over the years should be recognised. Said that if there is an event then the partnership should be invited in recognition of the hard work done.</p> <p>Kate Campbell said they are looking at what the launch will look like.</p>	
9	<p>EEH objectives for rail</p> <p>Helen Fallon gave an update on EEH’s regional rail priorities.</p> <p>EEH has set out priorities for rail in its transport strategy but also identified objectives across other studies including the EEH passenger rail study.</p> <p>Now seeking to consolidate the evidence base for rail across all the strategies and reports into a single integrated plan for rail. Want to ensure there is consistency particularly where there are competing demands on the network and ensure integration across modes and within the wider transport network to ensure the rail investment delivers maximum benefits. The purpose of this work is to agree the rail strategic objectives across each of the 7 mainline routes that pass through EEH.</p> <p>EEH, Transport East and Transport for the South East have been working together to create the wider South East Rail Partnership. This is also in combination with GBR and TfL. This will ensure the agreed transport strategies for regional connectivity are embedded in the GBR.</p>	
10	<p>Future meeting dates</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 October 2023 (11am-1.30pm)</li> <li>• 20 December 2023 (11am-1.30pm)</li> <li>• 20 March 2024 (11am-1.30pm)</li> </ul> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent asked whether the board would like to arrange a physical meeting. The board agreed.</p>	<p>Cllr Steve Broadbent will discuss the possibility of in person meeting with Adam King and Naomi Green.</p>