



EAST WEST MAIN LINE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

Friday 06 October 2023

11am – 12:15pm

Virtual Meeting held via Microsoft Teams

In attendance

CLlr Steve Broadbent
CLlr Alex Beckett
CLlr Phil Bibby
CLlr Nicola Gribble
CLlr Liz Leffman
CLlr Brian Milnes
CLlr Alexander Nicoll
CLlr Philip Smart
CLlr Richard Stobart
CLlr Katie Thornburrow
CLlr Jim Thorndyke
CLlr Lesley Wagland
CLlr Indy Wijenayaka

Buckinghamshire Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Bedford Borough Council
Oxfordshire County Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Suffolk County Council
Ipswich Borough Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cambridge City Council
West Suffolk Council
Essex County Council
West Suffolk Council

Attendees

Jez Baldock
Jordi Beascoechea
David Bradbury
Andrew Bramwell
Susan Browning
Pete Brunskill
Suzanne Buck
Karen Chapman
Hilary Chipping
David Cumming
Paul Davey
Katherine Davies
Hanane Elmaarouf
Fiona Foulkes
Naomi Green
Philip Howard
Robert Jones
Adam King
Edward Leigh
Trevor Mason

East West Rail Alliance
East West Rail Company
Mid Suffolk District Council
Suffolk County Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Transport East
Suffolk Growth
SEMLEP
Norfolk County Council
Hutchinson Ports UK
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
England's Economic Heartland
England's Economic Heartland
England's Economic Heartland
Central Bedfordshire Council
Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
England's Economic Heartland
North Hertfordshire Council
Hertfordshire County Council

Melanie McGuiness
 Michael Newsham
 Sara Noonan
 Erin Pitcher
 Chris Poultney
 James Povey
 John Rippon
 Jeremy Smith
 Terry De Sousa
 Alastair Southgate
 Andrew Summers
 Beth West
 James White
 Rupert Zierler

Bedford Borough Council
 Ipswich Borough Council
 West Suffolk Council
 England's Economic Heartland
 Cambridgeshire County Council
 West Northamptonshire Council
 Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership
 Cambridgeshire County Council
 Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
 Essex County Council
 Transport East
 East West Railway Company
 Western Gateway
 Buckinghamshire Council

Item	Agenda Item
1	Introductions and Apologies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apologies sent from Cllr Plant • Declaration of interest from Phil Smart (Rail Freight Group)
2	Confirmation of Vice Chair/s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universal support from all members on the call to appoint Cllr Thornburrow and Cllr Nicoll as Vice Chairs of the East West Main Line Partnership (EWMLP).
3	Minutes of last meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions of the previous minutes were completed. • Minutes were accepted. <p>Naomi Green said that EEH has followed up on all outstanding contributions and have sent out letters for contributions for this financial year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Said that any encouragement of authorities to pay contributions is very welcomed. <p>Fiona Foulkes said that the EWMLP is funded solely by member contributions. At this point in the year, we have £30,900 committed or received, compared to an expected £50,985, so that's more than half of the monies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Luton Borough Council and Stevenage Borough Council have withdrawn from the partnership.
4	Beth West provided an update from East West Railway Company (EWRC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provided thanks to the Partnership for the continued support throughout the years. It is very important that there is continued support as the project progresses. • Since the route announcement in May there has been community engagement including 2 newsletters and 12 route-wide community drop-in events which were opportunities for people to ask questions and share their views. • EWR Co have been running local representative groups which focus on future engagement and the engagement strategy. • They have been meeting with councils across the route and have had cross party engagement.

- EWR Co have held third meeting of the Accessibility Advisory Panel which is to get feedback on accessibility needs through the design and development process.
- The community engagement plan is using a hyper-localised approach, want to make sure that everybody understands the wide-reaching benefits of EWR.
- The Company is also setting up a community charter and is having continued public engagement events as part of statutory consultation.
- EWR Co will be starting ground investigation surveys at the beginning of the next calendar year. Letters to landowners with voluntary access agreements will be sent out soon.
- It is pulling together preliminary environmental information report.
- Work on detailed designs to go into the statutory consultation process which is planned for summer 2024.
- Work is also underway to settle scope decisions and take detailed design forward so optionality can be reduced.

Questions

Cllr Steven Broadbent asked who will be notified about the land use letters?
Beth West said the local authorities (LAs) will.

Cllr Phil Bibby asked about the funding model.
Beth West said it is assumed that EWR will have public funding. EWR Co will be continuing to look at what opportunities there may be for private financing and will be trying to reduce the cost of the scheme.

Cllr Steven Broadbent asked about EWR Co looking into alternative traction technologies.
Beth West said they are looking at full electrification or electrification mixed with batteries. There are various constraints which are leading more to bi-mode solutions but engagement is underway with government.

Cllr Phil Smart suggested private investment could be brought in by operator investment deals. He asked about digging archaeological trenches between Bedford and Cambridge which may face pushback.
Beth West said they have land access agreements where landowners are asked if land can be accessed to do intrusive surveys. EWR Co are intending to go out next week with the initial questioning.

Cllr Steven Broadbent asked if EWR Co were expecting any upcoming funding announcements. Beth West said there was no anticipation of being in the Autumn Statement again.

Cllr Brian Milnes questioned the rationale for the Northern Cambourne route which requires a crossing of the new A428 and the existing dual carriageway.

Beth West said that EWR Co have the local opportunity plans work and funding which is intended to be used for different areas around the stations. They are working through how the £15 million will be spent in terms of development opportunities.

- For Cambourne working together in partnership to get the door-to-door local connectivity right for the station. EWR Co are speaking to National

Highways on how to work together on this. They want to make sure that work will enhance communities and integrate the railway.

Cllr Katie Thornburrow asked if there are figures about the predicted increase footfall for Cambridge station for when it first opens and when it is open 5-10 years down the line.

Beth West said these would be sent to her.

Cllr Lesley Wagland raised concern about CIL and NSIP funding. She raised the importance of how to have developers play their full part in the scheme and said that it would be useful to understand how LAs are getting the information to put into their CILs to help in relation to funding.

Beth West said that they have not assumed any CIL funding for the railway. The question is how to make sure that the right packages are in the areas around the station and making sure that the developer contributions are going to the right places.

Cllr Brian Milnes asked if they had been considering land value capture in the process in relation to raising money.

- Beth West said not for the railway itself as a lot of the land around the station is already privately held by the developers who would be looking for development opportunities.
- Naomi Green said EEH have been looking at opportunities on the schemes in the region. She said there is an issue with timing and the infrastructure planning process.

Adam King asked if the expected go live dates for the sections can be confirmed. Beth West said cannot confirm exact dates but expecting CS1 in 2025, and CS2 and CS3 are still being worked through with an expectation for early 2030s.

Cllr Alex Beckett asked for more information on the likelihood and specifics of electrification. He said that there is resistance in Cambridge and asked if any progress had been made on the community benefits, for example active travel routes. He asked for reassurance that Cambourne station onward public transport links will be prioritised.

Beth West said that EWRC wants to electrify but a case has to be made within government and look at the financing to make it happen. Working very hard to make this happen.

- EWRC is working with LAs on door to door connectivity and active travel.
- For onward connectivity EWRC are working with LAs and their onward travel plans. In Cambourne for example, making sure the guided busway will link into the station and linking with local buses. Will need to work with the providers to get the buses where they need to go.

Cllr Richard Stobart raised the significance of local representative groups and the information gathering from them. An understanding of what can be discussed at these groups would be useful. Suggested a notional agenda and questioned who would it come from, EWR, EWMLP, locally or a combination?

- Cllr Broadbent asked if Beth West has an outline agenda.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beth West said that every group is different and has different agendas. Will take this away and get feedback on and look at how engagement with local groups can be more effective. <p>Terry De Sousa said it would be helpful to have an update on when East West Railway Door-to-Door Connectivity Forum is next due to meet.</p> <p>Naomi said it will be end of October.</p>
5	<p>Aylesbury link</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adam King said that the Aylesbury link is incredibly important and was part of the original proposals. In March 2023, the board agreed to fund a piece of work alongside Buckinghamshire Council. Cambridge Econometrics was commissioned and are progressing this work which is looking at the key economic linkages along this corridor. Looking at sectors including life sciences and digital creative industries, marketing which are prominent along the corridor. The work was also looking at labour pools where there may be a surplus of skills in one place and a deficit in another and how improved connectivity can link those together. In addition, EEH is currently undertaking a connectivity study that includes the Aylesbury area. This will be published at a similar time as the study into the Aylesbury link and together, it is hoped that there will be a strong case for investment.
6	<p>Update from Eastern Section Board</p> <p>Update from Alexander Nicoll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Eastern Section Board had met just before the main EWMLP Board and a good attendance and discussion was reported. The group had considered wider issues not just those in the Eastern Section. <p>Andrew Summers reflected on outcomes from the Eastern-Section board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding announcement of Ely showcases importance of working together across the region and the benefit of working as a single voice. The cancellation of the Northern Leg of HS2 does have implications for freight capacity. There has been an emerging narrative around support for east west connectivity and regional connectivity from some national discussions. The Chancellor set out his unprompted support for EWR. The case needs to continued to be made particularly as some of the manifestos are being written for the next administrations. Asked for clarity on the timing and process on the EWR statutory consultation. Transport East is working on a piece of work to identify where there may be quick wins without the need for significant infrastructure improvements in the short term. Discussed the need to include the importance of freight and the freight opportunities EWR provides in the emerging narrative. Noted the importance of last mile opportunities to access stations. The wider connectivity among regional networks must be considered. Thinking about how we provide benefits to communities and businesses in these locations.

	<p>Cllr Phil Smart said Ely and Haughley has an immense significance to EWR and helps build the case for the next sections. Recommended freight FAQ section on EWR website. (link East West Rail Our approach to freight).</p> <p>Cllr Katie Thornburrow raised that a lot of the messaging surrounding the railway has becoming negative. Said it was important to involve local people and hear their voice. Discussed the need to help local communities understand the benefits and communicate this well.</p>
7	<p>Update from East West Rail Alliance Jez Baldock gave an update from EWR alliance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94% complete on the track, rail, and sleeper construction. • 10/10 new footbridges are open to the public. • 8 other footpath routes will be completed and handed over by the end of the year. • Currently undertaking road repairs, 65% of highways repairs completed and are progressing on the highways hand back process. • Winslow Station is making progress with the station expected to be completed by end of this year. The car park which will be owned by Buckinghamshire Council is taking shape towards the end of 2023 into 2024. • Bletchley station has had the footbridge installed and is due for completion towards the end of the year. • The alliance is working to reduce earthworks as much as possible and minimise impact. • Demobilisation is in progress, with 9/11 main compounds closed and reinstated. • Handed back a lot of temporary land plots to owners. • Main engagement activities are with schools and social groups looking at rail safety. Are trying to reach £3m mark for social return investment. <p>Cllr Steven Broadbent asked about fibre cabling. Jez Baldock said they have installed fibre, a number of which will be used for the railway but a huge number have been installed for private companies and general public use. The cable route itself is 85% complete.</p> <p>Naomi Green raised that a number of LAs have put in bids for 5G innovation corridor that uses the digital connectivity alongside EWR technology.</p> <p>Adam King asked when the Winslow footpath will open. Jez Baldock said the work is completed and being handed back soon. Will give Adam an update.</p> <p>Cllr Steven Broadbent asked EWR Co to give an update on biodiversity net gain at the next meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Katie Thornburrow asked EWR Co to give an update on how climate change is being thought about.</p>
8	<p>Future Meeting Dates Note: The next meeting is currently being organised as an in-person event, likely to be held in the Bletchley/ Milton Keynes area with the aim to see the new station.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12th January 2024.

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 March 2024 (11am-1.30pm, virtual) |
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