



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

**19 July 2024**

**13:00-14:00 meeting**

Virtual meeting held via Microsoft Teams

### **In attendance**

Cllr Alex Beckett	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Steve Broadbent	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Susan Brown	Oxford City Council
Cllr Jodie Chillery	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Nicola Gribble	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Tumi Hawkins	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Phil Larratt	West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Peter Martin	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Brain Milnes	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Graham Plant	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Tim Regester	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
Cllr Judy Roberts	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Anna Smith	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Cllr Richard Stobart	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Phil Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Katie Thornburrow	Cambridge City Council
Cllr Jim Thorndyke	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Indy Wijenayaka	West Suffolk Council

### **Attendees**

Jez Baldock	East West Rail Alliance
Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council
Angela Bond	Buckinghamshire Council
David Bradbury	Mid Suffolk District Council
Susan Browning	Buckinghamshire Council
Pete Brunskill	Oxfordshire County Council
Suzanne Buck	Transport East
Kate Campbell	East West Rail Company
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Katherine Davies	Babergh Mid Suffolk District Council
Verity Druce	Sundial Network on behalf of EEH
Hanane Elmaarouf	England's Economic Heartland
Fiona Foulkes	England's Economic Heartland
James Gagg	England's Economic Heartland
Will Gallagher	East West Rail Company
James Golding-Graham	England's Economic Heartland

Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
David Hughes	East West Rail Company
Peter Hume	Network Rail
Jodie Irwin	Central Bedfordshire Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Richard Joslin	Network Rail
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Edward Leigh	North Hertfordshire District Council
Melanie McGuinness	Bedford Borough Council
Andrea McMillan	East Suffolk Council
Chris Mills	Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Abigail Nichols	England's Economic Heartland
Erin Pitcher	England's Economic Heartland
James Povey	West Northamptonshire Council
Jeremy Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council
Alastair Southgate	Transport East
Julian Sykes	Greater Cambridge Planning

Item	Agenda item
1	<p><b>Introductions and apologies</b>  Cllr Anna Smith declaration of interest for Cambridge Station  Cllr Phil Smart declaration of interest Rail Freight Group</p> <p><b>Apologies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Phil Bibby</li> <li>• Cllr Liz Leffman</li> <li>• Mayor Nik Johnson</li> <li>• Andrew Summers</li> <li>• Cllr Daniel Allen</li> <li>• Cllr Lesley Wagland</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b>  <i>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and to receive an update on actions</i></p> <p><b>Minutes accepted</b></p>
3	<p><b>Chair's Update</b>  <i>To receive on update from the Chair</i></p> <p>Cllr Steve Broadbent gave an update on the work the partnership has been continuing. He also highlighted this is his last meeting as Chair therefore there will be an election at the AGM in October to appoint a new Chair.</p> <p>Cllr Broadbent said he looks forward to the opening of the next stage of the line which will allow many residents of Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes to be connected by train for the first time in many decades. However, the work is not done, and the full benefits of East West Rail will only be achieved when the route is successfully delivered in full, between Bedford and Cambridge and with the link to Aylesbury. The full development and delivery of the line needs to continue to be pressed especially to the new government whilst maintaining the support of communities along it.</p> <p>Cllr Broadbent highlighted that East West Railway Company (EWRC) need to ensure timely and effective engagement in the next stages of development including the handling of the statutory consultation. Following the last meeting, Cllr Broadbent has written to David Hughes the new Chief Executive of EWRC to welcome him to his role on behalf of the partnership and to invite him to join us at today's meeting. Cllr Broadbent said that colleagues at EEH are reviewing how the company, local authorities and other stakeholders will continue to work together.</p>
4	<p><b>EWR Company Update- overview</b>  <i>To receive an update regarding the work of the EWR Company, including introduction of the new Chief Executive.</i></p> <p><b>David Hughes gave an update from his position as new Chief Executive Officer of East West Railway Company.</b> He highlighted that the project has strong support from Treasury which speaks to the strength of the economic case. He also said that he was keen to build a constructive and collaborative relationship with members of the partnership board.</p> <p>David Hughes highlighted that EWR are preparing on the basis that there may be a Spending Review in the Autumn. He raised that they will hopefully get a sense of</p>

what the new government wishes to do in terms of the statutory consultation which was previously put on hold due to the election.

He gave a reflection on the new government and said that he was optimistic taking forward East West Rail, the confidence based on the great work that has been done to make its case over the years, including work done by this board. He raised that he believes the case chimes strongly with the priorities raised by the Labour Party during their election campaign. Despite this, David urged that we must not be complacent and we must actively continue to press the case for EWR.

**Will Gallagher gave an update on the Statutory Consultation.** He said that due to the election the statutory consultation has been put on hold and in the coming weeks they will be working to the ministerial level to work out what the next steps to get the consultation moving forward will be. He said that that as soon as information is known it shall be communicated.

Will Gallagher also gave an update on the engagement work they have been doing. They have held face to face conversations, talking to people about preparing for the DCO, what this entails and how they can get involved. EWRC have published newsletters in March and May as well as refreshing the website to have a renewed community focus and hyper local pages. They are also refreshing their presence on social media. Since March EWRC have sent out 4.8k Land Interest Questionnaires which enables EWRC to understand who owns and uses the land and property that may be affected by EWR. They have completed the seventh round of Local Representative Group meetings in April which were focused on preparing for the first stage of statutory consultation.

Due to political representative changes following the election, a round of introductory meetings with David Hughes with all route Local Authorities and new MPs are starting from now and October.

Will Gallagher pressed the importance of continued and increased collaborative work, including the Door-to-Door work, to ensure the benefits and opportunities of the scheme are maximised.

### **Questions/Comments**

**Cllr Steve Broadbent** asked about expected timelines for the statutory consultation.

**Will Gallagher** said it is hard to know, but they will share information when available, and give an update at the next board meeting.

**Cllr Brian Milnes** asked about housing allocation associated with East West Rail.

**Will Gallagher** said EWRC does not make decisions on housing or where housing is allocated. This is for the local planning authorities.

**Cllr Peter Martin** asked about to what degree will the project be looking at infrastructure development.

**Will Gallagher** discussed importance of future proofing and collaborative working with local authorities.

**Cllr Tumi Hawkins** said information in the EWRC technical report has been used by campaign groups to assume house building figures for Cambourne.

	<p><b>Cllr Alex Beckett</b> asked about whether EWRC can provide information about when the statutory consultation may happen  <b>Will Gallagher</b> said no information can be provided but expected to not be before summer or before mid to late September.</p> <p><b>Cllr Alex Beckett</b> asked if EWRC can publish a list or map to where the LIQ (land interest questionnaires) went out to?  <b>Will Gallagher</b> said there may be GDPR issues associated with publishing but will investigate this.</p> <p><b>Cllr Alex Beckett</b> Raised importance of those along the route also accessing the benefits of the scheme and questioned how this will be achieved.  <b>Will Gallagher</b> said that EWRC are looking into skills and what they can contribute to active travel networks.</p> <p><b>Cllr Susan Brown</b> asked about the position of the Cowley Branch line in current plans.  <b>Will Gallagher</b> said that it is a significant opportunity for the rail network and are testing whether EWR has a role to play in it.</p>
5	<p><b>Update from East West Rail Alliance</b>  <i>To receive an update regarding the work of the EWR Alliance</i></p> <p>Jeز Baldock gave an update about the construction of EWR. He said that the track has been finished and the track tamping is nearly done. The signalling and telecoms installation is nearly completed, and all new realigned roads have been opened. He said that 10 of 11 min compounds are closed and have been reinstated along with nearly all land plots as well as 100% of haul roads removed.</p> <p>He said that Winslow station is very nearly completed, with just the customer information and car park to be finalised. This will be operated by Buckinghamshire Council.</p> <p>The total return on social value is now over £3,000,000 since 2019. He said that they are continuing with Rail Safety training and are delivering defibrators among community groups.</p> <p><b>Questions/Comments</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Steve Broadbent</b> asked about where the apprentices are now.  <b>Jeز Baldock</b> said that all the apprentices have been retained by the Network Rail.</p> <p><b>Cllr Judy Roberts</b> asked about when the site visit will be.  <b>Naomi Green</b> said the site visit was postponed due to the general election, however it will likely to be a standalone visit, and more information will be circulated when available.</p>
6	<p><b>EWR Board- financial update, subscriptions and work programme</b>  <i>To receive an update on EWR board finances and programme of work, including a forward look</i></p> <p><b>James Gagg gave an update on the financial position of the partnership.</b></p>

	<p>He gave thanks to the partnership for providing membership subscriptions and sought agreement for the retention of fees at 23/24 levels. <b>(Approved)</b></p> <p>James Gagg highlighted that the work programme is proposed to focus on three key areas for the upcoming year, supporting the partnership in the next stage of the statutory consultation, improving coast to coast connectivity and supporting onward connectivity to the East and West.</p> <p><b>Questions/Comments</b></p> <p><b>Cllr Katie Thornburrow</b> asked why the fees have been frozen and not rising with inflation.</p> <p><b>James Gagg</b> said that the secretariat are very aware of pressures on local authority budgets and have budget left over from last year to help ease this.</p>
7	<p><b>Update from Eastern Section Board</b>  <i>To receive any updates regarding the work of the East West Main Line Partnership's Eastern Section Board</i></p> <p><b>Cllr Alexander Nicoll provided an update from the Eastern Section Board.</b>  Cllr Nicoll raised the continued need to advocate for Ely and Haughley upgrades, especially their link into the Eastern section of EWR. Additionally, he highlighted engagement they have had with new MPs in the region who have been supportive of the partnership's railway goals.</p>
8	<p><b>Future Meeting Dates</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17<sup>th</sup> October 2024 (in-person AGM meeting planned in Milton Keynes- 10:30 to 12:30 pm)</li> <li>• January 2025 (tbc, proposed in-person Buckingham)</li> </ul>