

East West Rail Consortium Board 30th January 2020

Agenda Item 8: Rail Review Update

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Welcome the presentation from Network Rail on the Rail Review now underway as part of the EEH Transport Strategy;**
- b) Welcome the opportunity the Rail Review provides to identify wider linkages that will be enabled by delivery of East West Rail**

1. Context

- 1.1 In September 2019 EEH shared with this Board the brief for its proposed work to undertake a review of the rail network serving the region.
- 1.2 The commission seeks to identify the future role of the rail system as part of the long term Transport Strategy for the region. In doing so, it will develop a set of conditional outputs (aspirational levels of connectivity between places). This will set the framework for future business case work that will assess the options for intervention. The study will draw upon existing demand, planned growth and relevant technical studies, for example, East West Rail outputs.
- 1.3 Network Rail System Operator has been appointed to lead the work. This builds on the strong working partnership between EEH and Network Rail, who continue to provide the EEH Business Unit with technical support to develop inter/intra-regional rail priorities for the Heartland.
- 1.4 Following the discussion with the EWR Strategic Board, an Officer Steering Group has been established. This group consists of colleagues representing the interests of the EEH Transport Officer Group, the Rail Delivery Group, East West Railway Company, together with Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.
- 1.5 The composition of the Steering Group is indicative of the wider role that the rail system – including East West Rail – has to play in meeting the strategic ambition for the region. Of particular importance is inclusion of representatives from Norfolk and Suffolk – reflecting the importance of rail services to the east of Cambridge as integral to the wider network.
- 1.6 The presentation from Network Rail ensures consortium members have visibility on progress to date. It will show how discussions at previous meetings of the Consortium – including presentations from Hertfordshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council – are being used as part of this work.

2. Scope of Work

- 2.1. The Rail Review will be delivered in two phases accompanied by two separate reports.

- 2.2. Phase 1 will baseline the current offer of the rail system in the Heartland, understand the connectivity challenges in terms of service levels and crowding and identify common ambitions through a literature review. Phase 1 is due for completion in May 2020.
- 2.3. Phase 2 will be undertaken by Network Rail's economic analysis team. The scope includes demand forecasting for existing EEH corridors/key nodes and identify potential connectivity, frequency and journey time aspirations by producing a conditional rail service specification. It is anticipated that this phase will be completed in late 2020.
- 2.4. The work being taken forward as the Rail Review is considered essential if this region is to achieve its economic potential, whilst respecting legally binding Co2 targets.
- 2.5. The presentation will provide an overview on the agreed scope, methodology and outputs expected at each stage of the study.

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