

**12<sup>th</sup> October 2020**  
**14:00 – 15:30**  
**MINUTES**

Of meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

**Present:**

Cllr Sue Clark	(Chair) Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Susan Glossop	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Philip Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Derrick Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr Paul Clark	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer	South Cambridgeshire District Council

**EWR Consortium Secretariat:**

Martin Tugwell	England's Economic Heartland
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Beth Dormer	England's Economic Heartland

**Also In Attendance:**

Kerry Allen	Suffolk County Council
Chris Winfield	Network Rail
Steve Lakin	Central Bedfordshire Council
Andrew Summers	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Michael Headley	Bedford Borough Council
James Gagg	Oxfordshire County Council
Melanie Macleod	Bedford Borough Council
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Andrew Reid	Suffolk County Council
Will Gallagher	East West Rail Company
Mark James	EWR Alliance
James Povey	Milton Keynes Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Louise Symes	North Hertfordshire District Council
Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
Jeremy Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council
Pip Hoskins	Network Rail
Laura Waters	New Anglia LEP
Stuart Morris	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Lee Carvell	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council

**Apologies:**

Cllr Yvonne Constance	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Paul Castleman	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Nick Naylor	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Norman	Brooks East Suffolk Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridge County Council
Carolyn Barnes	East Suffolk Council
Trevor Mason	Hertfordshire County Council
Hilary Chipping	SEMLEP
John Shortland	Bedford Borough Council
Laura Leech	Buckinghamshire Council
Sara Noonan	West Suffolk Council



Item		Action
1	<p><b>Introductions and Apologies</b></p> <p>Sue Clark introduced the meeting and noted the apologies.</p>	
2	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b></p> <p>Andrew Summers asked that the minutes were amended to record that he represents Transport East (not Suffolk County Council). With that amendment agreed, the minutes were agreed.</p>	
3	<p><b>East West Railway Company – Update</b></p> <p>Will Gallagher provided an update on key activity, in particular with regards to the work on the Central Section. He noted that the Company is continuing to work closely with England’s Economic Heartland on a number of pieces of work including that related to improving local connectivity to/from EWR stations.</p> <p>Regarding delivery of the Western Section Will reported that work continues at pace, with funding from Government secured to prioritise essential works that protect the overall programme such as highway improvements, site compounds etc. He assured the meeting that the Company is continuing to work closely with local communities to better mitigate the disruption caused although acknowledges that there is more work to be done there. He noted that the Company continues to work with Government on the detail of the final business case that will unlock the funding for main works. He reassured the meeting that Government support for the project remains</p>	

<p>high however nothing should be taken for granted while a spending review is underway.</p> <p>Will advised that the Company is preparing for a further round of public consultation on the Central Section in the first quarter of 2021. Route alignment options are in development, building on the announcement of the preferred route earlier in 2020. It is planned that final choice on the route alignment will be made in the second half of 2021, with a view to a round of statutory public consultation then taking place ahead of the submission of the Development Consent Order (DCO) in 2022.</p> <p>Once submitted, the DCO should be determined within a period of 15 months, enabling construction to get underway in 2024/25.</p> <p>Will noted that the next round of public engagement is expected to include a number of route alignments building on the preferred route E. Factors being taken into consideration include station locations, both at the crossover of the East Coast Main Line and at Camborne.</p> <p>Will commented on the critical importance of investing in capacity that enables EWR to realise its potential, noting that there is a need to address capacity issues at Oxford Station, and to ensure that the Bletchley to Bedford Midland section (Marston Vale line) has the capacity it requires. The Company is engaging with Bedford Borough Council on exploring the potential opportunities associated with Bedford Midland Station and any infrastructure requirements arising from them.</p> <p>Will noted that the next round of engagement would include consideration of issues such as blight, freight requirements and options for future traction. He confirmed that the Company would continue to use the assessment framework that was used with the previous round of engagement.</p> <p>In response to a question from Derrick Ashley, Will confirmed that EWR would be grade separated over the East Coast Main Line.</p> <p>Phil Smart voiced concern about Shepreth Junction remaining a flat junction and the implications this would have operationally with the opening of EWR. He also emphasised the importance of ensuring that Cambridge Station has the capability for EWR services to run through it and onwards to/from the Eastern Section.</p> <p>Will noted that the analysis regarding Shepreth Junction has yet to be completed: it was therefore too early to offer a view on what might be consulted on. He continued by noting that whilst grade separation might be better in operational terms, it was inevitably going to cost more and a judgement will need to be taken at some point. Phil Smart commented that in</p>	
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	<p>making that judgement consideration needs to be given to the cost in operational terms of poor performance if a flat junction is retained.</p> <p>Michael Headley asked what the timeline is for making decisions in relations to traction, particularly in regard to the consultation in early 2021 as the traction element may have impact on nearby properties.</p> <p>In responding Will advised that the Company is sharing its thoughts on the options so that Government can take an informed view on the way forward. He confirmed that he anticipated the forthcoming engagement as setting out what assumptions are being made at this point on traction.</p> <p>Responding to a question from Sue Clark, Will advised that he anticipated the next engagement would have more than one option included: he explained that the alignments identified will be a bit wider than a railway line, so it is not the precise line but is down to the 100's of metres.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p><b>Central Section – Reviewing the Consortium’s Position</b></p> <p>Martin Tugwell introduced the item and explained that this was an opportunity for the Consortium to reflect on how it wishes to respond to the forthcoming engagement (at the start of 2021).</p> <p>Martin reminded the meeting that the Consortium had responded to the previous round of engagement with its own response on the strategic issues; with individual members making their own submissions on specific matters.</p> <p>The proposition was to – once-again – establish a sub-group of officers to work with the secretariat to develop a draft response for consideration by the Consortium.</p> <p>Michael Headley commented that with the next engagement focused on route alignment a lot of the conversation will be around the impact on existing environments, residents, natural resources etc. Michael suggested that these elements should be at the forefront of our thinking.</p> <p>Sue Clark commented that she suggested the Consortium response should continue to be focused on strategic issues, and leave more local issues to individual authorities to pick up. In that context the points made by Michael Headley could form the basis of some initial thoughts.</p>	

	<p>Phil Smart commented that there are certain alignment options near the West Anglian mainline which could have significant implications for the Consortium’s overall ambition for the ease of connectivity through Cambridge and onwards to the Eastern Section. He also emphasised the importance of taking into account emerging policy documents – like the London Rail Study and the Traction Decarbonisation Network Study. The latter in particular favours electrifying the route east of Cambridge and makes assumptions that East West Rail would be an electrified railway.</p> <p>Sue Clark proposed that the Consortium support the proposed way forward. She asked the Officer Group to take into account the comments made by members. She also asked that the group take into consideration the First/Last Mile implications of any proposal, and the importance of ensuring that the benefit to the community it passes through is understood.</p> <p>Susan Glossop raised the question which officers will be in the sub-group and proposed that Sara Noonan should be involved as a representative from West Suffolk.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell advised that it would be appropriate to have, in addition to representatives from the authorities directly affected by the Central Section, representatives from the Eastern Section: in addition to Sara it was suggested that Andrew Summers and Kerry Allen might be appropriate. Both Andrew and Kerry expressed their willingness to be involved and the meeting agreed this approach.</p> <p><b>The meeting AGREED to:</b></p> <p><b>a) Create a sub-group of officers to develop a draft response to the next engagement on the Central Section</b></p> <p><b>b) An initial meeting of the sub-group being held prior to Christmas</b></p>	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>
<p>5</p>	<p><b>Eastern Section: Interim SOBC</b></p> <p>Kerry Allen introduced the item and noted that she would be focusing on three elements within the Interim Strategic Outline Business Case: the strategic, economic, and financial. She noted that the approach being followed would enable the Consortium to promote the output for consideration as part of the Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline.</p> <p>Kerry reminded the meeting that Steer consultants had been appointed to undertake the work. The officer steering group was currently reviewing an initial draft of the strategic business case and will then move on to the economic and financial cases around November this year. The covering paper set out the process for agreeing the output of the work.</p>	

	<p>Andrew Summers noted that Transport East is about to embark on preparing its Transport Strategy which aligns very closely with the SOBC and asked that Steer Consultants have access to the related thinking around that.</p> <p>Andrew also suggested that alongside the submission of the SOBC to DfT certain things should be done to support and endorse it. Andrew noted that an update at Transport East Transport Forum meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November may be timely.</p> <p>Alexander Nicoll noted that he and other members of the Eastern Group were continuing to press the case in support of the Eastern Section and welcomed the continued support of the wider Consortium in this regard. The publication of the prospectus last year had attracted useful publicity, and the group was committed to maintaining the momentum associated with the Eastern Section.</p> <p>He suggested that a further discussion with the Consortium Secretariat following the forthcoming of the Eastern Section Executive Board would be helpful.</p> <p><b>The meeting AGREED to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) Note the report</b></li> <li><b>b) Support the direction of the work</b></li> <li><b>c) Support a follow up meeting with the Eastern Section early in the New Year</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>
<p>6</p>	<p><b>Digital Infrastructure (Western Section)</b></p> <p>Martin Tugwell provided a verbal briefing on progress with this work. He had hoped to have a more substantive paper to put before the meeting but work on the Business Case is on-going.</p> <p>He reminded the meeting that it had previously supported in principle the proposal to ensure that the Western Section is delivered with digital connectivity alongside it. This would not only benefit the rail operators, but also provide improved connectivity for the communities it passes through.</p> <p>The previous meeting had been informed that the cost of this project would be just over £1m: DfT have agreed that this would be eligible for counting as 'Work in Kind'.</p> <p>The secretariat continues to work with NR Telecoms to develop the Business Case and will work with individual partners to seek their formal views on the proposal before the end of November.</p> <p><b>The meeting AGREED to note the update</b></p>	
<p>7</p>	<p><b>East West Main Line – Realising the Longer Term Potential</b></p>	

	<p>Martin Tugwell introduced the item by setting out that the item offered the Consortium members the opportunity to look beyond the current project.</p> <p>Martin reminded the meeting that the strategic ambition of the Consortium is to secure a strategic railway connecting East Anglian with Central, Southern and Western England. The work of the EWR Company represents a significant step forward in achieving this ambition but arguably it is just a first step in realising the full potential of an East West Main Line.</p> <p>In this context it was an appropriate moment in time for the Consortium to have a conversation about how it would like to build upon the momentum and success of delivering the current project and begin to think about how it sets out the longer term ambition and broader narrative. Martin noted that with the move towards a concession based model for future rail services it was important that local partners have a view as to their long term ambition.</p> <p>Phil Smart welcomed the opportunity for the discussion: he reflected that it might also be an appropriate moment to re-badge the Consortium. He suggested that re-branding the Consortium as the East West Main Line Group (for example) would reduce the potential for confusion over names and be a statement of intent on the part of the Consortium.</p> <p>Keith Dove suggested that another reason that this is a timely subject is that the recent announcement by Government to appoint Sir Peter Hendy to look at connectivity within the UK.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell responded by confirming that he understood that Sir Peter Hendy’s work will look at strengthening the linkages between the devolved nations and England. In a post-Brexit world this emphasises the importance of protecting connectivity to/from the UK’s global gateways.</p> <p>Derrick Ashley offered his support for the proposal, noting that there is a need to ensure that the investment in East West Rail is suitable for this wider purpose.</p> <p>Michael Headley was supportive of the comments made by Philip Smart. Michael commented that, in regard to the paper he would like to see more focus on through services as well interchange opportunities.</p> <p>Andrew Summers commented that in terms of added value the Consortium could take inspiration from the work that Cross-Rail and Cross-Rail 2 did in terms of identifying the economic benefits of the proposals. There are parallels here in that a new railway line is being built that will significantly enhance connectivity. Some powerful elements of Cross-Rail’s business case were around productivity and improved connectivity of labour markets.</p>	
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	<p>Andrew also noted that a significant number of new interchange hubs are going to be generated along the East West Main Line: Cross-Rail had a complementary package of investment measures to support the main investment. Andrew encouraged the Consortium to think in similar terms.</p> <p>Sue Clark welcomed the broad level of support for the proposal. Sue added that she thought the Consortium could benefit from stepping back and reminding itself of its strategic function and re-branding may help us to do this.</p> <p>James Gagg re-emphasised the need to build on the work from the Oxfordshire Rail Study which has been looking at the linkages between housing and jobs and what rail enhancements are needed to support that. James also noted that there are specific pieces of work underway focused on local accessibility that could be a good basis to build on in terms of connectivity issues across the whole route.</p> <p><b>The meeting AGREED to support the proposal and to have a further discussion at its next meeting</b></p>	<p><b>Secretariat</b></p>
<p>8</p>	<p><b>Western Section – Update</b></p> <p>Chris Winfield introduce the item by explaining there would be an update on delivery of the Western Section including an update on planning conditions and TWAO consents, and an update on communications.</p> <p>Mark James explained since the previous meeting they have had a successful season in terms of general progress on the works on site. Mark showed progress with works on site with supporting slides: the images showing building of haul roads, undertaking of archaeological excavation and other works as the delivery team gain access to the site.</p> <p>Mark reported that a site compound has been established at Bicester. There is now a construction site in Newton Longville that establishes their ability to build the railway Westwards. Drainage at Winslow Station is approximately 30% complete which is essential before further work can progress.</p> <p>James Povey asked a question regarding the nature/extent of works at Woburn Sands level crossing. In particular he was concerned that what had previously been agreed as mitigation might no longer be being delivered. In response Mark James noted that Network Rail had determined that the level crossing could be closed as a result of the agreed works: however he undertook to go back and re-check and advise further.</p> <p><b>The meeting AGREED to note the update</b></p>	
<p>9</p>	<p><b>Future meetings</b></p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020</li><li>• 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021</li></ul> <p><i>Note: that the working assumption at present is that future meetings will be held virtually until otherwise advised</i></p>	
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