

East West Rail Consortium Strategic Board 16th March 2021

Agenda Item 6: Rebranding the Consortium

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Considers the merits of rebranding the Consortium as the East West Main Line Partnership**
- b) Considers the merits of a strapline which provides a single-sentence 'mission statement' for the organisation**
- c) Considers the proposal to invite Western Gateway and/or local authorities in the west of England to become involved in the work of the Consortium**
- d) Agrees the proposed budgets for rebranding the Consortium and the preparation of the prospectus.**

1. Background

- 1.1 At its meeting on 20th October the Consortium agreed the need to develop a proposition that sets out the longer-term potential for the East West Main Line.
- 1.2 The Consortium recognised that improving east-west connectivity provides the over-riding transformational opportunity for its members, representing as it does the opportunity to establish a new main-line that links Ipswich and Norwich, through Cambridge and westwards towards Milton Keynes, Oxford and ultimately Swindon, South Wales and the South West.
- 1.3 At the same time, the East West Main Line creates the opportunity to improve wider connectivity, principally through one-stop interchanges associated with the traditional main-lines emanating from London.
- 1.4 The opportunity for improved wider connectivity is heightened still further by the opportunity created by delivery of HS2 to review how capacity on those main lines is reallocated. In particular the opportunity to develop a new inter-regional service along the Northampton – Milton Keynes – Aylesbury – High Wycombe – Old Oak Common corridor has been identified as a regional priority by England's Economic Heartland.
- 1.5 At its meeting on 9th December Consortium members reflected on whether it was timely to consider the branding of the Consortium. A key consideration here was the potential for East West Rail to become increasingly seen as referring to the work of the Company in restoring the Oxford to Cambridge link: wheres the Consortium's ambition has always been based on the need to also deliver the improvements to the Eastern Section, and indeed wider linkages.

2. Rebranding the Consortium

- 2.1 The East West Rail Consortium was established in 1995 to make the business case for East West Rail.
- 2.2 More recently we have seen the formation of the East West Rail Alliance (Network Rail and its partners constructing Oxford-Milton Keynes and Aylesbury-Milton Keynes) and the establishment of the East West Rail Company (the overarching organisation set up by the Secretary of State with responsibility for delivering and subsequently operating Oxford-Cambridge).
- 2.3 This has led to understandable confusion amongst both stakeholders and members of the public. For example, the Consortium regularly receives enquiries and FOIs meant for the Company, and expressions of interest from people/ organisations looking to work with the Alliance.
- 2.4 Changing the Consortium's name would help mitigate this confusion. Moreover, it would also allow it to reflect its focus on realising the long-term potential of the East West Main Line (while also continuing to make the case for the East West Rail 'scheme' to be delivered in full, including the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes connection that forms part of Connection Stage 1).
- 2.5 In considering a potential rebranding of the Consortium it is strongly recommended that any change is an evolution of what we have currently, rather than a wholesale change.
- 2.6 Building on the discussion started by Consortium members at the December and taking the above into consideration the meeting is invited to consider changing its name to: The East West Main Line Partnership.
- 2.7 This new name has the benefit of:
 - Reflecting the focus on realising the opportunity of the East West Main Line, rather than solely the East West Rail scheme as currently being delivered by the East West Railway Company
 - 'Partnership' better aligns with the objective of realising the long-term potential of the main line, something which will require a strongly collaborative approach
 - Replacing Consortium also ensures we do not share the same initials as the East West Railway Company.
- 2.8 The rebranding will include a new professionally designed logo and a thorough overhaul of the Consortium website (carried out in-house by the Consortium secretariat).

3. Strapline

- 3.1 It is recommended that a change in name of the Consortium should be used as an opportunity to adopt a strapline which appears on our branding.
- 3.2 The strapline would act as a mission statement for the organisation. On that basis it is proposed that the it needs to reflect the Consortium members' focus on realising/harnessing the longer-term potential of the East West Main Line.

3.3 Potential straplines for the new branding include:

- Realising the potential of England's new main line
- Realising the potential of England's new railway
- Realising the potential of the East West Main Line
- Harnessing the potential of England's new main line
- Harnessing the potential of England's new railway
- Harnessing the potential of the East West Main Line
- Connecting opportunities on England's new main line
- Connecting opportunities on England's new railway
- Connecting opportunities on the East West Main Line

Consortium members views on a potential strapline are sought at the meeting.

4. Wider Linkages Westwards

- 4.1 The rebranding also provides an opportunity to consider the merits of seeking the involvement of other strategic and local bodies who look to benefit from the wider strategic opportunities provided by the East West Main Line.
- 4.2 In this context the Consortium members might wish to approach the Western Gateway STB and/or local authorities in the west of England with a view to seeing if they have an interest in becoming involved in the work to promote the East West Main Line.
- 4.3 Indeed, Members may wish to note that in February Western Gateway published its *Strategic Transport Plan 2020-2025*. The document specifically identifies a 'Western Innovation Corridor' which links 'London and the South East to South Wales'. It states: "The corridor also facilitates connectivity between the Western Gateway and other key locations for research, academia and innovation such as Oxford, Science Vale UK Enterprise Zone and Basingstoke. The strength of the corridor's economy creates a significant travel demand."
- 4.4 Having Western Gateway, England's Economic Heartland and Transport East STBs as members of our organisation would be a statement of intent for a main line that has a strategic value running from 'east coast to west coast'.

5. The Main Line Proposition

- 5.1 Consortium members have previously agreed that they wish to set out a longer-term ambition for the East West Main Line.
- 5.2 It is proposed that this take the form of a 'prospectus'. Building on the work of the Consortium and the two STBs – EEH and Transport East – the prospectus would offer Consortium members the opportunity to set out their ambition.
- 5.3 The prospectus would look to make extensive use of visuals, including mapping, to set out the ambition, supported by a short and punchy narrative.

- 5.4 The prospectus will draw on a variety of work including the Consortium's Eastern Section business case, the outputs of EEH's Rail Passenger Study Phase Two, the EEH Transport Strategy, and Transport East's emerging Transport Strategy (due to launch in summer 2021).
- 5.5 The Consortium members could look to use the publication of the prospectus as the opportunity to also rebrand the Consortium.
- 5.6 It is envisaged that the prospectus, provisionally titled *Making the Most of the Main Line*, could be prepared so as to be ready for publication before the summer recess.
- 5.7 A communications plan will be developed for the prospectus, including a webinar and/or physical event.

6 Eastern Section: Initial Strategic Outline Business Case

- 6.1 Work on the initial Strategic Outline Business Case is coming to a conclusion. The outputs from the work commissioned from consultants will be considered by the Eastern Section Executive Board, prior to coming to the next meeting of the Consortium.
- 6.2 Publication of the initial SOBC could be aligned with the proposed rebranding and publication of the prospectus, helping cement the fundamental point that the Eastern Section is an integral element of the East West Main Line.

7 Resource implications

- 7.1 Based on previous experience, a budget of £2,000 is proposed for the rebranding (primarily creating a new logo). This would be funded from Consortium funds.
- 7.2 For the prospectus (including new mapping and document typesetting), a budget of £5,000 is proposed. This too would be funded from Consortium funds.

Adam King
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