

East West Rail Consortium Strategic Board 15 September 2021

Agenda Item 3: Rebranding the Consortium

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Agree to change the name of the East West Rail Consortium to East West Main Line Partnership, reflecting the Consortium's strategic positioning**
- b) Agree the recommended new logo (option 2) and associated strapline**
- c) Agree the strategic areas of focus for the East West Main Line Partnership, as 'five drivers' to accompany the rebrand**
- d) Formally welcomes Western Gateway STB to the Board**

1. Context

- 1.1. Previous meetings of the East West Rail Consortium have agreed the need to develop a proposition that sets out the longer-term potential for the East West Main Line. Included as part of this would be a rebrand of the Consortium.
- 1.2. The Consortium has consistently recognised that improving east-west connectivity provides the over-riding transformational opportunity for its members. The new main line will establish direct rail links between 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. As a result of this strategic positioning, Consortium members have previously agreed to the principle of rebranding of the Consortium.
- 1.4. 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: whereas the Consortium's ambition has always been based on the need to also deliver the improvements to the Eastern Section, and indeed wider linkages.
- 1.5. In addition to the rebrand, previous meetings of the Board have supported the development of a short document to be published alongside it. The document would outline the strategic ambitions for the East West Main Line.
- 1.6. Reflecting members' strategic ambitions, previous meetings have also agreed to extend the scope of the Board to include Western Gateway sub-national transport body, alongside England's Economic Heartland and Transport East.
- 1.7. The paper seeks approval from the Board for the final rebrand, including a new logo and strapline. It also seeks consideration and approval to proceed with the supporting document.

2. Rationale for rebranding

- 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 currently constructing Bicester-Bletchley) and the establishment of the East West Railway 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. Changing the Consortium's name would help mitigate this confusion.
- 2.4. Moreover, it would also allow it to reflect its focus on championing the long-term strategic potential of the East West Main Line (while also continuing to make the case for the 'current' East West Rail scheme to be delivered in full, including the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes link).
- 2.5. Previous meetings of the East West Rail Consortium have provided general agreement that the group should be rebranded to the East West Main Line Partnership. In March 2021, members were invited to submit additional comments regarding the proposal. Two additional responses were received: from Oxfordshire County Council and Cllr Phil Smart, both confirmed support for the new name.
- 2.6. East West Main Line Partnership has the benefit of:
 - Reflecting the focus on realising the opportunity of the East West Main Line, thereby expanding on the scheme currently proposed by the 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.
- 2.7. Subject to agreement, it is proposed that the rebranding, including the new strapline, logo and supporting document be launched at the East West Rail conference taking place on 30 September 2021.

3. Strap line

- 3.1. It is recommended that the new brand for the Consortium be accompanied by a strapline which appears on our branding.
- 3.2. The strapline would act as a short mission statement for the organisation. On that basis it is proposed that the strapline would reflect Board members' focus on realising/harnessing the longer-term potential of the East West Main Line.
- 3.3. In March 2021, Cllr Sue Clark suggested a strap line based around setting the 'strategic ambition' on East West Rail.
- 3.4. On the basis of that suggestion, it is recommended that the strap line be: 'Championing the strategic ambition for East West Rail'.
- 3.5. Members are invited to comment and agree on the strap line.

4. Five key areas of interest

- 4.1. The Board previously discussed producing a 'main line prospectus': a short document which sets out the objectives for the East West Main Line.
- 4.2. Work on the prospectus, together with comments made by members at previous meetings, has helped crystallise five key areas of interest for the rebranded Partnership.
- 4.3. It is recommended that these five key aims accompany the rebranding launch, presented within a short, professionally designed online-only document, titled 'Introducing the East West Main Line Partnership'.

- 4.4. The draft text of 'Introducing the East West Main Line Partnership' is set out in Annex 2. The text focuses on five proposed key areas of interest for the Partnership:
- Coast-to-coast: Realising opportunities east of Cambridge and west of Oxford
 - North-south connectivity: Including Aylesbury-Milton Keynes link and opportunities for new journeys using intersection with radial main lines
 - Interchange and strategic transport hubs: Frictionless interchange, including with other modes and improving the first mile, last mile to stations
 - A 21st century main line: Electrified; digitally enabled; environmentally sensitive design; and considerably constructed
 - Freight: Ensuring East West Rail contributes to the requirements of the national rail freight strategy, while also making the strongest case for prioritisation of the Felixstowe-Nuneaton corridor.
- 4.5. Members are invited to comment and agree on the five key areas of interest.

5. Logo, launch and implementation

- 5.1. An East West Rail conference, organised by Peloton, is being held in Oxford on 30 September 2021. Consortium chair, Cllr Steve Broadbent, will be speaking at the conference, alongside Cllr Alexander Nicoll and Naomi Green.
- 5.2. The conference presents an ideal opportunity to formally launch the rebranded East West Main Line Partnership.
- 5.3. As previously agreed by the Board, the rebranding should be an evolution rather than wholesale change, and therefore the recommended logo is inspired by the style of the current East West Rail Consortium logo.
- 5.4. Two options for a new logo are presented at Annex 1. In line with Board's preferences, officers recommend Option 2.
- 5.5. To coincide with the launch, the Consortium website will be updated to reflect the new branding, strap line and five strategic areas of interest. In due course the website will be more thoroughly redesigned. The website address, www.eastwestrail.org.uk will remain unchanged.
- 5.6. Awareness of the rebrand will be supported by a communications plan which will include a press release, social media activity, newsletter content and email out to stakeholders.
- 5.7. All future communications for at least the next six months will make clear that the East West Main Line Partnership is the new name for the East West Rail Consortium.
- 5.8. Discussions are ongoing with the Consortium's accountable body, Buckinghamshire Council, regarding the practicalities of formally changing the Consortium's name (if required). In the short-term, it is envisaged that the Consortium will remain as the name for legal purposes. The change does not affect the working arrangements for this Strategic Board.
- 5.9. Members are invited to comment and agree on the new logo.

6. Western Gateway

- 6.1. As part of its discussion on the rebranding, at its meeting in March the Board agreed to invite Western Gateway to the Consortium.
- 6.2. Members agreed that 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 'coast-to-coast'.

- 6.3. Following this, officers have held productive discussions with Western Gateway. In July 2021, the Western Gateway Board approved the decision to join the East West Rail Consortium and investigating potential joint working on the main line.
- 6.4. Western Gateway has been invited to give short presentation on their work at the Board's next meeting in December.

Adam King
September 2021

Annex 1: East West Main Line Partnership proposed logo

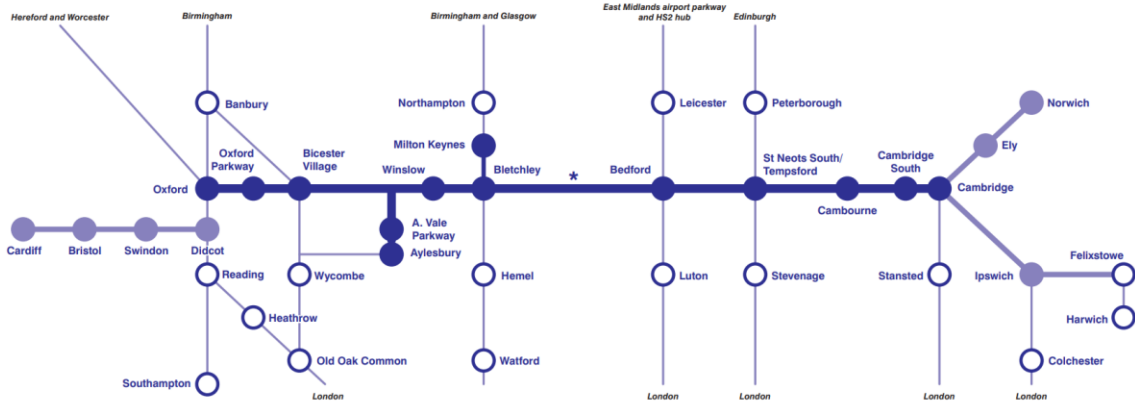
Option 1:



Option 2 (recommended):



Annex 2: Introducing the East West Main Line Partnership



[*] The configuration of stations between Bletchley and Bedford is to be confirmed by East West Railway Company following a public consultation.

Delivery of a strategic railway connecting East Anglia, with central, southern and western England has been a strategic priority for the local authorities comprising the East West Rail Consortium for over 25 years.

The technical work commissioned by the Consortium, including feasibility studies and business cases, has played a fundamental role in establishing the initial basis for the scheme, on which subsequent work has been built.

Throughout the development and delivery of the project, the Consortium has been pivotal in ensuring a close and strong working relationship between local authorities, the Department for Transport and Network Rail. The effectiveness of the working relationship is reflected in the level of support for East West Rail across the wider community.

Delivery of East West Rail is now underway, and should be supported by government to continue at pace going forward. Oxford and Bicester were connected in 2015, and construction work is now underway on the Bicester to Bletchley/ Milton Keynes section, due to open by 2025. Under the leadership of the East West Railway Company, Bletchley to Cambridge via Bedford are scheduled for completion by 2030, and through government support we can ensure that this timeline remains. We continue to reinforce the need for investment and delivery, at pace, of the Aylesbury-Milton Keynes link which was included in the scope of the original 'western section'.

The East West Railway Company's scheme will enable sustainable economic growth in the Oxford-Cambridge Arc, a national economic priority for government.

However, there is a need to go further in our strategic ambition for East West Rail which goes beyond the scheme currently being delivered. Indeed, delivery of the current East West Rail proposal should be just the beginning of the transformation in connectivity.

The longer-term potential of East West Rail to support planned growth and encourage further shift in both passenger and freight movements on to the rail network will require additional investment in its capacity and capability. Now is the time to champion the wider strategic ambition for East West Rail.

That's why we are promoting the concept of an East West Main Line to truly realise the transformational potential of East West Rail. And it is why the East West Rail Consortium has now become the East West Main Line Partnership.

The core focus for the East West Main Line is to achieve a step-change in east-west connectivity, linking Ipswich and Norwich with Cambridge, Bedford, Milton Keynes, Oxford and beyond that towards Swindon and onwards to Bristol and South Wales.

However, the benefit of the East West Main Line lies not just in the improved connectivity between those urban areas it directly serves, but also in the opportunity created where the route crosses the radial main lines centred on London. Removing the need for rail users to travel through London will additionally provide some relief to rail services on the radial main lines to/from the capital.

The creation of the East West Main Line will act as a catalyst for change. It is therefore important that the opportunities created by having improved access to rail services is used to shape future economic and housing growth proposals that are developed and brought through the planning system. It will also be essential that the investment in strategic connectivity is complemented by investment in improved local connectivity as part of a co-ordinated package of investment.

By expanding the benefits of East West Rail, the East West Main Line can have a transformational impact on the UK economy and environment.

The East West Main Line Partnership's approach to the East West Main Line will cover five key strategic areas of interest:

1: COAST-TO-COAST

For East West Rail to realise its full potential, direct services must extend beyond Oxford-Cambridge. Its potential should truly be 'coast to coast'.

This means:

East of Cambridge: Delivering the Eastern Section between Cambridge, Norwich and Ipswich is a fundamental part of the East West Main Line – indeed it was Ipswich Borough Council which originally founded the East West Rail Consortium in 1995. Our preliminary business case work on the Eastern Section so far has found there is a strong strategic and economic case for investment for direct services from Ipswich and Norwich to Oxford via Cambridge.

West of Oxford: There is potential for direct east-west services to extend as far as Cardiff, via Didcot, Swindon and Bristol. This would create a genuinely strategic route from west coast to east coast. Key to this is unlocking capacity restraints at Oxford and Didcot. To further explore the potential of services to the west of Oxford, the Partnership has recently been joined by the Western Gateway sub-national transport body, which includes Wiltshire and Bristol.

A coast-to-coast East West Main Line can support a future strategic pan-UK transport network, as outlined in the Union Connectivity interim report.

2. NORTH-SOUTH CONNECTIVITY

It is important to recognise that East West Rail is not just about improving east-west connectivity: it is integral to improving connectivity across the country.

The intersection of East West Rail with the historic main lines centred on London provides a unique opportunity to provide new travel opportunities that are not only more relevant to residents and businesses across the region, but which avoid the inconvenience of having to travel into/out of London.

East West Rail between Oxford and Cambridge intersects radial lines including the West Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and East Coast Main Line. East West services from Ipswich to Cardiff would further increase linkages with other radial lines.

The East West Main Line therefore has the potential to significantly improve north-south connectivity, putting passengers within a single interchange of all corners of mainland

Britain. It could significantly reduce the need for people to travel into London for a connecting service, resulting in time savings and economic benefits, as well as releasing capacity in the capital.

The link from Aylesbury to Milton Keynes is an integral element of the East West Main Line. It provides a key connection that will support future growth, improving connectivity in a way that reduces demand on the road network. It links the economic cluster centred on Milton Keynes with the planned growth centred on Aylesbury.

The capacity released by HS2 could unlock new direct journeys on the West Coast and Midland Main Lines in conjunction with East West Rail, notably from Northampton to Old Oak Common via Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Wycombe. There is also a case for direct services to Southampton, via Oxford, as well as from Nottingham and the East Midlands cities to Oxford and beyond.

The East West Main Line also has the potential to improve surface access to airports including Heathrow, Birmingham, Luton, East Midlands, Norwich and Stansted.

However, realising these benefits will require significant strategic planning around capacity allocation, timetabling and investment in new infrastructure. Given the long lead-in time for rail, this planning must begin now.

3. INTERCHANGE AND STRATEGIC TRANSPORT HUBS

The East West Main Line's potential to connect to services on other main lines is significant. But for this to be realised, where there is interchange this must be frictionless. This applies not only to interchange with other main lines, but with other modes, including for the 'first mile, last mile' of journeys. The facilities provided at strategic transport hubs should ensure frictionless interchange between rail services for all users.

Several of our urban centres are currently considering or developing transformational mass rapid transit schemes. East West Rail must offer seamless interchange with these schemes.

The East West Main Line can also be a catalyst for improving local connectivity, alongside regenerating the areas around stations and supporting planned growth, most notably in Oxford, Bletchley, Aylesbury and Bedford.

4. A 21ST CENTURY MAIN LINE

The East West Main Line should reflect the 21st century communities it serves: a hub for science and technology innovation, with expertise in clean energy, and blessed with a unique natural, built and historic environment which must be preserved and enhanced.

In this way the main line must be an exemplar for its high-quality standards of design, construction and operation, by incorporating the following principles:

Electrified from the start

The imperative to decarbonise our transport system is front and centre of transport policy at national, regional and local level. Electrification of the East West Main Line offers the only realistic traction technology for high-speed, longer-distance passenger services and freight services that will operate on it.

With the West Anglian Main Line, East Coast Main Line, Midland Main Line and West Coast Main Line all electrified, the case for electrification is heightened from an operational perspective.

Experience shows that the cost of retrofitting infrastructure for electrification once a rail link is operational will be significantly higher than if the investment is made at the same time as the initial construction works.

In developing detailed proposals to deliver East West Rail as an electrified route the importance of high quality and environmentally sensitive design must be applied as a key principle underpinning all work.

Digitally enabled

The transformational benefit of the East West Main Line to the region, its residents and businesses, will be enhanced further by ensuring it is delivered as a digitally enabled corridor, one that provides improved digital connectivity for both passengers and communities close to the rail corridor.

The East West Main Line Partnership and England's Economic Heartland have worked closely with the East West Railway Company and government departments to enable the section between Bicester and Bletchley to be delivered as a digitally enabled infrastructure corridor, providing access to high quality broadband and 5G for nearby rural communities.

Future stages of the East West Main Line should be specified as digitally enabled infrastructure from the start, with the cost of that provision included within the overall cost of the scheme. The cost of providing enhanced digital connectivity as a percentage of the overall scheme cost is marginal. However, unless it is included within the specification of the works from the outset it can be difficult to secure the provision.

Contributing to net environmental benefit

The scale of the East West Main Line is significant, not just as a transformational project for the region, but in terms of the potential impact it has on the natural and built environment. It is essential that the design of proposed works makes a positive contribution towards the requirement to achieve net environmental benefit.

In addition, the proposed works need to deliver a positive impact overall on biodiversity. The design of individual elements must respect and enhance the local environment. Particular attention must be paid to ensuring the setting and amenity of local communities is respected.

Considerately constructed

Experience of the Bicester-Bletchley section shows that in some instances the impact of the works has been exacerbated by decisions taken at the design stage which ultimately served to increase the impact on the adjacent local highway network during construction.

It has also highlighted the need for a higher level of mitigation measures on the local highway network, and the need for a higher level of oversight and management of construction activity.

The Partnership will continue to work closely with its partners to ensure the impact of construction is mitigated as far as possible for communities, building on experience gained to date.

5. FREIGHT

The freight and logistics sector is one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions. Greater use of rail for freight and logistics provides additional resilience for the business community, while also acting on the need to achieve net zero.

Whilst not part of East West Rail, removing the bottlenecks on the Felixstowe to Midlands corridor remains an immediate strategic priority for three sub-national transport bodies (England's Economic Heartland, Transport East and Midlands Connect).

However, it is also important that the East West Main Line is designed and delivered with the capability of supporting rail freight services without the need for additional works. In this regard due consideration must be given to ensuring that the impact on local communities of rail freight movements is minimised.

The design and operation of the East West Main Line should take into account and contribute to the delivery of the requirements of the national rail freight strategy. In due course Great British Railways will have a statutory duty to consider the needs of rail freight and to take those needs into account in planning the future of the rail network.