

East West Rail Consortium Strategic Board 15 September 2021

Agenda Item 7: Consortium update

Recommendation: It is recommended that the meeting:

- a) Notes the following items**
- b) Agrees the proposal to provide a contribution of £12,500 towards further work on the case for the Eastern Section**

1. Cllr Paul Castleman

- 1.1. It is with great sadness that we heard of the death last month of Cllr Paul Castleman, who up until recently had represented Luton Council on the Consortium.
- 1.2. Paul, who had lived all his life in Luton, was first elected as a councillor in 2014 and became a member of the executive in May 2015. He was a proud Lutonian, who revelled in the town's cultural diversity. A large part of his motivation for entering the political sphere was to be able to help those less fortunate than himself.
- 1.3. His strong roots and ties to Luton meant he was passionate about its unique heritage and history. Paul was a member of the Luton Heritage Forum for a number of years. He dedicated significant amounts of his time to promoting projects related to making residents aware of Luton's past and was instrumental in forging the council's heritage strategy and obtaining money from the National Heritage Lottery Fund to secure a Heritage Enabler for Luton.
- 1.4. Paul was on the council's executive as portfolio holder for Highways until May of this year. During his term of office he was active in promoting the council's green transport agenda as well as having oversight of the town's travel infrastructure.

2. Consultation response

- 2.1. At the previous meeting the Board considered its response to the East West Railway Company's second non-statutory consultation on the scheme.
- 2.2. Key areas of focus for the consultation were: Oxford Station and its supporting infrastructure (including Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations); London Road level crossing in Bicester; how best to serve communities on the Marston Vale Line; options for improved stations in Bedford; and five alignment options for the section of new railway between Bedford and Cambridge.
- 2.3. Discussion of the item included suggestions for a number of amendments. These were subsequently reflected in the final response, which was submitted to the Company for its consideration.
- 2.4. Please see the annex for the final response.

3. Eastern Section

- 3.1. Members will be aware the Consortium commissioned work to undertaken an initial Preliminary Strategic Outline Business Case (Pre-SOBC) for the Eastern Section last year.
- 3.2. The work has been undertaken by consultants Steer, working to a steering group of officers from Consortium members, together with the two sub-national transport bodies – England's Economic Heartland and Transport East.

- 3.3. Following the Board meeting in June, the Eastern Section Board has decided to commission further evidence to inform the Pre-SOBC and the Eastern Section's wider economic impact.
- 3.4. In June 2021, Board members agreed to support further work on the Eastern Section as a core part of the Consortium's work programme for the year ahead.
- 3.5. It is proposed that the Consortium agrees to joint-fund the additional work with a contribution of £12,500. This is likely to be around half of the total cost of the supporting work needed, with further funding expected from other partners.
- 3.6. In line with its decision in June 2021, members are recommended to agree the proposed contribution towards the work.

4. East West Rail Main Line 2021 conference

- 4.1. An East West Rail conference is being held in-person in Oxford on September 30, organised by events company Peloton.
- 4.2. Chair of the Consortium, Cllr Steve Broadbent, Eastern Section chair, Cllr Alexander Nicoll, and EEH interim programme director, Naomi Green, will be speaking at the event.
- 4.3. For more information see <https://peloton-events.co.uk/east-west-main-line-2021/>