

**9th June 2021
10:00 – 12:30**

APPROVED MINUTES

Of meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Cllr Sue Clark	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Peter Martin	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Philip Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Michael Headley	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Susan Glossop	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Duncan Enright	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Mark Howell	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Peter McDonald	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Neil Gough	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Alison Cackett	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Leader, Cherwell District Council & <i>Chair of</i>
<i>Oxford-Cambridge Arc Group</i>	

EWR Consortium Secretariat:

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

Also In Attendance:

Katherine Davies	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Steve Lakin	Central Bedfordshire Council
James Gagg	Oxfordshire County Council
David Rawson	Oxfordshire County Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
Pip Hoskins	Network Rail
Will Gallagher	East West Railway Company
Sara Noonan	West Suffolk Council
Mark James	East West Rail Alliance

**EAST WEST RAIL CONSORTIUM
STRATEGIC BOARD**



Kerry Allen
Tony Jones
Paul Frainer
Lewis Boudville
John Shortland
Rajesh Kungur
Andrew Preston
Hilary Chipping

Suffolk County Council
Norwich City Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
East Suffolk Council
Bedford Borough Council
Milton Keynes Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
SEMLEP

Apologies:

Cllr Steve Broadbent
Cllr Ian Stutely
Cllr Paul Castleman
Cllr Derrick Ashley
Cllr Paul Clark
Cllr Ian Bates
Cllr Yvonne Constance
Cllr Norman Brooks
Cllr Aidan Van de Weyer
Laura Leech
John Disley
Joan Hancox
James Povey
Chris Poultney
Matthew Randall
Andrew Summers
Louise Wicks
Trevor Mason
Jordi Beascoechea
Lee Carvell
Melanie Macleod
Louise Symes
Stuart Morris
Chris Winfield
Adam Wood

Buckinghamshire Council
Norwich City Council
Luton Borough Council
Hertfordshire County Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Oxfordshire County Council
East Suffolk Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Oxfordshire County Council
Buckinghamshire Council
Milton Keynes Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Cambridgeshire County Council
Transport East
Oxfordshire County Council
Hertfordshire County Council
East West Railway Company
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
Bedford Borough Council
North Hertfordshire District Council
South Cambridgeshire District Council
Network Rail
Hertfordshire County Council

.....

Item		Action
------	--	--------

<p>1</p>	<p>Introductions and Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Sue Clark opened the meeting and noted the changes to personnel. Sue invited each member of the meeting to introduce themselves. The virtual meeting protocol was discussed and observed.</p> <p>Due to the change in personnel following the local elections, the meeting was invited to elect a new Chair. Martin Tugwell suggested that, as Nick Naylor was previously elected as Chair as the Buckinghamshire lead member, the meeting look to the new cabinet member from Buckinghamshire, Cllr Steve Broadbent, to be the Chair with Cllr Sue Clark as the current Deputy Chair. The members of the meeting agreed with this proposal. Cllr Steve Broadbent was elected as Chair.</p>	
<p>2</p>	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p><i>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 16th March 2021</i></p> <p>James Gagg highlighted an inaccuracy in the previous minutes: James explained that he was misquoted in the recording of item 7 and agreed to follow this up offline with Martin Tugwell for the amendment to be made.</p> <p>Michael Headley highlighted that an action point at the previous meeting was to circulate the Oxfordshire Rail Study however this was not cascaded. It was agreed that this document would be shared with the meeting.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell noted that work is underway with the EWR Alliance and the EWR Company to ensure that as Bicester to Bletchley is being developed it is delivered as a digital corridor and contributions from local partners have been made to secure that. Martin shared that England’s Economic Heartland (EEH) has secured an additional £643,000 which will help deliver the fibre connectivity between Bicester and Bletchley.</p>	
<p>3</p>	<p>Consultations Responses</p> <p><i>For the Consortium to consider and agree its response to the consultation undertaken by the East West Rail Company – to include consideration of the proposals for Connection Stage 3 (Bedford to Bletchley plus the implications for London Road Crossing, Bicester) and the options for the Marston Vale Line</i></p>	

Martin Tugwell introduced the item and emphasised to the Consortium that this is a strategic response which is focused on the context provided by the work of the Consortium.

Given the importance of the response, Members considered it line by line.

The meeting expressed it was content with sections 1, 2, 3 and 4. Martin Tugwell reminded members that officers previously expressed the need to deliver a scheme in a high quality and environmentally sensitive way. The meeting agreed with this principle.

Cllr Peter Martin asked about plans to electrify the line. Will Gallagher said government has not yet made a decision on traction power for EWR and the Company is currently working through the options with government. With regards to the possibility of using diesel trains, Will responded by stating that in order to get CS1 operating as quickly as possible the only option is self-powered trains which are likely to be diesel however Will noted that this would be an interim solution.

Cllr Phil Smart noted that there will be considerable costs to retrofit the railway in the future and as such, the new section should be delivered as electrified infrastructure. Martin Tugwell suggested that, if members are content, under section B where the response discusses high quality and environmentally sensitive design a note regarding net zero is included as a recognition of what the Company is trying to achieve. The members were content with this proposal.

Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew raised a concern that Milton Keynes Council has around the line at Woburn Sands where the line is going to create some connectivity issues within Woburn Sands with the proposed closure of the level crossing. Martin Tugwell noted Jennifer's comments. He explained that the aim of section C was to illustrate that with regards to investment in strategic infrastructure, it is essential to have the commitment from government to support the complementary infrastructure at a local level.

Martin Tugwell moved on to section D. He advised that this should be used as an opportunity to restate the Consortium's position that East West Rail must be delivered in full, including the Aylesbury to Milton Keynes link as well as the connections east of Cambridge to Norwich and Ipswich.

Keith Dove suggested that the response should also highlight the issue of services to Central Milton Keynes as the response currently only mentions Bletchley. Rajesh Kungur noted that the issue of Central Milton Keynes is raised in the consultation response from Milton Keynes Council. Rajesh said he would share the wording from that response with Martin to be included.

With regards to section D, Cllr Phil Smart highlighted that there is a duty to be placed to promote freight on the network. Martin Tugwell suggested making a note of Phil's comments under section H which the meeting agreed to.

Martin Tugwell then moved the discussion to section F and noted that this section aims to highlight that when specifying and designing subsequent stages digital connectivity should be included from the start. This section was endorsed by the meeting.

Cllr Sue Clark introduced section 5. She stated that careful balance is needed between members expressing their views but remembering that the Consortium is a strategic group and the role is to support the principle of East West Rail.

Cllr Duncan Enright highlighted that in section 5.4 the additional benefits that EWR can bring to other projects are discussed. Duncan also noted that there is an ambition to make greater use of rail for travel within Oxfordshire between the surrounding towns, Didcot and the strategic gateway to London. Duncan suggested that, to help realise those ambitions, to mention them under section 5.4. Martin Tugwell agreed to include this point in the paper. Furthermore, Duncan expressed his appreciation for the items regarding London Road and Bicester and noted that Oxfordshire would like a very specific and strong case made for this issue in the document. Cllr Barry Wood agreed. He said the London Road Level Crossing cannot remain as it is as this would sever the town and cut off the new housing growth to the south which is pivotal to the local plan and Oxfordshire Plan 2050.

Cllr Sue Clark invited members to discuss the Bedford to Bletchley section. In regards to the level crossing at Woburn, Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew said there is currently no acceptable option that involves there not being an ability to cross where the level crossing currently sits because it would separate an established community. Jennifer stated that Milton Keynes Council would like a civil engineering solution and she would like this to be reflected in the response. Equally, Jennifer noted that they are not fully

	<p>satisfied with any of the options for the Stony Stratford level crossing closure.</p> <p>Cllr Michael Headley highlighted the last sentence in paragraph 5.25 and noted that it is more about connection to the Wixam community than just the station. Michael suggested that this sentence be amended to 'when improved connectivity to the new settlement at Wixam and its planned station.' Martin Tugwell recognised the substantive point about making sure that Wixam as an area of population needs to have connections.</p> <p>Rajesh Kungur welcomed mention in the response of Stoney Stratford in 5.23 and noted that, with the additions of Bow Brickhill and Wobun Sands, the names of those two level crossings after Stoney Stratford could be added in the comments under point 5.23 and that he would contact Martin regarding those comments offline.</p> <p>Will Gallagher said civil engineering solutions sometimes have other consequences which may need to be accepted. Cllr Sue Clark stated that she cannot support the proposals for Lidlington. Martin Tugwell responded that the response picks up that there are issues at Lidlington.</p> <p>Cllr Sue Clark moved the discussion onto the Bedford to Cambridge section. Andrew Preston requested that emphasis on the importance of EWR Company working closely with Highways England is mentioned in paragraph 5.36.</p> <p>Cllr Martin Wilby said South Norfolk Council supports approaching Cambridge from the south and this would more easily allow for connections to Norwich and Ipswich.</p> <p>The response was agreed subject to the amendments suggested being reflected in the final submission, and further work strengthening the section on Bletchley-Bedford.</p> <p>It was agreed that Martin Tugwell would send the amended response to Councillors Clark, Headley, Nicoll, Smart and Martin for final approval.</p>	
<p>4</p>	<p>Eastern Section: Initial Strategic Outline Business Case</p> <p><i>For the Consortium to receive the output of the work commissioned, and to agree on next steps</i></p> <p>Kerry Allen presented an overview of the item and noted that a group of Consortium members from across Suffolk, Norfolk and</p>	

	<p>Cambridgeshire supported by two STBs have been working since last autumn with Steer consultants to develop a preliminary strategic outline business case for the Eastern section requested by the Consortium at the January 2020 meeting.</p> <p>Against the challenging backdrop in which we have all been working, the work has been delayed. Kerry noted that what is significant about the draft pre-SOBC is that it demonstrates a strong economic case for connectivity between the eastern, western and central sections and that has an emphasis on a through service.</p> <p>The findings of the draft pre-SOBC is consistent with the outcome of the additional outputs study for the eastern section which the Consortium published in 2017. This demonstrated that there is a high value in connecting Suffolk and Norfolk with economic centres along the EWR route. This message cements that investment in the eastern section is an investment in a strategic project rather than emphasising a local rail project.</p> <p>Kerry said more business case work will be required as set out by the rail network enhancement pipeline. However, the findings of the draft pre-SOBC demonstrates that there is merit in pursuing this.</p> <p>Cllr Alexander Nicoll put on record his thanks to Kerry and the wider team for their work on the business case. Cllr Phil Smart noted that the draft conclusions demonstrate the value of having a through service to the east. This also strengthens the business case for all work being done west of Cambridge.</p> <p>James Gagg commented that the paper only looks at the business case for services to Oxford and suggested looking at the impact of a business case that extends services onto the west.</p> <p>Kerry invited the meeting to share further comments with her offline.</p> <p>Kerry extended her thanks to Martin Tugwell, Antony Swift and the officers who have set up the Eastern Section Group.</p>	
<p>5</p>	<p>Making the Most of the East West Mainline</p> <p><i>For the Consortium to consider and agree the 'proposition' that sets out the long-term ambition for the East West Main Line</i></p>	

	<p>This item was not covered during the meeting at it was agreed to defer the discussion to the next meeting.</p>	
6	<p>Western Section: Lessons Learnt</p> <p><i>For NR and the East West Rail Alliance to respond to issues and concerns raised at the previous Consortium meeting</i></p> <p><i>For the Consortium to identify agree the learning arising from experience with the delivery of the Western Section that needs to be taken forward with subsequent sections</i></p> <p>This item was not covered during the meeting and it was agreed to defer the discussion to the next meeting.</p>	
7	<p>Financial Report</p> <p><i>To receive the end of year financial report for 2020/21</i></p> <p><i>To agree partner contributions for 2021/22 and the programme of work for the Consortium</i></p> <p>With regards to subscriptions, Martin Tugwell proposed that these remain the same. On the basis that subscriptions remain the same, Martin noted that a sum of £50,000 has been identified to support further work on behalf of the Consortium. Martin advised that a portion of this funding is used to support the next stage of the Eastern Section. Furthermore, Martin suggested that the meeting may want to develop thinking that ensures we mitigate East West Rail’s construction impacts.</p> <p>John Shortland requested that the meeting make reference to and plan for involvement with the redevelopment of the Bedford Midlands station.</p> <p>Martin Tugwell highlighted an error made in the paper. The paper has review of programme for 2020/21 which is a look backwards and section 4 should be a work programme for 2021/22. Martin noted that this amendment would be made.</p> <p>Cllr Michael Headley proposed that the wider linkages work is a continued piece of work in to 2022.</p> <p>Cllr Susan Glossop noted that it has been 15 years since the subscription rates have been increased and as such suggested that the meeting look to increase these. Martin Tugwell agreed and noted that the role of the Consortium is now much broader</p>	

	<p>and suggested that as part of the forward look we should seek clarity for the Consortiums work programme over the next two meetings so that at the meeting in March 2022, the Consortium has had a debate around subscriptions and a decision has been made around what they should be to sustain a piece of work.</p> <p>It was noted that this meeting will be the last one attended by Martin Tugwell as he leaves his position as Programme Director for England’s Economic Heartland. The meeting placed on record their thanks to him.</p> <p>The meeting AGREED to:</p> <p>a) express interest for Bedford Midland and support for work on the eastern section.</p> <p>b) note the treasurers report.</p> <p>c) note the update on the end of year financial report for 2020/21</p> <p>b) seek clarity for the Consortium’s work programme over coming meetings and to make a decision around subscriptions at the AGM in March 2022</p>	<p>M Tugwell</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Future meetings</p> <p>Wednesday 15th September 2021</p> <p>Wednesday 8th December 2021</p> <p>Wednesday 9th March 2022</p>	