

## **East West Main Line Partnership Strategic Board 9 March 2022**

### **Agenda Item 4: Subscriptions and work programme**

**Recommendation: It is recommended that the Board:**

- a) Agrees to contribute towards the ongoing running of the East West Main Line Partnership, including its work programme, through a single annual subscription.**
- b) Agrees, for the financial year 2022/23 to a slight increase (3%) in subscription rates, meaning an annual local subscription for 22/23 of:  
£1,545 for District Authorities  
£3,090 for Unitary and County Authorities**
- c) Consider potential priorities for 2022/23 based in the information set out in Section 4**

#### **1. Context**

- 1.1. The East West Rail Consortium/ Main Line Partnership has been making the case for delivery of a railway connecting East Anglia, with central, southern and western England for over 25 years, including making the original business case for East West Rail.
- 1.2. In 2016 government established the East West Railway Company to deliver and operate the railway from Oxford to Cambridge.
- 1.3. The section of East West Rail between Oxford and Bletchley is currently under construction and expected to be operational by 2025. The East West Railway Company is responsible for designing and delivering the next stage of East West Rail to Cambridge.
- 1.4. The financial year 2021/22 was a milestone year for the Consortium, particularly focusing on its relaunch as the East West Main Line Partnership. The relaunch gave the Partnership a refreshed remit of 'championing the ambition for East West Rail'.
- 1.5. Under the Chairmanship of Cllr Steve Broadbent, and Vice Chairmanship of Cllr Sue Clark, the Partnership plays a key role in driving the long-term vision for East West Rail.
- 1.6. Buckinghamshire Council is the accountable body for the Partnership. The England's Economic Heartland business unit (also located within Buckinghamshire Council) is responsible for the day-to-day administration and officer staffing of the Partnership.

#### **2. Financial review**

- 2.1. During the financial years of 2020/21 and 2021/22 the Consortium did not need to undertake or fund major pieces of work. This was primarily because the case for East West Rail had been set by the government; work was underway to deliver the scheme between Bicester and Bletchley and East West Railway Company was leading development of the proposition for a solution between Bletchley and Cambridge.
- 2.2. As such, the Consortium's role was to oversee progress and ensure, on behalf of constituents, that all factors in the planning and delivery of East West Rail had been considered.
- 2.3. This role, combined with the Consortium's strong financial position, meant there was not an imperative to collect the subscription rates for these years.

- 2.4. Following the last financial update in June 2021, the Partnership secretariat has undertaken a review of the Partnership's finances.
- 2.5. Included in the review was an analysis of what money the Partnership has to spend on its programme (as opposed to keeping in reserves) as well as consideration of the level of staffing needed to support secretariat functions.
- 2.6. The review and subsequent changes to the way funds are classified and allocated has given a consolidated picture of the Partnership's financial position and its ability to fund work.
- 2.7. As of 1 March 2022 the projected Partnership's balance stood at £150,792. This does not capture any further spend within 2021/22, although we expect this to be minimal.
- 2.8. A consolidated funding position going forward is timely. The relaunch of the Consortium as the East West Main Line Partnership, and Board agreement over its six areas of focus has given the organisation a renewed sense of purpose and momentum.

### **3. Proposed Subscriptions 2022-23**

- 3.1. In June 2021 Board members noted that subscriptions have remained static since 2005/2006 despite increases in inflation.
- 3.2. It was agreed that at the March 2022 Board meeting, the Consortium will have had a debate around subscriptions and a decision made around its role and work programme.
- 3.3. The renewed focus for the Partnership, combined with the need to refresh the strategic case for the Oxford-Cambridge section (as outlined in agenda item 3) means the Partnership is moving into a busier work programme over the next year. The work will bring beneficial outcomes to the long-term delivery and impact of East West Rail, but it will also come with a cost.
- 3.4. This, alongside rising inflation rates makes it a requirement for the Board to consider and agree an increase in subscription rates by 3%.
- 3.5. This would make the revised subscription figures:
  - District Authorities: £1,545
  - Unitary and County Authorities: £3,090
- 3.6. Being a member of the East West Main Line Partnership enables organisations to be involved and have a say in the ongoing development work for the East West Rail project as a whole, including working with the East West Railway Company.
- 3.7. It also enables organisations to be involved in making the case for realising the wider opportunities that arise as a consequence of the East West Rail project.
- 3.8. An organisation's subscription covers the costs of project and communications management for the Partnership's activities. This includes the funding of consultancy work (commissioned by the Partnership and also to support its partners where there is a strategic fit); stakeholder engagement; maintenance of the East West Rail website; media relations; production of promotional material, marketing and events; and legal and consultancy costs.

### **4. 2022/2023 budget breakdown**

- 4.1. As of 1 March 2022 the projected Partnership's balance stood at £150,792.
- 4.2. Based on the budget, it is proposed that Board members agree that for 2022/23:
  - The Partnership retains £40,000 in reserves.
  - The Partnership contributes £30,000 to cover the cost of EEH business unit staffing time spent on Partnership work. This will partly cover the cost of officer time spent on communications and policy, and the administration of work in kind arrangements, carried out on behalf of the Partnership. Other costs associated with staffing the Partnership, including the time of the EEH director, will continue to be covered without charge.

- After general expenditure (including £3,120 for marketing) this leaves a total of £127,112 (£77,692 in funds plus £49,440 projected from subscriptions) available to be invested on projects that deliver the Board’s priorities.

## 5. 2022/23 work programme

- 5.1. Partnership members will want to ensure funds are invested only where projects have a clear, deliverable outcome that will bring tangible benefits.
- 5.2. Equally, the nature of the Board will often mean that funds can be used to contribute to projects being delivered in partnership. In adopting this approach, Board members will be able to lever greater benefits than if the Partnership were to deliver projects alone.
- 5.3. In order to plan for the year ahead, it is proposed that Board Members consider and provide a steer on a forward look of work on which the budget envelope of £127,112 could be spent.
- 5.4. No work will proceed without the Board being given a fully worked up proposal on which to make the final decision to proceed. At that point, Board Members will also be able to consider the financial implications of any decision to proceed – in terms of both project cost and implications on the Partnership’s overall budget and ability to deliver its work plan.
- 5.5. A proposed programme of work for consideration by the Partnership is set out in the table below.
- 5.6. The table is divided into three sections:
  - Work Packages that require immediate action and support, with the Partnership as lead commissioner or as a co-funder.
  - Work Packages that are necessary to deliver the agreed priorities for the EW Mainline Partnership. Projects may be delivered in partnership or with the Partnership as sole commissioner. There is a clear chronological order for projects, determined by the timing for decisions on investment and progress with complementary study work already underway/planned.
  - Work Packages that will be delivered by other organisations (notably, England’s Economic Heartland) but which the Partnership may wish to contribute, subject to funds being available.
- 5.7. The table also shows how the work primarily relates to the Partnership’s six agreed areas of interest:
  - Oxford-Cambridge at the earliest opportunity
  - Coast to coast connectivity
  - North-south connectivity
  - Interchange and strategic transport hubs
  - A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Main Line
  - Freight

### WORK PACKAGES SEEKING FUNDING IMMEDIATELY

(Agenda Item 3 refers)

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>EWMLP area of interest primarily covered by work</b>	<b>Programme and Financial Implications</b>
Updating the strategic case for East West Rail, as outlined in agenda item 3:	Area 1: Oxford-Cambridge Area 2: Coast-to coast Area 3: North-south	Total contribution sought: £42,000

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocacy for East West Rail (led by EWMLP)</li> <li>• Part funding of modelling work (joint-funded with EEH)</li> </ul>		<p>Approval this work is being sought at the 9 March meeting, agenda item 3.</p> <p><u>Programme Implications:</u> If agreed, the remaining budget for the financial year 22/23 would be £85,112. This would remain sufficient to deliver all, or parts of the projects set out below in the time frame that they are needed.</p>
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WORK PACKAGES FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION (in chronological order of need)

<b>Work Package</b>	<b>EWMLP area of interest primarily covered by work</b>	<b>Programme and Financial Implications</b>
Sponsorship of East West Rail APPG session	All	<p>An opportunity may arise for the Partnership to sponsor the inaugural session of the EEH All-Party Parliamentary Group on East West Rail. The APPG is currently in planning stage.</p> <p>A developed proposition will be brought to the Board in June 2022.</p>
Aylesbury link to East West Rail	Area 1: Oxford-Cambridge Area 3: North-south	<p>Work to specifically update and re-emphasise the business case for the Aylesbury link to East West Rail, ensuring that it continues to be considered an integral part of the overall scheme.</p> <p>Project options will be developed following conclusion of work to update the strategic narrative for East West Rail (as set out in agenda item 3).</p> <p>It may be that this work is carried out in partnership with another organisation/s, with the Partnership part-funding.</p> <p>A developed proposition will be brought to the Board in June 2022.</p>
Progressing Eastern Section	Area 2: Coast-to-coast	To fund the study into wider economic impacts of the Eastern Section.

		<p>This work is likely to be co-funded and co-commissioned with Transport East.</p> <p>A developed proposal, including financial implications will be presented to the Board in September 2022.</p>
Progressing west of Oxford	Area 2: Coast-to-coast	<p>Work to progress the strategic case for direct services from Bristol to Oxford and beyond.</p> <p>The decision to take forward work in this area will be strengthened by the current evidence being gathered as part of the EEH Oxford-Didcot-Swindon connectivity study which is due to be published in spring 2023.</p> <p>It is likely that the significant cost for work to progress the case for services from Oxford and beyond will be required in 2023/24 (rather than 2022/23).</p>

**PROJECTS TO BE LED BY OTHER ORGANISATIONS BUT WHICH THE PARTNERSHIP MAY WISH TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS**

Interchanges	Area 4: Interchange and strategic transport hubs	<p>To more clearly define the role that EWR stations can play as strategic interchanges with particular focus on opportunities for East West Rail to improve journeys to and from key strategic locations, including Northamptonshire, Luton and Peterborough. Subject to EEH Board agreement, it is expected that this work will be led by a partner/s such as EEH, with the Partnership contributing funding.</p>
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Varsity Way	Area 4: Interchange and strategic transport hubs	EEH is currently working with Sustrans to develop the case for a Varsity Way cycle route between Oxford and Cambridge. With EWR station connectivity being a key part of this, it is considered that the Partnership may wish to support any further next stages of this work.
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**March 2022**