

**Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
10:00 – 12:30**

**MINUTES**

*Of meeting held virtually via Microsoft Teams*

**Present:**

Cllr Steve Broadbent (Chair)	Buckinghamshire Council
Cllr Sue Clark	Central Bedfordshire Council
Cllr Philip Smart	Ipswich Borough Council
Cllr Phil Larratt	West Northamptonshire Council
Cllr Michael Headley	Bedford Borough Council
Cllr Susan Glossop	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Liz Leffman	Oxfordshire County Council on behalf of Cllr Duncan Enright
Cllr Norman Brooks	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Neil Gough	South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Alison Cackett	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Robert Roche	Luton Borough Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Leader, Cherwell District Council & Chair of Oxford-Cambridge Arc Group

**EWR Consortium Secretariat:**

Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Beth Dormer	England's Economic Heartland

**Also In Attendance:**

David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Steve Lakin	Central Bedfordshire Council
Andrew Summers	Transport East
James Gagg	Oxfordshire County Council
David Rawson	Oxfordshire County Council
Michael Newsham	Ipswich Borough Council
Keith Dove	Luton Borough Council
Antony Swift	Luton Borough Council
Natasha Holdgate	West Suffolk Council
Will Gallagher	East West Railway Company
Mark Hulme	East West Railway Company
Kate Campbell	East West Railway Company
Mark James	East West Rail Alliance

**EAST WEST RAIL CONSORTIUM  
STRATEGIC BOARD**



Kerry Allen  
Tony Jones  
Paul Frainer  
Jonathan Dixon  
David Allatt  
Lewis Boudville  
Jon Shortland  
Suzanne Buck  
Laura Leech  
James Povey  
Paul Everard  
Adam Wood

Suffolk County Council  
Norwich City Council  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
East Suffolk Council  
Bedford Borough Council  
Ipswich Borough Council  
Buckinghamshire Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
West Northamptonshire Council  
Hertfordshire County Council

**Apologies:**

Cllr Duncan Enright  
Cllr Mark Howell  
Cllr Martin Wilby  
Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew  
Cllr Yvonne Constance  
Cllr Paul Clark  
Cllr Ian Stutely  
Pip Hoskins  
Katherine Davies  
Sara Noonan  
Hilary Chipping  
Jeremy Smith  
John Disley  
Joan Hancox  
Trevor Mason  
Lee Carvell  
Melanie Macleod  
Louise Symes  
Stuart Morris

Oxfordshire County Council  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Norfolk County Council  
Milton Keynes Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
Norwich City Council  
Network Rail  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils  
West Suffolk Council  
SEMLEP  
Cambridgeshire County Council  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Buckinghamshire Council  
Hertfordshire County Council  
Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council  
Bedford Borough Council  
North Hertfordshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire District Council



Item	
1	<b>Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>

	<p>The Chair paid tribute to Cllr Paul Castleman who passed away in August 2021. Cllr Castleman represented Luton Borough Council on the Board and was a great supporter of the Consortium and EWR as well as an advocate for green and sustainable travel.</p> <p>Cllr Phil Smart declared an interest: his employment by The Rail Freight Group.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of Last Meeting</b></p> <p><i>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021</i></p> <p>Cllr Sue Clark requested that some adjustments be made to the notes made on item 3, the Consultation Response. She asked that the minutes note that the meeting went through the consultation response thoroughly and highlight that it was carefully considered.</p> <p>David Cumming said that the previous minutes noted Martin Wilby as representing South Norfolk Council which is incorrect as he represents Norfolk County Council on this Board.</p> <p>Adam King said all previous actions have been completed or would be discussed in the agenda of this meeting.</p>
<p><b>3</b></p>	<p><b>Rebranding the Consortium</b></p> <p><i>For the Board to agree rebranding the Consortium as the East West Main Line Partnership, and the accompanying five strategic areas of focus.</i></p> <p><b>It is recommended that the meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>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></li> <li><b>b) Agree the recommended new logo (option 2) and associated strapline</b></li> <li><b>c) Agree the strategic areas of focus for the East West Main Line Partnership, as ‘five drivers’ to accompany the rebrand</b></li> <li><b>d) Formally welcomes Western Gateway STB to the Board</b></li> </ul> <p>Adam King introduced the item. Since 2020 members have been discussing the proposition for East West Rail including what the future role of the Consortium should be.</p> <p>From these discussions, the idea of the East West Mainline has been considered to build upon what the East West Railway Company are working on between Oxford and Cambridge. Adam clarified that ‘main line’ refers to a line of strategic importance and a significant route connecting important towns and cities.</p>

The change in name would also mitigate the current confusion between the East West Rail Consortium, the East West Rail Alliance, and East West Railway Company.

Adam then discussed the new logo ideas and noted the previous conversations around approaching the new logo as an evolution rather than revolution hence why the new logo options are very similar to the current one.

The five key areas for the partnership encompass the discussions had over the past year regarding the proposition of East West Rail. Subject to comments, the plan is to publish the 'Introducing the Main Line Partnership' when the Partnership is launched. An ideal time to launch the Partnership would be on 30 September 2021 at the EWR conference in Oxford.

Cllr Phil Smart stated that he fully supports the rebranding as suggested. He made suggestions regarding tweaks to the logo, and to make the map more accurate and complete. He referred to page 10 of the document that reads 'in this regard consideration must be given to ensuring that the impact on local communities of rail freight is minimised'. Cllr Smart suggested that the sentence be moved to the end of the second paragraph so that it is the concluding statement so as to increase its prominence.

Tony Jones said the strapline was reminiscent of local authority jargon with its reference to 'strategic ambition'. It was suggested that it may be more effective to use a simpler form of words championing or promoting the line itself. Cllr Liz Leffman and Cllr Alexander Nicoll agreed that 'strategic' should be dropped from the strapline.

James Gagg asked for some minor tweaks to the map. Overall, James welcomed the wider emphasis of the Consortium as proposed, including welcoming the Western Gateway STB to better plan opportunities for improved western rail links.

Cllr Michael Headley said freight is of particular concern to residents and requested that the document highlight this and the ambition to minimise disruption caused by freight. With regards to the logo, Michael observed that the two-car train looks like a local train and not a main line train.

Cllr Sue Clark said the Partnership needs to restate that delivery of Oxford-Cambridge remains its fundamental objective. The Chair agreed and said that the document should be amended to take this into account.

Cllr Sue Clark requested that the suggestions to make changes to the five key areas be discussed offline. Sue suggested that a discussion around this be had between herself, the Chair, and the sector Chairs. The Chair agreed to this proposal.

**The meeting agreed:**

	<p><b>a) to change the name of the East West Rail Consortium to East West Main Line Partnership, reflecting the Consortium’s strategic positioning</b></p> <p><b>b) the recommended new logo (option 2) and the and associated strapline providing that the word ‘strategic’ be removed</b></p> <p><b>c) to the strategic areas of focus for the East West Main Line Partnership, amended to make clear Oxford-Cambridge was a priority</b></p> <p><b>d) to formally welcome the Western Gateway STB to the Board</b></p> <p><b>NOTE: <a href="#">The Introducing the East West Main Line Partnership can be found on the Partnership website.</a></b></p>
<p><b>4</b></p>	<p><b>Spending Review</b></p> <p><i>To agree the letter to be submitted to government setting out the Board’s investment priorities for the 2021 Spending Review</i></p> <p><b>It is recommended that the meeting:</b></p> <p><b>a) Endorses the East West Rail priorities being put forward by England’s Economic Heartland and Transport East for the Spending Review</b></p> <p><b>b) Agrees the Spending Review letter of support to be sent from the Partnership to DfT and HM Treasury.</b></p> <p>Naomi introduced the item. The 2021 Spending Review is against the backdrop of significant pressures on public sector finances. Therefore, she proposed that the Consortium provide a focused letter, attached to annex a in the papers, to the Exchequer and the DfT reinforcing the importance of East West Rail.</p> <p>She said both EEH and Transport East have prepared their own submissions for the Spending Review which reinforce the need for continued investment in EWR.</p> <p>Cllr Susan Glossop asked how the Partnership was planning to engage with MPs. Naomi Green said MPs would be sent a copy of the Partnership’s letter and agreed to offer one-to-one or group briefings to any MPs who would like to be provided with additional information. Andrew Summers reassured Cllr Glossop that Transport East are also liaising with MPs. It was also stated that EEH and Transport East meet with the east of England MPs on a frequent basis as a duo of STBs.</p> <p>Cllr Liz Leffman requested that a line be added to the letter about the importance of the development at Oxford station and how central they are to the development of the project. Furthermore, she asked that the letter provide a reminder about the need to improve the level crossing on London Road, Bicester. Naomi agreed to add these points to the letter.</p> <p><b>The meeting agreed:</b></p>

	<p><b>a) to endorse the East West Rail priorities being put forward by England’s Economic Heartland and Transport East for the Spending Review</b></p> <p><b>b) to the Spending Review letter of support to be sent from the Partnership to DfT and HM Treasury providing that the changes discussed be made</b></p>
<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>Lessons learnt</b></p> <p><i>For the East West Railway Company and East West Rail Alliance to respond to issues and concerns raised at the Board meeting in March. For the Consortium to identify and agree the learning arising from experience with the delivery of the Bicester to Bletchley section that needs to be taken forward with subsequent sections.</i></p> <p>Kate Campbell and Mark James outlined the strategic lessons learnt from connection stage one and the work done to lessen the construction impact on residents and businesses.</p> <p>She said identifying lessons learnt was an important exercise to ensure the smooth delivery of future phases of the project.</p> <p>Key lessons learnt included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues raised by local communities were higher than initially expected. This could be mitigated with better communication pre-construction stage.</li> <li>• Community liaison personnel are key to identifying local hotspot areas and helping to inform communities with clear outline of what the work will involve.</li> <li>• There was a need for stronger liaison between the East West Rail project and HS2. To be clear with the community about who is responsible for the works is very important. Kate also advised that coordinated use of media is essential so that between the EWR Company, EWR Alliance and Network Rail, messaging is not clashed.</li> <li>• Prepare for the unexpected, for example COVID-19 had a massive impact on face-to-face communications.</li> </ul> <p>Mark confirmed that the Consortium has continued its funding for the Social Value and Legacy Manager, Danny Miller, who continues to do good work as part of the EWR Alliance and shared his own views on lessons learnt, primarily that social value and legacy planning can start much earlier in the design phase.</p> <p>The Chair summarised the discussion and noted that there is no such thing as too much community communications.</p> <p>Laura Leech said following improvements to the way the Alliance worked with the local community, the number of complaints she receives have reduced. Laura also stated responses from community groups and parishes have improved.</p>

With regards road closures in the north of Buckinghamshire where alternative routes are limited, Laura still has some concerns and requested that conversations around this are still being had to ensure coordination.

David Rawson recalled a previous Strategic Board meeting where an action was taken by the Alliance to put together an action plan addressing issues discussed. David asked if the improvements that have been reported are on the back of that action plan and if so, can it be shared with the meeting. Kate Campbell responded by stating that the action plan would be shared with the group and noted that they worked closely with local MP Greg Smith and with Buckinghamshire Council on a list of key concerns alongside key actions which were addressed one by one.

Kate said that through this process, the Alliance met with the parish councils where all actions were closed and there was an opportunity to discuss the entire document and to receive feedback from all the parish councils affected. This led to the positive change, helped to build trust and improve relationships.

**The Meeting agreed:**

- a) for the EWR Company to share the action plan with partnership members**

**6 East West Railway Company/ Alliance update**

To receive updates on progress from the East West Railway Company and EWR Alliance.

Mark James introduced the item and talked through his presentation (available on the Partnership website).

Will Gallagher said that the non-statutory consultation is ending. Engagement included 270,000 consultation summaries were sent out to residents, over 75,000 documents downloaded from the website, nearly 200,000 page views, online meetings with MPs and local authorities and stakeholders. This range of activity led to an encouraging 9,800 responses to the consultation.

Also encouraging is the 190,000 individual comments made within those responses all of which are taken on board to enrich analysis.

The EWR Company are ensuring that even post-consultation, engagement activity is being continued. Will also made members aware that the EWR Company will be starting a new series of quarterly parish and town council forums in autumn of 2021 with the intent for local representatives to discuss the progress on the project.

In choosing a route alignment the EWR Company will consider the consultation responses, environmental data, survey data as well as economical and technical

data. This data will then be put through the lens of the fifteen assessment factors which were outlined in the last two consultations to get to the preferred route alignment. The intention of the EWR Company is to be able to announce the preferred route alignment in advance of the statutory consultation.

Cllr Alexander Nicoll asked if the EWR Company are tasking local MPs with anything. Will stated the need to provide MPs with enough information for them to remain supportive of the scheme.

Jon Shortland asked if there will there be a forum for the non-parished parts of Bedford Town. Will said that yes, this will happen, and he will ensure that the appropriate representatives are picked up. Will also said that if there are any specific individuals that members think should be contacted, he welcomes that information offline. Jon Shortland also asked if there is a comms plan for the gap between the announcement of the preferred route and the start of the statutory consultation? Will stated that the EWR Company will be maintaining active communications during that period.

Cllr Sue Clark asked if Will had any comments on the Spending Review which was discussed earlier on in the agenda before Will had joined the meeting. Will highlighted that there are more priorities than there is money and therefore, the EWR Company is doing its best to put forward a positive case at a strategic level for EWR and highlighting the reasons to invest.

He said showing how East West Rail contributes to levelling-up both within the region and outside of it was important. Britain's global competitiveness was also a key consideration. When one compares the productive areas in the UK to those of similar ilk in Germany or the USA, they are significantly less competitive. The Chair asked for the Spending Review submission (item 4) to take onboard these comments to further strengthen it. The meeting was content with the Chair's recommendations.

The Chair noted one of the areas discussed earlier in the lessons learnt item was around data such as road condition surveys. The Chair asked if this is picked up in the technical points and if so, what will the methodology be. Will shared the EWR Company have at the front of its mind the experiences local communities have had from CS1 and therefore, the construction delivery team are focused on how they can get a better handle on road conditions so that we can have a joint up approached to that.

**7 Consortium work update**

*For the Board to receive an update on work being carried out by the Consortium including:*

- *Eastern Section*
- *East West Rail conference*

***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***

Adam King introduced the item and reminded members that at the previous meeting it was agreed on 2021/22 work programme included further funding for the Eastern section work. Adam proposed for the Partnership to jointly fund further work on the Eastern section on the economic case which will be used to bolster the already strong case that is set out in the emerging pre-SOBC with the idea that the economic case for the pre-SOBC will be published in one package in due course.

Kerry Allen echoed Adam's points around the need to do the wider economic assessment impact work and the fact that the pre-SOBC does show a strong case for investment in the Eastern section and the purpose of the economic study is to bolster this and illustrate the art of the possible.

Cllr Nicoll stated that he Chair's the LGA's Public Transport Consortium and quite a few members of that group are excited by the possibility of the potential of the Eastern Section might bring. He noted the designation of free port status at Felixstowe and Harwich which is a powerful driver to the economic aspirations of the east and transport connectivity is central to making this suitable, long-term and durable.

Cllr Phil Smart drew attention to the fact that Network Rail is going to be working on a North Anglia study and he suspects that there are strong synergies to be achieved between that and the Eastern section work.

Cllr Sue Clark requested that for a future agenda item the meeting be provided with an update as to what has happened to the First Mile Last Mile work that EEH was working on in conjunction with EWR Company.

**The Meeting agreed:**

***a) to note the updates***

	<p><i>b) to the proposal to provide a contribution of £12,500 towards further work on the case for the Eastern Section</i></p>
<p><b>8</b></p>	<p><b>Future meetings</b></p> <p>Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021</p> <p>Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022</p> <p>The Chair commented that the working assumption is that future meetings will continue to take place virtually unless otherwise advised or desired should it be permitted.</p>