

EAST WEST MAIN LINE PARTNERSHIP STRATEGIC BOARD

Wednesday 9th March 2022

10:00 – 12:30

Virtual Meeting held 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 Alexander Nicoll	Suffolk County Council
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 Ian Stutely	Norwich City Council
Cllr Barry Wood	Leader, Cherwell District Council & Chair of Oxford-Cambridge Arc Group

Also In Attendance:

Naomi Green	England's Economic Heartland
Adam King	England's Economic Heartland
Fiona Foulkes	England's Economic Heartland
Trevor Brennan	England's Economic Heartland
Suzanne Winkels	England's Economic Heartland
Nathalie Mazhunga	England's Economic Heartland
Beth Dormer	England's Economic Heartland
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Steve Lakin	Central Bedfordshire Council
Rebecca Johnson	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 Rail Company
Mark Hulme	East West Rail Company
Kate Campbell	East West Rail Company
Jeremy Damrel	East West Rail Company
Mark James	East West Rail Alliance
Kerry Allen	Suffolk County Council
Luke Barber	Suffolk County Council
Tony Jones	Norwich City Council
Paul Frainer	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
Jonathan Dixon	Greater Cambridge Shared Planning
David Allatt	Cambridgeshire County Council
Lewis Boudville	East Suffolk Council
Jon Shortland	Bedford Borough Council
Suzanne Buck	Ipswich Borough Council
Laura Leech	Buckinghamshire Council
Gavin Jones	Buckinghamshire Council
Susan Browning	Buckinghamshire Council
James Povey	Milton Keynes Council
Paul Everard	West Northamptonshire Council
Adam Wood	Hertfordshire County Council
Jeremy Smith	Cambridgeshire County Council
Katherine Davies	Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils
Sara Noonan	West Suffolk Council
John Rippon	Bucks LEP
Hilary Chipping	SEMLEP
James White	Western Gateway STB

Apologies:

Cllr Susan Glossop	West Suffolk Council
Cllr Duncan Enright	Oxfordshire County Council
Cllr Sam Collins	North Hertfordshire District Council
Cllr Mark Howell	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew	Milton Keynes Council
Cllr Paul Clark	North Hertfordshire District Council
Pip Hoskins	Network Rail
John Disley	Oxfordshire County Council
Joan Hancox	Buckinghamshire Council

Trevor Mason
 Lee Carvell
 Melanie Macleod
 Louise Symes
 Stuart Morris

Hertfordshire County Council
 Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Council
 Bedford Borough Council
 North Hertfordshire District Council
 South Cambridgeshire District Council



Item	
<p>1</p>	<p>Introductions & Apologies</p> <p>The meeting made introductions.</p> <p>The Chair made members aware that the meeting would be recorded for the purpose of the minutes and would be deleted once the minutes are completed. The meeting was content to proceed on that basis.</p>
<p>2</p>	<p>Minutes of Last Meeting</p> <p><i>To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2021</i></p> <p>The Chair invited members to make comments or ask questions about the minutes of the last meeting.</p> <p>Ian Stutely (IS) highlighted that he did not attend the previous meeting and his apologies were not noted on the minutes of the last meeting. It was agreed that this would be amended.</p> <p>Andrew Summers (AS) updated the Board on progress being made to update the wider economic benefits of the Eastern Section. The market has been tested and potential suppliers identified alongside potential funding partners. There is a lot of support for the work.</p> <p>The meeting was content with the minutes of the previous meeting.</p>
<p>3</p>	<p>Updating the case for East West Rail</p> <p><i>To receive an update on the work of EEH and the East West Railway Company to update the strategic case for East West Rail (Oxford-Cambridge) and to consider how the Partnership can assist in strengthening the strategic narrative around this section.</i></p> <p>Adam King (AK) noted that DfT would welcome a locally led refresh of the strategic narrative around EWR. As such, AK explained that there are three key pieces of work planned to refresh and update the strategic narrative. Firstly, to consolidate the strategic narrative for EWR with a piece of work piece of work to be jointly funded by EEH and the East West Railway Company. Secondly, strategic modelling of the impact of EWR on jobs, the economy, car use and carbon which will use the land use model developed by EEH for its connectivity studies. Thirdly, highlighting business advocacy for EWR.</p>

	<p>It was therefore recommended that the Partnership supports this work with a contribution of £12,000 towards the modelling, while committing up to £30,000 to procure the business advocacy work, a total of £42,000.</p> <p>Robert Roche (RR) noted that Luton Borough Council will provide consultants with any information that helps reaffirm that the delivery of EWR will open opportunities to connect people and places.</p> <p>Philip Smart (PS) said it was important to recognise the Partnership/ Consortium was made the original case for East West Rail and predates the Company and Alliance. He suggested that the work should highlight the transformative effect that EWR will have on network resilience. He recommended that the business advocacy work include quotes from local businesses in support of EWR.</p> <p>Michael Headley (MH) noted that the north-south benefits of EWR do not end at the borders of Northamptonshire and requested that the East Midlands cities such as Derby, Nottingham and Leicester are also considered within the wider strategic narrative of East West Rail.</p> <p>Phil Larratt (PL) requested some focus around West Northamptonshire linking into the Midland Mainland, Northampton and Long Buckby.</p> <p>Ian Stutely (IS) requested that the references to Oxford and Cambridge also include Norwich and Ipswich. Naomi Green (NG) said that work is ongoing on making the case for the 'eastern section' however, this piece of work is centred around securing Oxford to Cambridge in its entirety which is the first phase of the project.</p> <p>The meeting agreed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To note the work being carried out to update the strategic case for East West Rail between Oxford and Cambridge, including the Aylesbury link b) To contribute £12,000 to joint fund modelling work to be commissioned by England's Economic Heartland c) To spend up to £30,000 on work to better leverage the business imperative for East West Rail
<p>4</p>	<p>Subscriptions and work programme for 2022/23</p> <p><i>To agree membership fees and provide a steer on the proposed work priorities for the year ahead</i></p> <p>Naomi Green (NG) introduced the item.</p> <p>During 2020/21 and 2021/22 the Consortium did not fund any major pieces of work. This was largely down to where East West Rail was at the time. The Consortium oversaw progress, supported local authorities on planning consents, and held the East West Rail Alliance and Company to account on the way scheme was delivered, for</p>

example the impacts of construction. She noted that in September 2021 the Consortium relaunched as the East West Main Line Partnership with a refreshed mandate covering six areas of interest which informs the work programme priorities.

Naomi said the Partnership's financial position had been reviewed, including the way funding was classified and managed. As a result the current accounts for the Partnership stood at just over £150,000.

Over the last two years subscriptions from partners had not been collected for the reasons she had outlined. For 2022/23 it was recommended that subscriptions are collected to allow the Partnership to take forward its work programme and secondly to reaffirm the local areas' commitment to East West Rail and the role of this Partnership.

Naomi said the level of contributions from partners had remained static since 2005/06. In order to put the Partnership on a sustainable footing a modest increase of 3% in subscriptions was recommended. This funding would allow the Partnership to take forward its work programme while a small amount would contribute to staffing costs associated with EEH being secretariat for the Partnership, including management of 'work in kind' contributions.

Naomi said the paper provided an indication of the proposed programme of work. This includes work discussed and agreed in the previous agenda item to update and reemphasise the strategic narrative for East West Rail between Oxford and Cambridge. Members are not being asked at this point to make a decision on any of the future projects – these will be brought to future meetings for the Board's approval. Options for co-funding work with partners will also be explored as appropriate to realise maximum value of investment.

The Chair noted how sponsorship of an APPG session on East West Rail provided a very good opportunity for the Partnership to raise the profile of the scheme.

Michael Headley (MH) said the potential work on interchanges needs to consider the East Midlands cities.

Phil Smart (PS) asked about the rationale for the EEH APPG and whether there would be benefit in re-establishing the cross-regional East West Rail APPG which had previously been in existence. He was happy for this to be discussed in more detail at a future meeting, however he said in any case it was important to engage with MPs to the east of Cambridge. Commenting on Andrew Summer's update on the eastern section, he said the mantra has always been that the eastern section needs to be 'central section ready' so that benefits can be realised from day one.

David Cumming (DC) said Norfolk County Council broadly supports the work programme. He said it was important the Partnership supports delivery of all the route whether extension to east or west and as far as it can provides core funding to support

	<p>those objectives. Requests for partner contributions towards particular projects should be made as soon as possible given budgetary constraints of local authorities.</p> <p>NG said Partnership funding is in good shape and capable of delivering the work outlined in the report. She said there may be a particular appetite from a council to contribute to work to get additional benefits from it.</p> <p>Alexander Nicoll (AN) noted how important communication with MPs and other wider stakeholders is. There were also other ways to engage with MPs other than through the APPG including direct contact between Board members and their Parliamentarians.</p> <p>Sue Clark (SC) said the work programme was much bigger than in preceding years. There was therefore a need to be cautious about the amount work relative to what has been done in the past. It was right to decide in turn the funding for these projects as they come up at future meetings.</p> <p>NG agreed with SC that there was a need to manage the programme so the Partnership can deliver on its ambitions. By showing an indicative programme now, members can be reassured work is planned across the entire geography of the main line. In terms of capacity the Partnership would also draw on support from the STBs along the main line.</p> <p>The meeting:</p> <p>a) Agreed to contribute towards the ongoing running of the East West Main Line Partnership, including its work programme, through a single annual subscription.</p> <p>b) Agreed that for the financial year 2022/23 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</p> <p>c) Agreed the priorities for 2022/23 based in the information set out in Section 4</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>East West Railway Company/ Alliance update</p> <p><i>To receive updates on progress from the East West Railway Company and EWR Alliance</i></p> <p>Mark James from East West Rail Alliance gave a presentation on construction work between Bicester and Bletchley. The presentation is available on the Partnership website. In summary he said construction is making good progress and is moving from a civils to rail delivery project.</p> <p>Barry Wood (BW) asked about plans for the London Road level crossing. MJ said for CS1 (Oxford to Milton Keynes) the Alliance had made some modifications to the</p>

crossing controls in August of last year. It is now fit for purpose and operationally suitable for Oxford-Milton Keynes services.

The Chair welcomed MJ's comments regarding opening public rights of way sooner than the three years they're permitted to be closed wherever possible.

Will Gallagher (WG) gave an update from the Company.

He said investment in CS1 is a sign of government's commitment to EWR. The Alliance is delivering on time and on budget which provides confidence it is possible to deliver schemes like this in a successful way.

In terms of Bletchley to Cambridge, WG said the Company is currently analysing evidence, including consultation responses, and preparing to make an announcement on preferred route alignments. Analysing consultation feedback and acting on it takes time. For example, there was lots of feedback on size of embankments and so the Company was doing work which reduces the size of embankments in places.

He said the 2021 consultation report would be published in the summer. He recognised this creates some uncertainty. The reason it was taking a time was the Company is genuinely taking into account the feedback which has been received.

WG said the Company has set up 17 local representative groups along the route. These bring together parish councillors and ward councillors. The Boards allow frank and open discussions about range of issues, not just route alignment, but first last mile connectivity, active travel, skills and opportunity creation.

WG said it should not be taken for granted that EWR was automatically going to happen – there was a need for organisations such as the Partnership to keep on making the case.

WG said the work with EEH and the Partnership would support telling government why EWR is a good thing to invest in. He said government also needs to have confidence that those benefits will materialise. It was important for everyone to build that confidence for government that the strategic benefits of EWR will be delivered.

He said an approach of 'build it and they will come' will not persuade government to spend billions of pounds. He said local authorities are already doing a lot on the basis EWR is coming. There was a need to bring that to life for government.

Michael Headley (MH) said he was concerned about engagement with residents who are impacted by the potential alignment, who are living with uncertainty. These residents are not included in the local representative groups with are for councillors. WG said the Company was examining how it engages with local residents as well as representative groups and will be able to give an update in due course.

Phil Smart (PS) said a lot of engagement on large infrastructure projects is understandably with neighbours living near the route. However, the users need to

	<p>have their voice heard too. WG said the Company was undertaking work to understand who will use the rail and benefit from it.</p> <p>NG said the messages from Will reinforce the importance of work updating strategic narrative for EWR.</p> <p>The Chair said the Partnership is a loud voice that can collectively say to government: build EWR and we'll help you deliver its benefits.</p> <p>Barry Wood thanked WG for his comments. He said it was important the Treasury was also engaged over the wider benefits of EWR. There also needs to be clarity on the connection between EWR project and local plans – how do they build on each other?</p> <p>WG said Treasury is an important audience as is DfT. DfT needs to understand transport benefits and feel confident other benefits will follow as this will allow them to justify the scheme.</p> <p>Hilary Chipping said the economic case for EWR connectivity is set out in local industrial strategies by LEPs. She said LEPs would like to be involved in making the strategic case moving forwards.</p> <p>Keith Dove asked about the freight potential of EWR.</p> <p>WG said the Company was looking at what the railway is currently capable of, options of what could be built and the likely demand in terms of freight. Government needs to be sure of the value of putting in additional freight capacity. Part of the work the Company is doing in run up to decisions due in the summer is analysis of the freight potential. Ultimately it is for government to decide on.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Western Gateway presentation</p> <p><i>To receive a presentation from Western Gateway STB on their strategic priorities, including improving rail connectivity from the South West to Oxford and beyond.</i></p> <p>The meeting received a presentation from James White which is available on the Partnership website.</p> <p>The Chair commented on the cross over and shared interest with Western Gateway and that their presence on the Partnership board was very much welcomed. He asked about connectivity with HS2.</p> <p>JW said Western Gateway STB is working with Midlands Connect and Network Rail on services between Cardiff, Bristol and Birmingham and the potential for those to link into an interchange with HS2 as it travels to the north.</p>

7	<p>Future meetings</p> <p>8th June 2022</p> <p>16th September 2022</p> <p>7th December 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. He said it may be possible to have an annual meeting face-to-face.</p> <p>Alexander Nicoll (AN) said virtual meetings offered environmental benefits however it is always good to meet people physically. Given wide geographic scope of the Partnership, virtual meetings appear to be sensible. He supported meeting once per year, with the central spine of meetings remaining on Teams.</p> <p>The Chair commented that he was seeing similar comments in the Teams chat.</p> <p>Therefore the Partnership would continue on that assumption.</p>
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