

Harston to Shelfords Group – Meeting notes

Meeting #1 – Details

Date: 06/01/2025

Time: 18:00

Type of meeting: Virtual (Teams)

Key discussion points and outcomes

1. Introductions, workshop overview, and housekeeping

- 1.1 Sarah Jacobs (SJ) welcomed attendees to the meeting, introduced the EWR Co team members and ran through the housekeeping and agenda for the meeting. She reiterated that the session was being recorded in order to aid the collection of feedback.
- 1.2 SJ explained that the non-statutory consultation will conclude on 24 January 2025. As part of the consultation, EWR Co felt it was important to meet with as many of the impacted parish and ward representatives across the route that fall in the draft Order Limits (red line boundary). Seven workshop sessions have been organised with new Local Representatives Groups (LRGs) to help reach all affected groups and gain feedback. However, she reiterated the importance of providing feedback via official channels. She advised that subsequent meetings will be in person.

2. Update on Project

- 2.1 Siobhan Adeleke (SA) provided a quick overview of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process.
- 2.2 EWR Co is currently at the pre-application stage of the process and will be required to undertake a statutory consultation.
- 2.3 Once the application is submitted and accepted by the Planning Inspectorate (PINs) the project will enter the pre-examination stage, during which anyone interested can register as an Interested Party.
- 2.4 The examination period lasts 6 months, during which there are public hearings where registered Interested Parties can give further feedback.
- 2.5 Following the examination, the Examining Authority (ExA) have 3 months to produce a recommendation for the Secretary of State (SoS) to review and consider. The SoS then has a further 3 months to make a decision on whether to grant development consent. The decision can be challenged by way of judicial review within 6 weeks of the decision

SA then signposted attendees to a [short video](#) on the consultation process.

3. Introduction to the workshops

- 3.1 SA encouraged attendees to visit one of the in-person consultation events to review the proposals in greater detail and talk to EWR Co experts. She gave a brief introduction to the workshops and how they are being planned. EWR Co are seeking feedback on the design and optionality set out within the non-statutory consultation across several topics such as community developments, community benefit and impacts, and environmental and sustainability. The workshops are an opportunity for EWR Co to discuss the detail of the proposals, gather feedback from attendees and address areas of concern. Due to time constraints EWR Co are not discussing other route options or any works outside the current scope at the workshops. Feedback will be recorded and will be input into the design change process. However, it was stressed that feedback at the workshops does not replace the formal feedback mechanism as part of the non-statutory consultation and therefore attendees were encouraged to still provide feedback via the official channels.
- 3.2 SA mentioned that EWR Co is also running workshops with local authorities. On 9 December 2024, EWR Co met with officers from Cambridge local authorities to discuss connectivity and active travel opportunities between Newton and Harston, as well as the legacy of the project and how the local communities can benefit from the project.

4. Open discussion feedback session

- 4.1 Rupert Pearce Gould (RPG) asked how the preferred options were reached. Jonathan Cornwell (JC) replied that the May 2024 Route Update Report (RUR) informed the design. Adam Kotulecki (AK) added that EWR Co Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) applied 14 assessment factors against of each design option, including benefits to rail options, capital expenditure, environment, and logistics, etc. This helps indicate whether a design option proposes a level of improvement or worsening. If there is neither then it is assessed as neutral. Details of the four options and summary of the assessments can be found in the Technical Report which is available online. In the Teams chat function, Jack Garrett (JG) shared a link to the [Technical Report](#), highlighting that the connectivity between Newton and Harston (Options 1-4), and their respective scoring in the Assessment Factors undertaken, is detailed from page 336. He also provided the link to the [consultation document](#) highlighting that the Illustrations of the Newton-Harston area on page 204.

- 4.2 RPG asked whether there is a difference in weighting between passenger and freight impact. AK replied there is no significant weighting between those categories but passenger operations have higher priority.
- 4.3 RPG mentioned that the height of the A10 and the Shepreth Branch Royston line has been adjusted over the last two years and asked whether this had been assessed from an environmental perspective. AK replied that the height of the railway has been lowered with the A10 going over the EWR line. Considerably less infrastructure, land take and construction disruption is required to build a road over railway.
- 4.4 Helen Slaski (HS) mentioned that they found the interactive map and presentation of the current design confusing and asked whether the 14 assessment factors have been applied at a local level. They voiced concern about the impact the project could have on the village of Newton, stating that proposals would cut off the community. JC showed the base map of the design and explained the current layout of options as depicted on the map.
- 4.5 RPG added that the drainage near Newton appeared to be going uphill as the balancing ponds were above the current road level and asked why the design needed to go through Newton. AK explained that the roads need to be elevated to cross over the railway and therefore surface water runoff would drain into those attenuation ponds from the new raised level.
- 4.6 HS added that they were also unsure about the red line boundary which is depicted as going through Newton. JG explained that the drainage needs to go through Newton to connect to the water source at the south of the village.
- 4.7 RPGs asked if maintenance of the balancing ponds had been included in the scheme cost. AK said that discussions are ongoing around maintenance but there is an assumption that the responsibility will be with the local authority. Estimates for all assets along the route have been included in the whole life costing and were reached using nominal industry costing estimate tools. AK added that the site is under review to reduce impact further.
- 4.8 Dom Bellamy (DB) requested further information regarding the potential impacts on Harston in relation to noise or pollution due to the proposed elevation of the A10 bridge. Katie Dixon (KD) mentioned that the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out from now onwards before the application is submitted for development consent. All aspects raised would be presented in the Environmental Statement (ES) as part of the assessment.
- 4.9 DB then asked if the current positioning of the proposals had been reached without environmental impact considerations and could decisions such as where the bridge is placed change as a result of the EIA. KD explained that a high-level assessment has been carried out, but specific surveys and modelling will not have fed into the current design which is still evolving. The EIA will indicate whether there is a

significant impact which will then determine the level of mitigation required. J Bellamy didn't understand how EWR Co could expect people to give proper feedback on the proposal if it is incomplete. In the Teams chat function RK expressed concerns that the impacts on community life are clearly not understood and there is a general lack of understanding as to the amount of disruption and change the project will bring to the communities of the local villages. KD replied that any feedback given is just as valuable as the environmental assessment in terms of design development and impact mitigation.

- 4.10 DB and Richard Cowling (RC) felt that most residents would find the proposals and visualisations hard to understand, causing concern. They requested simplified visualisations of the design. SJ confirmed that this is something EWR Co is developing.
- 4.11 Peter Brown (PB) asked why the railway needs to go so close to populated areas within South Cambridgeshire and why it can't be threaded between them. AK replied confirming that the railway has indeed been threaded between villages, though acknowledged the line is closer to some villages than others. The route was chosen by EWR Co to avoid impacting residential properties and sensitive environmental areas. SJ added that going back to why the route has been chosen isn't necessarily relevant any more since the preferred route has been chosen.
- 4.12 In the Teams chat function Ray Kemp (RK) voiced that he would expect that PINS would review the route and its decision in detail as he believes village residents are not convinced it is the best option. KD responded and provided a link to the [Scoping Report](#) which sets out EWR Co's scope and approach to the EIA for the project.
- 4.13 Lou Peden (LP) voiced concerned about the state of land after construction is complete, explaining there is a thick layer of chalk below the soil level that could be damaged by works and therefore no longer be farmable. In the Teams chat function HS stated that they believe the current proposals would result in three local farms going out of business due to soil damage, field access and land reduction. AK confirmed that EWR Co are aware and had been talking to landowners and farmers in the area to gain an understanding of how they use their land. He explained that there are measures that can be taken to protect the soil in certain areas, but these might not be possible across the whole design. There will be some areas that won't be able to be returned to the use they had before, at least not in the short term. Every design iteration is looking to minimise the overall impact that could be caused across the land EWR Co is using and keep it concentrated to small areas as possible. For land that may have a change in usage, alternatives include recreational provision or a biodiversity net gain (BNG) provision for trees and fauna. JC added that extensive engagement with affected landowners has happened and is continuing to do so to help inform the designs.

- 4.14 DB asked what the ownership status for the areas of land used temporarily for construction will be once the railway has been built and what if it can no longer be used for its original purpose. JC reiterated the importance of the discussions EWR Co has been having with landowners and key stakeholders regarding the usage of the land, access etc. He added that where possible, land would be given back. It was noted that, if, for example a landowner can no longer continue their business then there is the option to submit a claim to sell the land under blight and it would belong to the government.
- 4.15 Andrew Hawthorn (AH) referenced a piece of land near the M11 and asked who would own it. AK responded that EWR Co is looking to permanently acquire the piece of land through compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the road diversion over the bridge and close the level crossing at Hauxton. The embankments and highways would likely be inspected and maintained by the local authority and the bridge would likely be owned and maintained by Network Rail. It has not yet been confirmed who will take ownership of each of these items.
- 4.16 RPG asked whether, should the construction of EWR render a farm uneconomic, EWR Co would be required to buy the whole farm. AK replied that each site and business is looked at on a case-by-case basis and if EWR Co is perceived as causing a business to be unviable then they would have a commitment to support the original landowners.
- 4.17 JC asked if RPG had any views on the two options for connectivity between the two villages. RPG said he would have chosen both options in order to improve connectivity as much as possible and he would have kept Station Road if possible.
- 4.18 LP expressed concern that Option 1 would make turning right onto the A10 out of Harston difficult and the junction would become dangerous to use. Also that it risks turning Newton into a rat run as people attempt to bypass Harston and Option 4 puts too much pressure on the Cambridge Road.
- 4.19 RPG asked if EWR Co had had discussions at the county level. JC confirmed that regular discussions with county councillors took place monthly and that EWR Co would investigate the possibility of sharing names.
- 4.20 JC followed up by asking how much interaction those in attendance had with county councillors. DB and LP replied that they hadn't had any contact from a district or county level which they found disappointing.
- 4.21 LP asked if a bridge could be constructed that would allow Harston Road to remain open. AK replied that the elevation of the proposed bridge would be circa 25 metres in height and would require further land take, which would not be viable.
- 4.22 Glen Wooldridge (GW) asked if Options 1 and 4 would be combined, and if the road connecting Cambridge Road to Harston would be raised to the same level as a nearby hill. AK explained that Options 1 and 4 are not being combined. Option 4 proposes to transform the Royston Line alignment into a highway, where Option 1

proposes to transform it into a space for natural growth or an active travel corridor. The bridge going over the railway would be about 10 metres in height, similar to the crest of the hill nearby.

- 4.23 GW asked if Option 4 would increase the amount of traffic on Cambridge Road. Ben Nicholass (BN) mentioned that EWR Co have a 2023 model that reflects the current status of road networks and it has been forecast out to 2034 and 2049 to make sure that the additional background growth of traffic networks is being considered as part of the design. JC reiterated that only one option will be taken forward.
- 4.24 GW asked if the modelling takes traffic levels at certain times of day into account. BN confirmed that traffic peaks at certain times per day are considered as part of the model as well as seasonal or holiday differences.
- 4.25 In the Teams chat function, HS asked if EWR Co's traffic modelling includes the new Park and Ride currently being built next to the M11. BN confirmed that it did.
- 4.26 RPG asked if Donkey Lane would be protected. AK replied that Donkey Lane is being considered as part of a piece of work being carried out that will look at active travel and recreational route enhancement. EWR Co wants to protect the lane and link it with other potential new active travel corridors. Janet Lockwood (JL) added that they were in support of protecting Donkey Lane.
- 4.27 JL added that on the maps Hauxton junction was mentioned despite being a feature of the nearby watercourses and not part of the rail system. AK clarified that this was also a name used to describe the new junction of the railway, but in future EWR Co will make sure there is more of a distinction between the two features.
- 4.28 AH asked if EWR Co would consider investing in areas that are not necessarily involved in the project for active travel. For example, having a new cycleway alongside the existing railway that goes east from the level crossing on Hauxton Road. AK replied that an active travel corridor is being considered.
- 4.29 AH asked if the footbridge was being removed or kept as part of the two options. AK replied that the two options were deciding on whether to include footbridge in the design.
- 4.30 Penny Absolom (PA) asked if there was a reason that Baggot's Farm overbridge had been dismissed and whether Option 1 could include the use of Baggot's Farm overbridge to come out near Station Road without needing to go as far as the A10. AK replied that Baggot's Farm overbridge was previously part of Option 3. This option involved the creation of substantial embankments and a raised highway as part of its design to accommodate traffic. Because of this, it necessitated a roundabout outside the nearby school which raised safety concerns and therefore was discarded in favour of Options 1 and 4.
- 4.31 RPG asked if there were four or three tracks at the accommodation bridge. AK said it is currently three but anticipated being reduced to two. RPG was concerned that this could lead to increased freight train activity at night due to the presence of

passing loops. However, AK reassured him that the passing loops are not exclusively for freight and freight trains would not be sat idling in the passing loops overnight. The two existing timed service freight paths that currently go via the London Line would be re-routed via EWR route, but they would run during passenger train running hours rather than in the middle of the night.

- 4.32 RK asked how EWR Co will manage the impacts of construction, especially regarding Foxton level crossing. Traffic redirected from Foxton level crossing could impact local communities such as Barrington. Additionally, he asked if EWR Co were planning to fill the local Barrington Quarry using refuse material to help speed up the process of filling it and reduce traffic impacts in the local area from trucks. AK replied that EWR works will not impact Foxton level crossing or Granham's level crossing in Great Shelford. Barrington Quarry is one of the sites that EWR Co are looking at using to dispose of removed unusable material, but this has not been confirmed. AK added that EWR Co are required to publish a Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) as part of the DCO application, which will outline construction impacts and how they will be mitigated.
- 4.33 PB expressed concern for the deviation of the cycle path around the new balancing pond and whether EWR Co had consulted with Greater Cambridge Partnership as it deviates from their plan for the Austin Greenway. JC responded that EWR Co has consulted with the Sawston Greenway Project Manager and tried to align where possible, but unfortunately there will likely need to be re-work of the cycle path in this area.
- 4.34 PB asked if the balance pond could be moved to the opposite side of the railway. JG and AK explained that the pond was initially placed on that side due to concerns over the proximity to the nearby scheduled monument, but that design is in development.
- 4.35 PB enquired about the EWR Co proposal to remove a footbridge near to where the Genome (DNA) cycle path is being adapted. AK responded that it was being replaced by a new footbridge that would be wide enough for the additional EWR tracks.
- 4.36 PB suggested that construction traffic should be brought up the A1307 rather than the A1301 in order to access the construction compound on Grahams Road as it is better suited for construction traffic. The area near to A1301 is highly residential and not as well suited. AK asked that this also be included in PB's official consultation feedback.
- 4.37 SJ closed the meeting as the allotted run time had passed.

5. Additional Teams Chat Summary

- 5.1 Becky Whitehouse (BW) asked if the slides would be circulated to which SJ confirmed that they would.

- 5.2 RK thanked EWR Co for the meeting and felt more community events should be held in local villages as residents would appreciate a more focused opportunity on their issues, suggesting Cambourne as a location suggestion. SJ confirmed that EWR Co had held an event in Cambourne and have one in Comberton coming up.
- 5.3 HS asked if it would be possible to put the rail line through a tunnel at the current Station Road level crossing and have the road remain open.
- 5.4 AH felt it was difficult to envisage the proposed pedestrian bridge at Hauxton Road level crossing. They also asked if it would be possible to meet onsite with an informed member of the project team. JG provided an image.

Post-meeting clarification – JC and AK met AH on site on 9 January.

- 5.5 RC explained that, though they feel active travel is a positive thing to consider as part of the project, census data shows that Newton (and probably Harston) have an aging population and as such active travel should not be a substitute for good road connectivity.

Feedback Log:

ID	Description
1	Request for more user-friendly visuals and clearer maps to help residents understand the proposals and the impacts on their communities. A specific request was for a drawing or model of the proposed footbridge at Hauxton.
2	Concerns were raised about the impact of the proposed road diversions on local traffic and safety. Potential for increased traffic through Newton and Harston, and along church road in Hauxton. Particular reference to the right turn onto the A10 in relation to safety.
3	Suggestion to install traffic lights at the junction on the A10.
4	Attendees expressed concerns about the height of the A10 bridge and its impact on noise and pollution in Harston.
5	Questions were asked about the EIA and the potential for repositioning the route based on survey results.
6	The importance of maintaining connectivity between Newton and Harston was emphasised by attendees, with discussions on the two proposed options for road connectivity.
7	Request for the rail line to go through a tunnel at the current Station Road level crossing and the road remain open.
8	The impact of construction on local businesses and the environment was discussed, with concerns about the potential disruption to the community.

ID	Description
9	Concerns were raised about the use of Hoffers Brook for drainage and its impact on the local environment.
10	Questions were raised about the maintenance of balancing ponds and the responsibility for their upkeep.
11	Concerns were expressed about the impact on local farmland and the potential for irreversible damage to the soil.
12	The need for a detailed plan to manage construction impacts on local communities was emphasised.
13	The potential use of Barrington Quarry for spoil from tunnelling was discussed, with concerns about the impact on local traffic and the environment.
14	The need for greater connectivity between Newton and Harston was raised, with requests for connectivity proposals from both options to be included.
15	Request that active travel options such as a cycle path be investigated for existing railway lines nearby that are not directly involved in the designs.
16	Request that construction traffic to the Grahams Road compound should be directed through A1307 rather than the A1301 as it is better suited and less of a residential area.

Summary of actions

- **ACTION 1:** EWR Co to circulate presentation slide to attendees.
- **ACTION 2:** EWR Co to investigate the possibility of sharing the names of the Ward Councillors and Planning Officers that have been engaged with.
- **ACTION 3:** EWR Co to respond to AH's request for an onsite visit with EWR Co to discuss the proposed pedestrian bridge at Hauxton Road level crossing. *COMPLETED 9 January.*
- **ACTION 4:** EWR Co to answer HS question on whether it would be possible to put the rail line through a tunnel at the current Station Road level crossing and have the road remain open.
- **ACTION 5:** EWR Co to answer whether the footbridge or the path alongside the new road at Hauxton is longer.

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Sarah Jacobs – Senior Engagement Manager

- Siobhan Adeleke – DCO Statutory Stakeholder Engagement Manager
- Jonathan Cornwell – Development Programme Manager
- Katie Dixon – Cambridge Environment Area Manager
- Jack Garrett – Engineer
- Adam Kotulecki – Engineer
- Ben Nicholass – Traffic, Transport Planning and Modelling Senior Manager

Parish Council representatives

- Cllr Ray Kemp – Barrington
- Cllr Malcolm Watson – Great Shelford
- Cllr Peter Brown – Great Shelford
- Cllr Rupert Pearce Gould – Harston
- Cllr Dom Bellamy (Chair) – Harston
- Cllr Graham Dring – Hauxton
- Cllr Janet Lockwood – Hauxton
- Cllr Andrew Hawthorn – Little Shelford
- Beckie Whitehouse (Clerk) – Little Shelford
- Richard Cowling – Newton (resident)
- Cllr Helen Slaski – Newton
- Lou Peden (Chair) – Newton
- Cllr Penny Absolom – Newton
- Glen Wooldridge – Newton

Apologies

- Foxton