

EW Co Cambridge City & Surrounding Areas Local Representatives Group

20th February 2024

Questions during the meeting and received by email.

Oliver Smith-

Could you comment on the published findings of the NAO regarding the risk of the EWR and DLUHC plans being at cross-purposes unless there is more clarity about how EWR will support economic growth and regeneration of the region]

The NAO report confirms what we set out when we announced the Route – that the case for EWR rests on the economic benefits that a new railway brings in terms of new businesses, jobs and investment, rather than just improved connectivity alone.

As we've said, and as the NAO makes clear, not all of these benefits are captured in the conventional benefit-cost ratio (BCR), and therefore it is essential that we work closely with partners in Government and locally to make sure these benefits are delivered for the communities that we serve. The report acknowledges that we are already doing so, but also makes clear that more needs to be done. We welcome that – and are committed to working with Government to take forward the NAO's recommendations.

By better connecting this globally competitive science supercluster, East West Rail will unlock growth potential by increasing access to jobs and talent, while enabling new opportunities for collaboration across the UK and helping the country better compete with more mature US markets. Areas like the Cambridge Biomedical Campus are a driver for economic growth and investment, but it currently suffers from a lack of lab space. EWR will help alleviate this problem by providing access to more space and investment opportunities outside of the city.

EWR would considerably expand the number of people within commuting distance of high-quality jobs in the region. The region supports over three million jobs overall and by joining up the currently siloed individual jobs markets, whether in logistics in Milton Keynes, Agri-Tech in Central Bedfordshire, or life sciences in Oxford and Cambridge, EWR will make all these jobs more easily accessible for everyone living in the region.

80,000 new jobs could be created in Cambridge by 2050, an increase of over 40% and worth £4billion to the Cambridge economy. However, this growth is likely to be constrained as there is insufficient space for businesses to expand to create these jobs, and there is insufficient access to the labour market to fill these roles.

Delivering the line between Oxford and Bletchley/Milton Keynes is currently employing around 1,000 people and supports a further 500 in the wider supply chain, contributing an estimated £1.1 billion into the local economy in 2021/22. For later stages of the EWR, this could grow to over 8,000 jobs.

Can EWR commit to this line being electrified from the outset?

We are striving for EWR to be a non-diesel-only passenger railway and are currently exploring traction power options, including discontinuous (battery) and full electrification. We hope to be able to provide a further update in this space in our statutory consultation later this year.

Can EWR confirm that the line will be built to appropriate gradients to accommodate normal freight traffic

Steeper gradients affect heavier, mainly aggregates freight trains, whereas Class 4 intermodal are impacted less. Our design specification is to consider a maximum of 1 in 80 gradients, noting that there are locations between Bedford and Cambridge where the alignment may be particularly steep and such a gradient might be required. We are however still at early stages of design, and as such are still working through options and opportunities to optimise our gradient profiles before confirming what the final profile is proposed to be, and any potential implications for rail freight and other traffic. Alternative options, such as operational solutions, are also being considered.

Cllr Peter Fane

The earlier consultation suggested that EWR Co might respond to Little Shelford parish council's request for an alternative road routing if the level crossing on Hauxton Road is closed. Any progress on that, or will it be in consultation?

Our aim is to maintain connectivity between Little Shelford and Hauxton, should the level crossing need to close. This will be reflected in the updated proposals that we will share as part of the statutory consultation.

Will the consultation contain information on options re (1) freight loops associated with proposed Hauxton Junction, (2) degree of disruption anticipated at Cambridge station and to existing services, (3) closure of Long Road bridge and related diversion, (4) permanent level crossing and road closures, (5) embankment heights, (6) freight and traction? Will that form part of the "emerging design" and "options for design"? Will that be set out in emerge in SoCC?

We are still very much working on design and options and more information on this, and more, will be available during the statutory consultation.

Rupert Pearce Gould

Is the date of statutory consultation affected by an election?

As ever, this decision for an election would be out of our hands. However, at this stage there is no indication that an election would be the first half the year, so we continue to plan towards a statutory consultation the first half of the year.

Malcolm Coppersfield

Does consulting local authorities include Parish Councils?

I am somewhat disappointed to hear that when we get to the Statutory Consultation the Parish Councillors are disenfranchised and can't see how that helps the process having had them involved for the last two years in the LRG discussions. I would like to understand whether the EWR has taken legal advice on this – please can you confirm?

Statement of Community Consultation

Before launching the statutory consultation, the Planning Act 2008 requires that we produce 'Statement of Community Consultation' (SoCC). The SoCC details how and when we will consult the local community and the channels available to respond to our consultation. We must consult the host authorities, the local authorities (as specified in the Planning Act 2008) in the areas in which the project is proposed to be built, on the SoCC before we publish it.

We have advised the host authorities involved that parish councils would like more information on the SoCC process and if they can feed into it. For parishes interested, you may wish to contact your relevant host authority to see if you can provide some comments on how you would like to be consulted for the statutory consultation. Comments received from the host authorities will be considered in developing and finalising the SoCC.

When we launch the statutory consultation later this year, it is open to anyone who wishes to take part. We will publicise the ways in which organisations (like parish councils) or people can respond to the consultation. There will be a variety of in person and online events and all consultation material will be available online. Hard copies of some material will be available at information points.

Host local authorities:

- Cambridge City Council

- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council

Regarding the questions on freight and design I would ask EWR to answer the following points:-

Train Washing in Cambridge

EWR has suggested that stabling for their trains would be in Cambridge; this I understand would include train washing. Is that the intention? And if so is there water and effluent treatment capacity in Cambridge to cope with this. You may have read that Cambridge is a water stressed area so a confirmation on this would be appreciated.

We are still reviewing options for stabling across the route, including existing facilities and potential requirement for new ones to be provided as part of our scheme. A high-level update on our approach to depot and stabling considerations will be provided at the first stage of our statutory consultation later this year.

Freight type

Jo explained that there are many types of freight that might be carried

- a) **Could this include nuclear waste from Sizewell C?**
 - b) **Would this include aggregate for the building of the 150,000 new homes proposed by Michael Gove?**
 - c) **Would this in turn require the removal of the level crossings in Fulbourn and Cherry Hinton – two of the communities represented at our meeting?**
 - d) **If it wasn't designed for heavy freight, then the maintenance trains could be equally light weight and the argument that this is part of the justification falls away. Also if there was a ban on heavy freight then:**
 - i. **the line in this area could be downgraded to a “light railway”**
 - ii. **the number of stops increased and commuters added in increasing utilisation.**
 - iii. **the service intervals could be designed with commuters in mind – much as is happening in the Marston Vale.**
- Foot Note: 2 Freight trains per day is c 70 HGV's per day off the road; the A14 handles c 5,000 per day. Hardly significant in the scheme of things.**

If there was no heavy freight what would EWR estimate as the saving on the build cost?

Our work to date has mainly focused on intermodal (container) traffic opportunities from the eastern ports. There could be potential for other markets and rail freight traffic to utilise the EWR route in future, for consideration as the scheme develops, including opportunities to support construction in the region.

Our work to date has identified the potential demand for up to two freight train flows per day, per direction, from/to Felixstowe, which are not assumed to require other enhancements on the existing network to accommodate them (for example level crossing works as suggested).

Parking Loops Coldham's Common

As I understand it at present, these loops aid train scheduling but arise solely due to Freight – please could EWR comment?

Operational loops are required to provide a number of beneficial functions not restricted to freight, such as timetable regulation – allowing trains including freight or empty coaching stock etc – to be held as required until a path is available in the timetable; , overtaking of different services (including freight, empty coaching stock etc), the cascading of rolling stock and other. EWR Co proposes the inclusion of loop infrastructure across the scheme and will present proposed locations for this at statutory consultation.

So assuming that there is a real demand for heavy freight , see above, EWR is proposing that there are two stopping points either side of the Cambridge stations – and I was postulating that 1) one would be between Hauxton Junction and Harston and 2) the other would be after the 10mph Coldham's Common corner on the old track bed that is there (now a single track line) – not on the Common itself although it may be affected. Please could EWR comment and update us on their thinking please?

Regarding freight, EWR proposes the inclusion of freight loop infrastructure to allow freight to be held, as required until a path is available in the timetable. EWR will present proposed locations for this at statutory consultation, however there are no plans for freight loops in the Coldham's Common area.

Highways

I, for one, find it very difficult to form an opinion until EWR can inform us of the effect on Highways traffic locally and from other changes. Judging by comments on the call on Long Road bridge etc so do others. Please could we include in another session the current thinking on local travel, the impact on cycling and the impact of the closure of level crossings on road traffic – including proposed mitigation issues; so that EWR can receive feedback from local councillors who

deal with these same issues everyday. Or is EWR saying that local councils should do their own traffic survey on some theoretical basis?

A future meeting on this topic will be arranged