

Bedfordshire Group - Transcript

Meeting #9 - Details

Date: Friday 3 March 2023

Time: 6:30pm-8:30pm

Type of meeting: Virtual (Zoom)

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Hannah Staunton, EWR Co lead.
- Mo Alserdare, Programme Manager for the Bedford area
- Robert Milner, Programme Manager for Clapham- Huaxton
- Sarah Jacobs Local Representatives Groups Engagement Manager
- EWR Co production and support team.

Parish Council representatives

- Cllr Eric Cooper, Clapham Parish Council
- Cllr Pat Onley, Oakley Parish Council
- Cllr Gordon Johnston, Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden Parish Council
- Cllr Justin Griffiths, Roxton Parish Council
- Cllr Alison Myers, Ravensden Parish Council
- Cllr Nicola Gribble, Renhold Parish Council
- Peter Norris, Renhold Parish Council advisor

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Phillippa Martin-Moran-Bryant, Great Barford, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Martin Towler, Riseley, Bedford Borough Council and Thurleigh Parish Council

Apologies

- Biddenham Parish Council
- Bolnhurst and Keysoe Parish Council
- Brickhill Parish Council
- Bromham Parish Council
- Cardington Parish Council
- Colmworth Parish Council
- Cople Parish Council
- Great Barford Parish Council
- Milton Ernest Parish Council

- Shortstown Parish Council
- Staploe Parish Council
- Stevington Parish Council
- Turvey Parish Council
- Willington Parish Council
- Cllr Wendy Rider, Brickhill in Bedford
- Cllr Charles Royden, Brickhill in Bedford
- Cllr Jonathan Gambold - Bromham and Biddenham, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Roger Rigby - Bromham and Biddenham, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Jane Walker – Clapham, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Sarah Gallagher – Eastcotts, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Stephen Moon – Great Barford, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr James Weir - Great Barford, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Jonathan Abbott – Oakley, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Doug McMurdo – Riseley, Bedford Borough Council
- Cllr Tom Wootton – Sharnbrook, Bedford Borough Council

Documents discussed in this meeting

The following documents were discussed during the meeting and these are available on the Group's dedicated Community Hub site – [here](#):

- Agenda
- Slides
- Video recording

Key points, actions and outcomes

NB The recording was started part way through this meeting following running through the agenda and housekeeping rules.

[0:00:00]

2. Housekeeping

Slide 6 – Housekeeping

Hannah Staunton (HS): Wonderful, thank you so much. As ever, thank you so much everyone for displaying your usernames. We're all adults so use the mute function, don't use the mute function, whichever makes sense to you if you've got background noise or not. I'm not too worried about people jumping in to ask questions, I think we're all quite respectful in that regard. Please do use the raise hand function though, if you can, because it helps me keep track of who had the first question and if there's more than one question

we can, but ultimately, I mean it's a conversation isn't it so let's not put too many rules around it.

[0:00:40]

[...] Generally speaking, as well, it's good if you can keep your camera on because then we can see who's talking and understand what's happening but understand that might not be the preference for everyone, so that's fine too. Generally, the team at EWR tend to keep their camera's off when they're not talking because there's a lot of note taking going on and you just sort of tend to see the tops of peoples heads.

3. General Updates

Slide 7 – General Updates

[0:00:58]

[...] I will introduce, I think the team you're probably fairly well versed with at the moment, Tabitha, if you want to give a bit of a wave, Isobel's off camera at the moment, they are both in our...they work with us and they'll be doing a lot of the note taking and they'll be making sure that all the logistics work for the meeting. We've got Rob and Mo with us who will be taking us through today's topic, so we'll introduce them properly in a little bit or more properly and I'll ask them to introduce themselves. Any other sort of notes that anyone wants to make before we crack on with the meat of today's meeting?

[0:01:36]

Slide 8 – Sarah, LRG Engagement Manager

[...] Fabulous. Some quick general updates just to start with, first and foremost, well maybe not foremost, but first, I'd like to introduce Sarah as the new Local Representative Group Engagement Manager. She's not able to join us herself this evening, we've actually got two LRGs this evening, so she's split at the moment. She has joined very specifically to manage the entire workstream across the whole route, make sure there is a single point of contact, make sure that there's consistency and that we've got an in-house person running the workstream, so she will join us in due course and introduce herself properly.

[0:02:17]

[...] We asked her just to give a little information about herself, so she lives on the Suffolk / Cambridge border, she joined in January, and she's been shadowing the team so we've got a good handover, she's really really clear that she's here to listen and to understand as well. So please, if you send any emails to the Local Representatives Groups that's her now, that's her email, she'll receive those and she'll respond to them, as ever if you ask for an escalation to someone else, that will happen, but there's like a named person looking after that and as she said here please do reach out to her, she's very keen to hear from everyone, she just can't be in two places at once unfortunately. Gordon? You're on mute.

Gordon Johnston (GJ): Has Sarah replaced Jordi?

[0:03:02]

HS: No, no, no. So Jordi, Jordi, broadly takes care...

GJ: I thought he was the engagement manager?

HS: We have several engagement managers because we have so many people that we talk to. So, Jordi broadly looks after all our elected representatives, he started the LRG activity, but it soon became quite clear to us that he couldn't do all the work that was required to talk to councillors, MPs, their offices, that kind of stuff and do all of the, particularly the administrative work, that goes into putting the LRGs together, because once you start digging into it its an absolutely shocking amount of work to make sure these things run smoothly.

[0:03:43]

[...] So Jordi is still with us, very much, he'll be concentrating on other types of stakeholders and Sarah is entirely devoted to LRGs.

GJ: Ok, thank you.

4. Review of actions from previous meetings

HS: No problem. Any other questions? Fabulous. Quick review of actions from the previous meetings, if we may?

Slide 10 – Completed actions

[...] So we, there was a conversation around whether we would be able to share some examples of active travel, we will, I think we agreed at the time it was a sort of action for us to take away whether it would be something we could talk about at a future meeting, I think we can talk about that at a future meeting, so lets pick that up later in the meeting where we will discuss what you want to talk about in future sessions.

[0:04:28]

[...] We said we would confirm with the design team if we had agreed the specification for the gradients, this was a very technical question, so I have a very technical answer, which I will read in full and then obviously you'll have that circulated. So, the vertical grade is currently designed to be 1-80 as per Network Rail standards, it is not possible at this stage of the project to confirm whether the standard gradient would be improved for EWR. Any improvement would depend on a number of factors including maintenance, and future freight requirements, and discussions with industry.

[0:05:05]

[...] So if there are any follow up questions to that specific issue around gradient, please do let me know. I think you can tell by the way I read that out, that that's still not an area of expertise for me, so if you have specific questions, you can obviously submit them here or

you can submit them in writing, we'll go back into the business to get those responses for you.

[0:05:26]

[...] Last, sorry, next, similar to the first point, there was a question around whether it would be possible to talk with the team about how power choice could impact design and again I think that could be a topic for future meetings which we can discuss later on. Also, we were to confirm whether information on the geographical spread of respondents to 2021, can be shared with the group. An overview of the geographical spread will be shared as part of the information provided at the next announcement, and as those documents are still in draft at the moment that sort of forms part of the general drafting of those documents rather than a, something to discuss in isolation.

[0:06:07]

[...] Peter? Peter my love you've got your hand up, but I think you're on mute.

Peter Norris (PN): Yes, it's back to action number one, a question on the gradients. I made the point that the gradients were wound into this scheme, into this particular route at the time that the route alignment options were consulted upon. It was fed into all the costings, it was fed into the horizontal long drawings, the design of the track from Bedford to Cambridge, which derives the lengths of cuttings, the heights of embankments, everything was medicated on the use in 1 in 80 throughout the whole thing. Now, I don't understand why you can say that you still haven't decided if you're gonna do 1 in 80. It is...

[0:07:10]

HS: So sorry the note here to confirm, my understand of the note we've got and based on this I'll get further clarification, is that 1 in 80 is Network Rail standard but we are hoping to improve on that. So, we are designing to Network Rail standard, but we are hoping to improve on Network Rail standard.

[0:07:28]

PN: But you're operating to costings which were done on the basis of the cut of fill involved in creating a gradient of 1 in 80.

HS: That's my understanding, that's a specific question which I can go away to the team, I'm wondering if Rob is able to answer that as this is an area where he has some expertise.

Rob Milner (RM): Yep, I can.

HS: But I don't want to put you entirely on the spot on this one Rob.

[0:07:50]

RM: No, its fine, I can come in. Sorry it took a while to find mute on Zoom. So the design at the moment, yes you're right is on a 1 in 80 standard. That's something that will continue to be reviewed, there are other elements apart from...so in Cambridgeshire we have 1 in 80

gradients as well, but that's the basis of design it's a continued balance to say whether there is a... whether a benefit to reducing that towards 1 in 100, would outweigh the fact that you'd probably end up, as you suggest, with deeper cuttings, higher embankments if you went to a flatter gradient there. But the design at the moment is based on 1 in 80. I think the note here made, is basically sort of saying that this is something that continues to be discussed and reviewed, but its our working assumption.

[0:08:49]

PN: But I don't know, you haven't got any particular drivers from your point of view to ease off the 1 in 80? Because that requires more work and more expansion?

RM: To move to a flatter gradient would require, yes, more construction work, so its that sort of balance, but I think we're you know at the moment the design is 1 in 80 and that's an assumption we were comfortable with, but the design is continually reviewed and tweaked as we move forward.

PN: Yes, okay. That clarifies that, thank you.

[0:09:20]

5. Managing environmental impacts during construction: The EWR Context & Examples from CS1

Slide 11

HS: Excellent, thanks so much. Any other questions on the other actions on this slide. Fantastic, next slide please. Wonderful, well at this point I will hand over to Mo, who is our Programme Manager for the Bedford area and is among other things very well versed in managing environmental impacts during construction. Specifically, the action that we took from the last meeting that we had was to talk through some of the examples that we had from CS1. I think in order to do that effectively, its also important to talk through the EWR context in your area, which is slightly different from the CS1 context, and Mo as I say is an expert in all of those issues, so I will, with no further ado, hand over to Mo. Thank you so much.

[0:10:15]

Slide 12 – Introducing The Code of Construction Practice (CoCP)

Mohamad Alserdare (MA): Thank you, Hannah. Okay, I will introduce Rob as well who between us actually we cover this area, so its Rob and I really covering this part of the route, so, in terms of what I'm...you know, by going through the next set of slides I'm hoping that I'll provide more detail about the process for developing key documents and policy to manage, monitor, and control potential future construction impacts by EWR the Scheme. At this point in time, we're not able to tell you exactly what the mitigations would be for Bedford, but can draw on best practice from other projects, regulations, and other case

studies to let you know how we would go about mitigating some of these environmental impacts.

[0:11:08]

[...] As I said, the two key documents I'd like to bring to your attention are a.) the Code of Construction Practice, which I'll be introducing in a second, of which a draft will be submitted alongside the DCO, and the other suite of documents is called CEMPs and that's short for Construction Environmental Management Plans.

[0:11:31]

[...] So, without further ado, what is the CoCP and this slide essentially just aims at introducing what a CoCP is. It's a document which forms part of the Environmental Statement, it's submitted in draft in the DCO process, and it becomes final once the DCO is approved and is enforced on EWR's supply chain. What it does, is it provides a framework to support the application and demonstrate how construction of the EWR project will be undertaken and the associated measures to protect the environment. And so, DCOs typically include legal obligation for requiring the developer to implement the CoCP measures. So if I can get the next slide please?

[0:12:23]

Slide 13 – What's in a CoCP? (example)

Post meeting clarification: A CoCP is not the only method that can be used to secure mitigation as part of the DCO process. Whilst EWR Co may produce a CoCP for the proposed development, it may use an alternative method.

[...] So, you know, what is a CoCP and what does it actually look like? In recent years CoCPs have been produced by various major infrastructure programmes in the UK and incremental improvements from project to project have been implemented. The topics covered are broadly the same, and you can see the list is rather, quite, exhaustive with regard to the topics covered as part of the CoCP and rather than going through each item in detail, perhaps it might be beneficial for me to unpack a few examples.

[0:13:01]

[...] So, the examples I've chosen to go through in this presentation are relating to noise, sound and vibration, to air quality, and to traffic and transport. So, when it comes to noise, sound and vibration, it's the use of best practicable means which will be written as part of the CoCP, we anticipate, and that is as defined in the Section 72 of the Control of the Pollution Act 1974 and Section 79 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. So best practicable means is a defined term in those policies.

[0:13:36]

[...] Additionally, another principle we will aim to use to manage and control noise, sound and vibration, would be to control it at source, for example, through the selection of quiet and low vibration equipment, control of working hours, acoustic enclosures where required and even perhaps screening should it be necessary. In areas where despite the implementation of BPMs, or best practicable means, the noise exposure exceeds the criteria defined in the CoCP, then further mitigation would need to be offered in the form of noise insulation, for example.

[0:14:15]

[...] So that essentially, what I'm trying to convey is that there will be a wide ranging and prescriptive number of measures and a methodology to reduce or minimise the impact as far as reasonably practicable. You know, on air quality for example, the CoCP will include various you know measures to reduce the potential impacts on air quality and will also provide a framework for monitoring potential impacts.

[0:14:44]

[...] You know, one of the most simple examples when it comes to air quality would be for vehicles and plant to be switched off and secured when not in use or perhaps the provision or enclosure of filters on plant. You know other examples to actually mitigate impacts on Air Quality would be to use electricity or battery powered equipment instead of diesel- or petrol-powered generators. And I'm only choosing some examples but the actual document when submitted will be far more prescriptive as to the principles for managing construction.

[0:15:20]

[...] On the traffic and transport side, you know, EWR will require the impacts from the construction traffic on the local community to be minimised. Some of the measures will be route wide measures such as the timely maintenance of public roads, cycle ways, Public Rights of Way and including monitoring arrangements with the local authorities. Other principles that would be included as part of the CoCP would be engagement with vulnerable road users, you know, vehicle safety measures such as signage and mirrors and the use of technology to reduce blind spots depending on the vehicle size.

[0:15:59]

[...] And there would be other measures, and those would be local area measures, and we're kind going into CEMP territory which is Construction Environmental Management Plan territory in this document. But essentially, prior to the commencement of the works EWR will require that the Local Traffic Management Plans are produced in consultation with the highway and traffic authorities, the emergency services and other stakeholders.

[0:16:26]

[...] Other measures to minimise environmental impacts arising due to traffic and transport would be for permitted access route to be identified and only those routes to be used as part of the construction traffic routing, so those would have to be agreed in advance and

reported on. It would also include restriction of construction traffic on these routes such as the avoidance of large goods vehicles operating near or adjacent to school closing, drop off or pick up hours essentially, so what I'm saying is there will be some restrictions with regard to use of those roads if in the vicinity of a sensitive receptor and usually just regular operation with traffic liaison groups.

[0:17:11]

[...] So, as I say, this is actually quite a good transition to CEMPs, so if I could get the next slide please?

Martin Towler (MT): Just a minute, before you go. I think you're very light on water. North Bedfordshire is very much lots of clay land, and it just says 'general requirement' that's a bit light as far as water is concerned? It is a bit light.

MA: Sorry I should clarify; this is not our document this is just an example.

MT: Well, I think it needs looking at better. With this clay soil, drainage is going to be a big, big problem.

[0:17:46]

MA: Noted and that will be included as part of a draft, so I'll take that away.

MT: Let's hope so.

MA: Essentially you can see that its got Water Quality and Flood Risk as a section 11 and I haven't expanded on that and that can be done. I think there's various provisions with regards to flooding and drainage within previous CoCPs and likely to be included within ours. Eric?

[0:18:17]

Eric Cooper (EC): Hello, just to touch on traffic and transport, you just talked about construction traffic, but what about road users in general, so will there be like a minimum level of service that you expect to provide or ensure and how would you benchmark that to ensure delays do not go beyond a certain level, because its gonna be, I mean you're gonna talk about examples from further to the west, but you don't have the challenges there potentially, that you have in and around Bedford.

[0:18:57]

MA: I think that's a very valid point, I'd like to point out that this is, I mean, what I'm trying to do is actually demonstrate the policies or mechanisms by which impacts are mitigated in a generic term. What you mention here is in the assessment world, so, that is actually an activity that we need to undertake, and we are currently developing those models and, you know, a traffic baseline is developed as part of the Traffic and Transport Assessment, it takes into account the existing levels of road users and overlays additional traffic from EWR, you know, in very simple terms, I think I'm just simplifying it and there are experts who talk

about these in far more detail. But essentially, we build up the model so that we progressively add EWR impacts on the baseline and then project it into the future.

[0:19:52]

EC: Is there anywhere which sets what an acceptable baseline is?

MA: It would be set out, so it's developed in collaboration with the local authorities and these things are set out as, you know, as part of policy documents. I'm afraid I can't exactly answer that question in terms of threshold, but there's always a threshold with regard to all the environmental impacts.

EC: So what you're saying, what you're saying there is, I'm only talking about transport, I'm not talking about some of the other type of habitats and stuff, in terms of transport you're saying there's no standard as such in terms of what a threshold would be, you would determine it?

[0:20:30]

MA: You report on the significant impacts as part of the Traffic and Transport Assessment, but as I say to you, the assessment part is actually quite an extensive area of expertise of other colleagues, so its more on the mitigation side that I'm trying to kind of demonstrate that should an unacceptable level of traffic be determined as part of the assessment phase, the mitigation...

EC: Well, absolutely, I mean that's just right because you won't know how to mitigate it unless you know the problem you have and what level you're trying to reach you know and the question then becomes, what happens if you can't meet that? Do you go 'Oh well, its just too bad'?

[0:21:19]

MA: That would not be the case, I don't think. We are subjected to rules and regulations and there are frameworks and policies that we have to abide by with regards to that and I think if we are unable to mitigate the impact, we may have to rethink our plans, if the plans are deemed unacceptable by those who we actually consult with and get in touch with.

[0:21:43]

EC: Thank you.

PN: Just to get a bit of context around this, yes this is a very structured and wholesome way of approaching how you're going to do the job but to what extent will you have your ideas straight before engaging on the statutory consultation phase? How much, how far will you have gone into developing these plans when you get to the stage of going to the community on the Statutory Consultation.

HS: At risk of diving in, that's addressed in a slide in a couple of slides time, where I think Mo's laid it out quite neatly, so shall I suggest just putting a pin in that one for the time being and then we'll crack on with that in a sec?

[0:22:31]

PN: We can do that Hannah but its either yes, it is done before that or it's something that happens after statutory consultation in preparation for the DCO process.

MA: It would be the latter rather than the former, usually, that would be the practice but of course if we are able to produce a draft in advance of that, I mean I don't see why that can't be produced but essentially that is the milestone we are working towards, developing a draft CoCP to be developed and submitted alongside the Environmental Statement which forms part of the DCO application.

[0:23:11]

PN: Okay Mo, that's fine, let's see how the rest of your presentation develops.

Slide 14 – Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)

MA: Right okay, so, you know I, on the next slide I wanted to draw your attention to another subset of documents that will be developed by EWR and its supply chain, enforced on its supply chain and developed in coordination with them, which is the CEMPs, you know, the CoCP typically requires the development of those. What it does is it contains detailed control measures this time, to avoid, reduce, and mitigate adverse construction impacts whereas the CoCP provided the headline or the policy, this goes into the actual implementation of those, and it sets out the roles of responsibility to ensure compliance with the CoCP.

[0:23:59]

[...] What it does provide, is that provides us an approach and application to the mitigations, a mechanism to deliver the mitigations and plans and strategies to the mitigation and the outcome of that process is compliance with regulation, sorry legislation, regulations and the CoCP and a prompt response to non-compliance, so if I can get the next slide, please?

[0:24:23]

Slide 15 – The CEMP typically involves a series of sub-plans

MA: So, these are, this is a list, a more exhaustive list of the CEMPs, which you know, as and when required, involves about 30-40 odd different management plans that are produced prior to the start or the commencement of construction. These are, these contain far more detail than the CoCP would, it would be more prescriptive, it would talk about the actual local mitigations, rather than principles. I'll just give you, perhaps, some time to read through them if you're interested. There is some sort of mention of the Water Management Plan, which is also a CEMP, a Drainage Management Plan, which I draw your attention to but all sorts of other environmental impacts really. Justin?

[0:25:20]

Justin Griffiths (JG): It's alright Mohamad, I didn't mean to interrupt you mid-flow it's just, it struck me reading through that list and slightly akin to what Peter was leading towards in his question. So, in the development of these plans, let's take the Public Rights of Way and Open Space Management Plan, that's probably a topic which is of great interest of the people we represent, our parishioners. Would you be looking to consult with the likes of this group in advance of developing that management plan for that topic or would you write it yourselves and we would first see it at DCO stage?

[0:26:11]

MA: There are definitely mechanisms for stakeholders to influence the process. The statutory processes involve the local authority and those develop kind of... its once these plans are agreed by the Planning Inspectorate really, I think it sets out the envelope for what EWR can or cannot achieve, with regards to say, air quality of traffic management. So, you know, there is opportunity to influence the process, whether its at CEMP level or not, I will have to take away and actually get back to you on that, but essentially, I...

JG: It's not rocket science, you can see how things like a Public Right of Way...if you're slicing through the countryside and footpaths are being blocked up, that's going to be a topic, a hot topic

[0:27:04]

MA: I notice Rob's got his hand up and he's probably better placed at answering these.

JG: Okay.

RM: Yeah, I wasn't gonna ask you a question Mo I was gonna come in on this point. I think the Public Right of Way's an excellent example because its something that the detail of its sort of built up. So, within the Statutory Consultation we'll be setting out plans for specific Public Rights of Way more, so throughout the process there will be a consultation with locals and with groups yourselves on our plans for the Public Rights of Way which will inform how we deal with those specific Public Rights of Way, but the Public Rights of Way in general.

[0:27:47]

[...] I think with, the intention of the project is that Public Rights of Way will be maintained or diverted if required, sorry if we can't maintain it in its position, it'll be diverted and there's policies that will come in place to enforce that and that will feed through into these Management Plans with will go into sort of more and more detail. So, I don't think it's a case of were utterly silent and then we land this policy on your doorstep, there is opportunities to consult in more and more detail as we go through the process.

[0:28:26]

JG: Okay, because I...you see, you've got a resource here, you've got a large group of people with lots of local knowledge that can help you write an excellent Public Rights of Way and Open Space Management Plan, you know, use it.

HS: I think I'll jump in here as well and say you know Justin, I think you're entirely right, I think that's one of the things that we wanted this, these kind of groups, to be able to be. So, I think one of the things that we will be trying to consider over the next, I literally have a conversation about it coming up sort of in the business in the next couple of weeks, is to think really meaningfully about what kind of conversations we should be having with local stakeholders and how we can have that, those conversations in a meaningful way.

[0:29:16]

[...] So from my perspective its really helpful to know that there's an appetite to get involved with that, can I...you know, knowing that that's very helpful and I think we should take that away and discuss that and pick up... There is actually, again, a part later on where we kind of want to say 'What thoughts have you got?' and not to jump the gun, but I feel like a clear thought you've got is you'd like some more information on how you can feed into some of this stuff and that's a helpful thing for us to take away I think.

[0:29:46]

JG: Not wanting to repeat myself, we've got the local knowledge, we can help you.

HS: Yes, I agree entirely, I absolutely agree on that one Justin, really, really do. Sorry, I'll get my face away.

[0:30:00]

Slide 16 – Where does this fit in the DCO process?

MA: Okay, so that's kind of the list of plans and if I can get the next slide to just try and set the context of where this fits in the DCO. The light blue is the pre application phase, which typically lasts two to four years and that's the phase we're at. The next milestone would be to submit a statutory consultation and subsequently, to submit a DCO. Alongside the DCO a draft of the CoCP will be submitted. Then you would go through the motion, you know, as part of the, you know, inspection of the DCO and as part of that, after the Secretary of State decision, the CoCP is discharged as part of the DCO and the CoCP and EMPs will need to be adopted by the contractor.

[0:30:49]

MT: Excuse me, can you stop using loads of acronyms, can we have it in English please?

MA: Yes, Code of Construction Practice and Environmental Management Plans will need to be adopted by the contractor. The DCOs the Development Consent Order. Peter?

MT: Thank you.

PN: Mo, can you indicate where we are on the blue patch, you're suggesting we're in the middle of the typically two to four years, but we know that this stage, so far, since the Consultation on the route, it's languished and... is spitting out to the right considerably, so. If we were where your green arrow is indicating, then the Statutory Consultation is just round the corner. Whereabouts are we, please?

[0:31:38]

MA: It's not, the arrows not placed in an accurate representation of where we are in the process. But the next, the next stage or milestone will be statutory consultation and that is what we're hoping to achieve in the next milestone, prior to DCO. So, we're really preparing for that.

[0:31:57]

PN: No, yeah, we all appreciate that, but we'd like an indication of when you expect to launch that statutory consultation, please.

HS: So, I think the situation hasn't changed since we last had this conversation. We're working with government at the moment to get to a point where we can... they're comfortable with the plans and that they have scrutinized them and they're comfortable with them and that we can publish them.

[0:32:22]

[...] I think until we're in a position to publish them obviously we can't move on...we can't move on with certain stages until they've scrutinized things up to a point, so there's a knock on there and traditionally, it's not considered that, well, once Parliament rises, obviously, it then becomes very difficult to get Government to do anything. So that's why our aim is to get stuff, to get something out in the first half of this year, and we're hoping at the same time to be able to give you an indication of when the Statutory Consultation will be. That's very frustrating. It will be no surprise to you that that's frustrating for me as well but unfortunately, we just don't have a date at the moment for the Statutory Consultation.

[0:33:03]

PN: Okay Hannah, can I, at this point as its relevant, can I draw your attention to something that was set in the notes of the last meeting.

HS: Absolutely.

PN: Where we were referred to a five-stage video for the construction of this project.

HS: It was a, I don't think it was a video, it was a five-stage...maybe there was a video.

[0:33:24]

PN: It's a video, it's a very Mickey Mouse one with no soundtrack, but it is quite misleading and indicates that at this stage you're working on which is the best alignment to choose, you then make your choice, and you go to statutory consultation. There's no reference within

that guide which is open to the public that this is a stage where you go back to the DfT and say we prefer alignment such and such and they consider it and then they say yes okay and then you go to the Statutory Consultation.

[0:34:01]

HS: I think, I apologize if you feel that's misleading.

PN: I'm telling you what it is.

HS: I think there's... that absolutely isn't the intent, that there's obviously a lot of conversation and a lot of technical stuff that happens and I think we would have made a decision with any of our materials to introduce a level of granularity that we felt was helpful if we missed out, but you know if in doing that, we haven't talked about specific activities happening that you felt would be helpful, that's you know, that's not by design on our part. That's our desire to try and make the process as straightforward as possible for the for the majority of people reading. I mean, we are exactly as you say, we're in the moment, we're still in that stage where we are selecting and I've got the I've got the print version, just I always have it sort of here on my desk.

[0:34:59]

[...] And although yes, we don't specifically mention the DfT you know, as an arm's length body of the Department of Transport that's... ultimately everything needs to be decided by Central Government, that's a part of the process that perhaps we took for granted.

PN: I've only made the point that we're obviously, as Justin has said, it's a body that represents the local community. We're anxious to take part in this process, and we have things to contribute but also our people we represent, look to us to understand what's going on to be able to give them sensible answers and that's not helped if there's a misleading reference on your website.

[0:35:45]

HS: Again, that, I'm happy to go back and review I'm just gently pushing back, I guess on misleading, I apologize that that has, if that has misled you in any way. I think it's born from our side definitely on a desire to try and simplify the process because there is a lot of you know, sort of complicated nonsense in this areas.

PN: I looked at it earlier on today, because I read the notes and it was recommended that we all look at it and so I thought I better look.

HS: Yeah and so absolutely..

PN: I'm afraid I'm very disappointed.

[0:36:19]

HS: If further detail of what happens in each of those stages would be helpful, then we can have a conversation. I don't think, my experience being on projects like this, we have to

remember that the materials we put out on the website are for a broader audience and perhaps the audience we're talking to now, an audience that find it no less interesting to engage with the details. So, if the detail of what happens in each stage is interesting, then absolutely we can crack into that. That's not a secret, it's just we've tried to simplify it.

[0:36:51]

PN: I don't want to prolong this interruption it's just making the point that it's totally unacceptable and I'm sure you go away and have a look at it.

HS: I'm still struggling to understand why it's unacceptable Peter, so perhaps you and I can have a conversation because that does concern me.

PN: That's alright, have a look at it and then we'll have a talk.

HS: Yes, yes, I'll take that as an action that you and I should have a conversation.

PN: Thank you.

HS: That's okay, to understand that a bit more. Thank you.

PN: Thank you Hannah.

[0:37:17]

MA: Okay, so, I think, the really, the intent on putting this slide on really is to distinguish between the various stages in which the policies are applied or submitted. The Code of Construction Practice is more, you know, kind of submitted and developed during the Design Stage, whereas the EMPs are more geared towards the Construction Stage. So that's really just drawing that, where the two policy documents come in within the timeline, the generic one. So, if I can get the next slide, please?

Slide 17 – The context of CS1

[0:37:50]

[...] Right, so, I think, this was the end of the first part of the presentation and the next few slides are aimed at providing some examples of mitigation undertaken under Connection Stage One. Now before I go on to present the CS1 slides, I think Hannah mentioned it, but I just want to make sure you know the difference between the various connection stages of EWR are made clearly.

[0:38:24]

[...] CS1 is being delivered by East West Rail Alliance, which consists of Network Rail and supply chain, and who are working collaboratively to deliver CS1. The powers to build CS1 were obtained under a Transport Work Act Order, which was applied for in 2018 and obtained in 2020. And on the other hand, the difference is, EWR will deliver CS2 and CS3 under a DCO. So the consenting mechanism and the delivery mechanism is slightly different between the two projects, but the two projects, although they're not directly comparable,

in some cases, you know, the principles of mitigating the impacts are, and so in the next few slides, I'll try and show you a few examples of how the Alliance mitigated environmental impacts. Justin?

[0:39:14]

JG: Sorry, just one quick little question there, so when you submit those applications for things like the Construction Management Plan, agreed by the local authority, that will be the same mechanism for the stretch that we're talking about?

MA: They will be they will be subject to similar planning approvals, yes, at a local policy level.

[0:39:38]

JG: That's great. That's great. And do you know whether or not parish councils are statutory consultees on those applications to the local authorities?

HS: So, the, I can jump in on statutory consultees, technically, my understanding is that parish councils specifically are not, however, we would treat them in that space, that's our intent is to treat parish councils in that space. So, there's a... the law isn't quite as straightforward as a list of people that you need to contact but the way we have decided to interpret it would mean that we would ensure, and to be clear that goes to every time we've had an announcement the parishes have been the first people that we've had a meeting with, with the ward councillors, that sort of stuff.

Post meeting clarification: Parish Councils would not be involved in the discharge of Requirements process under the DCO; this is dealt with by the Local Planning Authority. However, parish councils are considered prescribed consultees for the purposes of statutory consultation and EWR Co would engage with them and ward councillors throughout the consultation process as appropriate.

[0:40:30]

[...] It's our, we, we haven't sort of made that statutory / non-statutory kind of specific delineation.

MT: Can I jump in there, if the village has an NDP, a National Planning Policy, it will be legal consultee of the planning process because they'll be consulted heavily.

HS: That's true. Yes, there are there are a bunch of very specific exceptions. There's a bunch of organizations who are statutory consultees who are, in my mind, oddly on that list, and there's a bunch who perhaps aren't on that list you should be. My personal approach is to look at the people who could meaningfully expect and want to be part of the consultation,

to target those and then also to make sure that secondary statutory consultees are also included.

[0:41:17]

[...] For me, and my team, the parish and Ward councillors are absolutely at the centre of the approach that we want to take for the next you know, however many years of this but Martin, thank you, you're entirely right. There's always a bunch of exceptions and overlaps and exemptions and all sorts of things. Gordon?

[0:41:42]

GJ: I was concerned to hear earlier, this is probably from Mohamad, earlier this week that Buckinghamshire County Council are having to fork out, or are forking out, about 5 million or thereabouts, towards the repair of roads, partly due to damage not only from potholes, from vehicles for HS2 and East West Rail. Obviously, our parishioners are going to be extremely concerned about Beds Borough Council, forking out large sums of money to repair roads, or towards the cost of the repair of roads. So, what are you going to do about that?

[0:42:31]

HS: I'll let Mo talk to the future and the plans put in place but if I can really briefly jump in on that specific thing, I think in the media that the local council undertook and the local MP undertook, they acknowledged that, you know, East West rail has been working really, really closely with Bucks on mitigation measures. They've been working on them very, very closely with the avoidance measures. There are other projects in the area. I feel quite confident the team that we've got working EWR has absolutely done what's been asked of us by the local authorities and more so in some significant areas, and that was acknowledged in the statements given. Undoubtedly though it's of concern to local people, and at that point I hand back to Mo.

[0:43:21]

MA: Yes, and I think this will become slightly more apparent when I go to the slides. But the CS1 experience has been to actually try and remediate the impact it's been made on the roads as a result of the use of excavating, sorry, the use of HGVs. So, what is attributed to EWR construction traffic routes and whatever impact has been had because of East West Rail needs to be remediated as a policy.

[0:43:51]

GJ: Well, our parishioners are not going to be happy if the council tax increases because Beds Borough Council is having to fork out money to assist with repairing roads, and we have a lot of rural roads in North Bedfordshire, so.

HS: And I think you'd expect that to form part of the discussions that are had with the local authority in advance of the projects. You'd expect that to form part of the agreements that

are made with the local authorities and, you know, there are instances of, for example, you know, entire roles being funded, the entire roles at local authorities, being funded by projects to enable the proper caretaking of specific aspects. Now, you know, none of us on this call, work directly in the CS1 part of the business because we're all obviously thinking quite a lot about Bedford to Cambridge.

[0:44:45]

[...] But there are, as part of the process that we're going through and as the process that Mo is talking about, these mitigation practices that we're putting in, they are there to ensure that the local communities and local councils don't bear the brunt unnecessarily and that's the brunt across a range of issues, financial as well as physical. Is that fair Mo?

[0:45:17]

MA: I think I think that's absolutely right. That is that is the process we're trying to describe as part of the slides and presentations is. You would have had some presentations on how to assess impacts. And and this is kind of going into what the policy is how you measure the baseline, how you understand what the effect of EWR is and how you mitigate it. As I say as parts of you know, COCP's construction traffic routes are identified, so lorries cannot use any traffic routes, they are monitored.

[0:45:50]

[...] On CS1, they're using tracking technology to make sure the right routes are being used and not you know, using local traffic roads that have not been assessed or identified. So there's a large degree of trying to enforce and ensure that that that, you know, is not where East West Rail is impacting roads, that is remediated by EWR.

[0:46:08]

GJ: Right, we'll hold you to that, Mo.

[0:46:11]

HS: I mean, you must, you absolutely must.

MA: Eric?

[0:46:22]

EC: I was just going to say ultimately, there's nothing stopping the local authority putting in papers into the DCO inquiry stating your case that roads need to be suitably, well the assets need to be suitably maintained.

[0:46:45]

MA: Or reinstated. Yes, that usually forms part of the requests from the council it does and if it doesn't, we are bound by policy not to worsen any roads or any assets that we actually use.

HS: Just to go back to the slide on the, that we're looking at at the moment that's probably the third, that falls under the third, the last bullet, which is that there are generally speaking well there are on CS1, but generally speaking on any project there are a significant number of consents and sub consents required

[0:47:14]

[...] by local authority to move forward and you would expect that some of those would have consequences for non compliance. So I'll let Mo go on with that but yes, any responsible projects will be looking to, you know, minimise any issues. And, again, I would go back to the point that it's been acknowledged many times by Bucks and by the local MP, on CS1, that the approach that EWR has taken has been very strong and and continues to get better actually, even though it's you know, it's from a decent baseline. Peter?

[0:47:54]

PN: It's unfortunate that we're comparing what's coming to us with what's happening in CS1 as we all know, CS1 is basically relaying track on an existing track bed. So there's no major earth moving, happening within CS1.

[0:48:14]

[...] It's an existing track bed, which doesn't have the track laid anymore. I think they've done the approaching halfway, which is good progress, but it's, as you can see from there. The track they're laying is supporting their own activities. So they're just going from one end or maybe both ends towards I don't know.

[0:48:42]

HS: and I think very specifically the conversation Mo and I had the reason that we decided to put this context in here was that the last meeting we had, the group was very clear that you wanted to see the kind of activity that takes place on CS1. And at the time, I was quite clear and so we can absolutely do that but it is a different part of the project, and so the mitigations that go into any projects and we're talking about rail project, we're talking about this area, but you have to think that there are major infrastructure projects happening all over the country, there's Sizewell, there's borders, there's you know, any number of rail, non rail energy, all sorts of things happening at the same time, at different stages of planning.

[0:49:21]

[...] And so the immediate, although we're very happy to show you some of the work that happened on CS1, we did want to make sure that the context that you just described was made very clear. It's different, so therefore the mitigations need to be thought through that are appropriate to the work going on between Bedford and Cambridge, which is a different prospect, the work that's on CS1.

[0:49:46]

[...] So I agree with you entirely, Peter, and that that was definitely what we wanted to convey in this slide. So I'm I'm very happy that that's been picked up.

PN: Yes, but also that last meeting, I was pretty clear about the fact that whilst we appreciate that we're dealing with five, optional alignments at the moment and choosing the best one, the one that suits you best. They asked they are, each of those alignment start along the same track right in the middle of from the middle of Bedford out through the Clapham escarpment. They all go the same route, therefore, and it's also the most busiest part of the whole construction group.

[0:50:27]

[...] Very demanding with the with the Great Ouse floodplain and it's gonna bring with it an enormous increase in disruption over what anybody's experiencing over in the CS1 area. And my point was that at this stage of the project, there should be some ideas that the East West Rail could share with the community about how they might tackle a project of this enormity. But the only answer that we keep getting Hannah, as you know, is that you haven't decided on the alignment yet, therefore, we haven't planned it.

[0:51:17]

HS: Yeah I think that that's I understand why you've taken the position that you have. But until we have a you know, a more solid idea of the route, the construction methodology will still be in development. So Mo can give you some broad brushstrokes of what we've done in other areas, and he's taken you through the process of why we do things in this way. Ultimately, we have to submit when we submit the DCO. We have to submit you know those management plans that you saw, we can't go off half cock and do a management plan for one bit here and one bit there. We have to submit those as part of as part of our evolving activity. So I absolutely understand why you would ask that question. It's a question I'd be asking too. But what I hope Mo's managing to get across is that there is a process here. This is known as a linear infrastructure project. And there are some things that just have to view as a whole rather than in sections.

[0:52:15]

[...] And there are some areas that we have to approach that way. I'm going to check with Mo that that he's comfortable with everything I just said.

MA: No, absolutely comfortable. I think I think I can see Rob's on camera if he wants to..

RM: Yeah, we're just gonna jump in on that. I mean, just to sort of say for comparisons me and Mo have both worked on, on High Speed 2 on sections which had similar challenges with moving excavation, cutting embankments, earth movements and obviously, then there traffic was a huge focus as well and a lot of work was done in stages to future where we are now.

[0:52:53]

[...] So transport assessments, will be carried out, modelling, which will take into account and there be a huge focus on the construction on that. And I mean, we expect that that the movement of HGVs and transport impacts will be a very key thing for the DCO inquiry and opinion inquiry. I mean we'd viewed the A428 inquiry and I know many of the local councils where we're pushing the project very hard on impacts on traffic and local traffic.

[0:53:27]

[...] So we understand the the, what should I say, the steps that need to go through and the focus on there are and there are industry that has built up quite a lot of understanding of, of those techniques which essentially went on CS1 it's different in terms of not having the new structures to construct. There are other projects.

[0:53:56]

PN: Yeah I understand that but this there's got to be a you can't do it all yourselves there must be a point where you start to engage in detail with the local authority as to how you're two activities, yours of building a railway and theirs of maintaining life in the local area are going to coexist. At what stage do you start to engage?

[0:54:22]

HS: I think Simon Gill when he came to give the presentation I want to say it was a couple of meetings ago I can look that up went through the Statement of Community Consultation and other activities there. Here we go. I think that was I think we went through that in this Group in September but we can definitely review that but you're absolutely right Peter, there are you know, alongside the design work, there's consultation work and engagement and those kinds of things happening at the same time. Yes, you're, you're entirely right.

[0:55:00]

PN: On a project of this size you would probably try and do as much of your transportation away from public roads. You would create your own whole roads to support it.

HS: So that's that's an option. But in order to do that, you've obviously got a much larger land take. So you're also looking at the disruption of buying a lot more land and potentially the bill that goes with that as well. So there are a number of again, as Mo said earlier, this comes down to balance effectively and at the moment as I've said in previous meetings, the team is trying to balance all of the different pieces of feedback that we've had all of the different competing demands and challenges on the project and they're trying to create an option which balances those as best we can do, you're entirely right.

[0:55:51]

[...] I've worked on projects where we've had specific access roads. I worked on Blackfriars, where they brought in as much as they could by river, CS1 they bring in as much as they can by rail. There are things you can do in some areas, there are things that are not available to you in other areas. And I think sort of the point of what we're talking about here is that you must think about these things in a site specific way on the one hand, but on the other hand, when you're talking about your mitigation plans and your overall view, you have to think about things in a route wide way. So there's two lenses through which we have to see a lot of this activity and that's the challenge that we're trying to meet at the moment.

[0:56:30]

PN: So at the moment then, it sounds as if there hasn't been a lot of close cooperation with the local authority as to how this project might be mounted.

[0:56:40]

HS: I don't think that's a fair characterisation. There is there is the there is the level of engagement that you would expect at this point in a project and actually probably a little bit more we have very good working relationships with local authorities. But as with all these things, you don't jump in at the deep end you work through the programme that you're working through.

[0:56:59]

[...] So you know, the point of design and delivery that Mo's describing at the moment is you know has come to us with engagement with local authorities and a number of other stakeholders to.

PN: Okay.

HS: Not this slide, obviously because it's what

[0:57:17]

MA: I think what I would add is actually just strengthening the point you meet Peter I think there are there is an element of trying to actually streamline the import and export of material as part of the scheme that is to the benefit of EWR and local communities. Those kinds of considerations are being developed and continued will continue to be developed. But there is one thing that I probably need to draw your attention to, as part of the planning process. We try and undertake conservative and reasonably conservative assumptions so as to determine the impact on the local community air quality and traffic to the most actually accurate way or perhaps at times, it may be that it's setting an envelope that's reasonably conservative with regards to the impact.

[0:58:03]

[...] So I think essentially that's, that's exactly what I'm trying to highlight in the process. And that as part of the early stages of the process, when you're developing your plans, you're slightly less prescriptive as to what methods you're using and you assess the reasonable worst case scenario. And you actually assess those impacts. And as part of design development, you're if you're able to improve on those, then you have the duty to do so, such as you know if you if you have to reduce the impact if you have a method of reducing the impact on local roads by bringing in less materials or perhaps rail based transport, like Hannah alluded to, which I will actually highlight in a second.

[0:58:52]

[...] Then we have to do that. And I think I think perhaps, I mean, Rob, I see you want to add something to that

RM: Yeah I was just going to add which I think that Peter might have alluded to that earlier as well. One of the things we'd look is how we can use the actual trace of the railway during construction. So obviously we're creating a linear corridor there and you know, the need is to use suitable roads for HGVs so you know where we can where we can transport material on that linear corridor to the suitable roads, it's obviously a good way of working and working the materials so they're offsite that that thinking will develop.

[0:59:30]

MT: Could I add to this sorry I can't find my hand. We're looking at a plan that's more like HS2 and rather than East West Rail's present job. And it looks to me that the problems that they've had and the disruption they've had in their construction will be mirrored. Hopefully you've learned not to mirror their problems and go off the way they went off. They're serious rural problems being developed on the present in Buckinghamshire as I understand I'm going to call off before my dogs makes too much noise. But yeah, can you answer that please?

[1:00:08]

MA: I think the slight distinction I would make between us and High Speed 2 is that a large section of High Speed 2 is tunnelled. And there is a large volume of excavated material which comes out of the logistics sites that at times prior to the to the construction of the rail heads which let's face it, there is no rail head so there's no trace. So then all of that work needs to be done in advance of the tunnelling.

[1:00:32]

[...] And a lot of the excavation material has to go up by roads that is not directly comparable to EWR where the vast majority of the route is in surface.

RM: I think it's fair to say isn't it Mo as well that projects learn from past projects and move on. So yes a number of the team's experience from HS2 and other comparable projects and they bring that to this project and you sort of learn lessons there and learn what works and what maybe didn't work as well.

[1:01:03]

PN: I think the difficulty I see or the big problem I see, and I'm sure that you must be aware of it is that there is no effective rail trace at either end of this route to substantially alleviate the problem of moving stuff to and from the side. You won't get a rail trace from the Midland Mainline until you've built across the flood plain.

[1:01:30]

[...] An enormous viaduct and on the lead out and then you're faced immediately with getting up a big hill there's going to be so much dirt to move, to dig out and move and deposit somewhere before you can actually lay any rails anywhere.

[1:01:56]

MA: Subject to detailed design I think is what I would say we don't know exactly the volume of excavated material that we can reasonably reuse as part of

PN: I'll withdraw at that stage. I've made my point. That's where I think the real problems are in getting out of the Clapham valley. It is a route that is known down to within a few meters that there are no alternatives to it. And I would have thought that there must have been some fairly detailed work on how it was proposed to do it.

[1:02:31]

RM: If you look at this section, I think some of the one of the points of the design is to try to balance the amount of material we are excavating and then then using so that we can use much from the cutting, the structural material from the cuttings of the embankments as we can so we're not taking up I mean Mo's example is very much linked to tunnelling where you're excavating material and taking it away and there was much more focus on rail heads there.

[1:02:56]

[...] But I mean you know the construction planning and thinking continues to develop so you don't want to close doors there, or make statements on the ways that definitely will or won't work, just that it continues to progress how we can reuse materials locally and move that off site to suitable locations in the having sort of minimal impact. I think it's fair to say there will be a huge focus on impacts on the local roads or I should say to mitigating and avoiding impacts on the local roads as we progress.

PN: Okay then.

[1:03:35]

Slide 18 - Controlling impacts for environment & communities

MA: So I'll take us through these slides and very quickly, essentially, as mentioned, you know, the kind of examples and the kind of things that CS1 has done or other projects as a matter of fact controlling that for the environment and communities.

[1:03:58]

[...] For example, the use of clear signage and safe access along diversions to help the community navigate construction. Trying to prevent congestion on local roads and restrictions of construction vehicles, protection of the existing flora and fauna. Placing tree protections, protection fencing along the access routes and within work areas, providing an illustration of that very shortly.

[1:04:25]

[...] Eliminating unwanted waste from site. Preventing construction mud from reaching local roads as far as reasonably practicable. The same with dust. You know the same with noise being heard by residents. And this is since for example, the need for a noise barrier was established via the policy and the assessment requirements. And all in all, I think it's just you know, I think just giving you examples on how to reduce noise and how to prevent flooding.

[1:04:55]

[...] You know where you know, we're crossing a waterway you know, providing culverts for drainage solutions and things like that. And ultimately the last bullet point I think perhaps probably the most important one is you know the advances in technology when it comes to monitoring noise, sound and vibration. And being able to do so in real time as technology has developed quite a bit lately. Once again, just drawing on other examples of other projects. This has been actually achieved and undertaken. If I can get the next slide please.

[1:05:31]

Slide 19 - Example from CS1

MA: Yeah, these are just kind of site pictures of CS1. I think it might appear like an ordinary site essentially, but on the right hand side you'll see some examples of early tree planting to try and compensate for the biodiversity impact, I guess, sorry the tree and then there's some you know the barriers that I just mentioned in terms of separating the work sites from the trees and vegetations. This is an example of you know, materials being imported by a rail and hence trying to actually minimise the impact on local roads that is being done by CS1.

[1:06:09]

[...] And additionally, what I'd like to draw to your attention, although not very visible is this this yellow vertical kind of thing you see on the left verge, which is a monitoring target, essentially. So that allows you to survey the ground and make sure that the ground movements and all that are we within order. So, you know, obviously quite a bit happening in this in this snapshot, if you like but we tried. The intention is to make it look seamless and to try and reduce the impact and so that when you see it, it looks like not much is happening but in actual fact, there were quite a few measures being implemented across and if I can get the next slide, please.

[1:06:51]

Slide 20 - Example from CS1

MA: Another example of that. This is an example of an ecological mitigation so you know, habitat creation and environmental mitigation that's been undertaken under CS1. Nothing more to see than the habitation, the creation of the habitat really. So if I can see the next slide.

[1:07:10]

Slide 21 - Example from CS1

MA: Right, I've put this one in to just illustrate instances where the Alliance has actually put in noise barriers as deemed necessary for this section of the route. If you look at it through the track side, it may look quite busy and congested but actually if you look at it from the other side, you know you're not seeing as much of the construction impact. And that is precisely the kind of thing we're hoping to achieve on CS2 and CS3 is the material being brought in via track by rail. And as I see that grey barrier being an acoustic barrier to reduce the impact of noise. Gordon?

[1:07:54]

GJ: I notice that none I noticed that none of these pictures are showing any electrification.

MA: I mean, not intentionally so. And I must confess it's just as just me trying to find out, you know, illustrate the examples that I gave as part of the COCP. What is it about electrification in particular that you want to mention? Is it the visual impact that you're concerned with?

GJ: Yep.

[1:08:29]

MA: Yeah. So I mean, that you know, these are I mean, as I say the policy sets out within the COCP would actually look at that. So it would be measured or assessed as part of the Environmental Statements and where required, you know, visual mitigation would have to be implemented. And that applies to all works, including electrification.

GJ: Is it normal to build a track like this, and then add on the electrification steel work?

[1:09:00]

MA: I'm afraid I can't comment on the sequence of CS1, but I can take it away.

GJ: Okay, perhaps somebody could tell me that later, thank you.

PN: Phillippa

Phillippa Martin-Moran-Bryant (PMMB): Hello, yes. Just wanted to ask about the acoustic barriers there. So are these just what you were putting out for construction? Or is that the kind of thing that it would look like? And they will be their permanent once the trains operating as well?

[1:09:27]

MA: Actually, in this case? This is this is a mitigation that was required as part of the operational assessment in this instance. So that's been identified and assessed and the mitigation is for the operational assessment. However, the contractor and the Alliance in this case have decided to put it in early so that the impact on construction is also mitigated, you know, as far as far as reasonably practicable. So in answer to your question, yes. I mean, I think noise barriers are identified as required for the operational stage to actually are put in place early and do remain.

[1:10:03]

[...] And that usually I think, once you put in a noise barrier, it's unusual to remove it subsequently. But you know once it's in there, unless it's in a critical situation, I think.

HS: I think also, it's important. This is the noise barrier that's been put in in this location. There are many different kinds of noise barriers. There are many different heights and visuals and colours and all sorts of different stuff, that comes with noise barriers. This is the one that would seem to be appropriate for this location. So again, just going back to that point before that every location needs to be assessed as you go through. This is just an example of one of the areas on CS1 where that was delivered.

PMMB: Thank you both.

HS: Thanks.

[1:10:47]

PN: Just to clarify your Gordon's comment on electrification, you're not actually putting in electrification, are you in CS1 at the moment?

MA: Not as far as I'm aware, but as I say, I'm not I'm not the CS1 person. So I'll take away the CS1 specific question.

PN: Oh, no, I understand that. In fact, there's no intention at the moment to put any electrification in at any, any part of this route because I think we're still waiting for clarification.

HS: So again, I think I think just to be really clear, the intent intention with the route is to ensure that the final running of the route is sustainable.

[1:11:26]

[...] Electrification and sustainability are often used interchangeably. That's not correct. There are many methods of sustainable power. And the company and the department haven't yet agreed which method will be used to power the trains in the long term. So there are, as we've discussed before, there is the potential for passive provision for electrification on further parts of the project. And CS1 as we sort of said earlier, was consented under a slightly different regime. So I just I want to make the point of the slight nuance there.

[1:11:58]

[...] That the intention of the route has always been and will always be to be sustainable on the whole route. And in any case, government policy would not allow you to run diesel trains past 2040. And you'd be a bit mad to open a railway with technology that you then sort of have to go back but you know, that quickly across the whole route. So there's a lot of nuance sort of hidden in there at the moment, but as Mo said, and as I said earlier, we've got a lot of information from our colleagues on CS1.

[1:12:30]

[...] We don't work directly on CS1, we can go back and talk to that to the Alliance and try and get some answers if there are specific questions there.

PN: No, I'm really more interested as to whether this alignment through Bedfordshire is going to be electrified, but it'll be it'll be wide enough, there will be space enough to put the overhead line equipment in this is what you're saying make. You're making provision for, passive provision.

[1:13:01]

HS: The current view is to make passive provision because we haven't published that final redline boundary. You know, again, with all these things until all of the decisions have been taken. It's not possible for me to be absolutely equivocal about some of these issues.

But the intent is to ensure the most passive provision is my understanding. And again, I think I would I absolutely do understand the temptation to conflate sustainable with electrified I absolutely understand that but it is a it is a conflation. So we just have to be a little bit careful and it's important for us we're precise about that.

PN: No, you're quite right, you're quite right.

HS: I knew you'd appreciate precision there Peter.

[1:13:42]

RM: Erm Hannah, I think Gordon also asked about the construction of the electrification and I think that would be constructed alongside the other parts of the railways that have been constructed. So for instance, you know, we obviously have the overhead gantries we obviously have to put in foundation so they will be constructed as we're constructing the embankments or whichever structures and then actually the string in the line and points in the parallel is going to be something done later in the day.

[1:14:15]

[...] You're using the construction trained technology so I think, you know, we're effectively, if the line is going to be electrified from day one, it will be constructed with the rest of the line. But yes, Hannah's you're right the design at the moment allows for electrification, that's passive provision.

MA: Yeah, I think that's the key. The key message, right. I mean, nothing stops us from doing so in the future. So if I can get the next slide, please.

[1:14:46]

Slide 22 - Example from CS1

MA: This is just, I think, another example of an ecological mitigation site whereby we've replaced habitat and CS1 are working towards commitment of plus 10% biodiversity net gain, and this is going towards that.

[1:15:03]

Slide 23 - Example from CS1

MA: If I can get the next slide, please. Yeah, and I think if we go back to the previous slide, you'll see you know, in very small towards the horizon, a small hut. And that's a bit more on the next slide, and that is a habitat for bats. So essentially, kind of habitat creation included within ecological mitigation, as required by the environmental mitigation plans for biodiversity. And if I can get the next slide, please.

[1:15:34]

MA: Right. So these are kind of, you know, more measure that CS1 have implemented. One of them being the first the first subset being related to the frequency and impact of construction traffic. The first principle being twenty is plenty for construction traffic in villages. You know, the lorries or HGVs, or other EWR vehicles will have to abide by a 20 miles per hour restriction on movements within construction traffic. That is for CS1 and that is usually common practice as I understand it.

[1:16:04]

[...] Now, there will be traffic ambassadors assigned to ensure a quick response to any emergency. You know, there will be wheel washing and road jet cleaning in place as you enter and exit compounds and sites. You know, approving vehicles and routes. You know, CS1 in particular bought all their rail and ballast by rail to minimize the impact on residents.

[1:16:29]

[...] A significant traffic management investment to allow the roads to be adequate for HGV movements sometimes in construction vehicles. Such as the destruction of passing bays or speed mitigations as required. And the final bullet point we touched upon, which is a significant investment in repairing roads after utilization by earthworks contractors and HGVs is agreed with local authorities.

[1:16:57]

[...] You know, again, there's some repetition in what I'm saying, but CS1 essentially implemented noise barriers to actually mitigate the impact, the operational impact, of trains in identified locations. There was a ballast dust suppression deployed to reduce construction dust and not worsen the air quality. And then I touched upon natural habitat creation, additional trees being planted, and quite a few replacement initiatives being implemented on the scheme. And if I can get the next slide, please.

[1:17:31]

PN: Mo, can I just interrupt that?

MA: Sure.

PN: To what extent do you think that the construction work between Bedford and the A1 can be assisted by delivering ballast and taking away waste by rail?

MA: To what extent? Well, I think to the

PN: You can do it in CS1, but in here you don't have a connection at either end so substantially going to be built using trucks and wheeled vehicles to move stuff.

[1:18:06]

MA: I think I touched upon this it's there's a hierarchy of, of you know, planning requirements that we need to satisfy with regards to the reasonable worst case scenario and a range of improvements we have to undertake so as to improve that worst case

scenario to the best practicable means as defined. So, you know there is a lot, there is work going into that, that we are looking at the moment and will continue to be the case throughout the process, the DCO process.

[1:18:39]

[...] So you know, I can comment perhaps, but it's not it's not a very good way for me to actually disseminate this information because we are we are currently looking at that kind of measures and we'll report on these kind of measures subsequently at later stages of the project as and when necessary, but for the time being, I think what I'm trying to say is, you know, when it comes to the air quality impacts or the traffic and transport impact the reasonable worst case scenario is being adopted.

[1:19:03]

PN: Thank you.

MA: Rob, I noticed you've gone off mute.

RM: No, no, you answered perfectly. I was going to say something very similar. I mean, we will, we will try and maximize the use of rail but, you know, we do have to adopt the reasonable worst case and not take that for granted at the moment.

MT: Can I just add to that. A lot of the villages you're going try and pass through have weight limits on their roads. How would you feel about using those roads?

[1:19:33]

RM: Well, we have to make sure the roads we're using are suitable. So, we would either have to use suitable roads, make those roads suitable, or find alternative roads to use. So, if our vehicles are over a weight limit for a bridge or whatever reason, we simply wouldn't be able to use that we'd have to find an alternative. So,

MT: I can tell you there's very few roads that are actually, suitable for you to use then.

[1:20:07]

PN: That will go on the route you're using.

MA: I don't think we're under estimating that we are we're definitely actually considering those elements and appreciate it's a considerable constraint. So on to my final slide, really, you know, examples of communications of mitigation on CS1 and other measures, really, social measures.

[1:20:32]

[...] There's been there's been effort to try and keep the community up to date with community drop in events, quarterly works newsletters, disruptive works letters dropped, engagement with schools, and there has been a wide range of social value initiatives. Approximately 660 volunteers from the alliance and 2642 hours of local volunteer work.

[1:20:59]

[...] And I think the key message here is lessons learned have fed into and will continue to feed into the CS2-CS3 developments as applicable and required by the development of the scheme. I think this was my last slide if I'm not mistaken.

[1:21:23]

HS: Thanks so much, Mo! So I guess before we move on entirely, just pause, to say we've got sort of half an hour left so if there are any comments that anyone didn't manage to make during the during Mo's presentation

[1:21:44]

[...] Peter, you look like you're holding back there.

PN: No, no I think I've dominated it too much.

HS: You're welcome to.

[1:21:54]

GJ: I think good roads to move the materials between, CS1 and sort of St Neots area would be via the M1, the M25, and the A1. That would solve a lot of our local issues.

HS: That's helpful. Thanks Gordon. I think, I'm sure that's one of the options that would be under review. Certainly. But, as I said before, I think, you know, the presentation that Simon Gill gave before about the Statement of Community Consultation and other aspects of things that we expect to talk with you in the future. I this absolutely won't and can't be the last time that we discuss this with you. This was meant to be, kind of, you know, an overview based on the questions that you asked. So I hope that we do have sort of some more detailed conversations as the programme progresses, but obviously, you know, depending on the final route. Justin?

[1:22:48]

JG: Hi, just a question which I don't expect an answer today. But the takeaway question. Could you sort of give us a guide on how much of the soft landscaping was planted on CS1, sort of early doors rather than what will be planted at the end? I'm just trying to get a sense of, cause you know, landscaping is great. It's a great mitigation, but you know, it takes five to ten years to actually become effective. And if any of that mitigation is planted early doors, then the chances of it actually providing any benefits will be realized much earlier. So just having a sense of what's been done on CS1, I appreciate, our route is not exactly the same, but it'll give us a sense of what potentially anticipate.

[1:23:45]

HS: Let's, let's take that away. Again, I'd be dereliction of duty if I didn't agree with you that it's you know, different, different bits of the project. But let's go away see if that's one, something we can get you an answer to. It's a really interesting question. Thanks Justin.

JG: Thank you.

[1:24:01]

HS: Thank you. Someone's hand went up really briefly and then disappeared. Before I had a chance to see who it was. Alison?

AM: That would be me, yes.

HS: Awesome. You're also rather mysteriously and brilliantly in the dark.

AM: Oh, am I?

HS: You're highlighted like a character from a sort of film noir.

AM: Right? I'll put the lights on in the room then.

HS: Oh, there we go. We can see you.

[1:24:27]

AM: I'm not saying I was in the dark, kind of joke joke, but I just hope...

HS: I do the same. It gets dark and I don't realize and then I'm just a little head and the rest of the room's black.

AM: Yeah, I was just going to chip in on that point, as landscape's my profession. Just to say that our route our section here is a gift for advanced planting, because very, very inexpensive plants such as willows can be planted in our floodplains, that can grow up to create temporary schemes. So, we don't have to jump to what would be a final landscaping scheme. There can be a construction period landscaping scheme because as we know, willows can provide a six or eight foot screen within two years, or even one year.

[1:25:10]

[...] So a good thing for your landscape architects will be to think of immediate construction mitigation, which need not be on the same land as the permanent landscaping scheme. Which will often need to be implemented after ground land modelling has been done, you know, in the sort of new landforms made. But, too often in road schemes, for example, or for mineral schemes, the opportunities to plant a construction period landscape scheme, which you know will get destroyed, you know, might need to be removed in the future that can have a fantastic remedial benefit for the five years or whatever, whatever your construction period is.

[1:25:52]

HS: That's so interesting. I think if ...

AM: I'm happy to have a conversation, you know, again can discuss that later.

[1:25:59]

HS: I'd like that, if I could. If I could ask team to pop in an action for me specifically, to have a chat with the environmental team to see if we're at a stage where we can have a meaningful conversation, you know, in that space, but Alison I think that's a really interesting as a as an environmental layperson, I think that's interesting.

AM: Because it would give little habitats for birds, and insects, etc, etc.

[1:26:28]

[...] Some of it some of that early construction that can be, could be kept. Other times it's known that it's just a temporary use of land. But it can be very beneficial and also it can be used to help screen, you know I was interested in noise barriers that they propose. They can be quite ugly. And again, a little bit of osiers or something growing in can soften the impact of barriers.

HS: It sounds like that you've seen that on other schemes, then it feels like you've you've seen that with your own...

AM: I've seen that on the mineral sites, but it's so applicable to any major construction.

[1:27:05]

HS: Thank you so much. Let's go and have a chat with the environment team. Thank you.

AM: You're welcome.

HS: Any other thoughts or comments on this before we move on? Okay. In that case, ooh sorry!

PN: Sorry, Hannah. I think there was a... there's been an odd comment made during these meetings.

[1:27:27]

[...] That the sort of design concepts are being looked at, to build simpler to not go so high, not dig so deep. Presumably, cost comes into a lot of this and I imagine that you're... This project is quite severely capped financially wise by the government.

[1:27:57]

[...] And maybe there's a fair amount of value engineering going on at the moment to try and get as much of the project done within existing budgets as possible. Um, and this will have a knock on to how the line is built, and quite possibly to, quite significant aspects of it like how deep cuttings are, or how high embankments are. To what extent is, is that level of potential change going on, please?

[1:28:34]

HS: I'm going to dive in real quick and then I'm going to hand over to Rob whose got his hand up. I think it's important to remember that the thing that we're trying to do is create a balance. And it's less about cost as an absolute number than it is about value. Because all options bring with them different values, be that different benefits for the environment, be that different benefits to the transport user. There are there are many benefits outside of sort of the direct cost. So it, it's not one of the challenges that any project has is that it's very rare to government to give you a number and say do what you like up to that number. In fact, I can't imagine a circumstance where they would.

[1:29:17]

[...] It's a very iterative process where you sort of think, well, you know, we, in environmental terms, this is something we absolutely have to do or you know, this this is our preferred way of doing it, but this is how much it will be. It's a very, as we sort of said before, and I hope I made clear earlier, it's about creating those balances between those different things. So, one of the things that we would absolutely, we absolutely have as a central point is that there is environmental, bottom line that we have, that we want to maintain and improve the, the local environment, local biodiversity, we want to make sure that we've hitting carbon net zero. There, there are a bunch of environmental metrics that we're working to.

[1:30:06]

[...] And then we're sort of trying to improve on that wherever we can. I think that's sometimes what makes it difficult to talk about the project because it is about balancing a range of different competing priorities rather than there being a clear for example, financial absolute that we're working to. It's a really interesting point though Peter.

[1:30:26]

RM: If I can come in and I'm just going to say I think, in this instance we look at the route through Bedfordshire also actually through Cambridgeshire cost is sort of between many times with the environmental impacts as well. So you know, if we had more money, you know, the idea is that we'd do the cuttings deeper, but then we're excavating more material we're lengthening our construction programme, got more HGVs on the roads or so we've got potentially got a greater environmental impact.

[1:31:01]

[...] So I think the overall balance is looked at and I mean I've worked on a few major infrastructure projects, and there's a sort of constant soft value engineering going along with the basis that there's always a book of saying, well, could you do something better, for less cost for less environmental impacts and then there's periods you go through which is, you know is a lot more focused on that value engineering.

[1:31:25]

[...] And we do consider things like the cutting and the embankments and whether it can get a better solution there, but you know I don't think the cheaper options, sorry, by spending more money I don't think you're reducing your impacts in there. So it's sort of all balance. Sorry, a bit rambling, but...

[1:31:53]

MA: I think I think what I would add to this is I think if the question is whether the cut and fill balance considerations have been taken into account in the optioneering and in the selection of the routes, the answer is yes, there has been consideration of cut and fill balance, which you refer to the assumptions or the criteria that was applied was applied throughout regardless of what the route is. So the same principles and methodologies were applied to all the routes which are equivalent to the level of design we're at.

[1:32:27]

[...] And those considerations have been factored into the decision making, which ultimately led to the Route E corridor being selected as the preferred route corridor. The way the costs evolved is that as and when additional information was available on the type of grounds, most importantly, that's probably the most important consideration the type of ground which is available on desktop based studies. And is not, and we don't have you know, detailed borehole data to be able to detail design the scheme but we're able to make relatively good assumptions and actually studies of what the ground's suitability is for reuse, or lack thereof.

[1:33:08]

[...] but also there's been also additional assumptions with regard to the cross sectional area that was actually included and factored in within the capital costs. That information is all available publicly in our websites, and has been extensively published from the Phase 2E report by Network Rail to the Phase 2F report after that.

[1:33:29]

[...] prior to the establishment of EWR Co to meet these elements, and further looked at by our consultants, both you know engineering and cost consultants to confirm that the assumptions made by Network Rail prior to us were valid and bringing them up to standard. But essentially the same methodology, the same principles and the same assumptions were applied to all the routes equally to determine a level of cut and fill balance which had been essential to determine what the capital costs are.

[1:34:00]

[...] And I just reiterate the points that Rob and Hannah made around, you know, capital considerations not being the only factor. It's a multidisciplinary assessment factor, but, but those considerations have fed through.

PN: Right, so the recosting of Route E, of the options leading which preceded selection of Route E which took place in the latter part of the consultation period, the route consultation period by Faithful and Gould.

[1:34:36]

[...] Those figures are still the latest figures are they on the cost of the project?

MA: I wouldn't be able to give you an answer on that. There's obviously a noticeable design developments which I would imagine revise those costs. But I think I'd defer to Hannah on this perhaps...

[1:34:55]

PN: Because those costs were made on a reassessment of the way that line was going to be built. And I think presumably by that stage, you had a fairly clear idea of the cut and fill balance along the route and the...

MA: If I'm honest, the key factor that really does help with the revising of those costs estimates to a point where they're more detailed and more, perhaps less, you know, include less risk and more detail is to go out there and undertake a comprehensive GI, you know, study as part of the enabling work strategy.

[1:35:32]

[...] So there's that element that has not yet taken place. So that that that work, I mean, as I said, it's the nature of this is exactly what I'm trying to highlight the nature of the iterative design elements and processes. But certainly, if you were to look at the evidence in terms

of, you know, the widening range and actually looking at the whole area comparing the same set of assumptions, and the same methodology that allows you to actually eliminate sensitivities and compare like for like in terms of the quantum and if that's going to change that is subject to detailed design in my understanding.

[1:36:12]

[...] Though I'm not really looking after updating the costs.

HS: Yeah, I think to be clear that the costs are published, those are the costs again, we at the last consultation the stage that we're at at the moment is to look at information as it comes into us and to publish new information at specific moments.

[1:36:39]

[...] We've always made clear that we will continue to evolve our economic modelling as well as our design work as well as our environmental modelling. That's exactly what you'd expect with a project like this. The more information we get in, the more refined our designs become, the more refined every aspect of the project becomes. So, the information that's available publicly is the information that was last kind of fully assured agreed looks at by government.

[1:37:04]

[...] I'm not clear at this moment. And it's a really good question, Gordon. Sorry, Peter. And it's one that I'm happy to think about is whether or not there'll be specific financial information published as part of the next stage of publications or whether that's something we should expect at the statutory consultation. But yes, the information that Mo talks about which is available on the website is the latest publicly available information around costs.

[1:37:33]

PN: And at what stage do you expect Mo, the GI investigations to be taking place?

MA: That would be in theory, I think, in preparation and advance of construction work taking place ahead of detailed design, so it will inform detailed design.

PN: How would you, how would you, in my mind, I've got statutory consultation and the DCO procedure. Where does the GI investigation which fully informs your ground calculations get established?

[1:38:11]

MA: Traditionally, traditionally that would happen after the DCO, it would entail a considerable investment in going out there and putting trial holes and bore holes. So it's quite a costly exercise to undertake.

[1:38:29]

PN: Right, so it's quite a risk then, it is quite a risk you carry then until you actually do that, to find out how difficult it's going to be to actually do the construction.

RM: I mean, Mo, just to sort of jump in there. This is I mean, the Ground Investigation Strategy is been looked at, at the moment, and where there's a need there may be ground investigations in advance of the DCO. But the vast majority that would be would be after DCO when this does come into the cost and also where we have the land.

[1:39:08]

[...] So that you know there may be a package of ground investigations before DCO where we can gain access, but I think the greater ones will be following DCO.

PN: Right, yes.

RM: But I think we can feedback that on that the Ground Investigation Strategy is being developed and is under review at the moment.

[1:39:30]

PN: Well there has been discussion over the type of ground that there is to the North of Bedford and the type of clay that there is, to the extent to which it can be reused in the project and you don't really find that out until you do a few bore holes and find out what sort of material is actually there.

[1:39:49]

RM: We do have..

PN: Will have a significant effect and a difficulty sort of problem.

[1:39:58]

RM & MA: You have a lot of historic records as well...

MA: Sorry, we're both geotech's right. There's historical data that's publicly available and made available by the BGS the British Geological Society that's free to use and usually is used as a representative of cross sections we're required. And this becomes a much higher risk if you're on a tunneling project, whereby, you know, unforeseen ground conditions and and much more detailed ground investigation is required and at times that is a major risk determining projects.

[1:40:27]

[...] However, I think for a scheme like EWR, it is risk we're carrying, but the historical data actually, you know, is I want to say sufficient, but it's representative enough to be able to draw a cross section that allows conversion.

PN: Okay. Thanks both.

[1:40:52]

HS: Excellent, thank you. Any other I don't want to cut the conversation short, but I'm where we've only got sort of 14 minutes in our time and I'm aware some people do have some hard deadlines. I tell you what, we'll see if there are any more questions that arise do, do, ping them over to us. There's a couple of very clear actions I think that came out of that a couple of follow up conversations and some really interesting thoughts actually, that I think we all take back to the team say thank you very much for a really good session on our side.

[1:41:23]

[...] Moving forward, we haven't got a specific topic agreed for the next meeting. Just to be clear, the next meeting I did a little bit of maths on this one and I'm thinking the next meeting probably be sort of mid April-ish. We'll send another poll sort of soon. Do we have any clear views on what you'd like to discuss at that meeting? One of the things I quite like to drop in there which is just a suggestion and that can be taken up or not, is I would really like to discuss specifically methods of engagement with local people.

[1:42:02]

[...] And that's something that's come up a little bit in this conversation. I'd really like to get into some of the detail of when we have not just the announcement that we're looking to but future consultation and that kind of stuff. I'd really like to have a conversation with this group about what for you worked last time, what didn't work last time, what we can improve on and any specifics in your area that that you would like us to take note of?

[1:42:27]

[...] That'll be a really sort of, that'd be a slight departure from the recent conversations we have, but I personally would find that very, very helpful, I think. Philippa?

PMMB: Yeah, it was just to say, obviously, we'll be in the pre-election period then. I think it's probably okay for this group to still go ahead, but in terms of that question, which I think is very valid, and that discussion is very, you know, it's very important. Might that be better off having that after the local elections, because obviously, you may be with different borough councillors.

[1:42:59]

HS: So the advice that we've had from the lawyers is that if you're comfortable having a meeting, we're comfortable having a meeting. That's my understanding.

PMMB: Yeah. I think so.

HS: So I think it depends on whether the group is comfortable having that meeting during the pre-election period.

PMMB: For me, it was just whether that subject matter that you've raised about how to consult if, and this is a question for the whole group to take is just whether you'd rather have that after the elections when you know who the representatives are everyone else is

comfortable with it. It's fine with me. I just wanted to, you know, raise that with the whole group.

[1:43:33]

HS: I think that's a good point that that is that are there any comments on that from the group?

GJ: I'm happy with that.

JG: Sorry, Gordon. You're saying you're happy with delaying until after Purdah?

GJ: I don't think my position as a parish councillor, is likely to change seeing as we're short of parish councillors. So, on that basis I'm happy to go with it before, but...

[1:44:04]

JG: I suppose, I mean, it might be difficult one to, to answer, but there is a distinct possibility that in this area we may have a change.

HS: Okay.

JG: So Philippa's comment about knowing who our Councillors are, board, Mayor, etc.

[1:44:28]

[...] If those individuals were to change come May, we'd want to make sure that the new people were on board.

HS: Perhaps rather than putting the group on the spot, this be something that we just send that off quick whatnot about and just say I do want to have the meeting, pre election period or would you prefer to defer? I'm aware that there are politics involved that aren't mine to get involved with.

JG: Yeah, it's a great topic and an important topic.

[1:45:00]

[...] It's just the timing. That's all. I'm sat here this evening. I'm unclear in my own mind, whether it would be worth doing it this side of elections or after. I'm inclined to think after.

PN: Hannah, I don't think there's a rush to do this. Afterwards, at the moment, there's not much point engaging with the community unless you've got something of substance to actually tell them and at the moment there is very little substance that can be...

[1:45:31]

HS: Well I guess the thing for us is that you might throw up some ideas that are really good, but have long lead times. So one of the reasons why it'd be good to have the conversation as early as possible is to ensure that any ideas that do come up involve long lead times. And that could be I mean, we're a government agency. We do have to get stuff we can financially

there are, you know, things to jump through and all the rest of it. There are just considerations where it's not just a question of, you know, sending out a letter. There are, there could potentially be all sorts of things that you recommend. So, having said that, I absolutely take the point that actually you've got considerations and your own organizations who are in positions that you want to think about.

[1:46:11]

[...] So can I suggest them that if we give you a little bit of time to reflect we'll send out a poll in a couple of days, and just ask you would you prefer to have this meeting before or after the pre-election, the election and we'll find a date that fits with the group? I think, because from our point of view, the advice we've had legally is it's fine for us to do it. But that's but you're in different position from us. And I wouldn't like to, to assume anything. So should we just agree that we'll send out a whatnot in the next sort of few days?

[1:46:44]

PN: Yep.

JG: Yeah.

PMMB: Makes sense. I think for me, it was just particularly the subject matter. That was all if you wanted to get input. It just made sense to me to make sure we put that in.

HS: So should we put that in the whatnot when we send it out. I keep saying whatnot, but the email or whatever it's called. There's a Doodle poll. When we send out the thing.

[1:47:01]

[...] If we say that our intention is to talk about this topic, are you comfortable having that before? Would you rather wait till after and then I think we'll go with the should we go with the majority or do you want to say like 75:25 or something?

JG: Majority?

PMMB: Majority yeah.

HS: Lovely. All right. Then we'll crack on with that. Nicky, you've got your you've got your hand up.

NG: Yes, Hannah. Thank you very much. I, I actually agree with Philippa on this one. Is there anything else we can discuss in six weeks rather than leaving another four or five weeks until after the elections? Which is kind of three months or something?

[1:47:38]

[...] If anyone could think maybe again, we send out a whatnot, or people drop an email for their preferred topics, and we could have a bit of a poll on that.

HS: I'd be having what we've done with another group is we've done a sort of slightly two stage thing. So we've sent out a thing saying sort of call for suggestions. So we don't miss anything. And then we've sent a secondary poll saying, asking people to, to kind of give us their indication. And that's avoided everyone, you know, coincidentally four people sent the same thing, but actually, they've just missed someone's really good suggestion on the side and they would have probably preferred that one. So we could do that. We could do a two stage if it's helpful.

[1:48:24]

NG: Yeah, I mean, I think so. Just, it's just keen to keep the six week gap going. It's very easy to, you know, elongate it, isn't it?

[1:48:34]

HS: I think that's fine. So I think there's probably a two stage question. One is, are you comfortable talking about this topic pre-election, if you are, brilliant, we'll go with it. If you're not, are you comfortable, what topic would you be talking about pre-election? And then we'll do a secondary poll. If we go down that route of saying which one would you actually like to see? We'll obviously have to get on that quite quick. So, I have send that around quite fast because we need to make sure that we've got the right subject matter experts and the topic that's chosen is something that we can meaningfully talk to so we'll do some tap dancing at our end to make sure that we've got sort of the right the right areas that I think I can feel away through that if you're comfortable leaving that in my hands to fix.

[1:49:16]

NG: Yeah, I mean, sounds like a plan. Maybe we can all take an action to feed back to you something we would like to discuss.

HS: That'd be great. That'd be really, really good. Thank you. Oh, let's say we'll give you... Well, we've got the weekend. So let's reflect on over the weekend, and we'll get cracking on Monday morning with moving forward with that.

NG: Thank you.

HS: Gorgeous.

[1:49:36]

[...] That's really helpful. Thank you. So I guess without further ado, we'll move just to AOB and closing remarks. AOB from anyone? Closing remarks and my point, kind of what I said before, thank you so much for the input you had in in slides before this really good food for thought there genuinely. I think we need to take that away and have some conversations and come back to you. And there's some specific chats that that we can have. If any of you want to have a chat with me or Sarah, outside of the whatnot. We're absolutely able to do that. And we'll send out the polls as soon as we can next week.

[1:50:12]

[...] The creating the meeting notes I think by now you know the slipstream we're in. Though it's worth noting that the last meeting was so close up against this one that we are not finished with that process yet. Although we are in this meeting. So it is likely two sets of meeting notes will be published before the next meeting, but they'll both be published within that period.

[1:50:34]

[...] Sarah who did join us. Do you want to just quickly say hi, before...

Sarah Jacobs [SJ] Sorry, I know it's at the end of the meeting. I just wanted to say hello everybody in showing my face, apologies for being late. I was at another LRG but it's been really, really interesting hearing everything you've all said. And as Hannah said, I'm now here so by all means, get in touch and I look forward to seeing more of you. Have a great weekend.

[1:50:57]

HS: On that happy note and as Sarah alluded to that, I hope you'll have a wonderful weekend and we will pick up with all of you very soon I would think.

PG: Thank you

NG: Thank you very much.

AM: Bye

JG: Bye