

# South Cambridgeshire West Group – Meeting notes

## Meeting #6 – Details

**Date:** Wednesday 26 September 2023

**Time:** 5:30pm

**Type of meeting:** Virtual

## Documents discussed in this meeting

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

- Agenda
- Action Tracker
- Slides

## Key discussion points and outcomes

### 1 Welcome, today's agenda, and housekeeping

1.1 Will Gallagher (WG) welcomed the group, introduced himself in his capacity as the chair of the meeting, introduced the EWR Co team members and allowed the councillors to introduce themselves. He then ran through the housekeeping and agenda for the meeting.

### 2 General updates

2.1 WG noted that there had been a total of 12 community events held across June and July. Two of these events, namely Cambridge and Bletchley, were added based on feedback received from the community. WG added that these gatherings drew in over 2300 attendees, with the Cambridge events alone hosting over 300 participants. In addition to these in-person events, WG also mentioned the availability of 'Your Questions Answered' videos, further enhancing the engagement and interaction within the community. WG explained that these efforts underline the commitment to fostering a strong and connected community through various channels of communication and participation.

2.2 WG noted that the Accessibility Advisory Panel (AAP) has recently held its third meeting, where the panel met key stakeholders from EWR Co and were able to give feedback to

support the design and development requirements. He added that AAP will continue to be involved in activities as EWR Co progress towards DCO.

2.3 WG noted that the red line boundary is currently being produced which would show, in greater detail, how much land would need to be acquired or used, temporarily or permanently to develop the railway.

### 3 Actions from the previous meeting

- 3.1 WG highlighted EWR Co's completion of actions from the previous meetings, which included a request for a community drop-in event in Haslingfield. A community event was held in Haslingfield on 12 October last year. This year, on Thursday 22 June, a community event was held at Eversden Village Hall, which is located close to communities in Haslingfield.
- 3.2 WG also explained that EWR Co had considered the request to make an in person visit to Caldecote and that on Thursday 15 June, EWR Co met with representatives from South Cambridgeshire District Council and visited Highfields / Caldecote, Chapel Hill, Shelford and the Biomedical Campus where local issues and aspirations in relation to the EWR plans were discussed.
- 3.3 Two attendees stated that although Robert Milner (RM) had met with a landowner, which is positive, they would like to request a visit to residents in Caldecote to discuss the impacts of EWR. The attendees felt that, despite Caldecote being one of the most affected villages, it is being ignored by EWR Co. RM responded that he is happy to return to Caldecote at the attendee's request.
- 3.4 WG then explained EWR Co's outstanding action, which was to be completed in the meeting. This was to consider further engagement activities with the LRGs to identify ways that group members could feed into the design proposals.

### 4 Topic- Approach to how we engage with you and your communities

- 4.1 WG summarised the timeline of EWR Co engagement activities, beginning with the community's involvement in two non-statutory consultations in 2019 and 2021. Continuing that, in the spring of 2022, the LRGs were initiated to further foster community engagement. Moving forward to the summer of 2023, a significant milestone was achieved with the Route Update Announcement (RUA). WG reiterated that EWR Co had been working closely with LRGs to shape how they engage with communities following the RUA, representing a critical step in this journey.
- 4.2 WG noted that this engagement process would continue as EWR Co progresses towards the anticipated statutory consultation next year. Beyond that, EWR Co's activities would proceed through the stages of Development Consent Order (DCO) submission, DCO examination, and eventually into the construction phase, all underpinned by ongoing community engagement efforts as they move forward.
- 4.3 WG added that EWR Co set up the LRGs with the view of shaping engagement through the feedback of members and their local knowledge.

4.4 An attendee explained that they didn't understand the point of the meeting and claimed that EWR Co were doing a tick box exercise to get through the DCO application stage and point to something that says the public were engaged, especially because of how few attendees there were in the LRG meeting. They believed that EWR Co was putting things that people really care about, being where the rail line is going and the disruption caused, to one side. The attendee stated that the communities in this LRG are small villages, so they do not have many organisations to engage with and was confused as to how local organisations would be able to help EWR Co develop plans on a rail line that is 15 years away. They explained that the best people to talk to are resident groups or councillors. Sarah Jacobs (SJ) responded that EWR Co is trying to build a wider picture of stakeholders and to get as many people involved as possible. SJ noted the point about the meeting attendance but explained that attendance at community events have been very good and that the purpose of this meeting is to see how we could create the best possible engagement arrangement. SJ acknowledged small villages often do not have many local groups, but this meeting is to see whether there are any that EWR Co have missed. She also noted that resident groups would be something EWR look at in terms of widening engagement.

4.5 An attendee noted that it would be helpful to know who EWR Co are engaging with, with specific reference to Central Bedfordshire Council. They stated that they understood that one of EWR Co's reasons for choosing the Southern route is the proposed housing development in Tempsford but stated that they do not believe there is any evidence that this development would happen. They expressed concern that there is a lot of development in the north of St Neots that is being ignored.

## 5 Learning about your communities

Who should we be engaging with in your communities?	Suggestion
Accessibility groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>AAP</li> <li>Greater Cambridge shared planning service</li> </ul>
Community groups <i>Including religious groups, women's networks etc</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resident groups in each village</li> <li>Caldecote EWR Group</li> <li>Youth groups - An attendee explained he was talking to a youth group in Waterbeach and they were very straightforward about what they want which would be good for engagement. They explained that members of the youth group said they want more trains.</li> </ul>
Business groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local small businesses - Construction of the line is going to result in partial or full road closures which would increase traffic in villages and towns. Whether there is a large increase in traffic, local businesses are</li> </ul>

	going to be severely affected whether residents feel less inclined to travel.
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comberton Village is adjacent to the route but is currently not being consulted so it would be right to start engaging with them</li> <li>• Cambourne Village college</li> <li>• Primary schools in local villages</li> </ul>
Other groups or portions of community we may not be aware of	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those affected by the construction</li> <li>• Parish Councils</li> </ul>

5.1 An attendee stated that the sentiment of local people is that the EWR proposals provide nothing for their communities, it may help the overall economy, but it would not help local residents, especially with thousands of homes being built in conjunction with the rail line.

5.2 Another attendee reiterated the sentiment, saying that people feel they are being bluffed, with no local benefit or relevance to them.

## 6 Communicating and engaging with you and your communities

*Did you attend the community drop-in events held across summer? What worked well? What could we do better?*

Questions / Prompts	Suggestion
Venues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings in smaller villages - An attendee expressed that events should be held in each village affected by the line. There are a lot of people in these communities who would/could not travel to a larger nearby town but would still want to learn more about the line and express concern. It was suggested village halls should be utilised and this would also solve the issue of overcrowding the events in larger towns.</li> </ul>
Use and layout of space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too difficult to locate people who knew the information you were looking for - One attendee stated that he asked multiple people to point him towards someone who would be able to answer his question and once he found him, there was already a queue of people waiting to speak with him, which was discouraging for himself and others.</li> </ul>
Timings and number of events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More meetings to help overcrowding - One attendee explained that at the Eversden event it was hard to speak to the people who knew the answer for your query</li> </ul>

	because there were too many people. This meant that lots of questions went unanswered.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Out of date maps - Multiple attendees expressed grievances that the maps used at the events were the same maps being used since 2021 and were thus out of date leaving off houses and businesses that would be affected. Gail Buckland (GB) explained that she and the team have been working hard recently to make updated maps.</li> <li>Construction details - One attendee said that there needs to be details in relations to construction because that would be just as much of a concern to residents as the operation of the line.</li> <li>Caldecote – Attendees couldn't find much information about Caldecote at the event which was disappointing.</li> <li>Staff training – One attendee said that lots of the EWR Co staff were new to the project and weren't equipped to answer questions they had.</li> </ul>
Other suggestions and comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1-1 meetings - An attendee said that arranging 1-1 appointments would be a good way for people to hear answers about the issues they really care about.</li> <li>Inconsistent responses from staff - An attendee said that people had been given different answers to the same question by staff at the event. This made people feel like the information provided was untrustworthy.</li> <li>Business case - The attendees appreciated they were able to get information regarding the Business case but didn't feel the staff were convinced about it.</li> </ul>

***How can we work more closely with you as LRG members to help disseminate information across your communities? How would you like information to be shared?***

Questions / Prompts	Suggestions
<p>Do you receive the community newsletters?</p> <p><i>Do you think these work well?</i></p> <p><i>Any suggestions for how they could improved?</i></p> <p>Potential locations we could use for posters/publicity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only one attendee was currently receiving the newsletter.</li> <li>Poster locations - village halls, Toft notice board, the Pavilion, and Caldecote Village club</li> </ul>
Any other local communications channels or local circulations we should be aware of and utilise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parish Councils</li> <li>Resident groups</li> </ul>

<p><i>Local websites, threads or newsletters?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Village magazines - Several attendees spoke about village magazines, that are produced monthly or quarterly, which would be a good way to reach residents, especially ones not online. It was mentioned however that whether EWR Co were to utilise this they would need to shorten down the information otherwise it would cost too much to print. Thus, this would need to be in conjunction with online material. Some examples of these magazines were The Calendar – Toft's monthly newsletter and The Tailcorn – Eversden's quarterly magazine</li> <li>• Facebook – This was mentioned by several attendees as a way to reach a lot of people effectively. One attendee explained though that is important you are posting on the right pages as some communities have multiple pages for different things.</li> </ul>
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## 7 Q & A with Area Manager

- 7.1 An attendee asked about how EWR Co is planning to cross the A428, RM responded by saying that they are currently assessing all options, whether that is going underneath in a short tunnel, or bridging overusing a viaduct through Bourne airfield.
- 7.2 This was followed up by an attendee saying that Bourne airfield is currently being developed for a big housing project so this decision would have a big impact on that. They noted that they do not understand why it is taking so long to decide. RM stated that EWR Co does not want to commit to something right now when there is a possibility that this may change. This approach takes time, but EWR Co are considering impacts on Caldecote, Bourne airfield and the A428 carefully.
- 7.3 Another attendee asked how the EWR plans relate to the current plans for the A603 and asked whether there would be a 10-meter embankment. RM explained that currently, the rail line is likely to go over the road with a bridge and embankments either side due to floodplains in the area. RM added that EWR design need to allow approximately 5 to 6-meters clearance above the road so it is likely the railway will be around 10 meters above the existing road.
- 7.4 Another attendee asked about how much influence stakeholders would be able to have when it comes to suggesting foot/cycle path routes which would be changed by EWR Co, as they believe locals know the area the best and would see opportunities for paths that EWR Co wouldn't. WG responded saying EWR Co is developing a door-to-door strategy with an active panel that is informed by members of the public and this would be rolled out soon when we know more. He also explained that during the DCO process there would be more ways for people to provide their thoughts and noted that if there are concerns about foot/cycle paths, people should contact the team now.
- 7.5 One attendee asked about when they could expect to learn more about noise and vibration levels. The attendee spoke of some constituents whose houses, that were made of timber, faced the proposed EWR line. They stated that timber is not very good at keeping noise out, but they had been told by EWR Co that they would not be affected by

noise which they find hard to believe. Another attendee followed up by asking whether the noise analysis would include freight trains and whether it would account for both construction and operation. RM responded by saying that the noise assessments would be for construction and operation including for freight trains and consider buildings structure. More information will be available at Statutory Consultation.

## 8 Closing remarks, future meetings, and topic

- 8.1 WG said that there was opportunity to bring in experts on very specific matters for meetings so attendees could dig deep on issues that mattered to them.
- 8.2 An attendee asked whether a future meeting could relate to sustainability of the track and the climate change cost, for example, when extreme temperatures freeze or buckle the tracks. They also requested a meeting on the impacts on construction and how these would be mitigated as this is very important to local people.
- 8.3 The last mile connection was also mentioned as a potential future meeting topic.
- 8.4 WG thanked everyone for their time and contribution and ended the meeting.

**Outcome:** Topics for future discussion include:

- Sustainability
- Climate change cost
- Construction impacts
- Noise and Vibration assessments
- First mile, last mile

## Summary of actions

- **ACTION 1:** EWR Co – To arrange for Robert Milner to visit Caldecote to discuss the potential impact of EWR proposals on residents with Councillors and the public.
- **ACTION 2:** EWR Co – To update maps, specifically those referencing Caldecote in all communications.

## Attendees

### EWR Co attendees

- Will Gallagher, EWR Co lead
- Sarah Jacobs, Local representative Groups Engagement Manager
- Robert Milner (Area Manager)
- Gail Buckland (Community Engagement Manager)
- EWR Co production support team.

### Parish Council representatives

- Martin Yeadon, Toft Parish Council
- Stephen Watterson, Great Eversden Parish Council
- Sean Houlihane, Dry Drayton Parish Council
- Nicola Pritchard, Caldecote Parish Council
- Susan Dalglish, Kingston Parish Council

### Local authority councillors

- Tumi Hawkins, Caldecote in South Cambridgeshire Council
- Sebastian Kindersley, Gamingley in Cambridgeshire Council
- Richard Stobart, Girton in South Cambridgeshire

### Apologies

- Polly Field, Caldecote Parish Council
- Helen Cartwright, Caldecote Parish Council
- Jocelyn Poulton, Childerly Parish Council
- Comberton Parish Council
- Corinne Garvie, Dry Drayton Parish Council
- Tony Gill, Hardwick Parish Council
- Jakub Derowski, Parish Derowski, Hardwick Parish Council
- Stephanie Jack, Little Eversden Parish Council
- John Houlton, Lolworth Parish Council
- Swavesey Parish Council
- Wimpole Parish Council
- Aidan Van de Weyer, Barrington in South Cambridgeshire
- Martin Cahn, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire
- Lisa Redrup, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire
- Martin Ian Atkins, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire
- Michael Atkins, Hardwick in Cambridgeshire County
- Bridget Smith, Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire County
- Edna Murphy, Bar Hill in Cambridgeshire County
- Lina Nieto, Hardwick in South Cambridgeshire
- Mandy Smith, Papworth and Swavesey in South Cambridgeshire
- Sue Ellington, Swavesey in South Cambridgeshire