

Croxton to Toft Enhanced LRG – Meeting notes

Meeting #2

Details-

Date: 13/10/2025

Time: 6:00pm

Type of meeting: In person

Key discussion points and outcomes

1. Introductions, workshop overview, and housekeeping

1.1 Paula Whitworth (PW) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced the EWR team on the call before running through the agenda and housekeeping.

2. Review of actions from the last meeting

2.1 Fiona Man (FM) provided an update on the first action, noting that EWR Co's approach to air quality, noise and vibration has been set out in the EWR Environmental Impact Assessment Scoping Report. This is available on the Planning Inspectorate website and FM offered to share a link to this. **Post meeting note: the link can be found here - [TR040012-000019-EWR - EIA Scoping Report - Final Version V3 \(3\).pdf](#).**

2.2 PW requested attendees provide feedback on the second action regarding whether the Croxton to Toft LRG should be merged with the Comberton to Haslingfield LRG, due to shared interests in Comberton. PW also mentioned a point raised in a written response that land within Abbotsley Parish Council falls into both the Croxton to Toft and Roxton to East of St Neots LRGs.

2.3 Tony Hyde (ToH) provided feedback on this, noting that it seems illogical that land within Abbotsley Parish Council is spread across two LRGs requiring representatives to attend two meetings. TH said that it seems sensible to have LRGs encompass all land within a parish council.

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2.4 Nicola Pritchard (NP) commented in the meeting chat that 'Merging Croxton and Comberton LRGs risks making an overly large LRG - which may hinder dealing with the local issues. Two separate LRGs means more focus on the issues in each area as they are both large areas with many complex issues that will need discussing as things move forward. I would recommend keeping it as it is.'

2.5 PW thanked attendees for their feedback and said she would take these comments away (ACTION).

2.6 Stephen Christian (SC) provided an update on the third action, noting that EWR Co will be discussing proposed design changes in the Croxton to Toft area later in the presentation.

2.7 The group discussed the fourth action with Tumi Hawkins (TuH) confirming that this action was referencing the location of construction compounds on Caldecote Road required for the cut and cover tunnel. TuH asked where this compound would be in relation to the village.

2.8 NP followed up on this by flagging previous conversations about whether this tunnel would be mined or bored and whether compounds need to be so close to the village or if they could be located at either end of the tunnel.

2.9 SC responded that a mined tunnel is EWR Co's proposed option going forward and that land above the tunnel does not need to be acquired. Construction compounds will be needed near the end of the tunnel, as shared at non-statutory consultation.

2.10 NP mentioned that there is a field opposite Fortitude Fitness Centre on Highfields Road and asked whether it could be removed from the construction compound area.

2.11 SC said the design hasn't been updated yet.

2.12 NP asked for this action to remain open then and SC confirmed that EWR Co would share updated information as soon as it is available (ACTION).

3. Project updates

3.1 PW gave an update on the stakeholder engagement that has been happening along the route.

3.2 PW shared an update on the current round of ELRG engagement and shared the dates of the other ELRG sessions.

3.3 PW shared a snapshot of the engagement that has been happening with political stakeholders from all parties along the route.

3.4 PW gave an update on community engagement – EWR Co is proposing a series of ‘pop up’ sessions which are community focused and provide an information channel for people who may not have had much exposure to the project previously. PW noted that EWR Co is finalising the programme and requested the group provided suggestions of potential venues to host these sessions.

3.5 Helene Leeming (HL) noted that South Cambridgeshire District Council are organising a Christmas Fair at Cambourne Village College on 7th December. This usually has about 600 – 700 visitors. HL then shared the details of this in the chat and PW said she would take this away (ACTION).

3.6 PW confirmed that EWR Co will share further information with the LRGs when details and dates are finalised.

3.7 PW gave an update on landowner engagement, noting that EWR Co has been writing to people who have land or property that could be impacted by the proposals. LRGs should also have received an update on this as well as details to contact the EWR Co Land & Property team.

4. Planning and Infrastructure Bill Update

4.1 PW then ran through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. EWR Co is working with government to understand the full implications of the Bill on consultation and engagement but see it as an opportunity to have collaborative and iterative engagement, focusing on hyper-local issues and testing emerging thinking with the LRGs.

4.2 PW noted that EWR Co will update LRGs as soon as more is known about what the implications of the Bill will look like in practice.

5. Environment

5.1 FM provided an environmental update. Initial environmental information was shared in the Environmental Update Report published as part of the 2024 non-statutory consultation. Since then, EWR Co has been reviewing feedback, engaging with stakeholders and landowners and completing surveys to inform design development.

5.2 FM presented on design integration and mitigation and explained how such proposals are embedded into EWR Co principles.

5.3 FM gave an update on EWR Co’s Biodiversity Net Gain commitment and the work that EWR Co is doing to meet that commitment.

5.4 FM presented a slide outlining various environmental updates that have been made since non-statutory consultation (*the full list of updates can be found in the slide deck*).

6. Croxton to Toff route section detailed discussion

Cambourne station relocation

6.1 SC shared a map showing where Cambourne station location was proposed at non-statutory consultation. Since then, EWR Co has undertaken further reviews of six locations following stakeholder feedback as well as concerns about the impact on highways. The assessment factors process, and outcomes of the location reviews were shared during the meeting.

6.2 TuH expressed concern regarding the overlay that was being shown on the map, noting that South Cambridgeshire District Council have not yet gone to consultation on their emerging Local Plan.

6.3 PW explained the desire to share information with ELRG members to facilitate open discussion but requested attendees keep the drawings and content within the meeting at this stage. **NOTE: PW flagged that this drawing and overlays will be omitted when slides are circulated alongside the minutes.**

6.4 Peter Sandford (PS) said that the map indicates that it will go straight through where National Highways are currently building a flyover for the A428 dualling.

6.5 SC responded that EWR Co won't be changing any National Highways work on the A428 and will be working around or adding to it.

6.6 David Pope (DP) requested an update on how active travel fits into the logic and rationale for the Cambourne station relocation proposal. DP also asked about potential stabling for carriage, carriage cleanings and sidings around Cambourne station.

6.7 SC said that these facilities won't be here. They were initially considered to the west of Cambourne station but EWR Co have gone through an assessment factors process for the entire route and none of the shortlisted options were in Cambourne so there won't be a depot here.

6.8 SC said that active travel proposals in this area are still work-in-progress but that this will be shared as soon as possible. There is a solution in mind, but EWR Co is working through the finer details on this.

6.9 HL reiterated DP's point and highlighted the importance of providing a clear explanation for how people will access the area when the location is made public. HL highlighted that many of the junctions in that area are dangerous and lack pedestrian infrastructure so the solution will need to consider these safety implications too.

6.10 TuH flagged that EWR Co will need to consider active travel from neighbouring villages too and not just Cambourne.

Bourn Airfield - Mined Tunnel

6.11 SC confirmed that the Bourn Airfield tunnel will now be a mined tunnel.

6.12 TH asked for clarification that a mined tunnel will avoid disruption on Highfields Road.

6.13 SC confirmed that there would be reduced disruption and less local impact as well, as well as reduced environmental impact. The A428 will now be avoided by tunnelling under it. There is a reduced land take (both temporary and permanent) and it also has a cost benefit.

6.14 HL asked what sprayed concrete lining means. SC responded that this would involve concrete sections (either circular or square) being dug into the ground and earth scooped out of it. It is a conventional method for building tunnels.

6.15 NP asked whether the above surface layer would be impacted by this method or if the process is all below ground. SC responded that apart from monitoring equipment, all work will be done underground.

Green bridges

6.16 SC shared a slide showing drawings and examples of green bridges. These bridges are large (up to 30-40m wide) and have different thoroughfares across the tunnel. The locations of these bridges will be in places where they benefit the environment and animal routes – particularly species such as bats. EWR Co has been doing a lot of surveys to inform green bridges designs.

6.17 TuH asked SC to clarify how many green bridges there are and where their locations would be. SC confirmed that there would be one at Hardwick Road and one at Hardwick Bridleway 5. FM noted that there is also one on the B1046 and the A603.

6.18 Martin Yeadon (MY) asked what these green bridges would look like. SC explained that the bridges would be wide overbridges – a normal road bridge is about 10m wide, but these green bridges are 30m wide. These bridges would go over the railway.

6.19 SC also shared a slide outlining a movement of construction compounds. Fields south of Comberton College were previously construction compounds but now they are not.

6.20 MY asked if the area north of Comberton Road would be a construction compound and which area south of Comberton Road would have a construction compound.

6.21 SC responded that the area north of Comberton Road (in the triangle on the map) is a construction compound for vehicles and materials but that is the only construction compound north of Comberton Road. The brown square on the map is the construction compound on the south of Comberton Road.

6.22 MY said this was a significant reduction and noted that his parish will be pleased with that update.

6.23 DP asked what EWR Co's plans are for planting on these green bridges and whether EWR will be liable to ensuring these plants are grown and green.

6.24 FM responded that EWR Co does not have a detailed planting strategy yet so do not have the details of what type of plant species will be used but they must be of a mature nature to support bats. This will mean that they need to be a native species that can support those habitats. Discussions still need to be had with Network Rail and Local Authorities regarding who maintains and manages the bridges in the future.

6.25 DP asked if green bridges have been built in earlier stages of the railway or elsewhere.

6.26 SC and FM said that they did not think there were any green bridges on other sections and Kate Campbell (KC) confirmed that there weren't any green bridges on Connection Stage 1 (CS1) of the railway.

7. The Accessibility Panel

7.1 Georgina Taylor (GT) explained that EWR Co have been doing a lot of work early in the project on accessibility and inclusion and want to get this right from the outset. EWR's Accessibility Advisory Panel have fed back that this work did not come through strongly enough at the last consultation which is why GT is presenting today.

7.2 GT discussed the legal obligations that EWR Co are required to uphold under the Equality Act 2010.

7.3 GT ran through the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) process and how this enables EWR Co to show that equality has been considered seriously and systematically. The EqIA will be submitted as part of the Development Consent Order application.

7.4 GT shared the areas of inclusive design that EWR Co is focusing on, and spotlighted station designs as this is an area that is more mature in terms of inclusive design. Stations are being reviewed iteratively to assess accessibility and inclusion.

7.5 GT then shared details of the EWR Accessibility Advisory Panel and explained how the Panel help to ensure EWR designs are rooted in lived experiences. GT put a link to the Inclusion page on the EWR website in the meeting chat.

7.6 Chris Poulton (CP) said that it was interesting to hear about how accessibility is being considered in the new railway. CP referenced the idea of having an active travel corridor along the railway and asked if this is being considered.

7.7 GT responded that there is a team working on active travel who have liaised with the Panel to ensure that active travel proposals are accessible. SC and PW said it would be worth talking about active travel at a future meeting (ACTION). SC confirmed that active travel design is being worked on and that an active travel corridor is being considered.

7.8 NP asked how many parking spaces there will be at Cambourne station and how many will be disabled parking.

7.9 SC responded that there will be disabled parking, but he does not have exact numbers to hand so will take that away and confirm (ACTION). GT also noted that this has been to the Panel to be discussed.

8. Discussion, Q&A

8.1 NP asked how EWR Co is going to protect the bats during construction and if there was any evidence that green bridges work for Barbastelle bats. NP also noted that Barbastelle bats are a low-flying bat and will most certainly be at risk of collision with trains and asked how EWR Co plans to prevent this.

8.2 FM responded that EWR Co has been doing a lot of bat roost, trapping and tracking surveys, to review crossing points to understand foraging locations. This will help to inform how bats are protected during the construction phase - EWR Co is looking at potentially providing some temporary flight line features (e.g. planting or fencing) and staggering the works too. This is very much work-in-progress, but EWR Co is using lessons learned from other projects to see what has been done previously and inform discussions with Natural England.

8.3 In terms of evidence that green bridges work for Barbastelle bats, FM confirmed that there is guidance and several papers on green bridge design and EWR Co can recirculate links that were previously shared at some parish council meetings on this (ACTION).

Post meeting note: the link can be found here - [Natural England Green Bridges Guide](#).

8.4 FM explained that bat surveys have been undertaken to understand the main flight paths and crossing points. Green bridges help to prevent bats colliding with trains as they can guide bats across the railway and EWR Co will design structures to ensure there is sufficient clearance.

8.5 PW referenced the questions raised in the chat and explained that due to being out of time, EWR Co will take those away and provide responses separately (ACTION).

8.6 PW ran through the process for circulating meeting notes with attendees and reiterated the confidential nature of this meeting when discussing evolving designs and emerging thinking.

8.7 PW ran through the process for circulating meeting notes with attendees and reiterated the confidential nature of this meeting, particularly when discussing evolving designs and emerging thinking.

Summary of Actions

- **ACTION 1:** EWR Co to provide the group with an update on Croxton to Toft ELRG membership moving forward following feedback provided by ToH and NP.
- **ACTION 2:** EWR Co to provide a further update on the location and impact of construction compounds on Caldecote Road.
- **ACTION 3:** EWR Co to explore the possibility of EWR Co having a 'pop up' session at the Cambourne District College Christmas Fair on 7th December 2025.
- **ACTION 4:** EWR Co to include active travel as an item on a future Croxton to Toft ELRG meeting agenda.
- **ACTION 5:** EWR Co to confirm the number of disabled parking spaces in Cambourne station proposals.
- **ACTION 6:** EWR Co to recirculate the evidence paper on how green bridge designs consider and mitigates for bats.
- **ACTION 7:** EWR Co to provide a response to the questions raised in the meeting chat.

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Attendees

EWR Co attendees

- Paula Whitworth (PW) – Senior Stakeholder Manager – East
- Stephen Christian (SC) - Development Programme Manager - Clapham to Hauxton
- Fiona Man (FM) - Environmental Area Manager (East)
- Georgina Taylor (GT) - Accessibility Manager
- Kate Campbell (KC) - Head of External Engagement
- Joe Harris (JH) - Statutory Stakeholder Engagement Team
- Olu Solola (OS) - Development Programme Manager

Local authority councillors

- Tumi Hawkins – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Caldecote Ward
- Helene Leeming – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Ward
- Peter Sandford – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Caxton & Papworth Ward
- Chris Poulton – Cambridgeshire County Council, Papworth & Swavesey Ward
- Lucy Nethsingha - Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambourne Ward
- Stephen Drew – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Ward
- Richard Stobart - South Cambridgeshire District Council, Girton Ward

Parish councillors

- David Pope – Elsworth Parish Council
- Martin Yeadon – Toft Parish Council
- Sean Houlihane – Dry Dayton Parish Council
- Tony Hyde – Abbotsley Parish Council
- Nicola Pritchard – Caldecote Parish Council
- Pauline Joslin – Hardwick Parish Council