



# **Foxton to Shelfords**

**Enhanced Local Representative Groups (ELRGs)  
Round #2 meetings**

**Wednesday 8 October 2025**

# Agenda

1. Housekeeping and welcome – Paula
2. Actions – Paula/Jon
3. Planning and Infrastructure Bill update – Paula
4. Environment – Leah
5. Active Travel update – Jon
6. Accessibility Panel – Georgina
7. Discussion, Q&A – all

# Housekeeping

## Thank you for joining

This is a virtual meeting.

Please display your full name as when you registered to attend – this can be done through the ‘Participants’ section.

To help everyone feel part of the discussion, please feel free to turn your camera on during the meeting if you can.

Please use the ‘Raise Hand’ function to raise a question during the meeting, found in the bottom ribbon (under the ‘Reactions’ option).



Display your full name in username



**Please use the mute function**



**Use the ‘Raise Hand’ function if you want to raise a point during the meeting**



**Please do put your camera on if possible**

# Introduction



## **Paula Whitworth**

Senior Stakeholder Manager (East)  
Joined East West Rail 21 July 2025

### ELRGs:

- Comberton to Haslingfield
- Foxton to Shelfords
- Croxton to Toft
- Cambridge

# **About me**

### Career

- 25+ years' background in external communications and engagement.
- Corporate affairs director, Motability Operations.
- Head of communications, NHS England (East).
- Head of national newsdesk, Network Rail.
- Six years in local government communications.

### Personal

- Live in Northamptonshire with husband and 20-year-old son.

# **Actions from ELRG round #1 meeting**

Action	Status
SJ to meet with Rupert Pearce Gould.	Complete
EWR Co to add area names to updates regarding future ground investigations.	Complete
EWR Co to ask the group whether they would like traffic modelling to be covered in more detail during a future meeting.	Complete
EWR Co to consider the topic of Active Travel for the next meeting.	Complete

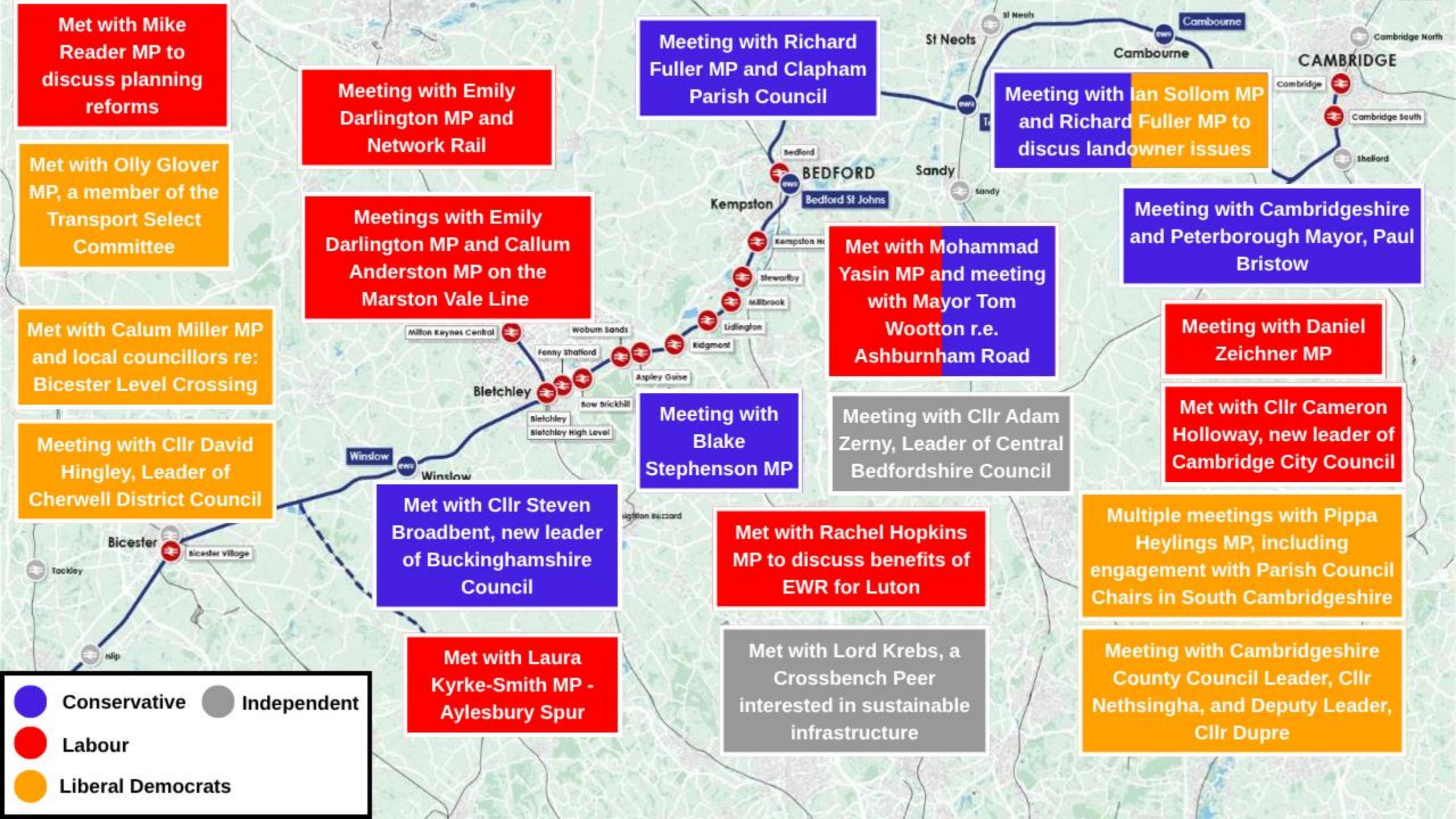
# Project Updates

# Enhanced LRG meetings



## Enhanced Local Representatives Groups Meetings

Clapham Green - Colesden	1-Oct
Oxford - Bletchley	2-Oct
Comberton - Haslingfield	6-Oct
Foxton - Shelfords	8-Oct
Fenny Stratford - Kempston	9-Oct
Croxton - Toft	13-Oct
Bedford	15-Oct
Cambridge	20-Oct
Roxton - East of St Neots	21-Oct



# Community Engagement – route wide

- Developing a programme of community 'pop up' sessions along the route on a rolling basis. Due to be launched before the end of the year.
- Provide an always-on approach to community engagement so people continue to feel connected to the project when we have limited information to communicate.
- Widen the understanding of the project in communities across the route.
- Provide another channel to receive questions and help build understanding of what we're doing.
- Develop long term relationships with our diverse community from now through to the end of construction.
- **Currently finalising a programme and would welcome thoughts on priority venues / locations.**



# Landowner engagement, starting Sept 2025

As part of our ongoing programme of engagement with land and property owners, we are writing to people across the East West Rail route whose land or property could be impacted by the proposals. This includes people we have contacted or met with before, as well as some people who we now believe could be impacted by East West Rail based on changes we have made to the designs since the non-statutory consultation.

We understand that land and property owners will have questions and concerns about this and so we are asking them to get in touch with our Land and Property team so that we can arrange to speak or meet with them regarding the project. Their dedicated case manager will explain the current proposals for East West Rail and how their land or property could be impacted, answer questions and talk them through what could happen next, including what support may be available to them.

We will record any suggestions land and property owners make and feed these back to our design team so that we can consider how we can reduce or mitigate impacts on their land or property, where possible, as we continue to develop the proposals for East West Rail.

# The Planning and Infrastructure Bill

# The Planning and Infrastructure Bill

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB) presents a significant opportunity to modernise and streamline engagement for nationally significant infrastructure projects. East West Rail (EWR) is working closely with government to understand and respond to the Bill's implications, particularly around consultation timing, stakeholder involvement, and iterative design development.

## **Our engagement vision**

We see engagement under PIB as a strategic, iterative, and inclusive process designed to build trust, reduce risk, and improve outcomes.

Our approach is structured to:

- Align with government policy.
- Enable meaningful two-way dialogue.
- Plan for a consultation on final proposals before submission - lighter touch than a traditional statutory consultation.

# Environment update

# Environmental Assessment Update

- [Environmental Update Report](#) published during 2024 Non-Statutory Consultation (NSC)
- Ongoing review of NSC feedback and stakeholder engagement
- Surveys underway to support design development
- Ongoing environmental assessment to inform design
- Stakeholder input helps shape and improve design outcomes



## Environmental Update Report

Non-statutory consultation

# Design Integration & Mitigation

- Protecting the environment is a fundamental part of our decision making when developing our proposals
- Preliminary assessment informs early design decisions and the design of embedded mitigation
- Aim to avoid or minimise impacts through design

## Avoidance

Measures taken to avoid creating impacts from the outset.

## Minimisation

Measures taken to minimise as far as reasonably practicable the duration, intensity and/or extent of impacts that cannot be completely avoided.

## Rectify

Measures taken to improve degraded or removed ecosystems following exposure to impacts that cannot be completely avoided or minimised.

## Compensation

Measures taken to compensate for any residual, adverse impacts after full implementation of the previous three steps.

# Survey Update

Environmental surveys are being undertaken across the entire route. Surveys which are ongoing or have been completed include:

- Arboriculture
- Farm Business Interviews,
- Biodiversity
- Air Quality
- Historic Environment geophysical
- Noise and Vibration
- Traffic and Transport
- Water environment

First phase of Ground Investigation progressing

Surveys which are planned to start in Winter 2025/2026 include:

- Archaeological Trial Trenching
- Soil surveys (Agricultural Land Classification and Soil Resources Surveys).





# Biodiversity Net Gain Update

- EWR made an early commitment to delivering 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, ahead of it becoming a mandatory requirement for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects from May 2026
- Awaiting government guidance on Biodiversity Net Gain for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects
- Our design integrates BNG early by avoiding and reducing habitat impacts
  - EWR does not directly impact any Ancient Woodlands or other irreplaceable habitats
- We have established the BNG Forum to work with key stakeholders to deliver BNG that works for nature and communities

# Environmental updates since NSC

- Refining the design of Hauxton Junction to reduce landscape and visual impacts
- Embedded mitigation – alignment and gradient work to reduce the scale of cuttings, embankments and lowering the height of the railway in the landscape, reducing volume of material required, resulting in fewer lorry movements
- Refinements to proposed environmental mitigation following feedback from NSC, landowner meetings and updated survey information
- Proposed landscape mitigation earthworks to help screen the railway
- Further consideration of localised flood issues e.g. Rectory farm underpass . We are proposing to undertake localised works to improve drainage conditions
- Location of drainage ponds and flood compensation areas are being considered to manage flood risk
- Consideration of buried archaeology to inform locations of drainage ponds, access roads, compounds and stockpiles



# Inclusion and Accessibility

**Georgina Taylor**

Accessibility Manager

# Why is Inclusion Important to EWR?



It's about providing **equitable access, as far as possible**, to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalised.



It affects **all areas of life**, including jobs, the economy, access to health, choice around participation and social activities, access to education, seeing friends and family.



It's an investment that can **create a loyal and expanded customer base, reduce the cost of future adaptations** and mitigations, and minimise costs associated with providing dedicated assistance to end users.

**An inclusive railway translates into a better experience for everybody**

# Our Legal Obligations

Under the **Equality Act 2010**, public authorities are legally required to uphold the **Public Sector Equality Duty** (PSED), ensuring that equality considerations are built into every stage of planning, design, and delivery.

## Key Obligations:

- **Eliminate unlawful discrimination** – EWR is actively working to prevent discrimination, harassment, and victimisation based on protected characteristics.
- **Protected Characteristics Include:** Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion or Belief, Sex, Sexual Orientation
- **Advance equality of opportunity** - Consider how to remove or minimize disadvantages, meet different needs, and encourage participation from underrepresented groups.
- **Foster good relations** - Promote understanding and reduce prejudice between people who share protected characteristics and those who do not.

# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

- ✓ **Identify potential discrimination under the Equality Act 2010**

EqIAs are helping uncover whether a proposed action might disadvantage people based on protected characteristics (e.g. age, race, disability, gender).

- ✓ **Promote inclusive decision-making**

They enable EWR to consider diverse needs from the outset—rather than retrofitting inclusion later.

- ✓ **Support legal compliance**

EqIAs are being used to demonstrate that EWR have met our Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) obligations.

- ✓ **Improve outcomes for all**

By highlighting unintended consequences, EqIAs can lead to better, more equitable design of infrastructure.

- ✓ **Encourage transparency and accountability**

Documenting the assessment process shows stakeholders that equality has been considered seriously and systematically.

**The EqIA will be submitted as part of the Development Consent Order (DCO) application**

# Inclusive Design

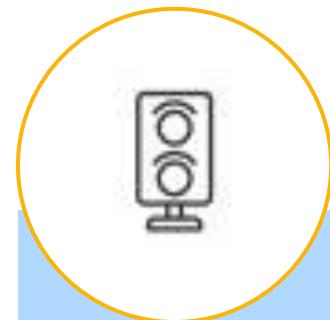
We are looking at inclusive design across all assets, including:



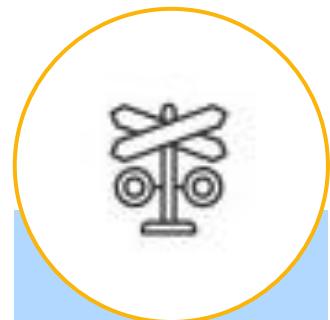
Stations and  
Rolling Stock



Depots, Sidings  
& Stabling



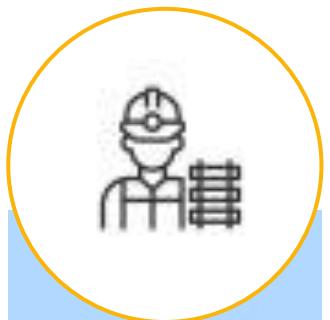
Control Rooms  
/ Centres



Public Rights of  
Way (including  
Level Crossings)



Equipment  
Buildings &  
Routewide  
Infrastructure



Evacuation &  
Maintenance  
Walkways

All **users** – not just passengers but also staff roles (e.g., operators, maintainers)

# Stations

- Iterative **reviews of station designs** to assess accessibility and inclusion.
- Working with design team to **develop mitigations** where issues arise.
- **Developing station requirements** based on good practice and feedback gained from panel sessions.
- We will present station designs to the EWR Accessibility Advisory Panel to **gain feedback from people with lived experience of disability**.
- **Station visits with the AAP** (May 2025), to see their experience within a railway station and understand challenges they face.



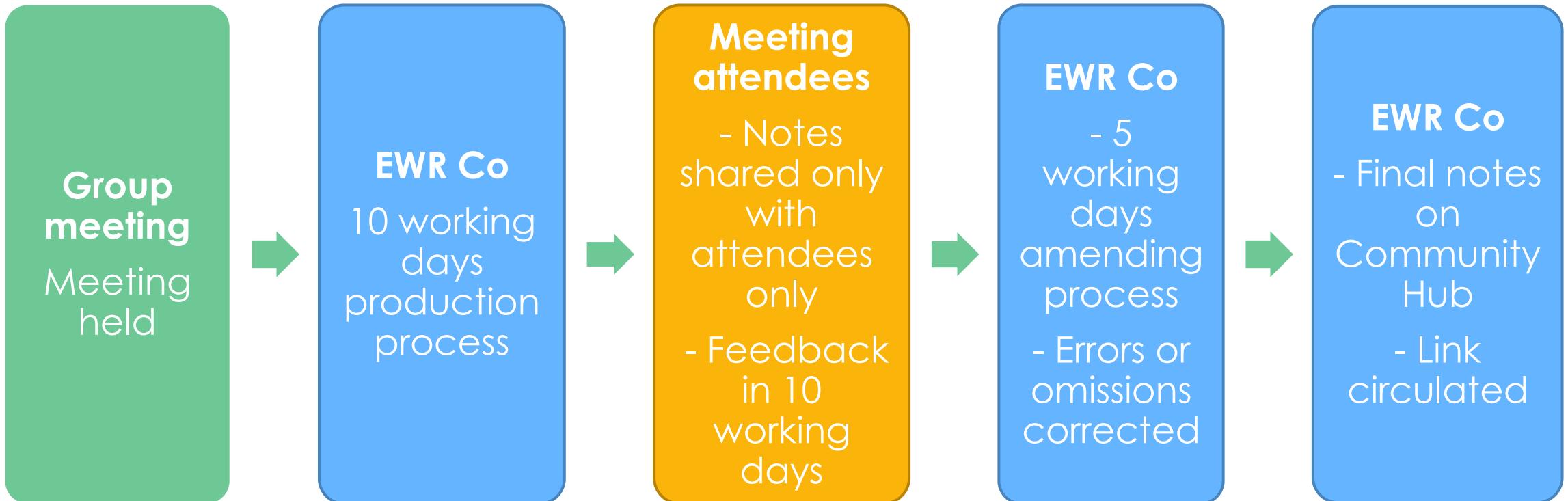
# EWR Accessibility Advisory Panel

- **Established April 2023** to ensure inclusive design through lived experience.
- **9 of the 12 residents** live across the Oxford–Cambridge route, many active in accessibility advocacy.
- **Focus:** Improving access for broad spectrum of disabled people with both visible and non-visible disabilities.
- **Meets every six weeks**, both in person and online, to provide ongoing feedback.
- **Purpose:**
  - Identify barriers early in the design process from a lived experience perspective
  - Develop inclusive infrastructure solutions
  - Enhance independent travel for all users
- **April 2024 published the priority issues** in rail [eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/accessibility-advisory-panel-outlines-priority-issues-for-disabled-passengers](https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/accessibility-advisory-panel-outlines-priority-issues-for-disabled-passengers)

For more information see the Inclusion Page on the EWR website: [East West Rail | Accessibility Advisory Panel](https://eastwestrail.co.uk/news/latest-stories/accessibility-advisory-panel-outlines-priority-issues-for-disabled-passengers)

# Discussion, Q&A

# Creating meeting summary notes





# Thank you

[www.eastwestrail.co.uk](http://www.eastwestrail.co.uk)