

Milton Keynes / Bletchley / Central Bedfordshire Marston Vale Group – Meeting note

Meeting #7 – Details

Date: Tuesday 12 March 2024

Time: 6pm

Type of meeting: Virtual-Teams

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
- Slides (including Action Tracker)

Key discussion points and outcomes

1 Welcome, today's agenda, and housekeeping

1.1 Jeremy Damrel (JD) welcomed the group and ran through the housekeeping slides.

2 General updates

2.1 JD highlighted the recent Spring budget and noted the Government's continued support for EWR, in particular the acceleration of works to the Marston Vale Line (MVL) through the existing Transport Works Act Order (TWAO). JD reiterated that EWR Co are working to support the operation of trains from Oxford to Milton Keynes as part of Connection Stage 1 (CS1), which will continue through to Bedford (CS2) and onto Cambridge (CS3).

2.2 JD explained that since the last meeting EWR Co has announced proposals for a two-staged statutory consultation. The first stage is expected to commence in the first half of this year.

2.3 JD noted this was the first meeting where the Milton Keynes, Bletchley and Central Bedfordshire Marston Vale groups have come together and thanked the groups for their attendance. JD noted that this format was a trial and that if members preferred to go back to separate meetings next time, then that would be implemented. Cllr Graham Turner (GT) expressed that he did not like the new format of the LRG with the combined groups, as there are a number of local issues that need to be discussed.

2.4 Cllr Alan Francis (AF) asked when further information would be provided on the MVL. JD confirmed that at the statutory consultation information would be shared on the entire

route. The consultation will also highlight how some areas of work could be completed sooner through the (existing Network Rail) TWAO.

2.5 Cllr Nick Burton (NB) noted that the TWAO provides specific obligations and had therefore hoped for further details ahead of the statutory consultation. JD explained that EWR Co continues to focus on the scheme in its entirety, but the budget provides the opportunity to accelerate the programme in areas which already have existing consent.

2.6 NB queried when further information would be provided given that construction must start within the next nine months. JD stated that EWR Co will provide further information on the MVL acceleration works at the earliest opportunity. Sarah Jacobs (SJ) stated that other groups had raised interest in the budget and further information would be shared with impacted groups in due course. Ryan Robertson (RR) clarified that the current deadline is for a second train service to be operational by the end of the decade.

3 Actions from the previous meeting

3.1 SJ reviewed all actions which were closed or ongoing. All actions can be found in the meeting slides.

3.2 **Action 1, Meeting 6 (Ongoing) – Bletchley Milton Keynes South:** EWR Co to review *housing numbers published in the Route Update Report*. This action will be taken away by SJ and a response will be provided.

3.3 **Action 1, Meeting 6 (Complete) – Milton Keynes North:** EWR Co to give an update at the next meeting following review of the *West Coast South Strategic Advice Report*. RR explained that conversations with Network Rail confirm that there would be no impact on EWR services and that EWR Co proposals would not prohibit recommendations from the report being implemented in the future. AF and NB noted that EWR services could be impacted by the potential to serve Milton Keynes Central from the east and the west.

3.4 **Action 2, Meeting 6 (Complete) – Bletchley Milton Keynes South:** EWR Co to review *how the Woodleys Farm crossing is being developed and the relationship with SEMK (South East Milton Keynes Strategic Urban Extension)*. Cllr Alex Poppleton (AP) noted the importance of the relationship between SEMK and EWR Co, and raised concerns that communities are unable to comment on development plans. JD explained that EWR Co engage with planning departments and developers to understand timelines and provide feedback on applications. Formal responses to applications are in the public domain, accessible via the Council's planning system.

3.5 **Action 1, Additional Q & A (Complete) – Central Bedfordshire Marston Vale and Bletchley Milton Keynes South:** EWR Co to investigate whether an option to specifically *reject the project should be written into the consultation documentation*. JD explained the specific rejection of EWR will not be a question at statutory consultation. A feedback questionnaire will be produced as part of the consultation which will provide respondents with the opportunity to comment on the scheme as a whole. The weight of

opinion on topics will be recorded within the Consultation Report that supports the DCO application.

3.6 Cllr Jenni Ferrans (JF) asked whether LRG meetings would still take place during the statutory consultation periods. SJ confirmed the meetings would still take place, whilst giving individuals time to review the supporting information documents.

4 Topic - The statutory consultation process

4.1 Sunisha Tharappan (ST) introduced herself as the EWR Co Engagement Lead for the MVL.

DCO process

4.2 EWR is a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). As part of this process, EWR Co will apply to the Secretary of State for Transport for a DCO.

4.3 There are defined stages and requirements. EWR Co is currently in the pre-application stage, so the focus is on design and gathering feedback through stakeholder engagement and statutory consultation. EWR Co are required to carry out consultation as part of the statutory requirements defined in the Planning Act 2008 prior to submitting the DCO application.

EWR's approach to statutory consultation

4.4 As part of this approach, EWR Co will be holding two stages of statutory consultation. The first stage is proposed to take place this summer.

4.5 Prior to launching the first stage of statutory consultation, EWR Co have developed a Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC). EWR Co are currently consulting local authorities along the route to feed into the SoCC, which will help to ensure that the consultation programme is tailored to the needs of the communities.

What will be presented in the first stage of statutory consultation?

4.6 During first stage of the statutory consultation, EWR Co will be providing information on the developing design including options being considered within the design, as well as high-level environmental, traffic and transport, and construction and logistics information.

What will be presented in the second stage of statutory consultation?

4.7 Prior to the second stage of the statutory consultation EWR Co would refine the order limits for the Project, options will be confirmed and a greater level of detail will be presented on the design as a whole.

Taking part in the consultations

4.8 During the statutory consultation periods it is important that it is open to everybody, and EWR Co would aim to make it as accessible as possible. Information would be shared online, as well as hard copies presented at a variety of venues such as libraries and community centres.

Publicising the consultations

4.9 ST ran through a number of methods EWR Co will be using to publicise the consultation stages, including website updates, press releases, social media and local adverts.

What will happen with our feedback after the first and second stage of statutory consultation?

4.10 After the first stage of the statutory consultation, EWR Co will analyse responses identifying any key themes within them. All feedback would be analysed, and the information used to help develop a single proposal for the entire route.

4.11 JF enquired whether the public would be able to see comments made at each stage of the consultation. ST confirmed that comments will be coded and included as part of the Consultation Report which would be drafted after the second consultation.

4.12 NB queried whether there would be any mechanism in place to ensure the information shared is accurate. ST explained that all information presented at the consultation is based on current models and assessments and if further information is available, updates will be provided during the second stage of consultation. JD confirmed that before acceptance of the DCO application for examination there would be a check by the Planning Inspectorate on the quality of pre application consultation, which would ask for feedback from Local Authorities along the route.

What happens next?

4.13 ST explained that EWR Co are currently at the pre-application stage and are working on the design. Consultation with Local Authorities is underway to develop the SoCC.

Questions

4.14 AP queried how long it would take to compile the feedback. ST noted that the timeframe depends on the volume of feedback.

4.15 AM raised a concern that splitting the consultation into two stages could push the timeframe of the entire project back. JD reiterated that timing relies on the volume of feedback and any changes to the design. EWR Co would aim to move from stage one to stage two as quickly as possible.

4.16 Cllr Sue Clark (SC) asked how the (existing Network Rail) TWAO works alongside the DCO application. JD explained that the recent budget provides the opportunity to progress

CS2 faster. The TWAO provides consent for the CS1 works between Oxford and Milton Keynes and an additional service on the MVL. However, EWR Co still require DCO consent for works between Bedford and Cambridge, and for works between Oxford and Bedford that will provide for the full EWR service.

- 4.17 Cllr Chris Martin (CM) noted that there had been no update on the door-to-door connectivity project (similar to Oxford to Bletchley) for the MVL line. SJ confirmed that further detail would be shared at the next meeting.
- 4.18 Cllr Andrea Vincent (AV) highlighted the point raised earlier with regards to housing numbers and expressed concerns that further detail can't be shared. JD explained that EWR Co are aware of the challenges caused by the timing differences between EWR and the developer. EWR CO is working hard to share information at the earliest opportunity – this will be the statutory consultation set for this summer.
- 4.19 Cllr Saverio Bongo (SB) asked if EWR Co will publish the weighting of feedback given. JD confirmed that it is a legal requirement to consider all feedback provided, and the Report will explain how feedback informed design updates, together with comment on the weight of opinion for key themes.
- 4.20 SB asked whether EWR Co would review feedback between the two consultations. JD noted that EWR Co would share an overview of the feedback from the first stage of the consultation to help inform the second stage. Detailed analysis would be available after the second stage in the form of the Consultation Feedback Report that would accompany the DCO application.
- 4.21 AF mentioned the Transport Select Committee meeting and Bedford Mayor Tom Wootton's claim that EWR Co hadn't undertaken any consultation with parishes along the route. The LRG meetings prove this to be incorrect. AF asked if EWR Co would challenge this statement. SJ confirmed that EWR Co won't be putting out a press release to correct Mayor Tom Wootton's statement as EWR Co are confident that the engagement with these groups is effective.
- 4.22 NB noted that Mayor Tom Wootton also suggested that EWR Co has done little engagement compared to that of the A428 scheme. SJ highlighted that further engagement would take place this year in the form of community events and conversations ahead of the statutory consultation. EWR Co continue to strive to engage with as many groups as possible.
- 4.23 NB raised concerns about the validity of the feedback provided from parish councils in Buckinghamshire. SJ explained that EWR Co has been working through the feedback with Kate Campbell, the chair of the Buckinghamshire LRG group.
- 4.24 NB raised concern that a recent telephone survey where EWR Co contacted 1000 people in Bedford was misleading, particularly the figures around buses. SJ would come back to the group with a response to this.
- 4.25 NB noted that there were a number of outstanding actions that need to be addressed before statutory consultation. SJ confirmed she would work through these.
- 4.26 NB highlighted that other LRG groups have been informed of changes to freight path figures. RR confirmed that the change of two to four freight paths has been accessible to the public since the Route Update Announcement (RUA).

Post-meeting clarification: An update to the freight paths was also covered during the LRG RUA webinar held on 26 May 2023.

5 Closing remarks, future meetings, and topics

- 5.1 NB reiterated the importance that clarification is provided on the TWAO and suggested a separate meeting to discuss the matter. JD agreed that local engagement is needed to support the MVL acceleration.
- 5.2 JD thanked everyone for their time and contribution and ended the meeting.

Summary of actions

- **ACTION 1:** EWR Co to provide an update on the MVL acceleration works/ TWAO.
- **ACTION 2:** EWR Co to expand on the headlines from the details of the recent Bedford survey.
- **ACTION 3:** EWR Co to review outstanding actions.
- **ACTION 4:** EWR Co to issue poll to members asking whether the group should continue to be combined or to revert back.

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Jeremy Damrel, EWR Co lead
- Ryan Robertson, Area Manager, Marston Vale Line
- Sarah Jacobs, Local Representative Groups Engagement Manager
- Gail Buckland, Community Engagement Manager
- Sunisha Tharappan, Area Engagement Lead, Marston Vale Line

Parish Council representatives

- Cllr Gill Clough, Aspley Heath Parish Council
- Cllr Phillip Ball, Bow Brickhill Parish Council
- Cllr Sam Crooks, Broughton & Milton Keynes Parish Council
- Cllr Clinton Taylor, Houghton Conquest Parish Council
- Cllr Jacquie Abbey, Hulcote and Salford Parish Council
- Cllr Robert Harrison, Hulcote and Salford Parish Council
- Cllr Nick Burton, Husborne Crawley Parish Council
- Cllr Graham Turner, Lidlington Parish Council
- Cllr Becki Gaskin, Lidlington Parish Council
- Cllr Chris Martin, Marston Moretney Parish Council
- Cllr Hugh Roberts, Marston Moretney Parish Council

- Cllr Alan Francis, New Bradwell Parish Council
- Cllr Peter Barnes, Simpson and Ashland Parish Council
- Cllr Roy Adams, Stony Stratford Parish Council
- Cllr van den Berg, Wavendon Parish Council
- Cllr Alex Poppleton, Woburn Sands Parish Council
- Cllr Adrian Moss, Wolverton and Greenleys Parish Council

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Susan Heather Clinch, Ampthill in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr John Baker, Aspley and Woburn in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Robert Morris, Cranfield and Marston Moretaine in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Saverio Bongo, Cranfield and Marston Moretaine in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Sue Clark, Cranfield and Marston Moretaine in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr David Hopkins, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Waqas Ahmad, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Ben Adewale, Monkston in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Jenni Ferrans, Monkston in Milton Keynes

Apologies

- Aspley Guise Parish Council
- Brogborough Parish Council
- Cranfield Parish Council
- Houghton Conquest Parish Council
- Millbrook Parish Council
- Ridgmont Parish Council
- Steppingley Parish Council
- Woburn Parish Council
- Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
- Broughton & Milton Keynes Parish Council
- Husborne Crawley Parish Council
- Kents Hill, Monkston and Brinklow Parish Council
- Little Brickhill Parish Council
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council
- Old Woughton Parish Council
- Shenley Brook End Parish Council
- Walton Parish Council
- West Bletchley Parish Council
- Woughton on the Green Parish Council
- Abbey Hill Parish Council
- Bradwell Parish Council
- Campbell Park Parish Council

- Central Milton Keynes Parish Council
- Stantonbury Parish Council
- Fairfields Parish Council
- Whitehouse Parish Council
- Great Linford Parish Council
- Newport Pagnell Parish Council
- Stony Stratford Town
- Shenley Church End Parish Council
- Stantonbury Parish Council
- Wolverton and Greenleys Parish Council
- Cllr Mark Smith, Ampthill in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Gary Summerfield, Ampthill in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr John Baker, Aspley and Woburn in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Ed Hume, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Emily Darlington, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Mohammed Khan, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Nigel Matthew Long, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Mo Imran, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Adam Rolfe, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Lauren Townsend, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Michael Legg, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Marie Bradburn, Bradwell in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Robert Exon, Bradwell in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Robin Bradburn, Bradwell in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Kerrie Bradburn, Broughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Uroy Clarke, Broughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Charlotte Hall, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Nana Oguntola, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Paul Trendall, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Moriah Priestley, Central Milton Keynes in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Darron Kendrick, Central Milton Keynes in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Martin Petchey, Central Milton Keynes in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Tracey Bailey, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Victoria Hopkins, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Ian Adams, Flitwick in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Heather Townsend, Flitwick in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Gareth Mackey, Flitwick in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Rebecca Hares, Houghton Conquest and Haynes in Central Bedfordshire
- Cllr Brigid Sarah McBride, Loughton and Shenley in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Shanika Caitlin Mahendran, Loughton and Shenley in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Vanessa McPake, Monkston in Milton Keynes

- Cllr Chris Wardle, Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Alison Andrew, Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Liam Andrews, Newport Pagnell North and Hanslope in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Andy Carr, Newport Pagnell South in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Phil Windsor, Newport Pagnell South in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Chris Taylor, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Peter Paul Cannon, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Sophie Ann Bell, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Stephen Brown, Stantonbury in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Chantelle De Villiers, Stantonbury in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Naseem Khan, Stantonbury in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Akash Nayee, Stony Stratford in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Jennifer Wilson-Marklew, Stony Stratford in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Joe Hearnshaw, Stony Stratford in Milton Keynes
- Cllr James Lancaster, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Manish Verma, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Fathima Shazna Muzammil, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes
- Cllr James Lancaster, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Ansar Hussain, Wolverton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Peter Marland, Wolverton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Robert Middleton, Wolverton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Amber McQuillan, Woughton and Fishermead in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Donna Fuller, Woughton and Fishermead in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Sue Smith, Woughton and Fishermead in Milton Keynes