

# Buckinghamshire

## Meeting #5 - Details

**Date:** Thursday 29 June 2023

**Time:** 5:30PM

**Type of meeting:** Virtual meeting (Zoom)

## 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](#):

- Action Tracker
- Agenda
- Slides.

## Key discussion points and outcomes

### 1. General updates

- 1.1 KC noted that the Accessibility Advisory Panel (AAP) met for their first session in April.
- 1.2 KC explained that the route update announcement on 26<sup>th</sup> May confirmed the route alignment preference between Bedford and Cambridge. Additional information can be found on the website [here](#).

#### ***Introduction***

- 1.3 KC noted that changes have been made to the proposals, which take account of the feedback received since the 2021 non-statutory consultation, further technical and environment work, and the analysis undertaken as part of the Affordable Connections Project (ACP). EWR Co is now sharing the updates made to the developing plans to design a railway that meets the needs of communities between Oxford and Cambridge.

### ***What have we announced?***

1.4 The Route Update Report (RUR) describes how the proposals for EWR have developed since the 2021 non-statutory consultation and what our preferred plans for certain sections of the railway are, including: route preferences, route-wide matters, and what happens next.

1.5 KC added that alongside the RUR, EWR Co published the Consultation Feedback Report (CFR), Economic and Technical Report (ETR) and the Need to Sell Property Scheme Guide (NtS Scheme Guide). KC explained that the CFR contains a summary of all feedback received during and after the non-statutory consultation and how EWR Co have taken account of it. A Need to Sell Consultation Feedback Report summarising the consultation on the draft NtS Scheme Guide has also been published.

## **2. Topic- Route Update Announcement**

### ***Updated service pattern***

2.1 Shaun Fisher (SF) introduced himself as the Programme Manager for Oxford to Bletchley.

2.2 SF ran through the updated service pattern for EWR trains; 4 trains per hour will depart from Oxford, with two going to Milton Keynes (CS1) and two continuing onto Cambridge. At Bedford another 2 trains per hour would join the 2 trains coming from Oxford/ Bletchley, with a total of 4 trains per hour between Bedford & Cambridge.

### ***Oxford station***

2.3 SF explained that Network Rail work is underway at Oxford station. In the 2021 non-statutory consultation, EWR Co presented plans to add new platforms to the station, build new infrastructure to the south of the station and make improvements to the station itself. These plans have since developed.

2.4 SF noted that there are various different interfaces between EWR and Network Rail that need to be considered and this work is ongoing. SF explained that EWR Co is also looking at additional track work to the north to boost capacity between Oxford station and Oxford North junction.

### ***Oxford to Bletchley***

2.5 SF noted that construction work is underway between Bicester and Bletchley (CS1). However, EWR Co is still considering the work that will be required at Oxford Parkway and Bicester Village stations, including forecasting demand and options for the London Road level crossing. Work is continuing to identify locations for passing loops between Oxford and Bletchley to allow faster trains to overtake stopping services.

### ***What happens next?***

2.6 SF explained that EWR Co still has work to do and is carrying out further surveys and investigations to help develop the project. This will be vital in providing information for assessments, which will underpin the information presented at the statutory consultation.

2.7 SF added that EWR Co will develop the design based on feedback received from the two previous non-statutory consultations and continuing environmental, economic and technical studies.

### ***Questions***

2.8 An attendee noted that there were two services to Bletchley and asked if there are any direct services to Milton Keynes Central and asked when this would come into service. SF explained that for CS1 the earliest it could come into service is December 2024 and that two services per hour will go from Oxford to Bletchley and Milton Keynes. When CS2 is completed two additional trains will go across the Marston Vale Line through to Bedford. CS3 will connect Bedford to Cambridge and this will be when the full services from Oxford to Cambridge occur.

2.9 An attendee noted that from December 2024, passengers will be able to catch a train between Oxford and Milton Keynes but they won't be able to get a train from Oxford to Cambridge until 2030, and stated this is quite a big gap. They asked whether there will be two trains per hour instead of four for the first phase. SF confirmed that there will be two trains per hour from Oxford to Milton Keynes for CS1 and clarified that EWR Co haven't committed to a date but have a goal to run trains from Oxford to Cambridge by the end of the decade.

2.10 An attendee asked if there were four trains per hour in each direction. SF clarified that it was four trains per hour in each direction and therefore eight trains per hour in total.

2.11 An attendee noted that the map presented a dotted line to Aylesbury and asked for clarification on this. KC explained that the Government is yet to make a decision on the Aylesbury spur, but EWR Co is continuing to work with them on the business case. The original proposals showed that it wasn't going to provide a consistent service and the business case therefore needed to be reviewed again. She added that EWR Co is working with the Government to understand how service patterns could look and understand whether it is a viable option.

2.12 An attendee asked what the timetable looks like for these two trains per hour. KC responded that they are still working on the timetable and will need to work with the operator who is still to be formally appointed. She explained that there is an indicative timetable which she can share.

**Post Meeting Clarification:**

A draft timetable was shared with the whole group via email following the last meeting.

2.13 An attendee noted that there are plans for 4,000 new homes to be delivered in Newton Longville and asked if there were any visions to reinstate the idea of a station at Newton Longville. Another attendee noted that the plans were for 3,000 new homes, not 4000, and stated that Network Rail have built a storage depo where the station would be placed. KC explained that a station at Newton Longville isn't part of the current proposals. SF added that door-to-door connectivity is important to EWR Co to connect communities where there aren't stations and further work is being done to consider door-to-door connectivity across the route.

2.14 An attendee asked if a stop could be put at Newton Longville, not necessarily a station. KC responded that the current construction design has been completed for CS1 now so they will not be adding in any new stations as part of CS1. However, she suggested that if the attendee felt strongly about this they could raise this at the statutory consultation.

2.15 Another attendee added that EWR Co is a main line railway and not a branch line. They stated that when you look at the overall route plan, tension is being caused along the Marston Vale Line due to multiple stations being so close together over a short distance. They noted that the Group should concentrate on the principal stations currently planned rather than adding additional ones. SF added that if EWR Co stopped at every station, this would cause a longer journey between Oxford and Cambridge and stated that a balance needs to be maintained.

2.16 An attendee asked to what extent has EWR Co been communicating with the Labour Party and asked if they were supportive of the proposals. KC explained that EWR Co undertakes engagement with a variety of stakeholders including political stakeholders across the board. She added that there is cross party support for EWR.

2.17 An attendee asked when the roads will be fixed which have been damaged by construction activities on CS1. KC explained that this is something that EWR Alliance have been working closely with Buckinghamshire Council on and engaging with Greg Smith MP to scope out interim repairs and scoping out plans and funding for permanent repairs. The attendee asked what year this will be done. KC responded that interim repairs are already underway. Susan Browning (SB) noted that the majority of permanent repairs will be undertaken in the latter half of 2023. The permanent repairs will need to be done next year once the demobilisation of the construction compounds has occurred.

2.18 An attendee noted that passing places on the roads have been built to a better standard than the roads they are attached to. They asked if these passing places could be left in. KC responded that she wouldn't be able to answer that and that these types of discussions are for meetings with EWR Alliance, outside of the LRG. She reminded the Group that this meeting is designed to look at the project as a whole. She added that they can engage with the attendee in more detail about the proposals outside of this meeting, as there have been lots of discussions around passing bays.

2.19 An attendee noted that they were told that Ox Lane, Little Horwood Road and Herd's Hill north of the white bridge would be reinstated in Q3 of this year and asked if that is still correct. KC confirmed this is still the aim but reiterated that this is outside of the LRG's remit.

2.20 An attendee asked if EWR Alliance will be doing the Lemborough and Gawcott Roads as well. KC responded that these roads are talked about in length in other meetings and that she's keen to focus the LRG on the project as a whole and therefore will respond on this outside of the meeting. SB responded that she would take this offline and discuss it with the attendee.

### **3. Review of actions from meeting #4**

3.1 An attendee noted that they do not have any opportunities to talk to EWR Alliance. KC asked if she could have a chat with the attendee to try to facilitate this. The attendee stated that this a Group matter and that there were regular meetings with HS2 and EWR Alliance which stopped. The attendee asked if these could be reinstated as this was an opportunity to discuss matters.

3.2 KC noted that Action 2 from meeting #4 'to reconsider approach to group meeting' is ongoing. KC asked the group whether they find the Group purposeful and whether they want the meeting to continue in its current form. Sarah Jacobs (SJ) noted she was interested in this Group's views as it's different to the other Groups along the route due to the current construction, she noted it is up to the Group how they want to approach future meetings and welcomed their views now or via email.

3.3 An attendee noted that the Group should be looking at Oxford to Cambridge as a whole and the importance of this LRG is that attendees can provide input on that. They also suggested to have conversations with the operator once this has been confirmed, to help with the launch of the service. They suggested to continue the LRG meetings and possibly time the meetings to key points in the process, that are affecting the DCO rather than quarterly.

3.4 An attendee asked if the operator could attend the LRG meeting. KC suggested that this could be done in the future once the operator is officially appointed. She outlined that although

the Prior Information Notice (PIN) had been published the contract had not yet been agreed between the Department for Transport (DfT) and the operator yet.

3.5 Ian Kelly added that himself and Greg Smith MP work very closely with the operator and agreed that it's a great suggestion to have the operator attend the meetings as soon as possible.

#### **4. Closing remarks, future meetings and topics**

4.1. KC outlined that EWR Co will consider feedback from the Group on how they would like the future meetings to run and will share this with the Group. SJ added that if the attendees feel like a meeting is not needed in September and should be held when there is more to talk about, to let her know.

### **Attendees:**

#### **EWR Co attendees**

- Kate Campbell, EWR Co Lead
- Shaun Fisher, Programme Manager for the Oxford to Bletchley
- Sarah Jacobs Local Representatives Groups Engagement Manager
- Damien Thomas, Communications and Engagement Manager
- EWR Co production and support team

#### **Parish Council representatives**

- Cllr Roger Slevin, Winslow Parish Council
- Cllr Jon Stone, Adstock Parish Council
- Cllr Peter Burton, Padbury Parish Council
- Cllr Mike Chapman, Newton Longville Parish Council
- Cllr Andrew Jones, Mursley Parish Council

#### **Local authority councillors**

- Cllr Beville Stainer, Winslow in Buckinghamshire Council
- Cllr Caroline Cornell, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council
- Cllr John Chilver, Winslow in Buckinghamshire Council

#### **Other attendees**

- Ian Kelly, Parliamentary Assistant and Caseworker for Greg Smith Member of Parliament for Buckingham;
- Susan Browning, EWR Stakeholder & Community Lead, Buckinghamshire Council

**Apologies:**

- Addington Parish Council
- Calvert Green Parish Council
- Charndon Parish Council
- Drayton Parslow Parish Council
- Dunton Parish Council
- East Claydon Parish Council
- Edgcott Parish Council
- Granborough Parish Council
- Great Brickhill Parish Council
- Great Horwood Parish Council
- Grendon Underwood Parish Council
- Hillesden Parish Council
- Hoggeston Parish Council
- Hogshaw Parish Council
- Little Horwood Parish Council
- Ludgershall Parish Council
- Marsh Gibbon Parish Council
- Middle Claydon Parish Council
- North Marston Parish Council
- Oving Parish Council
- Poundon Parish Council
- Preston Bissett Parish Council
- Quainton Parish Council
- Steeple Claydon Parish Council
- Stewkley Parish Council
- Stoke Hammond Parish Council
- Swanbourne Parish Council
- Twyford Parish Council
- Angel Macpherson, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council
- David Goss, Winslow in Buckinghamshire Council
- Frank Mahon, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council
- Iain Macpherson, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- Jilly Jordan, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- Michael Rand, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council

- Patrick Fealey, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council
- Philip Gomm, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- Robin Stuchbury, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council.
- Peter Martin, Deputy Cabinet Member Transport (HS2/EWR), Councillor for the Missendens, Buckinghamshire Council