

Bicester Group – Meeting notes

Meeting #7 – Details

Date: Thursday 28th March 2024

Time: 6:00 PM

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

Key discussion points and outcomes

1 Welcome, today's agenda, and housekeeping

- 1.1 Kate Campbell (KC) welcomed the group and went through the agenda for the meeting and ran through the housekeeping slides.

2 General updates

- 2.1 KC noted that feedback from local representative groups (LRGs) and the community events will be fed into the proposals that will come from the statutory consultation. This will be launched in June.
- 2.2 KC explained that the statutory consultation will be split into two stages to maximise the opportunity for all communities along the route to comment and influence the proposals.

3 Review of actions

- 3.1 KC covered of the actions. The action from meeting 6 re the AGM meeting invitation was raised by Carole Hetherington (CH) as not being completed as she had not been approached about this. KC agreed that we would take this away to follow up.

Post meeting clarification

Carole has since contacted EWR after the meeting to confirm that she had received an email from EWR on the meeting and offers apologies for misleading the meeting on this action point.

4 Topic – The statutory consultation process

- 4.1 Michael Flynn (MF) introduced himself as the Stakeholder Engagement Lead for the area between Oxford and Bletchley.

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 Development Consent Order (DCO).
- 4.3 There are defined stages and requirements and EWR Co is currently in the pre-application stage, so the focus is on the design and gathering feedback through stakeholder engagement and 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.

Our approach to the statutory consultation

- 4.4 As part of this approach, EWR Co would be holding two stages of statutory consultation. And the first one would take place this year around the summertime.

What will be presented in the first stage of statutory consultation

- 4.5 MF continued, at the first stage of our statutory consultation, EWR Co would be looking to provide information on options being considered within the design, as well as high-level environmental information, high level traffic and transport information, high level construction and logistics information.

What will be presented in the second stage of statutory consultation

- 4.6 The second stage of the consultation will share similar information, but it will be more refined.

Taking part in the consultations

- 4.7 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.

Publicising the consultations

- 4.8 There are several ways that EWR Co would be publicising the consultation, and associated events to make sure that as many people as possible can feed into it. EWR Co would like to ask for the help of LRG members in promoting these as well.
- 4.9 After the first stage of the statutory consultation, EWR Co would analyse responses identifying any key themes within them. Any commonality of themes would be analysed, and the information used to help develop a single proposal for the entire route.

- 4.10 At this present time, EWR Co do not have a date for the consultation, but this will be shared with all LRG members and the wider public in due course.

5 Questions

- 5.1 CH asked about the AAP
- 5.2 Chris Pruden asked about the recent Land Interest Questionnaires, and suggested there should have been more warning about these, and more information given. KC thanked CH for his comment and updated the group that since the letter had been issued, we have now created an FAQ document, which is available on the website. EWR will also be issuing copies of this document to all those who have received the letters, and it would be included with any future LIQ correspondence.
- 5.3 What is the situation with the Aylesbury connection? KC advised the group that the position hasn't changed and is still being considered.
- 5.4 Dawn Seaward (DS) asked about the amount of construction materials being moved as the works progress. Are there any plans to use part of the EWR line to move materials to Calvert? And if so, what will the impact of traffic on the service trains be? KC advised that we take this question away and provide the group with the answer. ACTION
- 5.5 Cllr Simon Lytton asked if more information about plans for the level crossing could be shared today? KC replied that there has been ongoing work with the district council, and it is still being discussed and that more information is likely to be shared during the statutory consultation. SL asked when and what extent the services would be ramped up and how the consultation would affect the implementation of a solution. KC answered that services from Bicester to Bletchley are due to start from 2025 but at this stage we do not have the service pattern. If we have any more information on this, we will share with the group in the summary note. ACTION
- 5.6 DS asked about the recent concrete spillage at Marsh Gibburn and that this area is prone to flooding. Has it all been cleared up? ACTION
- 5.7 Calum Miller (CM) asked if there was now funding in place for the whole line? KC replied that the government has made funding announcements for connection stage one, and a funding announcement for the acceleration for the Marston Vale Line. There have been commitments made for the rest of the line, but we currently we have not had further funding confirmations.
- 5.8 CM commented that people feel the consultation process is very slow and he hopes there is a quick process to delivering a solution to the London Rd crossing. KC acknowledged the comment, and reiterated the intention is to be able to share more information on this at the statutory consultation.

6 Closing remarks, future meetings, and topics

- 6.1 KC asked the group for any suggestions for future topics. The group was encouraged to send these to Sarah Jacobs at any time.
- 6.2 There were no other suggestions from attendees, so KC thanked everyone for their time and contribution and ended the meeting.

Summary of actions

- **ACTION 1:** Dawn Seaward (DS) asked about the amount of construction materials being moved as the works progress. Are there any plans to use part of the EWR line to move materials to Calvert? And if so, what will the impact of traffic on the service trains be?
- **ACTION 2:** Cllr Simon Lytton asked if any more information about plans for the level crossing could be shared.
- **ACTION 3** DS asked about the recent concrete spillage at Marsh Gibburn and that this area is prone to flooding. Has it all been cleared up?

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Kate Campbell, EWR Co Lead
- Gail Buckland, Community Engagement Manager
- Michael Flynn, Oxford Area Stakeholder Lead

Parish Council Representatives

- Dawn Seaward, Ambrosden Parish Council

Local Authority Councillors

- Donna Ford, Bicester East in Cherwell, Bicester North in Oxfordshire County
- Calum Miller, Otmoor in Oxfordshire County
- Les Sibley, Bicester West in Oxfordshire County
- Tom Beckett, Bicester in Cherwell
- Cllr Simon Lytton, Bicester North & Caversfield in Cherwell
- Cllr Lynn Pratt, , Bicester North & Caversfield in Cherwell
- Nigel Simpson, Kirtlington & Kidlington North
- Christopher Pruden, Bicester South and Ambrosden in Cherwell

Other attendees

- Carole Hetherington, Langford Village Community Association

Apologies