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RAIL

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Huntingdonshire / South Cambridgeshire Local Representatives Group

Meeting 5

20 June 2023

01. Welcome and today's agenda

Today's agenda

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02.
Housekeeping

03.
General updates

04.
Topic- Route Update Announcement

05.
Review of actions from meeting #4

06.
Closing remarks, future meetings and topics

02. Housekeeping

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

03. General updates

Since our last meeting

- Local elections held: welcome to the newly elected LRG members.
- East West Rail Accessibility Advisory Panel met for their first session in April.
- **On 26th May**, we published the route update for East West Rail (EWR)
- We have now published a range of **Factsheets** that you may also find useful including:
 - Approach to Cambridge
 - Embankments and Viaducts

(<https://eastwestrail.co.uk/routeupdate>)



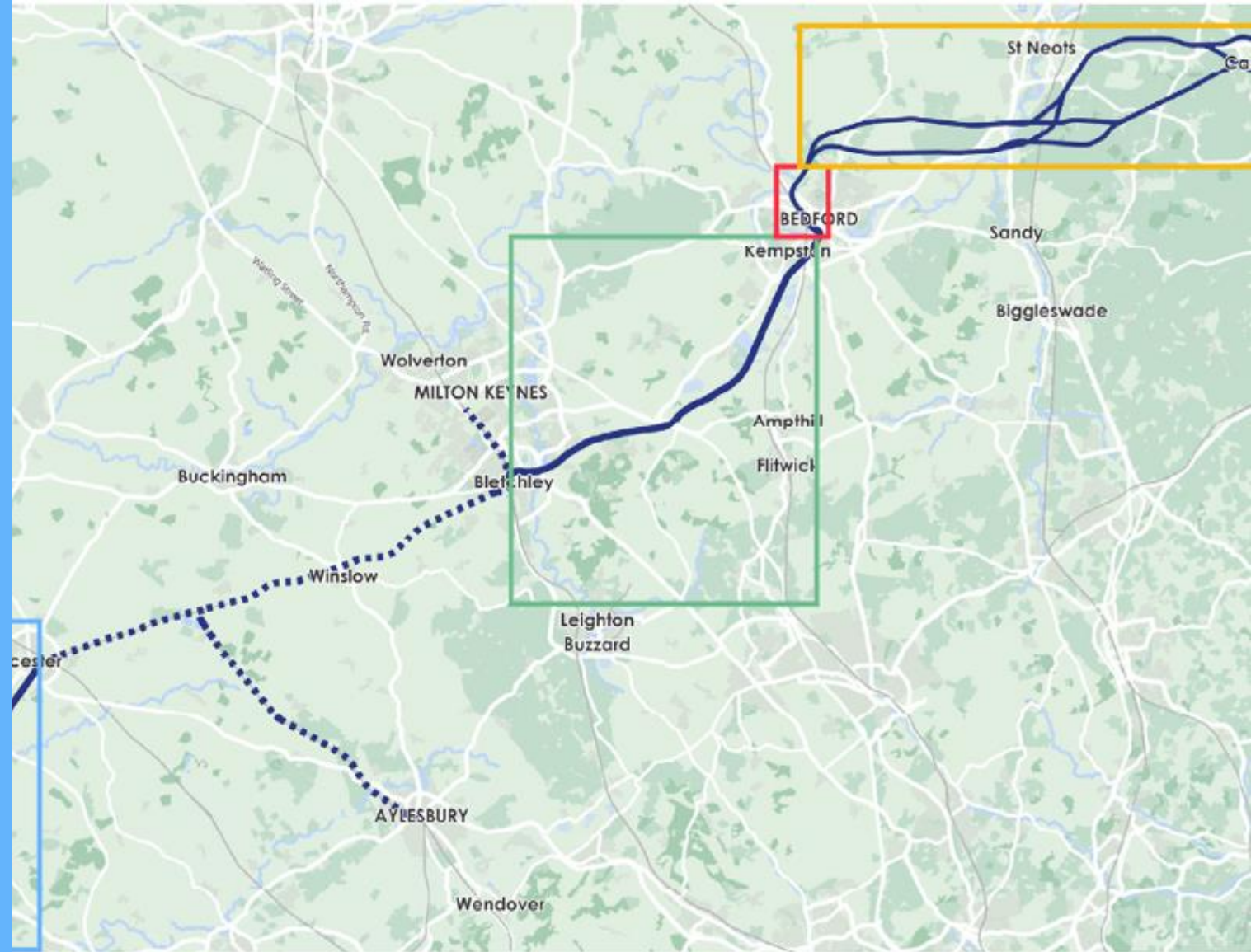
Introduction

Since the non-statutory public consultation on East West Rail in 2021, we've carefully reviewed feedback and used it, alongside a strategic review of the Project, to guide our developing plans to design a railway that meets the needs of communities between Oxford and Cambridge.

We've made some changes to the proposals we presented in 2021, which take account of:

- Feedback received during and since the 2021 consultation
- Further technical and environmental work
- The analysis undertaken as part of the Affordable Connections Project

Following that work, we are now sharing a number of updates about EWR.



- Project section A:
Oxford to Bicester
- Project section B:
Bicester to Marston Vale Line
- Project section C:
Bedford



What have we announced?

Route Update Report

The report describes how the proposals for EWR have developed since the 2021 consultation and what our preferred plans for certain sections of the railway are, including:

- Route preferences
- Route-wide matters
- What happens next



Associated Reports

Alongside the Route Update Report, we're also publishing:

- The 2021 Consultation Feedback Report
- The EWR Economic and Technical Report
- The 2023 Need to Sell Property Scheme



A little more on the Need to Sell Scheme

2023 Route Update Announcement

We have launched our Need to Sell Property Scheme, for home and property owners with a compelling need to sell.

This will allow people to sell their home or small business to EWR Co while the Project is in development and delivery, where they been unable to do so other than at a substantially reduced value because of the EWR Project.

Telephone number – 0330 838 7583

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Midsummer Boulevard

Milton Keynes

MK9 1FB



04.

Topic- Route Update Announcement

Rob Milner, Development Programme Manager: CS3

Connecting to the East Coast Main Line

Route Update

Our emerging preferences at the 2021 public consultation were:

- **Alignment 1**, which would travel northeast from Bedford, pass north of Ravensden, Wilden and Roxton and serve a new St Neots South Option A station.
- **Alignment 9** would travel northeast from Bedford, pass south of Ravensden, Wilden and Roxton and would continue east to serve a new Tempsford Option A station.

We reviewed feedback from consultation and Alignment 1 was found to continue to perform better overall.

Alignment 9 would:

- lead to the village of Roxton becoming encircled by dual carriageways
- likely have greater impacts on the environment
- be more expensive than Alignment 1.



Connecting to the East Coast Main Line

Route Update

After further review of the opportunities at St Neots or Tempsford, we found that a station at Tempsford would have greater potential to support economic growth than a station at St Neots.

Both locations could support roughly the same amount of new jobs and homes, but a Tempsford station would:

- Be more likely to enable this development to come forward
- Facilitate the re-use of the former RAF Tempsford site, achieving better brownfield over greenfield land usage.
- Avoid severance caused by the new A428 dual carriageway, which would be likely to directly impact a development at St Neots;
- Avoid the risk of the new community coalescing with the built-up area of St Neots.



Cambourne

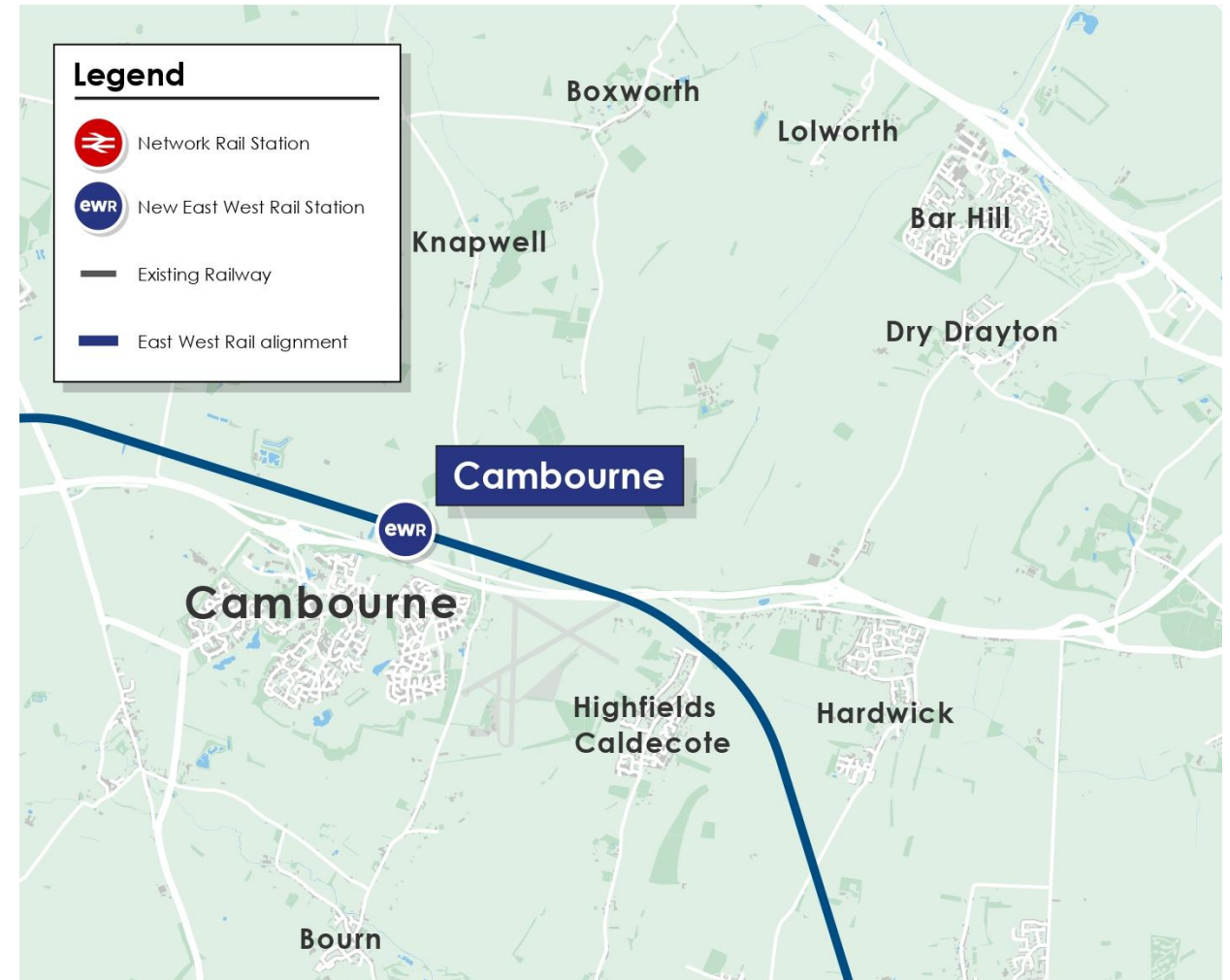
A new station north of Cambourne

A station at Cambourne South would require a greater level of mitigation to protect environmental and heritage assets.

This would constrain development at Cambourne South, so alignments serving Cambourne North perform better in relation to housing and economic growth.

A station north of Cambourne would not be expected to constrain development to the north of the A428, although it would be separated from the village of Cambourne.

Routes serving a Cambourne North station would run alongside the A428 potentially allowing the scheme to benefit from a shared travel corridor.



Cambridge

Route Update

- The approach to Cambridge will be made from a southern route.
- Despite the northern approach potentially being cheaper than the south, it doesn't deliver the same economic benefits.
- Cambridge Biomedical Campus is a driver for economic growth, creating high value jobs and attracting investment.
- Three times as many jobs within walking distance of Cambridge South, compared to Cambridge North.
- Biomedical Campus has 'triple helix' of the public and private sectors, combined with academia, which characterise the most successful science clusters around the globe. It's also part of a wider life sciences cluster growing south of Cambridge. These circumstances aren't matched in the north.
- More traffic congestion to relieve in the south than north.
- Material reductions in height of embankments and viaducts through South Cambridgeshire.



Cambridge

Growth constraints in Cambridge

Forecasts predict that **80,000 new jobs** can be created in Cambridge by 2050.

However, this growth is constrained by the existing transport network, especially to the west of the city.

Alongside high house prices and a limited labour pool, this is preventing people from accessing these opportunities.

EWR would allow more people to get into Cambridge and the Cambridge Biomedical Campus, the city's largest employment site

The Cambridge Biomedical Campus already attracts significant investment into the UK, lifting restrictions to help business grow and individuals flourish.



Embankments and viaducts

Embankments and viaducts

Embankments and viaducts are used by railways across the world to bring sections of track up to an acceptable height and smooth gradients over low ground.

During the 2021 consultation, we presented outline details about where the new railway might need to be ‘in cutting’ or ‘on embankment / viaduct’ and displayed the ‘reasonable worst-case scenario’.

Following responses to this consultation, we looked at ways we could reduce the height of proposed embankments and viaducts – or remove them altogether.

Removing or reducing embankments and viaducts

The work we’ve been doing since the consultation has helped identify some potential opportunities to reduce or remove viaducts and embankments, by:

- Taking the railway under roads in cuttings instead of building viaducts over them.
- Making minor diversions to potential route alignments to allow the railway to be lowered.
- Diverting the roads over the railway on smaller overbridges instead of building viaducts over existing roads.

These initiatives could allow us to remove completely or reduce the height of approximately 50% of the embankments or viaducts (by length) compared to what was shown in the 2021 consultation.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity

Building on the progress made on the section of the railway between Oxford and Milton Keynes, our ambition is to deliver 10% biodiversity net gain across the Project

We're continuing to prioritise avoiding high value and priority habitats and have done additional mapping work to avoid potential ancient woodland that hasn't been mapped.

Environmental surveys and assessments

We use environmental data to help us develop proposals that avoid, mitigate and compensate for potential impacts on the environment.

Since our last consultation we've continued undertaking environmental surveys and these will continue throughout 2023-24. We'll publish the findings of these assessments in the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR) as part of the statutory consultation, where you'll have opportunities to review and comment on our findings.



Route-wide matters

Benefits of rail freight

Rail freight can be a quick and sustainable way to carry goods around the country and offers many advantages:

- **it reduces CO2 emissions** by up to 76% compared to transporting freight by road
- **it reduces congestion on local roads**, as each freight train removes up to 76 lorries from the roads
- **it improves safety** by taking lorries off the roads, rail freight prevents an estimated 600 casualties per year
- **it brings benefits to the UK economy** estimated at £1.6 billion each year in productivity gains for UK businesses.

Rail freight on EWR

EWR has the potential to provide an alternative, more efficient route for some existing freight flows from the ports at Felixstowe and Southampton.

We've been exploring these options and opportunities, weighed against further investment requirements and local community considerations.

The current scope of EWR would allow:

- two new freight train paths per day per direction from Felixstowe, routed via Cambridge, through to Oxford and beyond
- around two new freight train paths per day from Southampton, routed via Oxford, Bletchley and onto the WCML.

These paths could replace over 70,000 HGV journeys on the roads every year

Route-wide matters

Our approach to freight

While our focus is on passenger services, we've been tasked with designing a railway that maintains the current rail freight capacity and makes appropriate provision for reasonable future growth.

The proposed route alignment includes connections to key parts of the wider network.

Current freight on EWR

There are three main existing freight flows across the current route, which we're considering in our designs:

- The Oxford to Bicester part of the route currently sees some freight traffic between Oxford and Banbury Road
- Freight traffic originating from the MML via the MVL, that connects to the WCML at Bletchley
- The final section offers paths for freight from London to Quainton Road/Calvert via Aylesbury.

What happens next?

We still have work to do and are carrying out more surveys and investigations to help us design the Project in more detail.

These will be vital in providing information for our assessments, which will underpin the information presented at the statutory consultation our subsequent DCO application.

We'll develop our design based on feedback received from the two previous consultations and continuing environmental, economic and technical studies.

There will be further opportunity for you to comment on our proposals during the statutory consultation.



What happens next?

Future consultation

We plan to start the statutory consultation on the preferred route and associated infrastructure in the first half of 2024.

This will provide a further opportunity for you to share your views with us.

In the meantime, we'll continue to engage with local communities and stakeholders to help us refine the design before inviting the public to submit further feedback.

Consultation feedback will be carefully considered when finalising our proposals.

Application for a Development Consent Order (DCO)

A Development Consent Order (DCO) is a piece of law that gives authority to East West Railway Company (EWR Co) to build the new railway.

This means that we're required to make an application for a DCO to obtain permission to construct and operate the railway.

The application will be made to the Planning Inspectorate who, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Transport, will appoint a panel to examine the application.

The examination will include consideration of the likely impacts of the Project on the environment and protected habitats.

Following the examination, a recommendation will be made to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will decide whether to give consent for the Project.

Community events in your area

Date	Time	Venue
22 June 2023	2pm – 8pm	Eversden Village Hall 4 Chapel Road, Great Eversden, CB23 1HP
26 June 2023	2pm – 8pm	Harston Village Hall 20 High Street, Harston, CB22 7PX
11 July 2023	2pm – 8pm	Cambridge Belfry Hotel Back Lane, Cambourne, CB23 6BW
17 July 2023	2pm – 8pm	Cambridge City The Graduate Cambridge, Granta Place, Mill Lane Cambridge, CB2 1RT
20 July 2023	2pm – 8pm	Love's Farm 17 Kester Way, St Neots, PE19 6SL

Questions or comments

05.

Review of actions from meeting #4

Outstanding actions

Meeting	No.	Action	Owner	Status
4	1	EWR Co to share a poll asking about preference for future topics (with commentary).	EWR Co	To be completed at the next meeting

05.

**Closing remarks, future
meetings and topics**

Next Steps

Topics for future discussion

Meeting #6 onwards:

Agreed frequency: Quarterly meeting

Meeting notes circulated within 10 days, feedback requested within 10 days. 5 working days amending process, posted on Hub

We're always here

All the Group's relevant documents will be available on its **Community Hub** site.

We will notify you when available.



Got a question?

If you have any questions about the Group, please email:

localrepresentativesgroups@eastwestrail.co.uk

If you have any questions about the project, please email:

contact@eastwestrail.co.uk

Or you can also call us on **0330 134 0067**