

Bletchley / Milton Keynes South - Meeting notes

Meeting #3 - Details

Date: Thursday 17 November 2022

Time: 7:00PM

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. Welcome

- 1.1. Jeremy Damrel (JD) welcomed attendees and thanked them for attending the Local Representatives Group (LRG) meeting. He introduced Robbie Gibb (RG) who would be presenting Active Travel / First Mile Last Mile (FMLM) and Amelia Boddington (AB) who would be presenting the Business Case Process.

2. Update announcement

- 2.1 EWR Co is aware that many people are waiting for an update on the project, and that although it had been hoped they could give an update earlier in the year, announcements for projects like EWR need proper scrutiny from central Government before they can be made. It was discussed that due to the evolving situation in Government over the past few months, this process has not been straightforward, but the team will work with new ministers and officials to update the public as soon as they can.

3. Actions and Terms of Reference

- 3.1 JD advised that updates to the revised Terms of Reference had been made and circulated to the Group via email.
- 3.2 JD summarised the five actions captured from the last meeting, all of which have been completed. The action tracker can be accessed [here](#).
- 3.3 Actions 1, 2 and 3 are discussed below. Action 4 was addressed directly with the attendee to which it is related and Action 5 was related to the topic of the Business Case Process and how EWR Co demonstrates the demand for the service, which is outlined in Section 5 below.

Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council

- 3.4 During meeting 2 an attendee highlighted that Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council is one council, but it had been wrongly split into two separate parishes on the LRG map. This resulted in the parish being divided between the Group for Milton Keynes North and this Group. Following a discussion, it was confirmed that EWR Co would retain a flexible approach and allow the parish council to continue to belong to both Groups given its position overlaps two established Groups. The boundary line has therefore remained, but the parish council has been correctly labelled as Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council on both Group maps.

Boundary proposal update

- 3.5 JD advised the proposed Group boundary revisions that were put forward to the Group at meeting 2 would not be taken forward as no consensus was reached within the Groups. JD highlighted that this could be revisited in the future if required.

Publication of future meeting dates for all Groups

- 3.6 A full list of LRG key days, including future meeting dates, can be publicly accessed from the Community Hub site [here](#).

4. Active Travel / First Mile Last Mile (FMLM)

- 4.1 Robbie Gibb (RG) introduced the FMLM concept, explaining that it is a customer's journey from door-to-door. He explained how EWR Co wants to enable Active Travel / FMLM with inclusivity and accessibility at the heart of the solution; how EWR Co wants to promote it; and how EWR Co could simplify the whole journey for its customers.
- 4.2 RG outlined that active travel means making journeys by physically active means, such as walking or cycling and gave examples of how poor maintenance on cycle paths connected to train stations could affect active travel.

- 4.3 RG outlined the solutions EWR Co is developing for FMLM which are designed to provide a sustainable, integrated and intuitive experience for all customers. This focuses on connecting customers to stations; harnessing the power of digital applications; and promoting active travel.
- 4.4 RG discussed potential opportunities for connecting customers with stations, including improved public transport networks, integrated ticketing and timetables, multi-modal connections and easy and safe taxi/vehicle hire, among other ideas.
- 4.5 RG outlined the potential opportunities surrounding digital applications to provide a hybrid, accessible option for connecting with EWR. He described examples of information EWR Co is looking to make available to customers, including alternative route alerts and localised information such as weather alerts.
- 4.6 RG discussed potential opportunities to promote active travel, including secure cycle/scooter parking, cycle/scooter hire, reviewing cycle conveyance on trains, healthy eating options at stations and an active travel pack/bundle, among other ideas.
- 4.7 A discussion took place about the importance of cycling and walking when considering FMLM approaches. Attendees felt that closing smaller stations could reduce opportunities for some residents to use active travel. RG agreed that these modes of transport are important and will be considered.
- 4.8 It was also suggested that cycle routes could be built adjacent to the railway to connect to existing routes, with adequate lighting to make them safe for users. RG explained that EWR Co would collaborate with local authorities and support opportunities for improvements to cycling schemes across the route where possible.
- 4.9 An attendee explained that Milton Keynes Council is building a cycle route from Newton Leys to Bletchley but were having difficulties gaining access to a piece of land and asked if this is something EWR Co could help with. RG would look to learn more about the situation.
- 4.10 Attendees highlighted the current financial pressures on local councils. RG acknowledged the financial pressures faced by local councils and explained that EWR Co would work hard to collaborate with local authorities to develop suitable active travel solutions, alongside supporting them in exploring funding opportunities.
- 4.11 Attendees noted that some stations do not have adequate bus services or car parking, which makes it difficult for residents with mobility issues to reach stations. It would be appreciated if EWR Co could consider tailoring their transport solutions to the communities they are for, especially when it comes to more rural areas. It was also suggested that it would be beneficial for EWR Co to reach out to hospitals regarding how to improve transport connections from stations to hospitals. RG explained that at this stage EWR Co is exploring FMLM solutions at a relatively high level, and at the next stage will look to understand in more detail the specific needs at each station. EWR Co would work with local

authorities and potential operators to develop solutions that meet customer needs and which are sustainable in the long term.

- 4.12 Attendees were interested to learn more about plans for an eastern entrance at Bletchley station. JD explained that EWR Co is in discussions with Milton Keynes Council regarding how they could potentially support this.
- 4.13 Attendees voiced concern that extended barrier downtime at level crossings and possible road closures could hinder active travel and cut off local communities. JD explained that EWR Co is aware of these concerns from local communities and authorities, and will continue to carefully consider them when further developing plans for the railway.
- 4.14 Attendees mentioned the importance of clarity when consulting on options for level crossings, JD acknowledged this.

5. Topic - Business Case

What is a Business Case?

- 5.1 AB outlined that the Business Case process is a process through which there is a full assessment of the costs and benefits of a project. She outlined that a wide range of information is required to build the business case so it will take time to generate.

How do we develop the Business Case?

- 5.2 AB outlined how the Business Case is an iterative process for a project of EWR's size. It constantly evolves as evidence bases enhances and understanding improves.
- 5.3 AB also explained that the Business Case involves gathering as much evidence, information and knowledge as possible over multiple periods. AB explained how evidence is gathered through the Business Case process, including stakeholder engagement; analysis of socioeconomic data; economic modelling; land and environmental surveys; and local and national Government and private sectors plans.

We have to adhere to a range of guidance

- 5.4 AB talked through a table outlining the main guidance for Projects on developing the Business Case Process, and what they cover.

What are the three stages of a Business Case?

- 5.5 AB talked through the main stages of a Business Case. AB described the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which considers the strategic fit of the scheme. Option development follows which considers the options for the scheme. The Outline Business Case (OBC), involves an analysis of how well a Project meets its objectives. This aligns with the

Development Consent Order (DCO) submission; the OBC is a supporting part of the Project stage that includes the DCO process, although separate from it.

- 5.6 AB explained that the Final Business Case addresses how we can deliver the scheme. Once approved, this moves to the build/delivery phase.
- 5.7 AB highlighted that Businesses Cases follow a five-case model: strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management. AB explained the role of each of these cases in developing a Business Case.

Strategic Case

- 5.8 The strategic case makes the case for change and demonstrates how it provides a strategic fit with other investments and activities. It also provides evidence outlining how the Project fits with other local, regional and national policies and targets.

Economic Case

- 5.9 The economic case sets out the costs and benefits of a Project and presents them as a full economic assessment. Ultimately, the economic case results in a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR), a single quantitative summary of the economic assessment. It feeds into the decision-making process as to whether the scheme is a good investment in terms of value for money.
- 5.10 AB provided a quantitative explanation of what would be considered a high or low score. She further highlighted that there can also be other relevant factors which cannot be monetised as part of the BCR such as landscape and biodiversity.

Approach to modelling passenger demand

- 5.11 AB outlined some of the factors that will be considered by EWR Co to forecast passenger demand including the purpose of travel, frequency of service, interchange and journey time, as well as demographic data and social economic factors from areas around station locations. EWR Co will also consider the changes in travel patterns related to the Coronavirus pandemic. AB explained that the Business Case looks at forecasts from entry into service to 60 years into the future, as per transport appraisal guidance.
- 5.12 An attendee was keen to understand the increase in predicted passenger numbers for those areas that are currently low. AB explained that EWR Co expects to see a rise in passenger numbers due to additional connectivity, improved journey times and increased frequency of services, making train travel more desirable.

Direct benefits considered in an economic case (Level 1 Benefits)

- 5.13 AB ran through examples of potential direct benefits of a scheme. These include a reduction in journey times, user charge benefits, carbon costs and external costs such as congestion. AB highlighted these are benefits that can be monetised.

Indirect benefits considered in an economic case (Level 2 and Level 3 Benefits)

- 5.14 AB talked through a table which outlined the indirect benefits considered in an economic case.

Costs

- 5.15 AB talked the group through a table covering key costs considered as part of the economic case in a Business Case. This included noting that some costs considered in the costs section are actually negative costs or benefits.
- 5.16 AB highlighted that this is a long process, which requires gathering lots of information and data from past consultations. EWR Co will continue to refine the Business Case to ensure the final proposal is the right one.

Commercial Case

- 5.17 The commercial case outlines the strategy for how the Project can be procured and delivered. The commercial case focuses on the delivery of the scheme with value for public money.

Financial Case

- 5.18 The financial case focuses on the affordability and funding of a Project, and its costs and revenue. AB explained that it does not focus on the wider benefits captured elsewhere (such as the economic and strategic case) but on the financial side of the scheme.

Management Case

- 5.19 The management case focuses on ensuring that the scheme is deliverable. The management case pulls together the governance aspects of a Project, such as how a scheme is evaluated, how the preferred option can be successfully delivered and how best practices will be enforced.

How to influence the Business Case

- 5.20 AB outlined how the Business Case can be influenced, advising that to improve the quality of the Business Case, EWR Co wants to gather as much information as possible.
- 5.21 AB advised that getting feedback from stakeholders is essential to this process and members can email contact@eastwestrail.co.uk, should attendees have any potentially useful information to contribute to the Business Case.
- 5.22 An attendee wanted to know if the Business Case would be predicated on both passenger travel and freight. AB explained that EWR would predominantly be a passenger railway, but it would also be able to accommodate freight. Freight services are already running on sections of the proposed EWR route and the government has asked that EWR support the existing services, and also consider options for potential future demand. How much freight

would use the railway is not yet known as this is subject to government policy and market demand, and is likely to be affected by interventions on other parts of the rail network.

- 5.23 An attendee highlighted that the A428 would be complete by 2025, which may be seen as more convenient for people to use when travelling west from Cambridge. AB acknowledged that the A428 would solve some transport issues within the area. However, future road capacity and increased congestion needs to be considered more long term. The railway line is being designed for the long term and EWR Co is looking at future travel patterns and the different types of journeys people may make.
- 5.24 An attendee wanted to know if EWR Co also looks at leisure travel. AB confirmed that we do.
- 5.25 The Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) has given the scheme a red rating and the Group was interested to learn why and how it came to that decision. AB outlined that developing a project like EWR is an iterative process and we are in the early stages of development, but we will continue to keep the Business Case and delivery program under review. EWR Co has already been refreshing the business case and testing the options for the future development of the scheme. It is anticipated once that work is complete, we will update our programme and improve on this rating.

6. Topics for future discussion

- 6.1 An attendee expressed interest in revisiting the topic of level crossings in the future when there was more detailed information to share on proposed design plans.

7. AOB and Closing Remarks

- 7.1 An attendee asked when the line between Bicester and Bletchley would be completed. JD explained that it would be coming into service in 2025.
- 7.2 An attendee wanted to understand if observational traffic monitoring surveys would be carried out at level crossings which are being considered for closure. JD confirmed observational traffic monitoring surveys would be carried out.
- 7.3 An attendee raised that during the non-statutory consultation an external group was distributing leaflets that omitted information about the proposed plans. The attendee felt that the leaflets were misleading and raised the importance of clear communication from EWR Co during consultations.
- 7.4 An attendee requested a timeline of all the stages between now and 2032, and what each of them would mean, as well as an expected date for the statutory consultation. JD explained that once the route update announcement is made, EWR Co would set out and share a road map that would lead the project forward.
- 7.5 Attendees were interested to learn more about the mention of the EWR project in the Autumn Budget. JD stated that EWR Co welcomed reference to the scheme in the Autumn

Budget. EWR Co will continue to work with the government and will provide further information to the Group when available.

Summary of actions

Action 1: EWR Co to learn more about the situation regarding a piece of land Milton Keynes Council require access to in order to build a new cycle route.

Action 2: EWR to revisit the topic of level crossings in the future when there is more detailed information to share on proposed design plans.

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Jeremy Damrel, EWR Co lead
- Robbie Gibb, Active Travel / FMLM SME
- Amelia Boddington, Business Case Process SME
- EWR Co production and support team

Parish Council representatives

- John Fairclough, Bletchley and Fenny Stratford Town Council
- Philip Ball, Bow Brickhill Parish Council
- Peter Barnes, Simpson and Ashland Parish Council
- Cllr David Hopkins, Wavendon Parish Council
- Helen Hupton, West Bletchley Parish Council
- Cllr Jo Green, Woburn Sands Town Council

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Emily Darlington, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Samuel Crooks, Broughton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr David Hopkins, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Vanessa McPake, Monkston in Milton Keynes Council

- Cllr Peter Paul Cannon, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr John Baker, Aspley and Woburn in Central Bedfordshire

Apologies

- Broughton and Milton Keynes Parish Council
- Kents Hill, Monkston and Brinklow Parish Council
- Little Brickhill Parish Council
- Loughton & Great Holm Parish Council
- Old Woughton Parish Council
- Simpson and Ashland Parish Council
- Shenley Brook End Parish Council
- Walton Parish Council
- Woughton on the Green Parish Council
- Cllr Ed Hume, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Mohammed Khan, Bletchley East in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Mo Imran, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Nabeel Nazir, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Matthew Nigel Long, Bletchley Park in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Michael Legg, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Adam Rolfe, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Lauren Townsend, Bletchley West in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Kerrie Bradburn, Broughton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Uroy Clarke, Broughton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Nana Oguntola, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Charlotte Hall, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Paul Trendall, Campbell Park and Old Woughton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Victoria Hopkins, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Alice Jenkins, Danesborough and Walton in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Shanika Caitlin Mahendran, Loughton and Shenley in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Amanda Marlow, Loughton and Shenley in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Jenni Ferrans, Monkston in Milton Keynes
- Cllr Leo Montague, Monkston in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Saleena Raja, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes Council

- Cllr Chris Taylor, Shenley Brook End in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Fathima Shazna Muzammil, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr James Lancaster, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Manish Verma, Tattenhoe in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Donna Fuller, Woughton and Fishermead in Milton Keynes Council
- Cllr Amber McQuillan, Woughton and Fishermead in Milton Keynes Council