

Buckinghamshire Group - Meeting summary

Meeting #2 - Details

Date: Monday 4 July 2022

Time: 5:30 pm

Type of meeting: Virtual / 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](#):

- Slides
- Action tracker

Key points, actions and outcomes

1. Interim Engagement Manager appointment

1.1 Ian Parker (IP) introduced Deanna Gray as the EWR Co interim Engagement Manager for the Local Representatives Groups (LRGs), who is temporarily in post to replace Jordi Beascoeachea. EWR Co are looking to hire a permanent person for the role and it is currently being advertised.

2. Meeting Notes

2.1 EWR Co put forward a proposal for the production of meeting notes. The aim is to produce and share a draft version of the summary meeting notes with those that attended the meeting within 10 working days. Attendees would then have a further 10 working days to review the notes and provide any comments they may have. EWR Co would make any necessary amendments and aim to publish a finalised version on the Community Hub site within five working days following the review period.

2.2 It was agreed during the first meeting that the notes would include a high-level summary of the meeting and any actions and outcomes reached.

2.3 EWR Co would not be recording the meeting, instead there are members of the support team taking notes.

2.4 Outcome 1: The Group confirmed they are satisfied with the approach for the production of summary meeting notes.

3. Review of actions from meeting #1

3.1 There were six actions from Meeting 1, four of which have been completed and two which are currently still ongoing. The action tracker can be accessed [here](#).

Terms of Reference (TOR)

3.2 IP confirmed that the TOR had been revisited to establish within them a clearer distinction between this group and other established groups in the area that are looking at the EWR development. An updated version of the TOR can be found on the Community Hub [here](#).

Purpose/aims of the different forums/groups

3.3 The purpose of the Group is to bring together the local representatives to discuss the whole EWR project. To be forward looking to when the Oxford to Cambridge route is complete, focusing on strategic, long-term plans that impact future stages in Buckinghamshire. It is different from other groups in the area that cover Highspeed 2 (HS2) and EWR Alliance (EWRA) construction and local project updates.

Status of Aylesbury Spur

3.4 IP explained that the final decision on what is done on the Aylesbury Spur rests with the Department for Transport (DfT).

3.5 The original plans would not have provided local communities with a reliable service, and this section requires more investment than originally planned. The decision as to whether funding is made available to develop is therefore still with the Government.

3.6 An attendee asked whether the Aylesbury Spur would be re-incorporate in to the EWR Co DCO application. IP responded that the Aylesbury spur is not part of the current scheme although work being done by HS2 would not preclude its inclusion in the DCO application if the Department for Transport decided that the scheme should be extended.

3.7 It was asked if IP could confirm whether High Speed 2 (HS2) plans are continuing to go ahead in Aylesbury without modification. IP confirmed that HS2's current plans would not prevent the Aylesbury Spur works being carried out.

Noise mitigation concerns

- 3.8 An attendee said that they wanted information on this topic in relation to specific homes within the Parish boundary close to the railway line.
- 3.9 IP acknowledged that there had been further correspondence on the matter. This should be dealt with separately and not during the Group's meetings.

Freight times

- 3.10 This action is still ongoing, however IP noted that freight paths are not necessarily used every day. EWR Co has no control over the freight paths on the existing network or who uses them, but rather Network Rail (NR).

Retention of road infrastructure improvements

- 3.11 Regarding the retention of road infrastructure improvements, currently proposed to be removed following construction. This is a being actively discussed between EWR Alliance (EWRA) and Buckinghamshire Council (BC) and has been raised as a topic at the EWRA/BC community meetings as it is a current construction related issue. It is not a matter for EWR Co.

4. Future topics

- 4.1 Based on the feedback from the first meeting, future topics were put forward by EWR Co for meetings 3 and 4.
- 4.2 Meeting 3 would look to be held in Autumn 2022 and the proposed topics for discussion are (a) compulsory purchase and compensation, and (b) active travel and First Mile Last Mile (FMLM).
- 4.3 The reason FMLM is being discussed with these groups is because EWR Co want the railway to be linked into the communities end-to-end.
- 4.4 Meeting 4 would look to be held in Winter 2022/2023 and the proposed topics for discussion for meeting 4 and onwards are (a) Environment: Green credentials, (b) Environment: Sustainable transport, (c) Technology: Broadband, (d) Construction effects: Lessons learned from the Alliance.

- 4.5 IP noted that Landowner Engagement had not been included and that Construction Effects (from the current construction works associated with Connection Stage 1) had been removed, as they had been deemed inappropriate for the Group under its updated Terms of Reference.
- 4.6 An attendee questioned the need to include compulsory purchase and compensation as a topic for the Group. IP agreed that this topic would be more useful for groups to the east of the line, and asked the Group to email suggestions of other topics they would like to see on the agenda instead.

Post-meeting clarification: EWR Co will include topic options within the meeting poll for meeting 3.

5. Topic: Development Consent Order (DCO) update, next steps and process

- 5.1 Simon White (SW) acknowledged that though there is a limited amount of infrastructure needed in the Buckinghamshire area, the presentation on the DCO would still be beneficial to the Group because it outlines how the process works and how local communities and other stakeholders can get involved.

Timeline

- 5.2 SW outlined that the DCO, if granted, would give EWR Co consent to build, operate and maintain the railway.
- 5.3 SW talked through the various stages that make up the timeline for the DCO process. He explained that EWR Co is currently in the pre-application stage. This has no specific timeframe although typically takes 2-4 years. This stage of the process is the responsibility of EWR Co.
- 5.4 Once the DCO application has been submitted the Project is subject to the examination stage. This includes relevant representations, hearings and written questions and is the process in which the application is scrutinised. After this, the Examining Authority (ExA) is given three months to make its recommendation to the Secretary of State (SoS) who then has three months to make a determination on whether to grant the DCO application.
- 5.5 An attendee asked which authorities are responsible for making up the ExA.
- 5.6 SW explained that the application is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) which is a government body. PINS have a list of examiners and depending on the size and complexity of the Project this would determine how many examiners are appointed to the ExA. These examiners, all of which are independent, become the ExA and lead the examination process, with administrative support from PINS.

Pre-application phase

5.7 SW provided additional detail around the pre-application phase, highlighting three key areas of activity and how they are connected. These were scheme development, environment and consultation.

Pre-application process and activities

5.8 SW provided an in-depth overview of the activities during the pre-application phase, covering the work that EWR Co had been carrying out.

5.9 Currently EWR Co is analysing feedback from the second non-statutory consultation undertaken in 2021 and are working towards a preferred route announcement (PRA). Once the PRA is made work will then begin to develop the design, as well as prepare the Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), and develop the Statement of Community Consultation (SoCC), before carrying out the statutory consultation.

Consultation, engagement and comms

5.10 SW explained the difference between consultation, engagement and communications, and outlined the documents and other requirements associated with each of these for the DCO application and those following its submission.

Local Authorities' (LA) role

5.11 SW noted that EWR Co aspired to engage in an open, honest and timely manner, without surprises and outlined how EWR Co aimed to schedule engagement going forward. The ultimate aim of engagement would be to gain consensus where possible and record areas of agreement and disagreement in a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) which would then be provided to the ExA.

5.12 The SoCC records the methodology that would be used to consult with the public, venues where information can be seen and how people can feed back their comments during the statutory consultation. EWR Co would seek comments from relevant local authorities on the SoCC at the appropriate time.

5.13 SW explained that it is likely EWR Co would have Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) with affected local authorities along the route. PPAs document how EWR Co and the local authority would work together and the PPAs are generally expected to continue to be in effect should the DCO be granted.

Environmental Matters

- 5.14 SW outlined the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process and production of the Environmental Statement (ES). The ES is a key document within the DCO application. It considers what effects (positive and negative) the scheme may have on the environment, including any proposed mitigation measures.
- 5.15 SW provided an overview of the various subject areas that EWR Co consider in terms of surveys, some of which have been taking place for some time. EWR Co would continue to carry out environmental surveys as work progresses towards the submission of the application.
- 5.16 An attendee asked if Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and local parishes within the area of the Group would participate in the consultation and engagement activities for the DCO if there were no physical works taking place in Buckinghamshire.
- 5.17 SW agreed that there were currently no physical works planned for the area. However, the outcome of the future proposed traction solution for the railway line may affect the infrastructure in the future e.g. if overhead electrification is adopted. Also, the DCO would cover the operation and construction of the railway line, which Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) and local parishes would be interested in. For example, changes in train services that run through Buckinghamshire would be an operational matter considered within the EIA.

6. Topic: Rolling stock & traction strategy

- 6.1 Mark Foster (MF) described the design of the initial fleet, explaining there would be two modern passenger carriages with accessible toilets. There would also be space on the trains for dedicated bike space. The initial fleet of trains would be diesel. MF explained that diesel traction would be used temporarily for the initial fleet, as it would enable EWR Co to commence services quicker. He outlined that future electrification is under consideration, awaiting a decision from the government
- 6.2 An attendee asked for clarification on the recent presentation in Winslow where participants were told that trains would definitely run between Oxford and Milton Keynes Central when the line opens.
- 6.3 IP explained that it is currently intended that some of the trains would run through to Milton Keynes, but not every train. Some trains would terminate at Bletchley. EWR Co are adapting the infrastructure to allow trains to run out onto the West Coast Main Line.
- 6.4 An attendee expressed concern that due to not all trains running through to Milton Keynes, EWR Co will not be successful in their aim to move people away the roads and on to trains, as well as improve economic development.

- 6.5 IP explained that EWR Co recently carried out some modelling that shows sufficient capacity for trains to Milton Keynes has been planned. It is about connecting places between Oxford and Cambridge with those two cities and also with Milton Keynes, rather than getting people from one to the other.
- 6.6 Andy Bugguley (AB) relayed the pros and cons of various types of long-term rolling stock options, explaining EWR Co's market engagement and other work looking at alternative forms of traction.
- 6.7 It was asked whether overhead electric lines could be installed without replacing bridges. AB explained that the new bridges that had been built or renovated had assumed the electrical clearances needed for overhead lines.
- 6.8 IP explained that whilst new bridges that have been built have made provision for electrification, some of the older bridges which have not been replaced may have headroom issues. Transport for Wales, which has some parallels with EWR Co, are using trimodal trains which are a combination of diesel, overhead electric and battery. IP explained that Wales has lots of bridges which are substandard or are listed and to save time and money, trains either run on diesel or battery for some sections of the route.
- 6.9 An attendee asked whether this would slow the trains down.
- 6.10 MF explained that this would not slow trains down and that bi-mode trains currently operated by a number of train companies change seamlessly between the methods during operation every day.
- 6.11 IP reassured the group that EWR Co is committed to running a net zero-carbon railway and, long term, the trains can't be diesel only. Technology is changing rapidly and EWR Co are growing expertise and looking into cleaner technology options.
- 6.12 An attendee commented that there should be support for non-diesel options and they would be willing to work with EWR Co to make this case to Government.

7. Closing remarks

- 7.1 Attendees sought clarification of the topic themes for the current EWR Co community drop-in events and how they differ from the EWRA events. Attendees want to be able to direct members of their community to attend the correct event relevant to their needs.
- 7.2 IP explained that there are no specific themes, they provide an opportunity for EWR Co to keep in touch with the local communities along the route. They are forward looking and related to the next phases of the project.

- 7.3 Kate Campbell (KC) following up by confirming that there are proposed EWRA events, which are more focused on the immediate effect of construction. KC said that she would speak to the teams leading the drop-in events for both EWR Co and EWRA to reiterate that messaging and any supporting promotional materials should be clear.
- 7.4 A follow up question was asked if the recently cancelled EWRA event in Winslow had been rescheduled. KC would ask EWRA to confirm.
- 7.5 It was asked if EWR Co have a preferred route. SW responded by explaining that the feedback from the second non-statutory consultation undertaken in 2021 is currently in the process of being analysed. Therefore, a preferred route cannot yet be announced.

Summary of Actions:

ACTION 1: EWR Co – to include topic options in meeting 3 poll.

ACTION 2: EWR Co – speak to the teams leading the drop-in events for both EWR Co and EWRA to pass on feedback from the Group regarding messaging and supporting promotional materials .

ACTION 3: EWR Co – ask EWRA to confirm whether the community drop-in for Winslow has been rescheduled.

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Ian Parker (IP), EWR Co Lead
- Simon White (SW), EWR Co Specialist – Development Consent Order (DCO) update, next steps and process
- Andy Bugguley (AB), EWR Co Specialist – Head of Systems, Rolling Stock
- Mark Foster (MF), EWR Co Specialist – Operations Executive, Rolling Stock
- Kate Campbell, EWR Co Specialist – Communications Manager
- EWR Co production and support team

Parish Council representatives

- Andrew Jones, Mursley Parish Council
- Mike Chapman, Newton Longville Parish Council
- Neale Hunter-Rowe, Hillesden Parish Council
- Roger Behagg, Edgcott Parish Council

- Roger Slevin, Winslow Parish Council
- Steve Simpson, Little Horwood Parish Council

Ward Council representatives

- Angela Macpherson, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council
- Beville Stanier, Winslow in Buckinghamshire Council
- Frank Mahon, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council
- Iain Macpherson, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- 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
- Adstock Parish Council
- Calvert Green Parish Council
- Charndon Parish Council
- Drayton Parslow Parish Council
- Dunton Parish Council
- East Claydon Parish Council
- Granborough Parish Council
- Great Brickhill Parish Council
- Great Horwood Parish Council
- Grendon Underwood Parish Council
- Hoggeston Parish Council
- Hogshaw Parish Council
- Ludgershall Parish Council
- Marsh Gibbon Parish Council
- Middle Claydon Parish Council
- North Marston Parish Council
- Oving Parish Council
- Padbury 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
- Whaddon Parish Council
- Caroline Cornell, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council
- David Goss, Winslow in Buckinghamshire Council
- Jilly Jordan, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- Michael Rand, Grendon Underwood in Buckinghamshire Council
- Patrick Fealey, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council
- Phil Gomm, Great Brickhill in Buckinghamshire Council
- Robin Stuchbury, Buckingham West in Buckinghamshire Council