

South Cambridgeshire West Group - Meeting notes

Meeting #4 - Details

Date: Monday 27 March 2023

Time: 5:30 – 7:30PM

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. Agenda, housekeeping

1.1 Jeremy Damrel (JD) welcomed attendees, thanked them for joining the meeting and outlined the agenda for the meeting.

2. General Updates

New EWR Co LRG Engagement Manager

2.1 JD introduced Sarah Jacobs (SJ) to the group. SJ outlined her role as EWR Co's new Local Representatives Group Engagement Manager and encouraged attendees to get in contact with her via localrepresentativesgroups@eastwestrail.co.uk should they have any questions or queries.

Spring Budget

2.2 JD noted the announcement in the EWR Co newsletter pre-Christmas, and confirmed in the Spring Budget announcement, the Government's route update announcement is set for May. He noted that following the announcement, EWR Co will be able to move to the next stage of the Development Consent Order (DCO) process and work to refine plans for the railway. The team remains committed to delivering a faster, more sustainable, and affordable way to travel that meets local needs and improves daily lives.

2.3 An attendee noted that they had attended a number of LRG meetings because their Ward spanned a few LRGs and noted that the business case process has also been presented at other

Group meetings. They suggested that SME efforts are not duplicated across different Groups. SJ responded that this can be considered for future rounds of meetings.

2.4 An attendee noted that they wished to discuss the Adjournment Debate about HS2 and EWR contractors that took place in the House of Commons on Friday 3 March led by Greg Smith MP (Buckingham) with a contribution from Rob Butler MP (Aylesbury). The attendee noted that EWR Co needs to have an approach which accounts for other large developments in the area such as the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet scheme to prevent disruption to communities. JD confirmed that EWR Co do regularly talk to National Highways, and that every effort would be made to minimise disruption for communities.

Post meeting clarification: East West Rail Alliance (EWRA) is delivering groundwork on behalf of EWR Co and although there have been times when things have not gone according to plan, EWR Co has been working hard on making improvements. HS2 and EWR are two different projects and, therefore, should not be conflated. When EWR Co moves forward with the Project it will apply for consent by means of a Development Consent Order (DCO). This will confirm how EWR Co will ensure disruption to communities is minimised as far as is practicable. Once the route alignment is confirmed EWR Co will be in position to discuss affected communities in more detail.

2.5 Another attendee responded that the events in Buckinghamshire had not left the community with much confidence in how the construction stage would be managed in their local area. He explained he would like more reassurance around what would be done to avoid this in future. JD explained that during the Statutory Consultation the Construction Methodology would be explained to the public. He emphasised the importance of the Code of Construction Practice (CoCP) that EWR Co will produce alongside the Development Consent Order (DCO) application, which is one of the documents which sets out how the project would minimise construction impacts on local communities.

Post meeting clarification: It is to be noted that a CoCP is not the only method that can be used to secure mitigation as part of the DCO process. Whilst EWR Co may produce a CoCP for the proposed development, it may use an alternative method.

2.6 An attendee noted the plans for the Station at Tempsford and asked how many homes are envisaged to be developed in Tempsford. JD responded that this sits outside of EWR Co's remit.

Accessibility Advisory Panel (AAP)

2.7 JD outlined that EWR Co has received 35 applications to sit on the Accessibility Advisory Panel (AAP) and that 16 of these applicants have been invited to interview.

First Mile / Last Mile renamed Door-to-Door Connectivity

2.8 JD noted that EWR Co is now using the term Door-to-Door Connectivity as opposed to First Mile Last Mile following feedback from LRG members across the route at the last round of meetings.

3. Actions from meeting three

- 3.1 JD stated the action captured from the last meeting: "EWR Co to provide the Group with typical operational hours for freight in Oxford. This has no bearing on what EWR Co will deliver."
- 3.2 JD noted that the presentation slide set out the response: "Freight services operate 24-hours a day at Oxford, on a fairly even spread. Oxford is a key hub for freight services travelling to and from Southampton, London, Wales or the West, and the Northwest. Exploring a typical weekday in January 2023, this equates to less than 1 train per hour per direction through Oxford. The above has no bearing on the timings and number of freight services which may run over the new EWR route between Bedford and Cambridge. EWR's strategy for freight is still in development."

4. Topic – Business Case Process

What is a Business Case?

- 4.1 CM outlined that the Business Case process is a process through which there is a full assessment of the costs and benefits of a project. He outlined that a wide range of information is required to build the business case so it will take time to generate.
- 4.2 He outlined the benefits a well-prepared Business Case brings to a project such as EWR.

How do we develop the Business Case?

- 4.3 CM outlined how the Business Case is an iterative process for a project of EWR's size. It constantly evolves as evidence bases enhance and understanding improves.

We have to adhere to a range of guidance

- 4.4 CM talked through a table outlining the main guidance for Projects on developing the Business Case Process, and what they cover.
- 4.5 CM also explained that the Business Case involves gathering of as much evidence, information and knowledge as possible over multiple time periods. CM explained the ways in which 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.

What are the three stages of a Business Case?

- 4.6 CM talked through the main stages of a Business Case. CM explained that the Strategic Outline Business Case which considers the strategic fit of the scheme. Option development follows which considers the options for the scheme. The Outline Business Case (OBC), which involves analysis on how well a Project meets its objectives. CM explained the Final Business Case addresses how we can we deliver the scheme. Once approved, this moves to the build/delivery phase.
- 4.7 EWR will be developing the outline business case in line with timings for the DCO application. The BC is a supporting part of the is separate from the DCO application but is required to support the DCO process.

4.8 CM highlighted that Businesses Cases follow a five-case model: strategic, economic, commercial, financial and management. CM explained the role of each of these cases in developing a Business Case.

Strategic Case

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

Economic Case

4.10 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.

4.11 CM provided examples of direct benefits and indirect benefits considered and what these mean when developing a BCR.

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

4.12 CM talked through a table which outlined the indirect benefits considered in an economic case.

4.13 Furthermore, as part of the DCO Process, an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) will be conducted. The EIA will consider a range of environmental impacts, including those on the surrounding landscape.

Costs

4.14 CM 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.

Commercial Case

4.15 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

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

Management Case

4.17 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 monitored and evaluated, how the preferred option can be successfully delivered and how best practice will be enforced.

How to influence the Business Case

- 4.18 CM 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.
- 4.19 CM advised that getting feedback from stakeholders is essential to this process and provided contact details if attendees had any potentially useful information to contribute to the Business Case. CM also noted that this evidence does not need to be positive, advising that all evidence helps to shape the scheme.

Questions and comments

- 5.1 An attendee asked how carbon is being evaluated to account for changes in modal shift. They noted that there was a freight aspect to carbon reduction and would be keen to understand how this is accounted for. CM responded that EWR Co is appraising carbon impacts, which exist in many ways – embedded carbon in construction, carbon emissions if running diesel trains or freight trains, and carbon reduction from encouraging people to use trains rather than other modes of transport. He noted that there are always pluses and minuses in that equation, but that EWR Co follows the Department for Transport's (DFT) standard accounting procedure using the TAG guidance which helps them account for carbon within the business case.
- 5.2 One attendee asked if the modelling is done as a live activity. They asked if this information would feed into sensitivities such as traction and electrification. CM responded that there were a range of sensitivities that EWR Co would be picking up in the business case, including electrification, freight, traction, and levels of demand, particularly the impact of COVID-19 on rail usage.
- 5.3 An attendee asked what evidence and learnings are drawn upon from other schemes, referencing the higher than projected passenger demand on the Elizabeth line. CM explained that EWR Co would certainly draw upon lessons learned from other projects, agreeing that the Elizabeth line was an important example and that EWR Co is working to try and capture this sort of wider information. He explained that ridership is still recovering from COVID-19 but that the situation is improving.
- 5.4 An attendee asked what kind of plan is maintained through the duration of the project to take on evidence from Connection Stage 1 (CS1). CM responded that EWR Co put in place monitoring and evaluation in CS1 and will continue to gather evidence from CS1 to inform Connection Stages 2 and 3. He explained that there would be aspects that would need evaluating in the long term across the whole railway which would not be immediately obvious from CS1 and that EWR Co is working hard to capture this information too.
- 5.5 An attendee asked what stage of the business case process EWR Co was at and if it would become available to the public. They also asked whether it will be one overarching document or split into three in line with the three connection stages. CM responded that the business case process is linked to funding and that CS1 has a full business case. He went on to explain that EWR Co is currently in the process of developing the business case for the second stage (CS2 and 3) of the railway in the strategic stage in the process. He emphasised the recent government support for EWR and explained that this was largely based on the strategic business case. He explained that after the strategic case is complete but will evolve as further evidence emerges, EWR Co will work to produce the outline business case in line with the plans for the CS2/3 DCO application, after which point, a full business case will be developed to unlock the funding for CS2 and 3. When the full business case is signed off by government it usually becomes publicly available.
- 5.6 Another attendee reflected on the discussions around HS2 stopping at a London station or not and asked if generally a cheaper route is considered the best option. JD replied that cost was just

one of a suite of deciding factors that government will look at. CM added that the business cases are not looked at in isolation and that it required a collective approach. He emphasised that it is the balance between costs and benefits that is important.

- 5.7 The attendee explained that they were concerned the viability of the business case could be compromised if a certain politician decided they wanted the scheme to go ahead and that this might mean costs are ignored. CM responded that ministers would make decisions based on all of the information provided to them within the business case and sometimes this may result in going in a more expensive scheme which provides more benefits or vice versa. He emphasised the importance of considering non-monetisable benefits and how this could result in a scheme looking more expensive from a net present value perspective.
- 5.8 An attendee asked where in the business case the cost to people is considered. They emphasised the impact of the current preferred option that goes through Caldecote and expressed concern that community impacts could be lost if interpreted as 'feelings' rather than costs to communities. CM emphasised that EWR Co certainly does not overlook the community aspect of the project. He explained the concept that they had explained was called severance and that factors such as these are quantifiable within the business case. The guidance highlights the cost upon elements such as pedestrians and cyclists if they can't get across the railway. EWR Co also considers qualitative information from consultation which can help influence the scheme. He explained some options may not even make it to the business case if multiple issues have been identified. Outlining the fact that ultimately there will be small groups of people who are affected by the scheme but that the upmost effort would be put into limiting and mitigating these effects wherever possible. JD added the importance of the DCO process in accounting for impacts on communities, particularly aided by the information acquired in the Statutory Consultation.
- 5.9 The attendee asked for clarification regarding whether only mitigation would be offered at the DCO stage when the route has been decided. JD responded that the design of the route would consider feedback received in response to non-statutory and statutory consultation.
- 5.10 The attendee noted their concern that if the business case was not published alongside the preferred route, they believe communities would not be able to understand the decision-making process behind it. JD responded that the rationale is set out in the 2021 Consultation Technical Report. He explained that EWR Co is obliged to publish any feedback they receive from stakeholders via consultations so there would be another report after the Statutory Consultation which offers a "you said, we did" level of explanation for communities. He emphasised the importance of individuals contributing to these exercises so that EWR Co can take on board a range of feedback.

5. Future Topics

- 6.1 JD invited people to suggest topics for future meetings. He emphasised that after a route announcement in May it would become easier to talk about the scheme in more detail and suggested that the next couple of meetings should be spent discussing the group's thoughts on the route update announcement. An attendee agreed that they would like to discuss this.
- 6.2 An attendee asked if it was worth discussing the frequency of the meetings as they worried the current quarterly frequency would not be able to keep up with the progress of the project. JD responded that EWR Co is flexible and can amend the frequency to one that suits the group. He emphasised that they did not need to be tied to a set pattern and that they could be flexible in both the frequency and the way that the group meets. He stated that the virtual format had

worked well up to this point but that in person meetings and workshops were also on the table should the group request these.

- 6.3 An attendee asked Jeremy if he had any more information on what the announcement in May will include. JD responded that the Route Update Announcement would likely be a line on a map supported by high level statements, with further granularity and detail provided at Statutory Consultation. He emphasised that there would be some direction of travel information and information on how individuals can get involved in further stages of the project.
- 6.4 The attendee asked if there was going to be sufficient evidence to enact a judicial review in May. JD responded that he is not a lawyer and that he did not know the exact answer to this question. He stated he was aware that a judicial review can be raised directly after a DCO decision is made as there is a set judicial review period but that was as far as his knowledge extended currently.
- 6.5 An attendee asked if there would be any notion of the flex between the route choice, its gradient profile and traction choice, in the May announcement. JD explained it would be much more high level in the first instance, likely in the form of a line on a map and that more detail would be available at the Statutory Consultation.

Outcome: Route Update Announcement to be discussed at future meetings.

6. Closing remarks

- 7.1 JD ran through the process for producing the summary note for the meeting.
- 7.2 SJ talked through the slides for how to access the Community Hub and group documents on there should they not be able to attend the meetings or want to share them with their communities.
- 7.3 JD reminded attendees that if there are any further questions attendees would like to ask, they can send them to localrepresentativesgroups@eastwestrail.co.uk or contact@eastwestrail.co.uk.

Attendees:

EWR Co attendees

- Jeremy Damrel, EWR Co lead
- Chris Milne, Head of Analysis, Business Case Subject Matter Expert
- Sarah Jacobs, LRG Engagement Manager
- EWR Co production and support team

Parish Council representatives

- Cllr Martin Yeadon, Toft Parish Council
- Cllr Professor Stephen Watterson, Great Eversden Parish Council
- Cllr Nicola Pritchard, Caldecote Parish Council
- Cllr Jocelyn Poulton, Childerley Parish Council

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Richard Stobart, Girton Ward, South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Cllr Sebastian Kindersley, Gamlingay Ward, Cambridgeshire County Council

Apologies

- Comberton Parish Council
- Dry Drayton Parish Council
- Swavesey Parish Council
- Lolworth Parish Council
- Hardwick Parish Council
- Wimpole Parish Council
- Kingston Parish Council
- Little Eversden Parish Council
- Aidan Van de Weyer, Barrington in South Cambridgeshire
- Corinne Garvie, Girton in South Cambridgeshire
- Lina Nieto, Hardwick in South Cambridgeshire
- Michael Ian Atkins, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire
- Sue Ellington, Swavesey in South Cambridgeshire
- Edna Murphy, Barr Hill in Cambridgeshire County
- Bridget Smith, Gamlingay in Cambridgeshire County
- Michael Atkins, Hardwick in Cambridgeshire County
- Mandy Smith, Papworth & Swavesey in Cambridgeshire County
- Tumi Hawkins, Caldecote in South Cambridgeshire
- Lisa Redup, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire
- Ariel Martin Cahn, Harston and Comberton in South Cambridgeshire