# Foxton to Shelford Enhanced LRG- Meeting note

**Meeting #2**

**Date: 08/10/2025**
**Time: 6:00pm**
**Type of meeting: Online on MS Teams**

## Key discussion points and outcomes

### 1. Introduction, overview, and housekeeping

1.1 Paula Whitworth (PW) welcomed attendees to the meeting and ran through the housekeeping and agenda. PW introduced herself and all EWR Co attendees on the call.

### 2. Review of actions from the last meeting

2.1 PW ran through the status of the four actions from the previous meeting, confirming them all as complete *(see slide deck for the full list of all actions)*.

### 3.Project updates

3.1 PW gave an update on the engagement that EWR Co has been involved in since the last set of LRG meetings.
3.2 PW discussed the current round of Enhanced Local Representatives Groups meetings and noted that invites to other meetings can be forwarded on request.
3.3 PW then shared a snapshot of the political engagement that has been happening with MPs and other political stakeholders along the route.
3.4 PW gave an update on community engagement, noting that the team are in the process of planning 'pop up' sessions along the route to increase project visibility. EWR Co welcomes any thoughts or suggestions on venues or locations to host sessions.
3.5 PW gave an update on landowner engagement, explaining that EWR Co has been writing to landowners who may be affected by current proposals. All LRG members should also have received updates on landowner engagement, including contact details for the EWR Co Land & Property team.

Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB)

3.6 PW gave an update on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB). PW explained that EWR Co is working closely with government to understand the implications of the Bill in relation to consultation and engagement, noting that EWR Co is expecting engagement to be much more iterative and collaborative, and continuing to test emerging thinking with ELRGs. PW said that the original process was to hold a statutory consultation twelve months after the close of the non-statutory consultation and while under PIB it was unclear what that would now look like, there would still be an opportunity for formal submission of feedback, alongside the more iterative engagement.

3.7 Paul Ormerod (PO) asked for clarification on whether the PIB will replace a statutory consultation or inquiry with a more informal process, and whether an independent person would still be appointed to conduct the inquiry.

3.8 Kate Campbell (KC) reiterated that there will be a consultation, but it was unclear what that would look like but confirmed that whatever shape it takes it will be a formal opportunity to provide feedback on the evolving designs that will be presented at that consultation. KC assured that the team will update LRGs as soon as the process becomes clearer.

3.9 PO clarified that it was a central consideration about how thoughts and suggestions could be inputted to whatever inquiry is implemented, that someone independent could fully listen and agree if something had been addressed or not by EWR Co. PW took a note to see what more information could be found out regarding how the PIB will impact statutory consultation and appointment of an independent person. (ACTION.)

3.10 Lisa Redrup (LR) enquired about response to the feedback received by EWR during the previous consultation and when it would be seen. KC confirmed that feedback is planned to be released by end of year (2025) in the You Said We Did document. KC clarified that it wouldn't cover everything as design is still emerging and evolving but the intention was to share a more substantive report, and LRGs would be given advance notice of its publication. LR highlighted the importance of the feedback report to be reflective of concerns and sentiment.

3.11 Peter Brown (PB) echoed PO's concern and asked what assurance could be given that there will still be opportunities to ask questions, get answers and influence decisions. KC confirmed that wouldn't change, and while it was difficult to give detail while the Bill was progressing through Parliament, she could be clear on the record that the intention is to provide a formal channel for feedback.

3.12 Laurence Damary-Homan (LDH) added in the meeting chat that he shares the concerns and also would welcome as transparent as possible analysis of the previous non-statutory consultation when ready. He added he welcomes the desire to have more, smaller community engagement, but an open, independent formal consultation is important.

3.13 PW confirmed all concerns had been noted and would be recorded in the minutes.

## 4 Environment update

4.1 PW handed the discussion to Leah Bargota (LB).

4.2 LB noted that initial environmental information was shared in the non-statutory consultation 2024 Environmental Update Report. Since then, EWR Co has been reviewing the feedback, continued to engage with stakeholders and complete surveys to inform design.

4.3 LB explained that environmental considerations are embedded into the design process and that EWR Co follows the principles of the environmental mitigation hierarchy.

4.4 LB then gave a survey update, noting that surveys are a critical part of how design is shaped and refined, helping to understand the existing conditions along the route and identify potential environmental impacts early in the process. LB noted the first phase of ground investigations is progressing well.

4.5 LB also discussed EWR's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) commitment. BNG is being embedded into design, including by avoiding and reducing impacts to high value habitats.

4.6 LB handed the discussion to Katie Dixon (KD).

4.7 KD ran through all the environmental updates to date since the NSC. (*See slide deck for full list of updates.*)

4.8 PB enquired whether the archaeological data gathered could be shared with the public. KD confirmed data would form part of the environmental assessment.

4.9 LB mentioned the possibility of organising pop-up archaeological sessions in Cambridge, similar to what has previously been delivered for Bedford and Milton Keynes, if anything was found during ground investigations.

4.10 LDH enquired whether the biodiversity net gain and the 10% delivery would be delivered through the usual methods of the Town and Country Planning Act application, or if it was different for a DCO. KD explained that guidance around BNG for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project like this scheme is slow in its release, but she would take the question away. (ACTION.) KD added that it would always be the preference to provide BNG where the impact is happening.

4.11 LDH asked the team for confirmation that chalk streams were identified as irreplaceable habitats. KD explained they qualify as riparian, which is one of the hardest habitats to get BNG credits for and so would be avoided as much as possible, and that they were looking at opportunities to enhance chalk streams where they could as part of Water Framework Directive requirements.

4.12 Penny Absolom (PA) enquired whether the different environmental surveys could be published and made available to the public. LB explained it was the aim to share the data, but it is still under review. KD added that the data often has to go through modelling and data assurance so it's difficult to share raw data without the processing behind it.

4.13 PO mentioned that Harston Parish Council is in discussion with Historic England about revisiting the archaeological ground around the villages in relation to alternative routes put forward by the parish council.

4.14 PO asked whether the meeting slides will be made available after the meeting. PW assured him that the meeting minutes will be made public along with the slides, with possible omission of slides covering sensitive and developing design work that needed to stay within the meeting.

4.15 LB addressed Anthony Taylor's (AT) question in the meeting chat regarding whether there will be any Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) made on people in their homes and children at school. LB answered that EIA covers a wide range of social topics, including impact on communities. She clarified the environmental statement would be commentable as part of DCO but the team would be happy to discuss any concerns in advance of that.

4.16 AT expressed his concern that the village of Newton would be cut off from their school.

## 5 Active Travel and Door to Door Connectivity

5.1 PW handed the discussion to Jonathan Cornwell (JC).

5.2 JC presented on active travel and door to door connectivity which met two criteria for the project: the first to provide active travel links and direct links to stations to encourage use of the railway; the second as mitigation to the impact of the railway, which he acknowledged was most pertinent to the group.

5.3 JC clarified that the interventions he would present on were caveated as being at a very early stage and there was no guarantee they could be delivered, but he wanted to show what the team wanted to deliver, and that they were working hard to understand risks and to work towards inclusion in base scope. He asked that specifics were kept within the meeting at this stage. (*NOTE, drawings omitted from the slide deck.*)

5.4 PB congratulated the project team on their work regarding active travel paths which affect Great Shelford and encouraged EWR Co to continue investigating and approving the plans.

5.5 LDH echoed PB's comments. LDH also voiced the concern regarding the closure of Harston/Newton Road and urged EWR Co to consider if there's any way that the road can stay open or design could be improved to minimise the impact on both villages. JC acknowledged the feedback had come through strongly in the non-statutory consultation and that the team had tried to find a solution but the route via London Road was the best option in terms of road connectivity.

5.6 LDH explained that he will continue to support the local residents in trying to push for a change, and that he welcomes any additional information on how the decision had been reached. PW added that she was aware of an outstanding request for information and future meetings with representatives of Harston and Newton and she was progressing that.

5.7 AT invited JC to visit Newton and see the current situation. JC thanked him and accepted and PW clarified that there would be a meeting soon.

5.8 LDH raised concern about people climbing onto the railway to shortcut their journey time. JC explained that level crossing closure was seen by Network Rail as a safety improvement and it was up to the project to make sure safe infrastructure was provided.

## 6 Accessibility and Inclusion

6.1 PW handed the discussion to Georgina Taylor (GT).

6.2 GT presented on EWR's Accessibility Advisory Panel. EWR Co are focusing on getting inclusive design right from the outset. Members of EWR's Accessibility Advisory Panel had fed back that this focus was not coming out strongly enough during the latest non-statutory consultation, so EWR Co are presenting on this work today.

6.3 GT discussed the legal obligations of the Equality Act 2010 and how EWR Co is playing due regard to those obligations. GT also ran through the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA).

6.4 GT discussed how EWR Co is incorporating inclusive design across all assets and spotlighted the work EWR Co has been doing on stations in relation to accessibility and inclusion.

6.5 GT ran through EWR's Accessibility Advisory Panel and how the panel helps to ensure that inclusive design is understood through the lens of lived experience.

6.6 AT asked in the meeting chat if inclusive design applied to the whole route or just stations. GT confirmed it was the whole route.

6.7 LDH asked about work to minimise impact for people with neurological challenges, for example the impact of noise in Harston created by the raising of the A10 and the effect on children and adults who are sensitive to noise. He would welcome insight into ways that EqIA considerations could go above standard compliance within planning legislation. LDH explained that the County Council had recently approved some individual special educational needs placements close to the proposed route in Harston. GT thanked LDH for the information and said that if there were concerns about a particular group, a more detailed assessment can be carried out in that area. (ACTION.)

6.8 AT asked in the meeting chat whether it would be possible to ask the panel to look at specific design details, such as the proposed bridge between Harston and Newton. GT answered that it would. (ACTION.)

6.9 Sarah Grove (SG) referenced local feeder stations such as Meldreth and Whittlefield Parkway which lack step free access. SG enquired whether there was scope or influence to make these more accessible. GT and JC stated that although EWR Co scope wouldn't cover it, by showing best practice in the work the project was doing, guidance could improve. KC added that it was an interesting point and that she would make a note of it.

## 7 Discussion, questions & answers

7.1 Glen Wooldridge (GW) asked whether the AstraZeneca withdrawal from Cambridge will affect the feasibility of EWR. KC answered that that would not be the case. GW asked for further clarification. KC answered that EWR Co was confident in the backing from the current government.

## 8 Closing remarks

8.1 PW thanked attendees for their contributions during the session and explained when the meeting minutes will be available for feedback.

## 9 Summary of actions

**ACTION 1:** EWR Co to provide information on how the PIB will impact consultation and the appointment of an independent person.

**ACTION 2:** EWR Co to provide information on whether biodiversity net gain proposals will be delivered in line with Development Consent Order requirements.

**ACTION 3:** LDH to flag County Council placements of people close to the route (eg SEND placements), and any other potentially sensitive facilities. EWR Co to share with EIA communities team.

**ACTION 4:** EWR Co to confirm that the Harston/Newton bridge will be taken to the Accessibility Advisory Panel.

**Post-meeting clarification**

**4.11**
EWR Co recognises the importance of chalk streams, however, they are not currently classified by the government as irreplaceable habitat.

Our general approach to water management reflects our recognition of the importance of chalk streams – we have identified them as key receptors and our ambition, where practicable, is to support regional ambitions for the restoration of chalk streams and to deliver improvements to chalk streams where we do cross them over a greater length than directly impacted. We will also aim to avoid abstraction during construction and operation that could affect chalk streams.

**ACTION 2:**
EWR Co has been working with the Town and Country Planning Act approach for BNG, however, this is expected to change as the government will be publishing guidance for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects to deliver BNG by May 2026, when it becomes a mandatory requirement for a DCO project.

**ACTION 4:**
The new bridge between Hartson and Newton has been highlighted to the EqIA team to ensure that impacts to the school are captured.

The design of the bridge was shared with the AAP in May 2025.

## Attendees

**EWR Co attendees**

- Paula Whitworth (PW) – Senior Stakeholder Manager – East
- Leah Bargota (LB) - Senior Environment Advisor
- Katie Dixon (KD) - Environment Design Manager, Cambridge
- Jon Cornwell (JC) - Development Programme Manager, Cambridge
- Georgina Taylor (GM) – Accessibility Manager
- Kate Campbell (KC) - Head of External Engagement
- Lavinia Popa (LP) – Statutory Stakeholder Engagement Team

**Parish councillors**

- Penny Absolom (PA) - Newton Parish Council
- Anthony Taylor (AT) - Newton Parish Council
- Paul Ormerod (PO) - Harston Parish Council

- Malcom Watson (MW) - Great Shelford Parish Council
- David Jones (DJ) - Little Shelford Parish Council

**Local authority councillors**

- Lisa Redrup (LR) – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Harston & Comberton ward
- Richard Williams (RW) – South Cambridgeshire District Council, Whittlesford ward
- Peter Fane (PF) – Cambridgeshire County Council, Sawston & Shelford ward; South Cambridgeshire District Council, Shelford ward
- Laurence Damary-Homan (LDH) – Cambridgeshire County Council, Sawston & Shelford ward

**Other attendees**

- Mark Lunn (ML) - Part Time Constituency Liaison Manager for Pippa Heylings, MP
- Jack Bullimore (JB) - Town and Parish Councils Liaison Officer for South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Sarah Grove (SG) - Project Officer, Cam Valley Community Rail Partnership