

Oxford to Bletchley Enhanced LRG

-Meeting note

Meeting #2

Date: 02/10/2025

Time: 6:00pm

Type of meeting: Online on MS Teams

Key discussion points and outcomes

1. Introduction, overview, and housekeeping

- 1.1 Sarah Jacobs (SJ) welcomed attendees to the meeting and ran through the housekeeping and agenda. All EWR Co staff introduced themselves and their respective job title.

2. Project Updates

- 2.1 SJ ran through the status of actions from the previous meeting. SJ explained that all actions, apart from the last, are still in progress.
- 2.2 SJ outlined that the session would discuss updates on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB), Environment, Accessibility and the Non-Statutory Consultation (NSC).
- 2.3 SJ finished running through the actions outlined in the presentation, with no comments or questions from the participants.
- 2.4 SJ shared the planned engagement activities, from November 2025 to January 2026 (*See slide deck for the full list of all actions*). SJ clarified that these engagement sessions will not be events but pop-up sessions for members of communities interested in learning more about the project.
- 2.5 SJ gave an update on the landowner engagement that EWR Co have been doing – EWR Co are writing to people across the route whose land or property could be affected by the proposals.

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3.Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB)

- 3.1 SJ provided an update on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB), noting that it presents an opportunity to modernise and enhance engagement outside of formal consultation periods. When EWR Co have more information, they will come back to the ELRGs on this matter.
- 3.2 SJ explained that EWR has been asked to continue work as usual while the PIB details are being decided in Parliament.
- 3.3 SJ explained that the project team is still aiming for consultation in 2026.

4. Environmental Update

- 4.1 Heidi Hutchings (HH) gave an environment update, noting that initial environmental information was shared in the non-statutory consultation 2024 Environmental Update Report. Since then, EWR Co have been reviewing feedback, engaging with stakeholders and undertaking surveys to inform design development.
- 4.2 John Riches (JR) stated that the Middle Claydon Passing Loop should be covered by engagement with their lineside community.
- 4.3 JR asked whether the discontinuous electrification proposal had been advanced, and if so, how will it affect environmental issues.
- 4.4 Anthony O'Dea (AO) replied to the question clarifying that the discontinuous traction power is still being analysed.

5. Route Section Update

- 5.1 AO and Renju Chacko (RC) explained the specific design decisions related to the Oxford – Bletchley sections: Oxford Bletchley, Oxford Station, Oxford Parkway Station, Bicester Village Station and London Road level crossing, and Bletchley Station.
- 5.2 JR emphasised that access from Rural Areas is dependent on car ownership because there is no Public Transport to get potential railway users to Stations. The public may not think that the railway is an alternative means to get to Oxford, which is currently well served by the X5 Bus route.

6. Accessibility Panel

- 6.1 Georgina Taylor (GT) explained that EWR Co have been doing a lot of work to embed inclusion and accessibility into proposals and design.

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7. Discussion, Questions & Answers (Q&A)

Environment

- 7.1 Rae Sloan (RS) asked how big the passing loops are, how many there will be, and when will there be a map to show their exact location. AO explained why passing loops are required and referenced their width will be a single track.

Engagement Timeline

- 7.2 RS asked when the team will have an answer regarding the choice for the Bicester level crossing options. RJ and AO stated that there will be further information available in October.
- 7.3 Mike Chapman (MC) asked the team to comment or confirm on when the new timetable will be issued.

Electrification

- 7.4 RS asked for clarification regarding the matter of electrification. In response, AO gave an overview on the matter of electrification. He explained that the project team is meeting the needs of building a green railway, as well as considering the benefits of using battery-run trains and taking in the changes posed by the building of Universal Studios theme park.

8. Closing remarks

- 8.1 SJ thanked the attendees for their contributions during the session and advised that further information is available on the [EWR website](#).
- 8.2 SJ advised that if any attendees have any further questions, these can be sent to localrepresentativesgroups@eastwestrail.co.uk.

Summary of Actions

No actions

Attendees

EWR Co attendees

- Sarah Jacobs (SJ) - Senior Stakeholder Manager
- Heidi Hutchings (HH) - Environmental Area Manager

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- Anthony O’Dea (AO) – Engineering Manager - Oxford to Bletchley
- Renju Chacko (RC) - Development Program Manager (West) CC
- Georgina Taylor (GT) – Accessibility Manager
- Lavinia Popa (LP) – LRG Support

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Laura Gordon – Oxfordshire County Council
- Cllr James Fry – Oxfordshire County Council
- Damien Maguire – Bicester Town Council
- Cllr John Chilver – Buckinghamshire Council
- Lesley Hewitt- EWR Liaison Officer, Buckinghamshire Council
- Cllr Nick Cotter – Cherwell District Council
- Paul Whitley – Bicester Town Council
- Rae Sloan - TBC

Parish Councillors

- Roger Landells – Chair of Twyford CP
- Cllr Mike Chapman – Newton Longville CP
- John Riches – Middle Claydon CP
- Andrew Thomas – Chesterton CP
- Peter Wright – Clerk East Claydon CP

Apologies

- Dan Hallett – Bicester Town Council
- Lisa Wilkinson – Clerk Charndon CP
- Richard Hamley – Winslow CP
- Nigel Simpson – Cherwell District Council
- Frank Mahon – Buckinghamshire Council
- Patrick Fealey – Buckinghamshire Council
- Fiona Mawson – Cherwell District Council
- Lois Muddiman – Oxford City Council
- Christopher Pruden – Cherwell District Council

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