

Croxton to Toft Enhanced LRG – Meeting notes

Meeting #1 - Details

Date: 02/06/2025

Time: 6:00pm

Type of meeting: In person

Key discussion points and outcomes

1. Introductions, workshop overview, and housekeeping

- 1.1 Sarah Jacobs (SJ) welcomed attendees to the meeting and ran through the housekeeping and agenda. SJ explained that the notes from the meeting would be made available on the community hub.
- 1.2 SJ also highlighted that although only the parishes in the Enhanced LRGs are statutory consultees, with regards to these meetings EWR Co have taken the view to also regard ward councillors as statutory consultees as this would allow EWR Co to have more meaningful discussions and provide more information.
- 1.3 SJ added that it would be up to the group's discretion whether to share the information discussed during the meeting, although it should be noted that some information would be confidential.
- 1.4 All attendees, including EWR Co staff, introduced themselves and their respective parishes, wards or job title.

2. Review of actions

- 2.1 SJ reviewed the one action from the last meeting, confirming that this has been completed.

3. Update on project

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Universal theme park

- 3.1 SJ explained that EWR Co is engaging with Universal to determine the potential implications of the theme park for Bedford and for the wider network. It has not yet been confirmed what the park may mean for EWR Co, but they are committed to maintaining close contact with all relevant parties such as Universal, Network Rail and the Department for Transport (DfT) to ensure accessibility and connectivity are core elements of the planning process.
- 3.2 Cllr Sharon Erzinciloglu (SE) asked where Universal would be positioned in relation to the EWR route.
- 3.3 SJ replied that it is positioned on the railway alignment and Stephen Christian (SC) added that this would have an impact on planning processes.
- 3.4 SJ explained that EWR Co are tightening up their approach to communications and project updates to local stakeholders.

Chiltern Railways

- 3.5 SJ explained that Chiltern Railways has been announced as the operator for the first stage of EWR and is expected to run services later this year.
- 3.6 Chiltern Railways would look to employ 45 apprentice train drivers and has delivered additional facilities for driver accommodation in Bletchley. Further updates would be provided once Chiltern Railways announces an initial date of operation.

Ground investigations

- 3.7 SJ shared that the Phase 1 ground investigation (GI) works for EWR Co started in February this year and that EWR Co have been or would be in contact with the parishes to notify them of such works.
- 3.8 The GI works were expected to take four to five months, but it is likely that EWR Co would need more time to complete them. EWR Co still needs to complete site visits and look for ways to reduce costs and risks associated with the GI works, as well as acquire permission through licences to access land. SJ acknowledged that EWR Co are aware of the sensitive nature of the area and reiterated that the GI works are often self-contained to limit impact on the surrounding area.
- 3.9 Cllr Martin Yeadon (MY) said that signs about ground investigations have been up in his local area for several weeks. MY said that the effect of these signs being in place for several weeks is that they are treated like wet floor signs, being ignored by local residents.

- 3.10 Cllr Peter Sanford (PS) suggested that dates of potential GI works should be added to signs.
- 3.11 SC explained that the process for completing GI works has been slower than EWR Co had hoped. SC explained that although landowners have signed licences, some are refusing access to their land – which is ultimately slowing down the process of completing GI works. SC added that because of these access issues, adding dates to signs could become redundant, as the dates of works taking place would likely change.
- 3.12 Cllr Tumi Hawkins (TH) asked if EWR Co knows why some landowners have refused access.
- 3.13 SC explained that despite landowners signing the licence, sometimes they change their minds, and then refuse to allow access.
- 3.14 Cllr Nicola Pritchard (NP) asked if landowners are legally obliged at this stage to allow access.
- 3.15 SC answered that they are if EWR Co has obtained a Section 172. This would involve going to the courts and then using force, which is an outcome that EWR Co wishes to avoid.

Surveys

- 3.16 SJ shared information on current and previous surveys conducted by EWR Co, outlining the range of surveys taking place as part of the DCO process.
- 3.17 SE asked about surveys of existing buildings, such as churches, and whether these would be subject to desktop surveys.
- 3.18 SJ confirmed that they would be the subject of desktop surveys.
- 3.19 SE asked whether there have been any issues with landowners in completing these surveys.
- 3.20 SJ confirmed that there had been no such issues that she was aware of.
- 3.21 NP asked whether locations for the monitoring of air quality, noise and vibration had been confirmed. This is of interest to her and other local stakeholders, as it would demonstrate which local villages are affected by factors such as noise and air pollution.
- 3.22 SJ confirmed that EWR Co would take an action to confirm this. SJ added that EWR Co partners with third-party organisations, such as National Highways, in order to deliver this data. SJ also said that EWR Co's environmental team is keen to speak with external stakeholders about their ongoing work, including archaeological findings in the local area.

3.23 SC explained that archaeological surveys have found a Bronze Age barrow near to Haslingfield.

3.24 TH asked about the use of radar surveys.

3.25 SC explained that they are used for the surveying of underground pipes and utilities.

Non-statutory consultation next steps

3.26 SJ provided an update on the non-statutory consultation (NSC). EWR Co is working through the consultation feedback and that the [NSC Summary Report](#) was published on 16 May 2025, which outlines emerging themes.

3.27 A more comprehensive 'You Said, We Did' (YSWD) report would be published at statutory consultation. SJ explained that the YSWD Report would summarise feedback received as well as evidence on how the project has considered feedback as part of the design development.

3.28 SE asked whether a 'summary document' of the NSC would be published, and if so, when this was likely to happen.

3.29 SJ explained that an NSC report would be published at the beginning of Statutory Consultation.

NSC emerging themes

3.30 SJ outlined emerging themes from feedback received, including growth opportunities, the need for community benefit, and access to jobs.

3.31 TH mentioned there being an issue in Caldecote with the station being difficult to access.


3.32 SJ said that EWR Co appreciates the need for accessible stations, and that EWR Co is keen to address broader traffic and transport issues where possible. SJ added that EWR Co is currently going through a triage process of NSC feedback, and would determine how this feedback could be implemented.

3.33 Cllr Tony Hyde (THY) asked how transport could be integrated if it doesn't exist, drawing on the lack of bus services in Caldecote.

3.34 SJ replied that EWR Co is having ongoing conversations with transport providers around these issues.

3.35 PS suggested that if EWR Co provided footpaths and cycle routes, it could be easier to access Abbotsley from Tempsford, with TH acknowledging that those close to the route won't

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receive benefits if they have accessibility issues.

3.36 SC mentioned EWR Co's work from St Neots to Tempsford on active travel, and their objective to increase active travel provision across the route with desktop exercises looking at existing routes.

3.37 SC explained that active travel proposals are being categorised from A to D: A – gets you to the station. B – connects with other active travel routes. C – less efficient. D – not considered.

3.38 NP said the local community is able to provide helpful comments, but the importance of receiving updates early cannot be emphasised enough.

3.39 SJ acknowledged NP's suggestion, explaining that EWR Co is often keen to update representatives as soon as possible, but is also subject to DfT timelines.

NSC emerging themes and Development Consent Order (DCO) process.

3.40 SE said that she was surprised people thought the tunnel through Chapel Hill was disruptive.

3.41 SC explained that it was the cuttings on the exit and entry to the tunnel that people were unhappy with.

3.42 SJ detailed the plan for Statutory Consultation to start 12 months on from the conclusion of NSC, with the DCO likely to be submitted 12 months after the conclusion of the Statutory Consultation.

3.43 TH asked why the DCO process was being shortened.

3.44 SC answered that the timeline has slight variables because of Universal, but Statutory Consultation is still likely to start in early 2026.

3.45 NP emphasised the importance of avoiding Christmas as part of the next round of consultation, as many local representatives had to work through Christmas in forming their responses to the NSC.

3.46 SJ acknowledged the comments and added that EWR Co must continue to adhere to DfT's timeline.

3.47 NP asked for an estimated time for 'spades to hit the ground'.

3.48 SC explained that this timeline is subject to change, but there is a chance of work commencing fully in 2029/2030.

4. Revised Local Representative Groups (LRGs)

- 4.1 SJ discussed the revised group structure for the LRGs and explained that all parishes and wards within the red line boundary have been placed into the 'Enhanced' LRGs, whereas those outside this boundary are part of the 'Community LRGs'.
- 4.2 SJ requested that LRG members inform EWR Co if they are happy for other members of neighbouring wards and parishes to attend future LRG meetings.
- 4.3 MY asked why the revised LRG group stops at Toft.
- 4.4 SJ explained that this was driven by the consultation team, but the borders appear to be relatively random.
- 4.5 SE asked why Toft and Comberton are in different groups when some representative areas land in between the two areas.
- 4.6 SJ explained that the groups could be merged and changed – and this is the type of feedback that EWR Co would appreciate receiving.
- 4.7 NP added that Comberton is where the secondary school is located, so there is a broad interest in the area, and local representatives would like to know about developments in Comberton without having to attend a separate meeting.
- 4.8 SJ reaffirmed that EWR Co are open to making changes to the groups and that it is for the groups to confirm whether they would like groups to be merged or changed.
- 4.9 MY added that he is supportive of extending the boundary as he would like to know what is happening in Comberton.


5. Terms of Reference

- 5.1 SJ stated that the Terms of Reference (ToR) had some changes and that they would share these with the group after the meeting. SJ stated that feedback was required from the attendees on the ToRs.

6. Croxton to Toft route section detailed discussion

Cambourne station

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- 6.1 SC explained that EWR Co are currently comparing options on the Chapel Hill tunnel, looking at assessment factors from Friday 6 June. SC said that the preferred option is for a mined tunnel, rather than cut and cover; however, this is subject to further design work.
- 6.2 TH said that this is a big plus, but asked about the certainty of this change happening.
- 6.3 SC explained that this is the preferred option, and that it would be considered further by comparing it against the assessment factors.
- 6.4 Cambourne station could potentially move further west by half a kilometre as part of this discussion.
- 6.5 SE asked about the possibility of more parking at the newly located station.
- 6.6 SC replied that EWR Co has found more parking to be frowned upon due to environmental impacts. SJ added that EWR Co are currently triaging feedback and have a design team looking at around 53 potential changes, a lot of which are minor. These changes were presented to local authorities across Cambridgeshire earlier in the day.

Farm and business accessibility

- 6.7 SC discussed a number of access requirements in the area.
- 6.8 SJ said that EWR Co would be notifying landowners about access to their land in due course.
- 6.9 TH said that the changes outlined were positive, as she wasn't sure what she would hear at today's meeting. TH did note, however, that the effect of house sales in the local area needs to be considered, with many sales falling through as a result of uncertainty.
- 6.10 SJ acknowledged that this has been caused by the uncertainty of the project's redline boundary and the unknowns surrounding these changes, but that the red line boundary would continue to shrink.
- 6.11 NP asked whether the mined tunnel would be concrete, so that local representatives could share this information with prospective buyers.
- 6.12 SJ & SC explained that this level of detail cannot be shared until the next round of consultation as further work is required to determine such things.

Community fund

6.13 SJ explained that the community fund is being planned, and that social value work would form a central part of this fund. The fund is currently being scoped out, with the hope that it would be launched later this year – EWR Co would then have a separate entity managing it, with parish councils then involved.

6.14 SE asked whether cycle lanes for active travel would form part of the community fund pot, for example.

6.15 SC confirmed that this would form part of the project design, and would be separate from any community benefit fund decisions.

6.16 On the subject of further engagement between now and Statutory Consultation, SE asked who would represent EWR Co at any such engagement.

6.17 SJ explained that the next round of LRGs is scheduled for September. Further engagement on subject-specific areas, such as the environment, may also form part of future engagement, and this would be shared with local representatives in due course.

6 AOB and Closing remarks

6.12 SJ informed attendees that the next round of LRG meetings would likely commence at the end of September 2025.

Summary of Actions

- **ACTION 1:** EWR Co to confirm if they can share the locations of air quality, noise and vibration monitors.
- **ACTION 2:** Local representatives to confirm whether the Croxton to Toft LRG should be merged with the Comberton to Haslingfield LRG, due to shared interests in Comberton.
- **ACTION 3:** EWR Co to summarise the relevant changes to Croxton to Toft, following on from EWR Co's discussions with local authorities across Cambridgeshire around the potential design changes.
- **ACTION 4:** EWR Co to confirm the location of the construction compound on Caldecote Road, as well as the locations of other relevant construction compounds in the area.

Attendees

EWR Co attendees

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- Sarah Jacobs – Senior Engagement Manager (EWR Co)
- Stephen Christian – Development Programme Manager – Clapham to Hauxton (EWR Co)

Local authority councillors

- Cllr Tumi Hawkins – Councillor for Caldecote Ward
- Cllr Helene Leeming – Councillor for Cambourne Ward
- Cllr Peter David Sandford – South Cambridgeshire District Councillor for Caxton & Papworth Ward
- Cllr Chris Poulton – Cambridgeshire County Councillor for Papworth & Swavesey Ward

Parish Councils

- Cllr Nicola Pritchard –Councillor for Caldecote Parish Council
- Cllr Sharon Erzinciloglu – Councillor for Great & Little Eversden Parish Council
- Cllr Shaun Houlihan – Councillor for Comberton Parish Council
- Cllr Tony Hyde – Councillor for Abbotsley Parish Council
- Cllr Martin Yeadon – Councillor for Toft Parish Council

Apologies

- Caldecote Parish Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Ward
- South Cambridgeshire District Council, Girton Ward
- Yelling Parish Council
- Cambridgeshire County Council, Bar Hill Ward