

Clapham Green to Colesden Enhanced LRG- Meeting note

Meeting #2

Date: 01/10/2025

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.

2. Review of actions from the last meeting

- 2.1 The ten actions from the previous meeting were outlined. SJ ran through the status of actions from the previous meeting. SJ noted that the team is currently working through the design feedback and explained that the session will discuss updates on the Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB), Environment, Accessibility and the Non-Statutory Consultation.
- 2.2 SJ noted that the team will be hosting meetings on noise impacts at a later date, as background surveys are still taking place. SJ guaranteed the project team will have discussions with local authorities, wards and parishes, and that SJ herself will reach out to Clapham Green to Colesden ELRG to give updates.
- 2.3 SJ applied the same actions highlighted in 2.2 to the matter of construction updates.
- 2.4 SJ finished running through the actions outlined, with no comments or questions from the participants.

3. Project updates

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Peter Norris (PN) asked for precise dates for the community pop-ups. SJ responded by saying that there are no precise dates available at present.

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- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 PN asked if the project team has concluded the matter of deciding whether they favour option 1B or 1C on the edge of the area of interest for Clapham Green to Colesden.
- 3.5 SJ explained that the project team does not have an answer at present because the decision is still under review, as it is impacted by the NSC feedback and the announcement of the Universal Studios project.
- 3.6 PN asked for specific timing for when this information will be made available.
- 3.7 SJ explained that at present the team is unable to provide a precise timeline.

4. Planning and Infrastructure Bill (PIB)

- 4.1 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.
- 4.2 Brent Fielder (BF) expressed concern about the PIB, claiming that it is a step backwards from democracy and engagement.
- 4.3 Stephen Arnold (SA) expressed similar concerns regarding the PIB, stating that it restricts those communities affected by infrastructure projects. He expressed the need for communities to be informed that, according to his own interpretation of the PIB, there will be less engagement on the project going forward.
- 4.4 Eric Cooper (EC) asked when the Bill will get consent, and how it will affect the project programme.
- 4.5 SJ explained that the PIB does not currently affected the program, and the team has been advised to continue with business as usual.
- 4.6 EC expressed his disapproval of the PIB and argued that it aims at delivering the project quicker and at a lower cost.
- 4.7 SJ said that she would bring forward more information regarding the PIB to the LRGs, when more information will be made available.
- 4.8 SJ explained that the project team is currently doing more engagement with local authorities and senior officials and thinking how to enhance communication channels in order to have a continuous flow of engagement.

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- 4.9 SA requested clarification on how the PIB will affect the Statutory Consultation going ahead.
- 4.10 SJ explained that the PIB would look at replacing the Statutory Consultation, but that it is unclear as how that will be done.
- 4.11 SJ made a note to request more information on the PIB from the DCO Consultation team.

5. Environmental Update

- 5.1 FM gave an update on the environmental assessment. FM explained that the team have been reviewing the feedback on environment received during the 2024 NSC, carrying out surveys and assessing the likely impacts of the development. FM made clear that stakeholder feedback will be thoroughly considered in shaping a design.
- 5.2 FM mentioned the surveys planned for winter 2025/2026, including archaeological trial trenching and soil surveys.
- 5.3 FM discussed in detail Biodiversity Net Gain.
- 5.4 FM outlined the changes made to the Clapham Green – Colesden section after taking in consultation feedback, landowner meetings and updated survey information.
- 5.5 FM discussed public rights of way, specifically about Ravensden footpath 35 and Ravensden byway 61, saying that the options are currently being decided upon completion of feedback analysis.
- 5.6 SA asked if there is progress on the matter of retention of Boat 61. FM responded that it is a work in progress.
- 5.7 BF noted that he does not agree with the project team's perception of environmental mitigations, using the construction plans for the Bedford section as an example.
- 5.8 EC asked Stephen Christian (SC) about the progress on the proposal regarding the tunnel at Clapham Green. SC responded by saying a tunnel was not deemed viable in that location, however, EWR Engineering will revisit following EC's slide presentation.
- 5.9 PN asked when the proposed date for the publishing of the You Said We Did document is.
- 5.10 SJ said the plan was for a late Autumn release, but the confirmed date was still being reviewed in line with DfT review of the documents.
- 5.11 SJ clarified that the YSWD document will not be a final version of project plans, and that more information will follow in the coming year (2026).

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6. Route Section Update

- 6.1 SC explained the specific design decisions related to the Clapham Green to Colesden route section, namely those concerning Clapham, Highfield Farm, Ravensden Brook, and Wilden East.
- 6.2 SC confirmed there is no bridge planned for Graze Hill Lane.
- 6.3 SA highlighted that Graze Hill Lane should not be severed from the surrounding area because it provides access to houses and is an ecological corridor.
- 6.4 Related to the Clapham Section, Mark Fitzpatrick (MF) commented on the Clapham Green footpaths 5 and 6 saying that the proposal should be upgraded to a bridleway in order to maintain bridleway access on both sides. He also mentioned a proposal regarding a potential public footpath adjacent to the railway coming up from Clapham Road, in order to give access to the countryside.
- 6.5 Related to MF's remark, SC took up the action of clarifying what type of bridge is planned for Clapham Green footpaths 5 and 6. SC also acknowledged the public footpath statement and explained the system of categories used by the project team to decide upon implementing a design choice in terms of active travelling.
- 6.6 Related to the Highfield Farm section, and linking the two bridleways which are located away from the railway, SC clarified that the project team will be providing Equestrian compatible bridges (parapet height) and a normal road surface.
- 6.7 Justin Griffiths (JG) invited the project team to enhance the environment and overall benefits for the communities when addressing mitigations.
- 6.8 BF asked whether the line running through Wilden will be electrified in full. SC replied by confirming that it will, as the team is electrifying the line all the way from Bedford to Cambourne.

7. Accessibility Panel

- 7.1 Georgina Taylor (GT) explained that EWR Co have been doing a lot of work to embed inclusion and accessibility into proposals and design. GT presented the part of the presentation related to accessibility and gave an overview of how the project team is addressing that.
- 7.2 Gordon Johnston (GJ) asked whether the project team will provide signage in any other language apart from English.
- 7.3 GT explained each station has a different need, and that the project team is working to be as inclusive as possible.

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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

ACTION 1: Sarah Jacobs to provide more detail on the PIB and how this replaces or works with existing consultation plans.

ACTION 2: Stephen Christian to check what type of bridge is planned for Clapham Green footpaths 5 and 6.

ACTION 3: Sarah Jacobs to share the meeting agenda and slides ahead of future meetings.

Attendees

EWR Co attendees

- Sarah Jacobs (SJ) - Senior Stakeholder Manager
- Stephen Christian (SC) – Development Programme Manager - Clapham to Hauxton
- Fiona Man (FM) – Environmental Area Manager (East)
- Georgina Taylor (GM) – Accessibility Manager
- Lavinia Popa (LP) – LRG Support
- Paula Whitworth (PW) – Senior Stakeholder Manager
- Olu Solola (OS) - Development Programme Manager

Parish Councillors

- Brent Fielder – Wilden CP
- Gordon Johnston - Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden CP
- Justin Griffith – Roxton CP
- Bernadette Russel – Ravensden CP
- Sarah Walker – Clapham CP
- Stephen Arnold – Ravensden CP
- Cllr Nicola Gribble (Bedford) - Ravensden CP
- Mark Fitzpatrick - Brickhill CP
- Eric Cooper – Clapham CP
- Peter Lamswood – Brickhill CP
- Martin Yemm - Wyboston, Chawston and Colesden CP Chairman

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Apologies

- Zara Layne – Bedford Borough Council
- George Gurney - Oxfordshire Council

Other

- Peter Norris –Invited expert

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