

# Cambridge Enhanced LRG-Meeting note

## Meeting #2

**Date:** 20/10/2025

**Time:** 6:00pm

**Type of meeting:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)

## Key discussion points and outcomes

### 1. Introduction, housekeeping, and agenda

- 1.1 Paula Whitworth (PW) welcomed everyone to the call, introduced the East West Rail team, and ran through the agenda and housekeeping.

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

- 2.1 PW noted that there was the only one action from the last ELRG meeting with Cambridge. PW explained that this action has been marked as complete and that attendees should have received the link to detailed maps.

### 3. Project updates

- 3.1 PW provided an update on this round of ELRG engagement.
- 3.2 PW shared a snapshot of political engagement with political stakeholders across the route, explaining that the various colours on the snapshot were indicative of the political party and demonstrate the widespread engagement that has been happening with political stakeholders.
- 3.3 PW provided an update on EWR Co's approach to community engagement. EWR Co are launching a series of 'pop up' sessions later this year to increase general awareness of the scheme. EWR Co are looking at venues with high footfall that could host these sessions and welcome suggestions from the group regarding potential locations.
- 3.4 Immy Blackburn-Horgan (IB-H) suggested that EWR Co communicate with Queen Edith's Community Forum and consider using the Nightingale Community Pavilion as it is a large space that can receive high footfall. The Forum sends out a weekly email to ward residents.
- 3.5 PW thanked IB-H for this suggestion and said she would take it away (ACTION).

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- 3.6 PW then provided an update on landowner engagement and shared that EWR Co are sending letters to people who have land or property that could be affected by current proposals, with details of how to contact the Land and Property team. ELRG attendees should also have received this information.

#### **4.Planning and Infrastructure Bill update**

- 4.1 PW discussed the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, noting that EWR Co see the Bill as an opportunity to do more collaborative and iterative engagement and that ELRG engagement can test emerging thinking and discuss hyper-local issues.
- 4.2 PW explained that EWR Co are working with government to determine what the Bill will look like in practice for engagement and consultation and will come back to the ELRGs once more is known.

#### **5.Environment**

- 5.1 Leah Bargeta (LB) provided an update on EWR Co's environmental work, noting that initial information on this was shared in the Environmental Update Report as part of the 2024 non-statutory consultation.
- 5.2 LB presented an update on EWR Co's Design Integration and Mitigation principles, noting that protecting the environment is a key part of how EWR designs are developed and that this is embedded throughout the process. LB also explained how EWR Co look to avoid, minimise, rectify, and compensate for any potential impacts.
- 5.3 LB shared an update on the ongoing surveys work that EWR Co are doing. These surveys provide useful context for existing conditions along the route. The first phase of Ground Investigations has been progressing well and are helping to inform the environmental assessments and engineering designs.
- 5.4 LB discussed EWR Co's Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) commitment and how EWR Co been embedding BNG into the design process from the outset by focusing on avoiding and minimising environmental impacts.
- 5.5 LB then shared some of the environmental updates that EWR Co have made in the Cambridge area since non-statutory consultation (*see the slide for full list of updates*).
- 5.6 Naomi Bennett (NB) pointed out that Cambridge City Council normally ask for a 20% BNG uplift rather than the 10% commitment that EWR Co has made.

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- 5.7 LB responded that Cambridge City Council are part of the BNG Forum and that both local and route wide factors are considered but EWR Co will feed that point back to the BNG team. **Post-meeting note: This point was fed back to the EWR Co BNG Lead who acknowledged that all the Local Authorities in the Ox-Cam Arc have made this as a target and, through working with the stakeholders on the Forum, EWR Co are looking to maximise BNG where possible.**
- 5.8 Karen Young (KY) noted that BNG is a well-established concept, expressing surprise that EWR Co were awaiting government guidance on this and asked what this guidance is.
- 5.9 LB responded that EWR Co have been working closely with Natural England, and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and are awaiting established guidance to factor that into metric calculations. EWR Co have been following the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act and the DCO application. PW also flagged if KY wanted more detail on this then this could be set up with the BNG team.
- 5.10 Matthew Morgan (MM) asked if EWR Co have been considering wildlife corridors and how they could be affected by the railway
- 5.11 LB acknowledged that linear structures such as railways can cause severance for wildlife but explained that EWR Co have been looking at incorporating environmental mitigations into design and follow the Lawton principles to ensure that any severance is managed.

## 6. Route section: Cambridge

- 6.1 Jonathan Cornwell (JC) presented on active travel. He noted he had presented at a previous ELRG meeting in terms of routes into the city, and that it was also of interest to this meeting for people starting for example at Cambridge South with improved routes out to the villages.
- 6.2 JC noted that the designs were still at a very early stage and were being presented only to give a flavour of what was being proposed as the team worked towards including them in the next period of design and consultation.
- 6.3 Bryony Goodliffe (BG) flagged the possibility of Trumpington Park and Ride moving and asked if footpaths would be joined up to accommodate this move. Katie Thornburrow (KT) also flagged that the Trumpington Park and Ride is going to move before EWR is in operation so this must be considered.
- 6.4 JC noted that the Park and Ride is proposed to move out to the junction of M11 and A10 and that the Melbourn Greenway would be retained, ensuring this route continues to be joined up.

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- 6.5 MM said it was good to see that these areas are being upgraded and that the footpaths look promising. MM highlighted the importance of considering parapets during bridge design to avoid any negative visual impacts.
- 6.6 JC responded while bridge design work is in the formative stage, parapet design will certainly be considered.
- 6.7 **NOTE: PW reiterated that the designs on screen were work-in-progress and evolving so will be omitted from the slide deck circulated with the meeting minutes. PW asked that the specifics stay within the meeting at this stage**
- 6.8 JC then presented a high-level summary of ongoing works along the route section. (See slide deck for full list of works)

#### Long Road Bridge

- 6.9 JC provided an update on Long Road, explaining that the existing road layout is not wide enough to accommodate new tracks so the bridge will need replacing.
- 6.10 KY noted that Long Road falls under her ward and said that a closure over a weekend would be manageable, but anything longer will cause major disruptions for the south of the city and is a major concern.
- 6.11 NB suggested avoiding any weekend working when Cambridge United Football Club (CUFC) are playing as football-related congestion spreads throughout the city. NB also highlighted that anyone who attends Addenbrookes Hospital will be impacted so this should be considered.
- 6.12 JC responded that EWR Co have been assessing two options – 1) a full closure and 2) a temporary bridge. Extensive emergency services engagement has helped to inform these assessments and EWR Co have also been conducting design and construction/logistics studies in parallel. The findings of these assessments and studies suggest a full closure is the best option and that this would be for a period of 6–13-weeks. EWR Co are working hard to ensure that any impacts of a full closure are mitigated as far as possible and that this is as close to the 6-week timeframe as possible. EWR Co are looking at using some space near the bridge for pre-assembly work which will help to reduce the construction period. Engagement with stakeholders will continue to be crucial to minimise the impact on the city.
- 6.13 MM noted Long Road Bridge had been closed previously when the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway was built and suggested EWR Co take a look to see what was done on that occasion.
- 6.14 KY said that although she was supportive of East West Rail, 6 weeks is too long and EWR Co should be exploring ways to make that timeframe shorter. KY wanted her feedback recorded that the residents in Queen Edith ward will not be happy with a long closure.

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- 6.15 JC noted that EWR Co recognise the disruption that a closure will cause and have been engaging with industry-leading specialists on this. The emergency services have also shared some useful insights about how to minimise the impact on the city. He said that his ask was for people on the call to input into the plan to minimise disruption.
- 6.16 NB reiterated the importance of considering CUFC football matches and other events such as the Cambridge Folk Festival. NB also proposed that EWR Co engage with the Princess of Wales Hospital in Ely about patients potentially going there instead and consult with employers regarding potential mitigations such as home working for the period of closure.
- 6.17 JC responded that these are exactly the sort of examples that EWR Co are looking to build into the proposals.
- 6.18 KT flagged that when the Hills Road Bridge was closed for the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, one side of the road was closed while the other side remained opened. This did mean that construction took a lot longer, but this could also be explored or EWR Co could explain why that approach was not pursued.
- 6.19 IB-H stated she had similar concerns to everyone else. She asked if there were any temporary alternative routes that EWR Co could use around the location of the bridge.
- 6.20 JC responded that this was the other leading option. It is feasible but there would be significant environmental impacts – it would mean lots of trees are removed out of the priority habitat. The temporary bridge would also come at a significantly increased cost and traffic modelling showed it would not address traffic problems as it would be a single lane bridge with traffic lights. It had been shown that it was not a robust solution which is why the full closure was being pursued.
- 6.21 BG and MM suggested in the meeting chat that EWR Co could request Addenbrookes hospital open the through-route during the closure period to ameliorate some of the traffic.
- 6.22 JC responded that EWR Co will be looking at all options during the period of closure.
- 6.23 PW thanked people on the call for their valuable feedback and reiterated there will be plenty of opportunities to continue to feed into the plan.

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### Cambridge station upgrades


- 6.24 JC then provided an update on Cambridge station upgrades that EWR Co are proposing to make. These were presented at the last non-statutory consultation so will not necessarily be new to people.
- 6.25 JC noted that a more recent development is that EWR Co have been looking into the potential for an eastern entrance to the station. This would mitigate challenges on the western side, including pedestrian flow from the new platforms and the heritage status of the station building. It would also link up with active travel. A design study has been conducted to see if the entrance is feasible, which concluded that it is, although JC stated that it is not fully committed and is still being worked through.
- 6.26 MM said that it was very good to hear that EWR Co have been exploring having an eastern entrance at Cambridge station as this could support regeneration of the area. MM flagged that EWR Co should aim for multi-storey parking and will need to consider how to link up the cycle bridge with cycle parking as well as give thought to cycle security. MM said that the current station does not have sufficient parking on the south side.
- 6.27 JC responded that if an eastern entrance is brought into scope, it would include an active travel hub with bike parking on that side too. EWR Co are also considering potential improvements for the south side of the station. Security in the area will also be considered.
- 6.28 NB flagged that residents who live on Rustat Road are experiencing issues with displacement parking.
- 6.29 NB also explained that the current station can be inhospitable for disabled users and if more seating could be provided if there was an eastern building.
- 6.30 IB-H also flagged the importance of having more than one lift at the station.
- 6.31 JC said he would take these points away.

### East of Cambridge.

- 6.32 JC presented on proposed upgrades in the area east of Cambridge (*see slide deck for further details*).

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- 6.33 JC explained that EWR Co showed the concept of a turnback at non-statutory consultation – where instead of terminating at Cambridge station, trains carry on empty to the turnback west of Cherry Hinton. EWR Co is now looking at providing a station, but it is not in base scope at this stage.
- 6.34 MM asked if EWR Co would plan to include these proposals in the final DCO application rather than a later add-on.
- 6.35 JC confirmed that EWR Co would be looking to include these proposals in the DCO application but there is still a lot of work left to do and funding to secure. An east station would require third party funding, most likely from developers, but that is the aspiration.
- 6.36 MM asked if there were any mechanisms for financing to be given later – i.e. built and then funded after.
- 6.37 JC noted that he was unsure if there were any mechanisms like this, but EWR Co are exploring all options to ensure that this opportunity is included.
- 6.38 NB noted Abbey and Cherry Hinton residents are very excited about the possibility of an east station.

## **7.Accessibility Panel**

- 7.1 Georgina Taylor (GT) shared an update on EWR Co's Accessibility and Inclusion work, noting that NB and IB-H had already touched on the importance of inclusive design in earlier discussions.
- 7.2 GT shared EWR Co's legal obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and discussed EWR Co's Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) mitigations process.
- 7.3 GT discussed the inclusive design work that EWR Co has been undertaking and how this is embedded into all assets across the railway. GT spotlighted station design and shared how inclusive design has been incorporated into this work.
- 7.4 GT provided information on the EWR Accessibility Advisory Panel (AAP) and posted a link in the meeting chat to an article covering the priority issues identified by the AAP as well as the Inclusion Page on the EWR website.

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7.5 NB flagged that a lot of station issues are about seating. She explained that as mobility scooters cannot be easily taken onto trains, people who are less able to stand have to travel without their usual means of support and seating is essential.

7.6 GT thanked NB and said she could be contacted with more details and if there was anything else that should be looked at, she would take it away (ACTION).

## **8. Discussion, Q&A**

8.1 PW closed the meeting by sharing the process for circulating summary notes and noted that all feedback provided in this meeting will be recorded.

## **Actions**

**ACTION 1:** PW to feedback IB-H's suggestion to use the Queen Edith's Community Forum to communicate any details for upcoming 'pop-up sessions' and consider using the Nightingale Pavilion as a venue for such sessions.

**ACTION 2:** JC and GT to take away NB's points regarding lack of public seating around Cambridge station being a big problem for disabled people and how this could be considered in future upgrades.

## **Attendees**

### **EWR Co attendees**

- Paula Whitworth (PW) – Senior Stakeholder Manager - East
- Jonathan Cornwell (JC) - Development Programme Manager - Cambridge
- Leah Bargeta (LB) – Senior Environmental Advisor
- Georgina Taylor (GT) - Accessibility Manager
- Kate Campbell (KC) - Head of External Engagement
- Joe Harris (JH) - Statutory Stakeholder Engagement Team


### **Local authority councillors**

- Katie Thornburrow – Cambridge City Council, Petersfield Ward

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- Bryony Goodliffe – Cambridgeshire County Council, Cherry Hinton Ward
  - Immy Blackburn-Horgan – Cambridge City Council, Queen Edith's Ward
  - Karen Young – Cambridge City Council, Queen Edith's Ward
  - Matthew Morgan – Cambridgeshire County Council, Fulbourn Ward
  - Naomi Bennett – Cambridge City Council, Abbey Ward

#### **Other attendees**

- Rachel Lambert - Principal Planner / EWR DCO Lead (Greater Cambridge Shared Planning)
- Natalie Smith – Shelford representative

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