

Bedford Borough Council/EWR - Minutes



Date: Friday 23 rd February	Time: 11.00 – 12.00	Venue: Rm 344 Borough Hall
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Attendees		Apologies	
TW	Tom Wootton – Mayor of Bedford Borough		
JW	Cllr Jim Weir - Deputy Mayor / Portfolio holder Environment, Highways and Transport		
JS	Jon Shortland – Chief Officer Planning Infrastructure & Economic Growth		
CA	Craig Austin – Director for Environment		
MG	Melanie McGuinness – Manager for Transport Policy and Infrastructure		
AS	Cllr Andrea Spice – Portfolio holder Town Centres and Planning		
CC	Cara Cosson – PA to Mayor Tom Wootton & Minute taker for BBC		
[EWR]	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company]		
[EWR]	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company]		

Abbreviations

BBC	Bedford Borough Council		
EWR	East West Rail		
POETS	Protect Poets – Residents Steering Group Bedford		
DCO	Development Consent Order		

No	Item
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>None received.</p>
2	<p>Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>TW advised Cara would take minutes for BBC.</p> <p>ACTION: None</p>
3	<p>Agenda</p> <p>TW confirmed purpose of the meeting: EWR had wanted to meet to talk about their consultations and BBC wanted to meet about the studies JS department/BBC had carried out and EWR's opinion on those.</p> <p>TW advised he also had a list of questions from POETS Group and other questions also</p> <p>TW asked [EWR] if there was anything they wanted on the agenda/to discuss.</p> <p>[EWR] advised they were at the meeting for the update, to advise how things are going and were happy to talk about the reports.</p> <p>[EWR] advised she and members of team had watched the stream and were versed on the reports.</p> <p>[EWR] asked if TW could be respectful of her team in public.</p> <p>TW advised he was very sorry for his comment and requested this be minuted.</p> <p>ACTION: None</p>
4	<p>Jon Shortland Presentation/BBC Reports</p> <p>TW referred to the presentation given by JS which he thought was good.</p> <p>[EWR] advised she had given her feedback to JS.</p>

	ACTION: None
5	<p>Update from EWR</p> <p>CA asked if [EWR] would like to give an update. [EWR] advised targeting June first stage of statutory consultation, subject to any possible election. TW asked how long the consultation would last [EWR] 8 week period, looked at what the length should be. Second stage would probably be 12weeks. TW discussed possible election late summer [EWR] advised they could launch the consultation provided they were not in purdah. E.g if launched 30th June and an election was announced after this date this would be ok as it had started. Trying to get out before the summer recess, June is the target. A variable could be Universal announcements which they have heard varying things. TW advised BBC had also heard could be June. [EWR] Universal can respond to the consultation if Universal put out their announcement after the consultation but if their announcement comes before EWR consultation then EWR would need to think about material, so those are challenges. AS asked for the time gap between 1st closing and 2nd consultation, assuming no election. JW June again? [EWR] It would be next year, planning for the middle of next year. JS Heard re 2 stage consultation, don't quite understand what the advantages are. Is there any other DCO which is 2 stage? [EWR] It's the first time it's planned, we looked at comparable scheme, what happened in real life instead of what is supposed to and when there's a lot of stakeholder feedback from the consultation itself, it has to go a second time anyway. Looked at timing/elections/what trying to do and still options which need to be considered including Universal - first consultation allows that to materialise/ bubble up and develop so can have a proper consultation and decided to plan for two consultations to control and structure it better. One round of feedback, there will some options in the first consultation, then a planned second consultation on a single, where all other options will be closed down. TW asked what areas would be in the consultation for this summer, the whole line? [EWR] Everything TW From here to Cambridge? JS Bletchley to Cambridge? [EWR] Oxford to Cambridge – some associated works to do, various to manage already in Network Rail patch, Bicester London Road level road crossing to close (not for Oxford to Milton Keynes) but will for 4 trains/hour. Whole line, big work is land, Bedford to Cambridge. AS So for the second consultation what are the options – route/timescale? [EWR] No, will be small detail like couple of options on how to manage non-motorised vehicles (overbridge or underpass) specifics. Marston Vale Station, legitimately want feedback on Marston Vale line proposals. It is not the route alignment. AS Route will be decided at that point? [EWR] The route is what we published last year, proceeding with consultation on that route, greater detail on the red line boundary. TW Will you have detail in bridges/underpasses, will you have done that work? [EWR] Yes, in June JW Will the results of the first consultation structure the second consultation? [EWR] We are continuing with high level design, not the detail, when we get the consultation feedback we will analyse and take views whether it should be included in the design to the second consultation. We will be able to track the responses from the first consultation and you will see how the responses fit the next level of design. AS I'm confused, when you put it our last time was there not a route and a Tempsford variant? [EWR] There was a main route announcement and that was an option. We are looking at the Tempsford options and see if there will be a little option, but these are not massive variants. TW Not massive variants. Options consulting on: will they be 50 metres wide/ or 100m/ 200yds/ a mile? [EWR] It depends what/where that piece of railway is, embankment or cutting. TW So a red line on a map, that is where the railway is going, that is what you are saying? [EWR] There will be clarity on where the line is, the amount of land depends on whether it is a viaduct/embankment/cutting/flat. [EWR] Yes. There will be permanent boundaries and temporary boundaries. TW So it will show all the ground you need? To dump soil/put diggers on? [EWR] Yes. All temporary works would be included. First stage will have reasonable worst case, may be bigger than what we need. Want to minimise land take and minimise costs. Will look at reasonable worst case for land take for permanent and temporary. That difference will be clear. CA So the lines determine the reasonable worst case?</p>

	<p>[EWR] Yes ,will bring that in when we get to the second stage trying to find right way to do that and will become clearer, hopefully bring in further at DCO. Her team and consultants want to reduce costs and programme by building less, start wider and get narrower on detailed design.</p> <p>JS Where it is built from will you be putting the compounds on the plan?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes, worst case, not started our packaging strategy yet.</p> <p>JS For sake of argument might identify 6, but only need 3?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes, part of discussion over next year, we will work you as to protect the impact on roads, lessons learnt on the first phase, e.g do we look at resurfacing the roads before used by our vehicles rather than after, so it is safer for all using it. What is our packaging strategy where the spoil will go and comms with the community.</p> <p>TW So this will say how many houses you need to take in POETS?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes.</p> <p>ACTION: None</p>
6	<p>Return to Jon Shortland Presentation/BBC Reports</p> <p>JS Referring to the reports, we think we made a reasonable case where you need to do more work about points stack trains on platform 3 – is that work going to happen?</p> <p>[EWR] Not something we are looking now to the first 1st consultation but would look at again as part of consultation response.</p> <p>We think we have looked at the 6 verses 4 track as much as we can, if there is new information - which we don't think there is we can have another conversation. Bedford team has looked at will looked at reports in detail and there's nothing new.</p> <p>JS We think there is and we asked questions they couldn't answer, they said they would look at and do more work.</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] I'll pick that up with my people.</p> <p>TW Will you let people know and POETS know where the red line is going?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes.</p> <p>TW Before the Consultation comes out?</p> <p>[EWR] We've been having our regular local representative group had discussions.</p> <p>TW We have had a load of questions sent to us. The POETS group feel miffed that you only include the 2 local councillors not the group.. There is a breakdown in the relationship between the group and the 2 councillors. They feel underrepresented and want to feel their voices are heard which they don't.</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] [Redacted at request of East West Railway Company] has left, I will take that away</p> <p>ACTION: TW I will email the questions</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] I will look into that, news to me about the breakdown in relations.</p> <p>ACTIONS: As shown above</p>
7	<p>Public Meetings/Consultation</p> <p>AS Always been issues there and the northern villages have different timescales on meetings to town centre.</p> <p>[EWR] There will be reasons why.</p> <p>AS Not from you but seem more excuses rather than reasons, not fair and not even</p> <p>[EWR] We will take that away, this is not formal or statutory we do because we want to engage with communities, we have developed this.</p> <p>TW How do you see the consultation going in June? Public meetings again?</p> <p>[EWR] Still in development, have to have opportunities for people to provide us with feedback. Non statutory was done during Covid and it wasn't desirable as we couldn't have public meetings.</p> <p>CA So you are working towards public meetings?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes and we want your feedback also as you know your community better than us people engage differently.</p> <p>AS Question around speculation that for people to respond to consultation they need to have pre registered – is this so as there is confusion with residents?</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] First time heard this but will follow up.</p> <p>[EWR] Might be confusion over DCO as you have to pre-register to be part of the process. Consultation all can respond to.</p> <p>AS So the DCO is not for residents to respond to - it's high level?</p> <p>JS Responses to 2nd part of the consultation, will be bound up and if people want to appear in person then you have to register.</p> <p>[EWR] It's only if you want response as part of information public.</p>

	<p>ACTION: [EWR] We will put a 1 page fact sheet together</p> <p>ACTIONS: As shown above</p>
8	<p>Return to Jon Shortland Presentation/BBC Reports</p> <p>TW I'm sorry I didn't see your response to JS stuff.</p> <p>[EWR] I didn't send a response - just said did a great presentation.</p> <p>TW We have done a lot of work and also economic benefits in/around Bedford town, we have done work on routes that that is as good, if not better, you were talking on the radio the other day about connectivity Milton Keynes and Cambridge but you are coming through the middle of Bedford where you are not cutting through the middle of them (MK/Cambridge) . We have done a lot of expensive work and would like a written response to our work. Not commissioned lightly and EWR should answer what we put forward.</p> <p>[EWR] Not a problem, send to us formally and we will do a response that way, not an immediate turnaround to do a thorough job.</p> <p>ACTION: BBC to send their reports/work to EWR formally</p> <p>ACTION: EWR to formally respond to BBC reports.</p>
9	<p>General discussion</p> <p>AS Houses purchased in POETS are empty, what is the plan for those?</p> <p>[EWR] We have to do an inspection and see if up to spec to rent, that's happening at the moment.</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] will send update as to when that inspection is.</p> <p>[EWR] No reflection on people living in before but they have to do an inspection and reluctant to say when put people in as not done an inspection. Process is to acquire, inspect and see if any capital works are required, will need to be a cost benefit analysis. No intention to leave vacant, may need to look at other options if can't recover capital from the rent.</p> <p>AS Re the Hospital car park, is that more space than they currently have?</p> <p>CC left room 2mins</p> <p>[EWR] We will have a high level station design, where the station entrance will be where, protecting blue light services link into hospital designed so parking and local transport can come in.</p> <p>TW So that detail will be there in June?</p> <p>[EWR] At high level, need to look at land needed but I will get back to you as to whether the multi-story will be in there or not.</p> <p>ACTION: [EWR] to confirm detail of multi-storey in June consultation or not and specific detail.</p> <p>TW We have had an awful lot of questions about parking around the hospital and what happens when you are building.</p> <p>[EWR] I will come back to you, my opinion is the multi-storey has to happen first or doesn't work, but we need funding before start construction so will request to do early.</p> <p>TW When will you have a good idea about costs/and funding, do you see ministers regularly?</p> <p>[EWR] We do, but we don't update costs regularly, don't want to be updating regularly. Finished design work , design freeze and we are costing that now. Choices about scope and driving costs down, some based on the on sponsors requirements – DfT. Some things might be expensive so we ask if they really mean that.</p> <p>TW When will ministers have a true picture of what this will cost?</p> <p>[EWR] The issue is as developing the design we will have areas about benchmark to challenge, costs estimate at fixed points in time. Have to as part of Treasury green book must have right risk percentage. Team working on the cost plan, when available and risk percentage. Detailed design there will be a quantified risk assessment – not obliged to do this yet, using a high percentage, optimism bias.</p> <p>Will provide a cost for ministers before go out to consultation.</p> <p>Then again at second round of consultation</p> <p>Then again for outline business case.</p> <p>Evolving picture, need to tell story appropriately, often asked for costs at worst time as small design decisions can have a big impact.</p> <p>TW In June before consultation the minister will have some figures?</p> <p>[EWR] Yes.</p> <p>AS Is there any more work on flood analysis?</p> <p>[EWR] We did this as part of the route section, doing more work on the preferred route for resilience but all other options stopped that work.</p> <p>TW So not doing on any more work on the other routes?</p> <p>[EWR] No, because don't think it's a good option for taxpayers, because we have had the route update.</p> <p>AS Are you doing more flood work on preferred route before consultation?</p>

[EWR] Yes

TW So consultation sometime in June, and we'll be asked to comment on.

JS Can we have hard copies?

[EWR] Yes don't see why not.

AS Will you be doing public meetings?

[EWR] Anticipated, right numbers, if we can in the 8wk period, and recording responses, this is formal.

Last summer we were not soliciting feedback, we didn't want responses.

AS Can people come for information this time.?

[EWR] Yes.

AS People got different responses e.g. nothing happening at St Johns which upset a lot of residents

[EWR] People were trying to catch our teams up, will ensure our teams are fully prepared and consistent.

TW Once done the 8wk consultation, how long to gather info and look at.

[EWR] Quick turnaround, design drop scheduled for November. Design freeze point and then have 6 months to prepare documents for early April.

MG Do you anticipate you will get as many responses as last time?

[EWR] We should anticipate lots of responses. We are doing other work on green corridors so may be a broader response. We are preparing and budgeting for that,

It's a real people issue, experienced people need to be working on response, design and team spread across everything. Trying to find right amount of capability.

TW Anything else you want to ask us today?

[EWR] What are the next steps forward re our working relationship? Last year you gave us a list of stuff to talk about – worth revisiting?

JS Yes

[EWR] How to take forward?

JS Expecting final draft from [EWR] next week?

[EWR] Then schedule a meeting in a month's time

JS Go for week of 20th March before Easter

TW Ok

[EWR] We have been talking with Network Rail about public land, sidings, have you been talking to [EWR] about that?

JS No

[EWR] They are landowners how do we plug into your plans/regeneration?

JS Could we ask for a plan showing your plan re through Network Rail network with our plans for Prebend Street.

TW We have plans for car park/other places but can't go ahead until you put your red line on the map.

[EWR] Need a planning day in as to what potentially available. How do we use land to minimise impact, big cranes, staging element and phasing to minimise disruption.

TW You are pushing the government to give you the cash?

[EWR] Right now only have a need to sell,

CC Question on list - forgot to ask: The Department of Transport has a Statutory Consultation Process for Public Consultation, will you be following that?

[EWR] We will be following the Statutory Consultation process, whatever is in the DCO.

CA Good to clarify that.

TW Thanked [EWR] for visiting.

ACTIONS: As shown above