

# Bedford Borough Council (BBC) /East West Rail (EWR) – Minutes of Meeting



<b>Date:</b> Thursday 5 <sup>th</sup> February 2026	<b>Time:</b> 12.15pm – 1.15pm	<b>Venue:</b> Committee Room 1/Teams
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Attendees	
<b>TW</b>	Mayor Tom Wootton – Mayor of Bedford Borough BBC
<b>JW</b>	Deputy Mayor Councillor Jim Weir BBC <i>joined via teams</i>
<b>NG</b>	Councillor Nicola Gribble – Councillor for Renhold and Ravensden, Portfolio Holder for Environment BBC <i>joined via teams</i>
<b>AS</b>	Councillor Andrea Spice – Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth Planning and Prosperity BBC
<b>ARC</b>	Antigua Riley Corion – Community Engagement Officer BBC
<b>JBB</b>	Joanne Branson Budd - Head of Capital Projects, Infrastructure and Sustainable Travel BBC
<b>GC</b>	Gavin Chinniah - Head of Planning and Building Control BBC
<b>RB</b>	Rupee Baga – Executive Assistant to Laura Church CEX BBC (Minutes)
<b>[EWR]</b>	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company] <i>joined via teams</i>
<b>[EWR]</b>	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company]
<b>[EWR]</b>	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company] <i>joined via teams</i>
<b>[EWR]</b>	[Redacted at request of East West Railway Company]
Apologies	
<b>CC</b>	Cara Cosson – Personal Assistant to Mayor Tom Wootton (Minutes) BBC

No	Item
1	<b>Apologies</b> Noted above
2	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
3	<p><b>i. Review Actions from meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025</b></p> <p>Page 1 EWR to provide technical note for Ashburnham Road            Page 4 EWR to provide Alternative design proposal around Bridge alternative compound around Midland Station            Page 6 EWR to provide technical note design Ashburnham Road (no's 2 – 22)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Technical Note was provided to Bedford Borough Council in December. This includes alternative design proposals around the bridge. Attached the note, for info.</i></li> </ul> <p>Page 2 EWR to provide summary of feedback from engagement            Page 2 EWR to provide details of engagement            Page 2 EWR to provide summary of discussions and feedback from meetings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A summary of engagement sessions held was provided by email on 22<sup>nd</sup> December.</i></li> <li>• <i>Can provide more detail on the content of our engagement during today's meeting. Asked to share detail of the feedback that was received at each of these meetings.</i></li> </ul> <p>Page 4 EWR to provide map of Ashburnham Road with red line on            Page 5 EWR to provide list of affected properties addresses for Bedford including Queens Park</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On 9<sup>th</sup> January, EWR Head of Land &amp; Property sent a list of properties (attached) (including addresses and title numbers) within the safeguarding area to Bedford Borough Council Officers. This included all addresses associated with a residential or commercial property and removed any that are land only, unless they are associated with an existing residential or commercial premises.</i></li> <li>• <i>The team have asked for clarity on when the landowners have been contacted relating to each of these properties, as well as clarity on those that are in the process of purchase, or have already been</i></li> </ul>

*purchased by EWR. EWR have also sent GIS shapefiles showing the safeguarding boundary to Bedford Borough Council's planning team which includes Ashburnham Road and is the same as the red line boundary. This will enable you to produce a map of effected properties.*

Page 4 EWR to confirm meeting date (with Clapham Parish Council)

- *An update was provided in email from 22<sup>nd</sup> December. This stated that a meeting was held with Clapham Parish Council on 9<sup>th</sup> December and included a short readout. I can also confirm that a further meeting was held on the 27<sup>th</sup> January in Clapham with the Clapham-Colesden & Bedford ELRG members.*

Page 8 EWR to go through hospital/car park provision and construction phasing with BBC

- *A workshop was held on 29<sup>th</sup> January in London with Bedford Borough Council, Bedfordshire Hospital NHS Trust and EWR Co. to review the hospitals latest designs for the elected care facility.*
- *Based on the hospital's current designs, EWR Co. Has submitted a holding objection. Further discussions and workshops are also being planned.*

Page 9 EWR to provide update at next meeting (hospital car park)

- *[EWR] will provide an update on our work regarding the hospital car park at the meeting on Thursday.*

## ii. **EWR Project Update**

- a. Development Consent Order**
- b. Design Update Sessions**
- c. Regional consultation events**
- d. Track Alignment through Bedford**

JBB asked what additional updates will be provided following on from the updates from the 'you said we did' sessions? [EWR] confirmed these are being worked on and will share once finalised. JBB asked that this is done in a timely manner, before the design update sessions.

[EWR] confirmed discussions around the design update sessions will be around the St Johns railway and the track behind the Cauldwell Community Centre, realignment would offer a new play park, Ward Cllrs will also present at this meeting. [EWR] confirmed the changes in the track alignment will increase the open space area.

[EWR] confirmed details of the upcoming sessions:

- Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February 15.00-19.00 at the Cauldwell Community Centre
- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> February 12.00-17.00 in Queens Park full details to follow

JW is aware of the logistics of the Cauldwell Community Centre and asked if the current park will be relocated while the new park is put in place, [EWR] confirmed the plan is to provide the play area within the same location while the work is being carried out.

ARC flagged up a previous request asking EWR to share feedback from previous and upcoming sessions to enable the Councils engagement with the community.

[EWR] confirmed she will escalate ARC request.

NG asked if relocating the play area will affect the current parking, [EWR] confirmed the proposal of relocating the open space will affect the parking.

Whole curved corridor will be re grassed which will result in 500m of additional open space, this area can also be considered for additional parking. [EWR] will share the plan

JBB asked if the options selection has been concluded, [EWR] confirmed the process has been completed and will share with a caveat of minor changes.

**iii. EWR Engagement Update:**

**a. Bedfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust**

[EWR] has been going through the planning application with the hospital, have put in a holding objection,

GC referred to the hospital application with EWR where the car park is going to be relocated through the grant process, hospital need around 1250 spaces if this is factored in story heights we are looking at 9 commercial stories, concern is around where the car park will be located and logistical impact.

GC needs to give members assurances that there will not be any long-term impact in terms of parking.

[EWR] has been in communication with David Carter and Richard Sumry at the hospital, referred to the various workshops held last year and confirmed they had reached an agreement for a multi-story car park, however when the detail was re visited the footprint of the hospital design has now caused a problem, hence lodging an objection.

[EWR] is disappointed that a viable option has not been reached, [EWR] echoed [EWR] comments.

GC asked if EWR would design a car park and submit as part of the current application or is the land just being safeguarded until the DCO process is submitted.

[EWR] confirmed they would disconnect from the hospital phase and then pick it up once the process involved EWR.

GC the hospital wants to get the planning application through in the next upcoming months, the DCO process is unclear and asked what assurance EWR can give, [EWR] agreed the main impact is being caused by EWR.

[EWR] asked GC to set out an outline of assurances needed from EWR to enable the Council to make an informed decision. GC suggested a meeting takes place with EWR, hospital and Council officers to obtain clarity.

[EWR] agreed with GC suggestion to set up a meeting EWR, hospital and Council officers.

TW emphasised the urgency on supporting the hospital.

[EWR] agreed with TW however they cannot give a commitment without honouring it.

GC asked why EWR could not submit the DCO?

[EWR] would prefer this option however the CPO element will take as long.

AS asked if the new multi-story can car was for the hospital and station, [EWR] confirmed the multi-storey car park will be for the hospital, however some station uses may use the car park.

[EWR] the government will be responsible for dealing with the impact of the flow when Universal are up and running. The station car park is not to be used as a park and ride to Universal

GC suggested a better route would be for the DCO to be front loaded and submitted to the Council, if we grant the hospital and the car park comes up later with issues around height etc this would impact the hospital work going forward.

[EWR] noted and said they would take this away

**b. Land & Property Engagement**

Face to face meetings with various owners and occupants took place on Monday 26<sup>th</sup> January over all a positive outcome however ongoing engagement agreed.

Dom Polski met on the 26<sup>th</sup> January management have appointed an agent who is now liaising with EWR

[EWR] confirmed officials from the polish consulate are not the owners of the land however there is an overlay which [EWR] is aware of.

ARC flagged up the polish community use this location for elections and have concerns for the upcoming elections in 2028.

[EWR] has also met with Tony from Dom Polski and communication has been clear, [EWR] has also shared his personal number with Tony to contact him if there are any concerns, no call has been received to date.

ARC flagged up concerns raised by Dom Polski in terms of relocation.

[EWR] confirmed they are working with them in terms of floor plans, business rates so that this can be fed into next steps

GP surgery met on the 26<sup>th</sup> January lands team carried out a tour of the premises went through the design linking in with Dr Basra's surveyor, condition is that no decisions are made without Dr Basra.

ARC said EWR will also need to link in with the ICB, [EWR] confirmed this is in progress they are waiting for ICB to respond.

ARC will escalate this.

**iv. Any items to raise by Bedford Borough Council**

**v. Outstanding items for escalation**

**vi. AOB**

AS asked how many properties have been purchased, [EWR] said he does not have an exact figure

ARC referred to the list shared with the agenda, and asked who on this list have been engaged with, impression from residents is that there has not been any support

JBB referred to the properties impacted outside of the safeguarding zone, [EWR] referred to the point made earlier where letters of engagement have been sent out to residents within the red line and will be sending these out to residents outside of the redline.

ARC asked for clarification on what has been done for the residents outside of the redline.

[EWR] confirmed there was a public meeting held last year which was open to all.

Upcoming design sessions will be open to all. AS asked if she attended as a resident outside of the red line would she be able to see what she will be facing i.e., trees, walls, rat runs.

[EWR] confirmed they are developing the mitigations while finalising the designs, encouraging the community to feed into this process.

[EWR] confirmed they will take this ask away and provide a response

ARC flagged up clear communication around upcoming sessions for communities that are outside of the redline and asked how they understand what is happening, i.e. residents in the Poets and Ashburnham that are not subject to CPO, but will be significantly impacted, Queens Park, Kempston, the rural areas etc.

	<p>[EWR] confirmed active engagement and activity is in place and asked for use of our local knowledge to ensure the message is spread to all.</p> <p>JW suggested engaging with the Ward Councillors within these areas, [EWR] appreciated this suggestion and will look into this.</p> <p>ARC is also happy to support with her community links.</p> <p>Design consultations February opportunity to comment on the plans, additional component to the engagement, main consultation in the Spring, however they will not be able to share the final version.</p> <p>TW asked how rural areas will be included.</p> <p>[EWR] will take this action away and respond, AR confirmed we are happy to support.</p> <p>[EWR] will investigate more events however there needs to be a balance in terms over covering 85 miles.</p> <p>TW asked for a map on how they will cover the Black Cat and surrounding areas that can be shared with parish councils [EWR] will action this.</p>
<b>4</b>	<b>Actions from this meeting</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Next Meeting date</b>