



Meeting note

Project name	East West Rail - Bedford to Cambridge and Western improvements
File reference	TR040012
Status	Final
Author	The Planning Inspectorate
Date	18 September 2023
Meeting with	East West Rail
Venue	Microsoft Teams
Meeting objectives	Project Update Meeting/Scoping Report
Circulation	All attendees

Summary of key points discussed, and advice given

The Planning Inspectorate (the Inspectorate) advised that a note of the meeting would be taken and published on its website in accordance with section 51 of the Planning Act 2008 (the PA2008). Any advice given under section 51 would not constitute legal advice upon which applicants (or others) could rely.

Introduction to Technical Partner MWJV

East West Railway Company Limited (EWR Co) ('the Applicant') introduced their Technical Partner MWJV, who were appointed in 2022. MWJV gave a brief summary of their history in the DCO process and their plans to support EWR Co through the process.

Project Update

The Applicant released their Route Update Announcement on 26 May 2023. The documents are published on the Applicant's website. The Applicant presented their service pattern to the Inspectorate and provided an overview of the proposed route as announced. The Applicant held 12 public events through June and July 2023, with 2,337 people attending in total.

Next Steps / Scoping Report

The Applicant explained that work is currently underway to set out the scoping report, key concepts and principles. Stakeholder engagement will take place in winter 2023 with a view to submit a request for a Scoping Opinion in early 2024.

The Applicant has held two stakeholder meetings regarding scoping. The Applicant will hold more detailed meetings with specific stakeholders focusing on main areas of concern.

The Applicant is aiming to keep the scoping report and Environmental Statement documents succinct and accessible for all audiences. The Applicant is seeking to use a digital format (GIS) to allow key stakeholders to access information easily.

The Inspectorate raised that not everyone has access to digital documentation and the Applicant should ensure that all documents are accessible to everyone. The Inspectorate noted that, to date, only one scoping report for a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project has been submitted in a digital format and that this was provided by the Applicant in addition to the scoping report. The Inspectorate explained that the organisation will be undertaking a digital discovery over the coming year however at this time, the Inspectorate can only accept Scoping and DCO application documents in a PDF format. The Inspectorate emphasised that Applicants can submit a digital submission if they wish, but this is an addition to the PDF submission.

The Applicant raised the government's intention for the transition to Environmental Outcome Reports (EORs). The Inspectorate confirmed that it does not have any further information on this, other than the information currently publicly accessible.

Programme Update

The Applicant is working towards a Statutory Consultation in mid-2024. The Applicant explained that there is work ongoing to confirm a programme to DCO Submission and that they are working closely with key stakeholders after the Route Update Announcement to inform option selection and design development. The Applicant gave an overview of the medium-term view of the Programme and explained that they would be able to provide an update on DCO submission date at the next project update meeting.

NSIP Reforms

The Applicant asked for any additional information regarding 'Reform Area 2'. The Inspectorate confirmed that they cannot give any information at the current time as the consultation had not closed. The Inspectorate explained that it may be in a position to provide an update on National Infrastructure Reform at the next project update meeting, dependent on timescales.

AOB

The Applicant asked if the Inspectorate had any advice for good practice for Scoping Reports. The Inspectorate referred the Applicant to Advice Note 7.

Specific decisions/ follow-up required?

The following actions were agreed:

- The Inspectorate to arrange an update meeting in Mid-November 2023.