

EWR Consultation

Date: 9th June (10.30-11.30am)

Attendees from EWR: Martin Wheeler, Edward Bebbington, Angela King

- Northern corridor: I asked for the EWR attendees to provide me a high-level overview of why the Northern corridor option was not deemed to “perform well”. The team said that the scoring method contained many different elements and they could not provide an easy explanation. I was referred to Appendix F of the technical report.
- I asked if consideration had been given to a route following the M11 corridor, down from the A428, closer to Cambridge, as an alternative to cutting across un-spoilt landscape to connect with the existing line further south at the Shelfords. I was advised that this had been considered, but one reason for it being rejected might have been that the M11 route crosses a flood plain. I remarked that the M11 motorway had already been built across the flood plain, so why not place the rail line alongside. Martin thought this might be because planning regulations have changed regarding development on flood plains.
- I asked about the five southerly routes and whether the more Northerly route alignment (#1 and #9) were still emerging preferences. They stated that this was the case, but only based on scoring to date, and that it could be subject to change.
- I asked about statutory blight provisions. Martin advised that these provisions only related to circumstances where part, or all, of a property was subject to a compulsory purchase order and that this was more relevant for residential property. He noted that there are also reverse compulsory purchase provisions allowing for somebody to request purchase if their property would become substantially unmarketable due to the railway line proposal. The individual impacted would hire a chartered survey (costs would be covered by EWR) who would submit a valuation (and a marketing period would be required to prove the property unmarketable at a fair valuation). EWR would have the right to challenge the valuation, but there are arbitration provisions in case of dispute.
- Martin referred to a “Need to Sell” scheme (part 1 claim) as more relevant for circumstances where a property not in the path of the railway line was never-the-less negatively impacted. Noise pollution would be a key example of this. However there is no compensation for loss of value due to a blighted view.
- Martin also mentioned injurious affection provisions where part of a field neighbouring the railway line became rendered impractical to farm (i.e. became cut-off or too small to be farmed economically).
- I asked about the route alignments that passed closest to Kingston, stating my concern as to the aesthetic impact and noise pollution that this would cause to Kingston residents. I was advised that at its closest point to Kingston, where the Kingston road meets the Bourn / Toft road, the rail line from coming the West would run on an aqueduct (before subsequently running along an embankment). Angela advised that at this closest point the height of the rail line would be circa 13.5 to 15 metres above the ground. I stated my concern that this would have a significant impact on Kingston, especially how far noise would carry given the height of the aqueduct. I also stated my concern that where the line would run past Kingston in a south-eastly direction towards the Eversdens, it would have a significant impact on the un-spoilt views of residents on the Eastern and Northern side of the village, including our own home, and for which there are no provisions for compensation.
- Angela and Martin advised that the boundaries of the route alignment were the definitive extent of land to be acquired, also allowing room for construction to take place (although provisions for central work sites and access would also be required in addition).
- The EWR team recommended the webinars (specific to different locations impacted) as a good source of information.

Follow-up actions advised by EWR representatives:

- EWR will send a simpler explanation of why the Northern corridor performs badly (if one becomes available).
- EWR to send information on how the emerging preferences (southerly routes #1 and #9) are scoring so far.

Text of email sent to EWR consultation prior to 9th June deadline:

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am a residential property and farm landowner at Kingston, Cambridgeshire, that will potentially be impacted by the EWR project. This email represents the feedback of myself, along with my sister, Helen Macintosh and my Mother, Irene Heyman. All three of us own property at Kingston and all of us are potentially impacted.

In response to a letter inviting us to provide feedback (Ref: EWR_PGM-ARD-LP-XX-LR-G-10073) I had a meeting today with EWR consultants Martin Wheeler, Edward Beddington and Angela King.

As a follow up to the meeting, I note the following points of concern / objection:

- Given the significant environmental impact of the more southerly approach options to Cambridge on un-spoilt countryside, I need a clear and easy to understand explanation as to how the negative scoring aspects of the Northerly Cambridge approach option (disturbance, lack of economic potential, operating inefficiency, etc) make this option unviable.*
- I need to understand why the proposed southerly approach of the line into Cambridge could not follow the M11 corridor. I was told that this was because that route crosses a floodplain. However, there is already a motorway built across the floodplain, so why not add a rail line alongside? Is it just about cost?*
- Of the various southerly routes, I understand that the emerging preferences are routes 1 / 9. However, if circumstances changed and routes 2 / 6 / 8 were selected, running close to Kingston, I would not only be concerned by the additional environmental impact, but also the negative impact on the lives of those living in Kingston and the financial harm caused by reduced value of property. The height of the aqueduct passing close to Kingston (at ~15 metres in height) would not only harm the view but would likely cause significant noise pollution for the residents in Kingston. More personally concerning would be the negative impact on the value of our family home which resides on the top of a hill with un-spoilt views to the South and East (towards the Eversdens and Cambridge). A railway line cutting straight across this landscape would undoubtedly reduce the value of our property and I understand there would be no compensation for the financial harm caused.*

I would be grateful if you could note these concerns / objections as detailed above and confirm receipt.

Sincerely, Paul Heyman.