

East West Rail Update, October 20th 2020

Anthony Browne MP hosted a meeting with parish councils and representatives from EWR (Ian Parker - head of delivery for EWR, Will Gallagher -Strategy Director for EWR) and an advisor (Ashton Cull) to the Mayor James Palmer on Thursday 15th October.

Notes from the meeting:

East West Rail (EWR) are committed to minimise splitting villages. If the railway crosses particular roads some may be mothballed, others may have a bridge or underpass. They have not completely ruled out tunnelling (for example to the south of Haslingfield).

EWR are obliged to maintain public rights of way.

EWR are against level crossings.

EWR are definitely looking at the possibility of a station north of Cambourne. It is a slightly longer route, but would only add two minutes.

The majority of the routes EWR are looking at are within Route E. Ian Parker dismissed the possibility of the route going to Cambridge North. He stated it was more expensive and the journey time would be longer. Also, when the route is developed eastwards towards Felixstowe, trains would require to turn around, which is not the case if coming to Cambridge South.

EWR are looking at various forms of traction including: battery, electric, hydrogen and diesel. [Anthony Browne stated he was pushing for electric trains straight away, rather than diesel, as there seemed no sense in starting with diesel trains when the government is committed to phasing them out in the near future].

EWR are in talks with Highways England regarding the A428 and possibly having the railway alongside the road, or at least going over it if a station is situated to the north of Cambourne.

EWR are planning for four trains per hour to Cambridge, with the potential to increase it slightly if need be. I'm unsure if that means there will be four going in the other direction too.

There is the possibility that cycle lanes could be run along parts of the track.

EWR are in ongoing talks with MRAO (Mullard Radio Astronomy Observatory). Some of the telescopes are redundant, so perhaps the railway can go through some of its land. Ian Parker, on the issue of freight, said it was extremely unlikely that the train line would be 24/7. The railway would be 'first and foremost a high speed passenger line'. EWR have launched a Community Hub (eastwestrail.co.uk). This gives everyone a chance to engage in live discussion and access all documents they have ever published.

Thank you to all who have shared their concerns with me following the leaflet by Tessa Davies. I urge you to contact EWR (contact@eastwestrail.co.uk) and Anthony Browne (anthony.browne.mp@parliament.uk) in the first instance if you would like to raise any

issues. I do believe that EWR and Anthony Browne will take note, especially with structured argument. The more people who voice their concerns now the better. The next major step in the process will be early next year when EWR publish their route options. This will definitely be the time to shout about the alignments.

Best wishes, Isabel Robinson