



CAMBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL

District of South Cambridgeshire

A Virtual meeting of this Council was held using Teams on Tuesday 19th November 2020.
Meeting commenced at 17:00

Present:

Cllr R Poulton (Vice Chairman)
Cllr D Jones
Cllr P Gavigan
Cllr G Thompson

Cllr R Betson (SCDC)
Cllr G Clayton (SCDC)
Cllr M Howell (CCC)

In attendance:

John Vickery Town Clerk
Ellie Lydon- Office Administrator

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from MP Anthony Browne and Cllr J O'Dwyer.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Will Gallagher, Director of Strategy and Sponsorship introduced himself and Jordi Beascochea, Engagement Manager.
The Town Clerk introduced himself and the Councillors in attendance.

3 & 4. EAST WEST RAIL AND NORTH CAMBOURNE STATION

A PowerPoint was shared on the screen by East West Rail. Slide 2 showed a map of the preferred Bedford to Cambridge route. It was explained that one of the reasons East West Rail had selected this route was they had felt there was a strong urge for the Railway to serve Cambourne.

Slide 3 showed the 'Route to Construction'. Stage 2 'Developing Route Alignment Options' was highlighted to indicate where East West Rail currently are in their development. At this stage, land surveys have been carried out over the past year and more are planned for 2021 to help them understand environmental issues in the area with over 600 survey access request being sent to landowners across EWR recently. Land surveys are also helping with developing the route alignment options and they aim to have a set of alignment options for the route option area.

East West Rail have also published an interactive map with environmental data, listed buildings and local nature reserves etc. shown on the maps for the public to view. The information they have gathered has helped them to understand the opportunities and constraints different areas have. The north is outside the area they are looking at but as part of their due diligence they will consider this. It is a potentially viable option but will mean the extension of the consultation area.

East West Rail had received feedback from stakeholders that there should be a station to the North of Cambourne. The initial view was that it would add more expense and

Signed

Date
1-4

journey times would be longer, however a station to the north of Cambourne is now seen as a potentially viable option. Exploring the option of having a station to the north of the A428 and one that is in the route option area would increase the consultation area.

Below is an estimated timeline of development:

Non-Statutory Consultation- Early 2021

Statutory Consultation- Late 2021-Early 2022

Application for Consent- Middle of 2022

Consent Given- Mid to late 2024

Construction begin- 2025

Service- Before then end of the decade.

Slide 5 listed the assessment factors when developing route alignment options. This included factors such as journey time (if the journey time is short, people may opt to choose the railway rather than the road). Connectivity to mainlines for longer journeys, being mindful of the costs and looking at how new connections can support economic growth in the area.

East West Rail have been speaking with Local Authorities such as, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council about the approach and are being careful to follow advice on COVID-19 about carrying out virtual engagements, whilst also planning how to speak to “hard to reach groups” who may not be able to attend virtual engagements.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions were asked by the Councillors in attendance:

Q: If there is the possibility for the route to be to the North of Cambourne will carrying out further consultations affect the time scale you have predicted?

A: Expanding the consultation zone would not significantly impact the time scale as it would be done parallel to other surveys.

Q: Can we see the analysis of the route?

A: The analysis will be shown when presenting the route as part of the consultation. We will publish how we have applied 15 assessment factors at future consultations and as part of the application.

Q: Regarding the Mayor of Cambridge’s plans for the Cambourne to Cambridge busway scheme to have a northern bus route, would you be inclined to build a route North or South of Cambourne?

A: We are engaged with the Mayor’s Team and Greater Cambridge Partnership and are looking at what is the sensible route for us to build.

Q: Are you working with Highways England regarding to the A428 duelling between Caxton Gibbet to Black Cat Roundabout.

A: Yes, we are working closely with the contractors.

Q: There was previously a discussion that there could be access to Cambridge Station using the Northern route, but this has been rejected. Why?

Signed

Date
2-4

A: Going into Cambridge using the Northern route would take longer for the passenger and would be more money for the taxpayer. All evidence points to going to Cambridge from the South.

Q: How much is the desire for passenger's journey time to be short driven by the need for freight?

A: We are currently working out what the freight demand will be. The railway is primarily a passenger railway but there is likely to be some freight. When looking at roads they are used by both cars (passengers) and lorries (freight), which is the same for railways. There are some characteristics needed for heavy freight to use the tracks. We also need to look at how freight gets access to East West Rail. Freight has been looked at provisionally, but the main focus is it being a passenger railway.

Q: Is it possible to get to Addenbrookes?

A: The route would go to Addenbrookes then to Cambridge South Station.

Q: The preferred route option, you say reduces cost and journey time, but the route goes up and down. Why was the original route to the south that goes straight across discounted?

A: Route A, which was straight across was a little faster and cheaper, however when taking in to account the 15-assessment factors, ancient woodlands and other environmental factors were affected. Information has been pieced together to provide a route for optimal activities to passengers from Cambourne whilst having less environmental impact.

Q: What factors are taking into consideration when building a station? Who plans where parking will be etc.?

A: East West Rail are taking into consideration parking, cycle routes, walking routes, electric charging points and many other things that we will need to provide to last for the future. We are working closely with the local authorities and talking to the travelling public regarding 'whole journey time', home to destination. When planning a journey people look at the time it takes to leave their home to reach their destination, not just the length of the train journey so we are also looking at connectivity.

Regarding parking spaces, in most cases they are part of the same development and are associated with the train station. Other station car parks are owned by the local authority. The size of the car park will depend on the estimated number of passengers and there is other modelling you can do to work out how many spaces the car park will need.

Q: If the route is to be the South of Cambourne, this will encroach on the Nature Park. Will you then buy local land around the station, so you do not lose the Nature Park?

A: It is too early to say but it is something we are mindful of.

-Question from East West Rail to Councillors-

Q: Do people have any issue with having station to the North, across from the A428?

A: It seems to be a sensible idea to have a station to the North of Cambourne when taking into consideration the projected development around Cambourne and where they will be sited. It will be useful to have a station in a location where people are likely to gravitate towards due to already heading that direction to access the A428. Having a station to the north also allows for better options to create a travel hub. It would enable

Signed

Date
3-4

Cambourne to have train, bus, metro and cycling routes etc. to be integrated and would be easier for surrounding villages and the proposed new developments to access the transport hub.

When the route options were released, there was a large amount of uproar from residents of villages that did not want the railway to be near their village, which swayed the decision for the route to run through Cambourne and the majority of people support having a station to the North.

EWR: Regarding the route including Cambourne, this decision was not entirely based on the uproar from other villages. We had heard from South Cambridgeshire District Council and many of the surveys with postcodes from Cambourne and surrounding villages wanted a station at Cambourne.

5. ANY OTHER ISSUES

6. CONCLUSION

East West Rail thanked the Councillors for their time and comments. They will be mindful of the surrounding developments and impacts on residents in surrounding areas.

The Town Clerk reiterated that the Town Council feels strongly that a station to the South of Cambourne is not appropriate, as it harder to get to. It will be useful to have another meeting in the future to learn about the progression and how we can input on decisions being made.

Vice Chairman Cllr Poulton thanked East West Rail for attending and listening to our views and thanked them for making it a very useful meeting.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

TBC. This is likely to be in the Spring, prior to the next round of consultations.

Meeting concluded at 17:53

Signed

Date
4-4