

Item



Briefing on Major Infrastructure Projects Covered by Officer Delegation

To: Councillor Katie Thornburrow, Executive Councillor for Planning Policy and Infrastructure, Planning and Transport Scrutiny, 17 January 2023

Report by: Stephen Kelly, Joint Director for Planning and Economic Development

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Wards affected: All

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 At the 04 October 2022 meeting of Planning and Transport Scrutiny meeting, Members approved a delegation for providing the City Council's position on specific elements of the statutory process of certain significant new national and regional infrastructure projects, to the Joint Director of Planning and Economic Development.
- 1.2 At that meeting, it was confirmed that a briefing would be provided at the next meeting of the Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee, and an overview of the projects identified for delegations, to enable an opportunity for members to express their views to officers.
- 1.3 Projects covered by the delegation are:
 - (a) Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIP) which are known/believed to follow the Development Consent Order (DCO) route:
 - Cambridge Water Treatment Works relocation
 - East-West Rail
 - (b) Projects for the construction of guided transport schemes, which will follow the Transport and Works Act 1992 (TWA) Order for consent:
 - Cambourne to Cambridge Rapid Transport Route (C2C) public transport corridor project.

- Cambridge South-East Transport Route (CSET) public transport corridor project
- Cambridge Eastern Access public transport corridor project
- Waterbeach to Cambridge public transport corridor project
- Greater Greenways Project (various routes)

- 1.4 Given the number of projects which are being delivered by Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP), and the project programme review and update that GCP is currently going through (with a number of items scheduled to be considered at the next GCP Board meeting on 09 March 2023), this report focuses on providing an update for the two NSIP projects which will follow the DCO route – the Cambridge Water Treatment Works relocation and East West Rail.
- 1.5 It is proposed that at the 21 March 2023 meeting of Planning and Transport Scrutiny a further briefing will be provided in respect of the other infrastructure projects which will be dealt with mainly under the Transport and Works Act route. This will allow time for a more detailed discussion on each project (the four access corridors and Greenways projects listed in criteria (b) above).

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Executive Councillor is recommended to:

- (i) Note this update report in respect of the Cambridge Water Treatment Works relocation and East West Rail.
- (ii) Confirm agreement to an update on GCP infrastructure projects being provided at the next meeting on 21 March 2023.

3 Background

Project Update - East West Rail

- 3.1 The East West Rail project seeks to connect Oxford and Cambridge by rail, including through a new railway between Bedford and Cambridge with new stations at Cambourne and in the Sandy/St Neots area.
- 3.2 East West Rail Company (EWR Co) will apply to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for a Development Consent Order (DCO) for the new railway between Bedford and Cambridge. Both Greater Cambridge councils will be involved in this process as consultees and, if approval is granted, it is likely that they will take responsibility for discharging many of the requirements of the consent and for monitoring and enforcing the DCO provisions and requirements.
- 3.3 The project programme for EWR is uncertain. The last version shared by EWR Co with the local planning authority in Summer 2021 is reproduced below.

Stage	Date
Non-Statutory Consultation	Completed Q2 2021
EIA Scoping	Q2-Q3 2021
Design Freeze (scope and alignment)	Q3 2021
Preferred Route Announcement	Q4 2021 / Q1 2022
Design Freeze (consultation design)	Q4 2021
Preliminary Environment Information Report (complete)	Q1 2022
Statutory Consultation (Final scheme)	Q2 2022
Design Freeze (DCO design)	Q4 2022
DCO Application submission	Q2-Q3 2023
PINS Decision	Q4 2024

- 3.4 Subsequent delays have resulted in this timetable above becoming significantly out of date. However, the government's Autumn Statement 2022 has recommitted to growth plans for railways with reference to the East West Rail project explicitly. Senior officers from EWR Co made contact with the Councils after the Autumn statement but offered no new information. A representative also attended a recent SCDC forum meeting to answer questions – but without offering any new information.
- 3.5 EWR Co has suggested that the next step is to publish its report on the 2021 non-statutory consultation and a timescale for announcing the preferred route alignment option. These publications are expected to take place in early 2023 (before/after local elections), after which EWR Co suggests it will be able to confirm the programme and agree and sign a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Councils.

Project Update – Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Works Relocation

- 3.6 Anglian Water is proposing to build a waste water treatment plant for Greater Cambridge on a new site area within Greater Cambridge to the north of the A14 between Fen Ditton and Horningsea. Once operational, it will replace existing plants on Cowley Road, Cambridge and off Bannold Drove, Waterbeach - hereafter referred to as the existing Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and the existing Waterbeach WWTP and hence is known as the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant Relocation Project (CWWTPR).
- 3.7 Once relocated, the existing Cambridge WWTP will be decommissioned to meet the requirements set out by the Environment Agency. The decommissioned site will then be available for the delivery of the ambitions set out in the North East Cambridge Area Action Plan and the emerging Joint Local Plan.
- 3.8 There is some certainty around the project programme for the WWTP relocation. The Development Consent Order application is yet to be submitted but is anticipated in February 2023. Following this submission, both South

Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City authorities will be required to submit an Adequacy of Consultation procedural response within 28 days of the submission.

- 3.9 If the DCO is formerly accepted by PINS following receipt of the adequacy consultation response, a three-month pre-examination period begins. During this time interested parties including both Councils, as well as residents and special interest groups are invited to provide relevant representations to PINS.
- 3.10 The examination will commence three months after the formal acceptance of the DCO and will be a six-month process.
- 3.11 Early into the examination process, both districts will be required to submit a Local Impact Report which is a written report giving details of the likely impact of the Scheme on the authority's area. A Statement of Common Ground is also to be submitted setting out areas of agreement between the applicant, and the two districts. Areas which are not agreed upon then become areas of focus during the examination.

4 Considerations

East West Rail

- 4.1 East West Rail is currently at the pre-application planning stage. The Strategic Sites team is due to coordinate the councils' input to the DCO process and, as such, is holding monthly catch-up meetings with EWR Co to monitor the emerging programme and ensure a PPA is signed before significant work needs to commence. The Planning Policy, Strategy & Economy team also attends these meetings and continues to engage in strategic-level discussions with various stakeholders to ensure alignment with the new Local Plan.
- 4.2 Key issues are likely to include the following:
- The alignment of the railway and its detailed design
 - The location of the station at Cambourne and any further development
 - The level of development expected by EWR Co alongside the railway
 - Connecting/integrating the railway into the public transport network
 - Impacts on existing London-Ely rail services via Cambridge
 - Rural connectivity to the new rail services
 - Minimisation and mitigation of environmental effects (e.g. visual, noise and vibration)
 - Interaction with landscape character
 - Economic implications
 - Decarbonisation through electrification of the railway
 - Meeting biodiversity net gain requirements

Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Works Relocation

- 4.3 Issues that have emerged during the pre-application period are set out below.

Although officers have been engaging with the Anglian Water team throughout the last year, the final details of the proposals will only be clear when published as part of the submitted DCO application. The draft documents that have been shared with officers in the last 6 weeks are still being considered by the Applicants and may be revised further as part of the DCO.

4.4 The following areas are likely to need further discussion with Anglian Water once the DCO is formerly accepted by the Examination Authority.

- **Biodiversity:** The Cambridgeshire Authorities are likely to request clarity on the information in the application and although this project will be considered under national guidance, a commitment to the delivery of the highest possible proportion of biodiversity net gain is an expectation, to ensure the best possible environmental benefit.
- **Odour:** The initial modelling details that have been shared indicate that there may be a negligible impact of odour at people's homes, in line with the Institute of Air Quality Management (IAQM) guidance. The odour modelling report will form part of the Environmental Statement (ES) to be submitted formally as part of the DCO.
- **Landscape:** The impact of the development on the Landscape Character Areas (LCA) at both local and national level, particularly the Eastern Fen Edge during the construction and early years of the development, remain areas of significant comment notwithstanding the proposed planting becomes more established (year fifteen plus). It is expected that this matter will need to be reviewed again in light of the final design and landscape solutions. The mitigation measures to be employed should form part of the DCO submission.
- **Heritage:** There is anticipated to be an impact to identified heritage assets arising from this proposed development. Whilst the mitigation proposed may go some way to reducing the effects, the lengthy construction phase will also exacerbate the impacts on how the landscape and surrounding heritage assets are appreciated during that period. The details of the mitigation for the construction impact should be provided in more detail as part of the DCO.
- **Active Travel:** Given the heavy vehicles using the site access and new junction arrangements being formed, alongside the proposed creation of new connections, the DCO details are expected to secure high-quality provision for cyclists, pedestrians and horse riders as part of the proposed works, with connections to existing public rights of way maintained.
- **Climate Change and Carbon:** The Council has adopted the Zero Carbon Strategy outlining how the district aims to halve carbon emissions by 2030 and reduce them to zero by 2050. Anglian Water, the projects promoters also have clear commitments to Zero Carbon. Whilst supporting this major project, the Councils will need to fully understand how these two objectives align and how

well the measures proposed will achieve the objective through the DCO.

- **Traffic Management:** The traffic modelling that affects local roads is being reviewed by Cambridgeshire County Council as the Highway Authority to establish the impact on the Highway Network, and controls on traffic routing during construction and protection of local communities as far as possible is being sought, a key lesson learnt from the A14 Project.
- **Water Resources:** Potential impacts on water resources resulting from the operation of the proposed development will need to be considered in the ES. The applicant had indicated that this has been considered and found to give rise to residual effects which were not significant.

5 Implications

a) Financial Implications

- 5.1 The consideration of and support to the Council in responding to these significant infrastructure projects forms part of the existing funding and responsibilities of the Shared Planning Service. In line with best practice and reflecting the complex technical nature of proposals such as this and the level of specialist engagement required, the Shared Planning Service uses PPAs to programme and where required, fund specialist resources to support the Councils consideration and response to projects. In addition, the Council expects to retain expert legal advice (potentially jointly with SCDC) to ensure effective representation at the forthcoming public examination. This advice has been retained. The cost of and need for such advice has been considered in the service's budget insofar as it is possible to do so at this stage. This report raises no implications for the cost of delivery of that response.

b) Staffing Implications

- 5.2 There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report. A number of officers across this Council and SCDC will contribute to the determination of the Council responses to the formal DCO application – and will be required to support the presentation of the Councils case at the examination in due course. This resource has been considered in the programming of other work across the Shared Planning Service.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

- 5.3 An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) has not been undertaken in respect of this report, as it does not relate to a decision for or against any infrastructure proposal – upon which the Council expects equalities and poverty implications to have been assessed by the promoter. The DCO application itself will include a comprehensive assessment of the schemes impacts and officers will, in forming a response, have regard to the impact of the project on the Councils equalities objectives. The report is accordingly not considered to give rise to any equality or poverty impacts.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 5.4 See above. The effect of the development on the Councils ambitions for Net Zero and Biodiversity will form a key part of the assessment process that will begin formally upon submission of the DCO application. This report is not considered to have any direct environmental implications.

e) Community Safety Implications

- 5.5 None.

6 Consultation and communication considerations

- 6.1 This report relates to matters on the way that the Council responds to proposals for infrastructure.

7 Background papers

- 7.1 Background papers used in the preparation of this report:

[Public reports pack 04102022 1730 Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee.pdf](#)

[Printed minutes 04102022 1730 Planning and Transport Scrutiny Committee.pdf](#)

[Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

8 Appendices

(None)

9 Inspection of papers

- 9.1 To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Stephen Kelly Stephen.kelly@greatercambridgeplanning.org