

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: East West Rail Consultation
Meeting/Date: Cabinet – 14th February 2019
Executive Portfolio: Housing, Planning and Economic Development
Report by: Planning Service Manager (Growth)

Executive Summary:

On the 29th January a 6 week consultation on 5 broad route options for East West Rail (EwR) was launched. The consultation closes on the 11th March. The process is intended to inform a later decision on actual route alignment in 2020 and there will be a further statutory consultation on route alignment in 2021 if a route is progressed.

EwR consider that Oxford, Cambridge and the communities in between are renowned for their vibrant economy, educational excellence and scientific innovation. They deliver growth and prosperity both locally and for the whole country.

The National Infrastructure Commission identified in their report "Partnering for Prosperity: A new deal for the Cambridge Milton Keynes-Oxford Arc", economic prosperity is not guaranteed. Without investment in new infrastructure designed to support housing growth and link communities, the area will fall behind and fail to attract or retain the talent which helps maintain its position in the UK economy.

To read the full consultation please follow the link:

<https://eastwestrail-production.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/public/Central-Section-Consultation/fe0f74c338/EWR-Consultation-Document.pdf>

Given the early stage of the consultation a consultation response must be prepared and submitted to EwR but given the time constraints we are unable to draft a report for a later Cabinet meeting. With that in mind the proposal is to seek authorisation for a response to be prepared by officers, in consultation with the leader and deputy leader, and be submitted to EwR on behalf of the Council. The response will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny (Performance and Growth) on the 5th March for their comment.

This consultation seeks comments on EwR's key criteria, namely

- Supporting economic growth
- Supporting delivery of new homes
- Costs and overall affordability
- Benefits for transport users
- Environmental impacts and opportunities.

There is a public exhibition in St. Neots at The Priory Centre on Monday 11th February 2019 at 3.30pm – 7.30pm.

Recommendation:

The Cabinet is recommended to authorise the Head of Development and Planning Service Manager (Growth), after consultation with the Executive Leader and Deputy Executive Leader, to prepare and submit formal comments on the route options proposed on behalf of the Council.

CONTACT OFFICER

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