

**SOUTH EAST ENGLAND  
REGIONAL TRANSPORT BOARD**

Date: 24 January 2008  
Subject: **East West Rail**  
Report of: Director of Development  
South East England Regional Assembly

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that the Board:

- i) note the outcome of the work undertaken by the East-West Rail Consortium;
- ii) re-affirm the Board's support for the restoration of the western section of East-West rail in support of the regional policy framework set out in the draft South East Plan and the Regional Economic Strategy;
- iii) confirm the Board's support for commissioning further with a view to identifying a preferred route option;
- iv) offer to provide leadership, through its partners, in the development of a funding package to deliver the scheme.

**Purpose of Report:**

To brief the Board on the outcome of work commissioned by the East-West Rail Consortium; work to which both the Regional Assembly and SEEDA have contributed both financially and in-kind.

## **1. Context**

- 1.1 Restoring the rail link between Oxford and Milton Keynes/Bedford forms the western part of the East-West rail project. The Panel that conducted the Examination in Public of the draft South East Plan identified the key role that this piece of infrastructure has to play in supporting delivery of planned growth along this corridor.
- 1.2 The regional significance of the proposal has long been acknowledged by regional partners. The Regional Assembly and SEEDA have been active members of the local authority led consortium that has promoted the scheme. Both partners have contributed to the cost of the work that is the subject of the presentation to this meeting.

## **2. Next Steps**

- 2.1 It is clear from the work completed to date that a strong business case can be established in support of the restoration of the rail link. Although the driver of the project has been its status as a scheme of regional significance it is increasingly clear that it is also significant in a national context.
- 2.2 The output from this most recent work will form the starting point for the next stage in the development of the scheme; the identification of a single preferred option. It is highly likely that this will be a variation on the options considered so far.
- 2.3 Given the significance of the scheme in supporting delivery of the draft South East Plan and the RES the Board has a key role in continuing to act as a champion in its support. Both the Regional Assembly and SEEDA will therefore continue to play an active role in the guiding the next stage of the scheme development. The Board also has a key role in acting as a champion for the scheme at the national level.
- 2.4 In developing the detail of the scheme it is important that the need to provide a link from the main East-West rail corridor to Aylesbury is seen as being an integral element of the core scheme.
- 2.5 In addition to the work required to develop a preferred option there is a need to undertake work in parallel that will firm up details of the funding package that will deliver the scheme. A key assumption is that a significant proportion of the capital cost of the scheme can be recovered in the form of third party contributions recovered through the planning system. It is anticipated that the regional partners will provide leadership on this dimension of the project.

**Martin Tugwell**  
**Director of Development**

17 January 2008

Contact: Martin Tugwell, Director of Development  
T: 01483 555211 E: [martintugwell@southeast-ra.gov.uk](mailto:martintugwell@southeast-ra.gov.uk)