

The Editor

26 October 2024

Bedford Independent

(By Email)

Dear Erica Roffe,

In my capacity as Technical Lead for the BFARe group I organized the visit of David Hughes and his 4 colleagues to view the areas of concern that we have over the proposed construction of Alignment 1 (Tempsford Variant) which is EWR Co's proposed Route E solution. I also wrote the post-visit summary, which was sent to you by our press officer, Chris White.

We are concerned that prior to publication you have clearly sent the summary to EWR and allowed them to pick and choose what you eventually printed without reference back to us. As a result, mention made in the original about the contributions made by Phillipa Sims, Chair of Clapham PC, Keren Wilkins, Clapham Park residents, Bernadette Russell and John Maberley, Chair and Cllr of Ravensden PC, Gordon Johnston, Cllr of Wyboston Chawston and Colesden PC and Justin Griffiths chair of Roxton PC, who had all given their time to contribute, was omitted. Also missing was reference to a section of the visit where the EWR visitors were introduced to the extensive flat topography south of Bedford and the Great Ouse which still offers a beneficial and much less challenging southern alternative route.

The repeated reference to David Hughes being appreciative of the really frank and honest discussion is entirely accurate. He was clearly taken aback at the complexity and magnitude of work required in the Fairhill/Clapham flood plain area and negotiating the adjacent Clapham escarpment. He was surprised at the level of local appreciation of the challenges that will face EWR and seemed equally perplexed at the inability of his accompanying experts to offer much evidence that these matters had yet been considered to any depth.

So, despite our concerns that final editing control had been handed to EWR Co without referring back to us (which we hope will not happen again) the article is representative subject to the points made above being taken account of. The full version of the summary report on David Hughes' visit is available on the BFARe web site:

<https://bfare.org.uk/>

We now await (subject to continued support financial support post-Budget statement) the launch of the 3rd Non-Statutory Consultation which we love in hope will produce more answers to the myriad of unanswered questions that EWR Co have yet to address.

Yours sincerely

Peter Norris

BFARe Technical