

A46 Member Partnership, 6/10/21

Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Minutes

1. Introductions and Apologies (Chair)

Attendees:

Cllr Mark Cargill (Chair), Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Cllr Adrian Hardman, Wychavon District Council
Cllr David Bill MBE, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Cllr Jill Simpson-Vince, Rugby Borough Council
Cllr Ben Taylor, Blaby District Council
Cllr Maggie Wright, Leicestershire County Council
Adrian Hart, Warwickshire County Council
Nicholas Dauncey, Warwickshire County Council
Paul Harris, Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Karen Hanchett, Worcestershire County Council
John Seddon, Coventry City Council
Amanda Lawson-Smith, Gloucestershire County Council
Shawn Riley, Wychavon District Council
Cat Hartley, Blaby District Council
Helen Nightingale, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Adrian Thorpe, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Kirsty Rea, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Victoria Lazenby, National Highways
Sarah Spink, Midlands Connect
Andrew Pritchard, East Midlands Councils
Tess Nelson, Harborough District Council
Peter Heath, Rugby Borough Council
Mark Palfreyman, Leicestershire County Council
Rob Thornhill, Harborough District Council
Philip Clarke, Warwick District Council
Jonathan Dibble, Tewkesbury Borough Council
Neil Hopwood, GFirst LEP

Apologies:

Cllr Philip King – Harborough District Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr John Boyce – Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
Cllr Jim O’Boyle – Coventry City Council
Cllr Andrew McKinlay – Cheltenham Borough Council
Cllr David Gray – Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Heather Timms – Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Alan Amos – Worcestershire County Council
Stuart Maxwell – Leicester City Council
Luke Willetts – Worcestershire LEP
Colin Knight – Coventry City Council
Bill Cullen – Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

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Kirstie Rea – Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Adrian Thorpe – Oadby & Wigston Borough Council

Cllr Cargill welcomed attendees to the meeting and noted the apologies. He reported that since the last meeting he and Adrian Hart had met with Andrew Todd and Parvez Islam at the University of Warwick regarding emerging proposals for their existing campus sites near Coventry and Wellesbourne. This will form part of the new South Warwickshire Local Plan being developed jointly by Stratford-on-Avon and Warwick District Councils.

Cllr Cargill referred to positive discussions held with Sarah Spink at Midlands Connect and Kam Khokhar of National Highways since the last meeting which had highlighted the need for closer joint working to promote improvements to the A46 with Government.

2. University of Warwick Masterplan (Presentation from Andrew Todd and Parvez Islam)

Parvez Islam gave a presentation on the strategic and local transport improvements being developed and delivered to support the University of Warwick (UoW) Masterplan covering its Campus near Coventry.

Andrew Todd stated that the A46 is very important to the UoW in terms of connectivity to the wider region and noted that the campus is looking to become a testbed and exemplar for sustainable transport initiatives.

Cllr Cargill thanked PI for the presentation and referred to the significant cost of the Kenilworth to Leamington Spa 'K2L' cycle scheme. He asked how funding would be secured for cycle infrastructure at UoW. He also noted that electric vehicles are still more expensive in comparison to conventional petrol/diesel vehicles and questioned how climate change objectives would be achieved without some form of subsidy.

PI responded that promotion of active travel would require significant investment in cycle infrastructure and we have to think how we influence and lobby Central Government to secure this level of investment. UoW is working with partners to create better links into the area from Coventry, Kenilworth and Leamington Spa and to improve active travel on the campus itself, including reallocation of road space to provide a better cycle route network.

Cllr Cargill asked how potential safety issues with e-scooters were being addressed.

PI commented that whenever a new transport mode is introduced such as e-scooters, there will always be challenges. This happened when motorised vehicles had first been introduced as well as the advent of the railways. He added that there

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is a need for new modes to be introduced in a safe and practical way with e-scooters and micromobility starting to become more popular.

Cllr Cargill thanked AT and PI and suggested inviting them to future sessions. He asked for any further questions to be sent on to PI/AT via AH **[ACTION: ALL/AH]**.

PI agreed to forward the presentation to AH for circulation **[ACTION: PI/AH]**.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (Chair)

Cllr Redford noted that a report on the A46 Strategic Link Road was due to be considered by Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet later this month. This will set out the results of the consultation undertaken earlier this year and will recommend that the scheme is taken forward to OBC submission to DfT and further development following that.

Cllr Cargill asked to be kept informed on progress with this scheme in the future **[ACTION: AH]**.

4. National Highways Update (Victoria Lazenby)

VL noted that Highways England had been re-named National Highways. She gave a short presentation on Route Strategies and an update on key schemes relevant to the area. VL agreed to forward the presentation to AH for circulation **[ACTION: VL/AH]**.

For Route Strategies, workshops are planned for October/November 2021 with Local Highway Authorities. An online tool (launched 25th August) would be available until the end of November 2021. This allows consultees to drop a pin on a location with text boxes to outline your concerns. Responses will be collated to help inform the development of the route strategies.

Cllr Hardman noted that there had been a number of recent fatalities on the A46 and asked whether National Highways would welcome concerns to be forwarded from Parish Councils via the Route Strategies online tool.

VL suggested these concerns be put on the online tool (<https://arcg.is/1uuDSC0>) to help raise their profile and also to approach Fiona McKenzie (Route Manager for the A46) with a copy to herself.

Cllr Bill referred to the proposals for the Hinckley National Rail Freight Interchange (HNRFI) where public consultation is imminent. He commented that he understood from Warwickshire and Leicestershire County Councils that no highway impact study had been produced and questioned whether National Highways has had any input.

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Cllr Bill referred to the current planning application at Padge Hall Farm which is mostly in Warwickshire (Rugby Borough) but is accessed from the A5 in Leicestershire and asked whether any conclusion had been reached by National Highways regarding the acceptability of proposals to lower the road under the low railway bridge.

VL offered to send a note of the latest position to Cllr Bill after the meeting **[ACTION: VL]**.

AH noted that he had just set up a joint meeting with Warwickshire and Leicestershire County Councils and National Highways for next Wednesday 13th October 2021 to discuss the Padge Hall Farm application.

AH asked whether it would be useful for the A46 Partnership to submit its own submission on Route Strategies specifically for the A46 corridor, raising key points on current operational issues and where improvements are most needed, referencing the evidence base produced by Midlands Connect. AH indicated that he is happy to co-ordinate preparation of that submission and to share a draft with members before the end of November 2021.

Cllr Cargill along with a number of member representatives agreed with this suggestion **[ACTION: AH]**.

5. Midlands Connect Update (Sarah Spink)

SS gave a presentation on the role and priorities of Midlands Connect (MC), the Sub-National Transport Body (STB) for the Pan-Midlands area, which is responsible for securing investment for strategic transport improvements and ensuring these align with Government and regional priorities. SS agreed to forward the presentation to AH for circulation **[ACTION: SS/AH]**.

The MC Regional Strategic Transport Plan is due for release in Spring 2022. Its launch has been delayed until after publication of the Government's Integrated Rail Plan which will set out how HS2 will integrate with the Midlands Engine Rail and Transport for the North/Northern Powerhouse Rail proposals.

TMTC Conference – An event will be held in June 2022 for MPs and businesses which will focus on why we need to push for investment in the A46 corridor and raise the profile of the TMTC.

Cllr Cargill asked whether MC had engaged with the UoW on issues such as micromobility in the development of their Plan?

SS replied that micromobility and cycle route planning is more of an issue for Local Highway Authorities, but MC try to ensure its plans are aligned.

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Cllr Bill queried the status of the A46 Southern Bypass of Leicester as a recurring issue. SS replied that the detailed evidence gathering by MC had shown the existing alignment of the A46 is the preferred option for any future improvement schemes.

Cllr Bill referred to the HNRFI proposals – the original proposition to improve M1 Junction 21 now appears to have been dropped by the site promoter. Is there an alternative strategy for improving M1 Junction 21 with funding from another source?

SS asked Cllr Bill to send her an e-mail with the exact questions so she could pass this onto the MC Strategic Roads Manager (Swati Mittal).

Cllr Bill welcomed the proposals to improve the Coventry to Leicester/Nottingham rail route but highlighted a capacity issue due to freight on the Leicester to Birmingham and Leicester to Coventry lines. There is a need to consider what happens at Narborough given the issue of the level crossing.

SS replied she was unsure about Narborough but there is a big piece of work looking at rail capacity around Leicester including the key junctions to the north (Syston) and south (Wigston) of the city. MC recognises there are capacity issues which need to be resolved before these service improvements can come forward.

Cllr Bill agreed to send SS a note outlining these questions. **[ACTION: Cllr Bill/SS]**.

VL commented that there is a Leicester Western Access study being undertaken as part of the RIS3 pipeline work looking at M1 Junctions 21 and 21a. She can provide details at a future meeting or ask the Project Sponsor to give an overview. **[ACTION: VL/AH to arrange as a future item]**.

6. Garden Town/Garden Village and Growth Update (LPA reps)

Before introducing this item, Cllr Cargill asked for any other items which members would like to bring forward including strategic development opportunities – please forward these to AH. **[ACTION: ALL/AH]**.

(a) Tewkesbury Borough Council

JD reported that the Tewkesbury Borough Local Plan had been through examination and is now at Main Modifications stage. The next round of consultation is due towards the end of 2021 with response to be considered by the examination Inspector. Adoption is anticipated in early 2022.

Strategic planning issues are covered by the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester City. Consultants are currently reviewing the evidence base. Dates for the Regulation 18 draft plan stage are to be confirmed.

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The Garden Town proposal which is a 30+ year programme for 10,000 houses is being considered by the JCS. The original 2018 Concept Masterplan is being substantially updated. A significant amount of work on development principles has been undertaken with particular reference to the potential for a sustainability-led approach. Consultants are developing a sustainability strategy. JD agreed to give a future presentation on this **[ACTION: JD/AH to arrange as a future item]**.

JD noted that a significant amount of work is being done on an interim planning strategy prior to formal allocation and taking the plan through the Executive to allow wider community/stakeholder engagement. HIF Funding has been awarded for delivery of the bridge at Ashchurch over the railway line to be brought forward.

ALS noted the need for improvements to M5 Junction 9 and the A46 upgrade at the far western end of the corridor where it connects with the M5 to support the Garden Town proposal. The former has Large Local Major Scheme funding support from Western Gateway STB. Approval has been granted for the pre-SOBC submission, and GCC is now working on the SOC/OBC.

GCC is the scheme promoter which requires collaborative working with National Highways as the scheme is located on the SRN. ALS reported that resourcing issues at National Highways appear to have been resolved and good progress is now being made. Baroness Vere (the Roads Minister) has asked for a project briefing next week. This will enable National Highways to engage more fully with GCC.

DfT is working with GCC and National Highways to agree the process for how it will review the work prior to formal submission. The SOC is due for completion in the next six months in advance of public consultation and will explain how approximately 30 route options have been narrowed down to just 2 or 3.

GCC is bidding for £3-5 million internal scheme development funding. If the SOC is approved, there is potential for DfT scheme development funding to come forward.

(b) Stratford-on-Avon District Council

PH – limited progress has been made since the last meeting regarding the proposals for the Long Marston Airfield (LMA) Garden Village.

The adopted SDC Core Strategy includes two new settlements, the first near Jaguar Land Rover at Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath which is being developed and the second at LMA which is much more complex.

There is already permission for 400 dwellings at LMA where construction has started with a possible second phase in advance of delivery of the Stratford Western Relief

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Road (SWRR). The SWRR is a major highway constraint as it failed to secure HIF funding and is unaffordable by the developers alone.

The planning application has now been in for two years and the PPA extended to the end of March 2022. It is unknown whether the SWRR will get planning permission or funding. SDC is engaging with Homes England to consider various alternative transport-related options to enable LMA delivery.

There is a possibility LMA will have to be reconsidered as part of the new South Warwickshire Local Plan being jointly developed with Warwick District Council. It may be that development at LMA and adjacent land may provide the means to fund the necessary transport and other infrastructure.

Cllr Cargill noted that SDC currently has an 8.3 year Housing Land Supply. PH noted that in the short-term, build out of the first 400 with potential for further development at LMA in advance of the SWRR does buy some time.

(c) Blaby District Council

CH noted that Whetstone Pastures Garden Village currently has no planning status. The proposal includes a new motorway junction at M1 Junction 20a.

The Council is around halfway through the production of a new Local Plan. Delivery of the settlement is probably 10 years away. There is potential government capacity funding to develop Garden Village principles should it appear in the next local plan. The local plan is at initial technical stage including high level viability assessment, flood risk assessment and highway modelling.

Proposals for M1 Junction 20a have been around for a number of years. The Housing Market Area for Leicester and Leicestershire is looking to compile the transport evidence required to support a business case for a new motorway junction.

This will require an element of public funding in addition to developer funding. If the technical evidence shows that the new junction is required at that location to deliver growth, then it will proceed to business case stage. Working groups are in place including National Highways, LCC Highways and other relevant bodies. It is anticipated that the initial assessment will hopefully be concluded in approximately 6 months.

(d) Other emerging strategic development opportunities (All LPAs)

None reported.

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7. A46 Action Plan/A46 Corridor Local Plan and SEP Update (Adrian Hart)

AH noted that both documents are updated on a regular basis through the officer group in order to provide information to members.

The main update from the Action Plan relates to the A5 Longshoot-Dodwells scheme which was formally abandoned by DfT in August. Luke Willetts from Worcestershire LEP will update on the new Worcestershire Growth Strategy prior to next meeting **[ACTION: LW]**.

8. Lobbying, Communications and MP Engagement (Chair)

Cllr Cargill encouraged members to lobby MPs when speaking with them regarding local issues on the A46, but noted that we have a stronger voice if we co-ordinate our efforts with Midlands Connect on strategic improvements and the wider TMTC.

Andrew Pritchard provided an update on the proposed A46 Newark Northern Bypass. The selection of a preferred route by National Highways as a RIS2 scheme had been delayed due to the Comprehensive Spending Review which is due to take place on 27th October 2021.

A decision on the route and funding is anticipated early next year. MC/TfEM has made representations for the scheme to be expedited. He asked those with MP contacts to raise the profile of this scheme as it is important for realising the overall TMTC vision.

SS noted that MC will be holding a parliamentary event in early December 2021 with local MPs which will focus on decarbonisation.

9. Future Items (Chair)

- a. A46 Walsgrave Options Consultation (likely early 2022)
- b. Mapping of A46 Corridor Housing and Employment Growth
- c. Gigafactory, Coventry Airport
- d. EV Charging and Power Generation Infrastructure
- e. Environment Agency and Climate Change Adaptation
- f. Jaguar Land Rover (JLR)

AH noted that he would add the M1 Leicester Western Access RIS3 Pipeline Scheme as an item for the next meeting **[ACTION: AH]**.

AH reported that the officer group is in the process of updating previous mapping to show all current Local Plan housing and employment growth and other sites coming forward outside this process. Colleagues at LCC are helping to produce these. If possible, they will be circulated to members ahead of the next meeting.

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Cllr Cargill asked whether we have contacts at JLR.

AH indicated that he and John Seddon of Coventry City Council do have contacts at JLR in Coventry and Warwickshire **[ACTION: AH/JS]**.

10. AOB

Cllr Cargill will be attending a forthcoming micromobility event at UoW and agreed to provide feedback on this at the next meeting **[ACTION: Chair]**.

The meeting closed at 12:10.

Date of Next Meeting: 26th January 2022, 10.30-12.30 (Microsoft Teams)