

## **A46 Member Partnership**

**Tuesday 2nd October 2018**

**14:00-16:00**

**Tewkesbury Borough Council, Gloucester Road,  
Tewkesbury, GL20 5TT**

Present:

Members: Cllr Vernon Smith (Chair) (VS), Gloucestershire County Council  
Cllr Mark Cargill (MC), Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
Cllr Heather Timms (HT), Warwickshire County Council

LEP representatives: Neil Hopwood (NH), GFirst LEP  
Michael Warner (MW), GFirst LEP  
Luke Willetts (LW), Worcestershire LEP

Officers: Adrian Hart (AH), Warwickshire County Council  
Amanda Lawson-Smith (ALS), Gloucestershire County Council  
Nicholas Dauncey (ND), Warwickshire Council  
Shawn Riley (SR), Wychavon District Council  
Annette Roberts (AR), Tewkesbury Borough Council  
Andy Baker (AB), Worcestershire County Council  
Jeremy Williamson (JW), Cheltenham Borough Council

Highways England: Eri Wong (EW), Asset Manager - Coventry & Warwickshire

Speakers: Syed Abbas (SA), Highways England  
David Crosser-Drake (DCD), Highways England  
Alistair Cox (AC), Midlands Connect

Apologies: Cllr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council  
Cllr Adrian Hardman, Wychavon District Council  
Cllr Jeff Clarke, Warwickshire County Council  
Cllr Lynden Stowe, Gloucestershire County Council  
Cllr David Welsh, Coventry City Council  
Cllr Christine Radford, Leicestershire County Council  
Cllr Sebastian Lowe, Rugby Borough Council  
Victoria Chapman, Rugby Borough Council  
Gary Woodman, Worcestershire LEP  
Dave Barber, Warwick District Council  
Colin Knight, Coventry City Council  
John Seddon, Coventry City Council  
John Careford, Stratford-on-Avon District Council  
Ann Carruthers, Leicestershire County Council  
Mark Palfreyman, Leicestershire County Council  
Stuart Maxwell, Leicester City Council

### **Item 1 - Introductions and Apologies (Chair)**

Cllr Smith chaired the meeting on behalf of Cllr Hardman who was unable to attend.

### **Item 2 - Election of Deputy Chair (All)**

It was agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

### **Item 3 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (Chair)**

Minutes of the previous meeting held on Wednesday 13th June 2018 were agreed.

### **Item 4 - M6 Junctions 2-4 Smart Motorway (Highways England)**

Syed Abbas (SA) and David Croser-Drake (DCD) from Highways England gave a presentation on the scheme which is currently being implemented to improve the M6 between Junction 2 at Coventry and Junction 4 near Coleshill by upgrading it to an 'all lane running' Smart Motorway. The scheme will also see some enabling works for HS2 delivered at Junction 4.

The objectives of the scheme are to provide increased traffic capacity, reduce congestion, maintain or improve safety and provide more reliable journey times.

In summary, the project involves:

- Converting the hard shoulder to create a permanent fourth lane between Junctions 2 and 3a;
- Converting the climbing lane eastbound between Junction 3a and 3 to a permanent traffic lane and retaining the hard shoulder;
- Between Junctions 4 and 3a the motorway will have 3 lanes and a hard shoulder; this is designed to tie in with the existing M6 Junction 5 to 8 Smart Motorway;
- Installing new electronic information signs, signals and CCTV cameras - these will be used to vary speed limits and manage traffic flow and incidents;
- Installing emergency refuge areas separated from the main carriageway to use in place of the hard shoulder.

**Cllr Smith** asked how much Highways England is interacting with Local Authorities in the areas affected by the scheme. He noted that reducing traffic speeds could risk displacing traffic onto the surrounding local road network.

DCD responded that the project team is liaising with Solihull Borough Council, Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council. There are monthly Traffic Management Forum meetings with key stakeholders (police and local authorities).

SA added that the works required night-time closures so there was close liaison with Local Authority contacts and parish councils.

**Cllr Timms** remarked that Ansty has a real problem during road closures and that if you don't keep traffic on the motorway, there are significant problems on the local road network.

DCD responded that the project team can advise but not compel traffic to use alternative routes during periods of night-time closures of the motorway during the works.

**Cllr Timms** accepted there are daytime closures but that traffic finds its own route during closures which are not necessarily on the posted diversion route. She referred to the recent major improvements at A46/A45 Tollbar End and noted that the communities affected by the scheme haven't experienced traffic relief since it was completed.

DCD gave a summary of progress to date and noted that the scheme was programmed to be open for traffic in March 2020. He added that there had been a number of Public Information events in July 2016, December 2017, and January/February 2018.

DCD noted that the project team was working with Fillongley Action Group over its concerns about highway drainage which were being addressed. He added that issues affecting Ansty had been communicated to the Traffic Management Forum several weeks ago.

SA commented that the project team recognise that the scheme does not exist in isolation and that the approach to scheme diversions is co-ordinated as far as possible, e.g. in an attempt to avoid more than one diversion in any particular direction.

JW asked what the trigger for intervention for Smart Motorways was for this scheme.

DCD responded that the scheme is designed to reduce congestion by providing additional capacity in response to increasing traffic volumes including a significant

volume of HGVs, and to improve journey time reliability and safety using variable speed limits so that traffic progresses more smoothly.

SA added that the Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) for the scheme was 2.2 which means for every £1 spent on scheme delivery there is £2.20 worth of benefit (e.g. travel time savings). The minimum BCR for a scheme to be considered for possible funding was normally 1.5.

**Cllr Timms** - commented that traffic is diverting north but not south and asked for clarification on what is being done about this.

DCD replied that the issue has been brought to the attention of Warwickshire Police.

SA added that the project team has investigated the concerns raised by Cllr Timms and had done all within its powers. However, it was for the Police to decide whether any enforcement action would be taken.

AB asked for clarification on the reason for not converting one particular section to all lanes running. SA replied that this section was affected by significant engineering challenges which were considered too costly to address.

MW asked for details of how much more capacity/increased average speeds will the scheme provide.

AH commented that the scheme was designed to make journey speeds more reliable and to improve capacity and safety.

SA noted that in addition to the predicted journey time benefits an economic assessment had been undertaken which showed benefits to the wider economy.

**Cllr Smith** thanked the project team for their presentation.

AH agreed to forward a copy of the slides including contact details to members.

#### **Item 5 - M42 Junction 6 (Highways England)**

The planned presentation by Highways England was deferred to a future meeting.

## **Item 6 - Midlands Connect Update (Midlands Connect)**

Alistair Cox (AC) from Midlands Connect gave a presentation to update the group on the A46 Corridor Study and wider Midlands Connect work including the A5, A50/A500, Midlands Rail Hub, Midlands Motorway Hub, Major Road Network (MRN), Sub-National Transport Body (STB) and forthcoming budget asks.

The second phase of the A46 Strategic Corridor Study is now considering a number of priority sections of the route for investment, these being Ashchurch, Evesham, Stratford-upon-Avon, Coventry, Leicester, Newark and Lincoln.

**Cllr Smith** commented that the Midlands Connect report notes the need for the A46 to be brought up to Expressway standards and asked whether this means dual carriageway standard. AC confirmed that the illustrative package developed in the first phase of the study included provision of a high quality dual carriageway standard route on the A46 between the M5 and M40.

AC referred to the Highways UK conference which is to be held on 7-8th November at the NEC. Midlands Connect is proposing to launch two videos at the event, one outlining the national role of the A46 and the second providing a more localised overview of specific sections of the route.

AC asked for contact details of business users for possible interviews, as the Government is particularly interested in this type of evidence to justify route improvements.

**Cllr Cargill** asked for further details of the status of Midlands Connect as a possible Sub-National Transport Body (STB) and whether this would attract more funding opportunities.

AC responded that Midlands Connect is consulting with constituent authorities on the possibility of it becoming an STB. He referred to the example of the Rail Hub project which had stalled. Midlands Connect's subsequent involvement had secured £5m government funding for scheme development work.

AH commented that prior to RIS 1, the A46 Partnership did not exist and the route did not feature on the national agenda. However, 4-5 years on we now have an evidence base which outlines the significant contribution of the A46 towards national productivity and how this could be enhanced with further investment.

**Cllr Smith** remarked that he supported the Midlands Connect Strategy and had engaged with local MPs Lawrence Robertson and Alex Chalk. He also noted that Chris Grayling had been provided with a copy of the A46 Partnership Prospectus. He asked for clarification on when a route plan showing the improvements to the A46 would be available.

AC responded that there was a rigorous scheme development process to go through before potential schemes could be taken forward through Highways England's Project Control Framework (PCF). He added that the purpose of the A46 study was to identify and prioritise sections of route where capacity enhancements would provide the greatest level of benefit.

AC added that the precise format of business cases was unknown at this stage but could be similar to Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bids which aimed to support release of housing. He noted that there would be a need to secure funding for scheme development work in the next RIS2 period (2020-2025) with possible construction of schemes in RIS3 (post-2025).

AH commented that without the Midlands Connect work, we would be waiting for RIS2 schemes to be announced with no guarantee that the A46 would feature. He also noted that some of these bigger projects are years in the making. He stressed the need for continued support of Midlands Connect in order to bring forward improvements more quickly than would otherwise be the case.

AC outlined other studies currently being progressed by Midlands Connect including the A5, A50/A500, Midlands Rail Hub, Midlands Road Hub Phase 2 (including Strategic Park and Ride, M6 Junctions 3-11, making better use of the M6 Toll and consideration of a western strategic route), Major Road Network and Smart Ticketing.

SR asked for details of where the A46 sits in the 'Roads Programme' referred to on the slides. AC replied that the A46 is the most advanced, and by March 2019 we will be clear what we need in terms of priorities.

JW asked about the role of strategic park and share to reduce single occupancy commuter car use, and that this may be more cost effective than Smart Motorways.

Cllr Smith commented that the fundamental point is that we like to be 'in our own bubble' and value personal choice when making travel decisions.

AC commented that as parking supply becomes restricted, there is more incentive to consider alternatives such as Park and Ride.

Cllr Smith thanked AC for the presentation.

AH agreed to forward a copy of the presentation to members.

#### **Item 7 - Highways England Update (Highways England)**

EW noted that an announcement in relation to RIS2 was expected in late October at the same time as the Autumn Budget.

**Cllr Smith** asked if a copy of the report would be made available.

EW agreed to refer the request back to the Midlands Development Team.

SR asked for an update on progress on the M5 Junction 6 Improvement Scheme. EW agreed to provide a written update.

EW noted that Heather Wilcox is the interim replacement for Serena Howell who has left Highways England.

ALS commented that she expected a RIS2 announcement to be made on 29<sup>th</sup> October and asked whether there is anything more we can be doing before then.

AB noted that the announcement may simply be the Government's response to the SRN Initial Report consultation rather than a Draft RIS2 Programme which is due to be released later next year.

#### **Item 8 - Mapping of Planned Housing and Employment Growth (Adrian Hart)**

Before updating the group on this item, AH reported that he and ND had produced a working draft Gantt chart showing the timescales for various schemes affecting the A46 and other projects including HS2, Coventry City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games.

AH noted that the purpose of the chart was to give members advanced notification of works affecting the A46 and commented that Transport for the West Midlands have appointed a Director of Network Resilience to co-ordinate the programme of works across the network.

AH noted that the Officer Group would continue to develop the chart and keep it up to date. EW offered to provide assistance.

AH noted that there is a group that meets to co-ordinate major works. The chart provides a snapshot of the A46 to illustrate just how challenging this is going to be.

**Cllr Smith** asked for this item to be added to the next meeting agenda.

AH agreed to provide an updated version in time for the next meeting.

AH moved the discussion onto Item 8 and noted that collating the housing and employment data onto four plans had been a significant exercise.

AH gave thanks to colleagues at Leicestershire County Council who had produced the maps and Dave Barber (DB) at Warwick District Council for co-ordination.

DB will be sending an e-mail requesting up to date data from the Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) later this month/early November.

AH commented that the maps showed there were 60-70,000 houses and in excess of 600 ha of employment land proposed across the section of the A46 corridor covered by the Partnership.

AH noted that the maps will be updated on an annual basis around this time of year after the housing and employment land reviews by the LPAs.

**Cllr Cargill** noted that there appeared to be much less development between Tewkesbury and Warwick compared to the northern section of the corridor.

AH referred to sites which had a slightly less direct impact and the cumulative effect of larger and smaller sites would have a more significant impact.

**Cllr Cargill** referred to very high house prices in Stratford which led to significant inward commuting.

**Cllr Smith** commented that as the mapping does not include smaller sites in villages (e.g. 300 houses in villages such as Honeybourne and Chidswickham) so the actual total could be nearer to 100,000 dwellings.

#### **Item 9 - Engagement with MPs (Shawn Riley/Adrian Hart)**

SR reported that he and AH had met with Nigel Huddleston MP (NH) to discuss his role as an 'A46 Champion' to make the case for improving the route in Parliament.

NH had agreed to fulfil this role and was keen to engage with other MPs along the route including those from other political parties.

AH added that the meeting had been extremely positive and NH was keen to work with the other MPs up to Lincolnshire and Humberside. NH was due to meet with Jesse Norman MP shortly. AH and SR had encouraged him to use key facts and figures from the Midlands Connect work highlighting the importance of the route to the UK economy. NH had asked for more work to be done on casualty/safety issues and numbers of housing.

AH informed members that in order to establish the A46 more firmly in Government thinking, NH had suggested that an A46 group comprising like-minded MPs could be formed. NH will also lobby for a Westminster Hall debate on the A46 and he is keen for cross party liaison on the issue.

AH suggested that a small delegation could go to meet the MP group once established and NH's office could help to organise this. AH asked members whether they are comfortable with this approach.

AH reported that officers were developing a further iteration of the A46 Prospectus within the next few weeks. This will be shorter than the previous version and will draw on the work undertaken by Midlands Connect. This could be used at the

Westminster Launch in November/December 2018 subject to the MP group being set up.

**Cllr Smith** replied that Cllr Hardman had briefed him on these developments and was very supportive of raising the profile of the A46 in this way.

**Item 10 – A46 Action Plan Update (Adrian Hart)**

See Item 11 below.

**Item 11 - A46 Corridor Local Plan and SEP Update (Adrian Hart)**

In conjunction with the Gantt chart of programmed works, AH has undertaken a more comprehensive update of the A46 Action Plan and the Officer Group has provided updates on Local Plans and SEPs (circulated with meeting papers).

**Item 12 - Media Issues (Chair)**

These were covered under Item 9.

**Item 13 - Future Items (Chair)**

Suggested items included.

- a. M42 Junction 6 (deferred from this meeting)
- b. A46 Corridor Programmed Works
- c. Revised A46 Prospectus
- d. A46 Stoneleigh

**Item 14 – AOB**

None.

The meeting closed at 16.10.

**Date of Next Meeting:** Tuesday 23rd January 2019 @ 2pm, Coventry City Council.