

A46 Member Partnership
Wednesday 23rd January 2019
14:00-16:00

Coventry City Council, One Friargate,
Coventry CV1 2GN

Members: Cllr Adrian Hardman (Chair), Wychavon District Council
Cllr Mark Cargill (Vice Chair), Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Cllr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Jeff Clarke, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Christine Radford, Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Sheila Scott, Blaby District Council

LEPs: Michael Warner (MW), GFirst LEP

Officers: Adrian Hart (AH), Warwickshire County Council
Nicholas Dauncey (ND), Warwickshire County Council
Shawn Riley (SR), Wychavon District Council
John Seddon (JS), Coventry City Council
Dave Barber (DB), Warwick District Council
Amanda Lawson-Smith (ALS), Gloucestershire County Council
Annette Roberts (AR), Tewkesbury Borough Council
Robert Weaver (RW), Tewkesbury Borough Council
Andy Baker (AB), Worcestershire County Council
Jeremy Williamson (JW), Cheltenham Borough Council
Garry Scott (GS), Leicester City Council
John Richardson, Blaby District Council
John Careford, Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Mark Palfreyman, Leicestershire County Council

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

Speakers: Johnathan Pizzey (JP), Highways England
Ian Bamforth (IB), AECOM
Sarah Spink (SS), Midlands Connect

Apologies: Cllr Vernon Smith, Tewkesbury Borough Council
Cllr Lynden Stowe, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Heather Timms, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Andrew McKinlay, Cheltenham Borough Council
Neil Hopwood (NH), GFirst LEP

Item 1 – Introductions and Apologies (Chair)

Cllr Hardman welcomed attendees to the meeting.

Item 2 - Election of Chair and Vice Chair (All)

Cllr Hardman was confirmed as Chair and Cllr Cargill appointed as Vice Chair with a two year rolling tenure (i.e. Vice Chair becomes Chair after two years).

Item 3 - Governance and Membership of the Partnership (Chair)

AH reported that the updated Governance document specified that a minimum of three members was required for a quorum to allow the approval of minutes and key decisions to be taken.

AH noted that he had received applications to join the Partnership from four other local authorities, these being Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough, Blaby District and Harborough District Councils.

Cllr Hardman moved to accept their applications – this was agreed. AH to invite each of them to propose their lead officers and members to attend future meetings of the Partnership.

Item 4 - Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising (Chair)

The minutes were agreed for uploading onto the A46 Partnership website.

Item 5 - M42 Junction 6 (Highways England/Aecom)

JP and IB gave a presentation on the committed RIS1 scheme at M42 Junction 6 which will provide improved access to Birmingham Airport, the HS2 Interchange, National Exhibition Centre and Jaguar Land Rover.

The purpose of the scheme is to reduce the number of movements at the existing Junction 6 to create more capacity by creation of a new junction to the south (Junction 5A), improvements to Junction 6 and the Clock Interchange and a new dual carriageway link road to the west of Bickenhill.

The scheme has been classified as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP) and planning permission is being sought through the Development Consent Order (DCO) process under the 2008 Planning Act. A Statement of Common Ground is to be produced setting out points of agreement and disagreement between interested parties for use at Examination.

Cllr Hardman asked if north facing slips at the new Junction 5A would be included in the scheme design.

JP replied that the traffic modelling had demonstrated these were not needed as traffic from the north and east would continue to use Junction 6 to access the Airport and surrounding area.

JP/IB referred to proposals for a new Motorway Service Area (MSA) to the south and west of the proposed Junction 5A which is pending consideration by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Highways England is working closely with the promoter of the MSA to ensure their proposals can go ahead should they receive planning permission.

JS referred to the proposed A46 works at Binley and Walsgrave and noted the critical need to manage overnight road closures as the A46 is the main diversion route for the M42.

JP/IB replied that works to the Oldbury Viaduct on the M5 and M6 Junctions 2-4 Smart Motorways were scheduled for completion before the improvements to M42 Junction 6 begin. The M6/M42 will therefore give a much better diversion route than at present. JP noted that a framework contractor is already in place and is developing a phased construction plan.

Item 6 - Ashchurch Garden Town Proposals (AR)

The Group received a presentation from Tewkesbury Borough Council on the proposals for a Garden Town at Ashchurch. AR noted that the proposals are still very conceptual. The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) had included 2,500 dwellings at MOD Ashchurch up to 2031. Although this had been removed from the JCS prior to Examination, the Inspector had asked for a masterplan approach to be adopted for the site.

There is capacity for 10,000 new homes and up to 100 ha employment including the MOD and land to the south of the A46. Significant infrastructure investment would be required to address existing congestion issues at M5 Junction 9 and on the A46 through Ashchurch itself.

There is ready-made rail access in the form of Ashchurch for Tewkesbury station, although a strategy for improving service frequency and passenger provision will be needed.

Discussions with key stakeholders including train operators and Midlands Connect are underway. There are other development opportunities to the south linked to possible offline solutions for the A46.

A decision from Government on the Garden Town proposals is expected in March 2019.

AH asked whether there is sufficient value in terms of development viability to fund the significant infrastructure required to facilitate growth in the area.

AR replied that the quantum of development should be able to fund a new M5 junction and dual carriageway link road off-line. AH noted that the cost of M42 Junction 6 (c. £300m) was not dissimilar.

ALS referred to the 1993 costed alignment of improvements to the A46 and M5 Junction 9 (£280m).

RW highlighted the aspiration to significantly enhance the economic profile of Tewkesbury and referred to lessons learned from the construction of Worcestershire Parkway regarding train service enhancement.

Cllr Scott noted that she supported Garden Villages but there was a need to ensure sufficient education provision.

Item 7 - Midlands Connect Update (SS)

SS referred to the work being undertaken by Midlands Connect to develop an enhanced strategic case to accelerate investment in the A46, which is increasingly being seen as a nationally significant economic corridor.

She gave an update on Phase 2 of the A46 Strategic Corridor Study which was looking at four specific areas, these being Tewkesbury to Warwick, Leicester, Lincoln and Newark.

She reported that Midlands Connect had established an effective Communications Team which included a former BBC journalist. She recently met with Nigel Huddleston MP who was keen to engage with other MPs to push for more investment in the A46.

She noted that DfT appreciate a 'one voice' approach setting out the key investment priorities for the region and that Midlands Connect as the emerging Sub-National Transport Body had a key role in working with local authorities to identify and promote these.

Item 8 - Highways England Update (EW)

EW reported that Highways England were developing the Strategic Business Case for RIS2 to be submitted to DfT in Summer 2019

For M5 Junction 6 (Worcester North), Heather Wilcox is liaising with Worcestershire County Council regarding progress with a view to scheme completion in Spring 2019.

Cllr Jeff Clarke asked for details on timescale for improvements at the Binley and Walsgrave junctions on the A46.

EW replied that proposals for Binley were still being progressed as part of RIS 1, and they were now working through options for the Walsgrave junction. AH confirmed that according to details on Highways England's website, the Binley scheme was programmed to commence in March 2020 with completion by Spring 2022.

MP asked whether schemes will be identified by the end of 2019. EW replied that the published RIS2 will include a definitive list of schemes which will receive funding between 2020 and 2025.

Item 9 - Mapping of Planned Housing and Employment Growth (DB)

DB thanked the local planning authorities for the information which they had provided on proposed housing and employment sites for mapping growth along the A46 corridor. He also asked MP to thank Lisa Godfrey of Leicestershire County Council for undertaking the mapping on behalf of the Partnership.

DB explained that the A46 had been split into sections to look at cumulative impacts and the relationship of each development site to the A46 (i.e. strong/moderate/weak).

Map 1 shows growth clusters to give an overall visual impression. Map 2 shows actual development sites (housing and employment). Map 3 shows diagrammatic sites (size and relationship) with red strong direct/green more remote.

It is proposed to update the information in Autumn 2019.

Total development along the section of the corridor which is covered by the Partnership is c. 90,000 dwellings, representing approximately 10% of total national housing growth (1m dwellings).

AH proposed to include one of the plans in the revised prospectus. It was agreed that Midlands Connect can also share this information with other partners.

Items 10 and 11 – A46 Prospectus and Lobbying of MPs (SR/AH)

AH reported that he had reviewed and circulated the draft updated A46 Prospectus and noted that there were key moments over next 12 months regarding lobbying for RIS2.

AH suggested that the revised Prospectus could be launched through Nigel Huddleston and fellow MPs to kick-start raising awareness with key people in Government. It was noted that he is seeking a debate in parliament on the A46 corridor.

AH commented that this approach by itself was unlikely to bring forward improvements early enough and emphasised the need to further develop a strategic narrative regarding the value of the A46 to the UK economy. He added that he was in early discussions with Midlands Connect on how to get the route into the national psyche in a similar way to the Oxford-Cambridge corridor.

Cllr Clarke commented that upper tier authorities would continue to lobby as well as this Partnership and Midlands Connect.

Cllr Cargill supported this and noted that a two-pronged approach was necessary.

Item 12 - A46 Action Plan/A46 Corridor Local Plan and SEP Updates (AH)

AH updated the Group regarding the A46 Action Plan and the position regarding Local Plans/SEP, including details of the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth

Plan. MP described that this was a joint piece of work between the Local Authorities and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership to agree a long term growth plan up to 2050. This includes an indicative SE bypass of the A46 around Leicester as supporting infrastructure.

Item 13 - Media Issues (Chair)

This item is covered under Items 10 and 11 (see above).

Item 14 - Future Items (Chair)

- a. Network Coordination and Resilience
- b. A46 Strategic Corridor Study Phase 2
- c. A46 Stoneleigh Improvements
- d. M40/M42 Smart Motorway

Item 15 - AOB

Cllr Hardman thanked Coventry City Council for hosting the meeting.

It was noted that Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough, Stratford-on-Avon District and Rugby Borough elections are to be held in Spring 2019.

Item 16 – Next Meetings (dates to be confirmed):

June 2019 - Leicestershire County Council
October 2019 - Wychavon District Council
January 2020 - Warwickshire County Council

List of Actions

- 1. Minutes from October 2018 meeting to be uploaded onto A46 Partnership website (AH/ALS).**
- 2. Invitations to be sent to the four additional Local Authorities for future meetings of the Partnership (AH)**
- 3. Circulate copies of Highways England’s presentation on M42 Junction 6 and Tewkesbury Borough Council’s proposals for the Ashchurch Garden Town (AH).**
- 4. A46 Officer Group to develop a cohesive programme for lobbying including further updates to the Prospectus to include housing and employment growth maps (Officer Group).**
- 5. MP to provide a web link to Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan (December 2018) for circulation (MP/AH).**
- 6. AH to circulate dates for the remaining Member Partnership meetings in June/October 2019 and January 2020 (AH).**