

**A46 Member Partnership
Wychavon District Council, 2/10/19
Minutes of the Meeting**

Attendees:

Cllr Adrian Hardman (Chair), Wychavon District Council
Cllr Mark Cargill (Vice Chair), Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Cllr Jeff Clarke (JC), Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Vernon Smith (VS), Tewkesbury Borough Council
Adrian Hart (AH), Warwickshire County Council
Nick Dauncey (ND), Warwickshire County Council
Shawn Riley (SR), Wychavon District Council
Amanda Lawson-Smith (ALS), Gloucestershire County Council
John Seddon (JS), Coventry City Council
Mark Palfreyman (MP), Leicestershire County Council
Rob Thornhill (RT), Harborough District Council
Andy Baker (AB), Worcestershire County Council
Luke Willetts (LW), Worcestershire LEP
Annette Roberts (AR), Tewkesbury Borough Council
Jeremy Williamson (JW), Cheltenham Borough Council
Paul Harris (PH), Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Michael Warner (MW), GFirst LEP
Barry Bodin-Jones (BBJ), GFirst LEP
Neil Hansen (NH), Highways England

Apologies:

Cllr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Ozzy O'Shea, Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Christine Radford, Leicestershire County Council
Cllr Sheila Scott, Blaby District Council
Cllr David Bill MBE, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Cllr Heather Timms, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Philip King, Harborough District Council
Cllr Patrick Moyneux, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr David Welsh, Coventry City Council
Cllr Andrew McKinlay, Cheltenham Borough Council
Helen Nightingale, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
John Careford, Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Robert Weaver, Tewkesbury Borough Council
Andy Yeomanson, Leicestershire County Council
Cat Hartley, Blaby District Council
Stuart Maxwell, Leicester City Council
Neil Hopwood, GFirst LEP
Eri Wong, Highways England

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Item 1 – Introductions and Apologies (Chair)

Cllr Hardman welcomed attendees to the meeting. Introductions and apologies were as recorded above.

Item 2 – Membership of the Partnership (Chair)

AH reported that Oadby & Wigston Borough Council had requested to join the Partnership. This was agreed by members. [Action: AH to write to Oadby & Wigston Borough Council to confirm agreement and invite them to future meetings.]

AH is still in discussion with colleagues at Nuneaton and Bedworth Borough Council regarding joining the Partnership.

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

The minutes were formally agreed for uploading onto the A46 Partnership website [Action: AH/ALS].

Item 4 – Garden Town/Garden Village Update (TBC/GCC/SoADC/BDC)

(a) Tewkesbury Borough Council

AR and ALS gave a presentation on the proposals for Tewkesbury Garden Town. The Joint Core Strategy for Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Gloucester City is recognised as an area of growth, with the proposal for Tewkesbury/Ashchurch having been given Garden Town status in March 2019. Discussions with Homes England and MHCLG are ongoing, with the aim of setting a red line boundary in the draft JCS early in 2020. A build out period is envisaged for the site beyond 2040, with a significant requirement for supporting infrastructure and services.

AR reported that work had begun to resource the team, with Jonathan Dibble having been appointed as Programme Director. Consultation on the principles of the Garden Town proposal would be undertaken with the local community and wider stakeholders. A website has also been established at:
www.tewkesburygardentown.co.uk.

ALS provided some context regarding the historic proposals for M5 Junction 9, including the 1993 DoT plans for a bypass of Ashchurch. A study was undertaken in 2017 by GCC/HE which considered constraints/options for the A46 in the Ashchurch area, which was subsequently used to inform the 2018 Garden Town bid. More recently HE has prepared a PCF Stage 0 report to inform RIS2. Midlands Connect has also undertaken a two-stage strategic study of the wider A46 corridor between Tewkesbury and the Humber Ports. The work undertaken to date is suggesting that an offline solution to the A46 is needed in the Ashchurch area by 2026.

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The work undertaken by Midlands Connect and the A46 Partnership has raised the regional profile of issues on the A46 and at M5 Junction 9. A Large Local Major Scheme bid for M5 Junction 9 is currently being prepared by GCC for submission to DfT via the Western Gateway STB. A pre-SOBC was submitted in July 2019 on which feedback is awaited. A full SOBC will be prepared for submission in December which will set out a limited number of options for the junction linked to the Garden Town proposals. If the SOBC is approved, an OBC submission would need to follow in 2020/21, which could have a price tag of £2M+.

AR indicated that the Inspector's decision is awaited on the planning application for housing on land north of Fiddington and its implications for any realignment of the A46 and connection to M5 Junction 9. The Chair asked if it was possible to reserve a route. ALS confirmed that this was not possible yet as a number of options are still under consideration.

VS highlighted the importance of the Partnership. The Garden Town is an exciting proposal but needs forethought and planning. The Fiddington development will see housing coming forward without the necessary infrastructure, including more pressure on M5 Junction 9. Should the proposal secure planning permission it will remove certain options for the A46 and motorway junction.

Comparisons were made between Worcestershire Parkway and the need for the rail offer at Ashchurch for Tewkesbury to be substantially improved, including multi-modal access to the station.

AB highlighted Worcestershire County Council's bid to DfT for £500k to develop the business case for improvements to the A38 on the Major Road Network.

b. Stratford-on-Avon District Council

PH gave an update on the two existing Garden Town/Village proposals at Gaydon/Lighthorne Heath near M40 Junction 12 (3,100 homes plus Jaguar Landrover extension) and Long Marston Airfield (LMA) located five miles south of Stratford-upon-Avon (3,500 houses and 13ha of employment).

LMA is a former World War 2 airfield which has been used for the Phoenix music festival, Global Gathering and the Bulldog Bash. The site is now vacated to build a new settlement on. Provision of the South West Relief Road (SWRR) is a critical part of delivering the new settlement. A maximum of 400 houses can be built without SWRR and the committed link to the A46 at Wildmoor via the West of Shottery Relief Road. Site preparation is underway for construction of the 400 homes to start in early 2020.

An outline planning application has been submitted for the wider allocation of 3,100 dwellings.

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As well as mitigating the impacts of the development, the SWRR will also help relieve congestion in Stratford town.

The road is controversial due to its potential impact on landscape, a SSSI and residential amenity, particularly at the northern end of the route where it meets the B439 Evesham Road. An elevated structure is required to cross the River Avon and the Greenway (the former rail line between Stratford-upon-Avon and Honeybourne).

The SWRR is estimated to cost £130m, which is substantially more than was originally anticipated. A HIF bid has been submitted by Warwickshire County Council on behalf of the developers to meet the shortfall in funding. A detailed planning application for the road has been submitted.

The Chair asked about the impact of building the SWRR on the A46, and how this proposal differs from the previous EcoTown. PH confirmed that this is around half the size of that proposal, but it still has a number of technical complexities in its delivery.

The Deputy-Chair suggested that the LMA development could be supported by light rail or guided bus utilising the Greenway. The existing leisure use of this corridor would however need to be maintained in some way given its popularity.

PH highlighted the potential impact on the A46 of development at the University of Warwick campus at Wellesbourne and the growth of the Quinton Rail Technology Centre at the former Long Marston Depot.

VS asked officers about the comparability of the M5 Junction 9 (c.£100m) and the SWRR (c.£130m). AH noted that all major schemes have their challenges. The SWRR has to cross a flood plain and avoid a SSSI. The officer group which supports the Partnership explore issues like this where we face similar problems, such as the scale of growth and how to manage the resulting impacts. The sharing of experience in developing and implementing Garden Towns and Villages is a good example of this.

c. Blaby District Council

AH summarised the note which had been circulated by Cat Hartley of Blaby District Council regarding the proposals for the Whetstone Pastures Garden Village (c.3,000 dwellings).

AH shared concerns he had received from Cllr David Bill of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council including his strong opposition to the proposed changes to M69 Junction 2 on Hinckley and Burbage.

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Item 5 – Midlands Connect Update (Simon Statham)

The Partnership received a presentation from SS on a number of projects being undertaken by Midlands Connect:

A46 Strategic Corridor Study Phase 1 – this recognised the case for investing in the A46 corridor and demonstrated to national government that we are adding value to planning process. The study provided some idea of where interventions may need to be delivered to support the functional economic geography of the corridor.

A46 Strategic Corridor Study Phase 2 – has focused on identifying the type of interventions, where they are needed and when.

Task One has looked at identifying a sequenced programme for the corridor and specific issues around Newark. The Newark Bypass has subsequently received funding in RIS2 as a result of an enhanced strategic case for the scheme.

The preparation of a sequenced programme has been informed by further investigation of development aspirations beyond the current local plan period (i.e. post-2030). This took the form of interviews with LPAs, recognising the sensitive nature of such discussions. This highlighted the opportunity for a further 275,000 new homes and 190,000 jobs in the A46 corridor. The sequencing has considered scheme feasibility costs and allowances for risk.

Task Two has looked at the section of the corridor between Tewkesbury and Warwick, with a particular focus on Ashchurch, Evesham, Alcester to Stratford and M40 to Leek Wootton.

Task 3 has considered the Leicester Area, with a focus on identifying a credible strategy in the short term (next 10 years) as well as longer term needs – recognising some of the potential sensitivities around the Expressway proposal to the east and south of the city.

Task Four has focused on Lincoln, including the wider role and constraints of the A15 and M180.

Task 1 is due to be completed by the end of November 2019. Tasks 2-4 should be completed by the end of October 2019. The recommendations of the Phase 2 report will then be taken to the Midlands Connect Steering Group for approval.

Trans-Midlands Trade Corridor Plan – The wider A46 corridor is being promoted as an economic rather than transport corridor. The proposal has been generally well received by DfT, BEIS and Homes England given the support which has been demonstrated from the 42 local authorities and LEAs. Unfortunately, there is no Government funding available at the moment, however Midlands Connect and its partners have been encouraged to continue to redevelop and refine the proposition

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in order to maintain this momentum and be ready when the next fiscal opportunity arises. As such, a Steering Group has been established with AH representing the LHA's and RW, SR and PH representing the LPA's on the A46 Partnership.

The Group is trying to learn from the wider experience of the Ox-Cam Corridor which Government is supporting through investment in East-West Rail and other projects.

Coventry to Leicester and Nottingham – This piece of work is considering the delivery of a direct service between these cities. Rail users currently face an hour-long journey due to the need to interchange at Nuneaton. The main capital cost of the scheme is at Nuneaton where a flyover/dive-under will be necessary to avoid a direct interface with the WCML.

A5 Strategic Corridor Phase 1 – this study has developed the strategic case for investment in the A5, with the recommendation that the section between the M42 and M69 should be prioritised for development during RIS2 and delivery in RIS3. The Project Board which AH is a member of is due to finalise the recommendations before it is taken to the Midlands Connect Steering Group for approval.

A38/A42/M42 Strategic Corridor Phase 2 – this piece of work has recently commenced and will look to better understand the economic role and function of the corridor.

Midlands Rail Hub – The SOBC was submitted to Government earlier in the year. The financial ask is for £20m to develop the OBC.

Midlands Connect Strategy Refresh – The original strategy published in 2017 was based on work undertaken in 2015/16. We now know far more detail about different projects and priorities given the technical work which has been undertaken over the last 2-3 years. The current mood of the time is also very different from 2017. What is our stance on roadbuilding? How do we respond to the Climate Change emergency? Do we need to focus on more than just productivity? A Scoping Workshop is due to be hosted by Midlands Connect on 10th October at the ICC in Birmingham at 12.30pm. A Partner Charter is also being developed.

The Deputy-Chair raised the forthcoming review of the Stratford Core Strategy in terms of both housing and infrastructure provision. Certainty over investment in the A46 could have a significant influence on where new sites may be promoted.

There was a general discussion regarding whether Brexit will potentially help us with promoting the corridor as a major trade route, particularly given its links to ports and airports.

Representation from the Partnership on MC Project Boards was raised, not least in terms of engagement with District and Borough Councils. SS recognised that this

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would be important for the work on the Trans-Midlands Trade Corridor given the links to growth.

JC raised concerns over the Coventry to Leicester and Nottingham services not stopping at Nuneaton given the 14,000 new homes allocated in the Local Plan and wider Transforming Nuneaton aspirations – which include increasing footfall in and around the rail station.

SS noted that Coventry to Nuneaton services were due to become half-hourly, and that the Midlands Rail Hub will see the frequency of Birmingham to Leicester services also improve. An option which includes a flyover and call at Nuneaton is still being considered, particularly given the interchange benefits this yields with the wider rail network.

VS suggested that MC should be looking at 2050 in terms of 5G and its implications for the network. He noted that it is predicted that 50% of children born in 2019 will never learn to drive. Electric cars may not be the future and that hydrogen may in fact be the way forward.

SS confirmed that the strategy refresh will certainly be looking towards 2050, including alternative fuels for freight and logistics to facilitate non-combustion engine powered fleets.

Although MC will continue to look at strategic transport issues, they are keen to understand where local interventions could complement or take pressure off the strategic network. The Chair recognised the importance of engagement which is needed with the Local Highway Authorities on this and other matters

In relation to the Trans-Midlands Trade Corridor, AH suggested that if each local authority and LEP were to contribute £20-25,000 towards the next phase of work, this would generate a local contribution of around £1m towards the total £3m ask. SS indicated that this might be a tactic we want to apply given the commitment it would demonstrate to Government. **[Action: AH to contact each organisation to seek views on the principle of making a funding contribution. SS to raise this with partners in the wider A46 corridor.]**

Item 6 – Highways England Update (Neil Hansen)

NH gave a detailed update on RIS1 schemes and the RIS2 process. At the request of JC, he was asked to produce a summary note for AH to circulate to members. **[Action: NH/AH.]**

Item 7 – Mapping of Housing and Employment Growth (Adrian Hart)

AH reminded members that the first set of plans showing housing and employment growth across the Partnership area had been produced this time last year. This

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required input from LPA's which was correlated by officers at LCC to produce a visual output. A request will shortly be issued by AH to ask for the updated information to be sent to LCC. We will look to share the revised mapping either prior to or at the next member meeting. **[Action: AH/All LPA officers.]**

The Chair thanked colleagues from LCC for their work to support this initiative.

Item 8 – A46 Action Plan/A46 Corridor Local Plan and SEP Update (Adrian Hart)

AH reported that the note being provided by NH would be used to update the A46 Action Plan. The Local Plan and SEP update would also be reviewed for the next meeting. **[Action: AH.]**

Item 9 – Lobbying and MP Engagement (Adrian Hart)

AH noted that engagement had been undertaken with Nigel Huddleston MP in his role as A46 Champion for both Midlands Connect and the A46 Partnership, but that he now had a role as deputy-whip within the Conservative Party. SS noted that the MC Comms Team is trying to create across-party MP group, but that an overall figurehead is needed.

VS suggested that Lawrence Robertson MP is keen to be involved in supporting the work of the Partnership. He asked if there was anyone similar at the Leicestershire end of the corridor.

Given the uncertainty over whether a General Election may be called in the near future, it was agreed to defer any key decisions on this issue at this stage.

Item 10 – Media Issues (Chair)

The Chair noted there were no current issues to consider.

Item 11 – Future Items (Chair)

Given recent discussions with colleagues from Highways England, AH indicated that a presentation on the options for A46 Walsgrave would not be possible at the next meeting in January but would be available later in 2020. A presentation would be provided on the A46 Stoneleigh improvements which are being led by Warwickshire County Council in conjunction with Coventry City Council. **[Action: AH to organise with WCC colleagues.]** A detailed briefing on the RIS2 announcement was also requested by members.

AH asked whether there was an appetite for a presentation on rail proposals of relevance to the A46, including the work of the North Cotswold Line Taskforce and the Birmingham – Bristol - Cardiff corridor. He suggested that Ian Baxter of SLC Rail, who is a very informative and captivating speaker would potentially be willing to

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deliver such a presentation. He has been involved in a number of rail schemes historically with Warwickshire CC as well as Worcestershire CC more recently in terms of Worcestershire Parkway.

A number of members including VS supported this proposal. The Chair asked AH to make the necessary arrangements. [**Action: AH to discuss with Ian Baxter.**]

Item 12 – AOB

The Chair thanked Midlands Connect and Highways England for attending and giving such useful presentations on both their current and future initiatives.

The meeting closed at 16.10.

Next Meeting: 2-4pm, 29th January 2020, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick