

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20

Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Cllr Adrian Hardman (Chair), Wychavon District Council
Cllr Mark Cargill (Vice Chair), Stratford-on-Avon District Council
Cllr Philip King, Harborough District Council
Cllr David Bill MBE, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Cllr Heather Timms, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Ken Pollock, Worcestershire County Council
Cllr Patrick Molyneux, Gloucestershire County Council
Cllr Vernon Smith, Tewkesbury Borough Council
Cllr Jeff Clarke, Warwickshire County Council
Cllr Jill Simpson-Vince, Rugby Borough Council
Cllr Ben Taylor, Blaby District 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
Tracy Crews, Cheltenham Borough Council
Peter Heath, Rugby Borough Council
Alison Newman, Blaby District Council
Cat Hartley, Blaby District Council
Tess Nelson, Harborough District Council
Adrian Thorpe, Oadby and Wigston Borough Council
Kirsty Rea, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Tom Allen, Highways England
Victoria Lazenby, Highways England
Sarah Spink, Midlands Connect
David Hudson, Environment Agency
Hayley Deighton, Environment Agency

1. Introductions and Apologies (Chair)

Cllr Hardman welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was his last as Chair. Apologies were received from the following:

Cllr John Boyce – Oadby & Wigston Borough Council
Cllr Jim O'Boyle – Coventry City Council
Colin Knight – Coventry City Council
Karen Moore – Highways England
Bill Cullen – Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council
Barry Bodin-Jones – GFirst LEP
Jackie Jobes – Cheltenham Borough Council

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20

Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

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

Cllr Cargill chaired the previous meeting on behalf of Cllr Hardman who was unable to attend. Cllr Cargill was not aware of any matters arising and the minutes were agreed. **Action: AH to forward the final version of the Minutes to ALS for uploading on the A46 Partnership web page.**

3. A46 Coventry Eastern Junctions (Presentation from Highways England)

Tom Allen (TA) – Senior Project Manager at Highways England with responsibility for delivery of the A46 Coventry Eastern Junctions (Binley and Walsgrave improvements) gave a presentation on progress (see slides for details).

There is a strategic requirement to improve the through flow of traffic on the A46 and to upgrade the section between M40 Junction 15 (Warwick) and M6 Junction 2 (Coventry) to a consistent standard.

The A46 Binley and Walsgrave roundabouts are the only two at-grade junctions remaining on this section. It is proposed to design and deliver improvements in sequence so there is a single phased programme of works starting with Binley.

Cllr Cargill asked whether there would be noise mitigation on the Binley flyover to protect occupants of nearby properties and whether long-term traffic growth forecasts would be affected by COVID-19.

TA replied that traffic noise impacts had been considered and would be incorporated into the design to protect the nearby hotel and residents of Binley Woods to the east of the junction.

TA added that during the last 5-6 months there had been reduced traffic flow as a result of COVID restrictions. Traffic volumes are now increasing on the SRN but have not yet reached pre-COVID levels. However, there is no expectation that the reduction in traffic volumes observed during COVID would become a longer term trend.

Cllr Timms expressed concern that the flyover graphic did not show the noise fencing but was reassured that noise mitigation is confirmed as part of the scheme. She added that a low noise road surface is being employed but would not last very long and so would need to be regularly maintained.

Cllr Timms commented that an area of concern for local residents is the use of the B4428 Brinklow Road for construction traffic through Brinklow village and Coombe Fields. She also asked whether children from Willenhall would still be able to cross the road to access Binley Woods Primary School.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

Cllr Timms expressed concern that Bob Pettifer (stakeholder liaison officer with contractor Osborne) had not received this information and she was keen for meetings to be held with local people virtually to provide this.

TA replied that there had been pre-construction consultation events held virtually in mid-September which had been advertised. Information similar to that in his presentation this morning was discussed and people had asked for details of how their journey times would be affected during construction.

Cllr Timms expressed concern that she had not been invited to attend on behalf of both Rugby Borough Council (RBC) and Warwickshire County Council (WCC). TA apologised to Cllr Timms for this oversight and agreed to pick this up with Bob Pettifer.

TA agreed to discuss the issue of construction traffic on Brinklow Road with the contractor and noted that it would mostly comprise Light Goods Vehicles and vans bringing workers into the site. It is the intention for heavy plant construction vehicles to have access onto the site directly from the compound.

Cllr King welcomed scheme and asked whether monitoring would look at potential delays on the wider network (e.g. HGVs diverting onto the A5/A426/M69)

TA replied that the construction team would liaise with Highways England's operations division to try and minimise delays. Metrics are already established to ensure excessive delays are not incurred.

Cllr Jill Simpson-Vince (Portfolio Holder for Growth and Investment, Rugby Borough Council) asked whether there would be overnight and/or daytime road closures when moving onto site and whether advance notification could be given to residents of Binley Woods via the Comms Team at RBC.

TA agreed to do this and noted that there would be four weekend closures of the main A46 (not necessarily in sequence) for placing of bridge beams. There would be advance notice and co-ordination with stakeholders.

Cllr Clarke asked for details of closures to be copied to Adrian Hart at WCC and what safety measures were proposed for vehicle occupants in the event of breakdowns on the flyover.

TA replied that no refuges were built into the design but there would be narrow verges provided on either side of the carriageway and that the design is compliant with current standards.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20

Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

Cllr Hardman thanked TA for the presentation and asked whether works would be completed before Coventry City of Culture.

TA replied that the City of Culture events were now scheduled to start in May 2021 when the scheme would still be under construction. Highways England is in contact with event organisers and the City Council to co-ordinate activities.

4. River Severn Partnership (Presentation from the Environment Agency)

David Hudson (DH) from the EA provided some context to the River Severn Partnership (RSP), which had grown out of collaborative working with local authorities on the management of the floodplain around Shrewsbury alongside a significant road project.

The RSP initiative had now become much broader and was looking at water management, availability, growth pressures, carbon offsetting, sustainability and environment along the whole of the River Severn. It is looking at opportunities for slowing down the release of water to manage the extremes of floods and drought.

DH referred to the example of Stratford-upon-Avon where land required for flood storage may also be valuable for housing but the constraint of the nearby A46 makes both of those aspirations difficult. DH noted that there may be an opportunity to free up development land by manipulating the flood zones in the area. There is also the issue of potential water shortages for agriculture around Evesham. There is a clear synergy between EA activities and aspirations for highway improvements on the A46 in these areas.

Hayley Deighton (HD) (Sustainable Growth Manager for the EA across the West Midlands) gave a presentation to explain the role of the RSP (see slides for details).

Cllr Hardman referred to the widespread disruption caused by road closures due to floods and the dramatic increase in the speed at which the River Avon rises during heavy rainfall over the last 30 years.

Cllr Smith (Cabinet Member for Highways and Floods Gloucestershire County Council) expressed his support for the RSP. He asked whether GCC is fully engaged and whether a hydrology map could be developed to consider all flooding (fluvial and pluvial) holistically.

HD replied that GCC and Tewkesbury Borough Council are fully engaged in the RSP and the core pilot is being led by James Blockley and Robert Weaver. She had given a similar presentation last week to Leadership Gloucestershire to gain further senior-level support.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

HD noted that her team was currently compiling data on flood risk from several sources to include fluvial and surface water (pluvial), and is working with Severn Trent Water which is updating its data for drainage and waste water management plans. This will give a better idea of drainage networks and help to understand the overall flood picture.

Measures going forward will consider a number of initiatives across the whole geography including an adaptive pathway plan to set out a flexible management approach.

Cllr Cargill referred to storage at scale and whether this would require provision of a large-scale reservoir.

HD replied that the approach would not rely on one single solution but a suite of measures at different scales. This is a complex programme of work with Severn Trent Water and Water Resources West which is considering how to move water down the system when and where it is needed.

DH commented that there were potentially several locations where water could be retained rather than one single block of land for a reservoir.

Cllr Timms (Environment Portfolio Holder for Warwickshire County Council) referred to flooding problems on the River Avon in Warwickshire and local Wildlife Trusts, SSSIs and Country Parks which could help to develop this idea further. She would support a strategic approach to the issue of flood alleviation and expressed support for the RSP.

HD noted that she would be very keen to engage with Warwickshire County Council going forward. **Action: AH to facilitate an initial discussion between EA and WCC Flood Management representatives.**

Cllr Hardman thanked HD for the presentation and asked whether Worcestershire County Council is engaged with the RSP. HD confirmed that this was the case.

5. Highways England Update (Victoria Lazenby)

Victoria Lazenby (VL) (Head of Planning and Development for the West Midlands at Highways England) will now be its permanent representative on the A46 Partnership.

VL gave a presentation to update the Partnership on where Highways England is as an organisation and the current position regarding Road Investment Strategy Period 2 (RIS2) which runs from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025 (see slides for details).

VL agreed to send links to the RIS2 documents along with the presentation. **Action: VL to send presentation slides and links to AH.**

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

Cllr Hardman asked whether there is a large carry forward from RIS1 into RIS2 and referred to the current requirement for nearly a trebling of housing numbers in South Worcestershire which would take a long time to deliver.

VL replied that several RIS1 schemes including the A46 Coventry Eastern Junctions discussed earlier are being carried over into RIS2. She would welcome discussions on how to work with authorities along the A46 to realise housing growth and balance that with impacts on the strategic road network.

Cllr Hardman asked whether there was some degree of prioritisation from Midlands Connect for A46 schemes.

VL replied that Midlands Connect is feeding into development of the Route Strategies and encouraged the A46 Partnership to raise the profile of issues along the corridor. Significant further work is required to understand what is both feasible and affordable. She noted that the schemes identified to date by Midlands Connect have yet to secure Government funding.

Cllr Hardman queried whether schemes would require local funding contributions.

VL replied that the RIS2 launch in March 2020 referred to third party funding to supplement Highways England funding. Highways England is considering how this will work in practice.

Cllr Bill referred to the complex situation in the Hinckley area which is due to be discussed at the forthcoming A5 Member Partnership meeting, and reiterated the need for improvements between Dodwells and Longshoot and an alternative A5 parallel to the existing route. There is a need for a closer look at the complex nature of how the A46, A5 and A47 work together.

VL added that a lot of work has been done by Midlands Connect as part of the A5 Strategic Corridor Study. Considerable investment is taking place which is testament to the efforts of A5 Partnership and she was hopeful that the A46 Partnership could achieve similar success.

AH referred to the issue of local funding contributions and commented that Warwickshire County Council had secured funding from MHCLG/Homes England for improvements to the A5 in North Warwickshire. He suggested that Homes England could be invited to a future meeting of the A46 Partnership to outline their thinking around future HIF funding bids to support the housing growth agenda. Cllr Hardman agreed that this would be helpful and asked AH to invite representatives from Homes England to attend a future meeting. **Action: AH to contact Homes England to discuss their attendance at a future meeting.**

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20

Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams

Meeting Notes

Cllr Clarke expressed concern that the schemes in the area of the A5 referred to by Cllr Bill have been further delayed.

VL noted these concerns and that her colleagues would give a more detailed update on scheme progress between Longshoot and Dodwells at the forthcoming A5 Member Partnership meeting.

Cllr Hardman thanked VL for the update.

6. Midlands Connect Update (Sarah Spink/Matthew Spry)

Sarah Spink (SS) (Stakeholder Management Lead, Midlands Connect) noted that Matthew Spry was due to give a presentation on network resilience but had to leave the meeting. He would however put together a high level briefing note for circulation to members. **Action: MS to send briefing note to AH for circulation with the draft Minutes.**

SS reported progress on a number of Midlands Connect initiatives:

- (i) The A46 Strategic Corridor Study work is nearing completion and is due to go to the Project Board prior to publication in November 2020.
- (ii) In early 2020, it was agreed that Midlands Connect would develop a Productivity Growth Plan (PGP) for the TMTC Corridor (likely cost £3m). Since then it had used its own funding to scope out the contents of the plan. A request for funding through the CSR has been made with a view to appealing to as many funding opportunities as possible across various Government departments (DfT, MHCLG/Homes England etc). EY (formerly Ernst & Young) and Atkins are developing the PGP in conjunction with a Steering Group comprising County Councils, District/Borough Councils, DfT, BEIS, MHCLG/Homes England and Highways England – not just transport-led but appealing to a wider agenda including housing and skills.
- (iii) Midlands Connect is in the process of refreshing its Strategy. Originally developed in March 2017, this identified the infrastructure needed to boost the region's economy and had developed a pipeline of schemes. Since then, there have been major changes (e.g. Brexit, Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Covid pandemic), all of which need to be reflected in the strategy refresh. There has been engagement with industry focus groups, with wider stakeholder events planned for January-March 2021.

Cllr Hardman thanked SS for the summary and commented that the economic argument for investing in the A46 had been greatly enhanced by the Midlands Connect work. He was however concerned that investment in infrastructure was taking too long to come forward.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

SS replied that she was trying to ensure anything we say in a strategy has a short, medium and long term plan in terms of delivering the necessary infrastructure. The PGP work was considering short-term improvements listed in RIS2 (Coventry Eastern junctions, Newark Bypass) to see what else could be done around these. The long-term blueprint does however give a level of certainty going forward.

SS also noted that outcomes from the A46 Strategic Corridor Study were being fed into the ongoing TMTC work.

Cllr King reported that he had attended the recent Leicestershire Strategic Planning Group presentation on the TMTC work and asked for details of who is represented on the steering group for that work. He added that the network resilience issue is critical – when there is a major incident on the M1 or M6 the secondary network is overwhelmed. He asked whether the network has sufficient resilience to accommodate traffic diversions required for the Binley and Walsgrave improvements discussed earlier in the meeting.

SS agreed to supply a list of TMTC Steering Group members. **Action: SS to send the list to AH for onward transmission to Cllr King.** She noted that resilience is also tied in with climate change not just day to day operation of the network.

7. Garden Town/Garden Village Update

Tewkesbury Garden Town – Tewkesbury Borough Council

Jonathan Dibble (JD) (Programme Director for Tewkesbury Garden Town) indicated that he had taken over from Annette Roberts and will be attending future meetings.

JD reported that work continues at pace and comprises a very large programme with a significant impact on the Tewkesbury/Ashchurch area. Various workstreams are being established. In summary:

- (i) Ashchurch Bridge – HIF funding secured for a new bridge over the railway north of the existing built up area at Northway which can unlock development north of the A46.
- (ii) Planning application for the bridge has been submitted to Tewkesbury Borough Council. A construction partner is to be appointed in 2021.
- (iii) Link roads will need to come forward at a later date to tie into the bridge and new development will be subject to future planning applications.
- (iv) Network Rail is a key partner and supportive of the proposals - GRIP 4 stage moving into GRIP 5 and joint working with GCC.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20
Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams
Meeting Notes

(v) Evolution of Concept Masterplan is a key piece of work – the MOD is now reinvesting in Ashchurch Base for the long term. Approx. 15 ha of land to be released for development purposes.

(vi) Moog have announced investment in a new facility for world-class aerospace engineering and there is consent at Fiddington for 850 homes.

Amanda Lawson-Smith (ALS) (Transport Planning Manager – Gloucestershire County Council) gave an update on progress with M5 Junction 9:

GCC is promoting improvements at M5 Junction 9/A46 through the DfT Large Local Major (LLM) fund. There is now an even greater need for the scheme with 10,000+ new homes at the Garden Town. The scheme includes proposals for a new junction on the M5 and a bypass for Ashchurch – pre-SOBC and SOBC submitted. The OBC is in progress with consultation on options in January 2021 and submission to DfT in Autumn 2021. DCO and planning application to follow in late 2021/early 2022 if funding is awarded.

Cllr Hardman asked for any questions to be e-mailed directly to JD and ALS.

Long Marston Airfield Garden Village – Stratford-on-Avon District Council

PH referred to Long Marston Airfield (LMA) Garden Village, traffic from which will interact with the A46 corridor. Site preparation and decontamination works have commenced for the initial 400 houses which already have planning permission. It is anticipated that housebuilding will commence during the first part of 2021.

An outline planning application for the remaining 3,100 homes has been submitted which also includes employment, community facilities and open spaces, together with a detailed planning application for the South Western Relief Road (SWRR). Both applications are complex so are unlikely to be determined until mid-2021 at the earliest.

Regrettably, the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) bid towards the cost of building the SWRR, on which the 3,100 homes are dependent, was unsuccessful. WCC and SDC are liaising with Homes England on the prospect of bidding for an alternative source of Government funding.

LMA and other developments in the Core Strategy are expected to make a financial contribution towards improvements at Wildmoor, Bishopton and Marraway junctions on the A46 near Stratford-upon-Avon.

Planning permission has recently been granted for a business park to the west of the town at Wildmoor. The developers are providing segregated right turning facilities at

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

the Billesley Crossroads on the A46 between Stratford and Alcester where there are existing congestion and queuing problems.

SDC is commencing a review of its Core Strategy in early 2021 and will engage with adjacent local authorities and key agencies with a view to developing a more holistic approach to infrastructure provision, including highway improvements and public transport. Large-scale strategic development may be better than dispersed development options in facilitating strategic infrastructure provision across local authority boundaries.

Whetstone Pastures Garden Village – Blaby District Council

Cllr Ben Taylor (Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing and Economic Development) has taken over from Cllr Sheila Scott and will be attending future meetings.

Cat Hartley (CH) (Group Manager - Planning and Economic Development) gave an update on Whetstone Pastures. She reported that Blaby District Council had been approached 4 years ago by a landowner consortium for a potential strategic development off the M1.

The site was awarded Garden Village status and the council is working closely with Homes England to take forward the proposal

The developer consortium is preparing technical evidence to support a potential local plan allocation – the site currently has no planning status and no applications are expected for at least 2 years. The consortium is likely to be consulting on a vision for the site in early 2021.

Proposals for new Junction 20a on the M1 – feasibility work is being undertaken with LCC, Midlands Connect, Highways England and neighbouring authorities. The scheme is considered pivotal to delivering the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan. A bid for further capacity funding has been submitted, a decision on which is now awaited.

Cllr Hardman thanked Cllr Taylor and CH for the update.

8. Improved coordination of litter picking and fly-tipping (Adrian Hart)

Adrian Hart (AH) (Transport Planning Manager – Warwickshire County Council) referred to major challenges around litter picking on the A46 and other strategic routes. The responsibility for this on trunk roads lies with District/Borough Councils. He noted that a similar piece of work to improve co-ordination had been undertaken by the A5 Partnership in 2019 due to problems with litter and general debris along the route.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

AH has been discussing the issue with Highways England colleagues to see if the A46 experiences similar problems. They have confirmed there are similar issues due to the limited budgets available and the need for traffic management to ensure contractor safety. There are also constraints on the ability to co-ordinate activities as Highways England often operate at night but litter picking occurs during the daytime.

AH asked whether members consider we should try to better co-ordinate these activities along the A46.

Cllr Bill commented that he would like to see progress on this matter and referred to significant problems of litter around M1 Junction 21/M69 slip road on the embankment. He suggested we should also engage with Network Rail as there are similar problems at South Wigston and the approach to Leicester station.

Cllr King (Deputy Chair of A5 Partnership) considered that better co-ordination of activities would help to improve efficiency in the face of diminishing budgets. Cllr Hardman agreed it would be useful to see how we could better coordinate these activities with Highways England.

AH will take this forward and report back to the next meeting. There may be opportunities for sharing of equipment across larger parts of the network. **Action: AH to circulate a schedule to relevant District/Borough Councils for completion.**

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

AH referred members to the material which had been circulated prior to the meeting. He added that he had also circulated the major works pipeline across the A46 Corridor to keep members informed.

Cllr Bill asked for some corrections to be made – the A46 Action Plan refers to M1 Junction 20a and asked whether there was a verb missing from the second sentence referring to a large local major scheme. There is also some controversy regarding the first three items of this report.

Cllr Bill referred to the last item on the Local Plan and SEP Update referring to the Leicester and Leicestershire Strategic Growth Plan which talks about a potential new route around the south and east of Leicester. He suggested that this paragraph needs to be updated in light of the further work undertaken by Midlands Connect as part of the A46 Strategic Corridor Study. **Action: AH to liaise with relevant colleagues to agree a revised form of wording.**

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20 Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams Meeting Notes

10. Lobbying, Communications and MP Engagement (Chair)

Cllr Hardman reported that Nigel Huddleston MP has now become a minister as have several other MPs from constituencies on the A46 such as Nadhim Zahawi MP (Stratford-on-Avon).

AH commented that the A5 Partnership and Midlands Connect had engaged Marcus Jones MP (Nuneaton) to be a champion for the A5. It would be extremely valuable to have a similar champion for the A46. He agreed to discuss this further with Midlands Connect to identify one or more MP champions now that there is an A46 Partnership representing the corridor north of Leicester.

SS commented that Nigel Huddleston MP and Nadhim Zahawi MP were very enthusiastic but had recently been promoted. The new northern A46 Partnership was in the process of identifying MP champions for that section.

Cllr Hardman offered to come back with suggestions. He would re-approach Harriet Baldwin MP who represents the section between Tewkesbury and the edge of Evesham and would be a vigorous advocate for the corridor.

SS offered to pull suggestions together into a plan of action. **Action: SS.**

11. Future Items (Chair)

The following items were identified for consideration at a future meeting:

- a. Midlands Connect Strategy Refresh
- b. A46 Trans-Midlands Trade Corridor Productivity Growth Plan
- c. Very Light Rail (VLR)

AH reported that Coventry City Council is testing and building a VLR vehicle which is similar to a tram but much lighter and less costly to install and operate. It is looking to establish a network in Coventry City with possible extensions into Warwickshire (Ansty Park and the University of Warwick). He indicated that it is battery powered, potentially autonomous and an interesting innovation for future discussion.

12. Election of Chair/Deputy-Chair (Chair)

Cllr Hardman announced this would be his final meeting as Chair and had enjoyed the role.

Cllr Hardman nominated Cllr Mark Cargill from SDC as next Chair who was elected unanimously there being no other nominations.

A46 Member Partnership, 7/10/20
Virtual Meeting on Microsoft Teams
Meeting Notes

Cllr King indicated that he would like to be considered for the role of Vice Chair. Cllr Bill stated that he is happy to support the proposal. This was seconded by Cllr Hardman with no further nominations and was therefore appointed.

AH thanked Cllr Hardman on behalf of the A46 Partnership for the work he had done to chair the group and welcomed his continued involvement going forward.

Cllr Cargill also thanked Cllr Hardman and was looking forward to chairing the group and working with our partners along the corridor.

13. AOB

Cllr Cargill referred to the Government algorithm on housing numbers and referred to a 120% increase in the housing requirement for Stratford and Warwick Districts which will impact on the A46.

The meeting closed at 13.04

Date of Next Meeting: 27th January 2021, 10.30-12.30 (Microsoft Teams)