

A47 Alliance Steering Group Meeting Note

Meeting: 2-4pm Friday 3rd March 2017

Venue: Assembly Room, Town Hall, Hall Plain, Great Yarmouth, NR30 2QF.

In attendance:

Aaron Douglas	Highways England
Claire Sullivan	Norfolk County Council
Cllr David Ritchie	Waveney District Council
Cllr Graham Plant	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Guy McGregor	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Margret Dewsbury	South Norfolk Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mark Kiddle- Morris	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Richard Blunt	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr Roger Foulger	Broadland District Council
Cllr Simon King	Fenland District Council
Cllr Tim East	Norfolk County Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland District Council
Cllr William Richmond	Norfolk County Council
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
David Glason	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Hannah Grimes	Norfolk County Council
Jack Eagle	Cambridgeshire County Council
Julian Munson	South Norfolk Council
Lewis Banks	Peterborough City Council
Michael Selfe	RAC Foundation
Naomi Chamberlain	Norfolk County Council
Nigel Allsopp	Highways England
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Richard Perkins	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Sheila Oxtoby	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Tim Mills	Breckland & South Holland District Council
Alan Gomm	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Tom Carpen	Planning Inspectorate
Nick Atkinson	Amey

Apologies:

Andy Heap	Amey
Andy Tatt	Peterborough City Council
Anna Graves	Breckland & South Holland District Councils
Carolyn Barnes	East Suffolk & Waveney District Council
Cllr Colin Law	Waveney District Council
Cllr James Finch	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Michael Ladd	Waveney District Council

Keith Simpson MP	Parliament
Libby Coe	Stephen Barclay's Office
Stephen Barclay MP	Parliament
Marie Finbow	New Anglia LEP
Mark Pendlington	New Anglia LEP
Peter Jermany	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Phil Mileham	Breckland & South Holland District Councils
Sandra Bush	North Norfolk District Council
Simon Machen	Peterborough City Council
Adrian Cannard	Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP
Andrea Long	Broads Authority
Andy Watt	Norwich City Council
Charlotte Palmer	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Peter Hiller	Peterborough City Council
Dave Watson	Suffolk County Council
Davina Galloway	Highways England
Gary Bellward	East Suffolk & Waveney District Council
Jonathan Cage	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Marcia Eastman	Highways England
Tom McCabe	Norfolk County Council
Trevor Ellis	Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP
Wendy Otter	Fenland District Council

1.0 Welcome and introductions

Cllr Foulger welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2.0 Apologies for absence

As listed above.

3.0 Last meeting note and matters arising

The meeting note from Tuesday 12th July was agreed.

The meeting note from Tuesday 6th December was agreed.

4.0 Terms of reference

The Peterborough Cambridgeshire Combined Authority was mentioned within the terms of reference and it was noted that when this has been officially established the Authority will be invited to the Steering Group meetings.

The terms of reference were agreed.

Cllr Foulger announced that he was stepping down as the Chair which he has held since September 2014. He noted that that this was timely now that the Steering Group are looking forward to RIS 2.

David Cumming asked the Steering Group for any nominations for Chair. Cllr Dewsbury nominated and Cllr Castle seconded Cllr Wilby who was the only candidate. The Steering Group agreed Cllr Wilby will be Chair.

Cllr Wilby thanked Cllr Foulger for his dedication and commitment to the Steering Group. Cllr Wilby then asked for a Vice- Chair, Cllr East nominated and Cllr Foulger seconded Cllr Plant for Vice- Chair and the Steering Group agreed to Cllr Plant becoming the Vice- Chair.

5.0 Roads Investment Strategy Two (2020-2025)

David Cumming gave a presentation on the RIS 2 priorities. He reminded the Steering Group of the priorities agreed at the December meeting.

David then discussed the Swaffham to Dereham section of the A47 which was suggested as a possible priority at the last meeting. At the last meeting it was agreed that further work would be undertaken to look at this stretch. David informed the Steering Group that the section which passes Little Fransham, Necton and Wendling is single carriageway which is in a poor condition with numerous access points onto the A47. David pointed out that we all recognise the need to improve this section and the need for improvements which will help those travelling, the economy and locals who live on that road. He reiterated that the Steering Group's aspiration is full dualling of the A47 with grade separation. It is recognised that this section of road is in an earlier stage of development than other sections. David recommended that dualling between Swaffham and Dereham isn't taken forward as a priority for RIS 2. This will allow background work to commence allowing the Group to keep up momentum to bring works forward as soon as possible. NCC will work closely with Breckland to look at the business case work offline.

Cllr Plant pointed out that the A47 is a whole length business proposition as the A47 is a crucial connection east to west.

David then discussed the Cucumber Lane junction with the Steering Group which is one of a number of junctions along the A47. The ambition here is full grade separation. The roundabout has been identified as a cluster site with roughly 9 collisions. Evidence that Highways England published in April 2014 didn't identify this junction as one of the worst casualty sites and it is not in the top 250, however it is clear there is a need to improve the junction. No work has currently been undertaken on a possible business case, costs or what the scheme might be. A rough estimate would be around £30-50m. The local authorities haven't seen Highways England's proposals for Blofield to

Burlingham but if grade separation isn't included then Highways England's evidence wouldn't appear to support the business case. Therefore the recommendation would be not to include it as priority for RIS 2.

In response to a question David explained the timescales for the RIS schemes are: RIS 1 2015-2020, RIS 2 2020-2025 and RIS 3 2025-2030. David explained to the Steering Group that it has been made clear in meetings with Highways England that there is housing growth happening in that area.

Cllr Castle supported the recommendation acknowledging the junction is an emerging scheme. It is anticipated that there will be more housing which may then make the junction improvements more pressing.

Following agreement to the two recommendations that the Swaffham to Dereham dualling and Cucumber Lane junction will not be included in the RIS 2 priorities David informed the Steering Group that we can now push on with advocacy. Activities need to look at the full A47 and should suggest how to bring all schemes forward.

The Steering Group has agreed that the Alliance's priorities for RIS 2 (2020-2025) are:

Location	Schemes
Great Yarmouth	Acle Straight
King's Lynn	Tilney to East Winch (Incl Hardwick flyover dualling)
Wisbech	A1101 Elm High Roundabout B198 East and West
Peterborough	A47 Eye Roundabout Improvement Scheme A47 J15 Scheme A47 J18 Scheme

6.0 A47 Alliance co-ordinated programme

Claire Sullivan gave a presentation to the Steering Group looking at lobbying and advocacy. The success of the RIS 1 schemes was down to the Group having one strong voice going to Government. Claire suggested we need to work closely with Highways England, Ministers and MPs. Claire informed the Group that NCC have drafted a detailed communications strategy which we can circulate. NCC are in conversations with John Hayes MP to help push the case forward. She also pointed out the EDP article on Saturday which showed the Minister was committed to coming up and seeing the A47. There are now opportunities to go to Westminster and encourage people to come here. The Group needs to follow the Third River Crossing model and shout loud about the priorities.

Cllr Plant stated that the success of RIS 1 was due to the Group asking every MP and Councillor along the route to come down to Westminster to meet the Minister and present a business case. This needs to occur again for RIS 2 showing the benefits for everyone along the route.

Cllr Castle said it was important for all to come together, this is a cross party issue and the Group must not forget the business community and ports. The Group needs to work with the Chambers and powerful stakeholders. Nova Fairbank informed the Group that businesses from Norfolk and Suffolk and LEPs are all happy to support the work of the Group.

7.0 Roads Investment Strategy One (2015-2020)

Highways England updated the Group on activities through RIS 1. Aaron Douglas informed the Group of VIP events on Monday 13th and Tuesday 14th March. It was suggested that Highways England inform people much sooner of future events so people can hold the date and time aside. Highways England informed the Group they are under tight programmes internally.

Cllr McGregor asked if the Peterborough to Lowestoft trunk road had officially been named as the A47. Nigel Allsopp responded informing the Group that there are only a couple of bits that need to be done but the road should be complete by the end of next week.

Cllr Plant enquired as to the signs on the roundabout near the hospital. Nigel Allsopp said he would look into the signage in that area.

ACTION: HG to circulate invitation to the VIP events to the Steering Group on behalf of Highways England.

8.0 Planning Inspectorate

Tom Carpen gave a presentation to the Group about the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). He explained that the PINS follow a National Infrastructure process and that his presentation gave an overview of this as it is a detailed process. The process was established in 2008 in the Planning Act. The Act was brought through to make a clear timetable for National Infrastructure projects so people would know when the decision would be made. Decisions on National Infrastructure projects are taken by a relevant Secretary of State. The proposed A47 application would be considered by the Secretary of State for Transport.

Tom explained that the NSIP process will involve a number of formal stages including:

The pre application stage - this will involve the applicant undertaking scoping work and holding a series of public or community involvement events. This is followed by a formal consultation stage (sections 42, 47 and 48 of 2008 Planning Act), and will include a Preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment. The applicant is responsible for preparing information and running the consultations. All meeting notes, and advice given by PINS are published on its website. Once the application is submitted PINS has 28 days to check that the application is of a satisfactory standard for examination, and that the applicant has carried out the required consultation including having regard to responses.

Submission (Acceptance and Pre-examination) stage – If accepted for examination, all application documents are published on the PINS website and the applicant is required to widely notify people under section 56 of the Planning Act. People can then register with PINS to be involved in the examination, and make representations with a minimum of 28 days for responses to be made. As part of this consultation stage there will be a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) accompanying the application.

The above consultation process is very important and the Environment Agency, Natural England, the local community and land owners are all consulted. PINS can advise anyone on the process, the aim is to try to help everyone understand how best to contribute to the consideration of the application. PINS can provide advice at any stage of the process.

Environmental impacts and their consideration are a key part of any application. Local authorities are a statutory consultee and are consulted along with the Environment Agency and Natural England and they have a role in influencing the projects as they move forward. There is an opportunity for anyone to take part and put their comments forward.

Examination Stage - Following on from above consultations PINS then sets up an examination and their inspectors have to make a recommendation to the Secretary of State within three months of the end of the examination process.

Decision Stage - The Secretary of State has to make a final decision within three months of the PINS recommendations. During the examination the Inspector/s will ask questions and scrutinise the proposal so they can write their report at the end of the process.

There is no appeal process but there are judicial review powers after the decision. The whole process can take between 3 – 4 years before a final decision is made.

Cllr McGregor informed the Group that two schemes in Suffolk are nationally significant. Tom explained that all applicants are treated the same and PINS cannot provide funds to support local planning authorities. The Planning Act explains the consultation process and there is no duty on local planning authorities to respond, but their importance to the effectiveness of the process is reflected in the legislation.

Cllr Castle stated that there may be objections to the dualling of the Acle Straight, however it is already a transport corridor with the existing road and the Norwich to Yarmouth rail line. So putting the new carriageway for a dualled Acle Straight between these is unlikely to have much impact on the landscape, as the road and rail line have been in situ since the mid-1800s. Tom explained that an examination would seek to understand all parties' views. PINS look at the project in front of them and decide whether that should get development consent.

Jack Eagle asked Tom if the schemes are looked at as packages or on individual merits. Tom explained that each application is considered on its own merits, however, if schemes are related, then PINS would have to look at interrelationships, looking at evidence between them and the cumulative impact. If more than one scheme was put forward in an application, then that application would be looked at as a whole.

Cllr East enquired if at the pre application stage can PINS suggest providing mitigation. Tom explained that PINS don't advise on which scheme is right or which is the best outcome.

Aaron Douglas informed the Group that a piece of work is currently being undertaken at the moment to look at the development consent order applications. Highways England are deciding how best to submit the schemes following traffic modelling work to check interactions between the RIS 1 schemes.

9.0 Other updates

Nigel Allsopp updated the Group on the renumbering of the A12 to the A47 which is almost complete. He informed the Group that although the deadline for consulting on evidence gathering was last July Highways England are still accepting detailed evidence to back up business cases. The document will be published soon.

Cllr McGregor stated that Suffolk County Council have agreed their priorities which are Copdock Roundabout, three junctions around Ipswich, A14 junction with Bury St Edmunds and A11 Mildenhall Fiveways.

Cllr Plant acknowledged that we are in competition with the rest of the country. Nigel said that other local authorities recognised that this Group was a good model and that competition will be fierce as everyone has copied us.

10.0 Items for next agenda

Cllr Castle suggested that the agenda items should be what's happening with RIS1 and what we are doing about lobbying for RIS2.

Cllr Plant agreed and suggested we identify funding for this by lobbying the LEPs to help secure funding for the business cases.

11.0 Any Other Business

None discussed.

12.0 Future meetings

The next meeting is to be held in Lowestoft on a Friday in June.