

A47 Alliance Steering Group Meeting Note

Meeting: 10-12 Friday 30th June 2017

Venue: Conference Room 1&2, Ground Floor, Riverside, 4 Canning Road, Lowestoft, NR33 0EQ.

In attendance:

Nigel Allsopp	Highways England
Cllr James Finch	Suffolk County Council
Richard Perkins	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Jonathan Cage	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Carolyn Barnes	East Suffolk Council
Peter Jermany	Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Andrea Long	Broads Authority
Simon Marjoram	South Norfolk Council
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	South Norfolk Council
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Paul Claussen	Breckland District Council
Cllr William Richmond	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Graham Plant	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Simon King	Fenland District Council
David Glason	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Philip Cowen	Breckland District Council
Hannah Grimes	Norfolk County Council
Claire Sullivan	Norfolk County Council
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council

Apologies:

Adrian Cannard	Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP
Alistair Cox	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Andy Heap	Amey
Andy Tatt	Peterborough City Council
Anna Graves	Breckland & South Holland District Council
Chris Starkie	New Anglia LEP
Cllr Guy McGregor	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr James Finch	Suffolk County Council
Cllr Michael Ladd	Waveney District Council
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Nick Worth	South Holland District Council
Cllr Peter Hiller	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Tim East	Norfolk County Council
Cllr William Nunn	Breckland District Council
David Dukes	Norfolk County Council
Davina Galloway	Highways England

Hamish Melville	Broadland District Council
Keith Simpson MP	Parliament
Lewis Banks	Peterborough City Council
Mark Pendlington	New Anglia LEP
Michael Selfe	RAC Foundation
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Peter Aldous MP	Parliament
Stephen Barclay MP	Parliament
Trevor Ellis	Greater Cambridge
Susie Lockwood	Norfolk County Council
Jack Eagle	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Richard Blunt	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Tim Mills	Breckland & South Holland District Council

1.0 Welcome and introductions

Cllr Wilby thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

2.0 Apologies for absence

Listed above.

3.0 Last meeting note and matters arising from Friday 3rd March

The meeting note from Friday 3rd March was agreed.

4.0 Roads Investment Strategy One (2015-2020)

Nigel Allsopp updated the Alliance on behalf of Aaron Douglas.

The consultation held through March and April was very successful. The feedback has been analysed and there is overwhelming support for improvements to occur in each location. Concerns were raised regarding: noise, environment, and construction delays, ideas for junctions and side road connections, connections for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians.

The project team are currently analysing the following topics on each option to make a decision on the preferred route: cost and value for money, safety, stakeholder opinion, and alignment with Highways England (HE) Delivery Plan KPI's, engineering and buildability and environment.

Preferred route announcements are planned for late summer. Key stakeholders, including the following will be invited to VIP briefings, similar to those held in March: MPs, County, District and Parish Councils (members and technical officers), statutory environmental bodies and the A47 Alliance. The project team also plan to meet with directly affected landowners and all relevant councils in the weeks following the PRA – invitations will be sent out in due course.

HE's supplier for preliminary design and the DCO process is now on board (Mott MacDonald / Sweco Joint Venture). They are very experienced in the DCO process and also have a large presence in Norfolk.

The project team are happy to respond to any A47 Alliance queries by email: A47CorridorImprovementRIS@highwaysengland.co.uk

David Cumming informed the Alliance that he and some other officers had met with HE and work is going well. The comments from the consultation have been taken into consideration. Everything is looking positive and these schemes are beginning to build up, every day we are a step closer to seeing diggers on the ground. David informed the Alliance he was happy with the new consultants and the project manager is well known to NCC as the consultants have previously been used by NCC. However David stated that the Alliance did not want to see any previous work being started again.

Cllr Plant raised a specific request about the newly changed hospital roundabout: there is currently no indication from the south about the new road which is meant to redirect traffic from residential areas. Cllr Plant wanted to raise this as a matter of urgency with HE as the road has been there 3 years. Cllr Plant raised his concern as he understood the current works plan has been cancelled.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to clarify with HE whether work is still planned for the roundabout.

Concerns were also raised around the need for the marking out of 4 lanes at the hospital junction. Signals were originally planned for the roundabout but now the RIS 1 money is only going to the Vauxhall Roundabout in Great Yarmouth.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to provide clarification on the Gapton Roundabout.

Richard Perkins informed Nigel that there were a number of signs that hadn't been changed. There are some on Caister Road and a few other outliers. There needs to be better signage to Lowestoft off the Norwich southern bypass which should point down the A47.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to check that HE are planning to change the signs that are still incorrect.

Jonathan Cage also stated that lots of houses have gone on the market around North Burlingham and a key area of concern will be Lynwood Junction. He suggested this might be as a result of the forthcoming improvements. Cllr Plant asked what is being done with the right turn out of Asda near the Fullers Hill Roundabout. David Cumming informed the Alliance that NCC are taking this work forward to finish the work earlier. Nigel and HE were also thanked on behalf of the public in locations where consultations were held. There was a high turnout in a number of locations and the fact that HE are listening to their concerns is really positive.

5.0 Roads Investment Strategy Two (2020-2025)

Nigel Allsopp updated the Alliance explaining that the evidence has all been received. The work is currently being processed and collated centrally. HE are hoping to receive more information soon and Martin Fellows and Nigel Allsopp are chasing for information.

Cllr Finch stated that it was disappointing to not hear anything as the work was submitted last year. Suffolk had nothing out of RIS 1 and feel that they have a good case as net contributors with ambitious economic growth plans. The authorities had been promised information at the end of the first quarter, and we are now at the end of the second quarter. Members are being criticised due to lack of working on infrastructure such as the Copdock Roundabout and in Bury St Edmunds.

Cllr Wilby supported Cllr Finch's comments and said it was frustrating that it is taking a long time to get feedback.

David Cumming enquired as to whether there is a senior contact that representatives of the A47 Alliance can contact?

Nigel Allsopp informed the Alliance that he would enquire and informed the Alliance that a series of engagement meetings will be held in the next few weeks.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to find a senior contact at HE for the A47 Alliance to contact.

Cllr Plant enquired as to the timeline for RIS 2 as we need to be getting the message out of the collective ask on the A47 Alliance at the political level.

6.0 A47 Alliance co-ordinated programme

Claire Sullivan presented to the Alliance about the work that is planned for the next few months. Claire explained that we have:

- Revamped the business case to make it more modern and suggested that any delegations or promotional activity we back up with the business case.
- Drafted a letter ready to send to MPs.
- Paid for some new drone footage and photos which we aim to add to the website.
- Revamped the website in the same style as the business case.
- Contacted John Hayes MP's office about the business breakfast, they have informed us that Jesse Norman MP is the best person to speak to as he has been appointed as having responsibility for strategic roads. We are hoping to host the business breakfast in September or October. John Hayes MP has informed us that he is happy to facilitate conversations.
- Been looking at social media to encourage lots of tweeting and we can lobby MPs online.

- Arranged a meeting with the Editor of the EDP to talk about NCC's priorities: dualling of the A47, Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing, Long Stratton Bypass and Norwich Western Link.
- Been looking to redesign and circulate the next newsletter.

Cllr Plant agreed that we need to start lobbying to get the message through to the right people. It was suggested that the business case is lacking on the breakdown of jobs which could be created across the area. In addition it was suggested that the BCR just being listed as high would not mean much to people and therefore a number would be more useful. For the last business case money was spent on an independent body to get the jobs and housing numbers.

David Cumming explained that last time Mott MacDonald were commissioned to find the numbers for jobs and housing, they informed us that although they could put jobs and houses to junction improvements they could not associate them with dualling schemes.

Cllr Plant stated that the dualling of the full length of A47 will benefit all along the route. David Cumming informed the Alliance that we would look again at the work.

Richard Perkins suggested that the Acle Straight should be easier to model as it is a short link. He also suggested a change on page 3 where it says the '115 miles main east west' as it may cause confusion with the A14, he suggested changing adding 'northern East Anglia'. Richard also suggested extending the drone footage which was presented to the Alliance beyond Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn.

David Cumming explained that NCC had commissioned the drone video and photography and paid for it. He also explained that NCC had spoken to the neighbouring authorities as NCC are not able to commission and pay for work in other counties.

ACTION: Suffolk County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council to look at the possible opportunity to commission drone photography of the A47.

It was also suggested that businesses would be happy to attend a delegation to Government and that there may be an opportunity for 2/3 business breakfasts in Great Yarmouth, King's Lynn and Cambridgeshire.

Claire Sullivan informed the Alliance that Nova Fairbank from Norfolk Chamber of Commerce has been really helpful and supportive for other business breakfasts and Richard Perkins stated that Suffolk Chamber of Commerce would be happy to engage.

Cllr Plant added that he felt it would be valuable to have businesses quoted in the business case.

Cllr King asked that the drone footage be sent over to him so he can action more footage. Cllr King raised concerns with the dualling of the Wisbech Bypass and felt it needs to indicate on the map and following pages that there

are other options for dualling. Cllr King also raised the fact that the garden town proposal submission had now been sent to government, which could offer a change in the economic value of the area. He also questioned why the A1101 Roundabout improvement was in the business case as that is proceeding in a separate process. He pointed out that there appears to have been a lack of communication between HE, Fenland District Council and Norfolk County Council and that he is happy to be involved in the discussions.

ACTION: NCC to send drone footage to Cllr King.

The Alliance also asked for a list of MPs along the entire route of the A47 and for their Twitter accounts so they can be contacted by the Alliance.

ACTION: NCC to identify all of the MPs along the route and their Twitter accounts and circulate to members.

Cllr Finch informed the Alliance that he fully supported the extra drone footage being taken in Suffolk and will do what he can to facilitate this happening.

Cllr Cowen informed the Alliance that Tim Mills had sent NCC some comments on the business case focusing on the comparison between the A47 and A14. The Alliance needs to focus on why the A14 has been successful and we need to learn from that. He suggested that the business case is not punchy and needs to promote the major port links with the road north and south. He suggested that the business case should promote the key links with the market towns and emphasise the benefit to the economy that A47 improvements would bring. There has been a large investment in the east coast and the constraints that the A47 provides is frustrating and limiting the economy.

Carolyn Barnes suggested that the Alliance should look at the A14 business case to establish why it was so successful.

Cllr King also suggested that the white on orange is difficult to read and that there is a discrepancy about the figures for the Wisbech to Guyhirn section.

ACTION: NCC to update the brochure to take on board the Alliance's comments.

7.0 Importance of the A47 to businesses

Jonathan Cage presented to the Alliance about the importance the A47 has to the business community. Jonathan informed the Alliance that out of the top 100 members in Norfolk Chamber of Commerce 81% are near the A47 corridor. Please find the presentation attached.

Some points from the presentation can be found below:

- Road links have been needed for years

- The Chamber could produce a generic questionnaire along the route of the A47 asking on views on growth if the A47 was dualled tomorrow
- We need to attract companies or expand existing companies by increasing customers and orders.
- Growth increase has been down the A11 corridor.
- New Anglia Economic Strategy looking at housing, real opportunity to look at other locations for growth.
- Leisure and tourism is huge in Norfolk with Great Yarmouth in the top 3 in the country.
- Need to improve social mobility as some market towns are reliant on buses like the X1 which is dependent on the A47 working well.
- Improvements to the A47 would improve journey times, reliability, safety and increase capacity.

Cllr Plant stated that the A47 has its own specific issues and the Alliance needs to look at what it can have an impact on. Cllr Plant questioned whether the £2m which has been given to the Acle Straight safety scheme improvements has been used on the Acle Straight. Cllr Plant explained that the Acle Straight needs to be dualled in order to allow the increase of the Port at Great Yarmouth.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to check whether the funding has been spent on the Acle Straight for the safety works.

Cllr Plant explained that we need to plan forward although the funding is long term as the work of the Alliance will benefit people in the future. The Alliance felt the economic argument is the most pressing case to highlight in the business case as existing businesses are getting near to their full capacity.

Jonathan Cage suggested that the Alliance should demonstrate the importance of the link to Peterborough as we do not want to bypass Norfolk. Some businesses are being deterred due to the transit times from the Midlands to the coast and back. We need to encourage new business and maintain existing. It was also suggested that asking certain businesses why they remain in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough could be used to help attract new people.

Cllr Dewsbury enquired about the North Tuddenham to Easton section of the A47 that is currently in RIS 1. During the consultation it was mentioned that there would be a separate consultation on the Junction at Easton.

ACTION: Nigel Allsopp to enquire as to whether there will be another consultation on the Junction at Easton.

Cllr Finch stated that there needs to be more joined up thinking across East Anglia where we support each other and all say the same thing.

8.0 Other updates

LEPs

The Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough LEP funded a £6.5m Growth Deal scheme to improve Junction 20 on the A47, this has been successfully delivered by Peterborough City Council and Highways England, on time and to budget. Initial reports are that the junction is delivering immediate benefits. The LEP will continue to support the Alliance's lobbying to address other sections of the A47.

Highways England

Nigel Allsopp updated the Alliance and explained that Highways England's contract with Amey has terminated. Kier has now been appointed and is currently trying to work through the back log of work. Highways England is looking at outstanding work on the A47 and submitting a single bid. From September there will be a lot of work on the A47, there is a very extensive work programme with a single contractor just focusing on the A47. Nigel informed the Alliance that Highways England are planning to take a mobile exhibition unit along the route of the A47 so people can raise areas of concern. Highways England have drivers being trained up who will be on the network in July. Nigel asked the Alliance where the mobile unit should stop along the route.

ACTION: All to suggest possible locations to Nigel Allsopp.

9.0 Items for the next agenda

- Confirm dates for the business breakfast
- Update on £2m on Acle Straight
- For future meetings all to send questions for Highways England in advance to Nigel or Hannah.
- Routine item on route management issues

Post meeting note: Following the meeting it was decided that a routine item on route management issues would be inappropriate for this forum. These issues should be highlighted with Highways England in the local authorities' regular Highways liaison meetings or directly with Highways England.

10.0 Any other business

NCC will take on Board the comments on the business case. Officers will provide the necessary material to members who can then discuss them with MPs.

11.0 Future meetings

We hope to hold the next A47 Alliance meeting on a Friday in September at Norfolk County Council in Norwich.