

A47 Alliance Steering Group Meeting Note

2-4pm Friday 21st June 2019

Edwards Room, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2DH.

In attendance:

Chris Starkie	New Anglia LEP
Marie- Pierre Tighe	Broads Authority
Cllr William Richmond	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mark Kiddle- Morris	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Gordon Bambridge	Breckland District Council
Simon Wood	Breckland District Council
Cllr Paul Claussen	Breckland District Council
Alan Todd	Federation of Small Businesses
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Jack Eagle	Cambridgeshire County Council
Wendy Otter	Fenland District Council
Paul Medd	Fenland District Council
Peter Havlicek	Highways England
Tom Lawman	Highways England
Peter Jermany	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Cllr Roger Foulger	Broadland District Council
Cllr Alison Cackell	East Suffolk Council
Philip Scotney	Road Haulage Association
Cllr Colleen Walker	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Graham Plant	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Dan Grimmer	EDP
Henry Bellingham MP	Parliament
David Glason	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Susie Lockwood	Norfolk County Council
Hannah Grimes	Norfolk County Council
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council

Apologies:

Andy Tatt	Peterborough City Council
Andy Watt	Norwich City Council
Chloe Smith MP	Parliament
Christine Marshall	Breckland District Council
Clive Lewis MP	Parliament
Cllr David Oliver	Fenland District Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Paul Hewett	Breckland District Council
Cllr Tim East	Norfolk County Council
David Allfrey	Norfolk County Council
Doug Field	New Anglia LEP

Jonathan Cage	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Kate Beirne	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Keith Simpson MP	Parliament
Lewis Banks	Peterborough City Council
Mayor James Palmer	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Peter Aldous MP	Parliament
Richard Perkins	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Steve Gooding	RAC Foundation
Tom Cornwell	Road Haulage Association

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Wilby welcomed the attendees.

2. Apologies for absence

Apologies are listed above.

3. Last meeting notes and matters arising from 15th February 2019

Agreed.

4. Roads Investment Strategy One (2015-2020)

Peter Havlicek updated the Alliance on the currently funded Roads Investment Strategy 1 (RIS1) schemes. Highways England (HE) are working to the dates agreed in the Delivery Plan. Statutory consultation is currently underway on the Thickthorn scheme. The other schemes are progressing. The Guyhirn scheme is likely to begin construction first at the end of 2020. He also explained the original dates proposed for RIS1 in 2014 had been superseded by those in the current Delivery Plan.

Cllr Castle stated the process is taking a long time. Burlingham has been back to the drawing board before. Gapton and Harfreys appear to have been dropped. Vauxhall appears to be looking to be delayed until after the Third River Crossing. The roundabout improvements need to have the ability to take the Acle Straight dual carriageway. We are already four years into a five-year programme.

Peter Havlicek explained that the Third River Crossing is likely to create significant changes in traffic flows. The preferred route announcement was made before the Third River Crossing announcement, HE needs to check this is the right option. Other junctions or roundabouts will come into play to better suit new traffic flow.

Cllr Castle- The Vauxhall roundabout will not be affected by the Third River Crossing and we know the vehicle usage.

Cllr Plant- the traffic down the A47 to Great Yarmouth from the west is not going to change. We see 3-5-mile queues everyday due to a single lane roundabout. The principle is accepted that it should be elongated. The Third River Crossing is a way away off Harfreys roundabout. Brandon Lewis MP has written to Highways England and we received a response which wasn't satisfactory.

Cllr Walker- I take on board everything that has been said in terms of the Third River Crossing. The bridge won't be finished until 2023. Gapton Hall roundabout still queues. There are boxes on the roundabout that are not helping. Traffic is still queuing back. I understand the issues around the Third River Crossing and I don't want to waste money, but we have to solve the problem.

Nova Fairbank- These schemes were funded in 2014. We are still waiting for a sense of urgency. Already starting to talk about RIS2. When will things start to move forward? There still doesn't appear to be a scheme solution for some schemes.

Cllr Bambridge- my concern is North Tuddenham to Easton which should start in 2021/22, although I have been told dates earlier than that. How certain are these dates? The road is key. The road improvements should have been underway by now.

Cllr Foulger- I support comments on RIS1, the schemes are all funded projects, and nothing has started.

Chris Starkie- I came to this meeting expecting there would have been progress, however there appears to be no change. HE need to have a tour of Great Yarmouth to see there is only one way in and out.

Cllr Claussen - I think it is diabolical there appears to be no timelines, no nothing. District councils have all been allocated growth. Growth has been on the back of what was agreed to happen. If the information and consultations are out of time HE will need to go back and start all over again. HE appears to be unaccountable.

Peter Havlicek- the funding for the five schemes is committed. Haven't included Great Yarmouth scheme as we need to make sure we get the right scheme. Traffic modelling analysis that we have done shows traffic will perform in a different way. Schemes are designed for traffic now plus 15 years, the work might pick up another junction like Harfreys. I will take note of the boxes back. Tuddenham does have a defined timeline. Blofield to Burlingham will go through DCO in January 2020. North Tuddenham to Easton will be delivered in accordance with Delivery Plan. The first scheme will be Guyhirn. Wansford to Sutton had issues at statutory consultation, HE is obligated to take comments on and reassess alignment, HE has taken legal

advice, need to analyse alternative routes to make sure it is feasible, don't want to get caught out with Planning Inspectorate. We need to do our due diligence.

Nova Fairbank- we appreciate you need to do due diligence. You appear to be hiding behind your Delivery Plan and just extending delivery dates. Committed funding is only committed when it's spent.

Cllr Cackell- Out of Suffolk the only route is the A47. There is only one bridge working and we are working on another. There are regularly awful traffic jams.

Henry Bellingham MP- Wansford to Sutton appears to have some issues. Guyhirn only has one objection. I had been talking to the Roads Minister. Had built a really good relationship with Jesse Norman MP who has now left his role. We need to take the strongest representation from Norfolk MPs to state to government these are not acceptable. When RIS1 first came into the public domain all schemes were going to be underway by 2019. Need to make clear to DfT as HE are not the final decision makers. This is just another example of the A47 not being given the priority it deserves.

Cllr Plant- schemes are part of a wider economic programme. The business case showed why they were needed. Government needs to see the potential of Norfolk. It is a kick in the teeth to learn after four years HE have still not got a plan to put on the ground and start tomorrow. NDR built already, looking to extend it.

Peter Havlicek- appreciate comments. There has not been a continual movement of delivery dates. The new dates were agreed in 2017. The Thickthorn scheme statutory consultation shows our continual commitment.

ACTION: A47 Alliance to send a letter to DfT explaining our concern for the current RIS1 schemes.

5. Roads Investment Strategy Two (2020-2025)

Susie Lockwood updated the A47 Alliance. On Tuesday we are going down to Westminster for the A47 Parliamentary Reception to push the case for A47 priorities to be included in the autumn announcement in RIS2. The reception is being hosted by Brandon Lewis MP. We have received a good response, around 60 people are coming. MPs from all counties, local authority representatives from across the region, LEP, FSB, Chambers, businesses and members of the media, EDP, look east and radio Norwich. Chris Grayling MP has confirmed he will be there on the day. The format will be that Brandon Lewis MP and Cllr Wilby will provide welcome speeches. Then there are a number of business speakers, explaining the impact the A47 has on their business and ambitions and what the A47 improvements would do. Chris Grayling MP will be speaking, we will present some evidence, postcards and letters from the public and businesses explaining the difference the A47 can make. We will also provide the business cases for the three priorities, copies of the brochure which includes the economic assessment work. Once we have presented the evidence, panellists from the region will answer questions

from the audience. The panellists are Mayor James Palmer, Cllr Plant, Chris Starkie, Philip Scotney and Rob Bush. We also received over 70 business letters and have a video displaying comments from the public.

6. Other updates

LEP

Chris Starkie explained the LEP are working on their Local Industrial Strategy which they plan to publish in November 2019. Infrastructure is one of the strands in the strategy.

Chambers of Commerce

Nova Fairbank explained she is supporting the Westminster reception and the ongoing work on the Norwich Western Link.

Local Authorities

Cllr Plant explained we are working together as local authorities with the LEP. Closely linked to getting infrastructure. Need to make sure there are links, with other elements like rail and broadband to make sure businesses and houses are built with the infrastructure in place. We are meeting in Westminster on Tuesday. Ministers and MPs make this happen, we will help.

Henry Bellingham MP- we are going to be in a bit of a vacuum. New ministers will be appointed at the end of July. There needs to be a strong representation from the Alliance to MPs. Collectively write into Chris Grayling MP and get to other key officials. Tuesday will be very important, Liz and Brandon and Chris all of us have a role to play. We haven't been let down but have been put in a position where expectations were raised and not met. Businesses in my constituency are doing well but are looking at further investment, this is a key factor. Achieved one milestone, perception of Norfolk and A47 corridor is important.

7. Any other business

ACTION: DC to send MPT any reports on the snail studies.

ACTION: HG to circulate latest HE delivery plan dates for each scheme.

ACTION: HG to arrange next A47 Alliance meeting in Great Yarmouth.

ACTION: HG to send invitation to Cllr Cackett and Therese Coffey MP

8. Future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting will be held on a Friday in Great Yarmouth in September.