

Minutes
A47 Alliance Steering Group
 3-5pm Friday 23 October 2020
 Virtual Meeting Via Microsoft Teams



Chairperson: Cllr Martin Wilby

In attendance:

Alice Craske	Norfolk County Council
Anna Graham	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Bob Collins	Department for Transport
Cassie Ruffell	Breckland District Council
Chris Griffin	Highways England
Cllr Christopher Seaton	Fenland District Council
Cllr Graham Plant Vice-Chair	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Cllr Mark Kiddle-Morris	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Martin Wilby Chair	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Norman Brooks	East Suffolk Council
Cllr Paul Claussen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Richard Blunt	Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr William Richmond	Norfolk County Council
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
David Glason	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Dean Sporn	Highways England
Emily Martin	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
George Freeman MP	Member of Parliament
Helen Corina	Norfolk County Council
James Wild MP	Member of Parliament
Jessica Frank-Keyes	EDP
John Bridge	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Katherine Haynes	Highways England
Laura Waters	New Anglia LEP
Lewis Banks	Peterborough City Council
Matt Stafford	Highways England
Paul Jackson	Breckland & South Holland District Councils
Peter Aldous MP	Member of Parliament
Peter Mumford	Highways England
Richard Perkins	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce

Apologies:

Andrew Mower	Federation of Small Businesses
Andy Tatt	Peterborough City Council
Andy Watt	Norwich City Council
Charlotte Palmer	Peterborough City Council
Chris Starkie	New Anglia LEP
Christine Marshall	Breckland District Council
Clive Lewis	Member of Parliament
Cllr Colleen Walker	Norfolk County Council
Cllr David Oliver	Fenland District Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
David Powles	EDP
Doug Field	New Anglia LEP
Duncan Baker	Member of Parliament
Elizabeth Truss	Member of Parliament
Jack Eagle	Cambridgeshire County Council
Jerome Mayhew	Member of Parliament
Luke Page	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Marie-Pierre Tighe	Broads Authority
Nina Cunningham	South Norfolk Council
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Peter Havlicek	Highways England
Peter Jermay	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Shailesh Vara	Member of Parliament
Simon Marjoram	South Norfolk Council
Stephen Barclay	Member of Parliament
Tom Lawman	Highways England
Tom McCabe	Norfolk County Council
Vince Muspratt	Norfolk County Council

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chairperson

Martin Wilby (MW) welcomed attendees. MW stated he is disappointed not to have obtained funding for A47 improvements in the spring announcement about Roads Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2), which had been made subsequent to the last Alliance meeting.

2. Apologies for absence

Chairperson

Noted above

3. Agree minutes from the previous meeting (28 February 2020)

Agreed.

Chairperson

4. Roads Investment Strategy 2 announcement

Norfolk County Council

MW introduced David Cumming (DC). DC explained the announcement was made as part of the spring budget. The announcement confirmed delivery of the current RIS1 projects, 2015-2020, and the programme for RIS2, 2020-2025.

Despite the announcement, DC acknowledged that local authorities are continuing to work on taking forward schemes and investing considerable resources in doing this.

MW thanked DC and MPs in attendance, stated that attendees are familiar with the progressions of RIS 2. Suggests moving item 7 on the agenda, Members of Parliament activities, to earlier in the proceedings to accommodate MPs.

5. Members of Parliament Activities

Present MPs

MW introduced George Freeman (GF).

- GF was appalled to see headline in EDP weeks previously (setting out that Acle Straight dualling was not included in a future programme).
- He had called an urgent meeting with Minister to register thoughts in strong terms that the comments from Highways England (HE) were not good enough.
- HE had agreed to come up and meet them, meet the Alliance and hear the importance of the road. GF thanked HE attendees on call.
- Stated it is clear new government infrastructure priorities have shifted and said we are committed to making sure route is seen as the important route of the East.

James Wild (JW) is introduced.

- Agreed for regular progress meetings to take place, suggested that meetings could be shared as a county.
- Stated needed to focus priorities on RIS 3 to get the campaign moving to develop the strongest cases for delivery. MW stated he would like to be involved.

Peter Aldous (PA) is introduced.

- Mentioned progress over the past six/seven years has been disappointing
- Issues to highlight is that this is a corridor for growth
- For those looking to invest in the energy sector, the main problems are skills and supply chain - comments about A47 and Acle Straight shows the importance of getting this right

Graham Plant (GP) is introduced.

- Appreciated comments from MPs
- Norfolk is still waiting for benefits of economic uplift and growth from 2014 when money was awarded to HE for RIS1 programme
- Keen to ensure the A47 has a route to a complete road, needs a whole route road dualled from Lowestoft to Peterborough to support the industry and livelihoods

MW thanked GP. Stated requires consistent approach to push our case, be listened to and acted upon.

Mick Castle (MC) is introduced.

- Stated that a regional approach is needed to get regional policies accepted
- MC couldn't believe the government accepted the importance of new bridges in Gt Yarmouth and Lowestoft to support the energy coast but neglected the Acle Straight, which links these to the rest of the transport systems

MW agreed that MC raised valid points re energy, importance of A47 to support energy. Thanked MPs for updates.

GF echoed previous comments of regional approach. Suggested major extra housing commitment in Wisbech to increase governments commitment and harness infrastructure, the Mayor of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority, agrees on proposals. Anna Graham (AG) will take GF comments back to Mayor's office.

6. What's next and RIS 3

All

DC suggested swapping item 5 and 6 on the agenda so MPs could benefit, as they had to leave before the end of the meeting, MW agreed.

DC displayed a presentation which set out the A47 Alliance Action Plan. This Action Plan sets out a suggested plan for the Alliance in the wake of the Chancellor's recent announcements about the spending review. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

- DC set out a timeline, included in the meeting papers, through to RIS 3 announcement, approx. 2024. He also set out short term activities, and explained a comprehensive spending review would take place in a year's time, opportunity to get some short-term announcements made in the next 612 months.
- Alliance work provides strong evidence about transport schemes and wider benefits, have a strong case and this can be effective to convince Ministers during decision making
- As shown on the timeline, there is an opportunity over next six-12 months over spending programmes. There is a one-year review in November, followed by a longer-term announcement, probably in November 2021. There

is therefore an opportunity to do something early in New Year, with a break for the local elections in spring, resuming afterwards until Parliamentary recess in the summer, to influence the autumn 2021 spending review. DC stated there is a strong case.

- DC explained that it was likely that these shorter-term decisions would provide only a limited opportunity for announcements about A47 investment. RIS announcement, likely in 2024, provides opportunity to get fuller range of schemes into the programme.

MW spoke of taking advantage of the window of opportunity. Campaign should be focused and reasonable.

GP asked DC about the absence of costings in the slide deck and comparative indicators. DC took this onboard and stated it was something they would present as government need to know return on investment.

GF suggested it is about refreshing the message rather than changing the ask to reflect competitive landscape. GP agreed with these comments over turbo charging.

MW, importance of being ready for New Year and follow up after elections in May. Asked DC if there is enough to proceed with amplifying the case. DC will contact officers across the route. MW stated it was a good move in the right direction, meeting moves on to the next item on the agenda.

7. A47 Alliance Activities

Norfolk County Council

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

Combined Authority MW asked DC to present item 7.

Vauxhall roundabout

- DC said they have agreed with HE that NCC will proceed with the first steps and work out whether there is a case for an improvement. This stage is nearing completion, will proceed with HE moving forward.
 - o MC pleased to see NCC is being involved, had previous worries that how this was related to the Acle straight had not been previously addressed

Alternative Funding

- DC said they are working through actions from previous meeting.
- Alternative funding was suggested by GF as way to finance and bring improvements to A47, working with teams across NCC to understand options in more detail.
- Trying to secure funding looking at municipal bonds, increased land value capture and business rates. Work is progressing and DC will update as progresses.

Proposition to DfT

- Norfolk director had made suggestions to work closely with HE to understand why RIS 2 was not successful
- Attached letter to DfT to work collaboratively with them to help longer term future development strategy, enable government to work on A47 as a case study
- Subject to comments received today, DC can take this up with government to work with us taking the bid forward
- MW, will proceed with no further comments being made
- With reference to paragraph five in the letter, MW will follow up with David after the meeting over comments made by GP

Wisbech to Peterborough

- Anna Graham (A) gave outline of report progress. Currently liaising with HE and reviewing old work, will update further once an agreement is in place. Positive discussions with HE moving forward.

8. Roads Investment Strategy 1 Delivery

Highways England

Peter Mumford (PM) introduced Matt Stafford (MS).

- MS explained they have strengthened team and are committed to working more closely, recognised they got this wrong before.
- Currently on target for all five schemes. Have listened to feedback from communities and made changes accordingly, some consultations may take longer as a result
- Acle Straight, protected snails' licence is currently a few years in, need to prove they can translocate the snails from the dykes adjacent to the road with minimal impact
- Continued with site investigations during Covid
- Gave an overview of schemes. Guyhirn is on track to start the project in the New Year. Wansford to Sutton dualling had route change to avoid ancient woodland.

PM and MW thanked MS. MW said a positive message and looking forward to working with MS and PW.

GP reinforced MW's comments of positive message.

MS stated he would meet anyone to go through anything in more detail if desired.

9. Other Updates

All

LEP

- Laura Waters (LW) mentioned they have launched the restart plan. Updated on progress on actions highlighted in report. Lobbied for existing priorities to be delivered.
- MW thanked LW for comments.

Combined Authority

- AG had no further comments to add.

Chambers of Commerce

- John Bridge (JB) dismayed at lack of progress. Will take forward with housing at Wisbech and points this could make to further improvement
- Richard Perkins (RP) gave a brief report from Suffolk Chamber and expressed the frustration of businesses in North East Suffolk at the lack of substantial progress with the Acle Straight dualling

Local Authorities

- MW takes silence as no further comments

10. Any other business

Chairperson

Chris Seaton voiced that Stephen Barclay MP would be in an ideal position to lobby on behalf, hopeful information will reach him. Referred to A47 as an economic corridor. Spoke of significance of cost in terms of accidents, injury and life.

MW agreed with economic corridor term and safety along A47, safety is important issue which needs addressing.

GP also agreed with economic corridor term.

MW thanked attendees, HE and members of parliament for updates.

11. Future Meetings

Chairperson

Dates to be circulated.