

A47 Alliance Steering Group Meeting Note

10am-12pm Friday 11th May 2018.

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

In attendance:

Richard Bacon MP	Parliament
Cllr William Richmond	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Roger Foulger	Broadland District Council
Hamish Melville	Broadland District Council
Peter Jermany	Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk
Mayor James Palmer	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Matthew Hogan	Breckland and South Holland District Councils
James Barwise	Cambridgeshire County Council
Nova Fairbank	Norfolk Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Mick Castle	Norfolk County Council
Cllr Margaret Dewsbury	South Norfolk Council
Cllr Mark Kiddle- Morris	Norfolk County Council
Guy Lewis	Highways England
Claudia Wegener	Highways England
Cllr Graham Plant	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
David Glason	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Marie- Pierre Tighe	Broads Authority
Lewis Banks	Peterborough City Council
Luke Page	Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
Cllr Martin Wilby	Norfolk County Council
George Freeman MP	Parliament
David Cumming	Norfolk County Council
Susie Lockwood	Norfolk County Council
Hannah Grimes	Norfolk County Council
Tom Fenwick	Parliament
Sophie Smith	Eastern Daily Press

Apologies:

Andy Tatt	Peterborough City Council
Andy Watt	Norwich City Council
Charlotte Palmer	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Mark Bee	Waveney District Council
Cllr Michael Ladd	Waveney District Council
Cllr Mike Stonard	Norwich City Council
Cllr Paul Claussen	Breckland District Council
Cllr Peter Hiller	Peterborough City Council
Cllr Richard Blunt	Borough Council of Kings Lynn & West Norfolk
Cllr Tim East	Norfolk County Council
Doug Field	New Anglia LEP

Ellen Goodwin	New Anglia LEP
Fiona Onasanya MP	Parliament
Fiona Walker	Parliament
Henry Bellingham MP	Parliament
Jack Eagle	Cambridgeshire County Council
Jayne Allan	Parliament
Mike Rigby	Parliament
Nina Cunningham	South Norfolk Council
Norman Lamb MP	Parliament
Peter Grimm	Suffolk County Council
Richard Perkins	Suffolk Chamber of Commerce
Sandra King	North Norfolk District Council
Shailesh Vara MP	Parliament
Sheila Oxtoby	Great Yarmouth Borough Council
Simon Machen	Peterborough City Council
Stephen Barclay MP	Parliament
Stephen Greenhill	Highways England
Tom McCabe	Norfolk County Council

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Wilby thanked everyone for attending and their ongoing support to the A47 Alliance.

2. Apologies for absence

Listed above.

3. Last meeting note and matters arising from 30th June 2017

Cllr Mick Castle asked if an update on the Acle Straight and the potential for acquiring grazing land between the rail line and road could be added to the next agenda.

ACTION: HG to add Acle Straight item to the next agenda.

4. Chair

Cllr Plant nominated, and Cllr Dewsbury seconded, Cllr Martin Wilby as the A47 Alliance Chairperson. There were no other nominations. It was agreed that Cllr Martin Wilby would remain Chairperson.

5. Membership

The new membership of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce was fully supported.

Nova Fairbank informed the Alliance that she had spoken with the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce and they fully supported the A47 Alliance and were happy with everything proposed.

6. MP support and activities

George Freeman MP addressed the Alliance, he said the Alliance's strength is powerful and clear and that all the MPs strongly support the dualling of the A47 and that we have a lot of powerful Ministers in government. The campaign in 2010/11 was powerful and effective. George informed the Alliance that MPs along the route will be meeting with DfT next week. There was a clear message from the Roads Minister that we haven't done badly with works on the A11, A14, A47 and Norwich Northern Distributor Road. George said we had powerful arguments for dualling the Acle Straight due to the Great Yarmouth/ Lowestoft offshore energy, Tilney to East Winch is also a strategic priority. He also said Elizabeth Truss MP sees the importance of dualling Swaffham to Dereham and there are several issues between Wisbech and Peterborough to support the case for dualling there. George said he thought the Acle Straight had a good chance of being included in RIS2. He suggested the western end Alliance members needed to show the growth planned and potential in the area. The western argument can look at the growth around Wisbech and the potential garden town. The Alliance needs to identify the killer arguments, so we can all speak with one voice. We can use the Norfolk Show/ Norfolk Day to build broader support it would be wonderful to have an app at the Norfolk Show, so people could show support electronically.

Cllr Plant stated we need to make the case for the A47; a total route case showing the link between the coast and Midlands, the A47 is a central artery through Norfolk. Last time we secured funding we went down en masse and filled the Minister's room with MPs, Leaders, LEPs, Chambers and businesses. We need to go to the Minister en masse again. Richard Bacon MP and George Freeman MP have strong voices.

Cllr Dewsbury suggested we arrange for drone photography at the Norfolk Show to show how busy the roads are during the event.

ACTION: NCC to investigate if this would be possible.

Cllr Castle explained there is a strong case for dualling the Acle Straight. Great Yarmouth is hosting an Air Show in June and the Vattenfall project has its operating base in Great Yarmouth.

Nova Fairbank said there are lots of opportunities. In the west there are plenty of tourism opportunities which is an important industry to the region and around King's Lynn is where you first enter Norfolk from the north. There are huge exporters based in the west of Norfolk and links through to Cambridge and the western end of the A47 are just as important.

Cllr Foulger said it is essential that a start on the RIS1 schemes is made on time. Some schemes are set to start in 2020 but there has been some slippage to 2021, when the two stretches of dual carriageway are complete at Blofield and Easton there will be a full dual carriageway from Dereham to Acle which would greatly improve access to Great Yarmouth and across the County.

Richard Bacon MP stated that the A11 dualling made an enormous difference. We need to make sure the case is strong enough, we need to know where there will be growth and housing. It was suggested that we hire economic consultancies to look at the economic case for the whole A47 route.

ACTION: Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to work together to arrange for consultants to identify the economic case for the dualling of the whole A47.

Guy Lewis explained that a complete route philosophy was the way to go. He stated that Highways England build what they are told to build, and that the Alliance should be clear about their priorities with dualling the whole A47 the long-term goal. Highways England look at growth, but this needs to be evidenced by for example linking it to the Local Plans.

George Freeman MP thanked Guy for his helpful points. He stated that the countries' growth is currently around 1.3%. He said there is a powerful growth argument around Cambridge which is the fastest growth hub. George suggested that if we could have the top 100/1,000 businesses signed up to support the dualling of the A47 it would send a very powerful message and show it is not just public agencies pushing for the infrastructure. We could also say these businesses have this much turnover and employ this many people.

ACTION: Local authorities to work together with the Chambers to identify businesses and garner further support for the campaign in advance of a delegation.

Nova Fairbank said we need to send a clear message to businesses and government that we need this key infrastructure. We have no motorway and some dual carriageway. If we get more money in RIS2 it shows that government has confidence in the local business community.

George Freeman MP suggested we challenge ourselves to get businesses at the East of England Show and Norfolk Show to support the campaign. We want every business along this corridor to support the case.

Nova Fairbank explained there is a digital version of the A47 postcard on the Chambers website.

Cllr Plant stated that the only way to get the schemes in RIS2 is through us going to the Minister to encourage them to tell Highways England to spend in Norfolk.

Guy Lewis explained that DfT decide where to spend money then instructs Highways England who will build a business case looking at the benefit cost ratio which balances the benefit to the economy against the cost of being built.

Cllr Plant said for RIS2 we need to make the case and that he doesn't see lobbying Highways England as the way forward: it's lobbying government.

Richard Bacon MP said we need to hear the economic argument and asked what economic consultancy has been hired?

David Cumming explained that the authorities have each commissioned work looking at the business case which looks at transport, congestion, resilience safety etc.

George Freeman MP said we need to update the business case with Cambridge looking at growth and using a consultant with a known name.

7. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority

Mayor James Palmer supported everything that has been said. He explained the Combined Authority had commissioned an economic review and it was interesting to see the first stage of the review which came out this week. It identified that the strongest growth of 8% was in Peterborough and that the economic evidence will be finalised in September 2018. He stated that it had taken a long time for the dualling of the A11 Mildenhall to Norwich. It is clear the economy in the east is where the future growth of UK economy will be. We have been quiet about how good and successful we are, we need to shout for investment in this part of the world as government haven't invested much in the east in the past. We cannot deliver the housing without the infrastructure to do so, we would not be able to build 20,000 houses on already congested roads. We must be organised and stand and lobby together. James said he was delighted to be here and will lobby government, so they can see the benefits to the wider economy. James stated that no authority is an island, the boundary is irrelevant to the public and businesses, what is done in one area will have effects on another. The reality is there is a lack of investment into our region, Cambridge will suffer if we do not invest. We need to provide financial evidence to the treasury.

Cllr Castle stated he welcomed the Mayor's support. He stated we need to look at the strategic purpose linking King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth to the Midlands and the North and Norwich to the South. There are also strategic links to the A1 and A17.

Mayor James Palmer stated the economic review of the western section of the A47 is due in September. Financially the Combined Authority has money but there are a number of infrastructure projects in the area asking for money, but the Mayor is happy to put in a share. Finding the money isn't the biggest argument, getting the A47 onto the government's agenda is. People want to

invest in our region as it is a strong growth area. Getting it into government's thinking is part of a strategy for the east.

Mayor James Palmer said he has been sceptical about the HS2 scheme as it is spending a lot of money on one single corridor. Some of that money could really transform transport in this area.

George Freeman MP stated politics is changing, Brexit has ignited the north. Let all our Mayors raise asset bonds to back infrastructure. Government needs to give us the money or freedom to raise the money.

Mayor James Palmer said there needs to be the ability to raise money from land value capital. He stated that he currently has several investors willing to put money into a pot to put into infrastructure. Finance is out there, and businesses want to invest in successful regions.

Richard Bacon MP stated the time has come to raise the volume. This area needs the right rail, road and digital infrastructure. We want to encourage the young to move to the region with families and to start businesses.

George Freeman MP stated that we need to try and get all businesses signed up. Complete this by the end of August to take to the treasury including capital and employment and the benefits of dualling the A47. Norfolk is also carrying national infrastructure with little benefit.

8. Roads Investment Strategy One (2015-2020)

Guy Lewis updated the Alliance on progress with the RIS1 schemes:

- **Great Yarmouth Railway Station right turn-** will be completed in 2018
- **Gapton Roundabout-** Due to the Great Yarmouth Third River Crossing announcement HE is having another look at the schemes and what can be done. HE is looking at Harfreys Roundabout to see what can be done there instead of Gapton. If no land take or orders are required, then we would not need to consult on the redesign of Harfreys though we would carry out some communications. Start works end of March 2019.
- **Vauxhall Roundabout-** developing in the background looking at the design following the right turn. Hopefully no Development Consent Order (DCO). The schedule will be re-visited to plan consultation and start of works once they have a clearer idea of what is required at the junction.
- **Blofield to North Burlingham-** Statutory consultation September 2018. DCO application spring 2019. Start works March 2021.
- **Thickthorn Roundabout-** Statutory consultation June 2018. DCO application Oct/ Nov 2018. Start works in June 2020.

- **Easton to North Tuddenham-** Not running at the same time as HE does not want all six schemes starting at the same time. Statutory consultation Spring 2019. Start works June 2021.
- **Guyhirn-** No orders or DCO required therefore no consultation required. Start works March 2020.
- **Wansford to Sutton-** The statutory consultation would have started early but Highways England are working further with the parish councils. Statutory consultation September 2018. Start works June 2020.

Guy also explained that Highways England have designated funds which can be spent on cycling, environmental and safety projects along the route. The projects do not have to be directly on the route and they do not have to be undertaken at the same time as the RIS1 schemes are being built.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/highways-england-designated-funds>

Cllr Dewsbury stated that the fund may be useful for North Tuddenham to Easton as they are looking at routes over or under the A47.

Cllr Castle welcomed the right turn out of Asda and asked if the design of the Vauxhall Roundabout is taking account of a potentially dualled Acle Straight considering it is a priority for the Alliance.

Guy Lewis explained that Highways England are looking at everything in Great Yarmouth to make sure they spend money in the right way at that junction.

9. A47 communications

Minister visit and other recent activity

David Cumming and Susie Lockwood presented to the A47 Alliance.

ACTION: HG to circulate the presentation.

Cllr Foulger stated he was encouraged by the presence and support of the EDP for the A47 dualling as it is helping to make the public aware.

10. Roads Investment Strategy Two (2020-2025)

David Cumming explained that we have held several useful meetings as it has been recognised that the 'Just Dual It' campaign is focused at the eastern end of the route as that is where the EDP boundary lines. There have been discussions to extend this into Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Luke Page informed the Alliance that the Combined Authority are having meetings with some media organisations next week. In Cambridgeshire one of the papers sent a message to the Combined Authority that Cambridgeshire has been too silent for too long and they were keen to galvanise support

around Fenland. Things are underway to pull Cambridgeshire and Peterborough media together to support a campaign.

Cllr Plant asked when we need to finish the campaign as we need to understand the timetable. He also asked if Transport East should be invited as they are currently not represented.

Cllr Wilby answered the goals are early July ready for the delegation and the Autumn Budget.

Nova Fairbank explained that the Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce is keen to support the campaign and can help with the business support.

James Barwise explained that the economic case work goes to outline business case and they are happy to do the same as in Norfolk. Cambridgeshire can liaise with Norfolk over the summer.

11. Other updates

Chambers of Commerce

Nova Fairbank explained she was meeting with businesses in King's Lynn to promote the 'Just Dual It' as businesses are not fully engaging.

Post meeting note: Richard Perkins had provided an update from Suffolk Chamber in advance of the meeting. Suffolk Chamber supports the membership of Cambridge and Peterborough Combined Authority and Cambridge Chamber of Commerce. Suffolk Chamber are still pushing the A14 no more delays campaign and are providing comments and support for including the A140 in the Strategic Road Network (the trunk road network).

12. Any other business

Cllr Castle asked if Highways England could take down the 70 mile an hour sign limit in the layby. (This was followed up after the meeting between David Cumming and Guy Lewis.)

13. Future meetings

It was agreed that the next meeting should be held on a Friday in September in Peterborough as the Roads Minister event was held in King's Lynn.