

## A46 Coventry junctions (Walsgrave) Statutory Consultation Webinar

Speakers: Sam Wraith, Joe Mulqueen, Mike Robinson

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**Sam Wraith:** Good evening.

Welcome to the A46 Coventry junctions Walsgrave scheme statutory consultation webinar.

Thank you for joining us this evening. We'll get started now.

Today we're going to provide you with an overview on our proposals. We'll start off today by briefly introducing ourselves.

I'm Sam Wraith. I'm the stakeholder and social value manager for Octavius Infrastructure, working on behalf of National Highways, and I'll be hosting today's webinar.

**Joe Mulqueen:** Hi, everyone, I'm Joe Mulqueen, I'm National Highways project manager on the scheme.

**Mike Robinson:** Hi, good evening. I'm Mike Robinson, I'm the project manager for the design organisation working for National Highways.

**Sam Wraith:** Today, we're talking you through our proposals and we'll also let you know how to find out more information and how to submit an official response to the consultation.

Towards the end of today's webinar, we'll be holding a question and answer session, where we'll be taking and answering your questions about the consultation.

To start us off today, Joe will take us through the agenda. Over to you, Joe.

**Joe Mulqueen:** Thank you very much.

So, as Sam said, this is a presentation on the Walsgrave junction. We'll be running through a bit of an intro to what the scheme is all about, where Walsgrave junction is, we'll do a bit of a review of the history of the scheme, how we've come up with the solution that we're presenting to you today. We'll then look at some of the key constraints in the area before going through the specifics of the proposed design.

We'll do a bit of a recap on the last consultation that we ran, and we'll cover some of the key questions that were asked before showing you a fly-through video of what the scheme looks like and is likely to look like in the future.

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Mike will then run us through some benefits and impacts of the scheme and also talk through walking and cycling and horse-riding provision that's contained within the scheme.

I'll cover the construction stage and what you can expect to happen during construction before running into some next steps, where to find out more, and then jump into a Q&A session.

The A46 Coventry junctions project comprises two junction improvements. The Binley junction you will know, has been improved and opened to traffic with a new flyover in November last year. Walsgrave junction, locally known as the Tesco roundabout or the Clifford Bridge Road roundabout, will be improved as the second phase of the A46 Coventry junctions scheme.

The A46 is quite a key trade corridor and there's lots of benefits to upgrading this junction.

Some of the key objectives of the scheme are reducing congestion and supporting the flow of traffic.

As we know there can be some tailbacks and congestion at the junction at the moment which we're looking to improve.

We're also focused on looking at the economic growth of the area and we'll also look at improving safety for the users of the road and also the people working on it.

The last time we came out to the public was back in June 2022 where we announced our preferred route. This was after we held an options consultation event in January and February 2022. The preferred route was called Option 11. We've gone through a period of design development from that preferred route announcement and today we're presenting the solution that we've come up with.

The public consultation started on 25 October and runs through until 6 December. And then after public consultation, we'll be doing a little bit more design work before submitting a Development Consent Order application which is how we obtain our planning consent for the scheme, towards the end of next year.

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This is a current view of the Walsgrave junction, and it highlights the key constraints that we've had to work within the area. In going clockwise from the left, we've got the overhead power lines. They run just to the west of the A46. At the moment the River Sowe floodplain is quite an extensive river and associated floodplain, just to the northwest of the existing roundabout. We've got a grade two listed building called Hungerley Hall Farm, which is adjacent to the A46. The hospital that you can see in the distance at the top of the screen is University Hospital Coventry and Warwickshire. The access into that hospital can be gained either from the north along the A4600 and along Clifford Bridge Road or from Walsgrave junction, so our junction is quite a key access route for the hospital. Just to the east of the existing roundabout is Coombe Pool, Coombe Abbey Park and Grounds. There's lots of sensitive areas within Coombe Pool, Coombe Abbey Park and Grounds. And we've also got the associated Site of Special Scientific Interest. The trees that go around the edge of Coombe Pool are protected due to the herons and nesting birds.

We can show you how we've dealt with these constraints in coming up with the proposed design. The solution that we're proposing comprises a fully grade separated junction. That is essentially two roundabouts on top of embankments with a bridge over the top of the existing A46.

What this allows is free-flowing traffic through along the A46 and then any vehicles that want to go to Clifford Bridge Road or use the local road network can come off on the slip roads, not halting any of the traffic on the main line. In order to construct this new junction, which is about 800 metres further north along the A46, we would need to extend the B0482 link road, which curves up alongside the A46 and joins on the left roundabout.

We would also realign the existing A46, especially around the location of the existing Walsgrave roundabout, just to allow smoother traffic around the bend by Coombe Pool.

Just on the speed limits of those two roads, the A46 around the location which currently has the roundabout there, around Coombe Pool, would be limited to 50mph due to the tightness of that bend. We would also be putting a speed limit of 40mph on

the local road network, which is appropriate and in keeping with the rest of the local roads in the area.

"You said, we did."

At the last consultation, there were a couple of key topics. The first one was future access to the hospital. There were lots of comments around getting a secondary route into University Hospital Coventry in Warwickshire. What we've done on this is engage with local authorities. We've also been engaging with the local developer and the link into the hospital is actually part of the Coventry Local Plan and is contained within a development just to the west of the A46. So once our scheme has been built, the local developer can also develop their site, which would include a hospital link road for blue light and staff access. We've been engaging with the developer and made sure that our scheme enables or does not prohibit their development going ahead and ensures that that future link road can be provided.

Another topic that came up was the improvements to walking and cycling facilities. Mike's going to cover this in a little bit more detail, but we've considered within this scheme the impact on existing walking and cycling routes and the potential for improvements while we're delivering this scheme.

The 50mph speed limit was something that came up in the last consultation. We will need to have the A46 at 50mph due to some of the design constraints and because of the tightness of the bend around Coombe Pool.

What we are ensuring is that the roads are suitably designed and curved to make sure that users will have a safe experience while using the A46.

And then the final point was the impact on the local road network. This is something that Mike will pick up a little bit later on in the presentation.

But we've been carrying out some additional traffic modelling since the last consultation, which Mike will go into in a bit more detail.

I'm going to hand over to Mike now to run through some of the benefits and impacts of the scheme.

Mike Robinson:

Thanks, Joe.

As Joe said, I'm just going to give you a high-level overview of some of the benefits and impacts of the scheme on some of the key criteria that the scheme gets assessed against during the DCO process.

I'll go through each one in order in the table on screen.

Starting off with journey times and congestion, what we do in order to look into this, we develop a traffic model, which we use to forecast predicted traffic flows, and we compare what we call the "Do Minimum" scenario, which is the existing road network, which also now includes the new Binley flyover. We compare this against what's called the "Do Something" scenario, which is the existing road network with Binley plus the new Walsgrave scheme.

That initial modelling work and the output from that shows that we've got benefits on the northbound and the southbound of the A46 in terms of journey time and also the amount of additional traffic that would be able to use that piece of the network because of the reduction in congestion. That's all mainly come from the fact that it's now grade separated, which separates the strategic traffic from the local traffic and enables more traffic to use the A46 without the delays they currently encounter.

In terms of the local road network, Clifford Bridge Road is the closest road to the scheme. Early indications are that we would anticipate a reduction in traffic on Clifford Bridge Road at the peak periods, so the AM and PM peaks, and by increasing the length of the B4082, that provides additional capacity for if there is any queuing, and it would prevent any queuing back on to Clifford Bridge Road at the roundabout where the B4082 currently joins.

Moving on to biodiversity, the scheme is going to impact on some protected species. They would include bats, badgers, owls, wintering birds, and also some of the wildlife sensitive

areas that Joe pointed out earlier (Coombe Pool and the River Sowe).

We've undertaken a number of surveys and we'll continue to do this through into the new year and all the results from those surveys will inform the design and also indicate what mitigation measures we need to include within the design. These mitigation measures might include some sensitive lighting, additional habitat creation, and also some new planting with the aim of achieving an overall positive impact on biodiversity.

The scheme will have an impact on some heritage assets, specifically the Hungerley Hall farm buildings which are grade two listed. We are currently in discussions with statutory bodies and the local authorities to understand the significance of these buildings and also what we need to do during construction and after construction in order to be sensitive to their status and what mitigation we need to include.

So that is all currently in discussions and once that's agreed with the statutory bodies, we can update the design accordingly.

Moving on to landscape and visuals.

The scheme will impact the character of the local landscape in terms of views and lost vegetation. And specifically, the junction is obviously elevated from the existing ground level, so that will impact the visual views in the area. There'll also be short term changes during construction because of haul routes, compounds and potential material storage areas that are going to be needed during construction.

We've undertaken a visual assessment and the scheme has been designed to avoid or reduce the adverse impacts as much as possible. We've tried to do this through good road design, mitigation planting, including additional plants and shrubs and these are used to break up the scale of the impact and help screen the new highways assets that are going to be constructed.

Road, drainage and water environment.

There's some key assets in the area, some significant culverts. We've got Coombe Pool, the River Sowe and its associated floodplain.

As part of the design, we are undertaking assessments of the flood risk, water quality, groundwater, and the characteristics of the river to try and understand all those implications on the design and obviously the results of the surveys that we've undertaken of existing drainage networks and things like that, all feed into the design.

For the drainage design, we discuss that with the Environment Agency and the relevant local authorities in terms of how we approach our flood modelling and our outfall locations.

Whatever we agree and implement, again, this has a final sign off by the local authorities and the Environment Agency. So we would design the scheme to avoid the risk of flooding and reduce the impacts on the water assets in that area.

A couple of things that we've introduced within the design are attenuation basins which help to store the run-off from the road and effectively slow the rate that that's discharged into the local river.

Road Safety.

The intention is for the A46 to be maintained to be safe, serviceable and to allow any maintenance that's needed to be done as safely as possible and with as minimal impact on the road and the road users as possible.

Our key safety challenges are to try and avoid loss of control accidents on the A46 and reduce minor shunt-type accidents on the A46 and B4082 as well. In terms of safety, everything we design, we have safety in mind.

Each design decision we go through, it goes through a risk assessment process, and where necessary, we discuss and agree these with the relevant safety authority, and we undertake a full road safety audit.



On the proposed design, that will be undertaken in the new year, and that will also include representatives from Coventry City Council as well on that road safety audit.

The main benefits of the scheme in terms of safety is removing the existing Walsgrave roundabout which acts as a conflict point. By removing that conflict point, and having a more free flowing network, that's going to reduce the amount of shunt and damage-only type accidents.

It's also going to reduce or even remove the risk of having high speed accidents where you've got high speed vehicles encountering stationary traffic.

The slip roads on the new junction and the B4082 will also be lit so that improves the overall safety of those roads. And as Joe's mentioned previously, the A46 will have a 50mph speed limit. From the previous consultation the B4082 speed limit has also been reduced from 60 mph. It's now proposed to be a 40mph speed limit. We are in discussions with Coventry again to get that agreed.

Air quality.

We're currently undertaking detailed assessments to determine the scheme's impact on air quality. The assessment includes several monitoring areas as part of the survey at key locations and this enables us to assess those results that we get from the survey and again feed into the design to understand what mitigation we might need to provide.

At stage two, the modelling work that they did around air quality doesn't have anything significant that they thought at the time. And based on the design work we've done, and some of the changes we'd made, we don't anticipate anything significantly different to what's been reported previously.

The full impact of the scheme's impact on air quality will be known in the new year and will be reported in the Environmental Statement document which is a key part of the DCO submission.

Noise and vibration.



It's a very similar story to air quality. We're currently undertaking the surveys. We've got noise monitoring equipment at key locations out on the network currently and again, the results from this will feed into the design, and feed into the mitigation that's going to be needed. That could include noise barriers, additional planting or fencing to mask some of the noise impacts.

From a short-term perspective during construction, there will be obviously an increase in noise at certain times when certain activities are required. We would look to carry out the noisiest activities during the day rather than at night.

And we potentially look to put other mitigation in place which could be shielding some of the construction materials that create the most noise.

And similar to air quality, the longer-term impacts of any noise increases will be detailed in the Environmental Statement, which again is submitted as part of the DCO.

And finally, the walking, cycling, the horse riders slide.

The scheme at the moment doesn't actually impact any of the existing routes in the area. Through consultation with the local authorities, and some of the key user groups in the area, as part of that work, we've come up with a solution that provides betterment of the existing network and also provides opportunities for a wider network to be provided at some point in the future.

What we're looking at providing is a new signal-controlled pedestrian crossing on Clifford Bridge Road on the eastern arm of the roundabout, which is the dashed solid green line, just on the eastern arm of the roundabout. That would be included as part of the scheme.

From the survey work we've done of pedestrians along that route, it's quite a heavily trafficked area for pedestrians, so that will improve that crossing for those users.

The B4082 - what we're proposing is to provide space in the verge and that would connect up to the existing farm accommodation bridge. The intention would be to retain that

bridge as part of the farm access into the fields on the eastern side.

At some point in the future, when the development work is undertaken to the west of the scheme, there will probably be a shift in some of the desired routes for these walking, cycling and horse riders. The space and the bridge will be in place for the new infrastructure to be constructed as and when it's needed.

Joe's going to talk about construction now.

Joe Mulqueen:

Thank you, Mike.

We're expecting, in terms of timescales, the construction to start towards the end of 2026. We've got to undertake some design and we've got to get through a development consent order before we have consent granted to start works.

Once we do start works, we're expecting it to last under two years from start, to open for traffic. Throughout the construction phase, there's a few plans that are in place.

In terms of construction compound, we will be looking to use the existing compound that sits in between Walsgrave and Binley. And we would also have what we would call a satellite compound closer to the new location of the Walsgrave junction.

We are working with the same team that we worked with to deliver the Binley scheme. We've picked up a lot of good practice and a lot of things that we can do to improve from the Binley scheme, which will be part of, and form part of, our construction stage.

We're currently putting together a traffic management plan. This traffic management plan will look at any closures or any traffic management that would be needed through the construction phase.

The two options that we're looking at are having a construction programme that maintains access along the A46 and into the local road network throughout the whole of the construction phase, with short closures, either overnight or at weekends to do key activities within the programme. So things like switching the

traffic management, or installing the bridge, might require short closures.

Another opportunity that we're looking into, and would like your feedback on, is potentially having longer closures which would enable the construction period to be shorter. If we're talking about longer term lane closures, or even potentially carriageway closures over a longer period of time, that might mean that we can get in and do a lot more work in a shorter period of time.

Now, obviously, we will be discussing this with local authorities and the hospital and other groups to make sure that it's safe to do any of these works, but it's something that we'd really be glad of your feedback on throughout this consultation.

When closures are in place, we will need to define these and we will have diversions in place. We've got some likely areas and roads that would be used, but we would be looking into those diversion routes and making sure that they're appropriate.

After the public consultation finishes on 6 December, we'll go away and gather all of your feedback and we'll also then write up a report on public consultation.

Your feedback will also inform any further design that we need to do to incorporate any questions or feedback that you give us. We will then put together our Development Consent Order.

There's lots of environmental documents, there's lots of legal documents that will need to be developed, and that Development Consent Order application is due to be submitted towards the end of 2024.

The Development Consent Order process is a process where the Planning Inspectorate will review all of our submission and there's a set timescale from the start of DCO application until we get a decision from the Secretary of State for Transport, which we would be expecting at the start of 2026.

Once we get that sign off from the Secretary of State, we will be allowed to mobilise and start works which we're currently proposing towards the end of 2026, with the road open to the public again towards the middle end of 2028.

Over to Sam now for where to find out more.

Sam Wraith:

Thanks, Joe.

Our consultation has started and is running for six weeks.

All responses should be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on 6 December.

You can find out more about our proposals by coming along to one of our public consultation or pop-up events and you find details of these on our webpage, or in our brochure on page two.

If you can't attend one of our events and would like more information, you can view printed copies of our consultation materials at one of our listed deposit locations.

You can also find information on our public consultation deposit locations on our webpage or in our brochure on page three.

That now leads us into our Q&A session with our panel.

How long will the loop take to get back onto the A46? i.e., the opposite direction to the hospital?

Joe Mulqueen:

Yes, I think this is a question if we're coming from the hospital towards the Walsgrave junction and getting down to the south of the A46.

There are forecast specific journey times that we're looking at through our traffic modelling. These will be shared closer to the DCO application time, but I think more of an overall answer would be there's a slightly longer distance for the traffic to get to the location of the existing Walsgrave roundabout if that traffic is coming from the hospital.

As I mentioned earlier, the new junction is around 800m further north along the A46, so there's a slightly longer distance to do that same journey. But what we found is that the reduction in the congestion means that there will be a smoother journey and you'll be moving all the way along that journey at certain times anyway, to travel south along the A46.

I think the specific journey times can be found in some of our later documentation, but the overall picture is that there'll be less

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congestion, which means that there'll be less traffic when actually trying to access the A46 at the moment.

I know it can back up quite heavily at Walsgrave junction and that back-up can also go onto the Clifford Bridge Road, which we're looking to improve.

**Sam Wraith:** What is the thinking of closing off the exit from the A46 to B4082?

**Joe Mulqueen:** Yes, this is having a link from the A46 northbound to the B4082, while the junction is also present a little bit further north.

There's a few answers to this one.

In order to deliver and to develop the scheme, we've got to meet the design standards. One of those standards looks at the proximity of junctions to each other.

In the instance that having an exit off the A46 to the B4082 would mean that there is a junction within 500 metres of the next slip road, which can create some safety issues.

There's also a couple of other constraints to deal with at that location.

Because of the new alignment that we will have of the A46, a link road would potentially have an impact on both the overhead power lines and the floodplain in that area because of the design that would have to be put into place.

**Mike Robinson:** It's quite a constrained area at the existing roundabout with the environmental constraints and having to fit a slip road in at that specific location to take the volume of traffic.

I don't think there's really sufficient space on what we've got in that area, which is why the junction's moved further north.

**Sam Wraith:** Do you know what impact this will have on local house prices? Has this research been done?

**Joe Mulqueen:** There's a couple of ways that this may impact local house prices.

There is something that we have called Part One claims. That is where a property may be affected by noise or vibration from a

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new junction. It looks fairly unlikely that there'll be significant increases in noise and vibration that would impact on house prices.

But we do, as part of this stage of the project, review any potential properties that would be likely to have a legitimate claim.

If it's something that you're thinking might impact your property, there's lots of information on the National Highways webpage for what Part One claims is, and how that works overall on other local house prices.

It's not something that we review as part of the scheme, but noise and vibration is something that we do look at and can provide some more advice on.

Sam Wraith:

With no more questions being posted that leads us to the end of our webinar.

We'd like to take this opportunity to remind you of the details of how you can have your say.

You can do this by completing an online response form or email your response to [a46coventryjunctions@nationalhighways.co.uk](mailto:a46coventryjunctions@nationalhighways.co.uk) or send a completed response form or letter to FREEPOST A46 WALSGRAVE SCHEME

And just that final reminder that the consultation ends at 11:59pm on Wednesday 6 December.

Thank you for taking the time to join us.

Good evening.