

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 8 November 2007

Report Title Issues Relating to the A5 in Warwickshire

Summary At its meeting on 26 April 2007, this Committee requested that a report be presented to this meeting regarding the A5. Discussions have been held with officers in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils, as well with the Highways Agency, to review the history of traffic management and development control along the A5 corridor and to identify works which have been carried out to date and are programmed for the future.

For further information please contact Shirley Reynolds
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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

Other Committees

Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)

Other Elected Members Councillor J Appleton
Councillor K Browne
Councillor Mrs E Goode

Cabinet Member Councillor M Heatley
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)

- Chief Executive
- Legal I Marriott
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers
- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee -
8 November 2007**

Issues Relating to the A5 in Warwickshire

**Report of the Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendations

1. That officers continue to meet with their counterparts at Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils to discuss development and transportation issues on an as-needed basis.
2. That officers continue to work with the Highways Agency to develop transportation modelling capabilities to the benefit of both organisations.
3. That this Committee considers whether to write formally to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils to invite Members to attend a Joint Members meeting to discuss issues relating to the A5 corridor.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 26 April 2007, it was agreed that a briefing paper would be prepared for this meeting to discuss issues relating to the A5 itself and the surrounding corridor of land.
- 1.2 The A5 in Warwickshire extends from M42 Junction 10 (near Dordon) to M1 Junction 18 (near Hillmorton). From Mancetter to Catthorpe, it forms the boundary with Leicestershire and then becomes the boundary with Northamptonshire. It also forms part of the boundary between the West Midlands and East Midlands Regions. See **Appendix A** for maps.)
- 1.3 A review has been carried out of the previous history of Member and Officer involvement in issues regarding the A5 corridor and also the highway works carried out by the Highways Agency to address various traffic management issues. This review confirms the current status of the A5 within the region and has led to a series of joint officer meetings taking place.

2. Member and Officer Involvement (1994 to 2005)

- 2.1 In September 1994, Members from Warwickshire County Council and Rugby Borough Council met with a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the

Department of the Environment as a result of long standing concerns about the need for co-ordination and integration of planning proposals, and to ensure that future development along the A5 should be sustainable from an infrastructure perspective.

- 2.2 Within Warwickshire County Council, an 'A5 Development Steering Group' (also known as the 'A5 Development Panel' had been established to monitor developments along the corridor. This Panel approved the brief for a local authority-led strategic transportation study which led to the development, in 1996, of a simple traffic model for the A5. This model was used to assess the impact of the Birch Coppice development.
- 2.3 Senior Members and officers from the three local authorities met on various occasions to discuss their respective views on the A5. As far back as 1995, Leicestershire County Council Members and officers stated the view that the A5 should be a high standard route which would support growth at Magna Park and at Hinckley. At that time, Northamptonshire County Council's expressed concerns related more to issues around Towcester and the need for a bypass. The need to lobby the Highways Agency to undertake a comprehensive Route Assessment was recognised.

3. Highways Agency Route Management Studies

- 3.1 In 2001, the Highways Agency commissioned WS Atkins to look at the A5, as part of a 'M1 to Birmingham Route Management Strategy'. A series of seminars were held with a wide variety of stakeholders to discuss the function of the route and its performance, any problems along the route and the development of an action plan for both the short to medium term (3 years) and the longer term (10 years).
- 3.2 The stakeholders identified that the A5 had the following route functions:-
 - (i) Part of the core trunk road network forming a national/international route for long-distance traffic (London – Holyhead).
 - (ii) Seen by developers as strategic location of major distribution centres.
 - (iii) Regional function providing connections to major towns.
 - (iv) Local function providing access to residential areas, shops and businesses.
 - (v) Diversion route for M1 closures.
 - (vii) Abnormal load route (although there is a bridge height constraint at Hinckley).
 - (viii) Leisure and cyclist route.
 - (ix) Protecting people – requirement to provide a safe environment for motorists and non-motorised users.

3.3 The key problems identified were:-

- (i) Safety at A444 Royal Redgate junction.
- (ii) Low bridge at Hinckley.
- (iii) Congestion at Longshoot.
- (iv) Safety between Dodwells roundabout and M69.
- (v) Safety at Smockington, Lilbourne and Wibtoft.
- (vi) Queuing and safety on approach to major junctions.
- (vii) Perceptions of excessive speed – need for better signing.
- (viii) Safety and accessibility through Dordon and Grendon.
- (ix) Safety at minor junctions.
- (x) Congestion at M69 J1 and M42 J10.
- (xi) Need to improve public transport.

3.4 The full conclusions and the resulting action plan arising from the Route Management Strategy were finally reported to the Highways Agency in 2004 and can be found on their website www.highways.gov.uk.

3.5 Since the Route Management Strategy was completed, the following works have taken place on the A5:-

- (i) Resurfacing works between Dodwells roundabout and M69 J1 (August/September 2005).
- (ii) Major maintenance works between the Cross in Hand and Gibbet Hill roundabouts (near Lutterworth) (October/November 2005).
- (iii) Resurfacing works between B4455 Fosse Way junction and A4303 Cross in Hand roundabouts (December 2005).
- (iv) Installation of new safety fencing at the bridge parapet at Bransford Bridge. (dates not known).
- (v) Improvements to Holly Lane roundabout (B4116) north of Atherstone (Section 278 works) (May to August 2007).
- (vi) Signalisation of M69 J1, including the provision of a footway/cycleway on the south side and a footway on the north side (March to October 2007).

- (vii) Speed limit reduction to 40mph, provision of footway and cycleway and new pedestrian refuge between Sketchley roundabout and Stretton Bends (October to November 2007).
- 3.6 In addition, the Warwickshire Casualty Reduction Partnership has introduced mobile safety cameras locations along the A5 between Grendon and Atherstone; M69 J1 to A47; B578 to M69 J1; Highcross to B4114; and near Clifton Fisheries. There are also fixed cameras near the Royal Redgate junction (A444). At the same time, an extensive signing and lining scheme was carried out.
- 3.7 The Highways Agency's 'Regional Network Report', published in November 2006, confirms that the A5 is deemed to be a route of regional rather than national strategic importance, and therefore any requests for scheme funding compete with other regional programmes.
- 3.8 The Highways Agency have recently submitted two requests to the Regional Funding Allocation process for schemes on the A5. These have the support of both Warwickshire and Leicestershire County Councils. The first is an improvement to the A5/A47 junctions (Longshoot and Dodwells). This scheme aims to address congestion and safety issues by constructing a new link road between the Dodwells roundabout and a new roundabout on the A47 south of the Longshoot junction. The second scheme is to address congestion and safety issues at the A444 Royal Redgate junction by constructing a new four-arm roundabout. The bids are being considered by the Regional Assembly for submission to Department for Transport. The outcome of the bid process will not be known until 2008.

4. Recent Joint Officer Meetings

- 4.1 Recently, a number of joint officer level meetings have taken place with both Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils. These meetings have taken place to discuss both development and transport issues. Particular development issues include the proposed growth of Hinckley and Earl Shilton, and the development of the former BT Mast site east of Rugby. The Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands and the need for the development of Local Development Framework Core Strategies is also driving the need for officers to meet on a regular basis.
- 4.2 The officers at Leicestershire County Council indicated that their current concerns relate to the congestion at the Dodwells roundabout and the Longshoot junction, and to congestion and safety issues at the Royal Redgate junction (A444). They reported that the East Midlands Regional Assembly have been reviewing the conclusions of the 'West Midlands to East Midlands Multi-Modal Study' (W2EMMS), which included the A5, to bring forward schemes for funding through the Regional Funding Allocation process.
- 4.3 The officers at Northamptonshire County Council recognised the value that was obtained from the joint working on the DIRFT expansion. However, they also indicated that the A5 corridor along the boundary does not give rise to any specific concerns at the current time as it does not carry as much traffic as the A508. They mentioned that a West Northamptonshire Development Corporation

has been established to oversee the development of the Northampton, Daventry and Towcester area, and it proposed to establish a contact with the Corporation in the near future.

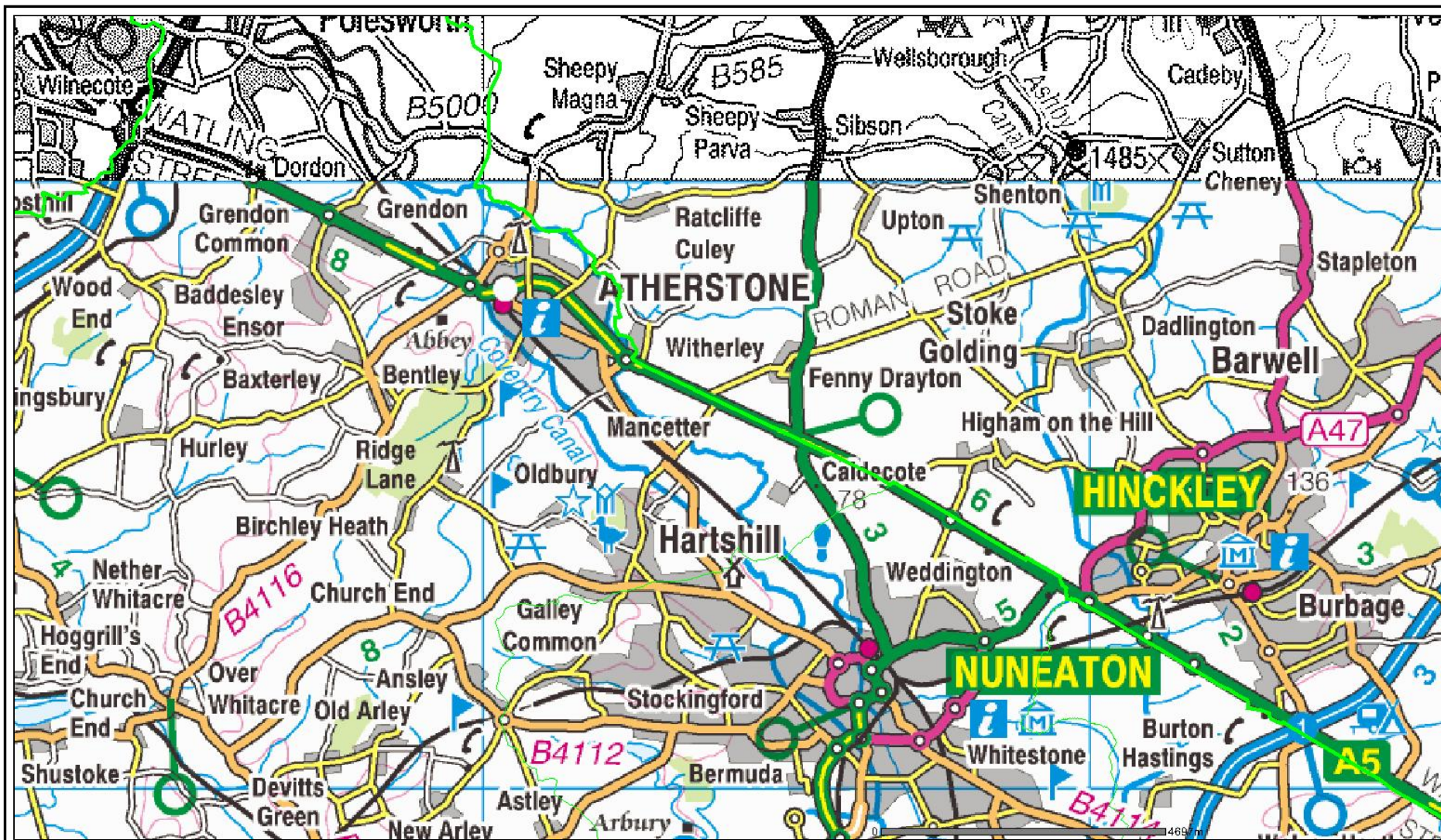
- 4.4 Recently, meetings have also been held with the Highways Agency and their term consultants to discuss joint working arrangements on both the Local Development Framework Core Strategies and on the development of transportation modelling capabilities. It is proposed to extend Warwickshire County Council's existing PARAMICS microsimulation model of the highway network in Nuneaton to cover the A5 from the B4111 junction to M69 J1. It is also proposed to develop a County-wide strategic traffic model in conjunction with the Highways Agency. These models will give officers of both organisations the ability to better assess the impact of developments and network changes.

5. Summary

- 5.1 A variety of background documents and reports, plus meetings with officers from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils, and the Highways Agency, have been used to develop an understanding of the interest that has been taken in the A5 corridor over the last 13+ years.
- 5.2 The recent joint officer meetings have forged links which will be useful when developments come forward along the A5 corridor, both in Warwickshire and in the neighbouring counties. In addition, the modelling capabilities being developed along with the Highways Agency will be of benefit to both organisations. It is proposed to hold these joint officer meetings on a occasional, as needed basis.
- 5.3 In recognising that Joint Member meetings have taken place in the past, but have lapsed, this Committee may wish to give consideration to writing to Leicestershire and Northamptonshire County Councils to invite their Members to reconvene to discuss development and transportation issues relating to the A5 corridor.

JOHN DEEGAN
Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

19 October 2007



Scale 1: 86880

Ref No. 1

Drawn SAR

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Subject

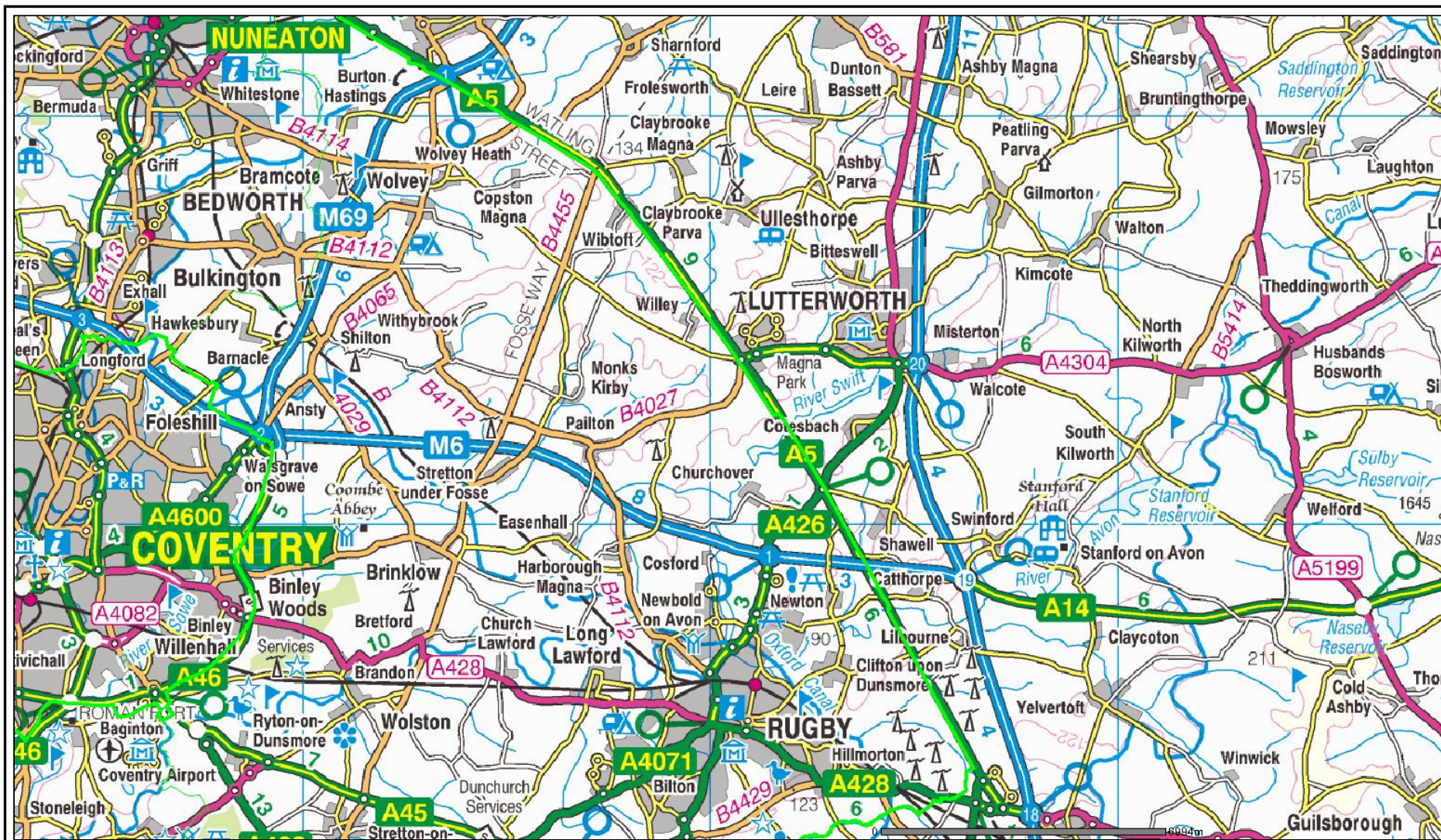
Issues relating to the A5 in Warwickshire



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APPENDIX A OF AGENDA NO.



Scale 1: 129378

Ref No. 2

Drawn SAR

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Subject

Issues relating to the A5 in Warwickshire



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