

Paul Bentley  
Team Leader | Project & Programme Management | Design Services | Environment Services  
Warwickshire County Council  
Communities Directorate  
Shire Hall Post Room  
Northgate Street  
Warwick  
CV34 4SP

23 August 2021

Dear Paul,

**Re: A46 Link Road**

I write regarding the A46 Link Road (Phase 2) project.

The University of Warwick currently has 28,390 students and 7389 staff, 60% of whom live in Coventry and Warwickshire. It is one of the major employers in the region. The University is planning for an overall growth in student numbers and build on the success of previous years. Improved transport connections are crucial in supporting this growth and the University is committed to working with Warwickshire County Council and other local authorities to ensure these are delivered.

Our most recent figures show that the University generates an annual economic impact of £1bn to the regional economy and supports a further 9,425 jobs locally. The University's regional strategy is to play an even greater role in the economic, cultural and social growth of our region. This includes:

- the £40m+ redevelopment of Warwick Arts Centre will lead to projected footfall of nearly 400,000 visitors per year for live events, film and the Mead Gallery. Warwick Arts Centre is already the largest in the Midlands and one of the largest in the UK outside London. The audience is overwhelmingly local people (not students) with 80% of attendees currently coming from Coventry and Warwickshire (around 50% from Warwickshire) so access from the South is very important. 22,831 school-age children participated in Warwick Arts Centre creative learning activities.
- Warwick Conferences. The latest pre-covid figures (2018-19) show 195,000 delegates attending events (day visitors and additional overnight visitors are not included in these numbers).
- The University will be developing key buildings as part of its refreshed campus masterplan. This will include the Science Precinct, a world-class approach to building connections within the Science Faculty, co-located working with innovative science businesses and engagement with the public. In addition, significant numbers of people connect with our research every year through public lectures, exhibitions and other activities.

Again, improved transport links will be crucial in connecting local people and businesses with the University.

The University is supportive of Warwickshire County Council's plans for the A46 link road as a multi-modal highway and recognises this as a critical part of wider transport infrastructure improvements around the University's main campus. The University would make the following further points:

- That the University is committed to sustainable growth and transport infrastructure that enables connectivity across the West Midlands and nationally to/from major transit hubs and cities. We would ask Warwickshire County Council to look at how to maximise the sustainability of the A46 Link Road including supporting provision for cycling, walking, etc.
- That the A46 Link Road should support and connect with other sustainable transport modes, including the proposed University railway station and Very Light Rail (VLR) network.
- That a very large proportion of vehicles (approximately 50%) currently using Gibbet Hill Road are travelling through campus to other destinations. The University would ask that the impact of through traffic on local road networks and local residential areas is fully assessed as part of the ongoing business case and design process.

Without improved sub-regional and regional transport links, the University's growth will be hampered. This will have a wider impact on the regional economy and in turn our local communities. The University is therefore supportive of the A46 Link Road.

Yours faithfully,



**Professor Stuart Croft**  
**Vice-Chancellor and President**