

A46 Walsgrave Development Consent Order (DCO) Examination

Local Impact Report on behalf of Warwickshire County Council (May 2025)

Context

This document provides details of the anticipated impacts of the A46 Walsgrave improvements for those living, working and/or visiting Warwickshire. It focuses on the broader outcomes of the planned investment which is the subject of the Development Consent Order; details of the specific local impacts of the proposed scheme and any planned mitigation (where appropriate) are covered in the Statement of Common Ground agreed between the applicant (National Highways) and Warwickshire County Council.

Key Impacts and Outcomes

There are four key impacts/outcomes which the A46 Walsgrave improvements will have on Warwickshire. These are set out below:

(a) Route Consistency and Performance

The A46 trunk road is a strategically significant route on the national road network linking the East of England and East Midlands with the South West. The route has seen a sustained period of investment over the last 25 years, with major improvements carried out at M40 Junction 15 (Longbridge near Warwick), A45/A46 Tollbar End (Coventry), A46/A4177/A425 Stanks (Warwick), A46/C32 Stoneleigh (between Kenilworth and Coventry, currently under construction) and most recently at A46/A428 Binley Woods. Delivery of the proposed improvements to the A46 Walsgrave junction will mean that all junctions on the A46 between the M6/M69 at Ansty and the M40 near Warwick will be grade-separated. This will bring a consistency to the route which will deliver journey time reliability benefits and safer journeys for users. A properly functioning Strategic Road Network (SRN) will also mean that trips are unlikely to divert to less appropriate routes on the local road network in Warwickshire (and Coventry) if there is a more reliable journey time on the SRN.

(b) Supporting Economic Growth

The economic prosperity of the Midlands relies heavily on the performance of the SRN. The A46/M69 corridor is particularly important within that network given its interface with a number of other key routes including the M1, M5, M6, M40 and A5. Research by Midlands Connect, the Sub-National Transport Body for the pan-Midlands area has identified the A46 as a nationally significant economic corridor that supports 2.9 million jobs and generates £115 billion output annually – equivalent to 9% of the total English economy. 22% of all goods and services produced in the A46 corridor are exported, demonstrating the importance of access to the Humber and Bristol/South Wales ports at either end of the corridor as well as Birmingham and East Midlands airports.¹

The A46 plays a significant role in supporting the sub-regional economies of Leicestershire, Coventry, Warwickshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. The corridor is home to a number of key employment sectors who rely on the A46, including Aerospace, Advanced

¹ A46 Corridor Study Stage 1, Enhanced Strategic Case – Midlands Connect (November 2018) and A46 Corridor Study Stage 2, Technical Study – Midlands Connect (November 2020)

Manufacturing and Engineering, Logistics and Distribution and Agriculture/Agri-tech, with businesses such as Jaguar Land Rover, Rolls Royce and Volvo having a major presence. The regionally significant Gigafactory site near Whitley and the Fraser Group development near Ansty which has recently secured planning permission will also both be supported by the proposed investment in the A46 corridor at Walsgrave. It will also help support and mitigate future growth in the emerging Local Plans for Rugby and South Warwickshire (a joint plan being produced by Warwick District Council and Stratford-on-Avon District Council), for which the A46 corridor is a key asset. The scheme may allow development to take place in the corridor (both locally and strategically) that would have otherwise been constrained had the investment at Walsgrave not taken place.

(c) Network Resilience

Current traffic movements between the M1 and M5 rely heavily on the A42/M42 and congested Birmingham Motorway Box (M5/M6/M42). The planned investment at Walsgrave and the resultant route consistency, performance and safety benefits described above will improve the overall network resilience of the Strategic Road Network and allow the A46/M69 to provide a genuine alternative for trips between the M1 and M5. This will bring wider benefits for released capacity across parts of the Midlands network.

(d) Reducing Severance and Improving Access

There are currently limited opportunities for Non-Motorised Users (NMU's) to safely cross the A46 trunk road in the vicinity of the Walsgrave junction, creating severance with the employment area around Ansty Park and the nature reserve/countryside facility at Coombe Abbey². The scheme to improve the A46 Walsgrave junction includes some passive provision to allow for improved pedestrian and cycle infrastructure to be made in the future (possibly linked to new development in the area). This includes:

- A potential cross-county pedestrian/cycle leisure route along the bridleway between Brandon and Coombe Abbey; and
- A potential pedestrian/cycle route following the bridleway between Walsgrave and Ansty Park.

Increased opportunities for walking and cycling have been shown to have physical and mental health benefits for both adults and children.

² Warwickshire Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP): Part 2 (Rugby) - Warwickshire County Council (February 2024)