
HS2 Liaison Group – A43 Subgroup
Venue: Microsoft Teams
Minutes of the meeting held on 8 September 2023 at 10.00 am

Representatives from the following organisations were present:

Cllr Phil Larratt (Chair)
Cllr Tony Bagot-Webb WNC (Brackley
& Cllr Cabinet Assistant HS2)
Cllr Sue Sharp
David Cranwell (SNATRA)
Dame Andrea Leadsom MP
Jack Edwards (Parliamentary assistant)
John Merchant (Helmdon)
Clive Hockley (Hinton-in-the-Hedges
PC)

Hilary Walton (Whitfield PC)
Cathy Ellis (Evenley PC)

In Attendance:

Esme Cushing (WNC)
Gary Pettit (WNC)
Nathan Lowde (WNC)
Chris James (EKFB)
Anita Solanki (EKFB)
Brenna Slade (EKFB)
Olivia King (National Highways)
Noemi Orban (National Highways)
Laura Provenzano Navajas (National
Highways)
Mark Coltart (National Highways)
Bill Freeman (National Highways)
Tom Woodward (Kier)
Fiona Williams (HS2)
Elizabeth Longinotti (HS2)

Apologies:

Dave Butcher (EKFB)
Filippa St Alban D'Ancy (National
Highways)
Nisha Mejer (HS)
Andras Juhasz (HS2)

MINUTES

1. Welcome and introductions

Cllr Larratt welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. NH Co-ordination presentation

NH gave a presentation on Coordination of Works on the SRN (please see slides).

The keys points were:

- There are a number of schemes ongoing which impact the network and there are more to come
- NH have a weekly co-ordination meeting that EKFB, WNC and others attend that looks ahead for the coming three weeks to ensure that there are no clashes and to minimise disruption as far as possible by sharing road space etc.
- A43/M1 are important strategic logistic routes for Royal Mail etc so critical to keep A43 open as much as possible
- HS2/EKFB have been very collaborative and relationship with WNC has also been enhanced through the regular coordination meetings
- Whilst full weekend road closures are not popular, in some cases they are less disruptive than having a longer period of night closures and allow others to maximise the road being closed (for WNC street cleansing for example)

The following points were raised:

- There is another new roundabout planned as part of the Towcester Relief Road on the A43. NH confirmed that this is still in design but will be considered once dates are confirmed for construction
- The A422 has a pinch point and is adversely impacted when there is an incident on the M40.
- There is no consistency with health and safety protocols between different NH subcontractors when WNC want to undertake street cleansing while the SRN is closed. This can mean litter pickers arrive but are unable to carry out their duties due to subcontractors not allowing them to get on site. NH recognise that this is an issue and are working internally to resolve between all the parties involved to ensure that everyone is working safely. NH committed to ensuring that discussions with WNC about street cleansing were undertaken as early as possible so expectations could be set.
- The condition of the A43 is poor in places and incidents on the A43 result in HGVs using villages such as Evenley which are unsuitable. Parish Councils do not know where to direct these issues to within NH. Bill Freeman the Route Manager for the area is the best first point of contact: by mobile in the first instance 07710100481 or by email at bill.freeman@nationalhighways.co.uk

- There is confusion about when closures are planned and a recent AWN looks like the A43 and A421 are being closed at the same time. NH and EKFB confirmed that those roads would not be closed at the same time and that is the reason for the coordination meetings to make sure that does not happen. [one.network](#) is the best source of information about upcoming closures. If there is any confusion please contact Brenna at EKFB brenna.slade@ekfb.com and she will clarify.
- Future AWNs will ensure that the information is as clear as possible and include details of whether the A43 is closed in a northbound (towards Northampton) or southbound direction (towards Oxford) to help people understand what the road closures are. Further communications are planned (newsletters etc).
- Diversion signage needs to be improved so that there is sufficient advanced warning. EKFB assured the meeting that fortnightly meetings were being held with WNC and all signage adheres to national standards. VMS will be used for the Winvic A43/Junction 15a weekend closure on 22nd September to intercept traffic from M40 etc. NH will speak to Winvic about access on the A43.
- The meeting felt that the unique location of the A43 means that Oxfordshire County Council and Buckinghamshire Council should be involved in the coordination meeting. NH to invite.

The group thanked NH for the useful presentation and discussion.

2. Presentation from EKFB on A43 overbridge

EKFB gave a presentation on the upcoming road closures associated with the A43 overbridge (see slides).

The following points were raised:

- Communications need to be specific about south/ northbound closures. EKFB confirmed that they were including this information in AWNs.
- During the weekend closures it is likely that there will be a lot of 'noise; on social media that Cllrs end up trying to respond to and just providing the HS2 Helpdesk details is not sufficient as people want answers quickly. EKFB will provide a FAQ document to help local Cllrs/MP and will see how else they can support during that weekend with positive communication.
- Whitfield doesn't have a parish council but would like the MVC to visit. EKFB to contact Whitfield to arrange a date.
- EKFB confirmed that the A43 overbridge will be at the same elevation as it is currently.

3. AOB

There are no planned future meetings. This will be kept under review by the main HS2 Liaison Group.