

A46 Strategic Link Road Consultation



Overview

What the consultation is about?

These are exciting times for Coventry and Warwickshire, with an economy which has continuing potential for growth, top-class Universities and expanding communities all generating demand for travel across the area. In order to be able to help meet the needs of people wanting to travel, we want to share our plans for a **new transport corridor** between the **A46 Stoneleigh Junction, University of Warwick and Westwood Heath in Coventry**.

Plans are still in the early stages, with indicative scheme proposals identified. We want to share these proposals with you, to get your views on your transport priorities for this area. We are consulting on **three main options**, which are described in this consultation document, along with the some of the key benefits and issues associated with each option. The feedback that you provide will help steer the project to ensure that we work towards a **beneficial but balanced scheme** and that the resulting proposal **reflects the views of the local community and wider stakeholders** (recognising that there will inevitably be a wide range of individual views on the transport issues in this area).

The new transport corridor is part of the strategic long term plans for sustainable growth in this region. These plans include wider cycle networks for Warwickshire and Coventry and a new railway station and interchange with the potential to link road, rail, cycling and very light rail (VLR).

Please take the time to read the consultation document and accompanying Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) as they outline the general principles for the new transport corridor and indicative scheme proposals, which may help you to understand how these proposals could affect you.

Why are we consulting?

This consultation document provides information on the work that has been done to date and outlines the core options considered for the new transport corridor along with the potential impacts and benefits. Feedback from this consultation will help inform and develop these indicative scheme proposals, by allowing us to take account of the issues and concerns raised by residents, businesses and others who have an interest in the area and the transport network.

The online survey will ask you questions regarding the three main options, along with specific questions regarding local connections and changes.

We welcome your comments and questions on the proposals.

You can feed back in the following ways:

- Complete the online survey at www.warwickshire.gov.uk/ask
- Email: a46linkroad@warwickshire.gov.uk
- Write to us at: Communities Directorate, Warwickshire County Council, Shire Hall Post Room, Northgate Street, Warwick, CV34 4RL

If you need to request a paper copy of the survey or an alternative format of the consultation document, please email or write to us at the above addresses. Alternatively, you can call the project manager on 01926 418029.

Web broadcasts

Please tune in to one of the web broadcasts to learn more about the scheme and ask any questions you may have. Dates of these events are available on the consultation website.

The broadcasts will be live, with recordings available after the event. Access will be through Microsoft Teams via a web browser.

Questions should be submitted in a written format, either prior to the event via the email address above, or during the event via the comments function on Microsoft Teams. We will try and answer as many as we can during the event. For those questions we are unable to answer, responses will be available on the consultation page after the broadcast.

Setting the scene - Coventry and Warwickshire

Coventry and Warwickshire have some of the fastest growing economies within the West Midlands. An efficient transport network with sufficient capacity and resilience is key to maintaining and supporting further future growth. Investment in key infrastructure is needed on vital corridors, such as the A45 and A46, to improve connectivity and conditions for businesses and to encourage continued operation and investment in the area. This is exactly what a new transport corridor to the south of Coventry aims to deliver.

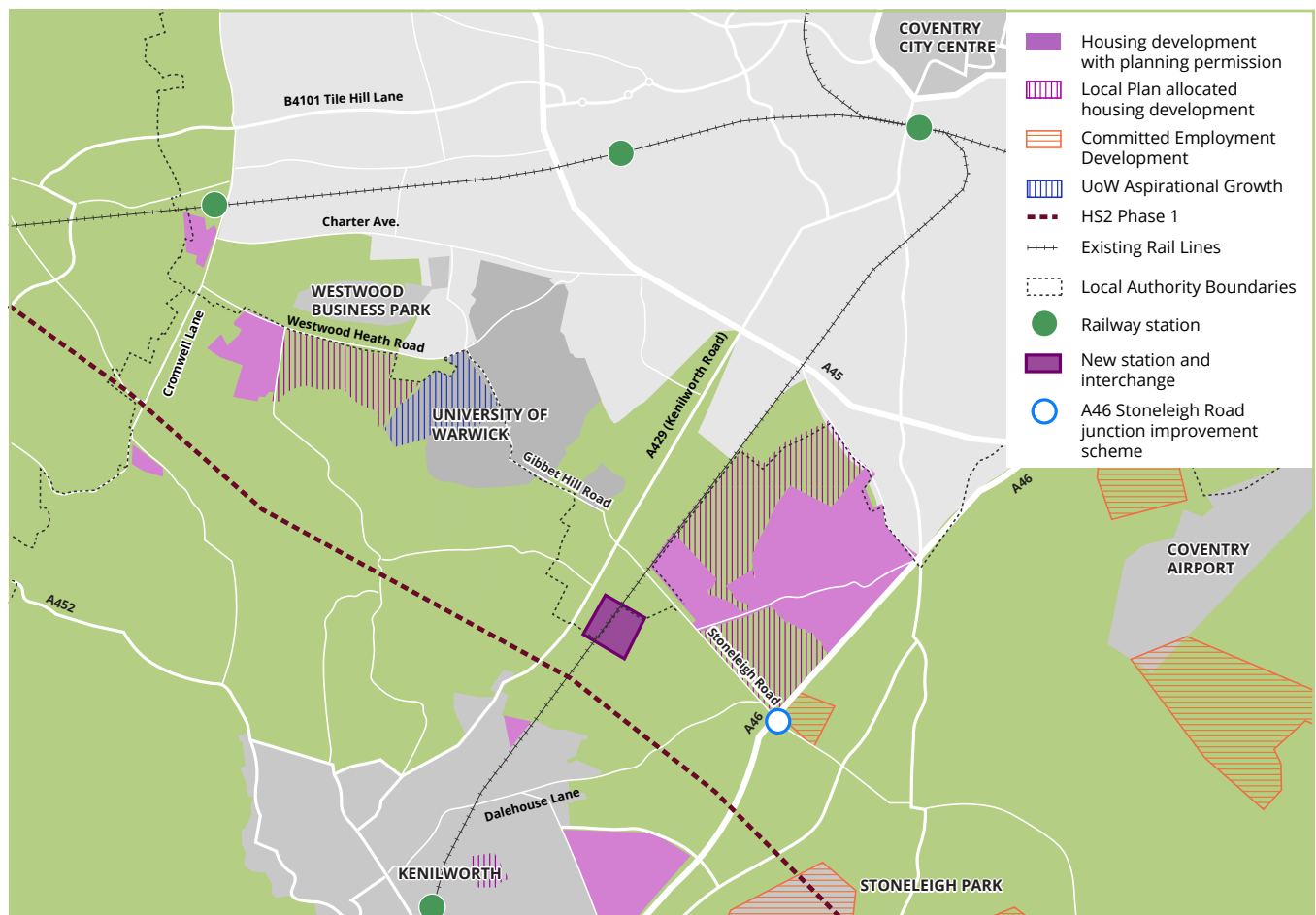
The consideration of a new transport corridor to the south of Coventry will investigate opportunities to improve access to University of Warwick and existing business parks, as well as linking to new and existing housing and employment, with the aim of reducing congestion on the A45 and A46. It also provides the opportunity to improve local connectivity whilst tackling local traffic issues, such as the rat-running of through-traffic on unsuitable local roads.

Planned future growth and development in the south of Coventry area

The A46 corridor has been identified for major employment growth, with committed or planned developments at Fen End, Whitley South, Coventry Airport, Ryton and Ansty. Additionally, there are also a number of significant housing developments proposed within the Warwick District Local Plan around Kenilworth and parts of south-west Coventry. These proposed developments will provide much needed housing for the area along with the additional employment opportunities.

The University of Warwick is one of the UK's leading universities with a reputation for excellence in research and teaching, innovation and links to business and industry, as well as being a major employer in and economic contributor to the wider area. Further development of the campus is required to meet the University of Warwick's aspirations for growth, particularly to continue to provide exceptional facilities for students to live and study, as well as to facilitate research and collaboration with industry and community partners. The University is currently developing plans for growth, looking to 2030 and beyond, in order to continue to create a dynamic environment for education and research.

HS2 will provide opportunities for further growth within the West Midlands, with plans to bring significant and diverse levels of employment to the areas surrounding Birmingham Airport and the proposed HS2 Interchange station.



Setting the scene - Coventry and Warwickshire

The A46 is a key link, both locally and more widely across the sub-region, providing vital business-to-business connectivity for companies such as Jaguar Land Rover and its supply chain. A major improvement scheme to upgrade the A46 Stoneleigh Road junction will soon be under construction and this will support improved access to and from the south of Coventry area, including to the University of Warwick and Stoneleigh Park.

Volumes of traffic are likely to rise, as a result of increasing demand for travel from proposed developments in the area, making the case for improving local infrastructure. Any increase in local congestion is also likely to impact the attractiveness of public transport services, including bus journey times and connections to rail services.

Therefore, in order to deliver a more sustainable transport network, infrastructure improvements are also essential to enable more journeys to be undertaken by public transport and active modes (such as walking and cycling). Improving connections to existing walking and cycling links, as well as unlocking the potential for a new station and interchange (enhancing access to buses, local rail services and active modes to the south of Coventry, will make it easier for people to travel by more sustainable methods.

Aims and objectives of the new transport corridor

The proposals for a new transport corridor explore the opportunities to transform connectivity and deliver economic and housing growth in the south of Coventry area.

The indicative proposals consider improving links between the upgraded A46 Stoneleigh Road junction and Westwood Heath, via A429 Kenilworth Road and the University of Warwick.

In order to be able to determine how successful these indicative proposals would be in delivering future growth aspirations and improvements to the transport network, the following aims and objectives of the new transport corridor have been developed.

Aims	Objectives								Key outcomes
	Maintain journey times on local network following wider A46 development growth	Support accessible economic development	Improve network resilience to provide consistent and reliable access	Improve accessibility to University of Warwick	Reduce severance by reducing traffic flows and improving walking & cycling links	Improve local air quality resulting from road transport in the area	Reduce rat running traffic on local roads	Enhance active travel by improving walking and cycling links in the south of Coventry	
Supporting access to key education, employment and growth sites in Coventry and Warwickshire	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improves accessibility by road, bike and public transport to the University of Warwick, surrounding Business Parks and other employment areas to the south of Coventry. Supports the delivery of significant housing growth Provides new infrastructure to support the connectivity of the local cycle network serving Kenilworth and the south of Coventry area.
Support growth aspirations of the University of Warwick and the wider A46 corridor	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supports major housing and employment growth in the south of Coventry. Improves access to the University of Warwick and consequently supports its growth aspirations.
Reducing congestion and improving journey times on the local road network	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduces congestion on the A46 and on key local roads. Provides additional connectivity and improves journey times on the A46, A45 and local road network. Reduces the inappropriate use of minor local roads (such as Crackley Lane) by rat-running traffic
Increase resilience of the network by improving journey times and providing better connectivity with the wider network	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhances the resilience of the local transport network by reducing congestion, improving journey times and providing better connectivity with the A46 and key routes in the south of Coventry. Supports access to public transport and greater journey time reliability for public transport services in the local area.

New transport corridor – Proposed options

In order to respond to the aims and objectives for a new transport corridor, initial feasibility work has been undertaken to consider possible routes for a new link road, its connections to the existing highway network and the potential for associated active travel infrastructure improvements. To date, several options have been considered in the context of high-level constraints and opportunities, as well as ensuring proposals do not preclude the potential for future connections.

The outline plans have initially considered the local topography and environmental considerations, such as woodlands and local landowners. A desk-top study has been conducted to ensure major environmental impacts are avoided in the first instance and, where this is not possible, they are minimised. The new transport corridor will be routed so as to avoid ancient woodland as far as possible.

Options have also been initially assessed, using a transport model, to identify how the indicative proposals will likely be used and the potential impacts they have on the existing local transport network.

Potential scheme options will continue to be developed, using feedback from this consultation, as well as more detailed consideration of constraints and the assessment of impacts and opportunities.

Further development of the potential options will include more detailed environmental surveys which will identify environmental, ecological and other factors for consideration. The surveys will also help inform the scheme design development and the appropriate level of mitigation measures to be put in place, to minimise any impacts of the proposed new transport infrastructure upon the natural and built environment, as well as maximising opportunities for improving biodiversity in the local area.

The design and assessment will take into account all relevant legislation and guidance.

Taking advantage of and building on the opportunities provided as part of the proposed A46 Stoneleigh junction improvement, which will soon be under construction, we have developed the following options for a new link road between the A46 Stoneleigh junction, the University of Warwick and Westwood Heath in Coventry.

Three main options are currently being considered as part of this consultation, these are:

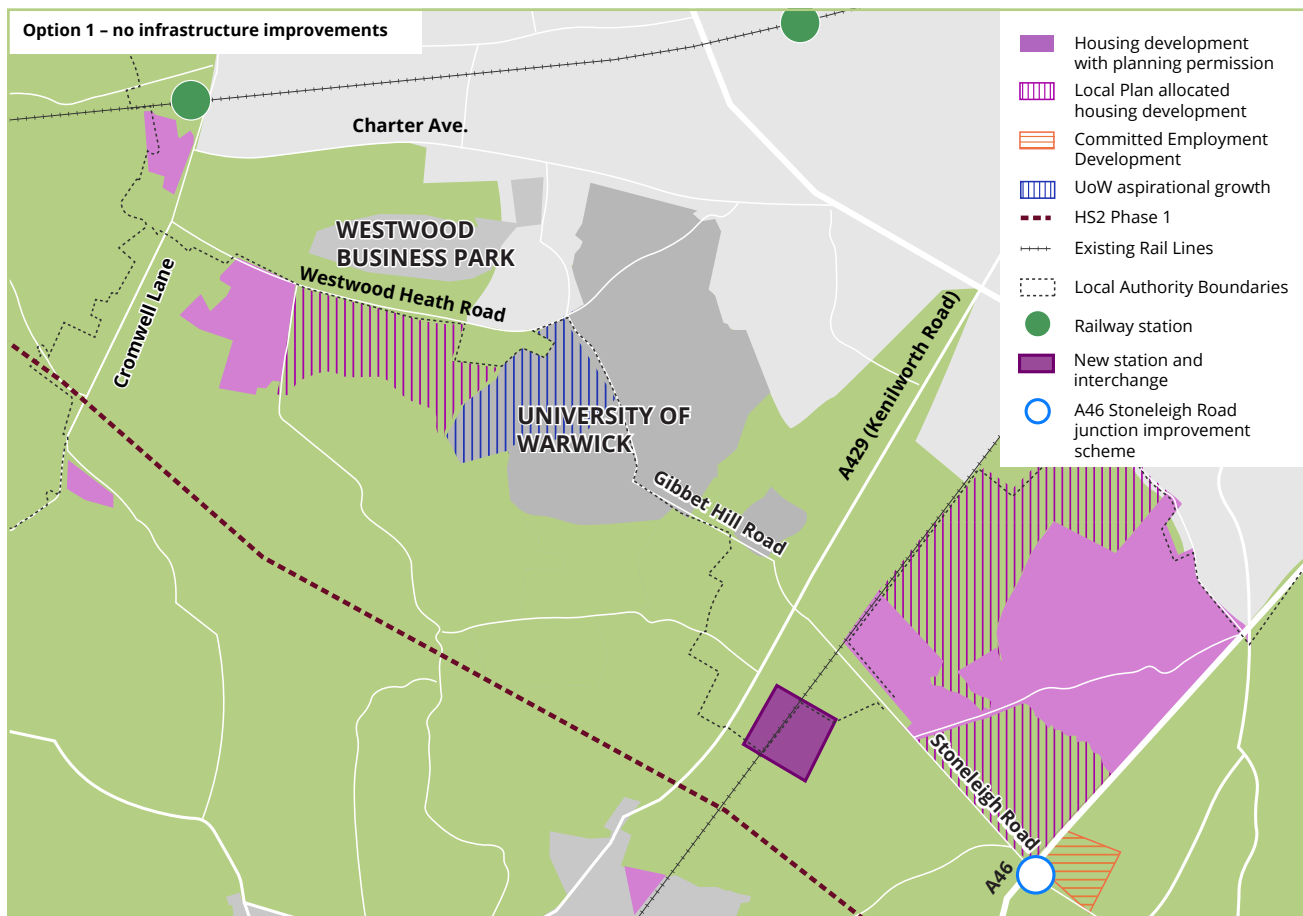
Option 1 - No infrastructure improvements

No additional infrastructure or new modes of transport will be provided, with the existing transport network remaining as it is currently. While there are no direct scheme costs resulting from this option, it does restrict the amount of investment in employment and housing growth that could be delivered and the associated economic benefits that could be achieved.

Whilst this option might minimise the additional travel demand on the network, it would also restrict the ability to meet the demand for new housing and to maintain the current strong position of the local economy. Alleviation of existing traffic congestion is unlikely, which will consequently impact people’s quality of life and health. In fact, journey times are predicted to increase without further investment in the transport network, particularly at peak times, with traffic volumes set to increase over the next ten years by up to 25%.

Therefore, without further investment, plans to increase the level of employment and residential development in this area will be limited by the capacity of the existing transport network. In particular, it is unlikely that additional journeys resulting from allocated Local Plan developments or future aspirational growth plans will be able to be accommodated.

These proposed developments are shown in purple, orange and blue below, which are a mixture of developments with planning permission, those allocated within the CCC and WDC Local Plans and the University of Warwick’s aspirational growth plans.



How it meets the objectives:		Key:	
Maintain journey times following wider A46 development growth	Reduce severance	Does not meet objective	Red
Provide accessible economic development	Improve air quality	Partly meets objective	Orange
Improve network resilience	Reduce rat-running	Fully meets objective	Green
Improve access to University of Warwick	Enhance active travel		

Option 2 - New link road to A429 Kenilworth Road

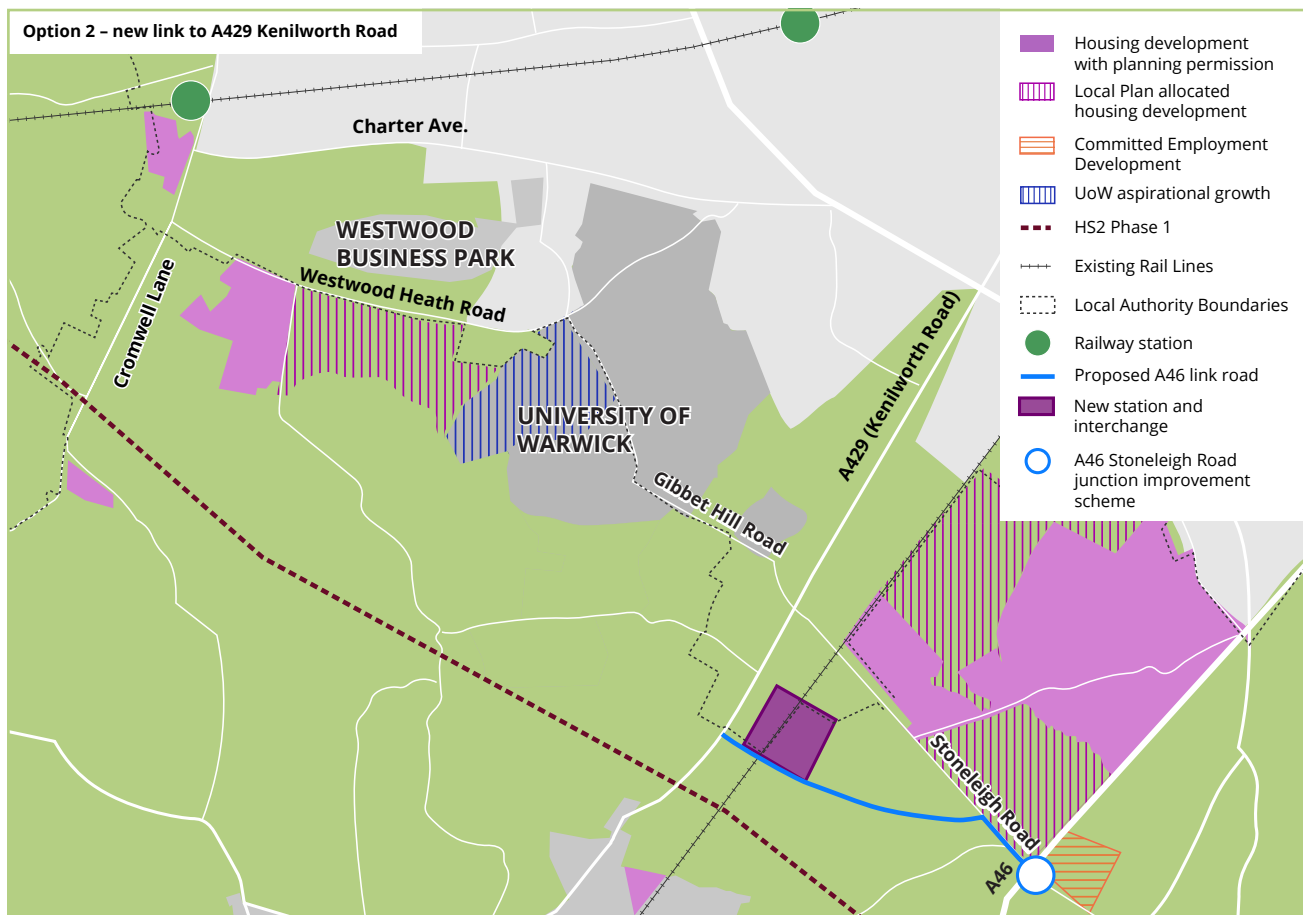
This option proposes to create a new link road between the upgraded A46 Stoneleigh Road junction and the A429 Kenilworth Road.

At the eastern end, the new link road would connect directly onto the improved junction between the A46 and Stoneleigh Road, with the addition of a left-in, left-out junction to the proposed King's Hill development. To the western end of new link road, a new roundabout would be constructed connecting to the A429 Kenilworth Road, with a possible additional connection to a proposed new railway station and interchange.

The new link road could be a single- or dual-carriageway road with segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities on one or both sides of the carriageway. Additional capacity could be made available for additional sustainable transport options, such as a possible dedicated bus lane, capacity for very light rail (VLR) and potential transport links into University of Warwick. This option would provide a partial bypass for Stoneleigh Road and Gibbet Hill Road, but through-traffic would remain on Gibbet Hill Road through the University campus as traffic from Westwood Heath would not be able to directly access the proposed link road. Option 2 proposals would also allow a future private connection providing direct access to the University of Warwick to be brought forward.

Initial analysis shows that Option 2 improves congestion and average journey times in the AM peak. However, during the PM peak, Option 2 still does not deliver sufficient changes to network performance. This may impact the delivery of housing and employment growth allocated within Local Plans as well as the aspirational growth of University of Warwick, particularly without further infrastructure improvements.

An indicative scheme alignment is included below.



How it meets the objectives:		Key:	
Maintain journey times following wider A46 development growth	Does not meet objective	Partly meets objective	Fully meets objective
Provide accessible economic development	Improve air quality	Does not meet objective	Partly meets objective
Improve network resilience	Reduce rat-running	Partly meets objective	Fully meets objective
Improve access to University of Warwick	Enhance active travel	Does not meet objective	Partly meets objective

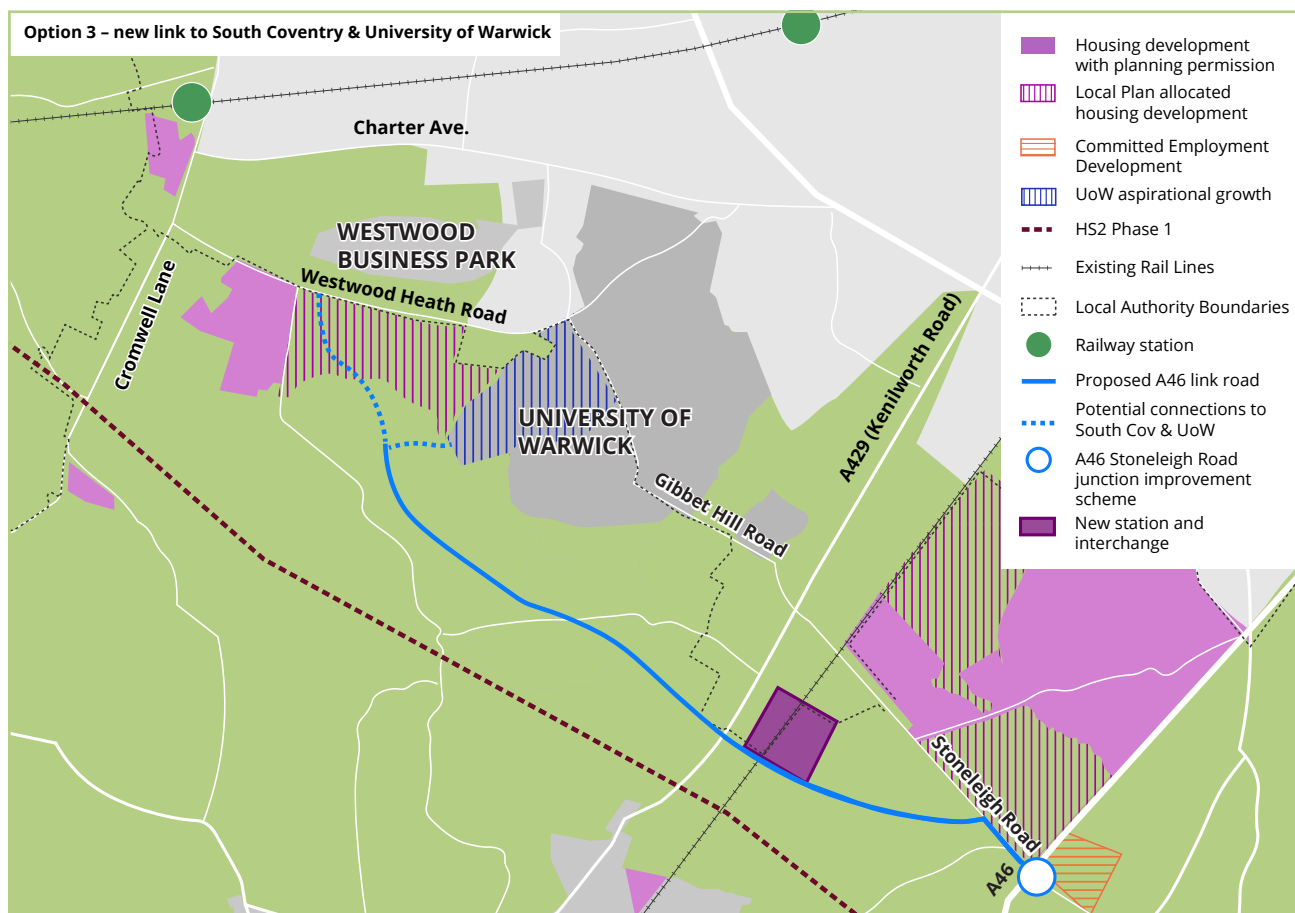
Option 3 – New link road to south of Coventry and University of Warwick

Option 3 would see a new link road constructed between the upgraded A46 Stoneleigh Road junction and Westwood Heath Road in Coventry, with a direct connection into the University of Warwick. The scheme would also include improvements to a number of local junctions within Coventry to help mitigate the predicted impacts of the scheme in that area of the city.

At the eastern end, the new link road is proposed to connect directly onto the improved junction between the A46 and Stoneleigh Road, with the addition of a left-in, left-out junction to the proposed King's Hill development. It would continue to the A429 Kenilworth Road, where a new roundabout would be constructed connecting to the A429 Kenilworth Road, with a possible additional connection to a proposed new railway station and interchange. From the A429 Kenilworth Road, the new link road could then connect to Westwood Heath Road, as well as providing an opportunity for direct access into the University of Warwick.

The new road would be a dual carriageway with segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities on one or both sides of the carriageway, until the junction with University of Warwick. At this point the link road would reduce to single carriageway road with continued segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities provision. Additional capacity could also be made available for additional sustainable transport options such as a possible dedicated bus lane, capacity for very light rail (VLR) and potential direct transport links into University of Warwick.

Initial analysis demonstrates that Option 3 would likely result in a substantial reduction in journey times across the local network, during both AM and PM periods. Therefore, it is likely to reduce congestion and deliver network-wide benefits, as well as more localised benefits along critical parts of the network, such as the A45 and A46. These improvements in local network performance and connectivity may support the delivery of housing and employment growth allocated within Local Plans as well as the aspirational growth of University of Warwick.

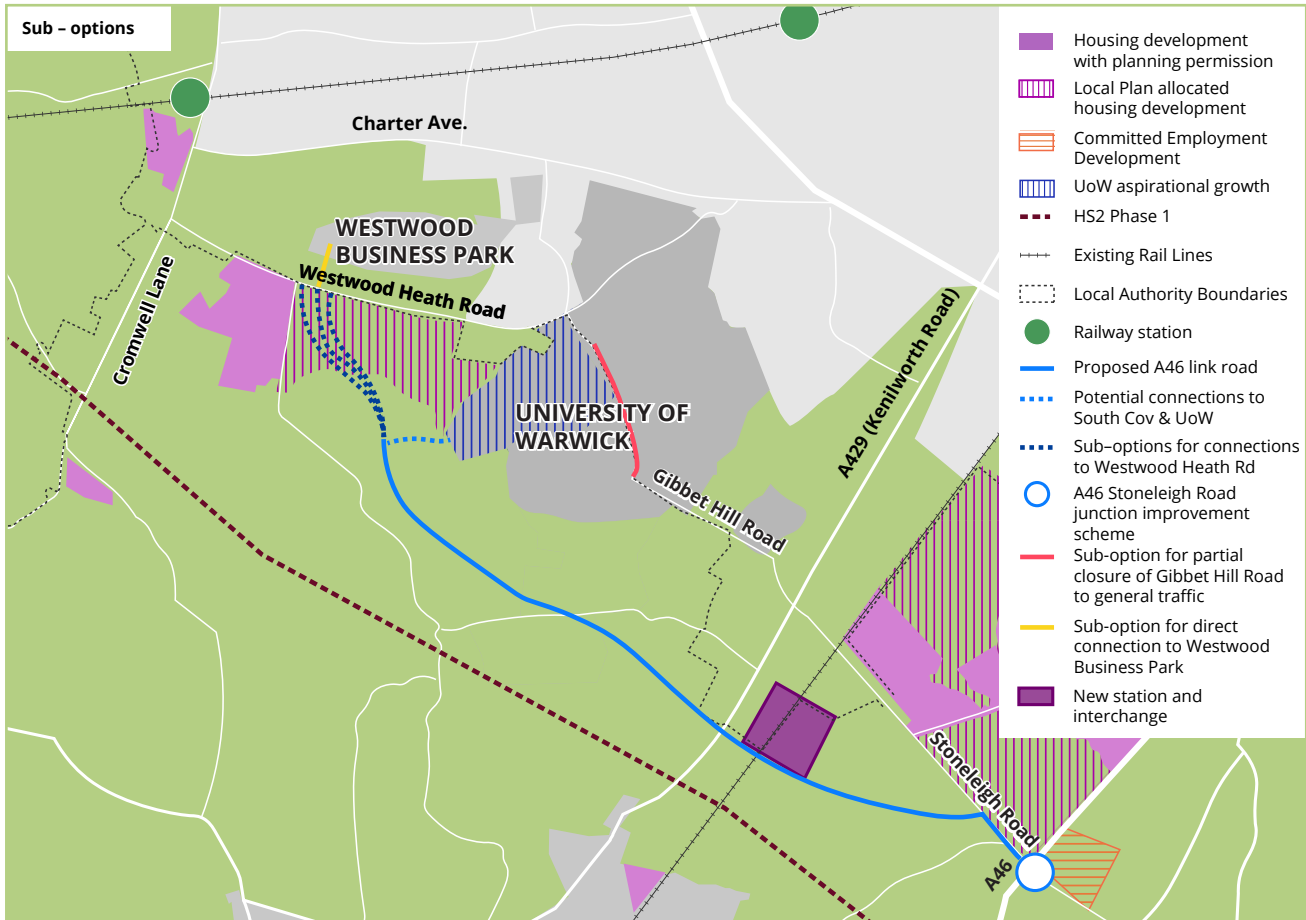


How it meets the objectives:		Key:	
Maintain journey times following wider A46 development growth	Reduce severance	Does not meet objective	
Provide accessible economic development	Improve air quality	Partly meets objective	
Improve network resilience	Reduce rat-running	Fully meets objective	
Improve access to University of Warwick	Enhance active travel		

Sub - options

If Option 3, a new link road to south of Coventry and University of Warwick, is selected there are a number of sub-options that are also being considered.

Indicative sub-option proposals are outlined below.



Gibbet Hill Road

Option 3 proposes a new link road between the A46 Stoneleigh Junction, A429 Kenilworth Road, the University of Warwick and Westwood Heath Road, which could enable a section of Gibbet Hill Road (shown in red) to be closed to general through-traffic. This could facilitate the repurposing of this section of road for use by public transport, pedestrians and cyclists only.

General through-traffic would be able to use the higher-standard link road, which provides a more attractive route from Westwood Heath Road to the A429 and the A46. Additionally, university traffic would be able to access the campus using the new connection from the proposed link road, rather than from Gibbet Hill Road.

Views would be welcomed on whether this sub-option should be considered further as part of the package of measures.

Sub – options

Westwood Business Park

Option 3 proposes a new link road between the upgraded A46 Stoneleigh junction, A429 Kenilworth Road, the University of Warwick and Westwood Heath Road. This also provides an opportunity to deliver a direct link into Westwood Business Park. However, it should be noted that HGVs would not be able to use this new access and would need to continue to use the access off Kirby Corner Roundabout.

Whilst a link into the Business Park would provide relief to sections of the local road network from general traffic, especially Kirby Corner Road, it also has the potential to have an impact on existing properties and communities.

Views would be welcomed on whether this sub-option should be considered further as part of the package of measures.

Westwood Heath Road

Analysis indicates that connecting the proposed link road into Westwood Heath Road (Option 3) results in wider benefits to the transport network. However, it is recognised that there are likely to be community concerns over the impact of such a connection.

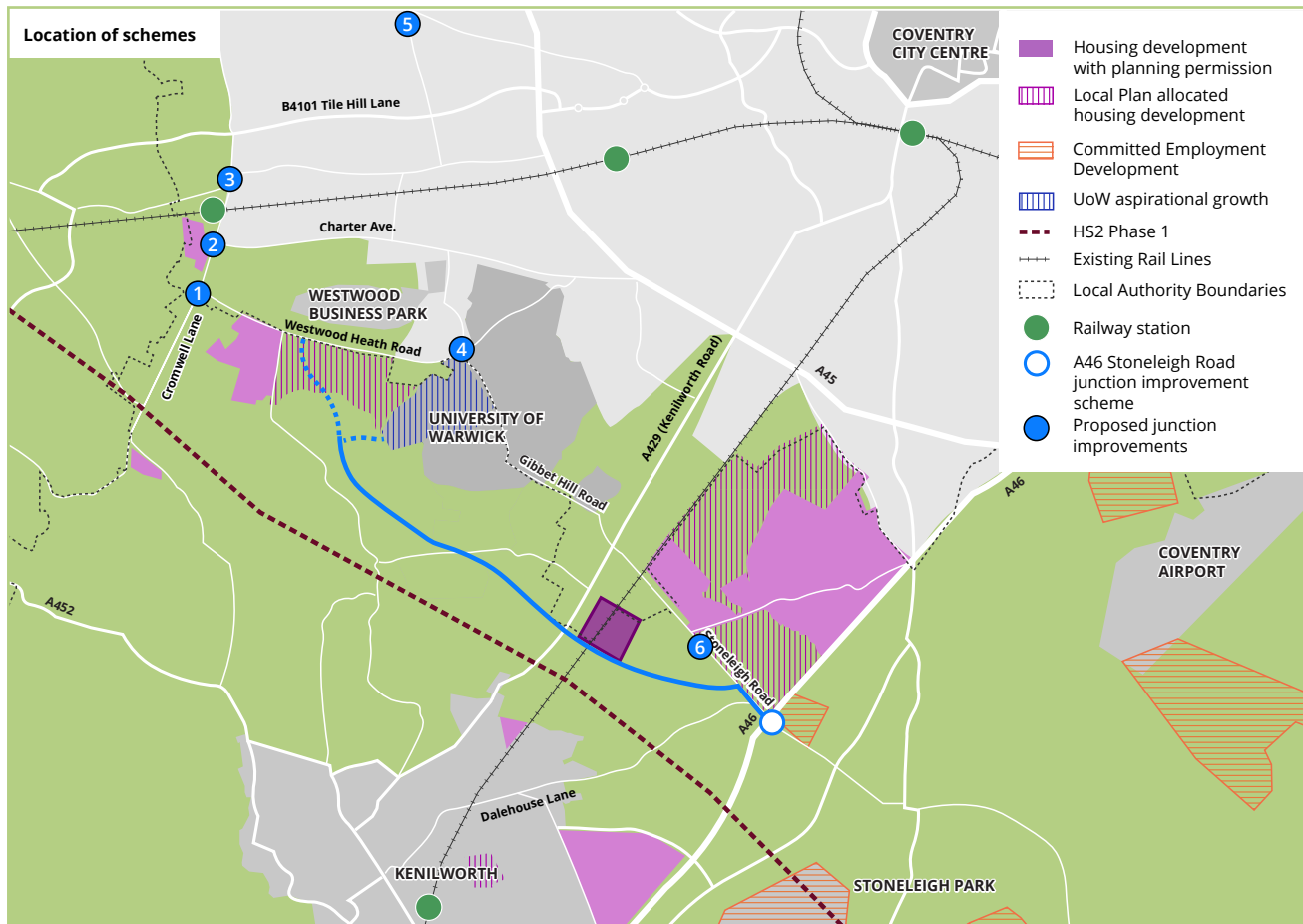
Your views on whether the link road should connect to Westwood Heath Road would be welcomed.

If such a proposed link is delivered, there are a number of locations where the connection could be made on Westwood Heath Road (dark blue dashed lines on the above plan).

Again, your views on the location, and type, of junction would be useful.

Local Junction Improvements

The link road will inevitably alter traffic flow patterns on the surrounding local network. Following initial analysis, it is expected that overall congestion will decrease in the local area. However mitigation may be required at specific locations where congestion has the potential to worsen as a result of the link road. The locations of the proposed junction improvements are outlined below. If any additional locations requiring improvement are identified during further scheme development, these will be considered as part of the ongoing assessment work.



Scheme 1 – Cromwell Lane/Westwood Heath Road Junction

This scheme proposes the adjustment of the junction to form a mini-roundabout. The scheme maintains the two-lane entry on the Westwood Heath Road approach, which is to be delivered as part of an existing scheme with planning permission identified at this junction.

Scheme 2 – Cromwell Lane/Charter Avenue

This scheme proposes the implementation of a 30-metre right-turn lane on the Cromwell Lane northbound approach to the junction.

Scheme 3 – Cromwell Lane/Torrington Avenue

This scheme proposes the installation of a 50-metre right-turn lane on the Cromwell Lane northbound approach to the junction.

Scheme 4 – Westwood Heath Road/Westwood Way

This scheme involves the provision of two-lane entry and exits on the Westwood Heath Road arms to the roundabout, to enable the east-to-west and west-to-east movements to be made in two lanes.

Scheme 5 – Broad Lane/Job's Lane

This scheme proposes the implementation of a 30-metre two-lane section on the Job's Lane approach to the junction.

Scheme 6 – Kings Hill Access Restrictions

This scheme allows Kings Hill traffic to travel to/from the site via Stoneleigh Road, however through-trips on Stoneleigh Road will remain banned.

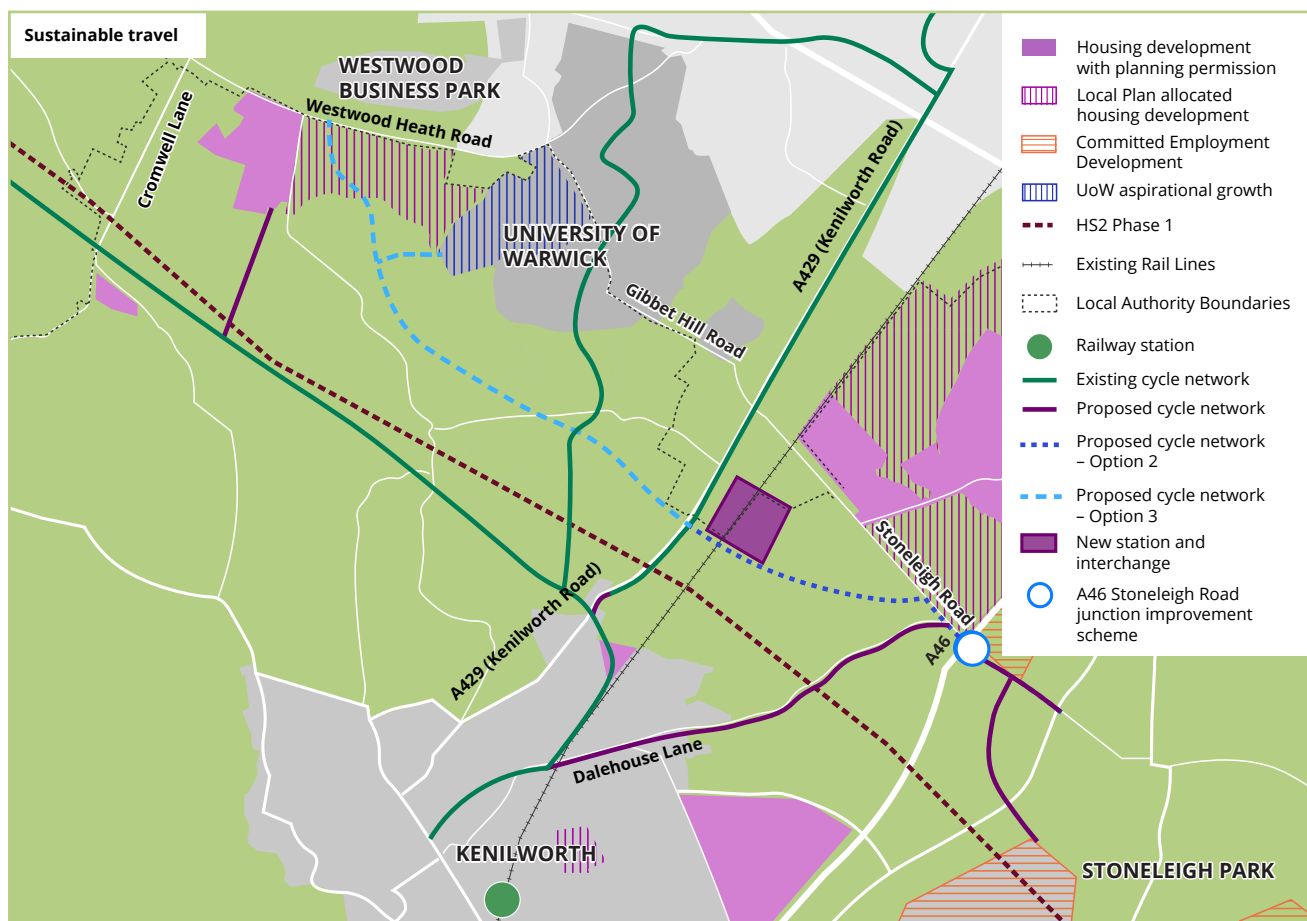
Sustainable travel

The new transport corridor aims to facilitate travel by safe and reliable modes of transport, encouraging people to choose to travel more sustainably and reduce journeys by car. As well as enabling more sustainable access for future developments, the new transport corridor creates opportunities for a potential vital link with very light rail (VLR) and other future transport infrastructure plans.

The new transport corridor provides the opportunity to improve sustainable transport connectivity in the south of Coventry area, including public transport access and walking and cycling infrastructure. In particular, the new link road offers the ability to provide segregated cycle and pedestrian facilities on one or both sides of the carriageway. Potential scheme designs are still being developed, with the level of sustainable travel connectivity dependent on which option is progressed.

Option 2 proposes improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure between the A46 Stoneleigh Road junction and the A429 Kenilworth Road, connecting into existing routes and other proposed cycle projects in the area. Option 3 proposes improvements to walking and cycling infrastructure between the A46 Stoneleigh Road junction, the A429 Kenilworth Road, University of Warwick and Westwood Heath Road. It would also provide connections to existing routes and other proposed cycle projects in the area, as well as into proposed housing and employment growth areas. A sub-option of Option 3 could further improve public transport, walking and cycling access to the University of Warwick, by enabling a section of Gibbet Hill Road to be repurposed for bus, pedestrian and cycling access only.

The new transport corridor, by linking to other proposed cycle projects within the area, ensures the delivery of safe spaces for sustainable journeys to be made and connections to the wider area.



Additional capacity could also be made available for enhanced public transport interventions as part of Options 2 and 3, such as a possible dedicated bus lane, capacity for VLR and transport links into University of Warwick. This also provides opportunities in the future for new and more environmentally friendly modes of transport to be used on the new transport corridor.

Early feasibility work is underway into a possible new railway station and interchange between cycle, rail, bus and VLR services, which could be located close to the proposed link road, where it crosses the existing Coventry to Leamington railway. The potential new railway station and interchange is being developed separately from this A46 link road proposal and is therefore not the subject of this consultation. However, it should be noted that a new railway station and interchange is unlikely to be brought forward without access improvements resulting from the proposed A46 link road.

Timeline/Next steps

Outline Business Case and Feasibility Design Winter 2020/ Spring 2021		Full Business Case and Detailed Design Summer 2021 – Summer 2024			Construction Complete Late 2024 - 2026/27		
2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collate consultation feedback • Refine package of measures to be brought forward • Outline Business Case application • Detailed feasibility design • Early environmental surveys • Report to Cabinet 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed design (including mitigation) and costing of preferred scheme • Further consultation on preferred scheme • Preparation of legal agreements (CPO, agreements with Statutory Bodies) • Preparation of planning application and other statutory process/orders • Preparation of procurement package • Preparation of Full Business Case application for funding bodies 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award main works contract • Construction 		

These timescales are dependent on the successful completion of each previous stage and the recognition that progress is reliant on the processes and approvals of key stakeholders, as well as the delivery of other key construction projects in the area.

The programme will be kept under review as the project progresses.

The scheme development has been approved by both Warwickshire County Council and Coventry City Council. Initial funding for the scheme development has been obtained from Department for Transport (DfT), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (C&WLEP), including for this consultation and an Outline Business Case. This will support applications for the funding of further scheme design and development to Full Business Case stage. The successful submission of the Full Business Case application leads to securing funding for construction.

Various funding applications are being sought to fund the construction of the scheme, and once the proposals have been developed further, funding for scheme delivery will likely be sought from bodies such as the Department for Transport, Homes England and the West Midlands Combined Authority. Additional funding is also likely to be sought from development growth in the area.