
HS2 Liaison Group – West Northants
Venue: Microsoft Teams
Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2025 at 10.30 am

Representatives from the following organisations were present:

Cllr Richard Butler WNC
(Chairman – Highways & Transport portfolio & Brackley ward member)
 Cllr Alison Eastwood WNC
(Rural South Northants ward member)
 Cllr Charles Manners WNC
(Rural South Northants ward member)
 Cllr Rosie Herring WNC
(Middleton Cheney ward member)
 Cllr Rupert Frost WNC
(Woodford & Weedon ward member)
 Cllr Fiona Baker WNC
(Brackley ward member)
 Cllr Stephen Clarke WNC
(shadow Highways & Transport lead)

Joshua Wallace *(Parliament representing Sarah Bool – MP for South Northants)*
 Emma Carr *(Parliament representing Stuart Andrew – MP for Daventry)*
 Philip Freer *(Friends of Boddington)*
 Malcolm Stewart *(Boddington PC)*
 Nigel Galletly *(Chipping Warden PC)*
 Josephine Rowling *(Culworth PC)*
 Maurice Cole *(Thorpe Mandeville PC)*
 Michael Powell *(Sulgrave PC)*
 Chris Weller *(Greatworth PC)*
 John Marchant *(Helmdon PC)*
 Andy Smith *(Radstone)*
 Bill Dodd *(Whitfield PM)*
 Hilary Walton *(Whitfield PM)*
 Clive Hockley *(Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM)*
 Colin Moore *(Syresham PC)*
 David Cranwell *(SNATRA)*
 Katie Robertson *(Byfield PC)*

In Attendance:

Simon Levell *(Kier Northants)*
 Rob James *(WNC)*
 Nathan Lowde *(WNC)*
 Chris James *(EKFB)*
 Dave Butcher *(EKFB)*
 Hannah Baron *(EKFB)*
 Clare Dean *(EKFB)*
 Fiona Williams *(HS2)*
 Kimberley Birtwistle *(HS2)*
 Andras Juhasz *(HS2)*
 Chris Coleman *(HS2)*
 Filippa St Aubin D’Ancey
(National Highways)
 Zachary Stamps *(National Highways)*
 Mike Koefoed *(National Highways)*
 Faiz Arogundade *(National Highways)*
 Stelios Tsolakoudis *(National Highways)*

Apologies:

Sarah Bool MP *(South Northants)*
 Stuart Andrew MP *(Daventry)*
 Cllr Charlie Hastie WNC
(Woodford & Weedon ward member)
 Cllr Anthony Bagot-Webb
(Brackley Town Council HS2 representative)
 Simon Matthews *(EKFB)*
 Haidee Williams *(EKFB)*
 Gary Pettit *(WNC)*

MINUTES

1. Welcome, Introductions, Minutes of last meeting (13.06.25) and Matters arising

Cllr Richard Butler welcomed everyone as Chairman and WNC portfolio holder for Highways & Transport.

The minutes from the previous meeting (13th June 2025) were agreed.

In terms of matters arising, it was understood all outstanding actions had been dealt with, and these were not discussed as such during this section of the agenda. **Note:** any actions arising from this meeting are highlighted with **ACTION POINT** after the relevant item.

There was however comment from Cllr Rosie Herring (*WNC*) in relation to a layout plan for Radstone Road area, and air quality data – requests from the previous meeting – both of which had been distributed and passed on by Dave Butcher (*EKFB*).

Cllr Butler explained that in general terms any other matters arising / questions on items scheme-wide would be dealt with in order as listed in the agenda under items **3a-3j** following the EKFB presentation on scheme update and related highway issues at item **2**.

2. EKFB scheme update including future road closure plans & phasing

Chris James of EKFB gave a comprehensive update including an informative and illustrated slide presentation on the route of HS2 starting just over the border with Oxon/Bucks, right through West Northants, and just beyond into Warwickshire, travelling along the trace from south to north. Questions were left until item **3**.

Note: *Highlights of the presentation are given below; more comprehensive details on scheme progress and key phasing dates may be obtained by reference to the presentation slides appended to – and distributed with – these minutes.*

Overall Progress

Some 'big picture' statistics were given to illustrate overall progress on HS2 – these were:

- 63% of way through overall construction programme;
- 71% of earthworks complete;
- 67% of concrete works complete;
- 63% completion of viaducts;
- 47% completion of green tunnels.

There is currently a 'reset' with HS2 programming and delivery in light of recent Government spending review, intended to create greater certainty for the project. Essentially, there are two more years of major construction works in terms of the critical interfaces with local highway networks.

A421 Overbridge (Oxon)

The structure is substantially complete, the A421 highway itself (*which links with the A43 south of Evenley*) will be diverted over the new bridge by the end of the year, along with diverted utilities.

A422 (Bucks)

A temporary 'bailey bridge' maintains connectivity along the A422 between Brackley and Westbury while the new bridge structure progresses, with parapets the next key activity due in December, following which the road will be diverted with opening expected in Spring 2026.

Turweston Viaduct

Beams are all in place on Turweston Viaduct which spans the River Great Ouse on the Bucks/Northants border, with works on the deck due to start in early 2026. This area is also a good example of where local public rights of way have been maintained.

A43 Overbridge

The concrete deck pour is now complete and parapet installation works are starting. It is anticipated that the highway tie-ins at either end will be completed around March 2026, involving some road closures, with the A43 diverted onto its new alignment over the bridge shortly afterwards in Spring.

Radstone Road

The bridge structure is largely completed, and associated highway works are taking place on the approaches. A six-week closure of Radstone Road will need to take place between 3rd November and 14th December to allow the highway tie-ins to be completed, with opening to traffic just before Christmas planned.

Radstone to Greatworth Structures

In the area between Helmdon and Halse there are three accommodation overbridges across the HS2 route variously carrying public footpath AN22, public bridleway AN37 and bridleway AN14 (*near Greatworth Fields*) – these are largely complete and due to open in 6-9 months.

Greatworth Green Tunnel

Greatworth Green Tunnel in its final form will be 2.7km long, approximately a third of the length (*900m*) of tunnel sections have been installed, with waterproofing and backfilling works following on in succession. It has been a good year for progress on the green tunnel, which has been accelerated through night working. Work on advancing the 'south front' of the tunnel towards its Helmdon Road end is due to start in Winter 2025.

Greatworth Temporary Road

Also known as the "Greatworth Tee", the second phase of this temporary road linking the existing first phase with the B4525 west is due to open later in Autumn 2025, which will help maintain connectivity in the area.

Sulgrave to Edgcote

Additional land has been utilised by the project for temporary soil storage associated with green tunnel excavations – these locations are close to Magpie Farm, near Sulgrave, and further north towards Edgcote. EKFB apologised for not communicating this more clearly to local communities, and sought to engage with stakeholders more fully going forwards, particularly in respect of the latter location which has sensitivities being adjacent to the Edgcote Battlefield site which was highlighted in recent media reports. EKFB stressed that best practice had been followed in conjunction with the WNC planning authority, and that geophysical surveys had been undertaken prior to the storage of the soil.

Lower Thorpe Viaduct

There was a successful 'launch' of the steel beams for this structure in late June 2025, and works on concreting the deck are underway. There will be periodic short-term closures of Banbury Lane (*between Thorpe Mandeville and Culworth*) during the Autumn to safely facilitate deck concreting and associated works overhead.

Edgcote Viaduct

In terms of this multiple-span structure over the River Cherwell, nearly all the concrete beams have now been installed, and deck concreting works are underway. Wardington Road (*leading from Trafford Bridge to Edgcote*) passes under the viaduct and is currently closed, however works should soon start on locally lowering it under the viaduct; these works have been delayed owing to flooding issue concerns and the need to agree a drainage design with WNC that minimised flood risk. Once Wardington Road works have been completed – anticipated Spring 2026 – Culworth Road near Chipping Warden will be permanently closed (*as per the HS2 Act*) to enable extension south of Chipping Warden Green Tunnel.

Chipping Warden Green Tunnel

Installation of concrete sections for the green tunnel is now 80% complete and advancing on two fronts, both north and south – this represents 2km of the final 2.5km length. Meanwhile, the new realignment of the A361 over the green tunnel has advanced well, and is due to open to public traffic by 6th October (*effectively phase 2 of Chipping Warden Relief Road*).

Highfurlong Area Earthworks

The viaduct in this area – located near Aston-le-Walls – was the first such structure to be completed on HS2 as a whole. Also of note is the fact that on the Greatworth to Southam section of HS2 this year, 1.7 million cubic metres of soil has been moved in cut-and-fill operations.

Claydon Road

The bridge structure and road over it (*Lower Boddington to Claydon*) were opened to public traffic on 26th August – interestingly the first public road on the Northants section of HS2 to be re-opened and in use on a new alignment over the railway corridor.

Boddington

The highway works in this area straddling the Warwickshire border (*Banbury Road, Warwick Road, diverted Claydon Road and Wormleighton Road*) were all opened on their final alignments on 22nd September, improving local connectivity. Owing to delays in opening the Banbury Road bridge itself owing to ongoing repair works, a short temporary road known as the “Southern Link” connects Banbury Road with diverted Claydon Road across the HS2 corridor, also enabling a through route between Warwick Road and Wormleighton Road by locally bypassing the bridge. Meanwhile, a short section of road from Spella Works to Three Ways has a one-way northbound traffic order imposed to protect it from being used as a ‘rat run’ until repair works are completed. Additionally, Stoneton Lane just into Warwickshire remains closed long-term to construct the bridge that will eventually carry it over HS2.

A423 Southam Bypass (Warwickshire)

Into Warwickshire, a new temporary section of A423 road opened on 18th September between Ladbrooke and Southam to enable approach works for the overbridge to proceed.

Engagement Events & Community Support

The presentation concluded with a number of examples of recent or imminent engagement events which EKFB are providing, including a number of site visits for local communities plus

a “Meet the Team” event in Brackley, together with community support being given to a wide range of local initiatives and projects in the West Northants area.

3. Questions following presentation in item 2. above:

Cllr Alison Eastwood (*WNC*) – opened the discussion with a question about programme, in view of the ‘reset’ on delivery of HS2 overall that had been announced, and how this would affect the project locally in West Northants.

Chris James (*EKFB*) – responded that there should be news on the programme reset early in 2026, and stated he will talk to HS2 about how that might look in West Northants specifically.

Cllr Alison Eastwood – made a further point about the confusion to road users in the Boddington area following the recent opening of the Banbury/Warwick Roads and associated diverted Claydon/Wormleighton Roads, which includes the short “Southern Link” temporary road and three sets of temporary traffic signals. She believed the signage for the new layout was poor, and needed improving, citing an example of where she had had to guide a local resident with an urgent need to attend hospital in Banbury.

Chris James – promised that he would follow-up these concerns and verify that the signage was correct and appropriate both through and on the approaches to the new road layout at Boddington, and would report back to Cllr Eastwood. **ACTION POINT**

Cllr Fiona Baker (*WNC*) – mentioned that the closures of Radstone Road for HS2 works were very disruptive indeed, creating real problems for children travelling to and from school. She stressed there needed to be a better communications plan and for the project to recognise this in terms of letting people know what was happening in a more proactive way.

Chris James – responded that communications are taking place on a regular basis with respect to road closures and durations, it is more a question of dissemination of information.

Cllr Rosie Herring (*WNC*) – commented that she wasn’t previously aware of the temporary soil storage close to Magpie Farm mentioned in the presentation, and asked for it to be noted that since recent electoral boundary changes she now represents Thorpe Mandeville, which is close to the site.

Colin Moore (*Syresham PC*) – stated the importance of achieving an ‘active travel’ route parallel to the A43 between Brackley and villages to the north i.e. Whitfield, Syresham, Silverstone. He stressed again that the A43 HS2 bridge needs to be configured to allow safe passage for non-motorised road users.

Cllr Richard Butler (*WNC Chairman*) – responded that he would arrange to meet with Colin Moore, along with other interested representative councillors from the affected parishes, Chris James of EKFB, HS2 and National Highways, with a view to achieving a consensus outcome on this issue. **ACTION POINT**

3a. Shared use cycleway along A43 – agreed 13/06/25 to be taken offline for discussion between SNATRA & National Highways – have any separate discussions taken place since last HS2 Liaison Group?

Whilst there was no response offered by either SNATRA or National Highways as to whether any separate discussions had taken place since the last HS2 Liaison Group on 13th June (**an ACTION POINT from that meeting**), Cllr Butler stated this item would be covered in the

context of the meeting with all relevant stakeholders that he intended to facilitate, as reported above.

3b. Radstone Road – ongoing utilities/works closures & durations, including timescale for opening road to public

Andy Smith (*Radstone*) – although most issues had been covered in Chris James' presentation at item 2 – e.g. new alignment due to open December – he noted there were still other utility diversion works causing closures of Radstone Road, with Anglian Water yet to be done. He felt there was still not enough advance notification given the potential to cause disruption. He further commented on the design of the highway tie-in at the north (*village*) end of the Radstone Road realignment works, expressing concern as to safety at the junction with the Radstone village road, given the road would revert to national speed limit 60mph (*currently 50mph temporary limit*).

Cllr Butler – responded that he would take up the issue of the national speed limit in the as-completed scenario and its effect on safety with WNC Highways. **ACTION POINT**

3c. Greatworth Tee (Phase 2) progress & anticipated opening date

This was fully covered in Chris James' presentation, and there were no further questions relating to the Greatworth Tee temporary road, however in relation to the Greatworth area:

Cllr Alison Eastwood – asked about what was happening to ensure maintenance of access and minimising of disruption to Greatfield Nursery, off the B4525 east of Greatworth.

Chris James – said he would follow-up on this item. **ACTION POINT**

3d. Banbury Road (Thorpe Mandeville) & Lower Thorpe (Banbury Lane) closure phasing & 'rat running' issues including Bulls Lane

Cllr Rosie Herring – mentioned the "devastation" on Banbury Lane between Culworth and Thorpe Mandeville, describing the road as "wrecked" following the intensification of use this single track road has been put to since the long-term closure of the parallel Banbury Road. She requested that the road be inspected to determine the extent of repairs needed.

Maurice Cole (*Thorpe Mandeville PC*) – clarified that the worst section of road damage is more towards the north end and therefore in Culworth parish, not Thorpe Mandeville.

Cllr Richard Butler – requested that Chris James of EKFB join him to inspect the damage on Banbury Lane; Cllr Eastwood requested that she might also join with them to view the road.

ACTION POINT

Maurice Cole – further added that 'rat running' on Bulls Lane is not an issue now that Banbury Road is shut, as it offers no benefit over going through Thorpe Mandeville; however, he noted a temporary reduced speed limit for the area would be useful.

Cllr Richard Butler offered to talk further with Chris James on this issue.

Michael Powell (*Sulgrave PC*) – made reference to one of the two soil storage areas reported in the presentation: that near Magpie Farm, not far from Sulgrave. He noted it is a long-term storage site, and expressed concerns over the noise and dust disruption caused by it, as well as surprise that it had been allowed at all.

Chris James – said he would follow up Michael Powell’s concerns and those of the Sulgrave community. **ACTION POINT**

3e. Wardington Road & Culworth Road closure phasing

This item was covered in the presentation, and there were no further questions or comments in relation to the Wardington Road or Culworth Road closure phasing.

3f. A361 Chipping Warden area – realignment & phasing including timescale for opening Phase 2 of Relief Road to public

Nigel Galletly (*Chipping Warden PC*) – expressed concern over the temporary two-week closure of the A361 just north of the village associated with the tie-in works for the new section of highway due to open by the 6th October. He noted that damage to the carriageway surface and verges of both Culworth Road and Welsh Road (*forming the 'local diversion route of choice'*) was quite severe due to heavy use by diverted traffic, including many HGVs. He asked if there was a plan to address damage repairs, given the risk of a repeat of the 'Spella link' scenario in the Boddington area?

Cllr Richard Butler – commented that he felt it would be beneficial to visit the area in light of what Nigel Galletly was describing. **ACTION POINT**

Chris James – said the increased use of the Culworth/Welsh Roads was an inevitable consequence of the closure on the A361 at Chipping Warden, as most people would not follow the very lengthy official diversion, however he would cover this in any inspection visit that Cllr Butler wished to take place.

3g. Recent opening of Claydon Road to public – effects of

This agenda item was to note the recent opening on 26th August of Claydon Road, Lower Boddington, and to recognise its benefits in progressively improving connectivity in the general area. There were no additional comments made, the re-opened road is operating well and there were no concerns raised.

3h. Warwick Rd/Banbury Rd (Boddington) progress on bridge remedial works, timescales for opening alternative Southern Link & associated one way traffic order (northbound) on 'Spella Link'

Chris James – reported that the delay to opening the Banbury Road bridge was due to issues with assurance of the welding on the steel beams, which required remedial works before the bridge could be certified for use.

Malcolm Stewart (*Boddington PC*) – re-iterated (*as previously mentioned by Cllr Eastwood earlier in the meeting*) that the signage around the new road layout in the Banbury/Warwick Road area west of the Boddingtons was confusing. There were concerns about traffic between the A361 and the Boddingtons, the ongoing disruption, and safety emerging onto Warwick Road, Upper Boddington, when using the one-way 'Spella link', and the incidence of 'near misses' at this junction.

Philip Freer (*Friends of Boddington*) concurred with the views expressed by Malcolm Stewart, describing things in terms of "the mess at Boddington" and the three sets of temporary traffic signals "being beyond a joke".

Cllr Richard Butler – offered to meet with Friends of Boddington before the next HS2 Liaison Group to discuss the effects of the recent changes to traffic patterns since the opening of the Banbury/Warwick Roads etc on their new alignment in conjunction with the temporary “Southern Link” and multiple traffic signals, plus the associated one-way traffic order northbound on the ‘Spella link’. **ACTION POINT**

3i. Northants diversions re: Stoneton Lane (nr Boddington) closure

Simon Levell (*Kier Northants*) – addressed this item, which was intended to make those present aware – particularly in the Boddington area – of effects of the closure of Stoneton Lane, just into Warwickshire, and how WNC had insisted that EKFB/HS2 sign the local diversion via Priors Marston towards Byfield and back to Boddington, or vice-versa, making use of higher quality, wider roads, rather than the shorter route direct from Priors Hardwick along Welsh Road to Upper Boddington which is only single track width and risked being seriously damaged by overuse in similar vein to the ‘Spella link’.

3j. General planning & development issues associated with HS2

Malcolm Stewart – in relation to this generic agenda item, asked what would happen into the future after HS2 had finished their main works, what was the ‘plan’ for the legacy landscape that would be left running past the various rural communities? In strategic planning terms, local communities wanted there to be some benefit, given HS2 as a concept does not do anything for them long-term. Cllr Butler added that local input to this would be important.

Chris James – EKFB/HS2 would feed back the emerging landscape plans to local communities in due course, but noted there was still clarification needed from HS2 as to their long-term plans for the land portfolio they were managing i.e. what they would still need to retain for operational purposes in addition to the railway corridor e.g. balancing ponds, accesses to trackside compounds; what land could be returned to adjacent landowners for agricultural purposes; and what land might be eligible for use to local communities. It would be necessary to wait for the drawings to be developed before having any meaningful debate.

Malcolm Stewart – also mentioned the negative legacy effect that disruption from the HS2 project was having on local businesses. It was noted that Cllr Butler and Sarah Bool MP wished to get an overview as to the effects on local businesses in this respect.

4. National Highways questions re: diversions etc as raised including upcoming events affecting A43

There were no further specific questions, all issues pertaining to the A43 and National Highways interfaces having been dealt with in preceding discussions and questions earlier in the agenda.

Zachary Stamps (*National Highways*) – announced that he would be moving on from his role dealing with the A43/HS2 interface. Stelios Tsolakoudis (*who introduced himself to the meeting*) would be taking on the role going forwards.

Filippa St Aubin D’Ancey (*National Highways*) – assured those present that she would continue to be involved with the A43 and its interface with HS2 in West Northants.

5. AOB

Clive Hockley (*Hinton-in-the-Hedges PM*) – asked if the slides from Chris James’ presentation at item 2 could be sent out with the minutes. **(note: these minutes include the slides)**

David Cranwell (*SNATRA*) – asked if he could also be invited to the meeting which Cllr Richard Butler convenes re: the active travel route over the A43 bridge; Bill Dodd (*Whitfield PM*) – also requested attendance at the A43 meeting. **ACTION POINT**

Chris Weller (*Greatworth PC*) – enquired re: the ongoing access to Greatworth Park given the changing nature of works in the B4525/Greatworth Tee area.

Chris James – confirmed dialogue was continuing with Greatworth Park, and access is being maintained on a temporary basis as the road evolves in the area.

Cllr Rosie Herring – mentioned the need for a responsive approach (*to communications*) after major diversions are implemented by EKFB/HS2, a point that had already been made earlier.

Cllr Richard Butler then closed the meeting.

Date of next meeting: Friday 28th November OR Friday 5th December, 10.30am – 12noon via Teams - TBC