

A46 Strategic Link Road  
*To nowhere!*

# Contents

1. Preamble – Preface, Definitions, Abbreviations
2. Context of Westwood Heath
3. Timeline of proposal
4. Outline of proposals
5. Impact on Green Belt
6. Why now – case for delaying?
7. Scope of solution vs the Cabinet agreement
8. What is a strategic link?
9. Moving the problem, not solving it
10. Consultation flaws
11. Other objections and observations
12. Conclusion

# Preface

- This document is being developed as a briefing paper for Westwood Heath Residents Association – we recognise that other areas may or may not share the same views
- It has been produced after an examination of the Consultation Report, the traffic modelling analysis, watching the video broadcast and submitting various questions.
- At present it's an outline to help us frame our thinking and some of the elements are 'bullet points' we're investigating.
- Errors, omissions, comments and suggestions are welcome to Ian Stevenson [chair@westwoodheath.org.uk](mailto:chair@westwoodheath.org.uk)

# Definitions

- Pre-Covid-19
  - The period prior to March 2020 (when restrictions were first introduced)
- During Cov-19
  - From March 2020 to date. Traffic was much reduced during this period although there was also less use of public transport with government advice to use private transport
  - Coventry Council figures estimate that the Coventry road network was operating at around 90% of the pre-Covid-19 level
- Post Covid-19
  - A period some time in the future when travelling returns to a steady state. It is anticipated that there will be some long term and permanent shifts in commuting, remote/home working, time-shifted travel (e.g. some work done at home with less need for rush-hour commuting)
  - As far as we know there are no official government estimates of the size of these changes
  - Given the current vaccine rollout this is not likely to be before the end of 2021, possibly well into 2022
  - Further impacts (e.g. shortage of vaccine, further mutations of the virus) may extent this further

# Abbreviations

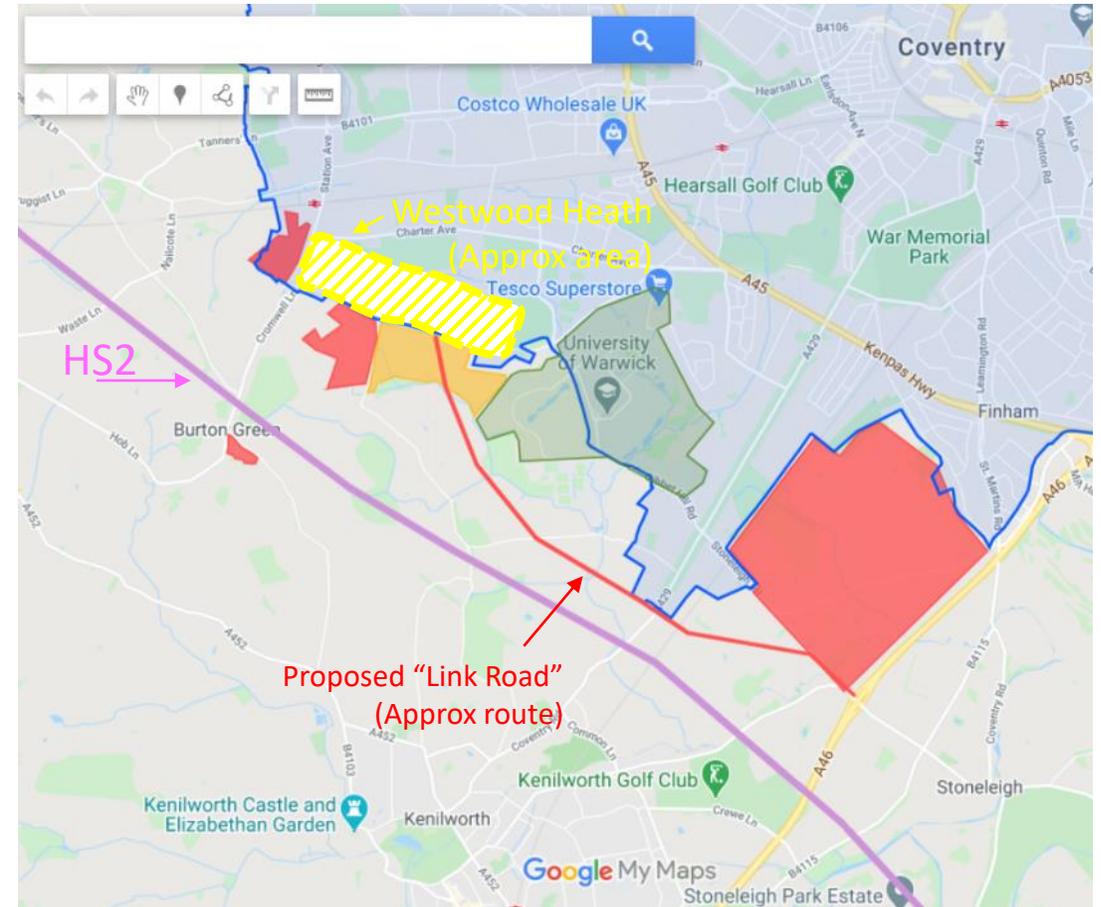
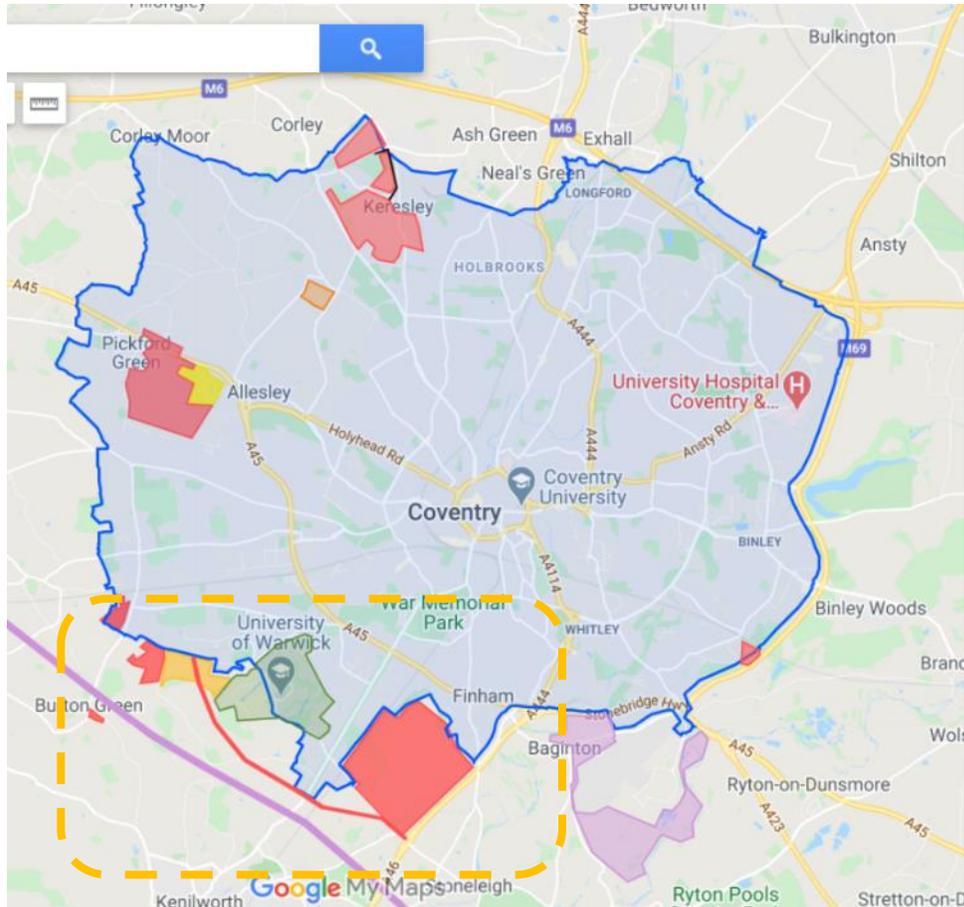
- CCC Coventry City Council
- UoW University of Warwick
- WCC Warwickshire County Council
- WDC Warwick District Council
- WWH Westwood Heath
- WWHR Westwood Heath Road

# Context of Westwood Heath

# Westwood Heath – context

On the Southwest edge of Coventry, Westwood Heath is an area of 700-800 households

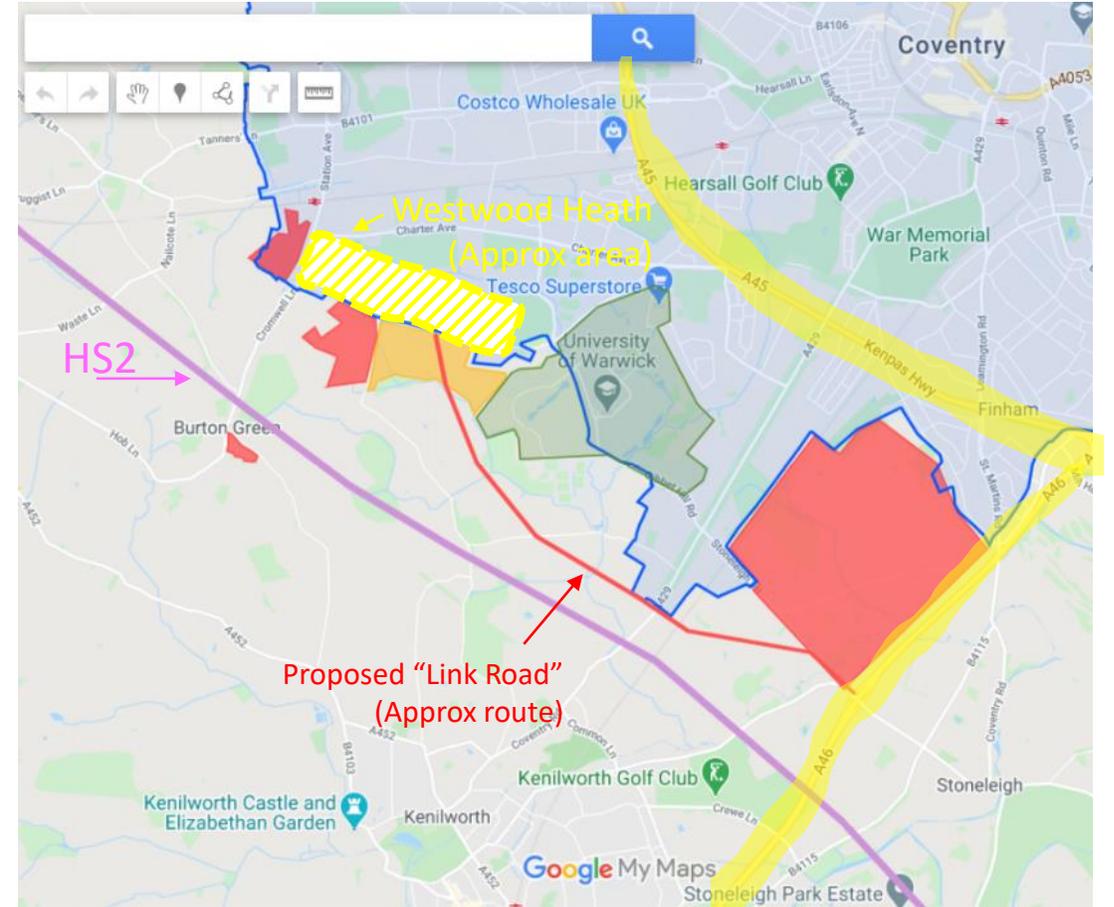
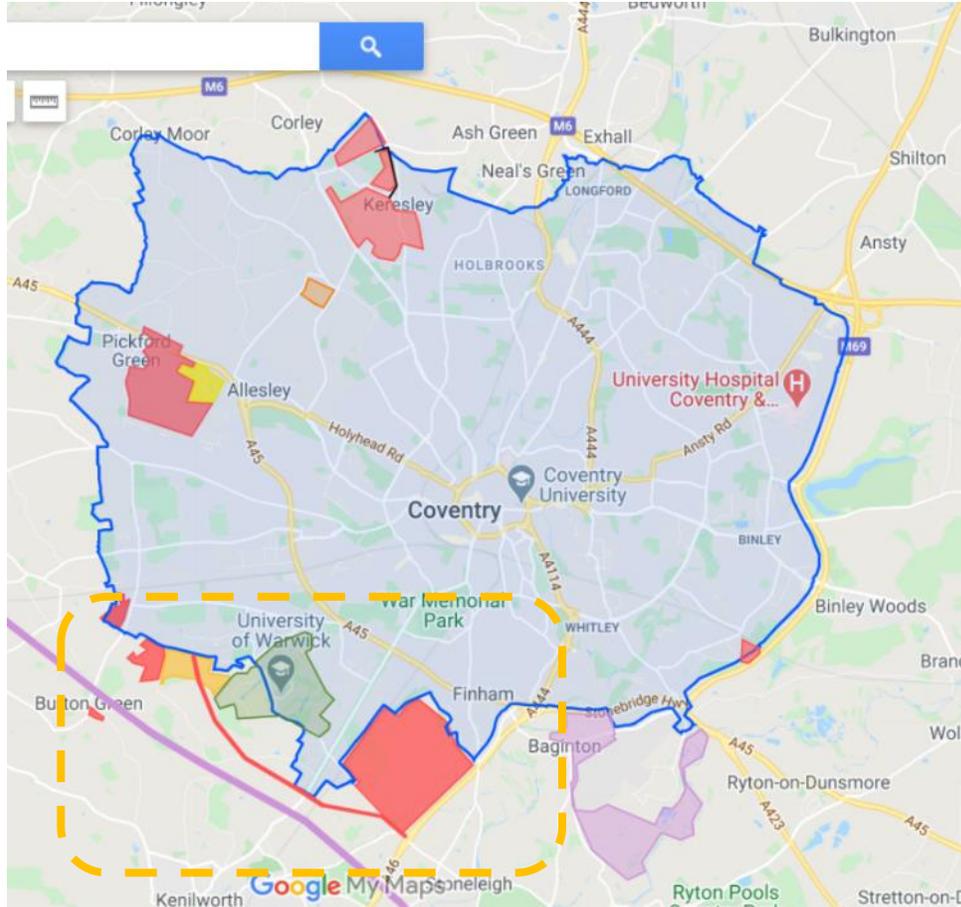
It adjoins (former) Green Belt and the University of Warwick



# Westwood Heath – context

Main through roads (A45 and A46) **Highlighted**

Red areas are housing developments identified from CCC and WDC Local Plans



# Timeline of proposals

- A “Link Road” of some sort was mooted some years ago as a prospective way of joining up the A46 to the A45 North-West of Coventry
- The concept has been watered down but retained the “link road” moniker
- The following slides show the sequence of plans

June 2018

Original sight of “Link Road” proposals

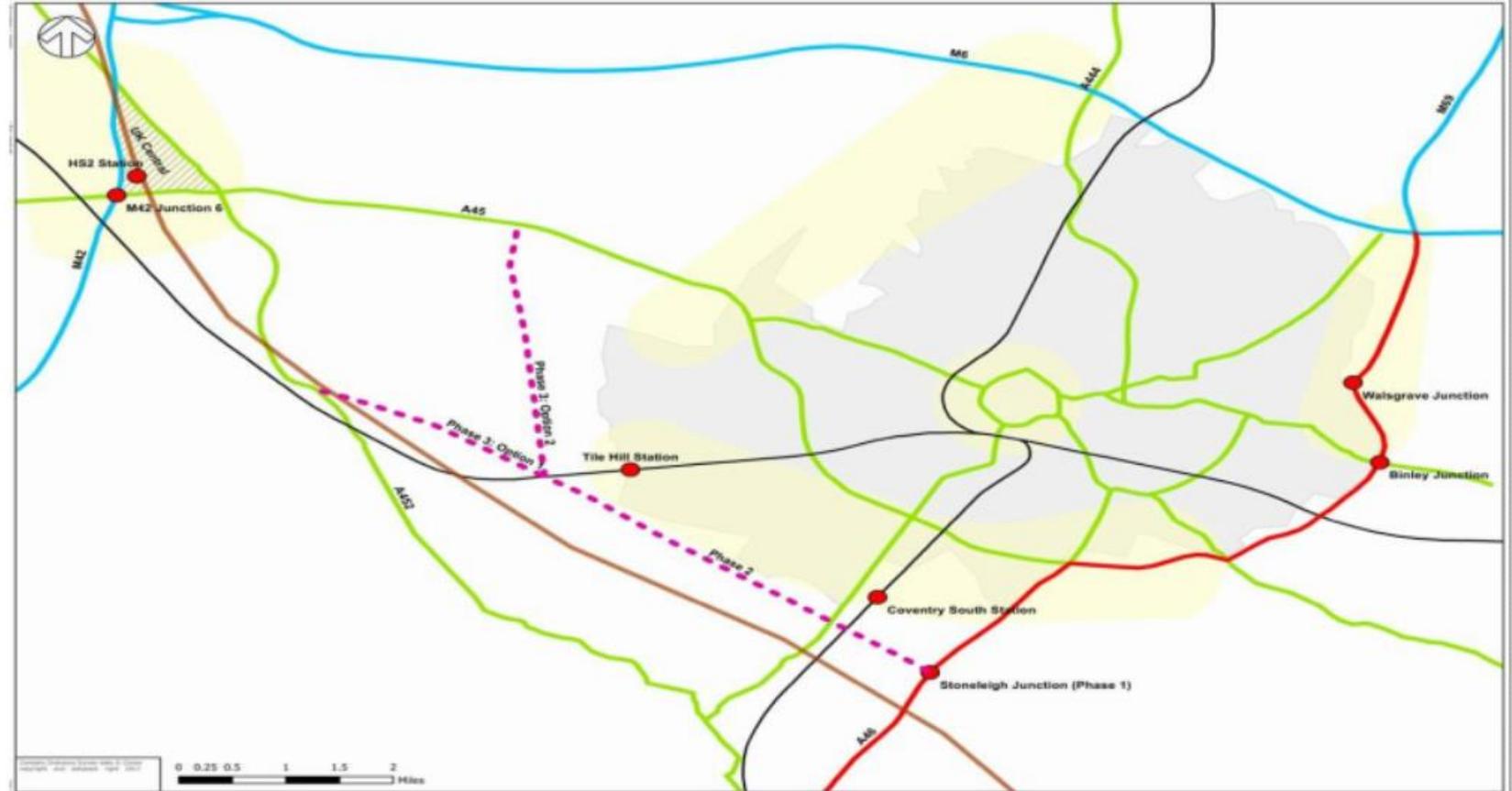
Phase 1 – Stoneleigh Island

Phase 2 – WW Heath

Phase 3 -

A46 linking with A45 or  
Balsall Common A452

# Coventry South Package



June 2018

Original sight of “Link Road” proposals

Phase 1 – Stoneleigh Island

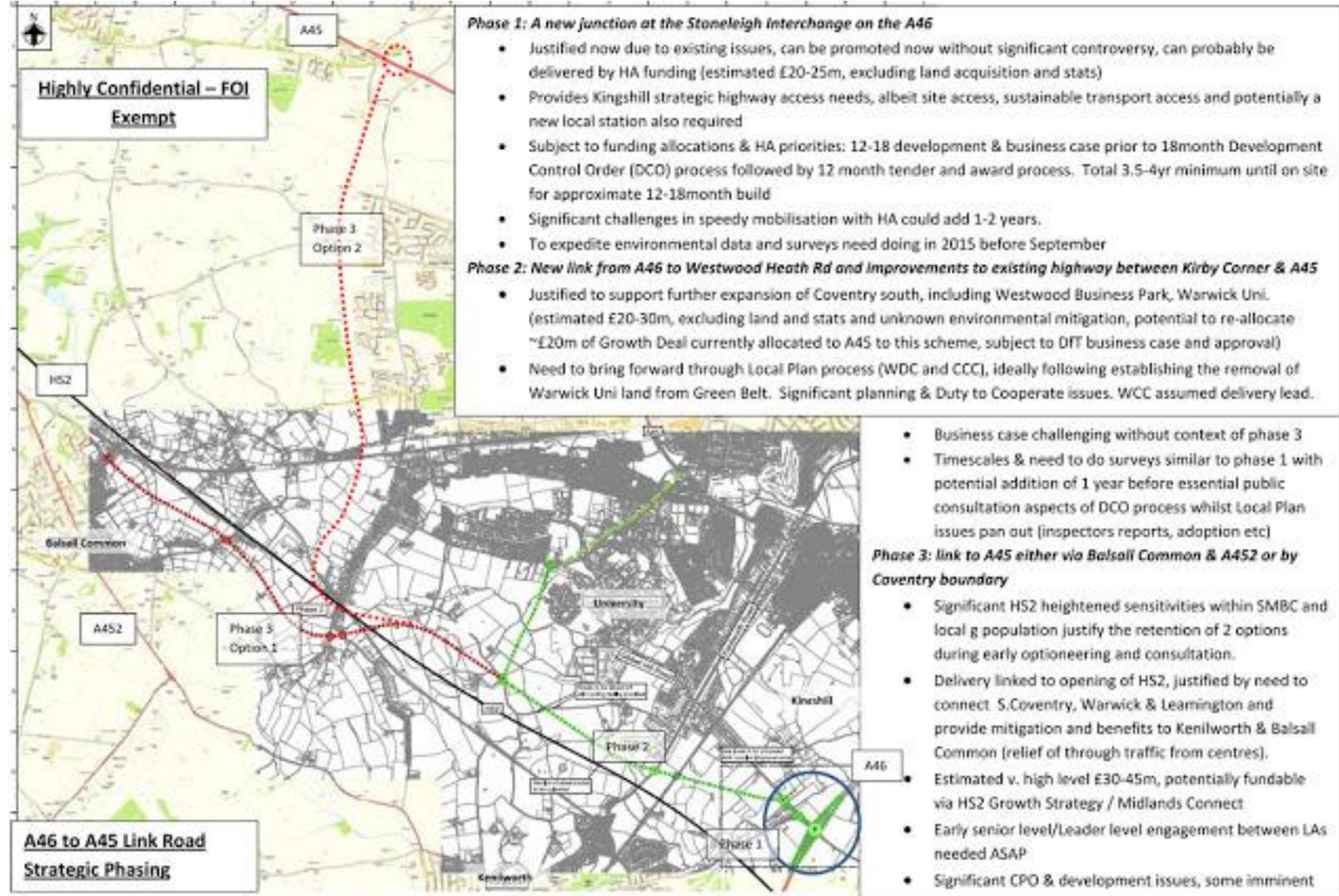
Phase 2 – WW Heath

Phase 3 -

A46 linking with A45 or  
Balsall Common A452

October 2018

FOI Request reveals route  
planning for links, including  
crossing Burton Green



June 2018

Original sight of "Link Road" proposals

Phase 1 – Stoneleigh Island

Phase 2 – WW Heath

Phase 3 -

A46 linking with A45 or Balsall Common A452

October 2018

FOI Request reveals route planning for links, including crossing Burton Green



- Highly Confidential – FOI Exempt**
- Phase 1:**
- [Redacted]
  - [Redacted]
  - [Redacted]
  - [Redacted]
  - [Redacted]
- Phase 2: New link from A45 to Westwood Heath Rd and improvements to existing highway between Kirby Corner & A45**
- Justified to support further expansion of Coventry south, including Westwood Business Park, Warwick Uni. (estimated £20-30m, excluding land and stats and unknown environmental mitigation, potential to re-allocate ~£20m of Growth Deal currently allocated to A45 to this scheme, subject to DfT business case and approval)
  - Need to bring forward through Local Plan process (WDC and CCC), ideally following establishing the removal of Warwick Uni land from Green Belt. Significant planning & Duty to Cooperate issues. WCC assumed delivery lead.

**Westwood Business Park is shrinking, not growing**

**"Business case challenging without the context of Phase 3...."  
....Yes, it is!**



- Business case challenging without context of phase 3
  - Timescales & need to do surveys similar to phase 1 with potential addition of 1 year before essential public consultation aspects of DCO process whilst Local Plan issues pan out (inspectors reports, adoption etc)
- Phase 3: link to A45 either via Balsall Common & A452 or by Coventry boundary**
- Significant H52 heightened sensitivities within SMBC and local population justify the retention of 2 options during early optioneering and consultation.
  - Delivery linked to opening of H52, justified by need to connect S.Coventry, Warwick & Leamington and provide mitigation and benefits to Kenilworth & Balsall Common (relief of through traffic from centres).
  - Estimated v. high level £30-45m, potentially fundable via H52 Growth Strategy / Midlands Connect
  - Early senior level/Leader level engagement between LAs needed ASAP

**A46 to A45 Link Road Strategic Phasing**

**Where will the scheme connect?!**

June 2018

Original sight of “Link Road” proposals

Phase 1 – Stoneleigh Island

Phase 2 – WW Heath

Phase 3 -

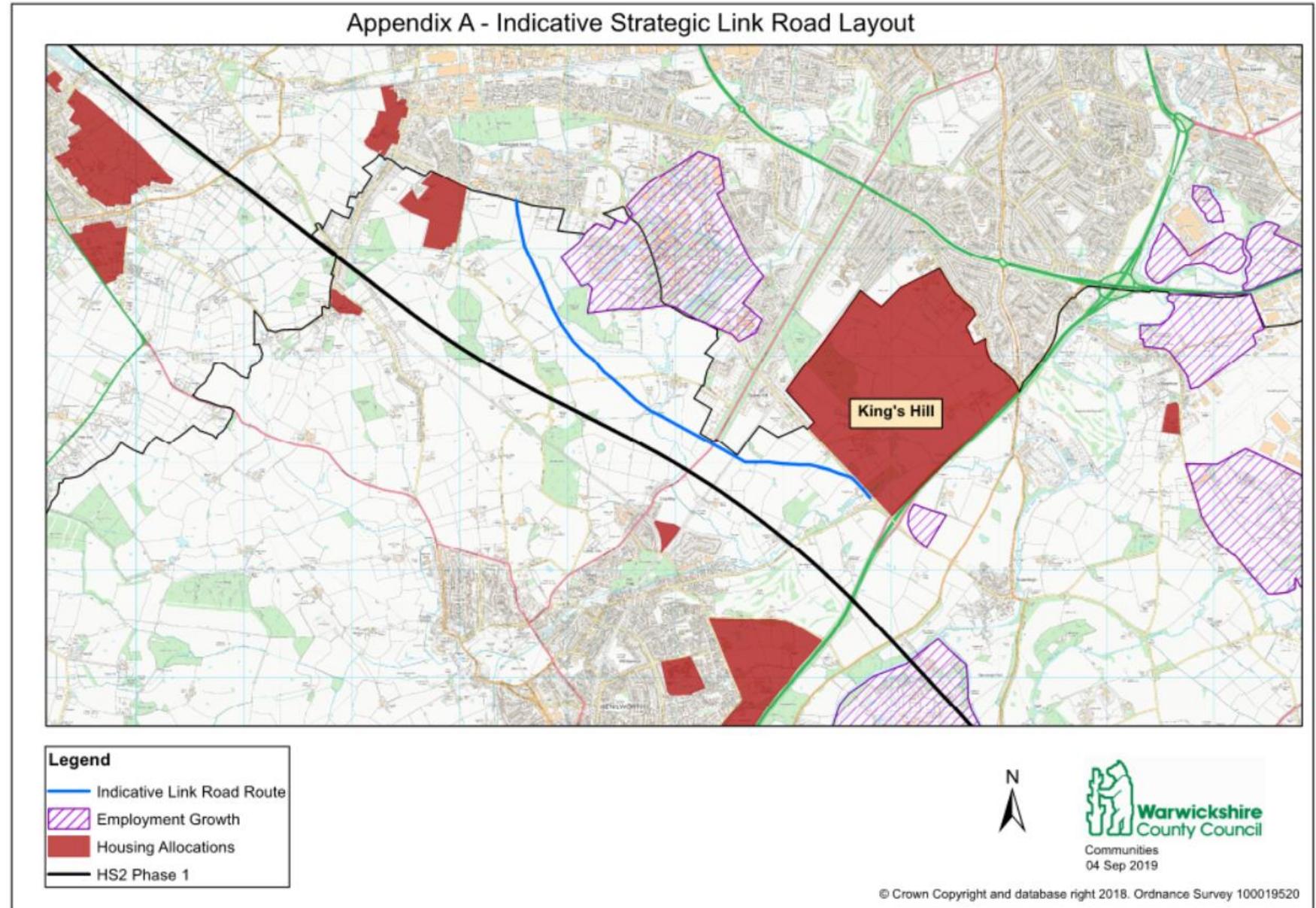
A46 linking with A45 or  
Balsall Common A452

October 2018

FOI Request reveals route planning for links, including crossing Burton Green

September 2019

Indicative route, and WCC Cabinet agreed funding to explore options



# Outline of Proposals

# November 2020 – Outline of proposals

Note – none of the proposals contain a direct link to the A45

## Option 1

No infrastructure improvements

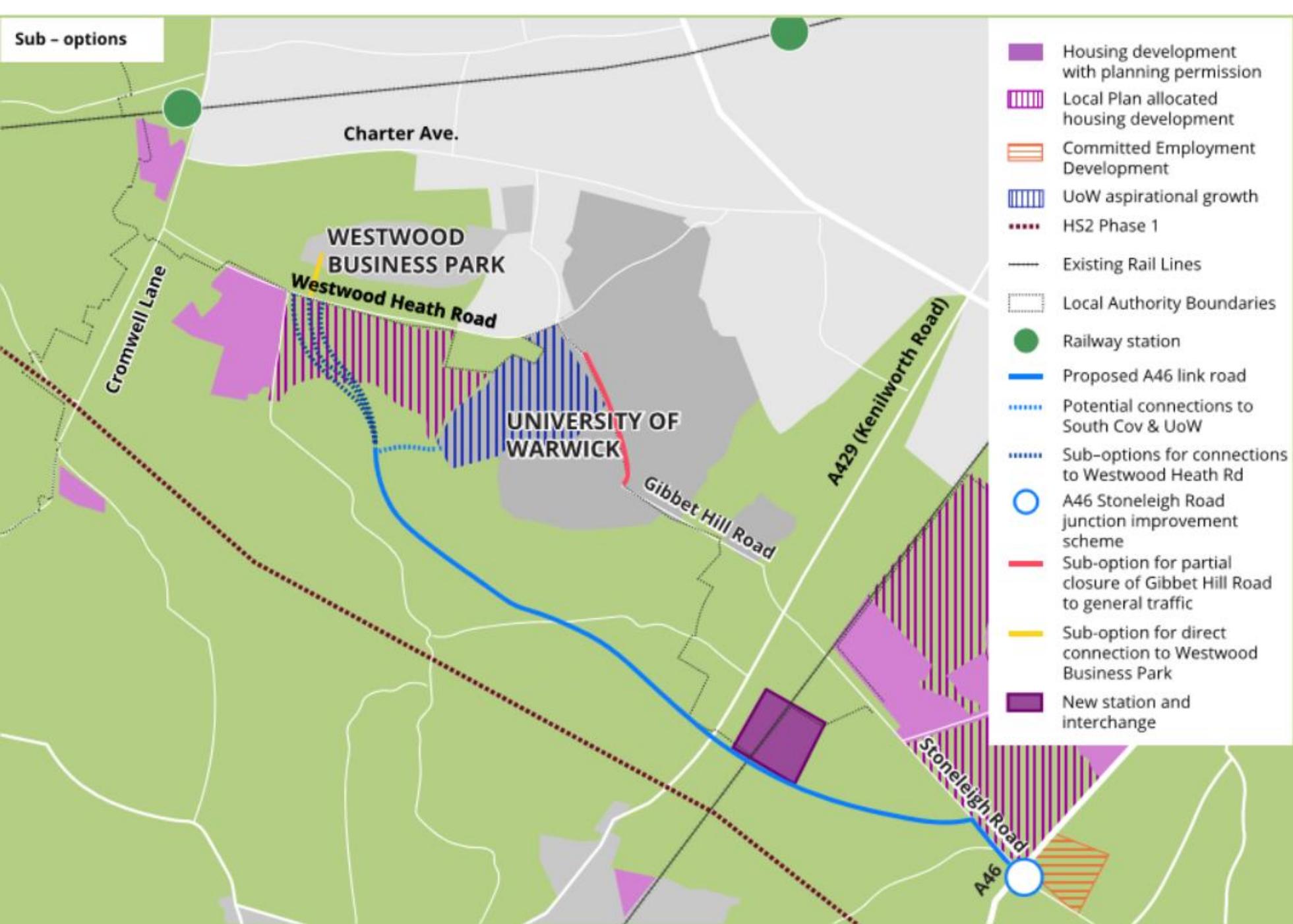
## Option 2

New link road to A429 Kenilworth Road

## Option 3

New link road to south of Coventry and University of Warwick

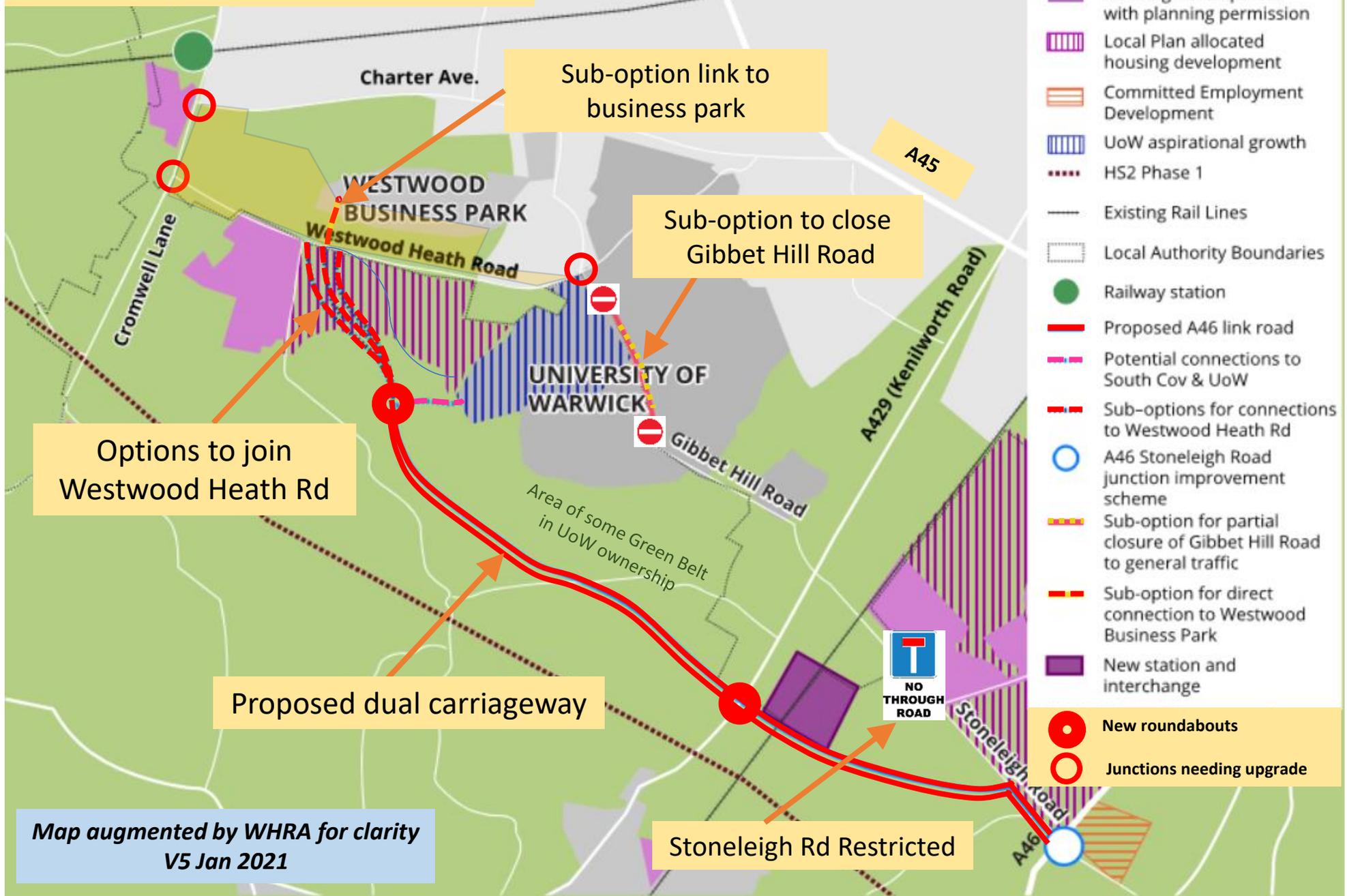
1. Sub-option to close Gibbet Hill Road to through Traffic
2. Sub option to provide access to Westwood Business Park from WWH Road



## November 2020 Proposals

- Little change in route
- Addition of *optional (!?)* spur to UoW
- “Options” for joining WWHR
  - Curious?
- Sub-option to close Gibbet Hill Road to through traffic
- Sub-option to introduce restrictions on Stoneleigh Road (not shown)
- The map did not do justice to the extent of the scheme so we augmented it....

# Map of "Option 3" and Sub-Options

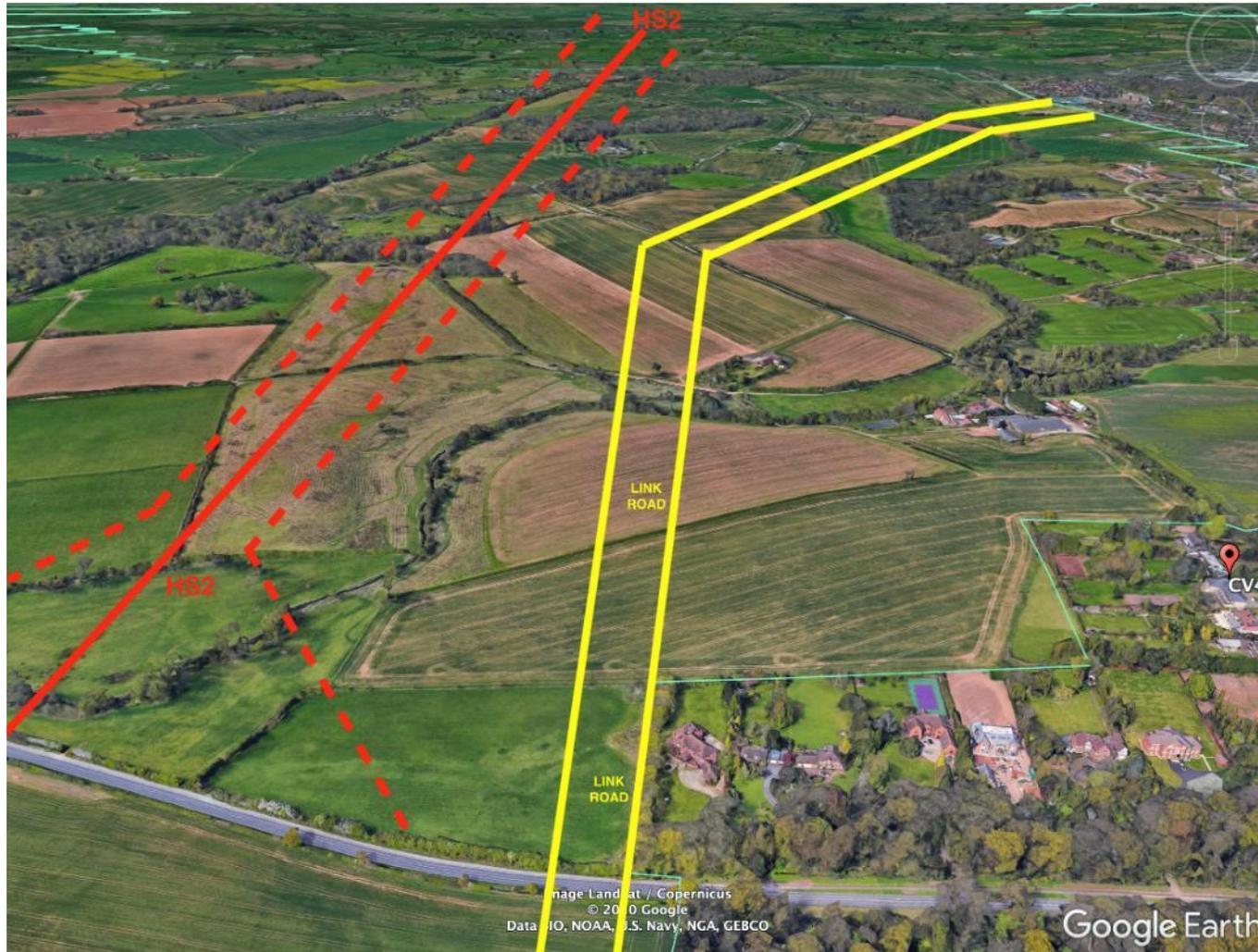


- Housing development with planning permission
- Local Plan allocated housing development
- Committed Employment Development
- UoW aspirational growth
- HS2 Phase 1
- Existing Rail Lines
- Local Authority Boundaries
- Railway station
- Proposed A46 link road
- Potential connections to South Cov & UoW
- Sub-options for connections to Westwood Heath Rd
- A46 Stoneleigh Road junction improvement scheme
- Sub-option for partial closure of Gibbet Hill Road to general traffic
- Sub-option for direct connection to Westwood Business Park
- New station and interchange
- New roundabouts
- Junctions needing upgrade

Map augmented by WHRA for clarity  
V5 Jan 2021

Destruction of Green Belt  
and the wider context

# The Link Road takes another swathe out of the Green Belt, already decimated by HS2



Other areas are badly affected in the vicinity of the road:

- Parts of Kenilworth Road
- Cryfield Grange Road
- Crackley area
- Noise, vibration, air quality impacts across a wide area

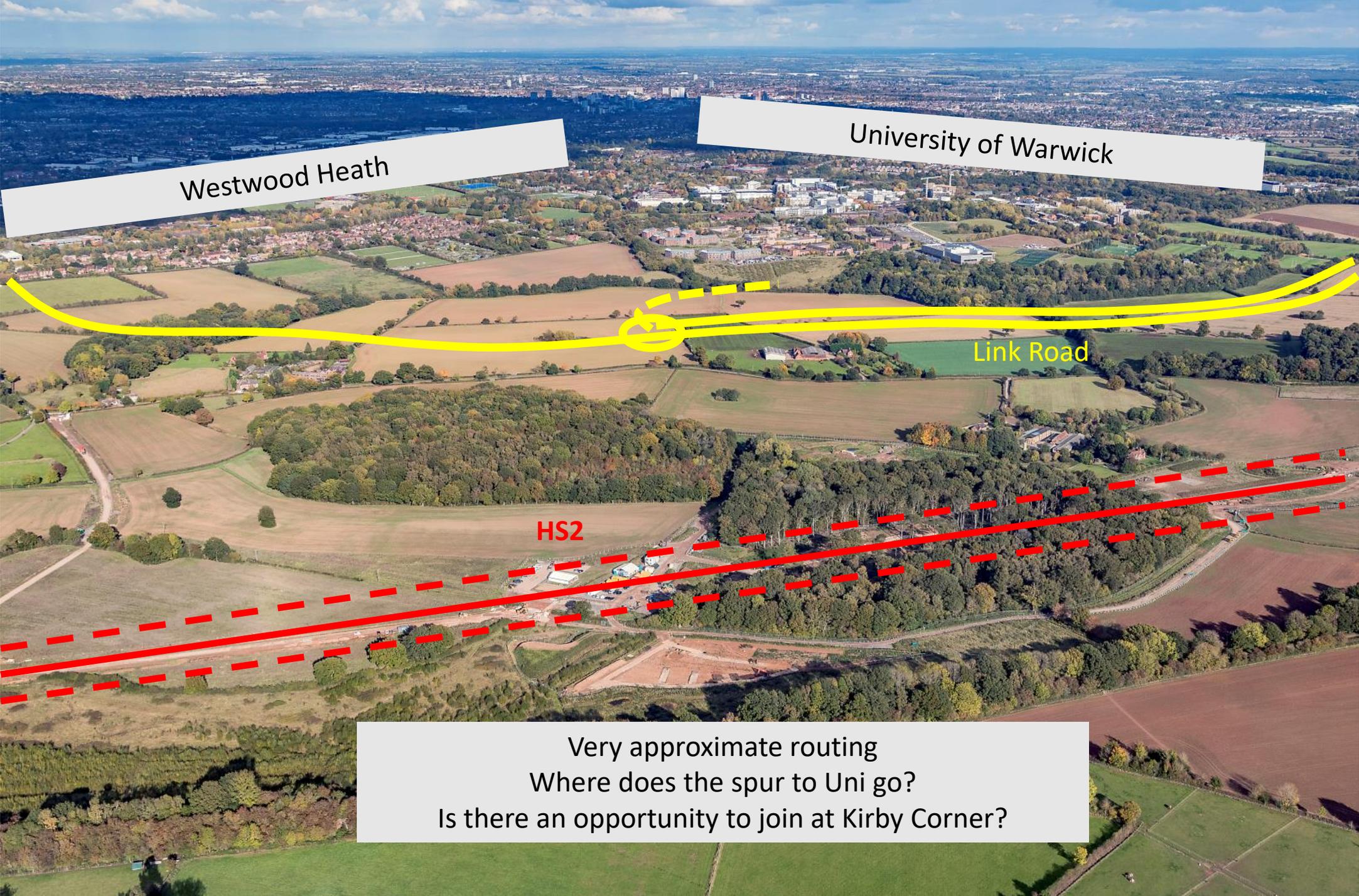
Westwood Heath

University of Warwick

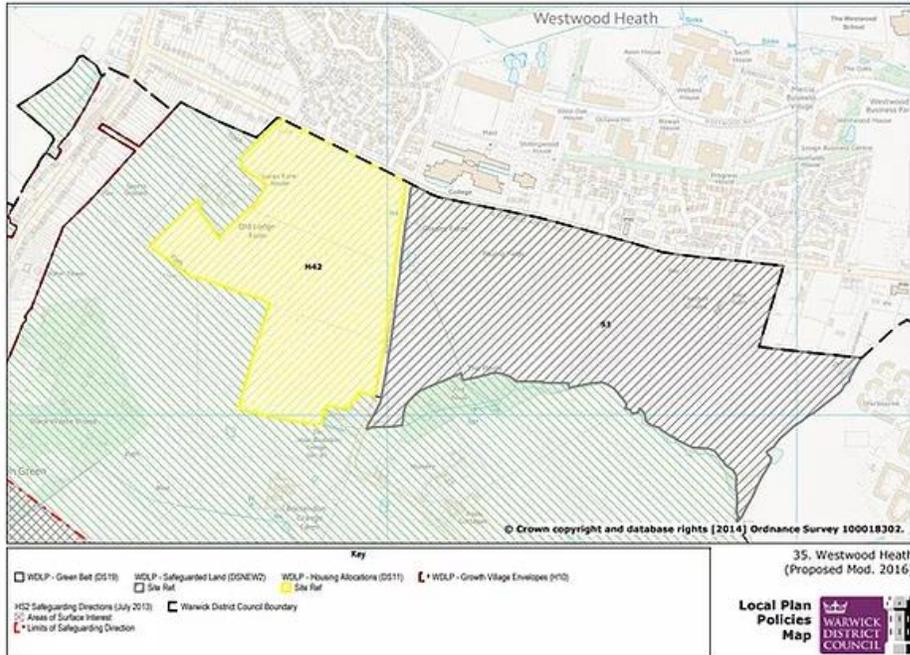
Link Road

HS2

Very approximate routing  
Where does the spur to Uni go?  
Is there an opportunity to join at Kirby Corner?



In addition to the direct threat to the Green Belt, further impact may result from “enabled” developments



Westwood Heath Safeguarded Land –  
i.e development not in the current  
Local Plan. 700-800 dwellings.

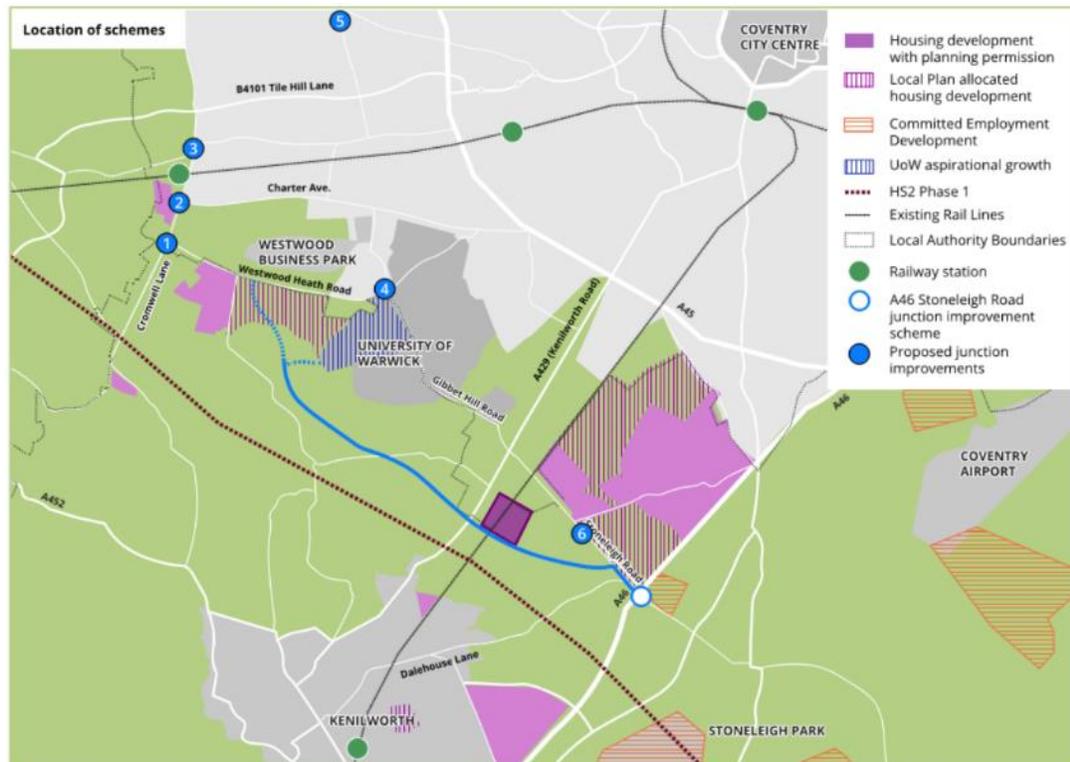
- The Modelling Assessment states that additional growth is intrinsically linked to the delivery of the link road:
  - 800 dwellings at DS21 off Westwood Heath Road
  - Increase Kings Hill from 2400 to 4000 dwellings
  - 20% growth in UoW Traffic
- There is no mention or modelling of the announced intention of UoW and CCFC to site a stadium in the area

# The Stadium



- Announced July 2020
- *“Both the University and the club (CCFC) are committed to a visionary, environmentally-friendly stadium in terms of materials, energy, noise, building and of course **access**”*
- **No other information has been forthcoming**
- **CCC and WDC have stated in Link Road Q&A that all they know is what is in the public domain**

Areas requiring traffic mitigation actions (e.g. junction improvements show the extent of the impact across broader communities



- This illustrates the intention to use the local road network to augment capacity on the A45 and provide an alternate route to the A46
- With a clean sheet of paper and £70m budget, why route traffic through built-up residential areas?

Why now?

# The case for “Do nothing” or “Delay”

- Radical change in commuting and remote working (and study) during the pandemic
  - Future travel may change forever – compelling business case & productivity
  - Future “steady state” not likely to be reached before YE 2021
- University of Warwick:
  - “Covid has affected many of the University’s future plans with reviews scheduled for the coming months...”
  - Plans to reduce travelling to campus:  
[https://warwick.ac.uk/services/estates/developments/our\\_future\\_campus/transport\\_and\\_mobility/](https://warwick.ac.uk/services/estates/developments/our_future_campus/transport_and_mobility/)
- Population figures used in the Local Plans for WDC and CCC are under review by the Statistics Regulator ahead of the scheduled Local Plan reviews & 2021 census, having been shown to have been over-egged

*These factors MUST be evaluated -  
Planning for growth that may not exist!*

Scope of consultation and  
relevance vs WCC cabinet paper

# Does the proposal meet the Sept 2019 WCC Cabinet brief?

- To facilitate and support the housing and employment proposals contained within the Local Plans for Warwick District and Coventry City
  - To support the growth aspirations of the University of Warwick (UoW), Stoneleigh Park and other key existing and proposed employment sites within the immediate area and wider A46 corridor in the context of the adopted Local Plans,
  - To ensure the Coventry and Warwickshire area is well connected to the economic opportunities which will arise as a result of growth and development in the region including HS2 and associated growth at UK Central;
  - To provide additional resilience to the Strategic Road Network (specifically the M6, M42, A46 and A45) through the delivery of a new high quality link.
  - To help reduce congestion in the A45 corridor which will allow further housing growth to come forward in North West, West and South West Coventry and parts of Warwick District; and
  - To unlock land to help realise the opportunity for a number of strategic sustainable transport infrastructure improvements in the area, including a new railway station to serve the University of Warwick, improved access to Tile Hill station, bus priority and a network of pedestrian and cycle routes.
- Population issues?
  - What are these *aspirational* plans?
  - How does HS2 help growth in this area?
  - Is this a “High Quality Link” – it is not a Strategic Road in the sense that the A45 and A46 are!
  - These could largely be achieved without the road link to WWH

# 2019 Cabinet continued...

2.5 The link road would see a transformational change in accessibility to the University of Warwick and the surrounding business parks and other employment areas through the provision of a new road linking the A46 at Stoneleigh with Westwood Heath via the A429 Kenilworth Road (close to the trace of HS2). This infrastructure will support the University of Warwick's long-term masterplan along with wider housing and employment proposals for the area. It will also help reduce the inappropriate use of minor roads such as Crackley Lane, Red Lane and Cromwell Lane for traffic wishing to access the University and its surrounding area.

- It *would* improve access to the University
- What are the trends in business park occupancy?
  - Two large sites lost to student accommodation (1300 rooms)
  - One large site lost to UoW
- Where is the UoW Masterplan?
- How does this reduce traffic on Red Land and Cromwell Lane?
- Intending the road to take volume from the A45 and A46 will increase traffic dramatically in WWH, Burton Green, Banner Lane, Broad Lane...

# Westwood Business Park



- Shrinking not growing!
- Pre-Covid-19 occupancy was greatly reduced:
  - 2 large employment venues demolished and replaced by student accommodation
  - 1 large employment venue has become a UoW research facility
  - Employment losses (e.g. Eon)
- Traffic volumes in the two years Pre-Covid-19 much reduced

# University of Warwick Masterplan(s)

The 2007 Masterplan has 8 overall project objectives:

- to plan for sustainable long term growth of the University to meet its strategic goals and Government objectives for higher education
- to plan for an integrated University optimising the use of its established successful campus
- to foster a 'campus community' where staff, students and those external to the University can come together to learn, study, research and interact to further human knowledge and understanding
- to provide a robust and flexible framework for development of the campus to meet current and future needs
- to provide residential accommodation on or near campus for a high proportion of students and an increasing number of staff to maximise their contribution to campus life
- to manage travel demand through a sustainable transport strategy to maximise accessibility of the University whilst mitigating the impact of traffic congestion on the area
- to pursue a sustainable future for the University and demonstrate long term stewardship of the environment by protecting and enhancing landscape character
- to develop further as a social and economic asset to the local community and the region, in broad accordance with government policy objectives

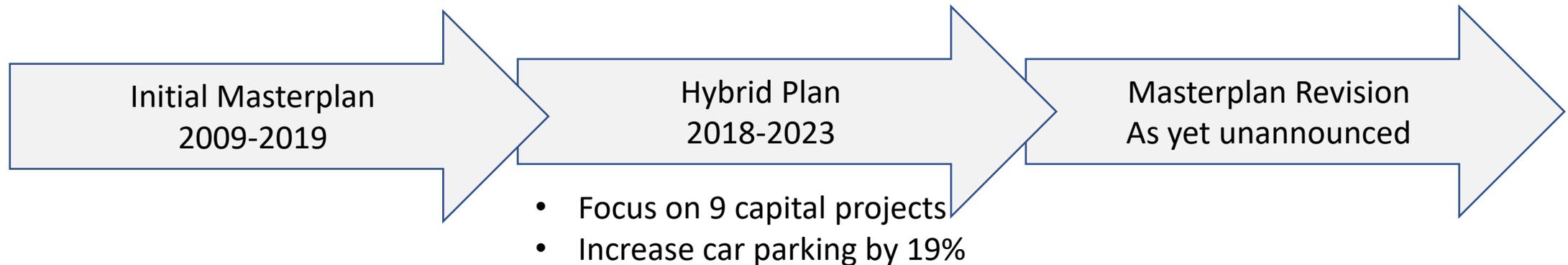


## The New Masterplan

- ▶ Embarking on new Masterplan with long term vision to 2030 and beyond
- ▶ Will take account of strategic transport infrastructure improvements eg link road, VLR, new rail station
- ▶ Series of public consultation sessions likely to be early 2019 – we'd like you to be part of this
- ▶ Once agreed by University, approval will be sought from the local planning authorities in a form to be agreed
- ▶ Masterplan could then replace/supersede the Capital Plan Hybrid Permission as it is implemented



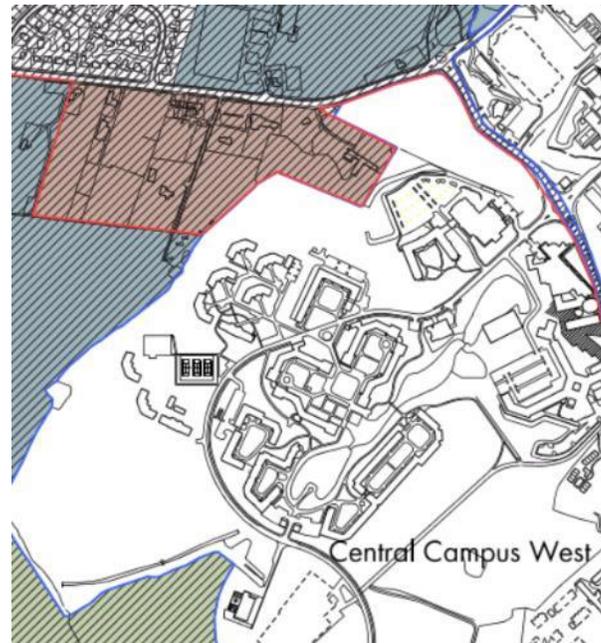
Source: UoW Hybrid Plan Presentation



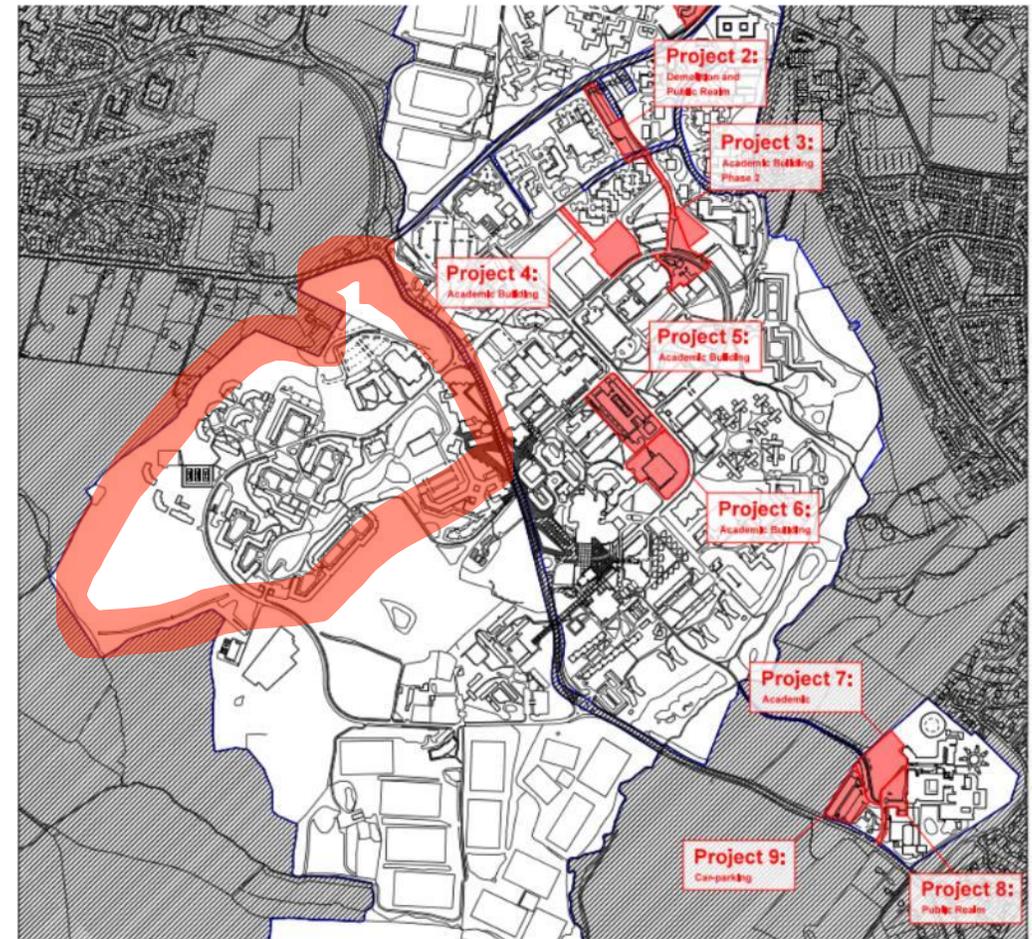
The area marked as 'aspirational growth' was from the UoW 2009-2019 Masterplan and has already been substantially developed, mainly with accommodation blocks. (It took several iterations to eventually get a grudging acknowledgement of this)



Source: WHRA Sept 2020



Source: UoW Hybrid Plan



The remainder does not feature in any current plan but would appear to be earmarked as an accommodation area.

Strategic Link?

# What constitutes a “Strategic” Road

- Westwood Heath Road
  - One with over 10 side roads, 60 drives, 10 commercial etc in a miles?
- Cromwell Lane
  - Similar issues
- There are other examples....



Moving the problem, not solving

# Immediately apparent issues & observations

- Bottlenecks remain at Cromwell Lane/Westwood Heath Road junction and beyond
- Traffic bypassed around Gibbet Hill and Stoneleigh Road but dumped on Westwood Heath Road & Cromwell Lane instead!?
- Cryfield Grange Road and parts of Kenilworth Road severely affected
- “Sub-option” to close Gibbet Hill Road – so all traffic would have to transit part of Westwood Heath Road
- **Displaces** rather than removes congestion, air quality issues etc
- Aspiration to cut rat runs on other local roads largely not met
- Increase of night-time traffic on Westwood Heath Road if Gibbet Hill closed

# Consultation flaws

# Initial leaflet drop



**How to participate**

1. Please register your interest at [a46linkroad@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:a46linkroad@warwickshire.gov.uk)
2. You will be emailed a link to the consultation

**Key Dates**

**Online Consultation Session One**  
Date: 17/12/2020  
Time: 7pm - 8pm  
Location: Microsoft Teams

**Online Consultation Session Two**  
Date: 07/01/2021  
Time: 7pm - 8pm  
Location: Microsoft Teams

For further information please contact us by phone on 01926418029 or by email at [a46linkroad@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:a46linkroad@warwickshire.gov.uk)

- Did not indicate the link road on the map! (But does have the 'future' rail station!?)
- Does show HS2 – although labelled it could easily be mistaken for the route!
- Initial distribution did not reach Westwood Heath and other local areas we checked
- Eventually delivered after the first video broadcast
- Some affected areas never received it
- Where did 11,000 leaflets go?

# Consultation flaws

- Major impacts are not obvious on first inspection
  - Dual carriageway to University entrance roundabout
  - Closure of Gibbet Hill Road
- University of Warwick “aspirational growth” area has already been built on
- Running over Xmas period in Covid-19 restricted area
  - Less opportunity to question
  - Consultation period was extended after a request, but no extra broadcast sessions
- Biased and incorrect evaluation of criteria
  - E.g. elimination of rat running not solved!!
- Documents designed for print but distributed online
  - Difficult to read e.g. complex tables with vertical writing
- Unbalanced treatment of ‘stakeholders’

# Which option should I choose?

## Option 1

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

## Option 2

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

## Option 3

How it meets the objectives:		
Maintain journey times following wider A46 development growth	Fully meets objective	Reduce severance
Provide accessible economic development	Fully meets objective	Improve air quality
Improve network resilience	Fully meets objective	Reduce rat-running
Improve access to University of Warwick	Fully meets objective	Enhance active travel

Key:	
Does not meet objective	Does not meet objective
Partly meets objective	Partly meets objective
Fully meets objective	Fully meets objective

Bias in the layout of the consultation paper would lead you directly to option 3 wouldn't it?

Consider for example:

- Air Quality has not been assessed at this stage – the answer is based on “faster traffic pollutes” less assertion (with no impact of extra traffic, or technical discussion of why!)
- Rat running on WWHR, Cromwell Lane and Pickford Green Lane increases *significantly* as a result of the scheme (Source: Modelling Assessment)
- Does adding a new road make it more, or less likely that folk will change transport mode – “active travel” assertion is based on running a cycle way and footpath alongside a dual carriageway.....

# Consultation flaws

- Broadcast events were useful but were very limited in the interaction you get in a face-to-face meeting
  - Questions were cherry-picked so more contentious issues were left out of the live broadcast (although they were answered in the Q&A writeup afterwards, the answers were not always accurate & unless people returned to the website to look, they'd be lost)
  - Some answers were dismissive – e.g. Population stats “A few people have claimed the numbers are misleading)
    - The “few” includes 12 Parish Councils / Residents Groups, 5 MPs, 5 Councillors, the West Midlands Mayor
- Qs sent by email have had a mixed standard of answers, some just plain wrong
  - Although the Q&A mechanism was fairly responsive
- Consultation map does not show Westwood Heath and Cromwell Lane (amongst others) as residential areas
  - Gives the appearance of the road avoiding residential areas

Other issues

# A45 and A46 Corridor

- Consultation document makes a big play of the employment opportunities in the “A46 Corridor”
  - Most of these lie off towards the airport and Whitley
  - This corridor improvement was already facilitated by the Stoneleigh roundabout improvement!
    - Where is the incremental need for WWH link?
- Impact of the Eastern Green SUE
  - Broadcast consultation stated that Eastern Green was a driver for the link road
  - The Eastern Green SUE Transport Assessment made no recommendation for this requirement (but is considered in the modelling assessment)
- Kings Hill SUE
  - Planning consent allows for an unusually delayed start – 15 years
  - If Kings Hill goes ahead, what is the assumption when it will have an impact?

# Conclusion

- The Link Road scheme started some years ago as linking up the A45 and A46 by a true “link” road
- The concept has been reduced in scope but has retained the link road name
- It does not warrant driving another swathe through the Green Belt & intentionally routing trunk road traffic through residential areas.
- The timing of the consultation takes no account of post-Covid-19 changes in the way of working
- The nearest response we can give is “Option 1 – do nothing” but the better action would be to have a response of “Re-evaluate the demand in the light of a Post-Covid-19 and results from 2021 census figures.

End of briefing