Safeguarding of Land for University of Warwick Multi-Modal Transport Interchange

Context and Background

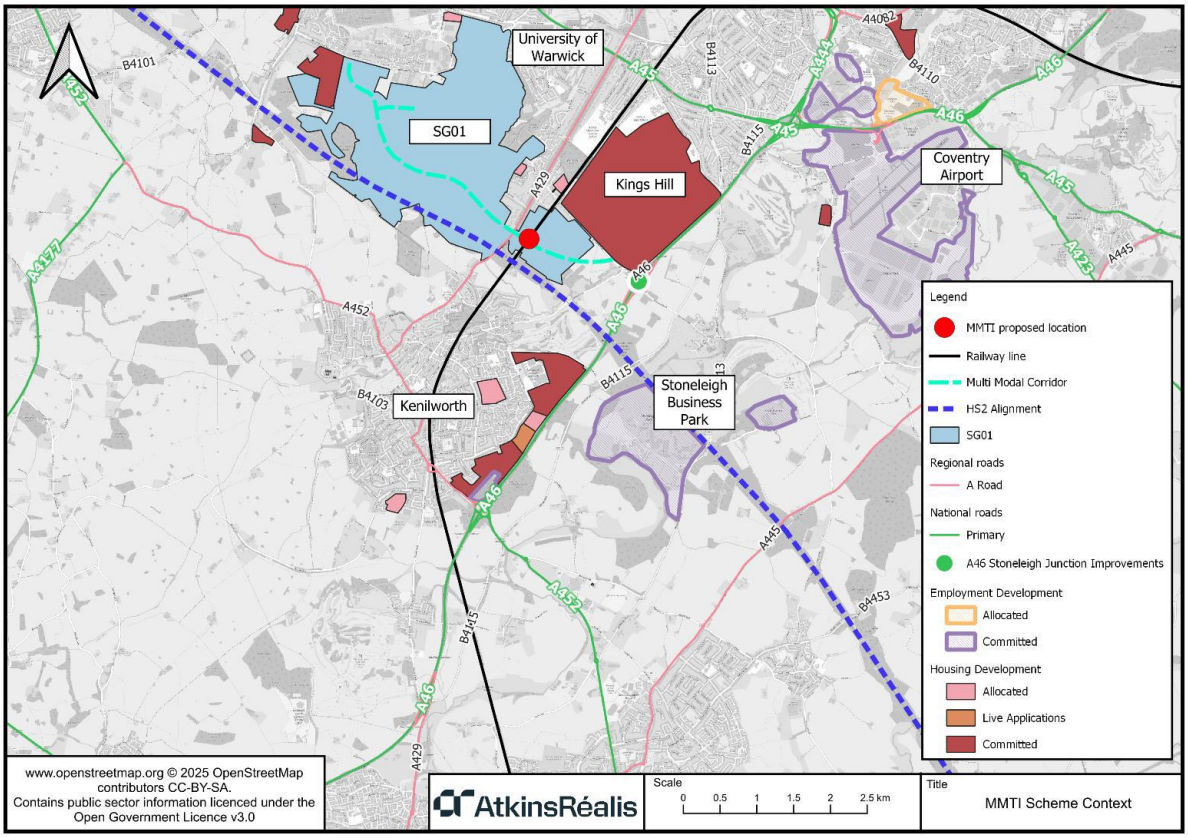
The opportunity to deliver a new Multi Modal Transport Interchange (MMTI) in the area adjacent to Kings Hill, north of the HS2 route, has the potential to be impacted by other development given existing and future growth pressures. Warwickshire County Council (WCC) would therefore like to request that Warwick District Council take the appropriate steps through the preparation of the South Warwickshire Local Plan to safeguard the land that will facilitate the opportunity for this MMTI facility to be delivered in the future. Significant work has been undertaken by WCC to refine the red line boundary submitted to WDC for safeguarding in 2025.

The County Council has identified the need for a new Multi-Modal Transport Interchange (MMTI) which would be located on the Elephant & Bear rail line, north of Kenilworth, close to the A429 Kenilworth Road and A46 trunk road. The MMTI will deliver a strategic infrastructure transport scheme that will address both existing transport challenges and support the significant long term growth aspirations across the Coventry and Warwickshire sub region.

The MMTI will consist of a park and ride facility with the ability to use different modes of onward travel to maximise connectivity. This would be delivered via a phased approach and would consist of;
Phase 1 – Bus based connectivity
Phase 2 – Very Light Rail
Phase 3 – Delivery of a heavy rail station and associated services

Figure 1 below shows the wider geographical context for the location of the proposed MMTI.

Figure 1 – Wider geographical context for proposed MMTI site



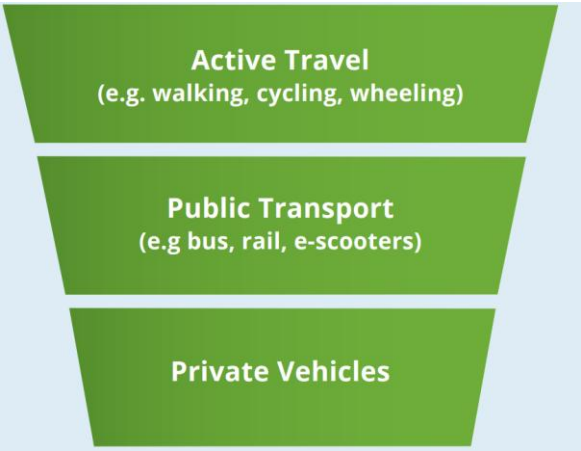
The opportunity to develop a MMTI at this location would be a major investment in transport infrastructure in the North of Kenilworth/South of Coventry (NoKSoC) area, The delivery of the MMTI would be supported by a high quality, integrated transport hub capable of supporting the multiple modes. The physical location of the MMTI and provision of high quality onward connectivity is designed to intercept car based travel at a key strategic location, thereby helping to reduce traffic volumes on more constrained and congested corridors. This will help to improve journey time reliability, provide positive air quality benefits and help contribute to higher usage of public transport.

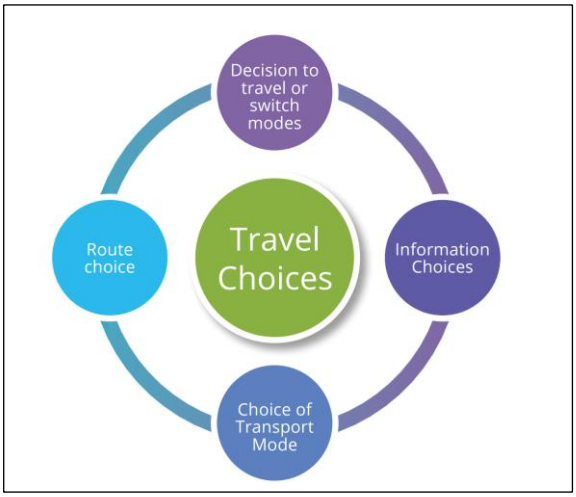
The facility would also contribute to the delivery of a Carbon Net Zero transport network and help maximise the benefits for Warwickshire and Coventry from key regional infrastructure schemes which are in development, specifically the proposals by Midlands Connect to increase the rail line capacity between Leamington Spa and Coventry and the development of VLR by Coventry City Council.

Policy Context

Local Policy

The delivery of a University of Warwick MMTI will help deliver a number of Warwickshire Local Transport Plan (LTP4) policies and strategies set out by the County Council. The delivery of the station will support the overarching LTP themes of Environment, Well-being, Place and Economy, supporting the delivery of the sustainable transport hierarchy and providing the opportunity for people to make a travel choice to switch from car to public transport, helping achieve Carbon Net Zero by 2050.





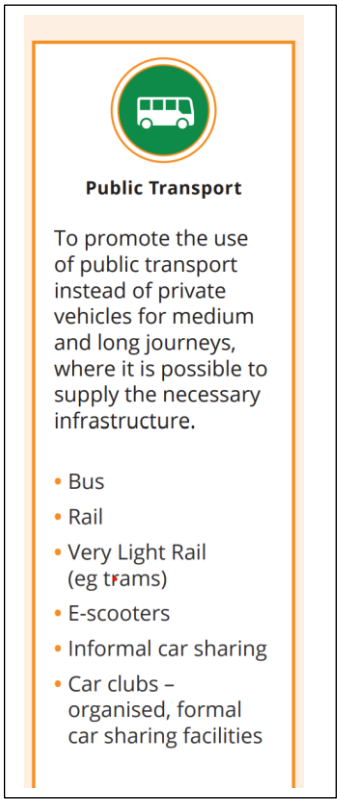
The delivery of the MMTI will support the delivery of LTP Key Policies 2 & 3 and the delivery of the wider Public Transport Strategy, in addition to the core policies set out in the Rail Strategy.

KP2 - Transport interventions which align with our Council Vision, government policy and as many of our four key strategy themes as possible

All policies and interventions will deliver benefits for the environment, wellbeing, place and/or economy. They will be designed to facilitate the right jobs, training, future skills, education, infrastructure and places. We will ensure that communities and individuals are supported to live safely, healthily, happily and independently. We want Warwickshire to be a prime example of a sustainable, net zero county.

KP3 - Decarbonising transport and transport related infrastructure

Transport contributes a greater proportion of carbon emissions than any other sector. WCC will pursue actions and objectives that seek to reduce pollution in general, and carbon emissions in particular, through a range of interventions. Car dependency will be discouraged, where suitable, in favour of more sustainable travel choices. We will consider the carbon cost of our activities on a cradle to grave basis, including new and improved transport infrastructure, such as roads, rail and bridges.



Public Transport

To promote the use of public transport instead of private vehicles for medium and long journeys, where it is possible to supply the necessary infrastructure.

- Bus
- Rail
- Very Light Rail (eg trams)
- E-scooters
- Informal car sharing
- Car clubs – organised, formal car sharing facilities

Warwickshire Rail Strategy Policies

Policy WRS1: Partnership.

The County Council will seek to engage and work with key partners to deliver improved rail services and facilities in Warwickshire.

Delivery of Warwickshire's rail aspirations will require the support of the wider rail industry, including Network Rail, TOCs, WMRE and DfT, along with key organisations such as Midlands Connect. Warwickshire will continue to engage with a wide range of partners to influence rail investment and service plans.

Policy WRS3: New rail services and stations

The County Council will develop proposals for new rail services and stations and work with partners to secure their delivery.

The proposed site will also support the aims and strategic objectives set out in the Coventry City Council Transport Strategy, namely:

1. Supporting the city's economic recovery and enabling long-term growth;
2. Delivering a sustainable, low carbon transport system;
3. Ensuring equality of opportunity; and
4. Maximising health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.

National Policy

The University of Warwick MMTI supports a range of national policies and strategies. These are include;

- Uk Infrastructure - A 10 year Strategy (2025)
- Decarbonising Transport; A better Greener Britain (2021)
- Gear Change – A bold vision for cycling and walking (2020)
- Clean Air Strategy 2019
- National Bus Strategy for England (2021)

Transportation makes a substantial contribution to CO_2 emissions due to the high levels of use of diesel and petrol vehicles. The delivery of the interchange facility will give people the choice to transfer from private car to bus/VLR or rail for r some trips, which will support the share of trips taken via sustainable modes,

Regional Policy

Midlands Connect

Midlands Connect is the Sub-National Transport Body for the pan-Midlands area, responsible for identifying and developing the strategic road and rail investment priorities which are needed across the East and West Midlands. One of the priority rail schemes which Midlands Connect is developing is the Leamington Corridor scheme. This will enable better access to the area, providing improved connections from South Warwickshire to Coventry and Birmingham Airport and increasing the frequency of longer-distance train services from Leamington Spa, Oxford and Reading. The infrastructure required for the delivery of this scheme is significant and will, as a minimum, require the double tracking of the railway between Leamington Spa (Milverton Junction) and Kenilworth.

To deliver the heavy rail element of the University of Warwick MMTI, full double-tracking between Leamington Spa and Coventry would be required. Whilst the full double-tracking of the line sits outside the direct scope of the Leamington Corridor scheme, Midlands Connect is considering the benefits of this as part of a a wider set of outcomes (local train service development, freight capacity, performance etc.) which the County Council is fully supportive of. Full double-tracking could enable a second local rail service to operate every hour, including calling at the MMTI.

West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE)

The delivery of the MMTI will support the wider objectives set out in the WMRE Rail Investment Strategy, specifically objectives 1,2 and 6, as set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: WMRE Rail Investment Strategy Strategic Objectives

	Strategic Objective	Desired outcomes
1	To support the recovery from Covid-19	Recovery of passenger volumes to pre-pandemic levels as soon as possible
2	To contribute to net zero	Modal shift from road to rail and a rolling programme of electrification
3	To deliver Midlands Rail Hub	Our key transport project that delivers improved connectivity across the region
4	To maximise the benefits of HS2 to the West Midlands	Improving access to HS2 from across the region and improving HS2 service offer
5	To develop high growth corridors whilst reducing social deprivation and levelling up	A train service on each corridor that matches demand whilst also providing access to jobs and education
6	To maximise access to the rail network	A network that is easy to use for all people, inclusively
7	To support the movement of goods by rail	A network that has the capacity and flexibility to carry more freight
8	To consider radical change in the long term	A plan that can be developed with industry support for the network needed in the 2050s

In addition, a proposed University of Warwick rail station is specifically mentioned in the Rail Investment Strategy for delivery of the heavy rail element of the MMTI between 2031 and 2040. The strategy acknowledges the infrastructure (full double-tracking of the Leamington Spa to Coventry line) required for the heavy rail element of the MMTI to be delivered.

Progress to Date

The County Council initially undertook a high-level assessment as to how the MMTI could potentially be delivered and where it could be located, this formed the basis of the original parcel of land put forward to be safeguarded. It was acknowledged at the time of submission that further work to refine the area of land to be safeguarded was required. This has now been undertaken and and the area of land to be safeguarded as been refined and the high level viability of the MMI has been assessed

The more recent study indicates that this strategic transport intervention will address existing transport challenges and support long term sustainable growth across the Coventry and Warwickshire sub region. The MMTI will provide a key sustainable transport hub that meets increasing travel demand driven by major housing, employment, and university expansion, alongside existing congestion and reliability issues on key corridors including the A429 and A46. At present, the local transport network experiences significant peak period pressures, with congestion concentrated at critical junctions. Journey time variability, heavy reliance on private car travel, and limited competitiveness of public transport combine to constrain accessibility and

reduce network resilience. Without intervention, these conditions are expected to deteriorate further as planned developments come forward as part of the South Warwickshire Local Plan (SWLP) process, risking both economic performance and environmental outcomes.

The MMTI provides a comprehensive, phased solution to these challenges by introducing a high quality, integrated transport hub capable of supporting multiple modes. The interchange is designed to intercept car based trips at a strategic point on the network before they reach the most congested urban approaches. This function is fundamental to reducing traffic volumes on constrained corridors, improving journey time reliability, and enabling a modal shift toward public transport and active travel.

Phased delivery

Subject to the development of a positive Business Case (in line with HM Treasury requirements) and funding delivery model, it is anticipated that the MMTI would be delivered in three phases. Due to existing transport infrastructure being under pressure it is not believed that additional housing development in the immediate area would be required to deliver the MMTI. Forecast modelling indicates that without intervention this pressure on the transport network will worsen significantly by 2041, constraining economic growth and undermining the delivery of housing and employment sites.

A funding delivery model has yet to be specified but is likely to be a blend of public and private finance.

Table 2: University of Warwick MMTI Phased Delivery Model

Delivery Phase & indicative delivery timeframe	Service provision and delivery
Phase 1 Late 2020's	Phase 1 would enable the delivery of a bus-based Park & Ride facility which would intercept trips from the Warwick/Kenilworth area and would include the delivery of a high- quality public transport interchange facility and car park, incorporating: • Appropriate quantities of vehicle parking to meet anticipated demand, including disabled provision; • Electric vehicle charging infrastructure; • High quality, secure cycle storage; • High quality passenger waiting facilities • Taxi drop-off/pick up facilities; and • High quality bus interchange facility (including a turning circle for a 12m long vehicle) It is anticipated that the MMTI will be provide up to 500 surface level car parking spaces initially. Modelling data indicates that based on a medium intercept rate around 548 spaces would be required. Further car parking could be

	provided via the installation of car park decking, subject to appropriate planning permission being granted. Delivery of Phase 1 will require: - Planning approval to develop the site - Acquisition of the required land - Capital funding to deliver passenger facilities and car park - Revenue funding to support bus service provision, if additional services are provided. - Provision of an adequate access to the site from the A429 Kenilworth Road (to be determined)
Phase 2 early 2030's	Phase 2 would enable facility served by the Very Light Network planned for delivery by Coventry City Council in line with the Coventry Transport Strategy. Precise routes and phasing will be dependent upon funding being secured, but a corridor for CVLR to run through the Kings Hill residential development is already identified, connecting to the Investment Zone centred on the Coventry Airport site near Baginton to the east and the University of Warwick campus to the west. It is likely that additional car parking will be required at this stage (up to 603 spaces based on medium intercept rates and does not include additional parking to cater for the University) It is anticiapted that this would be provided via decking of the surface level car park and would be subject to planning permission. Delivery of Phase 2 will require: - Transport and Works Act and other statutory approvals to be secured for construction and operation - Capital funding for infrastructure works - Revenue funding for VLR operations
Phase 3 Mid to late 2030's	Phase 3 of the MMTI would enable the site to be served by heavy rail. The station would be located on the Elephant & Bear Line, providing direct connectivity to Leamington Spa, Coventry and Nuneaton and excellent interchange opportunities to a wide range of regional and national destinations. In order to deliver phase 3 a small parcel of land on the east side of the railway has been included in the land put forward for safeguarding. This will enable the required railway infrastructure and accessible footbridge to be delivered. It is likely that phase 3 would incorporate further additional car parking capacity (approximately 200 spaces). This would be in the form of decking over the surface level car

	park and would be subject to planning permission being granted at the time. Delivery of Phase 3 will require; - Full Double-tracking of the rail line between Leamington Spa (Milverton Junction) and Coventry (Gibbet Hill Junction). The development of this scheme is being progressed through Midlands Connect, but given the scale of the infrastructure required, a decision to proceed and fund would be made by Central Government. - Provision of a second l rail service on the Elephant & Bear Line (or recast of how services operate along this route) and willingness of the Train Operator to serve the station - A new strategic highway link between the A46 Stoneleigh junction and the A429 Kenilworth Road (if this has not already been delivered as a result of local development). - Delivery funding.

Purpose of the facility

The emerging thinking regarding the trip types associated with the MMTI are set out below This sets out the various journey types and function of the MMTI in relation to the modes of public transport that could serve it. This indicates the potential demand associated with its function as, a) a Park & Ride facility for bus and/or very light rail (VLR) and b) as a railway station.

Trip types associated with multi-modal interchange MMTI as origin interchange for onward journeys		**MMTI as destination interchange**
Facility	P&R – bus & VLR	Rail
Final destination	Bus P&R - Coventry city centre VLR orbital – Coventry and Warwickshire Investment Zone, Coventry University	University of Warwick
Origin catchment	P&R: Kenilworth area Active travel: Kings Hill development, University of Warwick.	Rail: from Coventry, regional.
First mile/access mode assumption	Bus – walk up to 800 metres from the site, cycle 2km (needs a proper route and crossings). VLR - walk up to 800 metres from site, cycle up to 2km (expect this to be low as VLR route goes through Kings Hill). Bus & VLR - beyond 800 metres assume car access.	Not in scope.

Last mile mode assumption	Likely to be active travel, Public Transport Taxi.	To University of Warwick campus – active travel,bus accessing services on carriageway
Service stopping/routing assumption	Bus – assumption that they remain on carriageway rather than routing into site. There could be an opportunity to efficiently route through the site – e.g. in at Kenilworth Road, out on multi-modal corridor. (Site concept will include a bus facility, for rail replacement services and possible other bus route changes to extend to the site) VLR – assume stays on multi-modal corridor with stop facilities at this point.	1 train per hour (TPH) local Leamington Spa – Nuneaton service (calling at Leamington Spa, Kenilworth, University of Warwick, Coventry, Coventry Arena, Bedworth, Bermuda Park and Nuneaton). 1TPH long distance inter-regional service (e.g. Reading to Manchester Piccadilly)

University of Warwick MMTI – Site Location and Access

Work to identify potential suitable locations for the MMTI and associated car parking and station facilities has been undertaken. Given the significant constraints that already exist in the area (HS2 route, Leamington Spa to Coventry rail line, existing residential development and access constraints) there is a clear location where the site could be located. The initial land identified has been refined and is shown. Figure 1 outlines the revised red line boundary for which the land should be safeguarded for the MMTI).Access arrangements to the site would initially be from the A429 Kenilworth Road, until improved access via the planned multi-modal corridor link between the A46 Stoneleigh junction and A429 Kenilworth Road can be delivered. The more recent work confirms that the proposed site, between Coventry and Kenilworth, adjacent to the Elephant & Bear Line and close to the University of Warwick, offers the strongest combination of strategic fit, deliverability and future-proofing for an interchange in this corridor. This conclusion is supported by the Strategic Dimension evidence and the wider consideration of the constraints/opportunities. It is also reinforced by key stakeholder engagement .

Throughout the process to refine the amount and location of land to be safeguarded WCC have tried to ensure that the land safeguarded is proportionate in terms of being sufficient to maintain a deliverable site but not too extensive that it appears speculative and blocks development from coming forward,

Therefore, the proposed safeguarded land, is capable of accommodating the functional requirements of the phased MMTI facility, namely:

- **Core interchange footprint (all phases):** land for platforms (future), station building (future), bus interchange, pedestrian/cycle access, interchange public realm, and operational/service areas;
- **Phase 1 parking and access**: land for initial P&R parking and circulation, plus access junctions/links that enable safe access from the A429 and integration with the Multimodal Corridor;
- **Phased expansion / resilience within the site:** land to allow incremental expansion of parking and interchange capacity as demand grows and as later phases are progressed. This is evidenced by the report's demand and parking sensitivity

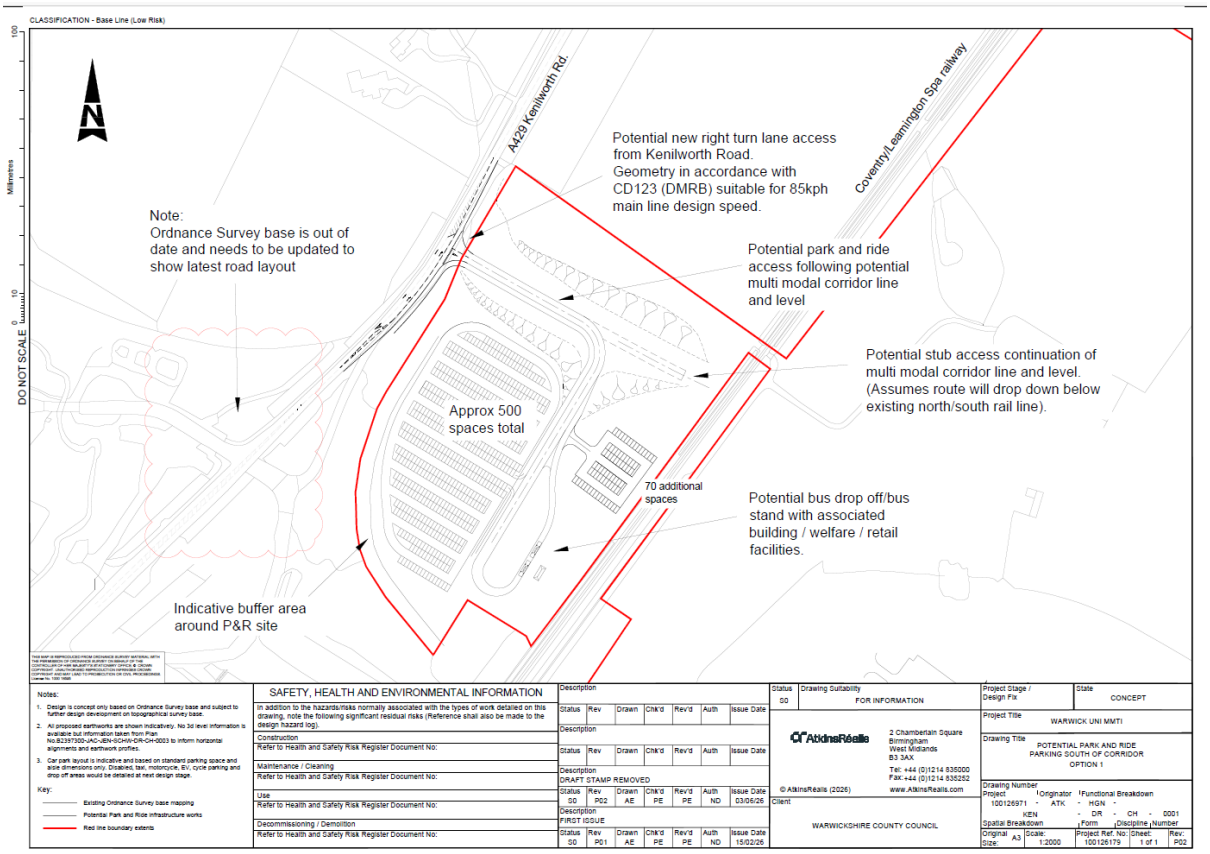
ranges (Section 7), which indicate that land take may need to accommodate growth beyond initial Phase 1 provision;

- **Future rail compatibility/passive provision:** land that enables station delivery without precluding future rail corridor enhancement, consistent with the report's recognition that heavy rail deliverability depends on rail capacity and service pattern development; and
- **Mitigation and place-making:** land for drainage attenuation, landscaping, buffers and biodiversity net gain where required, consistent with the opportunities and constraints described in Section 4.

Given the development pressure on land in the NoKSoC area and timing of the preparation of the South Warwickshire Local Plan, it would appear opportune to request that the identified site for the University of Warwick MMTI be safeguarded in the Local Plan to ensure that the opportunity to deliver this key transport facility is taken.

The land shown in figure 1 could provide approximately 500 surface level car parking spaces. This would broadly meet the anticipated need at the outset. Based on mid - range intercept rates plus the potential demand for parking from the University of Warwick when phase 3 of the site is delivered could see a requirement for up to 1015 car parking spaces. This could be accommodated via decking of the surface level car park, subject to planning approvals.

Figure 2 – Red Line Boundary for land to be safeguarded for MMTI



Green Belt Considerations

The identified site for the MMTI falls within land currently designated as Green Belt and this is a material planning consideration. However, the purpose of safeguarding is not to grant planning permission or approve a final design; it is to ensure that the Local Plan does not inadvertently foreclose a strategic infrastructure solution required to support sustainable growth and mode shift. National policy expects plans to identify and coordinate the provision of infrastructure, including transport infrastructure, alongside growth.

Any development located in the Green Belt will need to be carefully considered by the Local Authority in any potential review of Green Belt and removal of land from that designation. It is worth noting that when considering potential uses of land within the Green Belt, the National Planning Policy Framework states that:

155. *Certain other forms of development are also not inappropriate in the Green Belt provided they preserve its openness and do not conflict with the purposes of including land within it. These are:*
(c) local transport infrastructure which can demonstrate a requirement for a Green Belt location

Safeguarding the proposed interchange site is justified in this context because:

OFFICIAL

- The interchange is strategic supporting infrastructure for planned growth, with a clear role in reducing car dependency, supporting sustainable travel choices and addressing congestion pressures evidenced in the report;
- Potential Green Belt effects can be addressed through later design development, including consolidating built form within a defined node, integrating landscape and green infrastructure, and using mitigation land within the safeguarded site;
- The land's context is strongly influenced by existing and planned linear infrastructure (including HS2 and corridor proposals described in the study), meaning a consolidated interchange location enables a planned and mitigated approach rather than incremental and dispersed interventions.

Safeguarding therefore represents an appropriate plan-making action to retain an infrastructure option that aligns with sustainable transport outcomes while allowing the detailed Green Belt planning balance to be addressed at the consenting stage when the scheme design is sufficiently defined.

Wider Stakeholder Support and Engagement

Warwickshire County Council has engaged with a range of stakeholders in order to provide an overview of the proposal for the MMTI, the potential benefits of the scheme and highlight additional work that would be needed to develop the scheme proposals further in line with transport industry requirements.

The table below provides an overview of the key stakeholders that have the County Council has engaged with to date and a summary of their views on the proposal.

Table 3 – Stakeholder Engagement on the University of Warwick MMTI

Organisation	View of Organisation
West Midlands Rail Executive	Supportive of the indicative scheme, especially regarding the Phase 3 delivery of a heavy rail station. The station is identified in the WMRE Rail Investment Strategy with a planned delivery timeframe post-2031.
Midlands Connect	The County Council has been fully engaged with the Midlands Connect led 'Birmingham Airport Connectivity' scheme and has lent its support to the case for the full doubling of the rail line between Leamington Spa and Coventry in order to help secure a second local rail service. Midlands Connect understand the wider aspirations and are supportive of the concept of a MMTI. In conjunction with Network Rail, they are requesting a separate safeguarding through the South Warwickshire Local Plan for the land which is required to deliver the double-tracking.
Warwick District Council	Engagement with Warwick District Council officers has been positive and they have offered initial support for the concept of a MMTI facility in this broad location

	in helping meet existing and future trip-making in the immediate area.
Coventry City Council	Coventry City Council is supportive of an MMTI facility in this location and anticipate the site being served by their VLR scheme during Phase 2 of delivery. They are also supportive of the work which Midlands Connect has been progressing in relation to the Leamington corridorscheme.
University of Warwick	The University of Warwick is strongly supportive of a rail station to serve its education and research facility. This would allow students, employees and visitors to access the existing and future expanded Campus via sustainable transport means – thereby contributing positively towards its stated aims of encouraging and facilitating access by low carbon transport. Warwick University have indicted they are unable to increase car parking availability on campus and are looking to review on campus land use.
Network Rail	Engagement will be required with Network Rail regarding the siting of a heavy rail station at this location and the wider double-tracking works within the corridor. This will be sought as further feasibility and business case development is undertaken.
National Highways	Engagement will be required with National Highways regarding the traffic impacts of the MMTI facility at each of the three stages of its phased delivery, particularly in terms of the A46 Stoneleigh junction and wider A45/A46 corridor.

Next Steps and Programme of Work

Warwickshire County Council requests that the identified parcel of land is safeguarded via the Local Plan process. Work to develop a HM Treasury compliant Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) for the scheme will be prepared at the appropriate point.