



To: Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change: Councillor Tim Ward  
Report by: Head of Planning Services  
Relevant scrutiny Environment Scrutiny 08/10/2013  
committee: Committee  
Wards affected: All Wards

## **Cambridge City Council response to Highways Agency Consultation on Improvements to A14 between Ellington and Milton**

### **Non Key Decision**

#### **1. Executive summary**

- 1.1 Cambridge City Council has been consulted by the Highways Agency on proposed improvements to the A14 between Ellington and Milton.
- 1.2 This initial stage of public consultation runs from Monday 9 September to Sunday 13 October 2013.
- 1.3 Appendix A of this report includes the consultation document and Appendix B sets out the proposed representations to the Highways Agency, Appendix C has the previous consultation response to the last A14 scheme in 2009.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 This report is being submitted to the Environment Scrutiny Committee for prior consideration and comment before decision by the Executive Councillor for Planning and Climate Change.
- 2.2 The Executive Councillor is recommended to agree the City Council's proposed representations to the Highways Agency's consultation as set out in Appendix B.

#### **3. Background**

##### **Introduction**

- 3.1 In 2011/12, the Department for Transport carried out a detailed study of options for improving the section of the A14 between Ellington (near Huntingdon) and the Cambridge Northern Bypass. The Highways Agency has carried out a further assessment of these options and has developed proposals for a scheme which is now subject to initial public consultation between 9 September and 13 October 2013. Following this consultation, it is anticipated that the Highways Agency will announce a preferred route in late 2013. It is fair to say that the detail contained within the current consultation is still high level. The detail on particular issues of interest to the council is also not all available at the moment.
- 3.2 The proposed scheme starts at Ellington, on the existing A14 to the west of Huntingdon, before proceeding south and east to provide a new southern bypass to Huntingdon. The A1 trunk road would also be widened between Brampton and Alconbury to cope with additional traffic flows.
- 3.3. The existing A14 through Huntingdon would be de-trunked once the new scheme is completed and the bridge over the mainline railway, close to Huntingdon railway station would be demolished. The proposed scheme re-joins the existing A14 near Swavesey, and continues east as far as the M11 junction at Girton, along the line of the existing route, which would be widened to provide extra traffic capacity over this length. The Girton junction, which connects the A14, the M11, the A428 and an arterial route into Cambridge, would be modified to reduce congestion and improve safety. The proposed scheme then continues east along the Cambridge Northern Bypass. Junctions at Histon and Milton would be improved and the dual carriageway will be widened to provide extra capacity.

### **Development of the Proposed Option**

- 3.4 In 2001, the Government commissioned the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS). This study examined a range of options to address transport problems in the area and it made a number of recommendations relating to public transport improvements, the guided-busway, measures to constrain traffic movements in and close to Cambridge as well as improvements to the A14 to provide additional capacity. Detailed proposals were drawn up to upgrade the A14 between Ellington and Fen Ditton, however these were abandoned in 2010 following the Government's spending review.
- 3.5 In 2011 the Department for Transport commissioned a new study to look at other options, including rail-freight and public transport improvements. Six options emerged from the 2011 study; these are

set out on the consultation document at Appendix A. Option 7 which is effectively the current proposal is an amalgam of parts of the other options.

- 3.6 In analysing the six options the Highways Agency looked at:
- The Transport Benefits of the Scheme;
  - Journey times between Ellington and Fen Ditton;
  - Annual Journey time savings;
  - Benefit to cost ratio;
  - Road safety benefits;
  - Community impacts;
  - Environmental impacts; and
  - Cost of scheme.
- 3.7 Section 3.3 of the Highways Agency's Technical Review details their analysis of the options generated:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/243999/a14-technical-review-of-options.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/243999/a14-technical-review-of-options.pdf)
- 3.8 The proposed option was developed using elements of options 3 and 5 (set out in Appendix A) and following examination of the impact of the improvements on four sections of the A14, including the use of road tolls. The four sections were:

Element 1: the Huntingdon Southern Bypass, from Ellington to Swavesey, and the A1 trunk road between Brampton and Alconbury.

Element 2: the on-line section of the existing A14 between Swavesey and Girton, together with a new parallel route for local traffic.

Element 3: the link between the A14, M11 motorway, the A428 and Huntingdon Road at Girton.

Element 4: the Cambridge Northern Bypass between Girton and Milton.

### **Tolling**

- 3.9 The Government is proposing that the new road between Ellington and Swavesey will be subject to a toll on vehicles using the new road. The proposed charge could be between £1.00 and £1.50 for cars and light vehicles (current prices) and around double this amount for heavy goods vehicles. It is proposed that charges would apply between 0600 and 2200 seven days a week. The consultation paper states that the Government believes it is fair that road users should make a

direct contribution towards the improvement and that the toll revenue is an essential component in the business case for the road scheme.

- 3.10 In considering at what price to put the toll at, when the hours of charging should be and what part of the A14 should be subject to charging the Highways Agency have considered the overall scheme economics and the estimated number of vehicles likely to divert onto other routes to avoid paying tolls. They assert that the optimum tolling solution is one in which revenue from tolls makes a meaningful contribution to scheme costs, offers value for money to the user and minimises traffic diverting onto un-tolled routes.
- 3.11 The toll is proposed to be collected via automatic number plate recognition cameras, avoiding the need for queues and toll booths. Payment could be made either online or with physical payment options. Emergency vehicles would be exempt from tolls; foreign registered vehicles would not be exempt.
- 3.12 Most through-traffic is expected to use the toll road, as this will provide the fastest and most economical route. However, there exist a number of alternative routes that are likely to be used by local traffic and a small proportion of through-traffic.
- 3.13 Light vehicles would be able to use the de-trunked route of the former A14 through Huntingdon and a short length of Brampton Road.
- 3.14 Heavy traffic would have two non-tolled alternatives: either via the A1 and A428 from St Neots to Cambridge; or via the county A-roads through St Ives and the northern outskirts of Huntingdon.

### **Need for the Scheme**

- 3.15 The Highways Agency state that the following factors contribute to the need for the scheme:
- The existing A14 trunk road between Huntingdon and Cambridge is well known for congestion, delays and incidents;
  - The predominantly two-lane dual carriageway is unable to cope with daily volume of traffic;
  - There is significant use of the road by heavy goods vehicles;
  - The A14 is an important link between Britain and the east coast ports, and hence continental Europe;
  - Congestion on the A14 is a constraint on housing and economic growth in the Cambridge sub-region;
  - Traffic demand will rise in this region and the road which already has problems coping with traffic will worsen.

## Impact of the Scheme

3.16 The Highways Agency lists the impacts of the scheme as follows:

<i>Positive impacts</i>	<i>Negative Impacts</i>
Relief of traffic congestion on a critical link in the national transport network, providing more reliable journey times and making life easier and safer for businesses and commuters.	Landscape character in the floodplain of the River Ouse and across the open agricultural land along the route of the Huntingdon Southern Bypass, where it is recognised there will be significant impacts.
Unlocking economic growth potential by improving access to commercial districts, making it easier to travel to work and to do business in Cambridgeshire.	Light pollution in rural areas caused by road lighting, and how this can be minimised, including limiting its use to trunk road junctions where possible.
Enhancing national economic growth potential by increasing the capacity and resilience of a critical part of the Trans-European Network and by improving links to, and from, the east coast ports.	Air quality impacts including a potential deterioration in air quality resulting from higher traffic levels along the corridor.
Connecting communities by keeping heavy through-traffic out of villages, by reducing community severance, and by de-trunking the former A14 through Huntingdon to prioritise local needs.	Road traffic noise increases along sections of the scheme where traffic will increase and along the Huntingdon Southern Bypass, where screening and fencing will be necessary to mitigate the effects of noise.
Improving safety and reducing driver stress by keeping the right traffic on the right roads and providing safe local access for pedestrians and other non-motorised road users.	Construction impacts including noise, dust and air quality issues together with the disruption caused by construction vehicles and traffic management arrangements.
Improving the environment by de-trunking the existing route through Huntingdon, which will improve air quality and reduce traffic noise.	
Creating a positive legacy that enhances the reputation and attractiveness of Cambridgeshire and which establishes a distinctive	

## **Representations made to previous consultations**

- 3.17 Cambridge City Council has at previous consultations made representations on proposed improvements to the A14. These could be characterised as recognising that the congestions and accidents on the A14 indicate that improvements need to be made. However the Council has not been convinced that previous schemes proposed have been the best way to do that. These concerns centred on impacts on carbon emissions, increased traffic coming into Cambridge, air quality, noise, visual impact, floodrisk and construction impacts.
- 3.18 The Council previously urged consideration of alternatives to road building such as more provision of rail freight and rail infrastructure as well as incentives for freight to switch from road to rail. Furthermore the Council urged for measures to increase access to urban areas and increase use of public transport, for example more investment in Park and Ride, more and improved cycle routes and other urban access packages. Also electronic traffic management measures could reduce congestion and accidents while reducing carbon emissions, rather than increasing them. Measures that reduce speed and increase safety, such as more widespread use of Average Speed Cameras and Variable Message Signs (VMS) could be implemented. These have significant benefits in terms of accident reduction and some benefit in terms of increased traffic throughput. The Council's full representations from 2009 are set out in Appendix C.

## **The Proposed Scheme**

- 3.19 The scheme currently proposed is not dissimilar from the scheme that was withdrawn back in 2010; therefore a number of the previous issues raised by the Council are still relevant. These issues are set out in the previous report at Appendix C.

## **Next Steps**

- 3.20 Once the Highways Agency has submitted its Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Planning Inspectorate, a pre-examination stage will begin, during which time local authorities, individuals and interested groups will have a further opportunity to register representations. The Planning Inspectorate will then examine the DCO application together with representations made by the public and other interested parties. The examination normally takes up to six

months and further evidence may be sought during this time. Following the examination, the Planning Inspectorate will produce a report and will recommend to Government whether or not the scheme should proceed.

- 3.21 The Highways Agency anticipates that the Planning Inspectorate will be able to report to Government by the end of 2015 and that, subject to approval by the Secretary of State, it should be possible to begin construction by the end of 2016. Construction of the entire scheme, including associated de-trunking works, is expected to take between three and four years.

### **The 'Keep Cambridgeshire/Cambridge Moving Fund'**

- 3.22 Improvements to the A14 will have the potential for vehicles to get to the edge of Cambridge more easily in future. If this has the effect of increasing congestion on more minor roads entering the city and for unsustainable travel patterns proliferating then measures to mitigate that impact and manage that demand will need to be appropriately considered in concert with the wider project. The City Council is considering what additional measures it would want to see put in place to help manage demands on roads within Cambridge. Members will be aware that in May this year Environment Scrutiny Committee agreed the establishment of a 'Keep Cambridgeshire Moving Fund' for the city. This scope and extent of this fund will be discussed through the budget cycle this year.

## **4. Implications**

### **(a) Financial Implications**

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The Keep Cambridgeshire Moving Fund will be considered in detail through the budget process.

### **(b) Staffing Implications**

There are no direct staffing implications arising from this report.

### **(c) Equal Opportunities Implications**

There are no direct equal opportunities implications arising from this report.

### **(d) Environmental Implications**

There are no direct environmental implications arising from this report. However there are environmental implications from the A14 scheme that will need to be understood in detail.

(e) **Procurement**

There are no direct procurement implications arising from this report.

(f) **Consultation and communication**

There are no direct consultation and communication implications arising from this report.

(g) **Community Safety**

There are no direct community safety implications arising from this report.

## **5. Background papers**

5.1 The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme brochure;
- Technical review of options for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme
- Consultation responses to previous A14 schemes

## **6. Appendices**

- Appendix A: Highways Agency Consultation Document
- Appendix B: Draft Representations to the Highways Agency consultation
- Appendix C: Previous response to the A14 consultation

## **7. Inspection of papers**

7.1 To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact:

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