

**Cambridge to Huntingdon
improvement scheme** **A14**
Public consultation on route options
September 2013



Introduction

The Highways Agency (the Agency) is proposing a £1.5bn scheme to improve the A14 trunk road between Huntingdon and Cambridge, over approximately 25 miles.

The scheme will relieve congestion on one of the busiest stretches of the strategic road network between the West Midlands and the east coast ports. It will also enable local businesses to operate more effectively, allow a number of major residential developments to proceed and reduce congestion.

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 that it believes will meet strategic and local needs in the best way.

A public consultation exercise is being held between Monday 9 September and Sunday 13 October 2013 in order to gain your views on the proposed scheme, the tolling arrangements, and the other options considered.

Based on the consultation outcome, it is anticipated that a 'preferred route' announcement will be made in late 2013, allowing the Agency to protect the route against other forms of development while further design work is undertaken.

The project is classified by the *Planning Act 2008* as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP), which means that the Agency is required to apply for a Development Consent Order (DCO). The Agency will make this application in late 2014, but before doing so will conduct further consultation on the preferred route. The Planning Inspectorate will then seek the views of the public before carrying out a detailed examination of the application and advising the Government on whether or not the scheme should proceed.

The cost of developing the proposed scheme will be met from a number of sources. The largest proportion of funding will come from Central Government, but the local authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership in Greater Cambridge have pledged a total of £100m towards the costs of construction. In addition, it is proposed that a toll will be introduced on part of the route so that road users will make a contribution towards its costs.



Traffic congestion and delays are commonplace on the existing A14 between Cambridge and Huntingdon

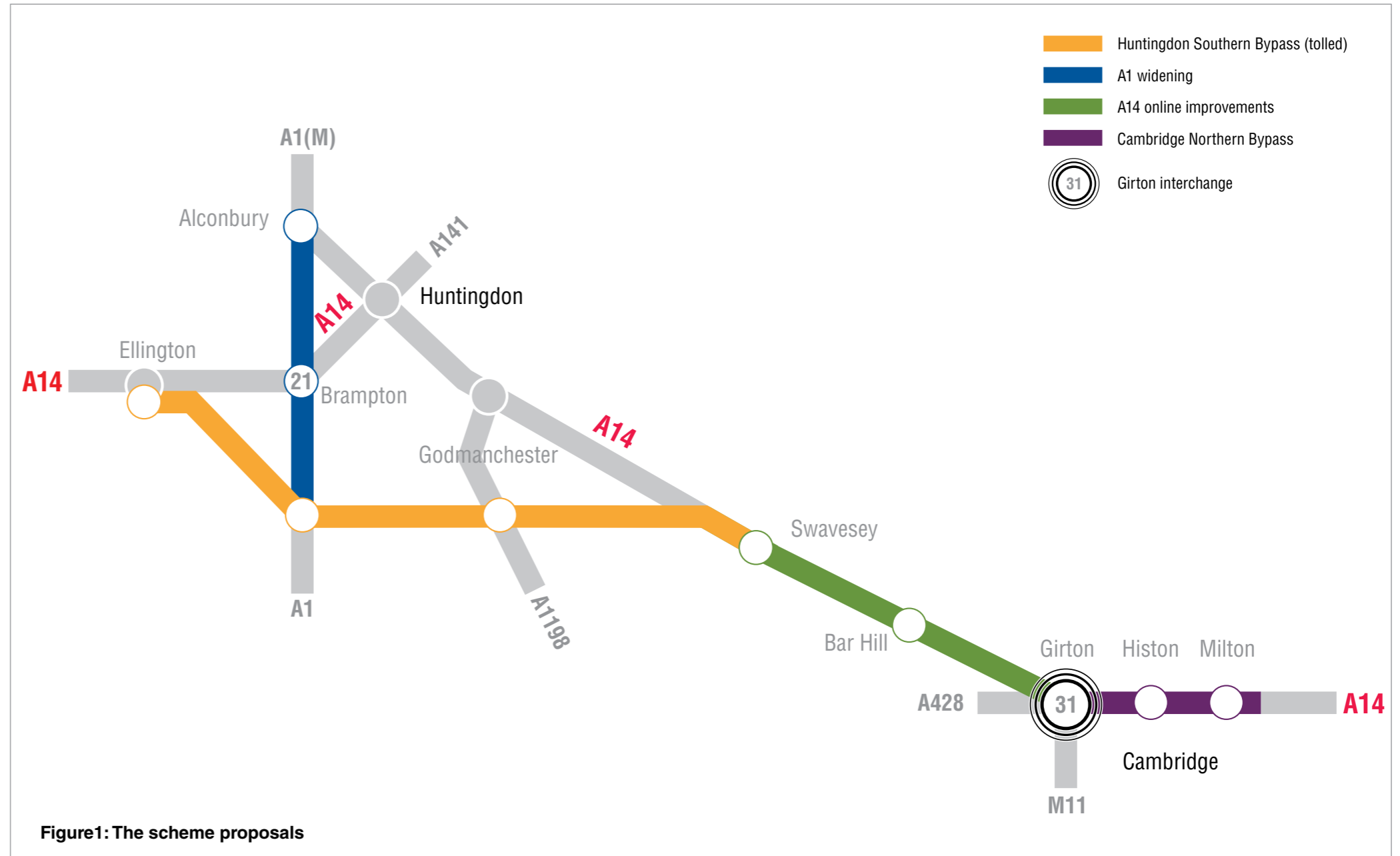
Scheme proposals

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 the town. The A1 trunk road will be widened between Brampton and Alconbury to cope with additional traffic flows.

The existing A14 through Huntingdon will no longer be needed as a strategic through-route and will be de-trunked once the new scheme is completed. The bridge over the mainline railway, close to Huntingdon Station, will be demolished.

The proposed scheme rejoins the existing A14 near the village of Swavesey, and continues east as far as the M11 junction at Girton, along the line of the existing route, which will 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, will be modified to reduce congestion and improve safety.

The proposed scheme will continue east along the Cambridge Northern Bypass. Junctions at Histon and Milton will be improved and the dual carriageway will be widened to provide extra capacity.



Tolling

Use of tolls to finance major highway infrastructure projects is not new in Britain and is the means by which the Queen Elizabeth Bridge at Dartford, the M6 Toll, and the Second Severn Crossing have all been funded. Not every new road project needs to be funded in this way but, because of the scale and cost of the A14 scheme, the Government believes it is fair that road users should make a direct contribution towards the cost of improvement. Toll revenue is therefore an essential component in the business case for this road scheme.

In this consultation exercise the Highways Agency is seeking the views of the public on the best, and most convenient, way that tolls could be applied and also on the lengths of road over which tolls would be charged.

The tolling strategy developed by the Agency has looked at the impact of different tolling options on overall scheme economics and has estimated the number of vehicles that are likely to divert onto other routes to avoid paying the tolls. 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 resulting from vehicles diverting onto alternative un-tolled routes.

The Agency has considered a wide range of tolling options, including different start and end points for the tolled section and a variety of charging arrangements. Each was tested against the benefits and income that it generated and the traffic levels that resulted on both the toll road and the un-tolled alternatives.

The proposed solution involves tolling the section of the new road between the Ellington and Swavesey junctions but not the A14 to the east of Swavesey or any part of the A1.

Other options that were considered included tolled sections from Ellington to Girton and Ellington to Milton, as well as tolling the existing route through Huntingdon, but these were discounted as they offered neither the strategic benefits nor the potential revenue of the proposed solution.

Tariffs have yet to be agreed but could be between £1.00 and £1.50 (current prices) for cars and other light vehicles, and around double this amount for heavy goods vehicles. It is proposed that charges would apply between the hours of 0600 and 2200 seven days a week.

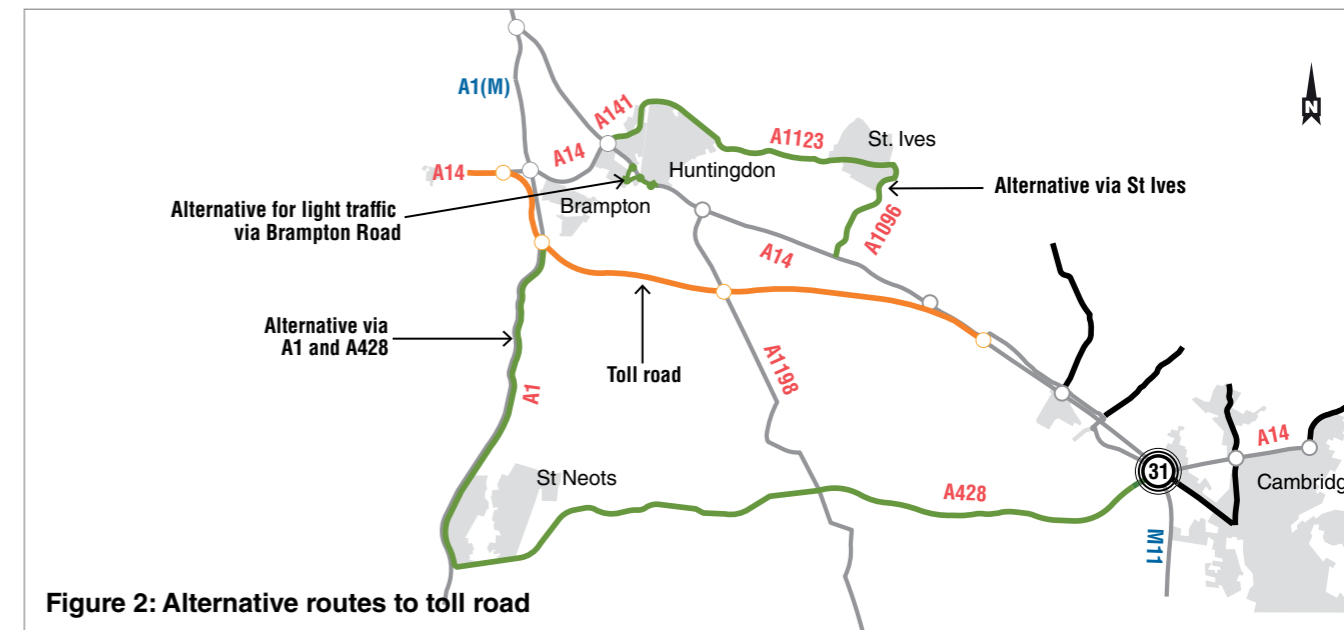


Figure 2: Alternative routes to toll road

Vehicles using the tolled section of road during charging hours would be identified using automatic number plate recognition cameras, which is an approach already used for the London congestion-charging scheme. As a result there would be no need for toll plazas and drivers would not need to queue in order to pay.

The Agency wants the payment of tolls to be a quick, simple and reliable process and would provide road users with a number of online, on-account, or physical payment options. There would be a limited number of exemptions from tolls, including emergency service vehicles. Foreign-registered vehicles would not be exempt from tolls.

Most through-traffic is expected to use the toll road, as this will provide the fastest and most economical route. However, there exists a number of alternative routes that are likely to be used by local traffic and a small proportion of through-traffic.

Light vehicles would be able to use the de-trunked route of the former A14 through Huntingdon and a short length of Brampton Road.

Heavy traffic would have two non-tolled alternatives: either via the A1 and the A428 from St Neots to Cambridge; or via the county A-roads through St Ives and the northern outskirts of Huntingdon.

Need for scheme

The existing A14 trunk road between Huntingdon and Cambridge is well known for congestion, delays and incidents. Built more than three decades ago, the predominantly two-lane dual carriageway is unable to cope with the daily volume of traffic that now uses it, and is in need of improvement.

Around 85,000 vehicles use this stretch of the A14 every day. This is significantly beyond the level of traffic that was expected when the road was built. In addition, around a quarter of this traffic comprises heavy goods vehicles - above the national average (of 10 per cent) for a road of this type.

The improvements to the A14 will combat congestion and unlock growth in the region by supporting business and allowing new areas to be developed. The importance of the A14 trunk road as a link between Britain and continental Europe is set to grow as the east coast Haven ports at Ipswich, Harwich and Felixstowe expand, bringing further growth to the region.

The scheme will improve connections between people and communities and create a safer road network. It will also provide a positive legacy for the region.

The Cambridge sub-region is one of the fastest growing areas of the United Kingdom in terms of population and economy. Between now and 2031, its population is expected to grow by 23 per cent, driving a 22 per cent increase in jobs. However, congestion is regularly cited by business as a constraint on growth. *The Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2011* notes that delivery of the joint development strategy for Cambridgeshire is threatened by congestion on the A14. Major developments, such as the new 10,000-home village at Northstowe, the Alconbury Enterprise Zone, and expansion on the northern and eastern fringes of Cambridge, all depend on an improved A14.

Traffic demand in the East of England region was predicted to increase by 26 per cent between 2010 and 2025* as a result of national growth in private car travel, increasing volumes of strategic freight traffic and localised population growth. Congestion on the roads will worsen as this additional traffic is introduced onto the network, and there will be longer daily commutes into, and out of, the area for the region's growing workforce.

* East of England region



Large housing development projects in Cambridgeshire are dependent upon the A14 improvement scheme

Impact of scheme

The proposed scheme provides a number of benefits to road users, businesses and the community, which include:

- **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
- **unlocking local economic growth** potential by improving access to commercial districts, making it easier to travel to work and to do business in Cambridgeshire
- **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
- **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

- **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
- **improving the environment** by de-trunking the existing route through Huntingdon, which will improve air quality and reduce road traffic noise
- **creating a positive legacy** that enhances the reputation and attractiveness of Cambridgeshire and which establishes a distinctive gateway to a region known for excellence in science and learning.

The Agency acknowledges that not all the impacts of the scheme will be positive and will be undertaking a more detailed environmental impact assessment at the next stage of the project. This will consider:

- **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

- **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
- **air quality impacts** including a potential deterioration in air quality resulting from higher traffic levels along the corridor
- **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
- **construction impacts** including noise, dust and air quality issues together with the disruption caused by construction vehicles and traffic management arrangements

The Agency is seeking the views of the public on the positive and negative impacts of the scheme on the community and environment, and welcomes suggestions on how these might be considered further as the scheme proposals are developed.



Route options

In 2001, the Government commissioned the Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (CHUMMS). The study examined a range of options to address transport problems in the area and recommended improvements in public transport – including the development of a guided bus-way – together with a series of measures to constrain traffic movements in Cambridge city centre and in some of the surrounding villages. These recommendations have now all been implemented.

The study also recommended improvements to the A14 trunk road to provide additional capacity and to relieve traffic congestion.

Proposals were drawn up for an extensive improvement scheme, extending from Ellington (to the west of Huntingdon) to Fen Ditton (to the east of Cambridge), but these were subsequently dropped in 2010 following the Government's spending review.

However, the need for improvement on the A14 remained and the Department for Transport commissioned a 12-month study in 2011 to examine other options, including rail-freight and public transport improvements.

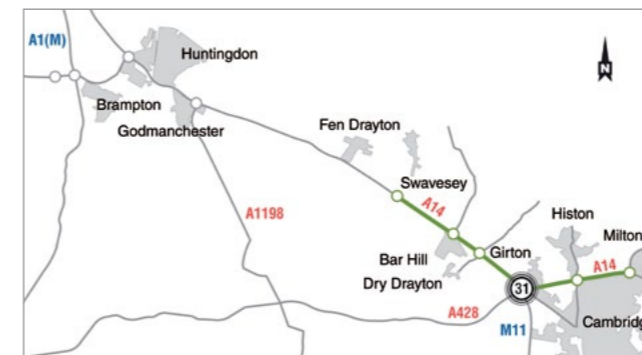
Six viable highway packages also emerged from the study and these were evaluated against traffic, economic, environmental and social criteria.

The A14 study concluded, in 2012, that options three and five offered the best overall solutions and provided the best value for money. Option three offered the best route around Huntingdon and enabled the A14 to be de-trunked through the town. Option five included the most effective solution for dealing with local traffic between Huntingdon and Cambridge.

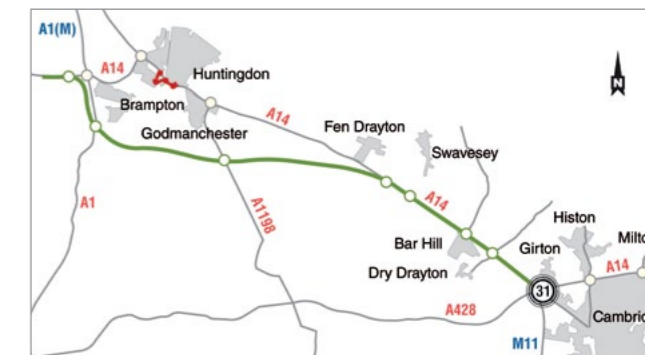
The final stage in the A14 study was to consider the suitability of these highway packages for tolling and how elements of the various options could be combined in different ways to provide the optimum solution.

The six highway packages are illustrated on the following pages and your views are sought on the benefits and impacts of these to travellers, to the community, and to local businesses.

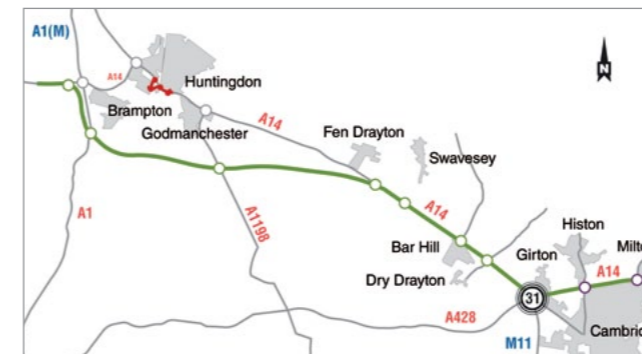
Option 1



Option 2



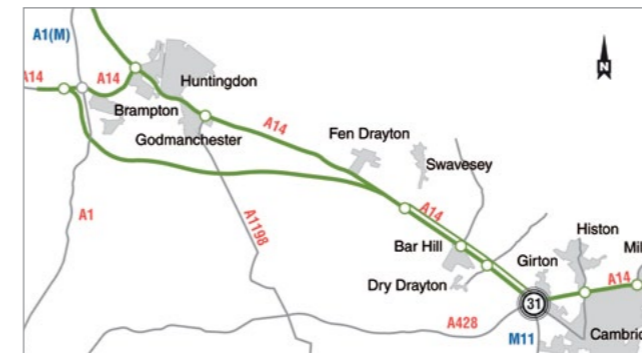
Option 3



Option 4



Option 5



Option 6

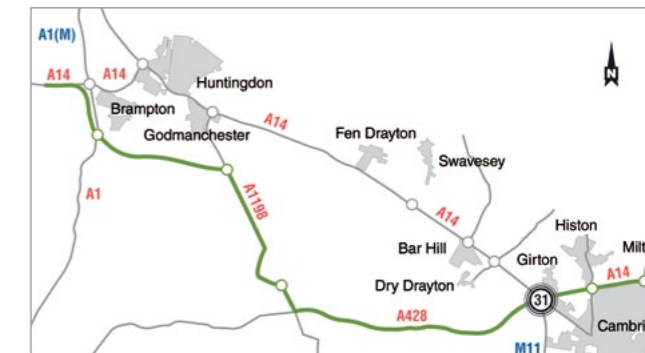


Figure 3: The A14 study options

	Description	Findings
Option 1	Improvement of Cambridge Northern Bypass, enhancement of Girton junction, and the provision of local access roads between Girton and Trinity Foot. Retention of the existing A14 trunk road between Trinity Foot and Ellington.	This option was not taken forward because it offered lower journey time savings than others, did not resolve many of the transport problems in the A14 corridor, did not achieve environmental benefits in Huntingdon and did not support plans for development on the western side of Huntingdon.
Option 2	No improvement of Cambridge Northern Bypass, limited enhancement of Girton junction, online widening and new junctions between Trinity Foot and Girton. Construction of a D3AP Huntingdon Southern Bypass between Trinity Foot and Ellington with an A1 junction at Brampton. De-trunking of bypassed sections of A14 and removal of the A14 viaduct across the East Coast Mainline.	This option was not taken forward because it did not resolve congestion and safety issues on the Cambridge Northern Bypass, did not provide adequate resilience in the event of accidents and breakdowns, did not support development on the northern and eastern fringes of Cambridge and offered lower value for money than other options.
Option 3	Improvement of the Cambridge Northern Bypass, limited enhancement of Girton junction, online widening and new junctions between Trinity Foot and Girton. Construction of a D3AP Huntingdon Southern Bypass between Trinity Foot and Ellington with an A1 junction at Brampton. De-trunking of bypassed sections of A14 and removal of the the A14 viaduct across the East Coast Mainline.	This option had some merit and had elements that warranted further consideration. But the option maintained existing side-road and property accesses onto the A14, with resulting safety and congestion impacts. It resulted in higher vehicle emissions than options with local access roads and did not provide resilience in case of accidents and breakdowns.
Option 4	Improvement of the Cambridge Northern Bypass, limited enhancement of Girton junction, online widening and new junctions between Trinity Foot and Girton. Construction of a D2AP Huntingdon Southern Bypass between Trinity Foot and Ellington (no junction with the A1). Existing A14 past Huntingdon retained.	This option was not taken forward because it retained accesses onto the A14, with resulting impacts on safety and congestion. It did not achieve the benefits of removing the A14 viaduct over the mainline railway in Huntingdon and did not support aspirations for development on the western side of Huntingdon.
Option 5	Improvement of Cambridge Northern Bypass, full enhancement of Girton junction, online widening and new junctions between Trinity Foot and Girton, together with new local access road. Construction of D2AP Huntingdon Southern Bypass between Trinity Foot and Ellington (no junction with A1). Existing A14 past Huntingdon retained.	This option had some merit and had elements that warranted further consideration. But the option did not achieve the local benefits of removing the A14 viaduct over the mainline railway and did not support aspirations for development on the western side of Huntingdon.
Option 6	Improvement of the Cambridge Northern Bypass, enhancement of Girton junction to enable free flow to A428. A428 widening to D4AP between Girton and Caxton Gibbet. A1198 widened to a D3AP north of Caxton Gibbet to the intersection with a D2AP Huntingdon Southern Bypass which continues west to Ellington with a junction onto A1 at Brampton. Existing A14 de-trunked between Girton and A1/A1(M).	This option was not taken forward because it offered lower journey time savings than most other options and would not resolve many of the transport problems in the A14 corridor. It generated the highest levels of vehicle emissions of all the options and offered the lowest value for money.

Proposed option

The Highways Agency has carried out further assessment of the six highway packages to develop a single scheme, which combines elements of options three and five in what it considers to be the most effective way.

The assessment has been carried out as four elements to identify the best solution for:

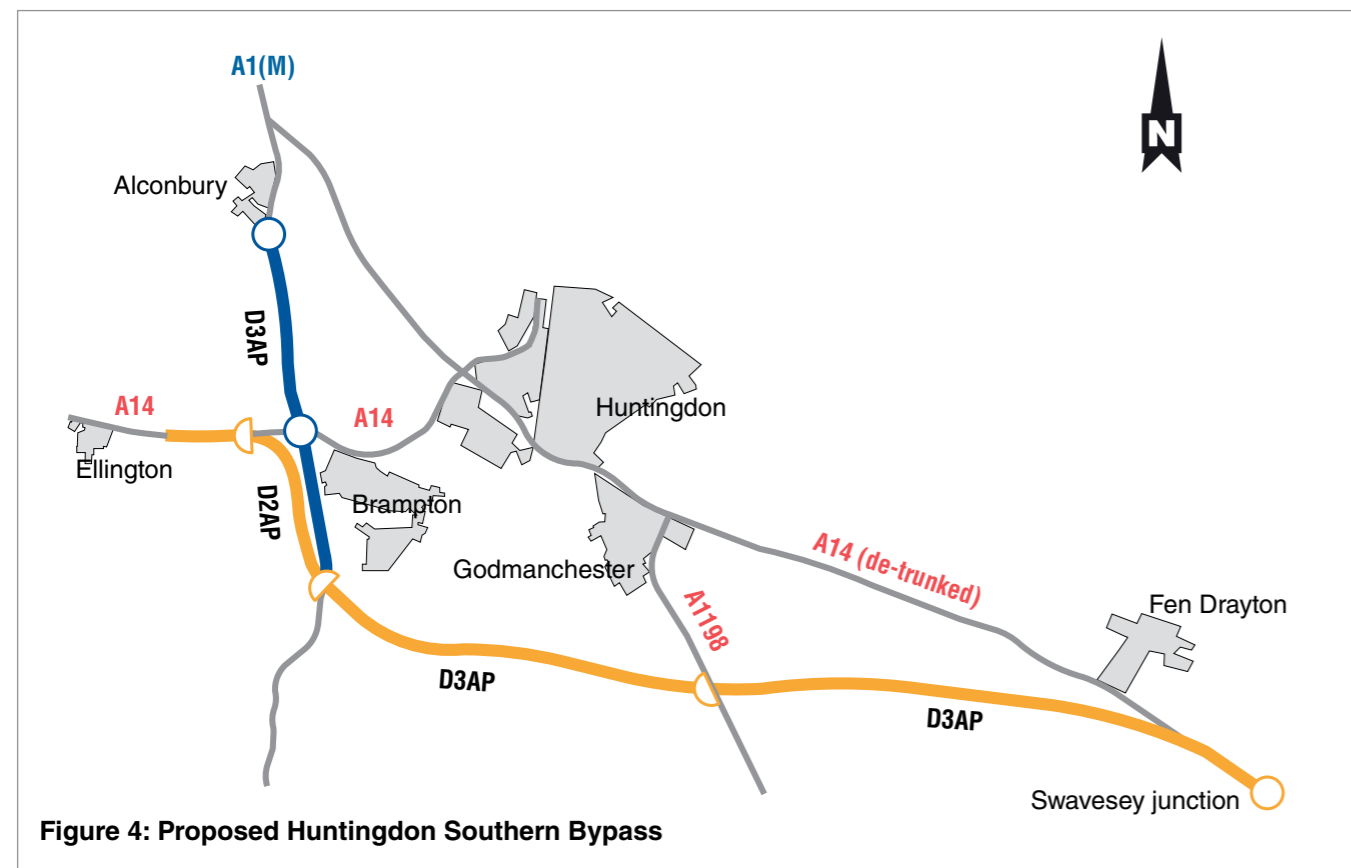
- **Element 1** – the Huntingdon Southern Bypass, from Ellington to Swavesey, and the A1 trunk road between Brampton and Alconbury
- **Element 2** – the on-line section of the existing A14 between Swavesey and Girton, together with a new parallel route for local traffic
- **Element 3** – the link between the A14, M11 motorway, the A428 and Huntingdon Road at Girton
- **Element 4** – the Cambridge Northern Bypass between Girton and Milton

This has involved a value-engineering exercise, which has helped the Highways Agency to identify technical solutions that can provide a similar level of benefits at a lower capital cost.

The result of this assessment process is described in more detail on the following pages of this leaflet. The Highways Agency is seeking the views of the public and other stakeholders on these proposals – and on the other six highway packages described previously – before a decision can be made on a ‘preferred route’ for the scheme.

Element 1

Huntingdon Southern Bypass



Key

 Huntingdon Southern Bypass (toll)

 A1 widening

D2AP: a dual carriageway all-purpose road with two lanes in each direction

D3AP: a dual carriageway all-purpose road with three lanes in each direction

The Highways Agency is proposing a new dual-carriageway southern bypass around Huntingdon, extending from the A14 at Ellington to a new junction at Swavesey. Limited movement junctions would be provided at Brampton and Godmanchester. Between Ellington and Brampton a dual carriageway with two lanes in each direction is proposed; from Brampton to Swavesey this increases to three lanes in each direction. The carriageway widths have been determined by looking at predicted traffic volumes more than a decade after opening.

It is proposed that tolls will be introduced on this section of road and will apply to vehicles travelling on any part of the route between Ellington and Swavesey.

The Highways Agency is also proposing to widen the A1 to three lanes in each direction between Alconbury and a new junction to the south west of Brampton in order to provide extra capacity for traffic moving between the A1 and the new Huntingdon Southern Bypass. There will be no tolls on the A1 trunk road.

The existing A14 will be de-trunked through Huntingdon and the road viaduct over the mainline railway will be demolished. An existing through-route for local traffic will be maintained via Brampton Road. This allows a number of environmental improvements to be made in Huntingdon and will result in a significant improvement in air quality close to the old A14 route.

The local authorities in Huntingdon are keen to exploit the wider social and economic benefits of de-trunking the A14 through the town.

Alternative route

Consideration was given to the possibility of retaining the existing A14 route through Huntingdon – as described in highway package option five – together with the construction of a dual two-lane Huntingdon Southern Bypass. However, this offers limited environmental benefits in Huntingdon, has broadly the same environmental disadvantages along the route of the southern bypass, and cannot achieve an acceptable level of tolling revenue as much of the through-traffic would be likely to use the un-tolled existing dual carriageway.

It is felt that this alternative route does not meet the strategic objectives for the scheme as well as the proposed route and provides less opportunity for local economic development and community benefits.

Element 2

A14 online improvement

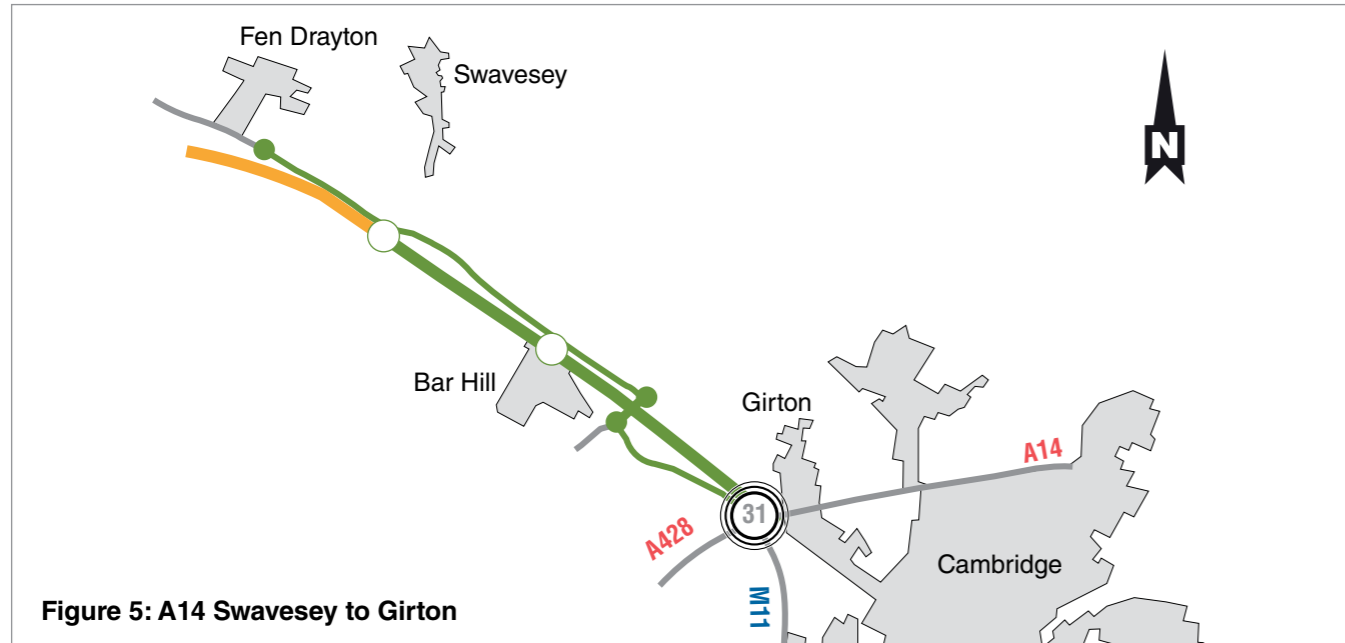


Figure 5: A14 Swavesey to Girton

The solution proposed between Swavesey junction and Girton involves widening the existing A14 to dual three-lane carriageway as far east as Bar Hill and then increasing to dual four-lane carriageway from Bar Hill to Girton.

New, improved junctions will be constructed at Swavesey and Bar Hill to maintain access to, and from, the A14 and to link with a new single-carriageway local access road, which will run alongside the A14 from Fen Drayton to Girton.

Existing access to the A14 at Dry Drayton would no longer be needed and would be closed.

The Agency considered options for tolling the whole length between Fen Drayton and Girton and for constructing a dual-carriageway local access road alongside the A14, but these were not taken forward because they were considered too expensive and because tolling would result in high traffic levels on the local access road.

Element 3

Girton junction

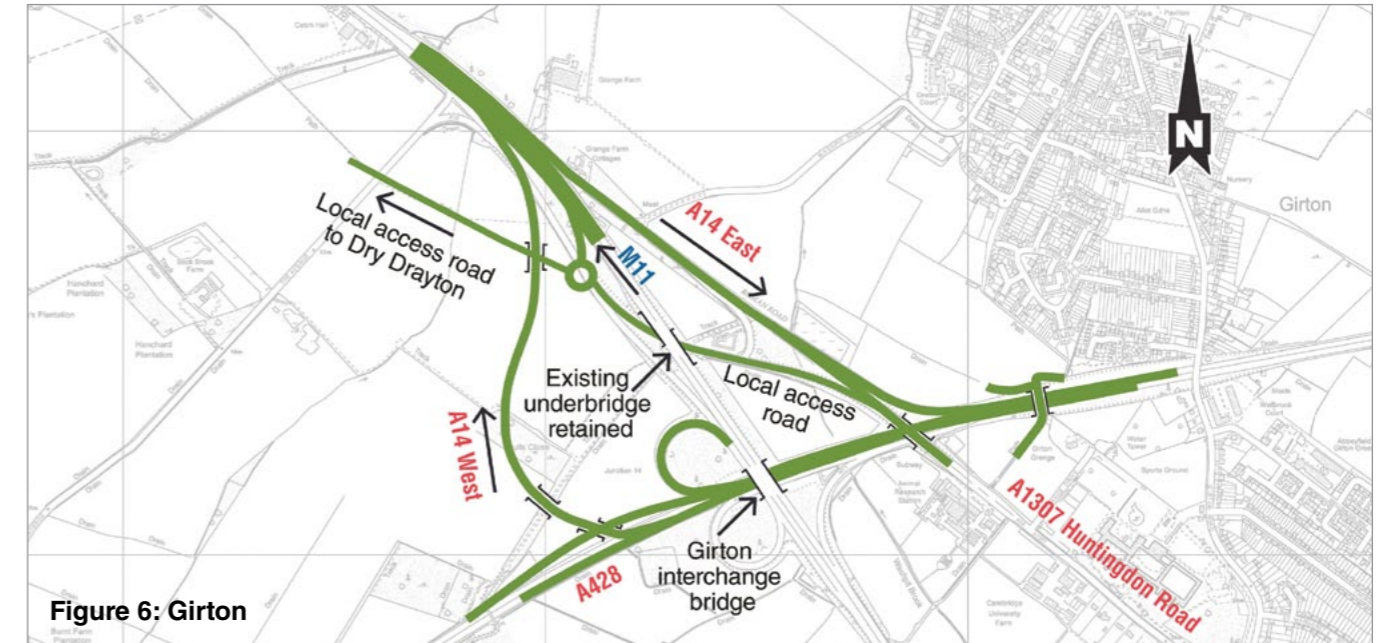


Figure 6: Girton

Girton junction is a complex and heavily-trafficked intersection between a motorway, two A-roads, and an arterial route into Cambridge. Over a dozen alternative schemes were considered for improving this junction, aiming to maximise the flow of traffic between the roads while addressing issues of affordability, safety, environmental impact, and traffic demand in the chosen solution.

The proposed solution maintains all the principal traffic movements through the junction and in particular improves traffic flows from east to west on the A14. It also improves merges between major roads to reduce queuing and delays and to improve safety.

Local traffic into, and out, of Cambridge will continue to use Huntingdon Road, which will connect to the new local access road and westwards to Bar Hill.

Element 4

Cambridge Northern Bypass

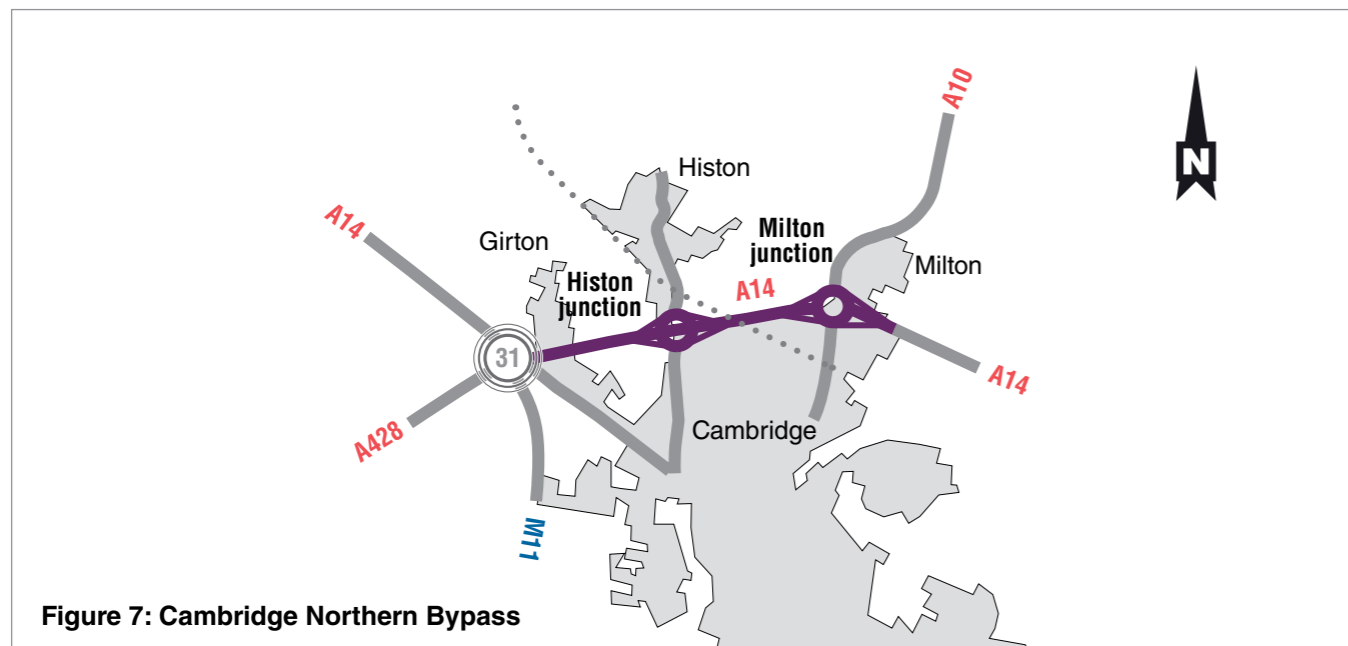


Figure 7: Cambridge Northern Bypass

The proposed scheme involves widening the section of the Cambridge Northern Bypass between Histon and Milton to dual three-lane carriageway, together with the improvement of Histon and Milton junctions to provide improved capacity and to reduce queuing back onto the bypass.

A separate Highways Agency scheme, to widen Cambridge Northern Bypass to dual three-lane carriageway between Girton and Histon has already been approved for construction and is expected to start in early 2014.

Consideration will be given to schemes for improving the A14 east of Milton junction as part of the Highways Agency's ongoing route-based strategy studies that include the A14.

The enhancements to the Cambridge Northern Bypass will help to regulate traffic flow better and to eliminate existing congestion, making the road safer. Journey planning will be more reliable and predictable. These improvements will also serve the rapidly expanding residential and commercial development in the northern fringe of the city, helping to preserve the reputation that Cambridge has for innovation and growth.

Next steps

Preferred route

This consultation exercise is your first opportunity to express your views on the current scheme proposals.

A consultation report will be drawn up and published once the consultation has closed in October. This report will summarise the views and opinions of the public and other stakeholders expressed during the exercise and make recommendations for future stages of scheme development.

Subject to the findings of the consultation, a 'preferred route' announcement will be made in late 2013 and the pre-application stage of the development consent process will begin.

Development Consent Order Application

The Development Consent Order (DCO) provides the Highways Agency with the powers needed to construct the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme.

Further consultations will take place during the course of 2014 to obtain a further, more detailed understanding of the views and priorities of the public, the local authorities, specific interested parties, and other stakeholders.

A community consultation exercise is a statutory requirement of the DCO process and will be explained in a Statement of Community Consultation, to be published in advance of the consultation exercise in late spring next year.

It is anticipated that a DCO application will be submitted before the end of 2014. This will include a description of the scheme, together with a detailed summary of the consultation that has taken place.

DCO examination and recommendation

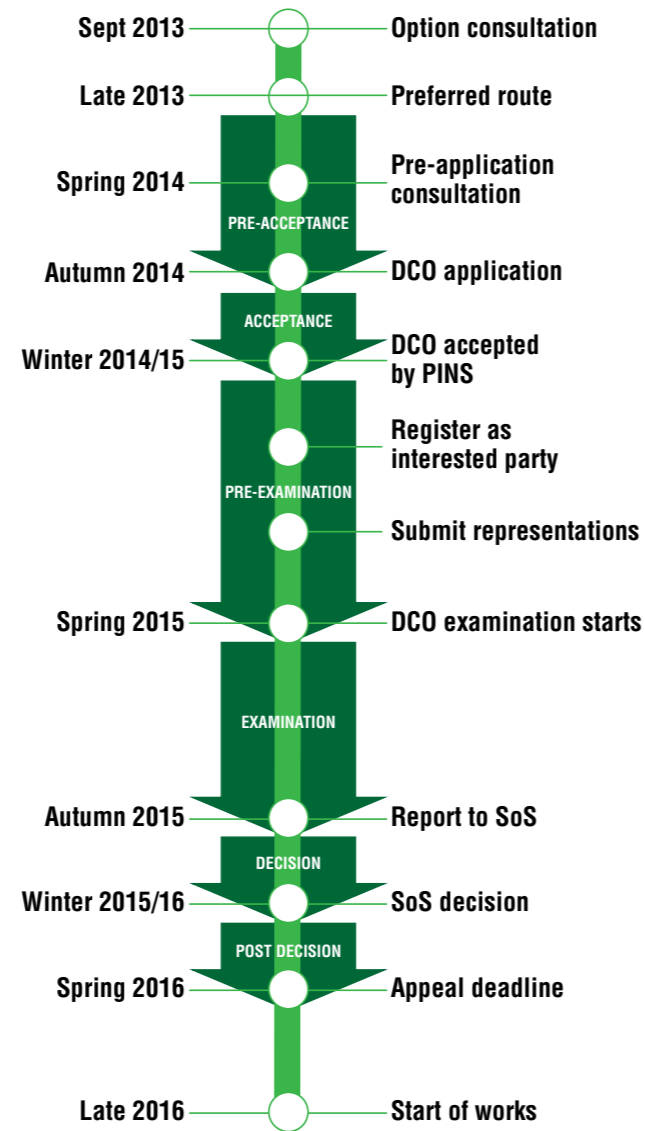
Once the Highways Agency has successfully submitted its DCO application, a pre-examination stage will begin, during which time individuals and interested groups will have a further opportunity to register representations.

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.

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.



DCO: Development Consent Order
 PINS: Planning Inspectorate
 SoS: Secretary of State

Share your views

To share your views and comments on the proposed improvements, please complete the online questionnaire or pick up a printed copy of the questionnaire at one of our exhibitions. The website address for this scheme is:

www.highways.gov.uk/A14CambridgeToHuntingdon

email: A14CambridgeHuntingdon@highways.gsi.gov.uk

More information on the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon improvement scheme, this public consultation exercise, and the statutory framework for infrastructure planning is available from:

- the Highways Agency website, which provides all relevant consultation documents and details of exhibitions
- at public exhibitions to be held during September and October 2013
- The *A14 Technical review of options*, which is available on the Highways Agency website or in printed form from the Agency on request (this provides additional detail on the scheme proposals, the options considered, the arrangements for tolling, and the statutory process to be followed)
- the Government's A14 challenge website pages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-challenge>
- the Planning Inspectorate's website for National Infrastructure Planning and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects: <http://infrastructure.planningportal.gov.uk/>



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