

**RESPONSE TO THE ADEQUACY OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON THE  
PROPOSED A14 IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

*To:* **Economy and Environment Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **11<sup>th</sup> November 2014**

*From:* **Executive Director, E,T&E**

*Electoral division(s):* **All, but more specifically impacting on:  
Huntingdon (2) , The Hemingfords and Fenstanton,  
St Ives (2), Sawtry and Ellington, Somersham and Earith,  
Brampton and Kimbolton, Castle,Cottenham, Histon and  
Impington (2),Waterbeach, East Chesterton, Willingham,  
Kings Hedges, Bar Hill, Arbury, West Chesterton,  
Godmanchester and Huntingdon East (2), Papworth and  
Swavesey, Buckden, Gransden and the Offords, Hardwick  
Woodditton,Somersham and Earith**

*Forward Plan ref:* **Not applicable      Key Decision      No**

*Purpose:* **To seek the Committee's views on the proposed response  
on the adequacy of community consultation. This is  
required to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by  
the Council as part of the Development Consent Order  
process being followed by the Highways Agency for the  
proposed A14 improvement scheme.**

*Recommendation:* **It is recommended that the Committee**

- a) approve the proposed response on the adequacy of  
community consultation; and**
- b) delegate the agreement of final amendments to the  
Executive Director Economy Transport and  
Environment in consultation with the Chairman and  
Vice Chairman of the Economy and Environment  
Committee.**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report outlines the rationale for and draft response to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) from the County Council, on the Authority's views on the 'Adequacy of the Community Consultation' undertaken by the Highways Agency (HA), on the proposed A14 improvement scheme.
- 1.2 Members views are sought on the draft response, which is attached as Appendix 1.

## **2. Background and Purpose**

- 2.1 The A14 scheme is classed as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project (NSIP). To progress the scheme, the HA must obtain consent by submitting a Development Consent Order (DCO) application to the Secretary of State. As a key stakeholder and statutory consultee, the County Council is required to respond at key stages. The first requirement relates to the 'adequacy of the applicant's consultation'.
- 2.2 After the DCO application has been received by PINS, which is anticipated to be by 28<sup>th</sup> November, the Secretary of State (SoS) will seek our views on the adequacy of the consultation. The SoS will not register the DCO application unless satisfied that the pre-application consultation was 'adequate' and in keeping with requirements of 2008 Act.
- 2.3 A draft response has been prepared on the basis of guidance from Government on pre-application consultation under the Planning Act 2008 where under Section 55 of the Act, local authorities may make representations to the Secretary of State concerning the adequacy of the applicant's consultation, which the Secretary of State must regard. Any such representation must be limited to how the applicant has carried out the consultation and may not be about how the applicant has had regard to responses to the consultation itself.
- 2.4 At the beginning of the DCO process, the HA produced a Statement of Community Consultation (SOCC). This identified their approach to consultation on the scheme proposals. The HA's SOCC included sections on features of the scheme, the application process, the autumn 2013 consultation on options and the proposals for a 10 week public consultation at the pre-application stage. As well as the SOCC, the HA made available a Preliminary Environmental Information Report (PEIR), The Preliminary Traffic Report and the proposed scheme layout.
- 2.5 A letter was sent from the County Council on 7 March 2014 confirming that the County Council was content with the SOCC subject to consideration of several elements mainly related to the Preliminary Environment Information Report (PEIR). These related to ecology, planning, minerals and waste, and the historic environment.
- 2.6 The Adequacy of community consultation is only one part of the process of responding to the DCO. The Statement of Common Ground will identify areas of both agreement and disagreement with the proposed scheme, this is the

primary document in which the Council will be able to raise any concerns about the scheme, while the Local Impact Report will require the Council to set out any additional impacts, positive and negative of the scheme not covered in the Statement of Common Ground.

### **3. Process & Key issues for consideration**

- 3.1 As a key stakeholder and a statutory consultee, the County Council is required to respond at key stages in the Development Consent Order process. This will begin in earnest once the application has been received, when the Secretary of State will contact Local Authorities to seek comments on the adequacy of the consultation. The representation must be limited to issues related to the Statement of Community Consultation, whether the authority agrees with the Statement and whether the applicant consulted in accordance with the Statement.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed response to the Planning Inspectorate. This concludes that the County Council is in general terms satisfied that the HA carried out the consultation in accordance with their SOCC. Indeed the HA worked closely with the County Council and other key stakeholders prior to making the DCO Application. As well as supporting the A14 Project Board, workshops were held with officers to present key elements and seek feedback on proposals and findings related to the Environmental Statement, Traffic Assessment, Design, and Asset Management proposals.
- 3.3 However, as a consequence of the nature of the process and short timescales between release of key data and the DCO Application, it has not been possible to consider and reach agreement on all matters. Nonetheless the County Council is content that the HA consulted as they outlined they would in the SOCC and, as such, has satisfied the duty to consult under the Act.
- 3.4 The County Council also considers that the HA has adhered to the consultation requirements included within Cambridgeshire County Council's own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).,
- 3.5 The County Council is aware of complaints made about the consultation process, from a number of residents who considered that there was a lack of detailed information in relation to likely impacts at the Public Exhibitions. The County Council cannot comment on the specifics or adequacy of the HA's response to the complaints received. Given the significance of this scheme, the availability of more detailed information on likely impacts and proposed mitigatory measures earlier on in the process might have helped local communities to better understand and to respond as part of the consultation. However communities and residents will have the opportunity to consider the environmental impacts and make representations in response to the publication of the DCO.
- 3.6 With respect to the Duty to Consult with Communities, the County Council therefore considers that the HA has met its obligations to consult with communities. The Council cannot comment on the adequacy of the Highways Agency's response to comments made by communities. It is expected that PINS will consider this issue at Examination.
- 3.7 The County Council will address impacts on local communities and the effectiveness of the HA's response in the Local Impact Report. This will be

produced by the County Council with our partner authorities once the full details of environmental implications and proposed mitigation measures are made available by the HA in the Environmental Statement, which is expected in draft imminently.

- 3.8 Progress will be summarised in the Statement of Common Ground between the HA and the County Council and this, along with a draft Local Impact Report and draft response to the DCO, will be presented to Members in March or April 2015. The Examination of the DCO by the Planning Inspectorate is currently anticipated to take place in the summer of 2015.

## **4 Conclusion**

- 4.1 The County Council is satisfied that the HA carried out the consultation in accordance with the SOCC, and complied with the requirements of the Act. The County Council is confident that the HA will continue to share details as they are developed ahead of the DCO submission.

## **5. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

### **5.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

The following bullet points set out details of implications identified by officers:

- The scheme will have significant benefits for the local economy through the reduction of traffic congestion on the A14, a nationally known bottleneck and adjacent County Roads, Market Towns and Villages.
- Huntingdon and Godmanchester should receive an economic impetus with development opportunities that should flow from the reduction of traffic in the towns.
- The scheme will facilitate the provision of the eventual full build out of the new town of Northstowe.
- The nationally known congestion on A14 is also known as “Cambridge’s Congestion”, its eradication would stop that unfortunate linkage.
- Legacy issues through new apprenticeships linked to the scheme will aid the future economy and
- The additional connectivity gained through improved cycling facilities should bring further benefits.

### **5.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

The new cycling facility provision in the corridor will encourage more cycling, especially for journeys to work and education which will benefit the health of residents. Additional footpath linkage will encourage more walking and exercise activity.

### **5.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

There are no significant implications for this priority.

## **6. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

## **6.1 Resource Implications**

The following bullet points set out details of significant implications identified by officers:

- The Council has agreed (See Cabinet Meeting Minutes for 10/9/2013) to provide £25m towards the Treasury stipulation that £100m of the scheme costs must be funded locally from the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Authorities which will benefit from the scheme. It is anticipated that this will be paid at a rate of £1m per year with funds top sliced from the Council's Local Transport Plan funding rather than additional borrowing. Payments will need to be made from 2020 onwards.
- The Council will, subject to satisfactory negotiation over reinstatement costs to an acceptable residual life, become the local highway authority for 20 kilometres of de-trunked grade separated dual carriageway. For this a significant dowry payment will need to be negotiated with Department for Transport (DfT) and the Highways Agency (HA) before the County Council should accept these responsibilities.
- The Council will inherit 12 kilometres of new public highway and accompanying cycle facilities which will bring their own resource demand for on-going maintenance. Discussions with DfT over the classification of these and the de-trunked roads will be required.
- The Council is also keen to work with HA to explore whether there will be any resources to support the amount of work from County Council officers that will be needed to input to the DCO process and to fully understand the implications for this authority.

## **6.2 Statutory, Risk and Legal Implications**

There are still significant legal and statutory risks to the DCO process which has yet to be fully tested for strategic highway schemes. At a national level there appears considerable support for the scheme.

## **6.3 Equality and Diversity Implications**

There are no significant implications within this category.

## **6.4 Engagement and Consultation Implications**

There has been extensive consultation by the HA on the proposed A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Scheme., and this was set out in the Highways Agency Statement of Community Consultation, which was agreed.

## **6.5 Localism and Local Member Involvement**

Although the A14 is principally a strategic scheme it will have local consequences which are likely to stimulate new ideas and opportunities whether this is at village, parish, City, or Market Town level.

Elected Members have been kept informed of progress of the scheme and the undertaking of the two consultation exercises by both by the HA and more directly by the County Council. There have also been five presentations or exhibitions solely for elected Members, when invitations were sent to County Members and the District Councils, and further workshops are planned for

Traffic Forecasts and to outline headline results from the Environmental Statement.

## 6.6 Public Health Implications

There is expected to be major air quality and noise benefits in the Huntingdon and Godmanchester central areas. There are potential air quality benefits across a wider area with the significant reduction in the nitrous oxides and particulate levels likely with the scheme. However, there will be areas where there are negative impacts and significant mitigation will be needed and further information will be available in the Environmental Statement.

Source Documents	Location
<p>Cambridgeshire County Council A14 informal consultation response – committee papers 27th May 2014</p> <p>The CHUMMS Report, DfT, September 2001</p> <p>The Cabinet has previously considered the A14 scheme(s) on 25/9/01, 14/6/05, 23/5/06, 27/2/07, 15/12/09, 17/9/12, 10/9/13, &amp; 29/10/13</p> <p>County Council Cabinet Agendas and Minutes can be found at:  <a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Committee.aspx?committeeID=11">http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CMSWebsite/Apps/Committees/Committee.aspx?committeeID=11</a></p> <p>The County Council's Enterprise, Growth and Community Infrastructure Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the current scheme on 4/2/14, item 4</p> <p><a href="http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=689">http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/CommitteeMinutes/Committees/Meeting.aspx?meetingID=689</a></p> <p>For the proposed scheme and consultation materials please see  <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-proposed-scheme">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement-proposed-scheme</a></p> <p>For the Highways Agency Statement of Community Consultation see  <a href="http://assets.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement/A14C2H_SoCC_Final_140321.pdf">http://assets.highways.gov.uk/roads/road-projects/a14-cambridge-to-huntingdon-improvement/A14C2H_SoCC_Final_140321.pdf</a></p>	<p>Location of Hard  Copies of documents:  Room 2A  Castle Court  Shire Hall,  Cambridge,  CB3 0AP</p>